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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I declare that this thesis does not include work of any thesis presented successfully for another degree. I declare that the thesis represents my own work except where referenced to others.

Place: University of South Africa

Signature:

Date:

Name: Bethusile Priscilla Dlamini

Student No: 49128809

## ABBREVIATIONS

AEC	Annual Education Census
AFP	Agence France Presse
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CEPD	Centre for Education and Policy Development
CIA	Centre for International Assessment
CIMB	Centre of International Benchmark Marking
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DPM	Deputy Prime Minister
ECCE	Early Childhood Care Education
EDSEC	Education Sector
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
EQUIP2	Education Quality Implementation Programme
FAR	Fiscal Adjustment Roadmap
FPE	Free Primary Education
GDP	Gross domestic product
GER	Gross enrolment ratio
GIR	Gross intake ratio
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GMSRC	Gorakhkali Manakamana Study and Research Center
GNI	Gross national income
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOF	Ministry of Finance
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NEHC	National Environment Health Care Centre
NER	Net enrolment ratio
NERCHA	National Emergency Response Change to HIV and AIDS
NNEPC	Nepal National Education Planning Commission

NPE	Non-formal primary education
NUPE	Non-forma Upper Primary Education
OECD	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
OVCs	Orphaned and Vulnerable Children
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PISA	Programme for International Standard Assessment
PTA	Parents Teacher Association
REO	Regional Education Office
SACU	Southern Africa Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SBA	School based assessment
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDP	School development plan
SMC	School management committee
SNI	Sebenta National Institute
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USA	United States of America

# Chapter 1

## Overview of the study

### 1.1 Introduction

Education is regarded as a tool for economic development, and hence a catalyst in the improvement of people's lives. It is on this premise that education is considered as a public good, and therefore a human right. It is also in light of this conviction that education has been placed at the centre of the global agenda. Hence, countries that are member states of the United Nations, have committed themselves to this global education agenda. This assertion is articulated in the United Nations Incheon declaration report of 2015. The inception of the global education agenda was initiated in Jomtein in 1990, where member states agreed to provide Education for All (EFA) for its citizens. The agenda was further reaffirmed in 2000 in Dakar, where once again member states recommitted themselves to pushing it.

In Dakar, at the World Education Forum, the Dakar framework was birthed. The context of the framework was ensuring that by 2015 all countries must have achieved Universal Primary Education (UPE). One of the targets adopted at this forum was for member states to provide Free Primary Education, so that the UPE goals are met (Swaziland EFA Progress Country Report 2000–2015 (UNESCO, UNICEF & MoET 2015). The UPE goals that were framed in Dakar were “early childhood and development, primary education, the learning needs of the youth and adults, adult literacy, gender parity and equality, and the quality of education” (UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, UNHCR, World Bank, 2015).

It is against this background that Swaziland introduced FPE in 2010. It is also at the root of this background that the researcher decided to undertake this study. This is particularly

because of events that were unfolding with regards to the provision and introduction of FPE in Swaziland, as such, the sustenance of the programme looked bleak. Swaziland's economic landscape was not at its best, neither was the Government's commitment towards FPE (Fiscal Adjustment Road Map 2010 [FAR] for 2010-2014). This was despite the fact that Swaziland also had a constitutional obligation of providing FPE, as there is a clause in the Kingdom of Swaziland's Constitution of 2005. The clause stipulates that Swaziland will have provided FPE three years after the adoption of the constitution. The constitution was adopted in February 2006 and the three years elapsed in January 2009. It is worth noting that Swaziland was not the only country that found itself not well prepared to meet this international obligation.

The 2015 deadline for the fulfilment of this goal proved to be a mammoth task for most developing countries. This assertion is supported by Mukeredzi (2009) who reports how the global pressure to achieve EFA has been a daunting task for developing countries. Mukeredzi points out two fundamental challenges that have contributed to developing countries being unable to meet the EFA mandate. These challenges are; an acute shortage of teachers and the large rural population, the author makes Zimbabwe a case in point. However, it is important to note that this is a common feature in developing countries. On the other hand Richard (2011) uses a different lens and perceives that the failure of developing countries to fulfil UPE is due to lack of funding and that international education policies are unfit for developing countries. It is important to note that Richard's argument is drawn from a critical theory perspective, which the researcher believes is a resourceful perspective for analysing the endless challenges faced by developing countries with regards to achieving EFA or UPE, which is an extension of the former.

Against this backdrop, this study sought to investigate the implementation and sustainability of free primary education (FPE) in Swaziland in relation to the policies that inform FPE and to what is actually happening on the ground. The Kingdom of Swaziland, as a member and signatory of various international and regional organisations, is mandated to implement the frameworks of these organisations. These frameworks take various forms, such as conventions, declarations and protocols. Some of these frameworks are the Jomtien Education for All Declaration of 1990, the Universal Primary Education (UPE) Dakar Framework of 2000, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), also of 2000, and more recently the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of 2015. Both the UPE Framework and the MDGs were supposed to have been achieved by 2015. However, when the MDGs agenda came to a close in 2015, not all the goals had been achieved, and they have since been replaced by the SDGs. The SDGs are an extension of the MDGs, and are meant to complete the tasks not completed by the MDGs. This is clearly articulated in the preamble of the SDGs of 2015, which specifies that the SDGs “seek to build on the Millennium Development Goals and complete what they did not achieve” (United Nations General Assembly 2015:1). The MDGs had eight goals and 48 targets. Goal 2 advocated universal primary education (UPE) for all boys and girls by 2015, which was not achieved.

The SDGs comprise 17 goals and 169 targets that must be achieved by 2030. The SDGs envisages "a world with equitable and universal access to quality education at all levels" (United Nations General Assembly 2015:3). The SDGs framework was determined by the purposes and principles of previous UN commitments, including the MDGs. It states clearly that the SDGs go beyond the MDGs, but that their priorities remain unchanged, education remains one of these priorities.

The government of Swaziland (GoS) proceeded to align its national policies with the above frameworks. These policies include the National Development Strategy (NDS) of 1999, the Poverty Reduction Strategic Action Plan (Swaziland 2006), the Education and Training Sector Policy or EDSEC policy (Swaziland 2011b), and numerous other policies. In addition, the frameworks were entrenched in the National Constitution of 2005, which was ratified by the monarch in February, 2006 and came into effect three years thereafter, in February 2009. In 2010 the Free Primary Education (FPE) Act was enacted as a legal framework for FPE. Based on these frameworks the GoS was compelled to implement FPE, despite the economic challenges the country faced. Further prompted by civil litigation, the GoS therefore introduced FPE in 2010.

The introduction of FPE occurred progressively, beginning with Grade 1 and 2 and progressing to higher grades in subsequent years. Its sustainability was threatened by the state of the economy and the manner in which FPE was introduced, however, which resulted in it not being well received by head teachers. Now, seven years later, the country's economic outlook remains grim, as His Majesty King Mswati III revealed during the opening of the 10th session of parliament on the 12th of February 2016. In his speech, the King referred to the fact that Swaziland's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) had declined from 2,5% in 2014 to 1,7% in 2015. He also stated that Swaziland's fiscal sustainability was at risk because of its high dependency on Southern Africa Customs Union revenues, which have been dwindling each year and were predicted to decline further in the 2016/2017 fiscal year (Swaziland 2016).

Since FPE was introduced in Swazi schools, a number of factors have been threatening to defeat the entire purpose of FPE. Some learners have been dropping out, for example, because of indirect costs related to the programme. These indirect costs include those for

school uniforms and transport. Another incidental expense that has been the biggest bone of contention has been that of "top-up" fees. Initially, confusion was caused by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) issuing Circular 14 (Swaziland 2012a), which seemed to encourage schools to charge top-up fees. This circular had a negative effect on the programme, because the Ministry has been struggling to set the matter right, despite revoking Circular 14 by means of Circular 17 of 2013 (Swaziland 2013c). Factors such as these seem to have counteracted the purpose and objectives of FPE, and addressing them remains a challenge for various reasons, such as inadequate research on FPE and related matters. These factors could as well result in conflict between head teachers, parents and the MoET.

The seemingly insurmountable challenges posed by the above factors and others have led the researcher to conduct this study. As Khumalo (2013) points out, little research has been undertaken on FPE in Swaziland. Reflecting on FPE and related policies, I therefore deemed it imperative to investigate the implementation and sustainability of FPE in Swaziland.

## **1.2 Background**

The FPE agenda dates as way back as 1948, as highlighted in the United Nations Human Rights Declaration of 1948. The Human Rights Declaration of 1948 declared education to be a basic human right, which means that every child has a right to education. It is for this reason that the United Nations has continuously and restlessly been aligning conventions and protocols that relate to this agenda. The Jomtein EFA agenda of 1990 is one of such initiatives, as well as the UPE Dakar framework of 2000 and MDGs of 2000. These global initiatives have had a significant impact on the education landscape internationally.



Swaziland introduced FPE in 2010. FPE is intended to provide access to education to every learner, irrespective of his or her socio-economic background, as stipulated by the Dakar framework of 2000 (Sawamura & Sifuna 2008; Ogola 2010; Fakudze 2012). Before FPE was introduced in Swaziland, many children from disadvantaged backgrounds were excluded from accessing education due to their inability to pay school fees. In 2010, the year in which FPE was introduced, 67% of the Swazi population was living below the poverty line of \$1 per day according to the Swaziland Millennium Development Goals Report (Swaziland 2010). The 2012 MDG Report showed that this figure had improved slightly to 63%. The economic situation is exacerbated by the country's poor economic performance, as reported by the GoS in its Fiscal Adjustment Roadmap 2010 (FAR) for 2010–2014. The situation was further worsened by the country's high unemployment rate, which had contributed to both the high poverty levels and the poor economic performance. Furthermore, the number of orphans of school-going age had increased due to the ravages of HIV/AIDS, and most of these orphans were unable to access education before the introduction of FPE (Armstrong, Khoboko, Moleli-Habi, Rampeta & Lepelesana 2012). This is despite the fact that some of the children's school fees, were paid by the GoS under the Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Fund. Even after FPE was introduced, however, such children continued to face challenges in accessing education, because they were unable to afford the incidental costs levied by schools (Phakati 2013).

It needs to be emphasised that charges were filed against the GoS for failure to introduce FPE in 2009, the date that had been set (Swaziland 2009a). The Constitution determined that FPE would be introduced three years after the adoption of the Constitution. The constitution was adopted in February 2006 consequently FPE was expected to be introduced in 2009. When this did not happen at the beginning of the 2009 school year, civil society and an association of former miners took government to court for failure to

do so (Swaziland 2009a). Government's defence was that it had been unable to fulfil its constitutional obligation due to financial challenges (Swaziland 2009). The court ruled in favour of the plaintiff, and government was instructed to implement FPE (Swaziland 2009a). Government appealed this judgment, however. The second time around, the court of appeal ruled in government's favour, stressing that, in as much as the Constitution decreed the implementation of FPE in 2009, it was not possible if government did not have the means to do so. It was for this reason that government implemented FPE in Grades 1 and 2 in 2010, and progressively rolled it out to further grades in subsequent years (Swaziland 2010e).

Interestingly, the Education and Training Sector Policy (Swaziland 2011b) and the FPE Act of 2010 came into existence only after FPE had been introduced, which means that, prior to its introduction, there was no policy or legal framework supporting FPE in Swaziland other than the Constitution. The MoET developed an FPE implementation framework in October, 2009 the stipulations of the Constitution of 2005 regarding FPE had not been given effect in legislation.

The introduction of FPE coincided with the introduction of the SADC child-friendly schools (CFS), which in Swaziland was adapted to suit local needs using the same pillars (UNICEF 2010; SADC 2015; The Multi-Country Child Friendly Schools Africa Capacity Development Workshop II Report 2006). The local version, according to an adaptation of the SADC CFS, was referred to as "schools as centres of care and support" (SCCS) or *inqaba* in the vernacular, meaning "fortress". Schools are therefore expected to implement the Inqaba manual in their everyday operation. This is supported by the MoET's EDSEC Policy (Swaziland 2011b) in the SCCS framework section. It consequentially became part of the FPE package and framework that schools are expected to follow.

As a member state, Swaziland through the leadership of the MoET was and still is bound to international and regional frameworks. It was in the light of this obligation that the section on FPE was included in the Constitution. However, due to financial constraints, the programme was not introduced three years after the adoption of the Constitution, as stipulated by the constitution, but only after legal charges had been filed against the state. It was against this backdrop that the MoET deemed it necessary to push the FPE Bill through parliament and have it promulgated as an Act in 2010.

Odhaimbo and Simatwa (2012), Marks (2009) and Chaudhary (2013) link education to the alleviation of poverty. It is thus imperative, considering the World Bank Swaziland Education Sector Analysis Study, as Marope (2010) notes, for the country to invest in human capital, rather than being bound by these international and regional initiatives (i.e. FPE or UPE) by virtue of its membership, because the country is not endowed with mineral resources. According to Schultz (1961), investing in human capital through education and other means that improve individual productivity in return for earnings is of economic value. The Poverty Reduction Strategic Action Plan (Swaziland 2006) also posits that investing in human capital is critical, not only to improve productivity in society, but also to ensure the proper functioning of a country's political, economic, social and civic systems. The researcher therefore believes that investing in FPE is vital for Swaziland if the country is to experience economic growth.

This notion is supported by most of the research on free and compulsory education, as well as by research on education and economic development. For example, Fishlow (1995 in Shobande, Odeleye & Olunkwa 2014) argue that education reduces inequality, and that therefore investing in human capital results in economic gains. For developing countries to develop economically, therefore, they need to invest in education. To do so successfully,

they need to start at the basic education level and progress to the tertiary levels. This is clarified well by Wilson and Briscoe (2004) in their research report on the impact of human capital on economic growth. Oluwatoyin (2011), in an article on human capital investment and economic growth in Nigeria, also supports this notion, as does Ozturk (2001). Ozturk, in his paper on the role of education in economic development, asserts that since the beginning of the 20th century, countries globally have expanded their access to basic education (Ozturk 2001:2). Further to this, Ozturk argues that if such investment was to be expanded to secondary education and to girls and women, the results would bring positive economic returns. Marope (2010) also supports this idea in a study on the Swazi education system, and believes that, because Swaziland is not endowed with natural resources, it should invest in human capital instead. The assumption is therefore that education could contribute towards overcoming the social and economic challenges that the country is faced with. Based on the scholars cited above, FPE could be argued to be one of the ways in which the country could invest in human capital.

The EDSEC Policy declares that it is the mission of the MOET to ensure sustainable access to education. The researcher believes that access can only be attained and sustained by removing all barriers to it. Amidst the aforementioned challenges faced by Swaziland, the sustainability of FPE is questionable. This is further exacerbated by the poor implementation of the FPE policy at school level. This has been regularly reported on in daily newspapers (see for example Masinga in the *Swazi Observer* dated September 16, 2016, in an article entitled "Seven months later still no solution on to FPE top up fees"; and Jele in the *Times of Swaziland* of 9 December, in a report on the public inputting to the FPE task team, which was established after the King's speech of 2014). Sukati (2013), in his study "Education for all children by 2015: Mere rhetoric or reality in Swaziland?", questions the claim by government and donors that EFA has been achieved in Swaziland

while on the ground the situation contradicts the gross enrolment ratio and net enrolment ratio that this claim is based on. Sukati points out that there are still many children who are out of school because they do not have money to pay top-up fees and other indirect costs, have to walk long distances to school, or are being kept home by parents to assist in chores. Sukati (2013) is therefore of the view that Swaziland is far from achieving the EFA goals. It is on this premise that this study seeks to investigate the implementation and sustainability of FPE in Swaziland in relation to policy and practice.

### **1.3 Problem statement**

Since the introduction of FPE, a great deal of confusion has been associated with the programme. In 2010 some schools requested permission to add top-up fees to the grants paid by government (Dhladla 2013c). Some of these schools were allowed to do so, and this prompted many other schools to follow suit (Dhladhl 2013c). Under the FPE Act of 2010, the MoET subsequently determined that schools should obtain permission by submitting a request in this regard accompanied by proof that a resolution to levy top-up fees had been passed at a parents' meeting, as spelt out in the FPE Act of 2010. The MoET further stated that this condition would be applicable and accepted only when a school was embarking on a building project. The issue of top-up fees has been the most contentious since the FPE programme was introduced in 2010. It has led to many other challenges arising, including the reversal of some of the gains of FPE.

The situation began to get out of hand when schools that were not granted permission to charge top-up fees started doing so regardless. This resulted in children who could not pay the top-up fees being chased from schools, and because of poor monitoring by the MoET some learners are faced with the same fate even today. Such children are therefore being denied access to education, which is contrary to the very essence of FPE. This confusion

took on crisis proportions in January 2013. The situation sent the MoET into panic mode as it issued and then withdrew government circulars on the top-up fees in a bid to sort out the mess. Some circulars were released without the knowledge of senior members of the Ministry. A case in point was Circular 14 (Swaziland 2012a), which was issued by the MoET on the 8th of February 2012 and signed by the Principal Secretary. The circular granted school principals the right to demand top-up fees and to seek legal redress against defiant parents. It states in clause 4 and 5:

4. If parent(s) or guardian(s) fails to honour the agreement and/ or arrangement, the school should send at least three reminders to parent (s) or guardian(s).

5. If the parent(s) or guardians despite the reminders, refuse, fail and/or neglect to pay the “Top-Up Fees”, legal action for recovery of same should be taken against him or her.

January 2013 saw the MoET and head teachers at loggerheads. The then Minister of Education sternly warned head teachers not to charge top-up fees, and instructed all schools which had collected such fees to refund parents. Head teachers defied the order, however, and stated that they would charge top-up fees and not refund parents in terms of Circular 14 of 2012. The ministry then threatened head teachers with disciplinary action. In reply head teachers threatened to take legal action against the MoET, and accused the minister of using this situation as a campaign strategy for the 2013 elections (Dhladhla 2013). Strangely enough, the head teachers did not seem to realise that what was happening was actually not in line with the FPE Act of 2010, which is the legal framework for FPE. Nonetheless, the minister further accused the principal secretary of blundering by issuing Circular 14 (Dhladhla 2013c). After this altercation, the MoET issued Circular 17, which nullified Circular 14, on the 6th of February, 2013 (Swaziland 2013c). Section 1 of Circular 17 states that "the Ministry advises all Head teachers of schools that all pupils in

Grade 1 to Grade 7 shall not be charged Top-Up Fees except in compliance with the Free Primary Education (FPE) Act of 2010". Section 5 of the same circular further states that "(t)his Circular supersedes any other circular on the subject, particularly Circular 14 of 2012, entitled "Non Admittance of Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC) for failure to pay Top-Up fees".

The drama that has been unfolding since the introduction of FPE clearly indicates that the implementation of FPE in Swaziland is beset by difficulties, and that this probably stems from the poor planning and management of FPE by the MoET from the onset of the programme, as highlighted above. The top-up saga sheds some light on the attitude of head teachers towards FPE, and probably indicates that they are not in full support of it. It would also seem that parents' views regarding the top-up fees varies, because in some schools top-up fees were, in fact, introduced by parents. The unfortunate result of the entire debacle is that children from poor households as well as orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) have become its victims. They have no one to speak for them, yet they are the ones who should benefit most from the FPE programme. There is therefore no doubt that levying top-up fees has marginalised them and alienated them from the school system, which defeats the very purpose of FPE.

It became clear as these events unfolded that a great deal of confusion reigned even within the MoET; it seemed as though senior officials were not in sync with the EDSEC Policy in terms of its vision, goals, and mission statement, with the FPE Act or with international conventions. This became evident in the manner in which the Ministry handled the top-up fees saga. The fact that those involved at the Ministry were the policy-makers and administrators of the education system is a concern, since one would not expect them to make decisions contrary to the FPE vision, the FPE Act and the spirit of the FPE

programme. It appears therefore that the implementation of FPE has not been given the attention it so richly deserves, which has led to its sustainability being brought into question.

#### **1.4 The Scope of the Study**

This study was conducted in the Manzini region of Swaziland. It was a multiple case study of four schools out of the 181 primary schools that are in the Manzini region. In total, in 2013 there were 619 primary schools country wide, Annual Education Census (Swaziland 2013a).

#### **1.5 Rationale of the study**

The researcher is of the opinion that all children need to be given equal opportunity to education, to enable them to realise their full potential. Thus charging of top-up fees in Swaziland in a system of supposedly free education deprives children of the opportunity of accessing education. Attempts have been made by Swaziland's MoET to stop schools from charging top-up fees, however in the absence of proper monitoring of the FPE programme the extent of adherence seems to be unknown and rather questionable.

As mentioned above, the country's economic indicators reveal that 63% of the population is living below the poverty line (Swaziland MDG report of 2012 and Swaziland Fiscal Adjustment report of 2010–2011 to 2014–2015). In addition a majority of the Swazi population consists of children of school-going age, as the youth make up 54% of the Swazi population (Swaziland 2009b). In the researcher's opinion, FPE is therefore a necessity in Swaziland. The need for FPE is further exacerbated by the high unemployment rate, which stood at 37.8% in 2010 (Swaziland 2012c). These statistics imply that, in the absence of FPE, many children would be at risk of not accessing primary



school education, thus sustaining the FPE programme is of significant importance. I therefore regarded it as imperative to undertake this study to investigate whether the introduction of entirely free primary education in Swaziland is achievable and perhaps sustainable, against the backdrop of its introduction as described in section 1.2.

As an educationist the researcher notes that there is a dearth of research on FPE, particularly with regard to its policy and practice in Swaziland. Recent studies attest to this, for example Fakudze (2012), who in her M Ed dissertation refers to how inclusive education is being implemented in Swaziland as part of the FPE programme. However, she decries the manner in which inclusive education was introduced, without proper training of teachers. In addition, she notes that teachers are not supported by the MoET inspectors of the Special Education Needs (SEN) Unit. Fakudze points out how the lack of an inclusive education policy further worsens the situation. However, it is worth noting that the MoET's EDSEC Policy stipulates the formulation of frameworks for each of the sub-sectors of the Ministry with a view to avoid the proliferation of policies. Khumalo (2013) in a discussion paper on the effective delivery of public education services in Swaziland raises the alarm about Swaziland's poor implementation of sector plans, despite the plans being sound. Khumalo gives an example of MoET strategic plan activities that have not been included in the costing, and explains how this becomes problematic at the implementation stage.

Sukati (2012), in a journal article entitled, "Education for all children by 2015: Mere rhetoric or reality in Swaziland?", also posed the question regarding whether Swaziland will achieve EFA by 2015. According to Sukati, the MoET and donor organisations claimed that EFA had been achieved, yet this was not the reality. Sukati pointed out that many children of school-going age were still out of school, and stated how top-up fees, transport costs and the cost of uniforms were some of the factors to blame. All of this

reveals that there is somewhat of a disconnection between policy and practice in Swaziland.

The researcher boast of more than eight years' experience in the field and over 20 years' experience in the field of education as a whole., and believes that all children should have access to education, to enable them to become better citizens and to take control of their destiny by making informed decisions. The researcher is currently employed as curriculum designer by the National Curriculum Centre, which falls under the MoET.

The key mandate of the NCC is the interpretation of national policies to develop new educational programmes and the translation of policies into instructional materials. The FPE policy is one such policy that directly affects the researchers work environment, because it touches on many areas of the education sector which have a bearing on curriculum. An example of such an area is the provision of quality and relevant education by means of the curriculum to achieve economic growth and global competitiveness as articulated in the EDSEC Policy. It is on this premise that I deemed it necessary to interrogate policies related to FPE and the ways in which they are implemented – more so because another key mandate of the NCC is to conduct research and advise the MoET accordingly. Furthermore, since all changes in the education landscape have a direct bearing on curriculum, it became imperative to investigate what was actually happening on the ground. The researcher therefore believed that this study would enable her to contribute to curriculum development from an informed position. In addition it would give the researcher a clear understanding of how education policy is formulated and how it is supposed to be implemented. This would promote the researcher's professional development and enlarge the researcher's knowledge base. It would also improve the researcher's understanding of how the education system in Swaziland functions, and

enable the researcher to interpret policy from an informed position as well as to make a positive contribution to the education system in Swaziland, not only as an officer of the National Curriculum Centre but as an aspiring lecturer or politician.

The researcher notes with concern that her grandchildren and all other children of basic education age should not be denied free education. Arendse (2011) in his study entitled "The obligation to provide free basic education in South Africa: an international law perspective" stipulates that every child in South Africa has a right to basic education, irrespective of his or her socio-economic background. Arendse refers to how not only language barriers but also school levies and other educational charges prevent children from accessing their rightful education. He further elaborates on how South Africa is obligated by numerous rights and legal frameworks at national, regional and international level to ensure that children enjoy such rights. Swaziland is equally obligated to ensure that children benefit from these entitlements.

At the outset of this study, the researcher hoped to be enabled to identify the gaps that exist in the policy-making and implementation processes and thus to make recommendations where needed.

### **1.6 Aims and objectives**

The aim of this study was to investigate the implementation and sustainability of FPE in Swaziland with respect to the interplay between policy and practice. In so doing, it attempted to provide policy makers with insight into what is happening on the ground and also into what is not happening, based on the ultimate purpose of FPE as articulated in policy documents and literature.

The general objective of the study was to articulate the importance of access to education, and to indicate how lack thereof in Swaziland is a violation of human rights. To this end, a further objective was to examine managerial systems at play in the introduction and implementation of FPE in Swaziland, and the many factors influencing them related to the environment they operate in. The study also intended to interrogate the educational leadership/management practices at play in the implementation and sustainability of FPE in Swaziland.

### **1.6.1 Specific objectives of the study**

The specific objectives of this study were to:

- analyse stakeholders' understanding of FPE
- explore how FPE is being implemented in schools in Swaziland in relation to policy frameworks
- determine whether the implementation of FPE is aligned with FPE/EFA policies, and if not, what the shortcomings and their causes are and how they can be bridged
- investigate how sustainable FPE in Swaziland is

### **1.7 Research questions**

To achieve the objectives of this study, the main research question was framed as follows:

How is FPE in Swaziland being implemented in relation to policy and practice, and is it sustainable?

To answer this question, an attempt was made to answer the following sub-questions:

1. What are stakeholders understanding of FPE?
2. How is FPE being implemented in Swaziland schools?
3. What gaps are there between policy and practice, if any, and how can they be overcome?

4. How sustainable is the FPE programme in Swaziland?

### **1.8 Significance of the study**

This study was undertaken to shed light on the importance of proper planning and organisation in the implementation of education policy. The findings of the study highlighted mistakes that are being made in the development and implementation of policies, and hence lessons that are to be learnt. The study was also conducted to provide knowledge about education policy and implementation, specifically in Swaziland, where good policies are normally developed but where challenges arise at the implementation stage. This set the platform for determining what the possible causes of this failure of implementation are. It has been noted that the tendency of using a top-down approach to management does bring about such challenges, and this study wished to ascertain whether this is a factor contributing to the challenges occurring in policy implementation. It is in the researcher's opinion that this approach tends to be ineffective in the implementation of education policy: frequently those responsible for implementing policy tend to resist whatever they are expected to implement. Most importantly, there is insufficient knowledge with regard to policy development and implementation in Swaziland. This study identified the roles that ought to be played by the various stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of programmes, and what it is that makes policy implementation sustainable.

The study further gives insight on the type of education leadership and policy compliance that is at play in Swaziland. Hence the researcher is confident of the notion that this study will also be a lens or yardstick that can be used to view and measure other areas, such as the level at which the rule of law is adhered to in Swaziland. It will also enable interest

groups and civil society to strengthen advocacy for social justice and human rights in as far as FPE is concerned.

### **1.9 Operational and Conceptual definitions (definition of terms)**

The study frequently used the terms below because of their conceptual broadness. The terms were defined relevant and limited to the scope of the study:

**Access:** Access to education is an important term in this study, because UPE or EFA cannot be achieved without access to education. Access to education is one of the guiding principles of the Swaziland MoET EDSEC Policy (Swaziland 2011b:ix), which states that: "Every Swazi citizen has the right to education and training appropriate to their age and needs, including the provision of free and compulsory basic education." The policy further stipulates as follows: "The primary mandate of the Ministry of Education and Training is to provide access to relevant quality education at all levels of the education system to all learners in Swaziland; taking into account all issues of efficacy, equity and special needs."

**Affordability and participation:** Affordability and participation are key components of FPE and are related to access to education: FPE can only be attained by putting in place mechanisms that will make education affordable to all learners irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds. This will enable all children to participate in education. The MoET policy (2011) states: "No Swazi citizen shall be excluded from age-appropriate formal and non-formal quality education and training because of its cost."

**Basic human rights:** These are the fundamental, inalienable rights of all people; they are egalitarian. Human rights are universal and are an international legal framework (United Nations 1948, United Nations 1966). Basic human rights include the right to freedom, irrespective of race, colour, religion, language, or political, national or social origin; life;

liberty; security; legal recognition as a person; and most importantly to this study, education.

**Curriculum:** This is a broad term which can be defined in many ways, depending on the context. Curriculum forms links between institutions of learning (the classroom), knowledge and society (Potokri 2016; Danmole 2011). A curriculum is a "structured plan of action that guides the process of education" (Danmole 2011: 4). Cuban (in Jackson 1992:216), describes it thus: "It serves as a documented map of theories, beliefs, and intentions about schooling, teaching, learning, and knowledge; ...The formal curriculum (written or overt) comprises those things in textbooks, and content and concepts in the curriculum guides" (Cuban in Jackson 1992:216).

**Education finance:** This refers to the allocation of funds to education. It includes financing the building of schools, training of teachers, remuneration of teachers, professional development of teachers, procuring teaching and learning materials, as well as providing adequate facilities and equipment.

**Free primary education (FPE):** Universally FPE refers to the state waiving tuition fees and paying for tuition. The term is also used synonymously with UPE and Education for All (EFA), since UPE or EFA can only be achieved by removing barriers to education access. One of the barriers to access is school fees, which some households cannot afford. Since the study was undertaken in Swaziland, in view of local context, the definition of FPE used in this study was that found in Swazi policy documents and in Section 2 of the in the FPE Act of 2010: "(F)ree education' means the education of a Swazi child at primary level at a public school without the parent of child having to pay tuition fees for that education."

**Governance:** This is the manner in which institutions or organisations are managed. In the education sector, governance can be centralised, according to the top-down approach, or decentralised at regional level or even school level. At school level governance is referred to as school-based management. In this case, parents, the principal and the teachers are collectively responsible for the welfare of the school. Such management entails those who have been mandated to govern making decisions and accepting responsibility. Governance further involves all stakeholders having a voice with regard to the direction the organisation should take, participation, competition and choices (UNESCO 2009).

**Implementation:** This means the process of executing FPE policy and rendering it operational in schools for the purpose of fulfilling its aims (see Oketch & Rolleston 2007). It therefore refers to the manner in which FPE is introduced, stakeholder participation in the implementation process, the implementation process used, social and economic demands, retention, access inhibitors and learners performance.

**Learning materials:** These are the materials used in learning to enhance the learning process. It includes textbooks and other print materials, software and other electronic materials, online/internet resources (including access), and supplies and other materials to support instruction in subject areas.

**Management:** Those people in organisations and institutions who are tasked with the responsibility of achieving goals, and who consciously and continually shape their organisations during the management process. The people tasked with this responsibility are called managers. They set the tone in organisations and influence their subordinates' attitudes towards their work. Managers also forge human relationships and are concerned with time management. Managers have to be effective and efficient. Effectiveness is about



doing the right thing, while efficiency is about doing things right (Stoner, Freeman & Gilbert 1995: Christie 2010). This notion is also supported by Bush (2007), who elaborates by stating that management also focuses on implementation and technical issues. In this study, the meaning of management is narrowed down to educational management because the study covers management at all levels of the education system.

**Policy:** Haddad and Demsky (1995:18) define policy as "an explicit or implicit single decision or group of decisions which may set out directives for guiding future decisions, initiate or retard action, or guide implementation of previous decisions". The policy referred to in this study is typically education policy. Potokri and Aina (2012:52) define education policy "as a mission statement concerned with how educational resources are allocated in a way that the broad philosophy and goals of education in a country is effectively and efficiently realised". For purposes of this study, policy is defined as a statement of intention by a government. It is also a deliberate plan of action to guide decisions and achieve national outcomes.

**Sustainability:** In this study it means the ability to be sustained or maintained, it implies not falling apart or having to change. With regard to FPE in Swaziland, it specifically refers to government's ability to sustain FPE according to its guiding principles. It also refers to government's ability to sustain financing FPE despite the economic challenges the country is faced with. Islam and Rahman (2008) contend that sustaining FPE requires government to have a political will as well as the necessary finances and managerial and technical skills.

**Socio-economic status:** This refers to a person's social and economic standing in society, and to the fact that people's social environment is influenced by their economic situation. According to Ezewu (1998:23), socio-economic status can be defined as the social and

economic position of an individual or family in any given society, determined by such factors as level of education, occupation and income. It is also determined by family background and characteristics (National Centre for Education Statistics 2015; Kainuwa & Yusuf 2013).

**Top-up school fees:** These are fees that learners are expected to pay to their school in addition to the amount the state pays for their education in the form of grants. Swaziland's FPE Act of 2010 states that such fees should be paid only in regard to school projects approved by the Minister of Education. This fee is only supposed to be paid once over a one-year period, which means that after making this payment, no learner under the FPE programme should pay any further fees.

### **1.10 Preliminary philosophical position and research methodology**

This section presents the abridged version of the study's philosophical position and research methodology (see chapter 4 for details). Here, the researcher's aim is to provide the reader with preliminary insight into the philosophical position and research methodology adopted for this study.

In this study, the researcher located herself within the constructivism/Interpretivism philosophical paradigm of constructivism/interpretivism, because FPE in Swaziland can be best understood by investigating it in its natural setting. Constructivism/Interpretivism is a qualitative research philosophical paradigm. Constructivism is based on the assumption that different people experience reality differently and therefore give different meanings to their experiences. This requires research to be undertaken in the natural setting of the phenomenon being studied (Krauss 2005; Lietz & Zayas 2010). The researcher therefore believed that the implementation of FPE and its sustainability in Swaziland could best be understood by those who were involved in its implementation on

the ground, in its natural setting. Furthermore researcher believed that it was vital to obtain data regarding the experiences of such stakeholders, since it was these experiences that would reveal the realities of the implementation and sustainability of FPE in Swaziland.

In this context, the researcher was of the notion that the social world could be studied in a value-free manner (Mộng Hà 2011) – one that would provide explanations of a causal nature and of course varied yet meaningful views or conclusions. This world view or paradigm of inquiry is objective and does not use a fixed set of questions or experiments, which made it possible for the researcher to formulate new questions as the researcher became more familiar with the context. The manner in which FPE was introduced in Swaziland required the researcher to interact with the subjects (research participants) in the study in order to understand the dynamics related to the implementation and sustainability of the FPE programme.

Furthermore, understanding the situation on the ground enabled researcher to analyse the interplay between policy and practice, based on stakeholders' experiences on the one hand and the content of policies on the other. This was of fundamental importance, because it provided insight into this aspect of the study. Bisman and Highfield (2012) posit that these realities are created in the mind and at different social realms, organisations, cultures and experiences, which in turn create multiple social realities. Bisman and Highfield further point out that it is for this reason that there are no predefined independent and dependent variables within constructivism. Instead situations are explored to determine how people make sense of them at specific times. Instead the situations at hand are real and occur in natural settings, where they impact on the lives of the people who experience them, in that particular context. Interpretations of these experiences can be drawn from these people as

they express and explain how they have been affected by them. Interpretivism was therefore applied to enable the researcher to understand these realities (Bisman & Highfield 2012).

Interpretivism is concerned with how people see, think and feel about the world. It seeks to draw meaning from diverse perspectives, actions, behaviours and effects, which are perceived to be complex and dynamic and to change with time (Hammersly 2012). The researcher's ontological position is therefore that there are multiple realities and that they are subjective. The researcher's epistemological view is that knowledge can be attained through interaction with respondents or participants who experience a given reality (Bisman & Highfield 2012). The philosophical position of the study is also influenced by the study's research approach and design choice.

The research approach followed in this study is qualitative. To gather in-depth data, the research design employed was that of a case study, based on Yin's (1994) assertion that a complex phenomenon can best be understood by using a case study design. A case study design can be used in both quantitative and qualitative research. The study's sample comprised four schools in the Manzini region of Swaziland. The sampling technique used was that of purposive sampling, and the sampling criterion applied in the selection of schools was location. One school was selected in each of the following types of locations in the region: urban, peri-urban, rural and industrial. At each school, the sample consisted of a parent, a teacher, a head teacher and learners. Education officials also participated in the research. The data collection methods used were individual interviews, focus group interviews, observation and literature reviews.

The data analysis method used for this study was thematic analysis. Initially I had intended using content analysis, but after carefully investigating the different qualitative

data analysis methods, thematic analysis was found to be most suitable, as it is flexible and provides a rich, detailed, complex explanation of data (Clarke & Braun 2006).

### **1.11 Organisation of chapters**

This study comprises six chapters that are organised as follows:

Chapter 1: This begins with an overview of the study, which consists of the; introduction, the background, the problem statement and the rationale of the study. The aims and objectives of the study are stated, as well as the main question and subquestions underpinning the study. The significance of the study – that is how the study will benefit the education sector in Swaziland – is explained. Lastly the operational definitions of the study are given.

Chapter 2: This chapter reviews literature related to the study and focuses on FPE policy (process and content), implementation of FPE, sustainability of FPE, and the impact of FPE in Swaziland.

Chapter 3: This chapter describes the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

Chapter 4: This chapter spells out the methodology used in the study. It describes the philosophical position of the research, the research design, the sample and sampling technique used, the methods of data collected and documents analysed. Trustworthiness, credibility and dependability criteria were applied to test rigour, in view of the study being qualitative as opposed to quantitative. Ethical considerations, data analysis and the limitation of the study are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5: This chapter contains the findings and a discussion of how they were categorised. Topics discussed are access as the main goal of FPE, benefits of FPE, effects

of top-up fees on access, other barriers to access, and the sustainability of access through FPE. The second section of this chapter focuses on the top-up fees dilemma, covering key issues such as schools levying top-up fees, head teachers' perceptions of FPE grants, and the top-up fees monitoring mechanism. The third section of the chapter looks at the implementation of FPE in Swaziland under the headings of stakeholders' understanding of the FPE policy, FPE policy guidelines and consultations. The fourth section of the chapter focuses on the administration of the FPE programme, and specifically on progress and changes made in the FPE programme, the building of school infrastructure, the FPE package, and the sustainability of the FPE programme. The fifth section delves into textbook management and distribution in respect of the management of textbooks and textbook shortages in schools. The sixth section focuses on FPE challenges and the quality of education and teacher training. The seventh and last section covers teaching and learning, looking at the classroom environment, learners' participation and behaviour, the curriculum, and the language of instruction.

Chapter 6: This chapter discusses the findings of the study in detail, based on the themes, subthemes, research questions, theoretical framework and literature review. It also presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

### **1.11 Chapter summary**

This chapter contained an overview of the study, and consisted of the introduction, a description of the background, problem statement, rationale, objectives, key questions and subquestions, significance, as well as the scope and limitations of the study. It concluded with a description of the organisation of chapters.

## Chapter 2

### Review of related literature

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter brings on board literature related to the study that the researcher reviewed. It begins with a brief outline of how the literature review was conducted and the challenges that the researcher encountered whilst soliciting information on FPE in Swaziland. The literature review layout is presented and discussed according to themes and subthemes aligned with the objectives of the study and the research questions. The themes are process and content, and the subthemes are policy as a concept, brief scope and definitions related to policy. Since this study concerns itself with FPE policy, an understanding of policy concepts related to the study is crucial. Literature on the implementation of FPE both in Swaziland and in other countries is reviewed. The impact of FPE in Nigeria, Kenya and other countries and its effect on quality education, as determined by means of assessment tests, are discussed.

Literature on the sustainability of FPE in the context of resources, its main purpose, and its goal of providing access to all irrespective of socio-economic status, is reviewed, and threats to the sustainability of FPE are discussed. This is followed by a discussion of FPE in Swaziland, its introduction, the human rights aspect, as well as challenges that the programme has been faced with. Literature on FPE perspectives outside Africa are subsequently reviewed, beginning with two developing countries, namely Nepal and Pakistan. Both countries are of special interest to the researcher because of their history and political structures, particularly the monarch system in Nepal, which is similar to that of Swaziland. FPE perspectives in developed countries are also studied, specifically those in

the USA with its No Child Left Behind (NCLB) initiative, as well as those in Finland and Hong Kong.

## **2.2 Free primary education policy: process and contents**

Since this study hinges on issues of policy and practice in relation to the implementation and sustainability of FPE in Swaziland, an understanding of the various FPE policies and their content is crucial. Knill and Tosun (2008) in their work entitled *Policy making* state that policies are statements by governments with regard to what they intend to do or not to do. Pacescila and Profiroiua (2006:150) cite Thomas Dye, who was the first person to define public policy as "all that the government decides to do or not to do". Policy may be articulated through "rules, regulations, law, and order" (Knill & Tosun 2008:1). In addition, Hu (2012) postulates that public policy has three different dimensions: the formal decisions made by government, the actions taken by government in the public sphere of people's lives, and the governing of social structures. Tumadóttir (2009) citing Barrett (2004:253) elucidates that "policy may thus be regarded as both a statement of intent by those seeking to change or control behaviour and a negotiated output emerging from the implementation process". Barrett further explains how the definition is tied to the success and failure of the implementation process, which means action, cannot be used to evaluate policy goals. Barrett's definition has been applied in this study, because the essence of the study is to examine the interplay between FPE policy and practice, requiring the consideration of action, which is practice.

### **2.2.1 Policy process and content**

According to Hallsworth, Parker and Rutter (2011) there is a gap between theory and practice in policy-making, which they attribute to the design of an unrealistic policy



models or failure to put policy into practice. Hence for clarity of understanding, this section of the study focuses on describing policy as a concept. The reason for this is to get to the gist of the relationship between policy and practice. It also highlights the scope and the definitions of policy by a few scholars. It further points out the definition that this study upholds. Dye (1995 in Babooa 2008) believes that it is unwise to conceptualise public policy distinctly, because it is subjective in meaning. Babooa therefore provides a myriad of definitions from different scholars and settles for Anderson's in Anderson (2000:4). Babooa sums up the definition of policy as "a relatively stable, purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or issue of concern". Babooa regards this definition as appropriate, because it differentiates between policy intent and action policy and recognises that policy does not consist of decisions but is related to decision-making. This definition suits the intentions of this study because the FPE policy represents the intent whereas practice is what is actually happening on the ground. This study wished to interrogate the actions, how they play out and their effects.

Policy implementation is a complex process, it is in light of this that the researcher appreciates Pacescila and Profiroiua (2006:151–152) explanation on how public policy is an interdisciplinary field that involves elements from: the economy, administrative sciences, management, theory of decision and so forth. It is on this premise that these authors classify public policy into the following categories: labels of activity, an expression of the general goal or desired state of affairs, specific proposals, decisions of government, official authorisation, programmes, products, results, theories or patterns and processes. This study embraces these categories because each of them exhibits a number of the traits of the FPE policy.

This view is articulated by Knill and Tosun (2008:1) who clarify that policies centred on FPE are mainly public policies hence they require long-term action and are intended to solve societal problems. According to Knill and Tosun public policies can be conceived as the main outputs of political systems.

Hu (2012) citing Jenkins (1978) concurs with Knill and Tosun's view that public policy is political action taken by actors with the intension of making interrelated decisions which are within the actors' powers. However, it is also important to note that public policy is not only motivated by political systems but also by social and economic factors (Knill & Tosun 2008), which are related to the interrelated decisions mentioned by Jenkins. This is confirmed by Subroto (2012:6), who lists the players that influence public policy as "government departments, pressure groups, the media and the public". This argument is further advanced by Bell and Stevenson (2009), who add that the socio-historical, cultural, economic and ideological dimensions of society also shape and contribute to public policy.

Ogola (2010) argues that the educational goals of any society are shaped by that particular society's social needs and culture. Ogola further emphasises that culture plays a pivotal role in shaping the provision of education and determining the extent to which educational goals are informed by educational policy. Ogola's explanation is significant to this study because it clarifies that the introduction of a new programme or policy requires a change both in mindset and in the way things are done.

It thus becomes clear that there needs to be a change in culture or practice. This implies that understanding the role of culture and its effects on the achievement of educational goals is critical. It is therefore imperative that culture should be considered when education policies are introduced to ensure that implementation is effective. Bell and

Stevenson (2009), on the other hand, believe that these dimensions are contextual and influenced by power relations. These authors see a relationship between leadership, policy and power, and state that "a failure to fully understand the complex ways in which policy shapes and is shaped by leadership fails adequately to explain the actions and practices of leaders at both the organizational and operational levels" (Bell & Stevenson 2009:9). On the same note Odura, Dachi and Fetig (2008) agree that culture plays a significant role in influencing the management style of leaders. These authors further mention that the environments under which education leaders, in particular school leaders, the principals, lead and make decisions is influenced by the culture. Odura et al (2008) also illuminate that Anglo-centric ideas will not necessarily transfer easily across borders because the context is different from that of developing countries. Odura et al (2008) present how in developed countries, principals are expected to be proactive when making decisions meanwhile the leadership styles in developing countries are subjected to bureaucratic centralised processes.

Curtain (2000) posits that good policy-making requires consulting the end users of the policy being formulated. He stresses that governments should seek wider stakeholder inputs at the policy formulation stage. Curtain explains how the separation between policy-making and delivery has created barriers to involving those who need to implement the policies. He stresses that good policy-making requires end users to be given ample opportunity to participate, and asserts that policy-makers also need to ensure inclusivity by putting in place policies that take full account of the needs and experiences of all those likely to be affected by them, whether they are individuals or groups, families, businesses or community organisations (Curtain 2000:36).

### **2.2.2 Policy players and processes**

There are numerous players in the policy decision-making process that do not form part of the leadership categories advanced by Bell and Stevenson (2009:9) for example media and interest groups. A case in point was that of the civilian pressure groups in Swaziland that forced the Swazi government to introduce FPE through litigation (Swaziland 2009a), although at the time no national policy or legal framework gave effect to the constitutional stipulation on FPE. It can be assumed that the international frameworks which the country is signatory to contributed to the inclusion of the section on FPE in the Constitution. In fact the MoET's FPE Plan of Action (Swaziland 2008b) does state that the FPE programme was informed by the Constitution and the MDGs.

Interestingly, Pacescila and Profiroiua (2006) see public policy as being divided into different levels and refer to policies that are influenced by international frameworks as international level policies. Some authors however, regard the internationalisation of policies as globalisation. Nishimuko (2007) is also of the view that public policy forms part of the international community and stresses that it is important for countries to participate in UPE (or FPE) as a global initiative. Arendse (2011) also views the provision of free basic education to be an international obligation citing sections 20(1) (a) and (b) of the South African Constitution. The South African Constitution states that everyone has a right to basic education, including basic adult education and further education. The South African Constitution further specifies that the state through reasonable measures must make these rights progressively available and accessible. Mokate (2014) supports this argument from a human rights perspective and believes that education opens doors for individuals to enjoy their human rights and utilise them to meaningfully contribute to society. These views are also supported by Krishnaratne, White and Carpenter (2013) who correctly understood that education is critical to economic and social development and

that access to education is a fundamental human right which is enshrined in the UN Declaration for Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). It should be noted, however, that Irfan (2008) postulates that the human rights discourse is mere rhetoric if it results only in policy formulation but undermines policy implementation.

On another note, Krishnaratne et al (2013) believe that education is a key factor in alleviating poverty, citing Millenium Development Goals 2 and 3, which focus on achieving UPE to alleviate poverty and eliminate gender disparities by 2015. Clearly these goals have not been fully achieved by developing countries (Irfan 2008; UN General Assembly 2015), as such they have been incorporated into the SDGs 2030 agenda (UN General Assembly 2015).

Consequently, since FPE policy is educational policy and education is a public good, as espoused by Irfan (2008) and Rose (2002), in some instances, such as in the provision of FPE it becomes public policy. In the same vein Kitamura (2009) argues that formulating education policy should be influenced by past policies and that in developing countries this approach can be a daunting one because the public sector capacity may not be fully developed. This according to Kitamura poses a problem, because education reform requires the evaluation of current policies to identify their strengths and weaknesses. It is through the evaluation process that education systems can be improved and issues regarding access, quality, relevance, efficiency and cost/finance can be addressed (Cummings 2005). It is worth noting that this same exercise was undertaken by the MoET in Swaziland in collaboration with the World Bank. The education system's strengths and weaknesses were identified and are reported in Marope's (2010) MoET sector analysis report. The report does not prescribe the introduction of FPE but it does report the

disparities that exist with regards to access to education; as well as the high repetition rates at the primary level; and the relevance, quality and efficiency of the system. However, Tarus, Gichoya and Muumbo (2015) note that issues of access, quality and relevance, efficiency and cost/efficiency are the ones which developing countries find challenging to implement, especially as far as education policies are concerned. This is because translating these issues into education policies is a daunting task because it requires an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of existing policies. Failure to obtain information on current policies, results in policy-makers not being able to apply the above factors systematically and comprehensively.

Referring to policy regarding resource allocation, teaching and learning practices in developing countries, Knight, Lietz, Nugroho and Tobin (2012) describe how evidence-based policy-making in developing countries is a challenge due to technical and other factors such as: "Academic and media freedom, the role of civil society, the stability and openness to political systems as important elements of gathering evidence based information which is then evaluated and communicated to influence policy" (Tobin 2012:14). Kitamura (2009:2) asserts that education reform in these countries is constructed through objectives which are translated into educational policy and that the goals of such policy focus on human rights, economic growth and social integration. Kitamura (2009) further asserts that educational policy should not be determined by only one of these objectives but by all three because together they produce a powerful tool.

Knight, Lietz, Nugroho and Tobin (2012) support the above assertion and stipulate that this has resulted in an increase in countries participating in international assessments. Knight et al. (2012) believe that the reason for the increase is that assessments are linked to human capital development and economic growth. In addition to this, the world polity

and the dominance of human rights as an internationally recognised value has also contributed to this, since access to quality education is regarded by many as a human right. This argument is further advanced by Lietz and Tobin (2014), who remark that the assessment tests described by Knight et al (2012) are mostly used to evaluate the quality of education over time, and less for assessing equity programmes targeted at disadvantaged groups, as in the case of FPE. Lietz and Tobin (2014) add that these assessments are also used to examine the effects of pre-specified policies, and that this data is mostly used at the goal-setting, implementation and evaluation stages of the policy cycle, instead of during the policy formulation stage. Nonetheless the authors note that whenever assessment tests are utilised during policy-making, it is usually at the agenda-setting, implementation and evaluation stages (Lietz & Tobin 2014). The authors note that tests are mostly used to inform policies geared at improving the quality of teachers through in-service training, the teaching materials used in schools, the identification and funding of the required resources, curriculum standards and reform, as well as performance standards and assessment. Kitamura (2009) as well as Lietz and Tobin (2014) agree that developing countries face challenges such as financial constraints and low technical capacity in the application and analysis of the assessments, hence the tests are unable to influence policy. Factors such as "the effectiveness of the education system, political sensitivities and conflict, the strengths of civil society and public discourse play a critical role in facilitating or impeding" the use of assessment programmes to inform policy" (Lietz & Tobin 2014:13).

Today the world is described as a "global village" therefore countries must ensure that they align their education policies with those prescribed by the international community in order to be globally competitive (Al' Abri 2011). Al' Abri also points out how globalisation has brought a myriad of challenges to developing countries in the economic,

social and cultural spheres. Consequently, developing countries often cannot keep up with the global education agenda. Lietz and Tobin (2014) indicate that developing countries face different challenges but that each has an impact on issues such as resources. The authors cite poverty and HIV and AIDS as challenges faced by Southern Africa.

Irfan (2008) supports the views expressed by Lietz and Tobin (2014) and points out, that developing countries are at different levels of economic development and income, therefore their commitment to education differs. Irfan (2008) indicates that other factors related to expenditure and efficiency is also at play in the different countries. The failure of low-income countries to realise the benefits of education and growth can be attributed to their weak education systems, macro-economic instability, market failure and social unrest (Irfan 2008).

To gain a better understanding of this failure, the researcher turns to Al' Abri (2011), who notes that developing countries find themselves compelled to implement international policies irrespective of whether it is suitable for their environments because they are compelled to comply with conditions set by international organisations that provide them with financial assistance. Although Al' Abri does not discuss the merits and demerits of this, he states that international organisations disregard the objections of developing countries and instead cite corruption, poor governance, unaccountability, secrecy, poor policy-making and disregard for the rule of law as the reasons behind the failure of developing countries to yield positive results from education. Unfortunately according to the Marope (2010) report, the Swazi education system seems to show the same characteristics as those described by Irfan (2008) and Al' Abri (2011).

According to Mokate (2014), education is not merely a tool but an empowerment tool which opens doors for people to escape from the poverty trap and facilitates development



as it promotes human rights, economic growth and social integration. Irfan (2008) emphasis on education as a basic human right and implies that it is vital for creating a just global community which will significantly promote prosperity, opportunities, and a healthier lifestyle (see Mokate 2014). The importance of these three factors is also referred to in the MoET's EDSEC (2011b) Sector Policy.

Prior to the formulation of the MoET's EDSEC policy (2011b), no education policy existed in Swaziland. There was only the Ministry of Education National Policy Statement on Education of 1999, the National Development Plans and other documents that informed education in small pockets. An evaluation of these documents was undertaken when the education sector analysis was performed by the World Bank in 2010. This evaluation was problematic, however, as the methodology used was not clearly spelt out; instead different types of frameworks that were in line with whatever is being reported on, were highlighted. However, these frameworks exhibited all the components identified by Irfan (2008) as necessary to a framework used for evaluating an education system. These components are human capital, the human rights perspective, and the human capability approach. It can therefore be noted with confidence that the evaluation process that informed the MoET Education Sector Policy was properly conducted. In view of the above, Kitamura (2009:4) states that "it is generally accepted that the education policy making process is comprised of three main tasks: analyzing of importance and objectives, data analysis and estimation, and prediction". Pacescila and Profiroiua (2006) provide an interesting dimension by noting that a policy can be evaluated by viewing its results against its declared goals, based on what is effectively achieved after the policy has been implemented. This approach provides the study with additional insights, because it looks at the interplay between policy and practice, which this study is concerned with in regard to the implementation and sustainability of FPE. Common to the writings of Buchert

(1998), Cummings (2005) and Kitamura (2009) are issues of feasibility, affordability and desirability being central to FPE.

Subroto (2012), however, considers the use of cycle models in policy-making, and notes that several policy cycles exist. It should be noted that the feasibility of policy cycles is the subject of much debate, the argument being that, in the "real world decision-making usually does not follow this sequence of discrete stages" (Jann & Wegrich in Fischer, Miller & Sidney 2007:43). Nevertheless, Fischer et al posit that "the stages perspective still counts as an ideal-type of rational planning and decision-making". It is in view of this that the researcher chose to consider the stages in this study based on Subroto's (2012) perspective. Bell and Stevenson (2009) note that as these stages unfold, they occur simultaneously and are ongoing. In light of this, Subroto (2012) explains that policy-making happens in stages and involves many actors and components. Accordingly no process occurs in a vacuum, but instead multiple interactions occur between the actors and components. Some of the stages highlighted by Subroto (2012:2) include those drawn from the May and Wildavsky (1978) policy cycle, which lists the stages as follows: (1) agenda-setting, (2) issue analysis, (3) implementation, (4) evaluation, and (5) termination.

Brewer and DeLeon (1983), on the other hand, define the policy-making process as consisting of (1) initiation, (2) estimation, (3) selection, (4) implementation, (5) evaluation, and (6) termination. Policy cycles emanate from the work of Harold Lasswell (1948; 1956; 2009) as underpinned by DeLeon and Weible (2010). According to DeLeon and Weible, Lasswell's work was refined by Brewer (1994), Brewer and DeLeon (1983), May and Wildavsky (1978) and DeLeon (1988). However, DeLeon and Weible's paper focuses on the stream of research evolving from Lasswell's work, which is outside the scope of this study, because it focusses more on explaining the importance of democracy.

This study adopts May and Wildavsky's model, as Jann and Wegrich in Fischer et al (2007:43) postulate how "today, the differentiation between agenda-setting, policy formulation, decision making, implementation, and evaluation has become the conventional way to describe the chronology of a policy process".

Interestingly, Haddad and Demsky (1995) argue that education planning is linked to policy-making. They illustrate this in their study on *Education policy-planning process: an applied framework*, and explain that once an evaluation has been undertaken, the concrete aspect of the policy-making process kicks in, because a schedule has to be drawn up of the players in the policy-planning stage. They emphasise how important it is to engage stakeholders at the planning stage, because failure to do so leads to implementation failure. Mokate (2014) supports this view and posits that the effectiveness of any policy is determined by the extent of public participation in problem identification, policy formulation and implementation. It thus becomes reasonable to agree with Haddad and Demsky (1995) that policy-making is the first step in the policy cycle, followed by policy implementation and evaluation. They note that policy formulation is dynamic, meaning that when policy is formulated, the scope of the policy matters – policies differ in scope depending on what their key objectives are. Some policies are short-term in nature and require day-to-day management, and others are more complex and long-term in nature.

From a slightly different perspective, Subroto (2012) emphasises the complexities of policy-making, and how it is not a simple matter of following a policy cycle, as highlighted earlier, but encompasses many things, such as failure to appreciate that it cannot follow a linear progression due to its complex nature. This results in some steps in the policy-making process being skipped or compressed, and the idiosyncrasies, interests,

pre-set dispositions, policy paradigms or mental maps of the actors involved often usurping the sense of smooth progression. This is due to policy-makers tending to overlook the role of stakeholders and even the stages of policy development. “It should therefore be noted that in the policy-making process a multitude of different processes occur on different scales and at different speeds in a simultaneous pattern” (Subroto 2012:3).

The above insights are of great importance, because they pave the way to analysing the processes that have been applied in the FPE policy-making process in different countries. This is especially the case because the FPE agenda has been encompassed in the EFA agenda: as highlighted in the UNESCO (2015) Global Monitoring Report, the achievement of universal primary education is an important indicator of EFA, even though it represents only part of the global ambitions regarding education. This being the case, it is worth considering some of the EFA strategies that have been clearly specified to meet the goals. They include but are not limited to ensuring the participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of educational development; showing national and international political commitment to EFA by putting in place action plans and investing in them; developing responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management; enhancing the status, morale and professionalism of teachers; and systematically monitoring progress towards EFA goals and strategies at national, regional and international level (UNESCO 2015).

Ahmad, Rauf, Imdadulla and Zeb (2012) provide fascinating insights into how education policies in Pakistan have failed because of corruption; lack of adequate financial resources; lack of trained personnel; non-engagement of policy implementers at policy formulation, evaluation and implementation levels; poor monitoring; poor policy

evaluation; institutional decay; teacher absenteeism; non-visionary leadership; centralisation; political instability; and lack of institutional discipline. This has resulted in the overall Pakistan education system ranking amongst the lowest in the region. This state of affairs has not only affected the Pakistan education system but has also had serious repercussions for other areas of national life. Most of the cited challenges in Pakistan are among those already mentioned as forming part of the policy dilemma faced by developing countries and resulting in the intended policy goals being unfulfilled.

The complexity of policy-making is also echoed by Edward (2001), who explains that policy environments are complex because they involve a number of players who come from different perspectives, and this causes unexpected events to occur. Thus, new policies are formulated in an environment of dense existing policies, which complicates the adoption and implementation of new policies (Jann & Wegrich in Fischer et al 2007). This is vital in the context of the implementation of FPE in Swaziland, because it constitutes a paradigm shift to accommodate the demands of the new policy.

Despite these complexities related to policy cycles, it is important to note that policy cycles play an important role in policy formulation. Nevertheless, other models developed after Lasswell's have some commonality in relation to the five stages of the policy cycle, namely; agenda setting, policy formulation, decision making, policy implementation and policy evaluation, and are applicable to problem-solving. Of concern and interest to this study is the illustration of a policy cycle below which illuminates pertinent stages of the policy cycle that are relevant to this study. The policy cycle displayed below will assist the researcher to link the corresponding relationships it displays. It will also be useful in respect to data collection and analysis.

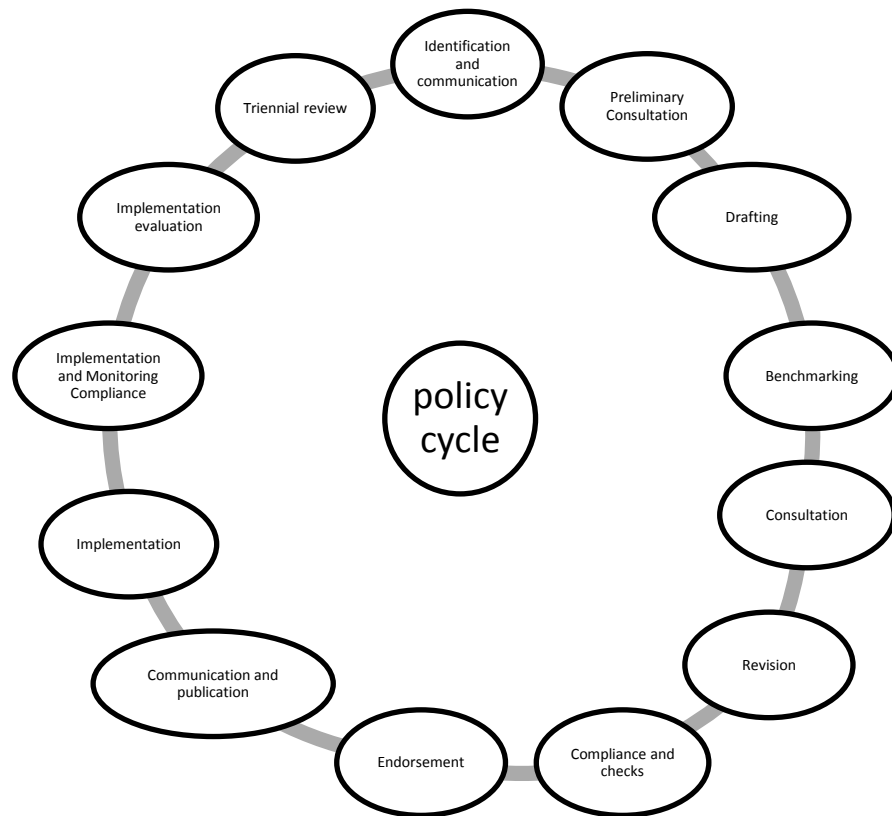


Figure 2.1: Elongated Policy Cycle Extracted from Freeman (2013:5)

Freeman's (2013) policy cycle above, is an elongated cycle which has become a traditional policy cycle and has five stages of policy making (see Fischer et al. 2007; Subroto 2012 & Cerna 2013). The elongated policy cycle has additional stages in addition to those in the five stages of policy making. The wording of some of the five stages of policy making in the elongated policy cycle are presented differently but they refer to the same tasks. For instance, agenda setting which is the first stage in the five stages of policy making is presented as identification and confirmation of policy requirements in the elongated policy cycle. Freeman (2013) confirms the similarities and aligns it with Lasswell work. Meanwhile, Subroto (2012) elaborated that Lasswell was the initiator of policy cycles. Freeman likewise further aligns this stage to the writings of Sabatier and Jenkins- Smith of 1993. The preliminary consultation stage in the elongated policy cycle is similar to the policy formulation in the five stages of policy making cycles which

advocates for stakeholder consultation. This too has already been highlighted as a notion that Mokate (2014) supports.

It is thus worthy of note that the elongated policy cycle emphasises on the importance of consultation and considers it a key element of policy implementation. Freeman further outlines the characteristics of the stakeholders that participate in the policy making process. The characteristics include and are not limited to: values, beliefs, interests, limited understanding of the environment they operate, reliance on heuristic interpretations, simplicities and responses to the environment stimuli, emotions, trust, reasoning and the making of behavioural decisions. Freeman draws these characteristics from Weible's (2012) work. The characteristics that Freeman outlines are of significant importance to this study because they give insight of the possible characteristics participants may possibly exhibit.

The elongated policy cycle also has decision making which are reflected in the endorsements and approval stages. This policy cycle also has the implementation stage and notably places a lot of attention and emphasis on it. This is exhibited by the subsequent stages after the implementation stage. These stages support and strengthen the implementation process. These subsequent stages are implementation and compliance monitoring, as well as implementation evaluation. Including and spelling them out in the policy cycle affords them the recognition and attention that they deserve. It also provides direction since the implementation tasks are stipulated and known by all that are involved in the policy implementation process. This aspect is of vital importance because it promotes accountability, transparency and sound education management strategies. It also informs this study because it focuses on the implementation of the policy under study and has an interest on the way the policy is implemented against what is practically happening.

Different scholars and writers have provided insight into how educational policies in different countries have been formulated. Oketch and Rolleston (2007) are among the many writers that have done so with regard to research they conducted in three East African countries, namely Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya. Their research was a review of the literature on policies related to free primary and secondary education in East Africa. They stipulate that the goals of these countries and those of the broader international community are equity and the enrolment of children who have been excluded from participating in or accessing education. The research explains how the introduction of FPE has always been the goal of these countries since they attained independence but that it was put on hold because of financial constraints.

Instead of introducing FPE, these countries focused on secondary and higher education, because there was a need for primary school graduates to progress to subsequent education levels. However, due to a call for UPE in the 1990s and the effects of multi-party politics in these countries, they braved the challenges of the past and embraced the EFA agenda by introducing FPE. In an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of former challenges, especially as it concerned the introduction of FPE, Oketch and Rolleston engaged in research. Their study sought to address the following questions in relation to earlier attempts to introduce UPE: What led to those policies and how were they funded? What was the role, if any, of the international community in the formulation of those policies? What were the politics and philosophies surrounding the formulation of those policies? Have the policies changed over time, and if so, how and why?

In response to these questions, the need for manpower to push the development agenda emerged as a key finding of the study. This finding does not in any way differ from that experienced in many African countries. For example, in Nigeria the need for manpower



development was seen as crucial, which accounts chiefly for the recommendations of the Ashby Commission set up by the federal government of Nigeria in 1959 to conduct an investigation into the country's needs in the field of education at all levels (Aina 2005). The quest for manpower development was also fundamental in the pursuit of Universal Basic Education (UBE), which is similar to FPE but also includes the grades at junior secondary school. In Swaziland basic education is a ten-year programme which consists of seven years of primary education and three years of junior secondary education (Swaziland 2011b). Arendse (2011:101) writes that, "the primary international law instruments prioritize basic education above other levels of education by requiring state parties to make it compulsory and free". This is also confirmed by the Swaziland EFA Progress Country Report 2000–2015 (UNESCO, UNICEF & MoET 2015).

Since independence in Nigeria, in 1960 "most of the planners and policy makers have perceived their greatest problem as that of inadequate manpower both in quantitative and qualitative terms" (Aina 2005:72). In order to fully equip individuals as a way of developing manpower, the federal government of Nigeria launched the UPE scheme in September, 1976. Although this scheme was embraced in many quarters, it was abandoned midway. In November 1999, however, the administration under the leadership of President Olusegun Obasanjo launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme in Sokoto (a state in Northern Nigeria). The relaunch of a programme similar to UPE by the federal government indicated that the scheme was regarded as desirable.

In East Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya jointly embarked on a mission to make education a priority in their development agenda. Each country had the same goals as its neighbouring states, thus in the 1960s they formed an alliance referred to as the East African Community and agreed on an education framework (Oketch & Rolleston 2007).

With time the alliance dissolved, however, due to differing political philosophies: Tanzania and Uganda opted for socialism and Kenya adopted capitalism. Oketch and Rolleston (2007) report that all three countries subsequently pursued individual education agendas based on the alliance framework they had established. The focus at first was on the expansion of secondary and tertiary education. But, because many Africans had been excluded from primary education due to practical and political reasons during the colonial era, this also brought about challenges. The reasons are explained as follows by Oketch and Rolleston (2007:4):

In practical terms, the rural subsistence economy may have not required people to be well educated. In political terms, an educated population may not have served the interests of the colonial system. Many who managed to gain entry to primary education could not continue beyond four years of education because of the Standard IV examination process. Access to secondary education was extremely limited and those who managed to reach it often regarded themselves to be elite Africans. The need to expand access to primary education was therefore identified, and goals regarding access to primary education were embraced by all three countries, even though policy had initially focused on the expansion of secondary school. Kimani (2012), reports that the first policy adopted by all three countries was to counter the abolition of the racially segregated school system which had existed during the colonial era. This, however, resulted in only the children of the elite being able to access school and the rest being unable to do so. The intended goal was somehow not achieved because of the payment of school fees, which was a barrier. Other policies which were introduced by these three countries were the introduction of the uniform system and the abolition of the primary school external examination. The implementation of the latter policy occurred at different times in each of these countries. The countries subsequently experienced tremendous growth in primary education. It is

worth noting that initially policy focused on the expansion of secondary education. However, this expansion declined in the 1980s because of economic challenges that these countries were faced with. Tanzania and Kenya implemented structural adjustment programmes and Uganda was experiencing political upheavals (Chuck 2009; Kitamura 2009; Kimani 2012).

Muyanga, Olwande, Mueni, and Wambugu (2008) write that in Kenya FPE was introduced in the 1970s, but because of the structural adjustment programme which was introduced in 1988, the FPE programme ceased to exist and a cost-sharing system between parents and government was introduced. This resulted in a decline in the gross enrolment ratio (GER). Chuck (2009) explains how structural adjustments by the World Bank and the IMF in the 1980s and 1990s led to Kenyan families sharing the cost of education with government. Chuck (2009) stresses that although FPE had been the country's ultimate goal since independence; it was only in 2003 that Kenya was enabled to introduce it effectively.

Swaziland was advised by the IMF to introduce structural adjustment policies to ease the budget burden government was carrying (Swaziland 2009/2010 Budget Speech). The literature on the implementation of FPE in other countries is important, because it illustrates a historic background similar to that of Swaziland, especially in respect of Swaziland having had the same aspirations when she gained her independence in 1968. Despite having had these aspirations, however, Swaziland had not been able to realise her independence dream. And this dream would still have been only a dream – in other words there would have been no FPE – had it not been for her international obligation. Abuya, Admassu, Ngware, Onsomu and Oketch (2015) report that countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have wanted to provide universal and FPE since independence, that is for the past

approximately forty years, but the road has been fraught with difficulties. Abuya et al (2015) reveal that, since the adoption of the UPE agenda and the MDGs, there has been an accelerated effort by most countries. This was especially true for the period between 1990 and 2000. FPE only became a reality in Swaziland in 2010, however, further strengthening the view that had it not been for the newly achieved independence, the action of civil society and the international obligation, FPE would in all probability not have been adopted in Swaziland.

### **2.3 Implementation of free primary education**

Paudel (2009) defines implementation as doing, achieving, fulfilling or completing a task. Burke, Morris and McGarrigle (2012) see it as the delivery of any plans or actions, be they policies, practices, programmes or service. More recent studies, for example Abuya et al (2015), suggest that there can never be implementation without action, and that implementation is judged against the set goals of what is being implemented. In the context of this study, the goal would be the delivery and application of FPE policies. The big question that then arises is what the set goals of FPE in Swaziland are. According to the MoET's EDSEC policy (Swaziland 2011b), the basic objective at the primary school level is to expand participation and to ensure that all children, irrespective of their socio-economic background, have access to quality education. It was to fulfil this objective that the MOET introduced FPE as well as the supply of free textbooks to all learners and schools.

The Ministry also provides infrastructure, facilities, furniture and equipment in a bid to achieve the FPE objective (Swaziland 2013). In an effort to provide education to all children, the Ministry aligned itself with global, regional and national policies. One such international initiative is EFA (Swaziland 2011b). It is important to note that this initiative

is not only being undertaken in Swaziland. Well before Swaziland embarked on it, other countries had also attempted to do so and were faced with implementation challenges. This is corroborated by Nishimura, Ogawa, Sifuna, Chimombo, Kunje, Ampiah, Byamugisha, Sawamura, and Shoko (2009), who conducted a comparative analysis of four countries – Ghana, Kenya, Uganda and Malawi. Their study indicate that many African countries attempted to introduce FPE after independence but were unable to maintain it because of supply-driven policies, ineffective implementation mechanisms, a decline in the quality of education, and political and economic crises.

It is evident from the experiences of these countries that the implementation process requires proper planning and sound strategies. Nigeria also faced the same fate when she introduced FPE after independence (see Csapo 1983 in Kenya 2008). According to Csapo (1983), Nigeria's failure to implement FPE is popularly referred to as "unfulfilled promise education". Csapo shows how education of this nature was a common political phenomenon in newly independent states, based on a similar study conducted by Islam and Rahman (2008). The Bangladesh education agenda was used as a case study when this research was undertaken. Islam and Rahman (2008), note that since 1974, despite putting several commission-backed five-year plans in place, Bangladesh has failed to successfully implement the FPE policy because of a lack of political will and financial capacity. The Bangladesh case therefore shows that FPE implementation challenges are not unique to Africa, but are a common phenomenon in developing countries. This study suggests that the successful implementation of FPE requires political will and the availability of funds. In a study conducted by Abuya et al (2015:4) the speculation is that:

if the teachers were more involved in setting the agenda, planning, and evaluation, to give feedback to the system, the effect of the challenges that reduced the impact of FPE would have been minimized. Moreover, with such a

declaration, what was missed was how teachers receive and translate broad policy, and curricula goals, into meaningful experiences and how these broad goals get passed to the teachers so that they can be key actors in the teaching and learning process.

Abuya et al (2015) postulate further that teachers are key players in the teaching and learning process but that, because there is a disconnection between policy-making and implementation, it becomes a challenge for teachers to translate policy objectives to practice. "Scholars of public policy see those charged with implementation to be at the center of the policy-making process" (Abuya 2015:4).

Nishimuko (2007), reports that Sierra Leone introduced EFA and FPE in 2000. To ensure that this initiative succeeded, government attempted to remove barriers related to access to education by providing teaching and learning materials, paying tuition fees, and enforcing legislation that ensured parents and guardians sent children to school. (Failure to do so resulted a fine of Le 500 000 – the equivalent of £10 000, imprisonment or both.) Despite this Nishimuko (2007) notes that the implementation of FPE seems to be beset by a myriad of challenges and is a daunting exercise, because even in cases where there is political commitment as in that of Sierra Leone, challenges continue to prevail. Nishimuko provides a clear picture of the situation in Sierra Leone by sketching its socio-political and economic status. It was against this backdrop that implementation challenges were experienced in this country, despite government's commitment to the EFA and FPE agenda.

Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries in the world and experienced 11 years of civil war. Nishimuko (2007) explains how, in a bid to build the nation and the education sector after the civil war, education was prioritised. The Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2000–2015 (UNESCO 2015) points out that Sierra Leone is one of the countries that have

shown a strong commitment to universalising education. Included in the list of such countries are Burundi, Ethiopia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania. The GMR further notes that Nepal, Rwanda and Sierra Leone have risen from conflict situations to improve their education systems (UNESCO 2015).

The situation in Sierra Leone is very similar to that in Swaziland, where 63% of the population live below the poverty line of \$1 per day (Swaziland MDG report, 2012). Half the budget towards universal education in Sierra Leone was donor funded. Meanwhile in Swaziland the Grade 1 fees for FPE were paid for by the European Union until the end of 2015. In Swaziland donor contribution towards this initiative was not as large as it is reported to have been in Sierra Leone; in fact, since FPE was introduced in Swaziland, the government budget for education has been enlarged incrementally as the FPE programme has been progressively introduced by grade levels. In the 2012/2013 fiscal year it increased by over E68 million to E2,1 billion (Swaziland 2012:23). The Minister of Finance in his budget speech for the 2012/2013 fiscal year expressed government's commitment towards FPE as follows:

Mr. Speaker, through the Constitution, the country is committed to make primary education free for all Swazi children. Primary education exhibits some of the greatest social returns on investment, with positive effects on health, fertility rates and child mortality. That is why, the Government will continue to roll-out state-funded primary education for Grade IV and the first quarter of Grade V in 2013 at a cost of over E80 million. Total grants to schools will increase to nearly E100 million. From this year 2012/ 2013, the EU will take over school fees for Grade 1 students.

In the fiscal year 2013/2014 the Ministry of Finance (MOF) increased the MoET budget by E150 million. The minister once again reiterated government's commitment to FPE, and declared that "Government will continue to roll-out state-funded primary education

for Grade V and the first quarter of Grade VI in 2014 at a cost of over E100 million" (Swaziland 2013:24). In the 2015/2016 fiscal year, the minister reiterated his commitment to FPE by announcing that an additional E52 million had been allocated to implement FPE to Grade 7 (Swaziland 2015:11). Richards's (2011) thesis supports the minister's claim, stating that Swaziland spends 20% on education, which is above the global mark. Importantly, the budget was increased in real terms to accommodate the progression of the FPE programme.

A donor initiative other than the payment of school fees for Grade 1 by the EU has been the provision of classroom furniture by UNICEF (Swaziland 2014). Despite the political will shown by the GoS, the FPE programme has been faced with challenges, the biggest of which has been the charging of top-up fees by schools. This resulted in the Head of State, King Mswati III, intervening and instructing schools to do away with top-fees when he opened parliament for the 2014/2015 session, as reported by Teetee Zwane in the *Swazi Observer*, a local daily newspaper, on the 23rd of February, 2014.

The meeting of governments in Jomtien, Thailand, the adoption of the EFA agenda in 1990, and the UPE Dakar framework of 2000 remain the propellers and frameworks for FPE globally. Since their adoption, some countries have attempted to introduce FPE to fulfil the EFA agenda (Swaziland 2006). The frameworks were further endorsed by the MDGs of 2000, which advocated for universal primary education by 2015 (see MoET FPE Action Plan 2009). Nambulirwa (2010:11), in a study on the implementation of UPE in Uganda, unpacks the EFA goals as follows:

Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Ensuring that all children particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to and complete free and



compulsory education of good quality. Ensuring that learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.

Nambalirwa (2010) stresses the significance of these goals and states that they can only be achieved through proper planning and organisation. Countries' attempts to meet the deadline of 2015 placed them in a precarious position, because they attempted to implement these frameworks without proper planning. A case in point is reported by Lekhetho (2013), in a study on the impact of FPE on the access to and quality of primary education in Lesotho. Lekhetho indicates that Lesotho introduced FPE to meet its commitment in international forums by ratifying agreements such as the EFA framework of 1990, the SADC protocol, the 2000 Dakar framework, and the 2000 MDGs. Lekhetho's argument suggests that Lesotho was actually not ready for FPE when it was introduced. Interestingly Lesotho's constitution, like that of Swaziland, contains a clause stipulating the introduction of FPE. In the Lesotho constitution, the section reads as follows: "primary education is free and available to all" (Chapter III, section 28) (Lekhetho 2013).

Lesotho's FPE Act was also enacted in 2010, well after the introduction of FPE in 2000, as had been the case in Swaziland, even though in Swaziland it was within the same year, some months after the programme was introduced. Lekhetho (2013) questions the long period that elapsed between policy development and policy implementation in Lesotho, and the credibility of challenging parents who do not comply with the compulsory aspects of the Act. Morojele (2012:37) further discusses what the objectives of FPE in Lesotho are as articulated in Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training (2000) policy, namely "to make basic education accessible to all pupils; to make education equitable to eliminate inequalities; and ensure that every Mosotho child completes the primary cycle of education notwithstanding that education is affordable to the majority of the Basotho". It

further asserts that the implementations of the aforementioned international frameworks are end objectives, because countries are expected to ensure the frameworks' goals are achieved.

Fulfilling the objective of making basic education accessible to every child seems to be a general challenge. Lesotho is a case in point: Morojele (2012) reports that many of the children enrolled at the primary level do not graduate, which indicates a high dropout rate. This is further confirmed by the UNESCO (2013) EFA Global Monitoring Report which discloses that the EFA policy objectives in terms of access are being fulfilled. This is then defeated by the poor retention of learners, however. In addition, the UNESCO (2013) EFA Monitoring Report reveals that other interventions would be needed if UPE is to be achieved. For instance, there is a need for policies that would tackle issues of retention, and that would address the direct and indirect costs of education for learners. This suggests that FPE policies that have been implemented in many countries, for example Lesotho, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Nigeria, and Bangladesh, still do not address access issues in respect of the cost of education.

#### **2.4 Impact of free primary education**

The introduction of FPE has had different impacts in the countries under review, but one impact that has been common to all, has been an increase in enrolment rates. Muyanga et al (2008:3) report that in Kenya after the introduction of FPE, the gross enrolment rate rose from 92% in 2002 to 104% in 2003. Lekhetho (2013) also describes how the introduction of FPE in Lesotho in 2000 increased the net enrolment ratio (NER) from 69% in 2000 to 84% in 2006. Similarly, Aluede (2006) reports that when UPE was introduced in Nigeria in 1976, the enrolment rate exploded, which resulted in demands for more schools and teachers. In response to these demands, shabby schools and untrained teachers

were utilised, which compromised the quality of education. Aluede (2006) attributes this to poor planning, and laments the fact that the Nigerian government seems not to have learnt from this mistake, because the same mistake was repeated when the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme was introduced in 2000 in Cross River State, Nigeria.

In their study Etuk, Ering and Ajake (2012) declare that using untrained teachers is futile, because it produces unskilled graduates who, in turn, do not benefit the country economically. Etuk et al (2012) note further that the UBE goals are not being achieved, because many children are out of school and engaged in child labour due to poverty. This exacerbates poverty in Nigeria, because such children miss out on opportunities to experience upward mobility. These authors further condemn the high levels of corruption common in government offices. According to them, this thwarts the entire effort of UBE, because funds meant for the programme are being embezzled. The EFA GMR 2000–2015 confirms this and reveals that Nigeria has shown little progress in respect of any of the education indicators, despite the fact that its gross national product (GNP) has grown substantially. Nishimuko (2007) and Ogola (2010) report similar findings for Sierra Leone and Kenya respectively. Based on the above, it can be concluded that the introduction of FPE has had a negative effect on the quality of education in a number of different countries.

Muyanga et al (2008) explain how in Kenya an increase in the enrolment rate led to challenges including shortages of equipment and resources (for example desks and chairs) as well as of trained teachers and facilities such as classrooms, resulting in overcrowding and some learners having to take classes under trees. Muyanga et al (2008) are puzzled by this state of affairs in relation to the poor quality of education that is being offered, and thus question the sustainability of the FPE programme.

The introduction of FPE has also had an impact on the standard of education, which has dropped. This has been a concern in many education quarters, and has resulted in a number of scholars including this aspect in their research. Nishimura and Yamano (2008) report that some experts believe that FPE has reduced the quality of education, and that this has resulted in some learners transferring from public schools to private schools. In the same vein, Sawamura and Sifuna (2008) note that governments tend to focus on quantity and overlook the effects on quality. Despite this aspect being acknowledged in policy documents, little has been done to correct it. They argue that this is attributable to governments politicising education, which has resulted in FPE being introduced under budgetary constraints. They further illustrate how this has become a common feature in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Apart from budgetary constraints, Abuya et al (2015) and Sawamura and Sifuna (2008) are of the opinion that the top-down approach used by the Kenyan government and perhaps elsewhere has contributed to the decline in the quality of education and resulted in non-responsiveness to teachers' concerns. For instance, when teachers in Kenya tried to voice their concerns about the declining quality of education to government officials, they were disregarded. Education Quality and Improvement Programme 2 (EQUIP 2 2007) concurs, and gives examples of countries such as India, Ghana, Zambia and Malawi as having had similar experiences. Kenya (2008) explains some of the causes for the decline as being a shortage of learning and teaching materials, hiring unqualified teachers, provision of extra tuition by teachers to generate extra income (leading to a conflict of interest that compromises their teaching within the classroom), lack of motivation, and disciplinary problems which emanate from the inability of teachers to manage the large classes.

CREATE (2010:6) refer to the effects of FPE on the quality of education as the "enrolment shock on the quality of learning and teaching", based on their research at two of the 14 schools that were part of their research entitled "Free primary education and after in Kenya: enrolment impact, quality effects, and the transition to secondary school". The major feature of these two schools was that they had the greatest Grade 1 intake when FPE was introduced in Kenya. Another important feature of the two schools was that the learners came from the poorest communities of slum dwellers. CREATE (2010) describe how the surge in enrolment at these schools placed intensive pressure on resources. "Desks, textbooks and other essential materials were all in critically short supply" (CREATE 2010:13).

Richards (2011) notes, in addition to the above indicators of poor quality education, that repetition, dropouts, poor performance outcomes, low hours of instruction, shortages of instructional materials and teacher-centred pedagogies all contribute to poor quality education. Richards also emphasises that the poor education outcomes and high repetition rates actually make education unattractive to learners and result in them dropping out of school. Another quality factor pointed out by Richards is the language of instruction and the curriculum, which in developing countries tend to adhere to that of the colonial education system and language of instruction.

In a nutshell, the issue of quality education in the light of FPE is a challenge that needs to be addressed, as it tends to impact children from low socio-economic backgrounds who have no other alternatives. Meanwhile children from better socio-economic backgrounds enrol in private schools as the next best alternative (Tomaševski 2006).

Conversely, Nakabugo (2008) views the poor quality education as being caused by factors other than overcrowding, and shows how the quality of education varies from country to country. She believes that quality education is influenced by many factors which are prevalent in the environment of a particular country at a particular time. She gives examples of some of these factors as being unstable economies, which leads to the quality of education varying as well; and countries being ravaged by wars and conflict, which has a negative effect on education. Nakabugo therefore comes to the conclusion that overcrowding is only one such factor. Nakabugo (2008:118) purports that “simply reducing the number of students in a class does not in itself improve the quality of instruction in the same way as increasing class size does not necessarily lead to poor education.”

Contrary to Nakabugo’s claim, Muthusamy (2015) conducted a study in a mainstream school in Durban in South Africa. The study was on teachers’ experiences with overcrowded classrooms. Muthusamy bemoans the teaching in overcrowded classrooms and argues that teachers who teach in such classrooms face a myriad of challenges that include; lack of physical space for movement around the classroom, limited learner participation, lack of direct interaction with the learners on an individual basis and learners’ learning opportunities and experiences are compromised. Meanwhile, Qiong and Ning 2011 have a twofold view on teaching overcrowded classrooms. One of each of these views concurs with Muthusamy (2015) and the other with Nakabugo (2010). Qiang and Ning categorically state that there is no consensus when it comes to effects of classroom size on children’s learning and achievement. These authors mention that English teachers in China have a negative view on teaching large classes. The teachers’ views that Qiang and Ning list are similar to those listed by Muthusamy, such as, physical constraints, inability to control the class, having difficulties in organising effective

classroom activities, lack of individual learner's attention, difficulties in evaluating the learners' activities, learners' differences are ignored, learning and discipline problems, Muthusamy (2015). On the other hand Qiang and Ning like Nakabugo are also of the view that there are other factors that contribute to challenges of teaching large classrooms, such as lack of quality teachers and resources. These authors citing other Chinese scholars reveal that there are advantages of teaching large classes. Qiang and Ning gleaning on research undertaken by Zhicang (2001) divulge that this makes students to bring new ideas, opinions and possibilities. Qiang and Ning (2011: 3) further borrow from the writings of Li and Jiana (2009), who postulate that large classes "can provide more opportunities for co-student interactions that foster an atmosphere of cooperation and encourage creativity and innovation". Hanushek (2003) confirms that more than class size, it is the quality of the teacher that matters, and stresses the need to boost teachers' confidence.

In a study conducted by Abuya and Ngware (2016) in Kenya, teachers identified the greatest challenge they found themselves faced with under FPE as being the manner in which quality assurance officers conducted their quality checks on the implementation of the curriculum. The teachers indicated that it pained them that these officers did not take the time to talk to them and determine what their challenges were. The teachers felt that, instead of these officers addressing their challenges, they came with predetermined notions of finding fault. Another challenge the teachers highlighted was the overcrowding in classrooms: they felt this compromised their teaching because they were unable to interact with the learners or to mark learners' work as often as they wished to. Another challenge referred to was the lack of involvement of parents in their children's education and the disciplinary problems they experienced at school due to parents failing to

discipline children. The teachers believed that this affected school performance and led to absenteeism, which was then blamed on the teachers.

On a different note, Nishimura and Yamano (2008) indicate that the FPE policy in a country stipulates how fee abolition is able to provide parents and pupils with the freedom to choose among the various public schools. This implies that FPE policies should ensure that they address and implement an education that is of good quality. It is only then that pupils' from different socio-economic can be attracted and kept in public schools. But if the quality of education at public schools deteriorates under FPE policy, parents of children from better socio-economic backgrounds transfer them to private schools in an attempt to give them access to quality education under the FPE dispensation (Abuya & Ngware 2016).

Whatever the reason(s) for the exodus of some learners to private schools, it is noteworthy that this causes a lack of equity in the overall education system: children whose parents are unable to enrol them in private schools to obtain a so-called high quality education have no choice but to continue to attend public schools, where they receive poor quality education. Tomaševski (2006) is also of the view that children from high socio-economic backgrounds transfer from public to private schools because of the decline in the quality of education in public schools. Tomaševski (2006) contends that this is the trend in Arab states, such as Morocco, Lebanon, Yemen, Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia. He explains that the decline in the quality of education in public schools has caused the education system in Arab countries to split into two unrelated parts: very expensive private education, enjoyed by the wealthy minority, and poor-quality government education for the majority – and even the latter can be costly for the needy in view of cost-recovery policies adopted by Arab countries in the context of structural adjustment programmes



(Tomaševski 2006:155). Aluede (2006), notes that this has also been the case in Nigeria since UBE was introduced. Aluede believes that this phenomenon has become evident in some Nigerian states, and fears that it will create class structures in the Nigerian education system.

## **2.5 Sustainability of free primary education**

Based on what has been said in this study there have been numerous concerns about the sustainability of FPE in Sub-Saharan Africa. Chuck (2009) and Kenya (2008) question the sustainability of FPE based on its reliance on donor funds. A Consortium for Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE) report reflects that these donor funds will dry up in a few years. Kenya (2008) particularly questions the sustainability of FPE in Kenya, basing his concern on the heavy injection of donor funds and inappropriate planning – a claim alluded to by Muthangya (2011), who highlights the fact that the sustainability of FPE in Kenya has been brought into the spotlight because its provision is beyond the scope of the Kenyan government's education budget and the country's economic performance, and donor funding cannot be relied on as it is often temporary. The sustainability of FPE is also a concern in Malawi, Uganda and Lesotho; this is discussed by Avenstrup, Liang and Nellemann (2004) in a paper entitled "Free primary education and poverty reduction: The case of Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi and Uganda". The concern of these authors is based on the countries' limited resources. Interestingly, Avenstrup et al (2004), note that even international agencies have been sceptical about the ability of the countries in question to sustain FPE, citing poor planning and administration as key factors. However, in the interest of promoting democracy, international agencies such as UNICEF and the World Bank have taken it upon themselves to support FPE through donor funding, and view it as the responsibility of the international community to assist, so as to ensure that FPE is a success.

The trend of relying on donor funds to finance FPE has also occurred in Swaziland, with the European Union (EU) committing funds towards FPE. For example, in 2012 the EU committed E21 million, which is equivalent to \$2,1 million, towards Grade 1 school fees (Ngozo 2012). Tomaševski (2006) decries the use of donor funds, because in the final analysis donors do not fulfil the aspirations of the countries they are assisting, instead setting conditions that need to be adhered to by recipients. Tomaševski (2006) indicates that sometimes these donations are delayed or are never received as promised.

Milu (2012) argues that, from a theoretical standpoint, FPE has a decolonised element and has become the victim of neocolonialism and world capitalism because of being bound to imperialist education practices and policies which seek to protect the interests of dominant stakeholders such as government leaders and transnational capitalist markets. Milu claims further that governments of developed countries use the Freirian banking model to design and implement policy, which results in the voices of other FPE stakeholders being silenced. This in turn promotes the reinforcement and perpetuation of inequalities. Milu (2012) bases this assertion on the use of critical pedagogy, which critiques the power relations that influence FPE and believes that they are intended to maintain the imperialist status quo. This is probably because of the conditions under which donor funds are accepted, which seem to promote the prevailing power relations between developed and developing countries. These power relations covertly impose adherence to conventions and protocols regardless of the economic conditions developing countries find themselves in.

Richards (2011) fully supports Milu's argument and in addition to the neo-colonialism philosophy also cites neoliberalism and the human capital theory as an economic philosophy which has caused the legitimacy of UPE policy to be called into question.

Richards explains how the dependence of developing countries on donors perpetuates the colonial dominance of the past because developing countries have to play by the donors' rules, which in most cases do not accommodate local context. According to this author, the dominance of Western neoliberal economic policies, which forms part of globalisation, is a neo-colonial stunt to westernise the world (Richards 2011). Tarabini (2010:6) describes the global landscape as follows:

The political changes generated by globalisation leading to the growing importance of international bodies in the design, financing and implementation of national policies. Although most of the international bodies were created after the Second World War, globalisation is substantially increasing their importance and it is changing their role in the regulation and implementation of educational and social policies.

It was these policies that compelled developing countries in the 1980s to implement structural adjustment programmes, which resulted in the education gains of the past being reversed (Kimani 2012). Richards (2011) believes the claim that investment in human capital can contribute to economic growth is weak and insubstantial, as education alone cannot do this. In the course of advancing his argument, Richards (2011) reiterates that the human capital discourse has reinvented the education agenda in order to create a knowledge-based economy and that investment in education is now legitimised on the basis new economic philosophy.

Opiata (2009:1) has a different perspective and reports that, according to the Department for International Development (DFID), funds to the tune of Sh1,3 billion, which is equivalent to \$812 500 (at a rate of \$1= S1600), donated for FPE in Kenya, cannot be traced, and this has resulted in some donors pulling out. These are some of the challenges that donors find themselves faced with, which can probably account for them setting

conditions in relation to the funds they donate or even pulling out of programmes. It therefore becomes evident that most countries, especially developing countries, do not have the financial and economic muscle to sustain FPE. This is the opinion of Kenya (2008), who notes that the capitation grant granted to schools by the Kenyan government is insufficient for some schools, because it does not cover all the school expenses, which threatens the sustainability of FPE. This is further corroborated by Akech and Simatwa (2010), who believe that the inadequacy of funds provided by governments lead to head teachers charging parents an extra levy, which some parents cannot afford.

Levies are also referred to as user fees. İşcan, Rosenblum and Tinker (2014) in a study on education in Sub-Saharan Africa, describe how, in Kenya, a number of schools sent pupils home to collect the money when parents failed to remit it in good time. User fees include tuition fees, school infrastructure fees and learning materials fees. Levying these fees has a number of adverse implications, one of them being that the purpose of FPE is defeated. Akech and Simatwa (2010:490) explain that this results in the failure of FPE to meet the education needs of the marginalised. The introduction of levies force learners from poor backgrounds to drop out, because they cannot afford the fees associated with uniforms and remedial funds. This is confirmed by Oketch and Rollestones (2010), who report that when FPE was introduced in schools in the Kisumu region of Kenya, the enrolment of learners far outnumbered the resources in schools, but when user fees – mainly for tuition and compulsory uniforms – were introduced, learners who could not afford them dropped out of school. Kinyanjuli, Ishmali and Mbutu (2014) point out how schools have often been a deterrent to educational access and have a negative effect on enrolment of learners in certain educational settings. Kinyanjuli et al. (2014) also mention how many children do not have access to education due to lack of school fees, and considers school fees as being a hindrance to access to education. The study conducted by İşcan et al (2014)

focussed on seven countries, namely Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia. In all these countries except Zambia, enrolment soared when school fees were abolished. The authors ascribe Zambia's data to the fact that as a socialist state it had not charged school fees from the outset. However, when the Zambian education policy shifted to charging school fees, the enrolment rate increased in public schools.

Based on the above it is important to note that the entire essence of FPE is to give children from poor backgrounds the opportunity to access education. Failure to do so implies that the FPE policy has failed. It is clear that governments' lack of funds places FPE at risk. This is evident from the influx in enrolments when fees are scrapped. Kattan and Burnett (2004) acknowledge that fees cannot simply be abolished, because they contribute immensely to the quality of schooling. Appropriate measures need to be put in place to ensure that the revenue obtained from school fees is sourced elsewhere. According to Kattan and Burnett (2004), this could be achieved by shifting funding from other government sectors to education.

Another challenge that threatens the sustainability of FPE according to Akech and Simatwa (2010) is the delayed disbursement of FPE funds by government. This makes the running of schools impossible, because the purchasing of learning materials, facilities and equipment is delayed. This issue has also been raised by head teachers in Swaziland (see Sukati 2012). EQUIP 2 (2007) report states that the issue of sustainability of FPE is real, and this has been caused by lack of sufficient donor funds, an economic decline, and competing needs. The report reveals that FPE has not been fully implemented because even where school fees are abolished, they make a comeback. Sometimes the collection of school fees is illegal: the EQUIP 2 (2007) report indicates that in two-thirds of the

countries studied, where school fees were eliminated they were subsequently illegally collected. Similar incidences were reported in Swaziland (see Dhladhla 2013).

## **2.6 Free primary education in Swaziland**

This section provides a brief historical background on Swaziland, being a British protectorate. It also provides insight on how the country was once temporarily under the South African Transvaal Province Administration. This section also highlights the country's geographical and educational profile, as well as the structure of the education system. The section further discusses the normative attitude towards legal issues in Swaziland. It also gives a background on the status of FPE in Swaziland.

The Kingdom of Swaziland gained independence from the British in 1968. It is worth noting that Swaziland was never colonised but was a British protectorate. According to Dlamini, Dlamini, Hlatwayo and Mabuza (2012), Swaziland switched several times from being a British protectorate to being a protectorate of the South African Republic (ZAR). It eventually became a British protectorate only, however. It is important to understand that the British were merely protecting their interests and wanted to control the economic activities of the ZAR, which intended building a railway line through Swaziland to Delagoa Bay, which would give it direct access to the sea. However, the British wanted the ZAR to use only the seaports in Durban and Cape Town, which was within their jurisdiction. The King continued to be the leader to the Swazi people, but the British refused to afford him this status and referred to him as paramount chief (Dlamini et al 2012). It was in light of this that Swaziland did not fight for independence. Instead over a long period of time it negotiated extensively with the British with regard to land and independence (Dlamini et al 2012; Magagula 1988).

The Kingdom of Swaziland is a small, landlocked country covering an area of only 17 364 square kilometres. The country is surrounded by the Republic of Mozambique on its north eastern border and the Republic of South Africa in the south and west. It is divided into four geographical and administrative regions, namely Hhohho, Manzini, Lubombo and Shiselweni. The capital city, Mbabane, is in the Hhohho region, where all government headquarters are located. Located in the individual regions there are regional government offices, including the offices of the regional department of education, which are run by regional education officers. These officers are responsible for administering education in the regions. They work hand in hand with regional inspectors and other regional members of staff. Decisions pertaining to education in the country as a whole, however, are made centrally, by the MoET in Mbabane.

The education system in Swaziland consists of formal and non-formal education. The formal education system is divided into four levels, namely Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE), Basic Education, consisting of elementary or primary education, lasting seven years, three years of Junior Secondary Education and two years of Senior Secondary Education. There is also Post-Secondary Education, which is higher education.

The Department of Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) is a very young department at the MoET; it is still at its teething stage and even the curriculum for this level is still being developed (UNESCO 2015). The ECCE curriculum is being based on the MoET's EDSEC Policy (Swaziland 2011b), which stipulates that an ECCE curriculum and standards should be developed in the short run. The Swaziland EFA Country Report of 2000–2015 (UNESCO, UNICEF & MoET 2015) reports that early learning and development standards have been developed for ECCE.

There is an important link between ECCE and primary school education, which this study is about because ECCE is intended to promote easy entry into primary education through developing learners cognitively (Swaziland 2011b). The importance of and need for ECCE in preparing learners for primary education is further emphasised in the UNESCO, UNICEF and MoET (2015) EFA Country Report 2000–2015. The MoET's Annual Education Census report or AEC (Swaziland 2013a) decries the large number of Grade 1 repeaters. It recommends that a study be undertaken to determine whether the large numbers are not because of a lack of ECCE. The report further reveals that only 70.7 % of learners who enrolled in Grade 1 in 2013 had undergone ECCE. The UNESCO, UNICEF and MoET (2015) EFA Country Report 2000–2015 states that the country still faces challenges with regard to the low ECCE participation rates. The report attributes these rates to poverty. There are ECCE offices both at the MoET headquarters and at the regional education offices. Their role is to monitor ECCE programs, which are presently privately owned and managed. The MoET is currently working on formalising and streamlining ECCE and incorporating it into the formal public education system (MoET, 2008; MoET, 2011).

Beyond Secondary Education there is Post-Secondary Education, which is higher education. There are a number of higher education institutions in the country, namely four universities, two teacher training colleges, since some of the universities train teachers as well in total there are four teacher training institutions, a technology college and a vocational institution. The universities offer diploma and degree programmes and the colleges offer only diploma programmes. There are also skills-based centres, which offer programmes that are skills-based in nature. The duration of study for a diploma is three years, while an undergraduate degree requires four years. The duration for a post-graduate



master's degree is two years when studied full-time and three years if completed part-time at the University of Swaziland (UNISWA).

From the four universities that exist in Swaziland, the University of Swaziland is the only one offering postgraduate studies. It offers master's degrees in a few faculties, and one faculty only offers a doctorate degree, namely the Agriculture faculty. The University of Swaziland also offers a post-graduate certificate in Education, which can be obtained in one year. It is important to note that the University of Swaziland is the oldest university and therefore the most popular and the best established one, while the other universities are relatively new and are still establishing themselves. A teacher who has a diploma and decides to pursue a degree in Education at the University of Swaziland will still need to devote four years to his or her study. This means the duration of study from diploma to degree level is seven years.

The Bachelor's degree offered at the Southern Africa Nazarene University requires three years of study. To qualify to register for a Bachelor of Education degree at this university, a person must hold a three-year Teacher's Diploma. This means that, in order to obtain a bachelor's degree at this university, a student needs to study for six years. This speaks volumes about the value that is placed on the diploma qualifications offered by these institutions.

A majority of primary school teachers in Swaziland are diploma holders. According to the MoET's Annual Education Census (AEC) report (Swaziland 2013a:48), 2 379 female teachers and 1 181 male teachers held primary teacher diplomas (the total being 3 560), 1 221 females and 252 males held primary teacher certificates (for a total of 1 473), and only 225 females and 83 males held Bachelor of Education Primary degrees (with a total of 308). The report further states that only 40% of teachers teaching at the primary level

are qualified, and that the remainder, which means three out of five, are not qualified to teach at primary school. The study duration required for a junior degree is daunting to most. This means that most teachers are not keen on upgrading themselves, which compromises the quality of education. This consequence is further compounded by the large number of teachers that are entirely unqualified to teach at the primary level.

Included in the formal education system are various types of schools. These schools are classified into two categories, namely public and private schools. These two categories are further classified into various other categories. The public schools consist of government schools, mission schools and community schools. These schools are named thus because they were established by these entities. Even then, mission and community school teachers are employed and paid by government, therefore they are referred to as government aided schools. The private schools are mostly privately owned but there are some that are semi-private because they too are aided by government, which also contributed to their establishment.

There are several non-formal institutions in Swaziland. These institutions provide adult and skills-based education. This enables those who have not had the privilege of undergoing formal education to learn and acquire skills which they can utilise for a livelihood. It is women and disadvantaged children who are out of school who benefit the most from these institutions (Jele 2012). An example of such an institution is the Sebenta National Institute (SNI), which has centres country-wide and offers adult literacy and numeracy training. However, over time under-age learners started flocking to the SNL centres to learn. Many of these institutions then decided to extend their offering to cater for the needs of these young people by introducing a Non-Formal Upper Primary Education (NUPE) programme (Swaziland 2011). Eventually, however, the institution

was compelled to offer the entire primary school curriculum that is now offered by the formal education system, which resulted in it changing its NUPE programme to Non-Formal Primary Education or NPE (UNESCO, UNICEF & MoET 2015).

MoET functions are informed by government policies and policy statements. The most recent policy is the EDSEC Policy of 2011. According to the EDSEC Policy (Swaziland 2011b:9), the mission of the MoET is to "(e)nsure equitable access to inclusive, life-long quality education and training for all Swazi citizens, through the sustained implementation and resourcing of a comprehensive Education and Training Policy". The Policy goals are (Swaziland 2011b): "The provision of an equitable and inclusive education system that affords all learners' access to free and compulsory basic education and Senior Secondary education of real quality, followed by opportunity to continue with life-long education and training, so enhancing their personal development and contributing to Swaziland's cultural development, socio-economic growth and global competitiveness."

A critical analysis of the MoET's mission and policy goals as stated above points to government's active involvement in and commitment to the provision of education. Against this backdrop, the researcher strove to explore, examine and possibly understand the implementation of this policy, particularly as it concerns the sustainability of FPE.

### **2.6.1 FPE in Swaziland: detailed account**

There is not much literature on FPE in Swaziland, because very little has been written on it. There are a few government reports that were compiled in conjunction with UNICEF, EMIS reports, conference papers and newspaper reports, and a minimal number of papers that do touch on FPE or EFA. Much of the literature cited here has been taken from these few sources. As mentioned in the literature (see section 2.1), Swaziland like most African countries aspired to introduce FPE immediately after independence (Dlamini 1972), but

was unable to do so due to financial constraints. This is echoed by Sukati (2013), who reports that universal FPE was the ultimate goal of every Swazi in accordance with the Imbokodvo National Movement of the 1960s. Sukati reiterates this in his paper entitled "Education for all children by 2015: Mere rhetoric or reality in Swaziland?". In response to the Jomtien Conference, many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa introduced FPE in the 1990s (Kattan & Burnett 2004). Swaziland was one of the countries that did not respond to this call at that stage. It was around this time that the country started experiencing economic challenges after having experienced economic growth in the 1980s (Swaziland 2006).

As a signatory to both international and regional conventions and protocols, Swaziland aspired to introduce FPE and compulsory education; the country even included a provision in its constitution, which was intended to be given effect six months after its adoption in July, 2005. Sections 6 and 29 of the Constitution of 2005 stipulate as follows:

Every Swazi child shall within three years of the commencement of this Constitution have the right to free education in public schools at least up to the end of primary school, beginning with the first Grade.

This clause was, as mentioned earlier, based on the Dakar EFA Framework, which was adopted by UN member states in 2000. It can be found in the section on the rights of the child.

Interestingly, Rogers (2010) interrogated this section in depth, with special reference to the court case against government for failing to introduce FPE when the three-year period after the adoption of the Constitution had elapsed (see sections 1.2 and 1.3). Rogers (2010) investigated this issue from a legal perspective, but touched on interesting insights with regard to the right to education, which are of importance to this study, particularly in

relation to its theoretical framework, which looks at education as a human right (see section 3.2.4). This court case was also highlighted earlier in the problem statement therefore the case itself is equally important and relevant to the study. Rogers (2010) is of the opinion that when the high court ruled in favour of the Ex-Miners Association and others, the judgment was weak in respect of socio-economic rights. Rogers (2010) feels the judgment did not apply the reasonableness test, as is done in South African case law with respect to constitutional socio-economic rights. Rogers (2010) explains that he confidently refers to South African case law because based on his observation Swaziland is open to international law and South African law. In his study he refers to the USA and South Africa, because the constitutions of these countries have much in common with that of Swaziland. The judgment indicated that every child attending primary school had the right to attend school free of charge, and that government had a constitutional obligation to provide FPE. Rogers (2010) argues that the court opted for individual entitlement in the judgment instead of granting a structural interdict or committing to supervisory jurisdiction. Rogers (2010) also mentions that there is a constitutional dissonance in Swaziland, explaining it as "the gap between the formal constitution and the legal norms and the actual practice of the government and the citizens" (Rogers 2010:9). He elaborates that constitutional dissonance occurs everywhere but that it is more prominent in developing countries, Swaziland being no exception.

It is worth noting that Rogers's (2010) focus fell on the first court case and not on government's appeal thereafter, where the court ruled in government's favour. Rogers used qualitative reviews as methodology in his study and reviewed this case as well as socio-economic judicial cases on education as a human right in other countries. He also analysed Swazi court cases to come with a hypothesis on the approach that the High Court in Swaziland should have adopted with regard to the FPE Act.

The key aspect of Rogers's study in relation to this study is his in-depth analysis of the court case in relation to human rights. However, as much as education is a human right, this has been under-legitimated in Africa, as indicated by Talbot and Sacco (2013). Having argued that the continent of Africa underplays human rights in learning and teaching spaces or institutions, these authors elaborate on the challenges faced by African countries, including a lack of resources, a shortage of schools, as well as inequality in terms of access and resource allocation.

A similar argument is advanced by McConnachie and McConnachie (2012), in an article entitled "Concretising the right to basic education". McConnachie and McConnachie make reference to two court cases in the Eastern Cape of the Republic of South Africa, where the applicants argued that the lack of facilities at their schools was a violation to learners' right to a basic education. However, according to the article, the two court cases referred to, produced no judgment therefore the authors proceeded with their argument based on substantial research, legal arguments and comparative law. Referring to the Schools Act of South Africa, the authors insist that a right to basic education should include a right to adequate facilities, which should consist of school infrastructure, basic services, and learning and teaching support materials as stipulated in the South African Schools Act of 1996, Section 5A(2).

Khumalo (2013) also discusses the court case mentioned by Rogers (2010) and agrees that this case contributed to FPE eventually being implemented in Swaziland in 2010, although according to the Constitution it should have been implemented in 2009. Further to this, Khumalo (2013) decries the fact that the Constitution focuses only on FPE and is silent regarding compulsory education as stipulated in the Human Rights Declaration and the Children's Rights Convention. Khumalo (2013) acknowledges that the introduction of

FPE has enabled children who were out of school to enrol and applauds the increase in the enrolment rate as a result of FPE.

In September 2009 the GoS appointed a Commission on Human Rights and Public Administration in terms of Legal Notice 143 of 2009 (Commission on Human Rights, Public Administration and Integrity Report, October 2011). The commission was established to give effect to section 163(2)(a) and (b) of the Constitution. The Commission doesn't seem to have accomplished much to date, except a report it produced in 2011 (Swaziland 2011a). In the report the Commission states that it is unable fully to fulfil its mandate due to financial constraints. It does seem as though the Commission no longer exists, however, because other than this report it has been silent and is basically unknown to most members of the public. The Commission therefore appears to be of no practical use whatsoever.

The Swaziland government website under the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs ([www.govt.sz.org-25/01/2016](http://www.govt.sz.org-25/01/2016)) stipulates the functions of the Commission to be associated with human rights, public administration and integrity. Under human rights the Commission is to investigate complaints concerning alleged violations of fundamental, constitutional rights. The right to FPE is one such right. Should anyone be deprived in any way of any rights and freedoms, the Commission is supposed to take action by remanding, correcting or reversing the instance. This is intended to ensure that people obtain appropriate redress. The Commission seemed to understand its mandate, and in the report that was compiled in 2011, it refers to issues related to children, which include their right to education. The report cites clause 3.4.1 of the National Social Development Policy of 2009, which states that "it is national policy to protect and promote the rights of children and ensure that their basic needs are met and that they are provided with

opportunities to reach full potential". This could be interpreted as meaning that the Commission would also consider issues relating to the right to education.

The issue of FPE has been very controversial in Swaziland. The controversy has arisen from a section in the 2010 FPE Act that stipulates that schools are responsible for funding school building projects. However, the Act emphasises that schools need to obtain permission to do so from the MoET, and that this can only occur after the building project has been approved at a parents' meeting by 75 % of the parents. The parents' signatures need to be attached to the minutes of that meeting, which has to be submitted together with the request.

Schools have not been complying with the above section of the FPE Act, however. Instead head teachers have been charging extra fees without seeking permission from the MoET. This has caused a number of incidents, one of which was reported by Simelane (2012) in the *Times of Swaziland*, a local daily newspaper. Simelane (2012) explains how parents stormed into one of the schools after their children were sent home for owing E200 (which is equivalent to \$18.18 at an exchange rate of \$1=E11). The amount was said to be a compulsory top-up fee, in addition to the E560 (\$50.90) paid by government. According to the newspaper report, parents were requested by the head teacher at the beginning of the year to pay E200 because government took too long to disburse FPE funds to the schools. The parents were promised that, when government paid the funds, they would be reimbursed. The report notes further that some parents paid the money while others did not. The parent's who did not pay, explained that they did not pay because government paid the school grant earlier than had been anticipated therefore they did not see the need to pay the E200.



Simelane (2012) reports further that, when the head teacher was interviewed about this, he claimed that the E560 paid by government was insufficient for running the school. He also said the top-up fee was required for paying support staff salaries, financing the school's feeding scheme and purchasing stationery. It should be noted that the FPE Act of 2010 contains a breakdown of how the E560 should be spent, and stipulates that E150 should be allocated to feeding schemes. In addition government, in collaboration with development partners, provides schools with food as part of the scheme. The schools feeding scheme is well articulated in the National Framework for Food Security in Schools – Swaziland: Schools Food Security Framework (Swaziland 2014a). Prior to the introduction of FPE in 2010, the Government had been providing free textbooks and stationery to every child at primary school since 2005, and had paid teachers' salaries at public schools. It is therefore baffling that one of the expenses listed by the head teacher in the aforementioned scenario included stationery, because the grant paid by government for every learner covered the required stationery (Swaziland 2010a). Many other such incidents similar to the above have occurred in schools under FPE.

The top-up fees issue is acknowledged by the Swaziland MDG report (2012:51), which reports that "Government's efforts to make primary education more accessible have been compromised, to some extent, by the charging of top-up fees by some schools, which should be avoided". This is likely to have led to 330 Grade 1 and 2 students dropping out of primary school in 2010 (Swaziland 2010a). Following the claim made by head teachers that the grant paid by government was insufficient, in 2012 the Ministry commissioned the Centre for Education and Policy Development (CEPD) in collaboration with Paul Musker and Associates to conduct an investigation into this issue. The CEPD (2012) reports that pressure around the appropriateness of the size of FPE grants was the driving force for their study, which is centred around the voices of different stakeholders. These included

voices in government, who argued that the grants were so large that they were a significant cause of the financial woes experienced by government, and that they would be unsustainable once extended to the full primary phase in the subsequent three years. In contrast some voices, particularly those at schools in urban areas, argued that the amount was so much lower than that which they had collected by charging learners directly, that over time the grant system would erode the income of schools and the quality of education they offer (CEPD 2012:6).

The study undertaken by the CEPD focussed on estimating operational costs for primary schools in Swaziland. The resulting report acknowledged a top down costing approach was used to ascertain the grants that the Government should pay per learner. The report further highlights that the different sizes of the schools were not considered when the grant amount per learner was decided upon. This has resulted in schools with large enrolment rates to benefit from economies of scale. Meanwhile the schools with small enrolment numbers struggled to make ends meet in the running of the schools. It also reports that, despite FPE being introduced progressively to the different grade levels, with government paying E560 for learners in Grades 1 and 2, the grant amount would remain unchanged for all the grade levels. As the FPE programme progressed to other grades, additional costs would need to be covered for practical subjects that become part of the curriculum at the higher grade levels. The amounts would therefore be as follows: E580 for Grade 3 and 4 in 2013, and E640, E670 and E1010 respectively for Grades 5, 6 and 7 in 2014 and 2015 (CEPD 2012). To date the programme has reached Grade 7, and the amounts being paid by government are precisely as anticipated by the CEPD (2012) study and the FPE Act (2010). Prior to the CEPD (2012) study, no other study had been conducted on what FPE costs would need to be and why.

In another study undertaken by Kadzamira and Rose (2001), entitled "Educational policy choice and policy practice in Malawi: Dilemmas and Disjunctures", the authors postulate that because FPE was introduced to fulfil a political agenda, no analysis of the education sector was performed, and the FPE policy framework was developed only after FPE had been introduced. Kadzamira and Rose (2001) also report that, even when the FPE policy framework was developed stakeholders were donor driven. This led to the interests of donors being prioritised at the expense of the country's needs. The authors therefore believe that, had the analysis of the education sector been properly undertaken and sustainable financial budgets put in place, the shortage of facilities and the high dependence on donor funds could have been avoided.

Kadzamira and Rose (2001) also point out that the situation is unsustainable, because should one or two of the donors pull out, the entire Malawi education system would collapse. They explain how initially the FPE programme was meant to be funded by the government of Malawi, however, the lack of capacity in the Ministry of Education in Malawi because of low salaries and the failure to fully analyse the implications of donor funds led to this dilemma arising.

Chimombo (2005) similarly reveals that, when the FPE programme was being developed, there was no understanding of how important it was for school stakeholders to participate in the process. Chimombo discloses the considerable financial implications of implementing FPE with government and donors funding the programme. Initially government was supposed to be responsible for all the costs, which included those for instructional materials and school construction, which would have made education completely free, but that has not been the case in practice (Chimombo 2005). Parents in most African countries where FPE is in full swing, still pay substantial amounts of the cost

of FPE (Chimombo 2005). In addition, donors often and largely support by providing instructional materials, building classrooms and schools, and training teachers. This means that governments' commitment is donor targeted, and that if the donors pulled out, the entire system would collapse.

The CEPD (2012) study was meant to inform government on how access to education could best be increased, in particular for the poor and marginalised, in response to international agreements and national political imperatives. In the CEPD report, study grants were defined as a transfer of funds from government directly to schools, with the express purpose of compensating for funds lost due to the introduction of FPE (CEPD 2012:6). This undoubtedly falls under the provision of grants in Swaziland, although in other countries the grants are also intended to provide quality education, which is not the case in Swaziland.

When FPE was introduced, the Education Sector analysis was in its final stages, and the Marope (2010) report was yet to be launched and endorsed by the Ministry. When the FPE Act was billed and enacted, the key contents of the analyses that were relevant to the Act were not included. Instead they were spelt out in the MoET's EDSEC Policy (Swaziland 2011b), in which efficiency, relevance and quality education are prioritised. This may not be described in terms of the grants, but as these are the policy directives of the Swazi MoET, everything should centre upon achieving these imperatives.

The researcher's readings suggest that in countries (e.g. Kenya) where the grants are substantially larger, the manner in which they should be used is prescribed. The FPE Act of 2010 does prescriptively break down how the E560 should be used at each grade level, but the report does consider this breakdown to be prescriptive and describes it as a breakdown of allocated funds into expenditure items. The heading of this section in the

FPE Act is "Fee structure", and as it is a legal framework, it could be considered to be prescriptive although flexible. In countries where the FPE grant is minimal, no conditions are laid down (CEPD 2012). In Swaziland the manner in which the grant should be used, is not prescribed either, despite the fact that the amount is substantial when compared to what other countries pay in the form of grants.

The CEPD et al (2012) feels that, because of the magnitude of the grant, it should be legally regulated and the regulations should stipulate how it should be used and audited. It is for this reason that Dlamini reports in the *Times of Swaziland* of 9 February 2012 that government's commitment to learning from other countries is questionable because the way the FPE grants are administered, does not correspond with the way they are administered in other countries.

The allocation of a large amount to each learner when there is lack of accountability leaves much to be desired. Dlamini (2012) further notes that it is worrisome that the issue of quality education has not been explicitly linked to the grants. Dlamini (2012) and the CEPD (2012:6) attribute this to the fact that the grant was not driven by a wider education policy but rather introduced rapidly in response to a constitutional stipulation. The Swazi FPE grant is higher than that of Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi or Uganda but lower than that of South Africa, where the government pays R1 000 per child per year in lower socio-economic areas. Dlamini (2012) indicates, however, that government payments of the grants tend to be late, which leads to schools running out of funds. He believes that government can only pay the grants in April, and that this is therefore when schools should start (Dlamini 2012).

Another consideration in terms of the sustainability of FPE in Swaziland is the country's poor economic performance since the beginning of the new millennium, as highlighted in

section 1.2. In the fiscal year 2010/2011 the government therefore designed a Fiscal Adjustment Roadmap (FAR), which was intended to guide fiscal expenditure till the 2014/2015 fiscal year. One of the purposes of FAR was to correct the slow economic growth. The country's economy continued to weaken, however, and statistical indicators for the year 2015/2016 revealed a bleak economic outlook, which was, and still is, cause for concern. In 2015 the Minister of Finance reported that: "Real GDP growth slowed down to 2.5 percent, in 2014 from an estimated growth rate of 3.0 percent in 2013" (Swaziland 2015:4).

Ogola, Olembo and Mse (2014) explain that education requires considerable expenditure because schools need to be constructed, teachers paid and facilities and equipment provided. According to Ogola, Olembo and Mse (2014), this suggests that a country has to be economically stable in order to implement and sustain FPE. Nonetheless in Swaziland's FAR 2010/11-2014/2015 (Swaziland 2010c), the GoS made health and education priority areas, meaning that, despite the economic challenges, government was willing to invest in these areas. There is a difference, however, between willingness and ability, hence, the concern over the sustainability of FPE.

## **2.7 Free primary education: perspectives and studies from outside Africa**

This section presents methodological, empirical and conceptual findings from two perspectives that were conducted outside Africa. The section is divided into two subsections: perspectives from developed countries and perspectives from developing countries.

### **2.7.1 Perspectives from developed countries**

Carroll (2008) describes the characteristic of developed countries as including a high GDP, low unemployment rates, good quality education and health services, a state-of-the-

art infrastructure, and a high standard of living. It is important to note that most developed countries have achieved UPE, with the exception of a few and therefore their focus has now shifted to quality education. The GMR 2000–2015 (UNESCO 2015) report confirms this and points out that since Dakar, the primary adjusted net enrolment, which is the indicator used for monitoring UPE, has remained high in high income or developed countries. The report lists these countries as being in North America and Western Europe, East Asia and the Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The World Education Forum report, compiled collaboratively by UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, UNHCR and The World Bank Group (2015) also reveal that all the countries in Western Europe and North America have achieved UPE and reached all EFA goals, which encompass FPE. This was achieved well before 2015. It therefore behoves this study to interrogate the practices of some of these countries, mainly the USA, Finland and Hong Kong. The UNESCO et al (2015) report further discloses that UPE was nearly universal in the said regions and had actually been extended to the lower secondary level by 2000. The "Gross Intake Rate (GIR) in primary school in this group of countries is 100% and the adjusted NER in primary education ranges from 93% to 100% across countries and indicators of internal efficiency are satisfactory" (UNESCO et al 2015:16).

In this study, perspectives are drawn mainly from the USA, Finland and Hong Kong. The criteria for selecting these countries is based on published and unpublished educational articles, dissertations, reports by the Center on International Education Benchmarking (CIEB) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as the CIA *World factbook*. The CIEB, OECD, and *World factbook* on Education use the Programme for International Standard Assessment (PISA) as a benchmark for

assessing and categorising the education systems of these countries. PISA in turn assesses students' achievements in Mathematics, Reading and Science. The issue of assessment tests being used as a quality yardstick is discussed in section 2.2.3 of this study, which deals with policy players and policy processes, and is therefore not new to the study. Even though the focus differs here, it contains interesting points that align with the argument on assessment tests. This is based on the fact that the FPE agenda is embedded in the EFA agenda, and that the focus is now not only on access but also on quality education in developing countries, as espoused in the SDGs for 2030 (UN Assembly 2015). Developing countries can therefore learn from developed countries because they have already achieved UPE.

Furthermore, developing countries are now also encouraged to focus on quality education. Hence, the use of standard assessments as a yardstick for measuring quality education can be emulated by developing countries. The relevance of the PISA tests to primary education, which is the focus of this study, is also worth justifying. Although the PISA tests are taken by 15 year-olds (AFP 2013) at the secondary level, their achievements are influenced by the foundation set at the primary level. If the quality of education is poor at the primary level of schooling, this will have negative effects at the secondary level. Another justification is that the PISA tests are now the international benchmark used for policy and practice, as well as for raising education outcome issues through focusing on education policy related to equity, quality, efficiency and effectiveness by setting of standards for education (Koh 2012).

Furthermore, an analysis of the PISA test provides a platform for analysis of the designs, impact and outcomes of policies. The success of educational policy depends on design, alignment and implementation of effective policy (Koh 2012). Since this study also



centres upon policy and practice, such insights are important for the study hence the need for an understanding of the education system of some of the countries that use the PISA tests as benchmark.

The justification that Labate (2006) draws from OECD reports in relation to the PISA assessments, focusing on only the above three areas, is that literacy, and more especially reading, is viewed as making a vitally important contribution to schooling. Furthermore, reading literacy is considered as a way of developing learners' communication skills, which are important for modern societies in that they use modern languages. Labate (2006) also reveals that grammar and literature have now been replaced by communication skills, which are both oral and written in nature and relate to the modern languages referred to. The focus on numeracy literacy, on the other hand, is intended to enable learners to make mathematical judgements based on their understanding of the role of mathematics in the world, more especially in this era of information technology.

Haahr, Nielsen, Hasen and Jakobsen (2005) in their study "Explaining student performance: Evidence from the international PISA, TIMMS and PIRLS surveys", recommend that education systems should ensure that students perform as well as possible in Mathematics, Reading and Science, and that weak learners should be assisted to improve. Haahr et al (2005) further recommend that policy makers should focus on the variations between different groups of learners and the different schools in each country, as they have found that there is not much variance between countries but that it does occur within countries. This probably implies that there are still equity gaps within countries. Haahr et al (2005) note that where the variance within countries is low, achievement tends to be high.

Elaborating on this argument Haahr et al (2005) also point to the fact that socio-economic backgrounds correlate with distinct school types and programmes. A case in point is that of the USA and Finland. Research shows that all learners in Finland receive the same education and have access to similar facilities, irrespective of their socio-economic background. Moreover there are no private schools in Finland, whereas the opposite is true for the USA. Darling-Hammond and Wentworth (2010) agree with this and believe, as Haahr et al (2005) do, that extensive investment in teacher training is important, Finland once again being a case in point. Darling-Hammond and Wentworth (2010) also note that countries that perform well in the PISA tests have an education culture that enables learners to acquire 21st-century basic skills. This is because the PISA tests do not test what learners recall and recognise, but instead require learners to apply their skills. A pedagogical approach based on synthesis, analysis, inquiry learning, research projects, investigation and development of products, reports and presentations enables learners to develop high-order skills.

It is worth noting that some challenges have now been identified with regard to NCLB policy in the USA in respect to the pedagogical approach referred to above. George (2014) points out that there is concern regarding the assessment tests in the USA covering only the three key areas, namely Mathematics, Science and Reading Literacy, because teachers tend to focus only on these subjects and neglect the other school subjects. It is worth noting that the use of PISA for assessing countries' educational performances has had a number of unexpected results and raised questions regarding education policy and implementation. This has been as a result of the high performance levels of countries in East Asia and Finland, which outperform the USA (Koh 2012). According to Koh (2012), the USA has been lagging behind in these assessment tests – this despite the fact that in 2002 the US federal government introduced the NCLB initiative based on the NCLB Act

of 2002, which is aimed at ensuring that every child, irrespective of socio-economic background, is provided with education of a high standard (Walker 2010).

Maleyko (2011) reveals that NCLB was introduced in the USA in response to a public outcry over the decline in the quality of education in the USA, during which the USA was described as "a nation at risk". Maleyko (2011) indicates that the NCLB initiative was also introduced to bridge the education inequity gap that had been identified in the USA, in accordance with the EFA agenda to ensure that education was equitable (UNESCO et al 2015). In a bid to fulfil the equity obligation, the NCLB initiative targeted categorised groups in society which were viewed as having being left behind. These groups consisted of "schools with large numbers, special education students, students living below the poverty level, and students of diverse racial and ethnic background" (Maleyko 2011:2). The US public was of the view that its education system was failing their children academically, and that the USA was losing its competitive edge in the international market (George 2014). Maleyko (2011), reports that the NCLB is the most significant legislation enacted by the federal government in the past 35 years.

Historically and constitutionally, public education reform has all along been the mandate of individual US states. The federal government's NCLB education policy directive was to set performance standards that would need to be adhered to by the different states' education departments, district education departments and schools. Adherence to the federal government's expected performance outcomes is encouraged by means of incentives for those who meet the expected standards, and sanctions for those who do not meet the minimum standards. States can opt out of the NCLB, but they can be penalised by forfeiting federal government funding (Maleyko 2011:48).

Mills (2013) also highlights the introduction of the NCLB policy, and points out that the NCLB Act was enacted by the George W Bush administration to improve the USA education system. Mills (2013:2) notes that this was done in the spirit of ensuring that schools and teachers were made accountable through measurable means, namely standard tests. According to Mills (2013:2) this "legislation had far reaching and deep effects on the curriculum and pedagogy in U.S. public schools". Mills goes on to say that the NCLB policy has created an education environment that is standard based according to a data driven, scripted curriculum, and that teachers are expected strictly to follow guidelines implemented by the school districts to test the curriculum using the standardised tests. According to Mills, studies show that this policy has deskilled and deprofessionalised the teaching profession, implying that teachers are no longer autonomously able to use their creative innovative skills when delivering the curriculum.

In support of Mills's viewpoint George (2014) argues that teachers are subject to burn-out because of the pressure that the standard tests impose on them. George's findings also reveal that teachers now focus on teaching content that will be tested in the standard test, and pay less attention to the other content in the curriculum. Teachers also use rote learning, factual recall knowledge, explicit instruction and effective teaching of learners who are struggling. This assertion is equally supported by Mills (2013), who posits that the NCLB policy has led to limited pedagogy teaching, and has encouraged the use of rote memorisation and "drill and kill" exercises in preparation for the standard tests.

In contrast, teachers in Finland are in charge, trusted and given the autonomy to be innovative and creative. The Finland curriculum is broad and requires no strict adherence to rules that teachers are expected comply with, and teachers mostly develop their own curriculum (Mikkola 2012; OECD 2010a). Aho, Pitkanen and Sahlberg (2006) and

Sahlberg (2015) believe that the success of the Finnish education system is based on allowing learners to learn without being tracked or choosing learning streams at an early stage. There are only two streams in Finland – general and vocational education. Most schools are owned by municipalities and operate autonomously (Aho et al 2006; OECD 2010a). The central government focuses on making policy, designing legislative frameworks and financing education (OECD 2010a; Mikkola, 2012; De Sauvage, 2015). Mikkola (2012) supported by AFP News Agency (2013) further explains how the Finnish education system focuses on equity and equal education opportunities, irrespective of children’s socio- economic status or geographical location. The government therefore finances education equally, regardless of the location or wealth of the community. It is important to note that this aligns well with EFA goals.

The Finnish education system provides all learners an equal opportunity to access good quality education, which is publicly financed. "Good school for all, not for some, is the core value that drives education in Finland" (Aho et al 2006:2).

### **2.7.2 Perspectives from developing countries**

Knight et al (2012) classifies developing, using the World Bank classification, which applies the Gross National Income (GNI) per capita. The EFA Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO 2015) is significant in this respect because it progressively takes stock of how countries have been faring in implementing the EFA education agenda since 2000. It has three objectives, namely to take stock whether countries have achieved the EFA goals and whether stakeholders have upheld their commitment to implement the agenda, to explain possible determinants of pace of progress and determine whether a direct link can be established between the strategy’s implementation and the achievement of the goals or

lack thereof, and to identify key messages for shaping a post-2015 global agenda (UNESCO 2015:1).

The UPE report also responds to the following questions: What progress has been made towards achieving the UPE goals? What has been done to accomplish this progress? And lastly, which countries have been successful or left behind, and why?

UNESCO and UNICEF (2013) report that there has been significant progress towards UPE in South and West Asia, however retention of learners in schools seems to be a problem. This means that progress in this case also revolves around issues related to access. It is worth noting that all countries in the Asia-Pacific region are signatories to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and are obligated in accordance with article 28 of the convention, to provide free and compulsory education. This then implies that these countries should ensure that the compulsory mandate that they have signed for is achieved. It is through making such a move that overarching issues of access to education can be addressed. Furthermore articles 2 and 29 mandate for the provision of quality education without discrimination. Notably some of these countries have also promulgated free and compulsory education into their legislation in various ways, some through constitutions, policies or national Acts. UNESCO and UNICEF (2013) also divulge that low quality education is a concern in the region. The researchers interest in reviewing South Asia literature was stimulated by the different trends with regard to EFA and in particular FPE, as reported in the GMR 2000–2015 (UNESCO 2015). Pakistan and Nepal are the South Asian countries which were cited most in the report.

As the researcher glanced through the literature of South Asian countries, she was intrigued by the dramatic historical education background of Pakistan. This resulted in the researcher soliciting more information on Pakistan's education system. Pakistan became

an independent sovereign state in 1947, after being colonised by Britain and India (Rizvi 2003). Rizvi (2003) reports that in the period between independence and 2003 Pakistan made attempts to implement UPE. During this time frame seven different educational policies focusing on UPE were developed and implemented but none of them were able to have the intended goals achieved. This claim is found in the UNESCO and UNICEF report of 2013, under Goal 2 of the Asia-Pacific End-of-Decade on Education for All. The report points out that article 25(a) of Pakistan's 18th amended constitution calls for free and compulsory education for all children within the age bracket of five to 16 years old, notwithstanding this Pakistan has been unable to fulfil this mandate. In addition to this the UNESCO and UNICEF (2013) report also mentions that in 2011, Pakistan had the largest number of out-of-school children in the region, namely 34%. Interestingly, the literature continuously reveals that policies to address this were put in place in Pakistan but there seems to be some implementation challenges. These challenges take different forms and have, in short, contributed to the poor education system in Pakistan. According to Ahmad, Rauf, Imdadulla and Zeb (2012), factors contributing to the poor education system include lack of visionary leaders and political will; lack of monitoring mechanisms and follow-up on the implementation of educational policies; poor evaluation of educational policies; political instability; inadequate financial allocation; and lack of engagement by stakeholders at the policy formulation, implementation and evaluation stages. These authors underscore that primary education in Pakistan is in a bad state because it is engulfed with political interference, nepotism, corruption and neglect.

Furthermore Rizvi (2003) and Memon (2007) point out that the downgrading of teachers' status adds to the myriad of education challenges that exist in Pakistan because of the low level of teacher training. Rizvi (2003:ii) reveals that in Karachi, there is "a high number of under-educated, under-trained, under-paid and most notably of all under-valued

government primary school teachers". Rizvi questions teachers' effectiveness and wonders how this impacts on the learners in terms of becoming the "enlightened and informed citizens of tomorrow" (Rizvi:ii).

Ahmad et al (2012) believe that many of the challenges in Pakistan can be attributed to poor policy implementation. According to them, policy implementation gaps contribute to poor communication, weak administration, poor policy evaluation, inadequate financial resources being allocated to education, public servants having a negative attitude, inefficient bureaucratic structure, failed decentralisation structures, a lack of political will, a leadership vacuum and deeply entrenched corruption. The Pakistan EFA review report (Pakistan 2014) lists the following two education policies that the country has been implementing in the past two decades: the National Education policy 1998–2010 and the National Education Policy of 2009. The report claims that these policies were formulated based on wide consensus among stakeholders, some of which are listed, but notably teachers do not appear in the list (Pakistan 2014:7). Rizvi (2003) believes that teachers are ignored in policy formulation in Pakistan. The EFA Review report (Pakistan 2014) states further that the National Education Policy 1998–2010 was not effectively implemented because of unforeseen and abrupt political changes that occurred due of a military coup and insurgency. It goes on to report that the National Education Policy was also faced with implementation challenges because no proper implementation follow-up mechanism was put in place. The report attributes this to the decentralisation of primary and secondary from the Federal Ministry of Education, and explains that this has weakened statutory coordination at institutional level.

Nepal's statistics, on the other hand, look considerably more positive. The GMR 2000–2015 (UNESCO 2015) places Nepal on the list of countries that have increased primary



education attainment rates by over 20%. Although the report indicates that poverty affects primary attainment rates, it notes that the attainment rates of children from the poorest households have increased. This despite the fact that Wagle (2012) and Joshi (2013) place Nepal among the poorest counties in the world and also point out that it is classified as a low income country. Graner (2006) reports that attempts to introduce FPE in Nepal date back as far as 1955. The article reviews education policies that have been developed in Nepal in the last 50 years and highlights the objectives of these policies, assessing their achievements and failures. Graner (2006), notes that education policies in Nepal have all targeted the provision of UPE, however, none of these policies have ever been achieved, and instead deadlines have been postponed. Graner (2006) views this as either lack of achievement or lack of commitment.

Judging by the current education system in Nepal, its achieving UPE is unlikely (Graner 2006). Graner describes how, in 1955, the Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPC) handed over its report and advised government to introduce free UPE across the country. Both Graner (2006) and Mathema (2007) point out that the UPE policy has in the last few decades led to an increase in enrolment at all levels. According to Mathema (2007), primary school numbers grew from 400 000 in 1971 to 3.9 million in 2001. Mathema (2007) reports that the GER stood at 131% at primary school level, but that the net enrolment ratio (NER) stood at 84%, and attributes this to 16% of the children in the age bracket six to 10 not going to school, as well as children dropping out of school and repeating. These statistics are confirmed by Wagle (2012), who gives more recent data indicating that there has been an improvement: that the GER in 2011–2012 had risen to 135% and the NER to 95 %. Wagle (2012) estimates that there are about 4,9% children out of formal primary education. Graner (2006) describes this dropping out and repetition as "human wastage", and notes that, because primary education had not been universalised

by 1975, the set goals stated in the NNEPC report had not been achieved. Graner believes that the situation prevails today.

Nevertheless, there has been improvement. In 2009 the NER stood at 93,7 % compared to 81% in 2001. The completion rate had also improved from 42% in 1998 to 67% in 2009, and the Grade 1 dropout rate, which stood at 19,2% in 1998, had declined to 6,5% in 2009 (National Environmental Health Center& Gorakhakali Manakamana Study and Research Center, 2010:5). The National Environmental Health Center (NEHC) and the Gorakhakali Manakamana Study and Research Center (GMSRC) conducted a study entitled "Internal efficiency of primary education", based on research among teachers, parents and 100 individual students. Twenty Head teachers and 20 teachers were also interviewed. The survey was conducted in all five geographical districts and covered 20 schools, therefore both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were used.

It worth noting that public schooling in Nepal is free up to Grade 8 for all children and up to Grade 10 for children from selected social groups and selected areas (Parajuli & Archaya 2014). These include disadvantaged and endangered groups in areas like Karnali (see Wagle 2012). Parajuli and Archaya contributed to a study on free compulsory education in Federal Nepal, which was commissioned by UNESCO. This study formed part of a UNESCO compilation entitled *A resource material on education and federalism in Nepal* (UNESCO 2014). The studies are meant to support Nepal's provision of education as it prepares to become a federal state. During the compilation of the above studies, Nepal was in the process of drafting the first constitution of the Federal Republic of Nepal (UNESCO 2014).

Wagle (2012) also provides the background to Nepal's political landscape. According to Wagle (2012) and Joshi (2013), Nepal experienced political unrest in the period 1996–

2006 after becoming a multiparty democratic state in 1990 under a constitutional monarchy. The political unrest and insurgence that prevailed thereafter was the result of the influence of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) taking advantage of the failed promises of democracy. Wagle (2012) further describes how an estimated 100 000 to 150 000 people were displaced, and children were either turned into soldiers or killed or displaced together with their parents. The war came to an end in 2006, and as Joshi (2013) explains, 1 300 members of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) joined the army. This was probably because, at that point, the party also joined the democratic race, as revealed by Wagle (2012).

Joshi (2013) notes that the political landscape in Nepal since the abolition of the monarchy has been fragile, with frequent changes in leadership, but that a new era is dawning as the new constitution is being developed. It was only in 2006, however, that the situation normalised and an interim constitution and government were put in place. These changes disrupted the governance of the country and of course the education system. This is described by Graner (2006), who explains that, in December 2002, students affiliated to the Maoists challenged private schools about the exorbitant fees they were charging. In January 2003 an agreement was reached that private boarding schools would reduce their fees. Graner further describes the reign of terror that arose from the payment of private school fees, and how in rural areas, these schools were stormed and closed down. Even teachers and students in rural government schools were not spared – many were held hostage, tortured and killed.

It was probably as a result of the above that UNESCO undertook the compilation entitled *A resource material on education and federalism in Nepal* in an attempt to assist the education sector. The studies focussed on how education could best be governed under the

prevailing structures. The studies were informed by best practices of countries with similar systems of governance, as well as by data on the current situation in Nepal (UNESCO 2014). In their study on free compulsory education in Federal Nepal, Parajuli and Archarya (2014) gathered data that facilitated negotiations through interaction with parents, teachers, teachers' unions, school management committee (SMC) members, parents teachers associations (PTAs), municipalities, and education officers at the central and district offices. Some professionals responded to questionnaires by means of e-mails, and there were altogether 75 participants. In summary, Parajuli and Archarya (2014) report that the 60-year effort to make education free in Nepal has been unsuccessful, and attribute this to a lack of political commitment, weak management capacity of the system, and poor financial provision.

Citing some of the development plans that illustrate to what extent the issue of free and compulsory education has been prioritised by government, Parajuli and Archarya suggests that several attempts have been made in Nepal to make education free. Each time, however, fees have again crept in. The first development plan (1956–1961) envisaged UPE by 1985. This was followed by the Education Act of 1962, which also anticipated implementing free and compulsory education in selected districts. In these districts, local authorities needed to raise 75% of the funds and government would cover the remaining 25%. The intention was for local authorities to raise the required funds by increasing tax, but the plan collapsed because of poor planning (Parajuli & Archarya 2014:80). In 1975 free compulsory education was announced again, but this time it was going cover Grades 1 to 3, and schools were not going to be expected to raise tuition fees, however, inevitably, schools eventually had to do so. Despite this, Parajuli and Archarya (2014) believe that this can be said to have been the first introduction of free compulsory education in Nepal, and over time free textbooks were also introduced for these grades.

Shiwakoti, Shrestha, Lamichhane, Adhikari, Devkota and Shrestha (2009) indicate, however, that even textbooks are not really free in Nepal, because learners still need to buy one or two textbooks. Since there are still some indirect costs, for example for school uniforms, which many parents cannot afford, Shiwakoti et al conclude that FPE has not benefited parents. This is in contravention of the 1990 constitution, in which education is recognised as a human right and which provides for free and compulsory education. The Education Act of 1971 as amended in 2001 is also committed to the provision of free and compulsory education.

Wagle (2012), in a study on dropout from schools in Nepal, lists additional indirect costs as being the purchase of exercise books and the payment of examination fees. According to Wagle (2012), fees for school maintenance and teachers' salaries are also charged by schools. As Parajuli and Archarya (2014) and Shiwakoti et al (2009) note, even government-aided schools find themselves having to charge tuition fees to pay teachers. These authors likewise indicate that free education is catered for in public schools but not in private schools.

The levying of additional fees is not the only factor leading to learners in Nepal dropping out, however. Wagle (2012) indicates, in addition, factors such as child labour, early marriage, repetition, corporal punishment, poor attitudes of teachers towards students because of improper training, lack of appreciation of education by parents from poor backgrounds, an irrelevant curriculum which does not relate to students' environment, the remote location of some schools, the need to do household chores, the opportunity cost of schooling, a lack of infrastructure, and a shortage of teaching and learning materials.

Under FPE in Nepal, challenges for boys differ from those for girls. The challenges faced by girls with regard to completing an education arise from the prevailing issues of gender

equality and equity. Wagle (2012) and Trynduk (2013) explain that some of the gender inequalities are as a result of girls marrying early and going to live at their husband's home. Thus families tend not to value girls' education, although they value education for boys, encouraging and enabling them to attend school, especially in rural areas. Even when girls do go to school, they drop out early to get married (Trynduk 2013). This cultural norm therefore prevents girls from gaining access to education. Wagle (2012) believes that this is perpetuated partly by the non-enforcement of compulsory. It is worth noting, however, that this phenomenon is not unique to Nepal, but is a common characteristic of developing countries. Myers and Harvey (2011) note that one in three girls in developing countries is confronted with early marriage Myers and Harvey (2011) point out that it is particularly prevalent in South Asia, where 46% of girls drop out of school, while in Sub-Saharan Africa the figure is 38%. Statistics indicate that out of nine countries, Nepal shows the second lowest percentage of girls in the education system at 55%, followed by Malawi at 51%, comparatively in Bangladesh at 66% and Niger at 75% they are pretty high.

Further to this is the issue of the caste system, which seems to be a challenge in South Asia. Wagle (2012) explains that the Dalits are the "untouchable" and therefore bottom caste that is socially marginalised in Nepal. Discrimination based on the caste system is illegal, but in practice it still exists (Wagle 2012; Shiwakoti et al 2009; Trynduk 2013). The Dalits are deprived from participating in social activities, entering a temple and marrying people from other castes. This affects their access to services such as education and health. In some places this extends to the school: the Dalit and non-Dalit children sit separately in school and Dalit children may even be made to learn standing up at the back of the class while other children sit (Wagle 2006).

Trynduk (2013) in a study entitled "A study of girls' education in the Chepang community of Nepal" writes that the Chepang caste is similarly discriminated against. They therefore don't attach much value to education, because they are shy and easily dominated by other groups. Shiwakoti et al (2009) explain that the Chepang are among five groups that are discriminated against. Moreover their geographical location is isolated and their infrastructure undeveloped, therefore they are also isolated from services. This includes education as well and in light of this their children are deprived access to education. Trynduk (2013) posits that girls are mostly affected, because they are expected to do house chores and take care of their siblings rather than attend school. Shiwakoti et al's (2009) findings reveal, however, that caste discrimination is no longer a barrier to accessing education, except for the Dalits.

Archarya (2007:xi) indicates the multiple factors that cause inequality and disparity in education as "high levels of poverty, fragile environments, entrenched gender and caste discrimination, vulnerable children, disabled children, working children, HIV affected children and those displaced by conflict". The grade repetition rate, which stood at 14% in 2010, poses another challenge in Nepal, as well as the GER for the last grade (UNESCO & UNICEF 2013). Wagle (2012) decries the high dropout rates and points out that the education system's inefficiency contributes to this, as do other external factors which were listed earlier in this section. In conclusion it can therefore be said that numerous factors in Nepal contribute to the non-realisation of UPE and add to the challenges of implementation of free and compulsory education.

## **2.8 Chapter summary**

It can be inferred from the literature on Nepal and Pakistan that even developing countries outside of Africa seem to face the same educational challenges as those faced by African

countries. Like African countries, they have not achieved UPE, which in this study is synonymous to FPE because FPE is as a result of the UPE global education agenda. Some countries refer to FPE as UPE and others as EFA. Their education systems are dogged by poor governance, a lack of resources, a lack of qualified teachers, gender disparities, a shortage of teaching and learning facilities, culturally related challenges, a lack of appreciation in some quarters because of the opportunity cost associated with education and labour, poverty, poor monitoring mechanisms, a shortage of textbooks, a lack of consultation on policy implementation, poor policy implementation and evaluation, political instability, and corruption. The focus in developing countries still falls on access, however equity remains a challenge.

The converse is true in developed countries, however. The developed countries studied here – the USA and Finland – have attained UPE, and their biggest concern is now on the quality of education. Interestingly, each of these countries' education systems and education cultures differ, which can probably be attributed to their different historical backgrounds. Developed countries' commitment to and investment in education, can naturally not be compared with that of developing countries, where resources are limited. Therefore the expectations of the international community with regard to developing countries' achieving the global education agenda in the absence of a level playing field cannot be justified. As Richards (2011) asserts, this could be described as being tantamount to neo-colonialism. In fact, developing countries need to be assisted financially and technically to enable them to fulfil their obligations in respect of education being recognised as a human right.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Theoretical framework**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework underpinning this study. FPE is driven by theoretical frameworks such as human rights, human capital, systems and modernisation, based on the notion that education is a human right as declared in the Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. Furthermore education is considered to be one of the most fundamental engines that enhance economic growth and development. Education is also viewed as a tool for modernisation, and because by its very nature it operates within certain systems at macro, micro and meso levels, those systems play a pivotal role in ensuring that educational aims and objectives are achieved. Their achievement is further determined by their effective implementation and sustainability.

#### **3.2 The systems theory**

As we have seen above, one theory is unlikely to be adequate in providing a true understanding of FPE – especially in the context of a developing country like Swaziland. The researcher therefore considers the use of more than one theory or rather different theories "packaged" as one – systems theory – as the appropriate theoretical framework.

Moving beyond understanding "system" as a term, Walonick (1993) asserts that systems theory is characterised by the interaction of its components and the non-linearity of those interactions. As Walonick (1993:1) explains, systems theory provides an internally consistent framework for classifying and evaluating the world. With this in mind, the researcher believes that the world can also be viewed as a system made up of different continents and countries managed by various governments that function through various

departments or ministries. Pondering this, it seems logical to state that a school and a unit or subsection of a department of education of any country is directly or indirectly part of a country's system. It is on this premise therefore that I uphold the view of Cheruto and Benjamin (2010), who explain that the systems theory deals with relationships and interactions in a system, and suggest that schools, like other organisations, are social systems. This applies not only to schools but also to the external environment that influences the way in which schools function. This is well articulated by Bastedo (2004), who points out that organisations are influenced by their environment.

An organisation's environment consists of other organisations which are of an economic, political or social nature. Bastedo (2004) indicates that all modern organisation theories use the open systems theory, which means the systems theory is made up of multiple organisation theories. Bastedo gives examples of theories such as contingency theories, institutional theories, and resource dependency theories, which all state that an organisation's survival depends on its relationship with its environment. Bastedo further posits that the open systems theory has changed the way in which schools are perceived because of its organisation and its demands on educational leaders. Bastedo (2004) goes on to say: Treating schools as if they are independent of their environment would lead to wide misperceptions of the driving factors behind organizational change. Contemporary studies of accountability movements, teacher professionalization, and instructional leadership all benefit from a strongly open systems approach to understanding environmental demands and the resulting adaptation in school policy and its implementation, or lack thereof.

The school is a subsystem of the education system, which is complex and composed of many subsystems. These systems are the macro system, which is the state; the school,

which is the mesosystem; and the class or microsystem. Cheruto and Benjamin (2010:73) further explain "that at each of these levels, educational decisions are influenced by different actors, for example, at the school level there is the school committee, the head teacher, teachers, and parents who make certain decisions and give opinions on the management of the school". Similarly, as Adepoju, Adunola and Fabiyi (2007) note in their research, in this study "input" refers, indirectly, to educational resources. "Process" involves management strategy employed to transform the input into output – skills and knowledge acquired.

The above explanation links up with implementation and sustainability of schools in particular and education in general. Implementation and sustainability of FPE in Swaziland reasonably depends on the interaction of educational stakeholders such as government, teachers, parents and learners, some as educational resources and others, for example students, as educational outputs. Between these two we find the process of implementation and sustainability. This is the process that illuminates the roles of other players, such as policy-makers, government officials, politicians and civil society, because their interrelationship and interdependence is vital to the success of the system.

The systems theory is applied in this study, because in doing so, these subsystems can be meaningfully interpreted using the constructivist paradigm that informs the researcher's research beliefs and world view. It was indicated at the beginning of this section that the systems theory that underpins this study comprises modernisation theory (input), implementation and sustainability theory (process), and education and human rights theory (output). I thus dug into each individually in an attempt not to only understand the research phenomena under investigation, but also to explain and perhaps analyse the data drawn from participants or respondents.

### **3.2.1 Implementation theory**

It has already been mentioned that the implementation and sustainability theories, which refer to "processes" within the system as expounded by Hill and Hupe (2002), form part of the systems theory. Elaborating on this and drawing on Easton (1953) in Hill and Hupe (2002), it is worth noting that in a political system, implementation is a throughput because it occurs within a system consisting of inputs, outputs and outcomes. Paudel (2009) conceptualises implementation as a process, output and outcome, the outcome in this case being the actual practice on the ground. It is for this reason that the implementation theory is embedded in the systems theory.

The question at hand when considering issues pertaining to implementation; is what is to be implemented (Hill & Hupe 2002). The response to this question is clearly policy. It is on this premise that the interplay between policy and practice is based in this study. It is worth noting, however, that implementation theory has not reached consensus with regard to theory itself. There are numerous schools of thought in the field, which can be attributed to the complex nature of implementation. DeLeon and DeLeon [sa], cited in an Oxford Journal downloaded in April, 2013, posits that implementation theory has reached a dead end.

The focus of this study is not on implementation theory but on the implementation of FPE in Swaziland. However, the content of the various implementation schools of thought provide the study with a good base on which to make comparisons and formulate supporting arguments. Comparisons are used not as a design but more as a tool for presenting arguments or discussing explanations without delving into the theoretical and methodological merits and demerits of theories. This is made possible because this aspect of the study is mainly based on the systems theory. It is important to note (Paudel 2009) that some of the perspectives examined here are Western in nature, therefore the

implementation contexts differ from those of developing countries such as Swaziland. However, Paudel also acknowledges that the implementation process is very similar in both contexts, making an interrogation of the different schools of thought very worthwhile. Paudel (2009) believes that it is also worth looking at some of the schools of thought found in developing countries, because policy implementation in these countries hinges on them. This should be borne in mind when considering implementation schools of thought with a Western orientation. Paudel (2009) citing Saetren (2005) posits that policy implementation in developing countries is faced with challenges and concerns that are influenced by numerous factors such as poverty, negative economic and political factors, a lack of participation by stakeholders, and the uniqueness of each country. Additional factors are limited policy-making capacity and ineffective programme implementation.

Cerna (2013) elucidates how the development of implementation theories emanated from the work of Pressman and Wildavsky (1973), who are considered to have been the originators of implementation theory. Hill and Hupe (2002) believe, however, that implementation theories emerged from organisational theory, except that the term "implementation" was not used. According to these authors, the evolution of implementation theories has been the result of several historical journeys. Hill and Hupe (2002) describe how implementation studies emerged around the 1970s. As the field evolved, it merged with several schools of thought at different stages, and the resultant theories are divided into the first, second and third generation. The approaches used were classified into three categories: the top-down approach, the bottom-up approach, and the hybrid approach, which other scholars such as Matland (1995) refer to it as the synthesis approach. An understanding of these theories is crucial to this study, because it is through them that conclusions on the implementation of FPE can be drawn.

Importantly, Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) popularised the idea of policy implementation failing to meet its desired goals. Their work was therefore dubbed "first generation". Pressman and Wildavsky also brought to the attention of policy-makers, researchers and so forth the possibility of policy implementation failure and its consequences. Pressman and Wildavsky suggested that governments should allocate resources effectively and efficiently to promote the welfare of civil society. Reviewing the work of Pressman and Wildavsky, Fischer et al (2007) support the rational model approach to implementation advocated by Pressman and Wildavsky and used commonly by governments today. This approach entails a linear relationship between policy goals and implementation, and requires proper bureaucratic procedures to be put in place. As laudable as the view of Fischer et al may seem, the researcher critiques their short-sightedness in regard to the delays often associated with bureaucracy.

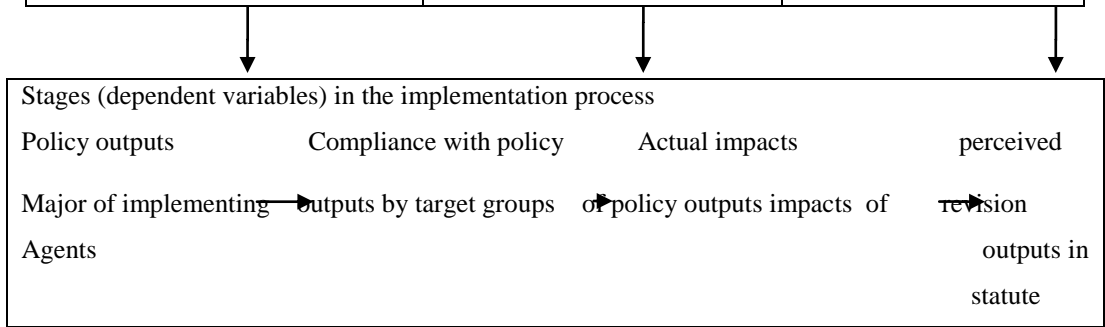
In their study in Ghana, Sarfo and Baah-Mintah (2013) focus mainly on procurement and public financial management, and argue that government institutions undergo many lengthy bureaucratic processes which often result in low productivity, inefficiency and loss of money and have a detrimental effect on budget. Attempts to address these bureaucratic problems and ensure effective implementation must involve the provision of adequate resources and a clearly spelt out system of responsibility as well as a hierarchical method of supervisory control.

After the first-generation implementation theories, the second generation theories arose. These consist of the top-down theory and the bottom-up theory. Among the prominent protagonists of the top-down theory were Van Meter and Van Horn (1975), Nakamura and Smallman (1980), and Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983) (Fischer et al 2007). This theory hinges on implementation being hierarchical and based on centrally developed policies (Fischer et al 2007). The theory supposes that central authority is in a better position to ensure that policy is implemented and the desired goals met. Matland (1995), summarising the works of Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989), emphasises three sets of factors that aid successful policy implementation: the ability to trace the problem, statutes' ability to

structure implementation, and variables that are not statutory but affect implementation (Matland 1995:146). This necessitated the development or formulation of 16 independent variables classified under the three sets of factors, which influence goal compliance in the implementing process. These are tabulated below.

Table 3.1 Factors and variables that affect goal compliance (Mazmanian & Sabatier 1989:542)

<b>The ability to trace the Problem</b>	<b>Statutes' ability to structure implementation</b>	<b>Non-statutory variables affecting implementation</b>
1. Availability of technical theory and technology  2. Diversity of target group behaviour and target group as a percentage of the population  3. Extent of behavioural change required	4. Incorporation of adequate casual theory  5. Unambiguous policy directives  6. Financial resources  7. Hierarchical integration within and among implementing institutions  8. Decisions rules of implementing agencies  9. Recruitment of implementing official  10. Formal access by outsiders	11. Socio-economic conditions and technology  12. Media attention to the problem  13. Public support  14. Attitudes and resources of constituency groups  15. Support from sovereigns  16. Commitment and leadership skills of implementing officials



On the other hand Barrett and Fudge (1981) are of the opinion that the top-down approach depoliticises the implementation process, despite political processes taking place throughout. They state further that policy implementation is difficult to separate from policy formulation. Fischer et al (2007) believe that policy-making is on-going, but Hill and Hupe (2002) disagree, as this would make analysis impossible. Fischer et al (2007: 53) mentions that the bottom-up theory is associated with "Lipsky (1971; 1980), Ingram (1977), Elmore (1980), or Hjern and Hull (1982). Tumadottir (2009), points out that Lipsky (1980), is considered to be the father of the bottom-up approach. Lipsky describes implementation as the everyday problem-solving strategies of "street-level bureaucrats" (in Fischer et al 2007). He describes the challenges and pressures that policy implementers are faced with. Lipsky (1969) concluded that this is why many of them eventually tend to develop their own culture of doing things and coping. Lipsky (1969) therefore describes these "street level bureaucrats" as people employed by government who interact with citizens, make independent decisions and have a strong impact on their clients. Police, teachers and low-level judges are good examples of street level bureaucrats, as well as public professionals (Tummers & Bekkers 2012).

According to Hill and Hupe (2002), these public professionals or bureaucrats implement policies based on the context that they work in and the prevailing culture that exists in their environment. They often find themselves working under difficult conditions, such as a lack of human and organisational resources, and threats that are both physical and psychological. Furthermore, their role expectations are ambiguous, contradictory and sometimes unattainable (Lipsky 1980) in Tumadottir (2009). These professionals are therefore considered to have high service ideals under intolerable conditions that require them to use their own discretion (Hill & Hupe 2002). Therefore "attempts to control them



hierarchically simply increases their tendency to stereotype and disregard the needs of their clients" (Hill & Hupe 2002:66).

Cerna (2013) expounds on how Hjern and Hull (1982) and Barrett and Fudge 1981 challenge hierarchical structures in organisations and are of the view that a great deal of action depends on compromise by people in organisations or between various organisations.

The ambiguity and conflict model developed by Matland (1995), which combines the top-down and bottom-up approaches, forms part of the second-generation implementation theories. It can be used both in theory and in practice. Cerna (2013) supports Matland's notion of combining the top- down and bottom–up approaches of policy implementation. Cerna argues that "combining the two approaches might thus draw on their main strengths while minimising their weaknesses. Policy implementation often takes place because a wide range of stakeholders interact between different levels – thus both central policy-makers and local actors on the ground are important for successful implementation" (Cerna 2013: 19) According to Matland, the approaches that exist, have a myriad of variables that affect implementation – more so because, important as the variables may be, they have been disregarded. He believes that synthesising the variables by simply combining them without theoretically considering their interrelationships worsens the problem of implementation. Matland believes that policy implementation is determined by the extent of ambiguity and conflict in policy goals. His conflict and ambiguity model has four implementation paradigms, which are: high conflict with low ambiguity (political implementation), high conflict with high ambiguity (symbolic implementation), low conflict with high ambiguity (experimental implementation), and low conflict with low ambiguity (administrative implementation) (Matland 1995).

Matland (1995) further describes the conflict and ambiguity model as entailing two approaches – the rational and the bureaucratic approach. The rational approach assumes that all policy goals are agreed upon by all actors, therefore there is a low level of conflict in the implementation process. The bureaucratic approach, on the other hand, is followed when the set goals have not been agreed upon, leading to a high level of conflict. This then necessitates bargaining in order to reach consensus, and coalitions being formed among the actors. The agreement that is reached is not necessarily on the set goals, but on what action should be taken. In most cases an agreement is not arrived at by actors. The bureaucratic approach could lead to coerciveness to ensure compliance. According to this approach, conflict will exist if the actors are interdependent but have incompatible objectives and do not interact. The level of conflict could increase if the level of incompatibility between concerns increases. The importance of any given decision will determine the level of aggressiveness.

The ambiguity model is also characterised by two categories – ambiguity of goal and ambiguity of means. Matland (1995) explains that there is a negative correlation between conflict and ambiguity. The clearer the goals the most unlikely that there will be conflict, while if there is ambiguity of goals, different actors could interpret them differently. Matland further states that ambiguity also includes ambiguity of policy means, in terms of availability of resources and its practical applicability. The top-down approach discourages ambiguity, however in most cases policy implementation is experiential and occurs by trial and error. However, Paudel (2009) is of the view that Matland overlooks the issue of policy discretion, which is a common feature used by policy-makers.

Implementation is viewed as the carrying out of the policy decision; it is usually based on a legal framework, on executive orders or on court decisions (see Blount 2013;

Mazmanian & Sabatier 1989; Mazmanian & Sabatier 1983). In this study, Swaziland with regard to FPE assumes two positions – that of a legal framework and of a court decision (Paudel 2009), the legal position being informed by the FPE Act of 2010 and the Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland (2005), and the court decision being the High Court judgment against the GoS (Swaziland 2009a). In summary, policy cannot be regarded as a constant. It is mediated by actors who may be basing their actions on different assumptions from those formulating the policy, and inevitably it undergoes interpretation and modification and in some cases subversions. Generally speaking, policy is a problematic concept. Thus, various actors make different claims as to its true features (Hill & Hupe 2002).

The third-generation theories combine the top-down and the bottom-up approaches. They include many perspectives, but the work Elmore (1995), Sabatier (1986a), and Goggin, Bowman (1990) (in Paudel 2009) are cited most often. Elmore came up with the backward mapping approach, which blends the top-down and bottom-up approaches. For him, the policy instrument and availability of resources should be considered first and foremost; thus he refers to this as forward mapping. In addition it entails the identification of implementers' incentives and the target group, as Matland (1995) suggests.

Sabatier's advocacy coalition framework, which consists of a group of actors from different organisations who share the same goals in the implementation process, is essential to an understanding of third-generation theories (see also Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1991). According to Cerna (2013:5), the coalition framework "specifies that there are sets of core ideas about causation and value in public policy; these coalitions form because certain interests are linked to them". While these networks of actors can be mapped within a policy sector (Cerna 2013), Sabatier (1986; 1988) argues that policies

should be analysed in cycles and over a long period of time, because the parameters within which they operate, remain stable for some time. Socio-economic and legal factors are some of the parameters that remain stable (Matland 1995; Wanna, Butcher & Freyens 2010). This framework has been criticised, however, for not considering social and historical changes as well as political changes, which commonly occur on the continent of Africa due to leaders' aspirations and agendas differing from the broad goals and philosophies of states or countries (Fischer et al 2007).

### **3.2.2 Sustainability theory**

Peter and Swilling (2014) explain that sustainability as a theoretical foundation, field of research and discipline, is still being developed. Jalkeanen and Nygren (2005) support this assertion and state that sustainability is a new ideology. Peter & Swilling further note that there are different convergent theories on sustainability that have emerged. Contrary to this view Jalkeanen and Nygren (2005) argue that sustainability is not a unified, nor coherent whole, instead it has numerous distinct and conflicting facets, which become philosophies of sustainability. It is in light of this that Jalkeanen and Nygren conceive sustainability as being philosophical, rather than being a theoretical framework or model. Nevertheless, what is of interest to this study is that despite the different views, there is one common thing that advocates of sustainability agree with, and that is, sustainability is about the human environment. An environment which consists of “social, economic, environmental, physical and political systems” (Peter & Swilling 2014: 1594) The Berkshire encyclopedia concurs with Peter and Swilling when it mentions that theories of sustainability seek to respond to social and cultural problems. The Berkshire encyclopedia refers to the different dimensions highlighted by Peter and Swilling as models. The models are classified as the; economic model, ecological model and political model, which influence the social system.

The researcher is of the view that all the debates and attempts that have been highlighted with regards to the areas that sustainability focuses on are in line with this study. The debate on the economic benefits that can be derived from education as highlighted in the literature matches the economic sphere of sustainability. The same holds with regards to the financial cost of FPE and the envisaged economic gains in the long run. Jalkanen and Nygren (2005) attest to this economic claim. These authors acknowledge that political and social decisions are now based on economic cost-benefit analysis. However, Jalkanen and Nygren criticise the solemn focus on economics and note that there are also other pertinent issues that need to be considered. These issues consist of values in relation to diversity, the natural environment, treatment of animals, cultures and traditions, and technological innovation cautiousness. The researcher is of the view that these issues are addressed in the other dimensions of sustainability, such as, the ecological and social dimensions. On the same note, issues related to access and equity in education which this study is about, belong to the social and political dimensions. The school infrastructure, surroundings and upkeep align with the ecological sphere.

In the *Berkshire encyclopaedia of sustainability: The spirit of sustainability* (p 380) sustainability is defined as "the capacity to maintain an entity, outcome or process over time". According to Lynam and Herdt (1989) in Widok (2009:43), sustainability is "the capacity of a system to maintain output at a level approximately equal to or greater than its historic average with the approximation determined by the historical level of variability".

Widok (2009) further discusses social sustainability, which FPE falls under, as it is classified under social welfare in government budgets including that of Swaziland. Social sustainability has several facets that include social values, which are sometimes referred to

as social capital. The education system is a component of the social system, and its operations are influenced by the social values of society. Widok (2009:43) defines social values as consisting of "transparency, fairness, balance, equality, wellbeing, health and safety". Most of these values fit the purpose of the introduction of FPE very well. Social sustainability concerns itself with protecting, promoting and preserving these values, such as "human rights, preservation of diversity, protection and promotion of health and safety, intra- and intergenerational equity among many others" (Craig & Benson 2013; Widok 2009; Du Plessis 2011).

According to Dobson (1996) there is a need to provide answers to normative questions on sustainability, such as "What needs to be sustained?". The same question is posed by Jalkanen and Nygren (2005) and Meisch and Voget-Kleschin (2015). Jalkanen and Nygren point out that scientific theory on sustainability does not specifically point out what is to be sustained. Meanwhile Meisch and Voget-Kleschin citing Dobson (1999), advance this argument by adding four (4) more questions to the one on what is to be sustained, and these are why? How? What are the objects of concern? What is sustainability between human made and natural capital? On the other hand Jalkanen and Nygren (2005:2) ask the same question as follows "in a world of limited resources, possibilities and resources, what is it that we are to sustain, is a question that science leaves to be dealt with elsewhere"

Dobson (1996) notes further that sustainability is not only for present but also for future generations. This view is strongly supported by Becker (2012) in Meisch and Voget-Kleschin (2015) who define sustainability as the establishment of continuity of actions and life orientations by human beings in terms of; human existence, future generations and nature. The issue of intergenerational justice therefore comes into play. A position that

Christen and Schmidt (2012) take and elaborate on based on the Brundtland Commission. These authors (Meisch and Voget-Kleschin) point of reference is the World Conference on Education and development of 1987, which places emphasis on the principle of justice. This is based on the claim that everyone has a right to live a decent life. Meisch and Voget-Kleschin further refer to the principle of justice as being a theory of justice. However, they note that the theory of justice needs to be spelt out in terms of the type of justice in relation to the sustainability concept. They then point out that this is within a complex system that requires natural scientific explanations of nature and social organization. A matter that Peter and Swilling (2014) have a conviction of, they contend that embedded in the sustainability theory are numerous theories that are conglomerate with a complex system. This results in the complexity theory being a subset of the sustainability system. On account of this, Peter and Swilling (2014) define the complexity theory as, “the theory for multi-agent systems”. Multi-agent systems are “all systems, subsystems and subsystem components, and not just the actors within the system” (ibid: 1598). In respect of this study, the answer to the question regarding what needs to be sustained is FPE. Sustainability would therefore need to concern itself with ensuring an acceptable quality of FPE without compromising future quality for generations to come but being cognisant of the complexities that exist and hence the challenges herein.

According to Acker-Widmaier (1999 in Christen and Schmidt 2012), sustainability is also about distributive justice that needs to be supported by political justice because it cannot stand alone. Acker-Widmaier believes that the right to a decent life, which includes education, not only entails a theory of intra and intergenerational distributive justice, but also that which regulates institutional acts, for example political justice. The political justice concept suggests that each person has an equal right to a fully adequate scheme of basic rights and liberties, which scheme is compatible with a similar scheme for all (Rawls

1971) and should be continuous, that is, continue from one generation to another. The Berkshire encyclopedia on sustainability supports the notion of sustainability being practically directed to economic health, ecological integrity and social justice, and addressing the myriad of global problems. This kind of thinking is cemented in the UNESCO (2007) results of the seventh consultation of member states on the implementation of the convention and recommendations against discrimination in education, of 1960. The results from the consultation recommend the elimination of discrimination in education, promotion of equality of educational opportunities and universal access to education of good quality. It is thus important to highlight the concept of something being sustained from one generation to the next hinges on sustainability, which is well articulated in the MoET Sector Policy (2011) in which the political will of policy-makers in terms of implementation is highlighted. This has been useful to the researcher study of the theory and practice of FPE policies, particularly as it concerns implementation and sustainability of FPE in Swaziland.

### **3.2.3 Human rights theory**

Many scholars (for example Sifuna 2005; Kenya 2008; Irfan 2008; Nsibande 2009; Lekhetho 2013) have conducted research on FPE in their respective countries, where such research has also been implemented. These studies support the importance of education for every child, and portray education as an instrument that people can use to improve their lives, identify their potential and break out of poverty.

As discussed in chapter 1, the right to education is enshrined in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland, under which charges were filed against the GoS in 2009 to enforce the introduction of FPE in Swaziland (Swaziland 2009a). Based on this constitutional provision, as well as on the aims of FPE as reflected in national and



international documents (see for example, the MoET's EDSEC policy [Swaziland 2011b] and the Dakar Framework of 2000), as well as on SDG 4 in the SDGs (2015–2030). The researcher also considered the human rights theory as suitable and an important factor of the systems theory that centrally underpins this study.

Human rights were the world's first universal ideology (Weissbrodt 1988), yet they are still a global problem. Human rights debates and legislation are major features of the socio-political processes and institutions of modern societies (Turner 1993; Freeman 2011). Freedon (1991) comments that the peculiar nature of the concept of rights, as a "capsule" surrounding other social and political concepts such as liberty, welfare, interest and self-determination. This makes it impossible to disentangle an analysis of rights from the properties of such client concepts, the client being the person who should benefit and enjoy the right. Although the concept of rights is highly contested in law, philosophy and politics, according to Turner (1993) the silence about rights in education is important. Notably the silence that Turner claims is no longer so in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Advocates of human rights to education are pushing the agenda. It is in light of this that countries are committed to ensuring that children are afforded FPE. However, there are evasive disabling factors that thwart these efforts. UNESCO (2008: 2) describes some of these factors as being; "traditional attitudes that prevent girls from attending school, limited availability to schooling, including teachers, limited financial means of people living in poverty...".

Contests over rights as entitlements are a major feature of modern social life, such as international agencies' support for FPE. Turner (1993), notes that it would be difficult to understand either the domestic or the international contestation over the nature of social membership or over citizenship, especially for children and women, without some

fundamental notion of human rights. Human rights, according to the United Nations Charter, are fundamental rights that extend to but are not limited to education, and have to be regarded as a central aspect of the social process of globalisation (Robertson 1990).

### **3.2.4 Modernisation theory**

Modernisation theory became a framework for scholars of nation building after World War II. It was developed by David McClelland, who used it to explain how societies developed based on their cultural and personality styles (Agbo 2005). Harber and Oryema (2014) are of the view that modernisation changes complex, differentiated and agrarian societies into modern industrial societies. Marks (2009), supports this view. He notes that the modernisation theory argues that, as societies industrialise and develop the influence of social backgrounds, ascribed education outcomes and the subsequent socio-economic backgrounds decline. Educational achievement is therefore the outcome obtained at the end of a given period. It is also viewed as proof of the acquisition of certain skills, knowledge and technologies based on learning, as highlighted by Potokri (2013). As Mark (2009) indicates, educational achievement has become an important aspect of modernisation, development and social mobility. McClelland (in Agbo 2005) notes further that advancement is caused by the need for achievement. He claims that children can develop the need for achievement through literature stressing the significance of self-help, competition and generally extroverted behaviour. Therefore, societies that wish to encourage their young to become entrepreneurs can impart the value of achievement to them at the right age. This can be interpreted as the age of basic education, which is appropriate for children expected to become future leaders and entrepreneurs.

Modernisation is therefore closely linked with the acquisition of modern values, usually from early in a child's life (McClelland 1961). According to Fagerlind and Saha (1989),

the basic assumption underlying the modernisation theory is that there is a direct causal link between five sets of variables in the process of modernisation, namely: modernising institutions, modern values, modern behaviour, modern society, and economic development. Harber and Oryema (2014) also emphasise that modernisation is associated with wealth and economic growth, which leads to development. School can thus be viewed as central to these processes of modernisation following its link with economic growth and development. The idea of FPE rests upon the notion that access to education reduces the ascribed social backgrounds and gender inequality; hence education promotes positive socio-economic returns for all, irrespective of social background (Marks 2009). Embedded within modernisation is the human capital theory, which advocates for countries to invest in human capital to stimulate economic growth and development.

Among other things, modernisation theorists believe that education is the most powerful factor in bringing about modernity, because it develops the individual from a young age to adulthood. Inkeles and Smith (1974) and Potokri (2014) contend that the individual human resource plays the most important role in the development process, because the modernity of a nation depends on its people, and a nation's economy cannot be highly productive unless the people involved in it have attained some degree of modernity. A study undertaken in Uganda by Harber and Oryema (2014) entitled "Modernisation theory: Prismatic society and educational decentralisation in Uganda, reveals that in the African context, modernisation is far from being attained in Eurocentric terms, because developing countries embrace both traditional and modern norms, creating a synthesis which eventually becomes refracted (Harber & Oryema 2014). Harber and Oryema refer to the refraction that occurs when a ray of light shines on a glass prism, and explain that modernisation involves transformation from traditional norms to modern ones. In

educational terms, societal values that are traditional in nature are transferred to the school – the very organ that is intended to transform children into people with modern values.

In an attempt to explain how education diffuses modern values and transforms traditional ones, Chaudhary (2013) argues that education inculcates individualistic and universal values that form part of modernisation, and that this is why education is being universalised and emphasis is being placed on the universalisation of FPE. Chaudhary goes on to give examples of some of the features of traditional life that modernisation is transforming, such as traditional art being replaced by the expressive arts found in the film and television industry, domestic trade being threatened by global trade, and environmental degradation. Harber and Onyema (2014) support the notion that the sanctioning of UPE and EFA in Jomtien in 1990 and Dakar in 2000 and the adoption of the MDGs were all aimed at universalising education.

### **3.3 Chapter summary**

This chapter began by highlighting the areas that would be covered in it. It then described the theoretical framework of the study, namely the systems theory. It elaborated further on the components of the systems theory incorporated in this study. It explained that the systems theory consists of subsystems that make up the inputs, throughputs and outputs of the system. Theories relating to the FPE programme in Swaziland, namely the systems theory itself, as well as the implementation theory, human rights theory, sustainability theory and modernisation theory, were examined in depth.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Research methodology**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of the research approach and design used in this study. It begins with clarifying the researcher's philosophical position as applicable to this study in support of the basis of the research, ontology, epistemology and the researcher's methodology choice.

#### **4.2 Philosophical position**

The philosophical position of any study is influenced by the paradigm that the researchers chooses. A paradigm is a world view based on the beliefs, values and methods applied in the research. Mộng Hà (2011:190) describes a paradigm as a framework that defines a research subject, research questions, the research process and the result interpretation". It therefore guides action in inquiry (Hammersley 2012). There are numerous research paradigms, such as positivism, post-positivism, constructivism/ Interpretivism, critical theory, emancipation, pragmatism and so forth. The action in inquiry of this study as highlighted by Mộng Hà (2011) will be guided by the constructivist/interpretivists paradigm.

Howe (2003), Hammersley (2012) elucidate that the constructivist and interpretivists paradigms are synonymous because they have similar characteristics. Krauss (2005) and De Villiers (2005) describe constructivism as an inquiry that is undertaken in a natural setting in which the phenomenon under study occurs. In such a setting the researcher interact with the subjects to obtain a better understanding of the phenomenon (Krauss 2005). Interpretivism is therefore about finding new interpretations of a reality based on the context in which it occurs, which is in its natural setting (De Villiers 2005).

Hammersley advances this argument and posits that to understand a phenomenon you need to understand why people do things in a certain way and the contextual orientation. De Villiers states further that the ontological assumption of this paradigm is that multiple realities exist within a phenomenon. According to Krauss (2005), the researcher's underlying belief system or assumption (ontology) influences the method of inquiry the researcher chose.

In regard to this study and in light of the above, the researcher believed at the outset that, in order to understand the phenomenon of the implementation of FPE in Swaziland and the FPE policies that exist, she needed to interact with policy-makers, policy implementers, parents, and the learners who are the recipients of FPE. The researcher's epistemological stance was that knowledge had to be drawn from the respondents who are experiencing the FPE phenomenon, and that these experiences had to be expressed. The explanation of the researcher's epistemological position was drawn from Potokri (2013), who points out that knowledge is created through interaction between you and the researched.

A qualitative research methodology was used because it was the most appropriate for this study. It aligned with the researcher's selected philosophical position (Potokri 2016; Joubish, Khurram, Ahmed, Fatima & Haider 2011). The appropriateness of this methodology is well described by Mason (2002) who expounds how qualitative research enables one to explore a wide dimension of the social world. In addition to this, Silverman (2013:53) elaborates that qualitative research provides an understanding of the participants' "perceptions, attitudes and their experiences of the social world". Mason (2002) further illuminates how qualitative research draws from the views, imaginations, social processes, institutions, discourses and relationships of the research participants.

These descriptions of qualitative research aligned well with the researcher's inquiry and pursuit of finding out how FPE in Swaziland is being implemented and its sustenance. This notion is supported by the institutionalised nature of the FPE implementation process and the discourses linked to the phenomenon. All of these factors played a significant role in influencing the researcher's choice for qualitative inquiry. This was also exacerbated by the researcher's epistemological position which is based on the premise that for the researcher to understand how FPE is being implemented in Swaziland, the researcher needed to draw information from the people that are experiencing its impact.

The researcher also needed to interrogate the relationships and interaction of the various stakeholders within the education system and beyond. This was based on the researcher's understanding that the success of FPE is influenced by the relationships that exist among the various stakeholders. In addition to this being cognisant of the fact that the implementation of FPE is supposed to be informed by policies, it became imperative that the researcher analyses the situation on the ground based on the views of the stakeholders and the policies that inform FPE. Qualitative research encompasses numerous facets in the sense that it is a technique for data collection and analysis, as well as a paradigm (Clarke & Braun 2013). It is on the basis of these attributes of qualitative research that the researcher deemed it fit. Fit for answering the research questions of this study and aligning with the theoretical framework underpinning this study.

Qualitative research methodology enabled the researcher to use several methods of data collection, which provided data on multiple realities and could also be used to interpret the phenomenon. Methods that were used were interviews, focus group discussions, observation and literature review. These methods were used so as to ensure that the triangulation of data would be possible. In addition, I held the epistemological view that in

order to understand a phenomenon, it had to be studied in its context, instead of using limited means that look only at restricted aspects of the reality and not at the whole, as quantitative methods do (Joubish et al 2011; Krauss 2005).

Krauss also believes that, to obtain a clear and in-depth understanding of what is going on in an organisation or institution, one needs to be there and gain first-hand experience of everything occurring in the institution, instead of using measurements or a fixed set of questions, as with the positivist paradigm. The researcher believes that this also holds true for an educational institution or institutions, which is the focus of this study. This is because the positivist paradigm uses natural science methods of inquiry based on the assumption that the social world can be studied in the same way as the natural world (Potokri 2016; Wahyuni 2012).

### **4.3 Research approach and design**

This section of the study focuses on the research approach and design. It elaborates on why qualitative research was used and the case study design for this study.

#### **4.3.1 Research approach**

As already indicated, this study hinges on a qualitative research approach (see section 1.10). The research phenomenon involves people in a social setting that are actively involved in the implementation of FPE. The use of this approach enabled the researcher to draw rich information from the participants. This was necessary, as the researcher believed that the implementers of FPE as well as education administrators had a better understanding of what was happening on the ground due to their first-hand experience of FPE since it was introduced in Swaziland. Their perceptions, belief systems and roles therefore provided this study with the rich data that was required.



The researcher's experience of how policy is interpreted and understood in Swaziland, or is made to be understood, was based on many factors that have influenced the way in which policy is being implemented, which influenced the researcher's methodological choice. The researcher therefore believed that it was through this type of research approach that this phenomenon could best be researched. In line with the researcher's philosophical position, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) state that it is the belief of qualitative researchers that "multiple-constructed realities abound, that time and context-free generalizations are neither desirable nor possible, that research is value-bound, meaning it is impossible to differentiate fully causes and effects, that logic flows from specific to general (e.g., explanations are generated inductively from the data)" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004:14); and that knower and known cannot be separated because the subjective knower is the only source of reality (Guba & Lincoln 1994).

#### **4.3.2 Research design**

This study used a case study design. Yin (2006) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry which focuses on a contemporary phenomenon in real life that is not clearly evident. Yin (2006) further explains that case study research is suitable for studying complex social phenomena. Because the phenomenon at hand is a complex social phenomenon, the researcher deemed it suitable to use case study research. Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtler (2006:269) define case study research as a form of qualitative research that attempts to "discover meaning, to investigate processes, and to gain insight into an in-depth understanding of an individual, group, or situation". Hence the researcher chose this design to obtain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of FPE in Swaziland. Moreover, the researcher believed that this design would also provide insight

into the interplay between the provisions of FPE policy and what is actually happening on the ground.

Insights into the sustainability of FPE were also gained by means of a case study design because the basis on which the sustainability of FPE depends, emerged as the study progressed. Wahyuni (2012) explains how case study research is conducted and reveals that it is influenced by three conditions, namely: the research questions asked in the form of why and how, the research not needing a control because the events that are studied are behavioural, and how case studies should be contemporary events and not historic ones. I can confidently state that the phenomenon which was studied, complied with these conditions, therefore the use of case studies as a research design was justified.

Based on Wahyuni (2012) the researcher elected to use multiple case studies, which entailed using a case study design which involved multiple sites (four different schools, located at different sites) and multiple methods to analyse the collected data, unlike with single case studies, which uses single cases. According to Wahyuni (2012:17), (t)he rationale behind the choice of multiple case studies over a single case study is to enable the researcher to compare the observed and revealed practices of participants in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of these practices.

In addition to the above motivation, the selection was based on the advantages of using a qualitative case study as highlighted by Scapens (2004). In an attempt to discuss the merits of this design, Scapens suggests that a case study can take one of two forms: it can be either a critical or an extreme case. A critical case is one that is concerned with critical events (Scapens 2004). In this study, the research questions are corresponded to that of a critical case, whereas an extreme case is undertaken to test theory or broaden its application to a wider range of circumstances. Since this study was driven by research

questions in respect of the implementation and sustainability of FPE and does not involve theory testing as such, it can be described as a critical case.

Additional advantages of using a case study design are that it brings understanding of complex issues and objects. This seems to align with the views of Adepoju and Fabiyi (2007), who note that issues surrounding UBE, or better yet FPE debates, are complex. The choice of this design was also based on the fact that a case study adds value to research because it extends the experiences and strengthens what is already known. Studies of this nature have not been conducted in Swaziland, but similar studies elsewhere that served as the springboard for this research (as cited in the literature review section) have shown this to be true. This also enabled the researcher to place emphasis on the detailed contextual analysis of a small number of events and their interrelationships (Scapens 2004; Starman 2013).

#### **4.4 Sample and sampling technique**

The sample for the study consisted of head teachers and teachers at four schools as well as MoET officers. Since the research design used was that of a case study, purposive sampling was used to select the schools. According to Burns and Grove (2007), purposive sampling is non-probability sampling, which requires the researcher to make a conscious decision about which individuals and institutions to engage based on the information they can provide. This technique enabled the researcher to manipulatively identify various demographic locations to include in the sample. It also enabled the researcher to determine the impact of the implementation of FPE on the schools based in those particular locations.

Four public schools were located in the Manzini region, which is the most central and the largest region in Swaziland (Swaziland 2013d). It was also conveniently located for the

researcher to access, because she is employed in the same region. Travel and cost constraints were therefore minimised.

One school was selected for each of the following types of location: urban, semi-urban, rural and industrial. In this study, the schools are referred to as school A, school B, school C, and school D. Schools located in different areas were chosen because despite them being from the same region, they differed from each other in many other ways, for example the way in which they were managed, the type of learners they served, the type of parents that were involved, and particularly the socio-economic backgrounds of learners from the different schools. School A was selected because it was a large urban public school which served children from low-medium to low socio-economic backgrounds. School B was a large, government-aided mission school located on the outskirts of Manzini, hence it was considered to be a semi-urban school. It served children from two very large slums in Manzini, namely Ka Khoza and Mancozeni, and the socio-economic backgrounds of these children varied between low-medium and low-low. School C was a rural school in the Manzini region situated in an ordinary rural setting and serving children in the rural community in which it was located. School D was a public school located in the Manzini industrial district in Matsapha, which served children in the Matsapha area who had mixed socio-economic backgrounds. Other schools referred to by students during interviews were given pseudonyms in the subsequent report.

At these schools, the Head teacher and one of the other teachers participated in the research, because they were the ones implementing the FPE policy in the schools. Representatives of the recipients of FPE, namely one parent and five learners in each school, were also involved. Two and in some cases three teachers in each school were recommended by the Head teacher. The researcher selected one of the recommended

teachers at each school to work with. The reason for this was to prevent the Head teacher from knowing exactly which person (participant) the researcher worked with. Initially the intention was that the selection of teachers would be based on number of years of experience under FPE. Each participant teacher was intended to have been involved in the FPE programme from its inception in 2010 and, if possible, progressively to have taught learners from Grade 1, where the application of FPE was introduced. However, this was not feasible in all the schools, because the Grade 6 teachers had joined the school well after the introduction of FPE. For instance, in school A the teacher entered the teaching profession immediately after graduating from college in 2013. In School C the Grade 6 teacher had been transferred from another school and so was new at the participant school. In some schools the teachers had progressed up to the lower primary level only that is up to Grade 4. The learners were taught by teachers who have been designated to teach upper primary. At the beginning of the research, the researcher had anticipated that the teachers progressed with the learners from Grade 1 to the upper level grade. Unfortunately that was not the case at the schools. Instead the progression of the learners with the teachers was from Grade 1 to 3, then Grade 4 to 5 and Grade 6 to 7. At each of these levels the learners progress with the initial teacher at the beginning of that particular level.

Three MoET education officers who are responsible for the FPE programme were also intended to be involved in the research. Only two officers were interviewed, however, because the chief inspector for primary schools had retired and the person who had been meant to be interviewed as an FPE officer was then interviewed as acting chief inspector for primary schools as well as FPE officer. To avoid confusing her role and designation, she is referred to as the senior MoET officer. Another officer who was interviewed was a regional primary school inspector in the Manzini region. These officers are responsible for ensuring that the FPE policy is implemented properly. The chief inspector for primary

schools is the overall overseer of the FPE programme, and the Regional Primary School Inspector is responsible for monitoring teaching at the primary level; as such they both play a crucial role in the implementation of the programme, since teaching is now monitored under the FPE programme. Obtaining information from them about the programme gave the researcher considerably more insight into the programme and its implementation. Their input confirmed some of what had already been gleaned from the schools, dispelled misconceptions and clarified data contradictions.

#### **4.5 Data collection methods**

In this study interviews, observations and document analysis were selected as data collection methods suitable for qualitative research, based on Lodico et al (2006). These authors indicate that "qualitative data are often gathered in the form of words, pictures, or both; these research tools also known as data collection methods produce data that allow for rich and thick descriptions of the phenomena being studied" (Lodico et al 2006:144). Considering that this is a qualitative study, using these methods of data collection was essential to enable the researcher to get insight through interviews, focus group discussions with the participants in their natural settings, as they are the ones who were experiencing the FPE phenomenon on the ground (Bisman & Highfield 2012). The use of document analysis as a method of data collection as well, was to triangulate the data collected at a later stage of the methodological process. Anney (2014: 277) defines triangulation as using "multiple and different methods, investigators, sources and theories to obtain corroborating evidence". The use of multiple data collection methods in this study was consistent with Anney's definition, as were the primary and secondary data collection sources used in this study.

### **4.5.1 Interview method**

Wahyuni (2012) posits that the main requirement of an interview is enabling interviewees to share their views, experiences and stories in relation to a social phenomenon. Edwards and Holland (2013), note that interviews take various forms, and that each form is determined by the nature of the interview. In this study, semi-structured interviews were used, firstly because this was qualitative research, and secondly because it matched the researcher's philosophical approach, as Edwards and Holland (2013) suggest. Semi-structured interview schedules were therefore used for both individual and focus group interviews. This allowed or enabled the researcher's to prompt the interview participants, since this technique enabled her to discuss issues at length with interviewees and also made elaboration possible.

#### *4.5.1.1 Semi-structured interviews*

The research participants were interviewed using semi-structured interview questions. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2010) describe semi-structured interviews as interviews that fall between structured interviews and unstructured interviews. The advantage of using semi-structured questions was that they enabled the researcher to prompt participants or respondents more in-depth and probe any given situation. Based on Welman et al (2010), an interview guide which indicted the topics and subtopics to be covered, was used during the semi-structured interviews. The themes for the interviews were drawn from the reviewed literature and guided by the research questions. The interview guides were developed for the different types of participants as described in the sample. The other informants were not recipients of FPE, however, but merely implementers of the programme with the exception of the parents. Some of the questions posed to the learners therefore needed to centre upon the benefits they derived from the programme, as well as their experiences with regard to its implementation.

The participants that were interviewed in this study were the Headteachers in School A, School B and School C and the Deputy Head Teacher in School D. In School A, two head teachers were interviewed because during the course of the study the initial Head teacher was suspended and replaced by another. In School A, when Head teacher 2 was being interviewed, there is an occasion where he roped in his secretary to answer some of the questions that he could not respond to because he was new in the school. The situations that turned out otherwise, confirm the importance of conducting research in the natural settings because it is there that the researcher got a clear picture and understanding of the situation and experiences of the participants, as elucidated by Wahyuni (2012), Bisman and Highfield (2012). In each of the schools that participated in the study, a Grade 6 teacher was interviewed. A parent of a child in each school was also interviewed, a Regional Inspector for Primary Schools and Senior MoET officer were also interviewed. The researcher made an appointment with each of the interviewees.

The Head teachers and teachers were interviewed in English and they responded in English. The interviews were tape recorded and the researcher also took notes of the interview responses and observations made during the interview process. The recorded responses were transcribed and consolidated with the notes. There were instances where the researcher had to follow up some of the interview participants' responses to get clarity and confirm if the respondents meant what the researcher had captured. There were also instances in School A where the researcher had to re-interview the Head teacher, teacher and learners because the tape recorder had failed to record the responses and the researcher had missed some of the responses in the notes. The recorded responses were transcribed after each session. The duration of the interviews for both the teachers and Head teachers were 1 hour 30 minutes.



It is worth noting that the interviews with the parents happened at the schools. Parents who lived within close proximity of the school were selected by the teachers and asked to come. Initially the plan was to interview parents' who had a child in Grade 6, but because of work and unavailability of the parents, that criteria fell off and instead, any parent who had a child in that particular school was interviewed. The parents were interviewed in siSwati which is Swaziland's native language. The researcher followed the interview schedule which were in English but asked the questions in siSwati. The researcher recorded the interview responses and also took notes of the interviews. The recorded responses were transcribed and translated by the researcher and the notes incorporated. The researcher also utilised the services of a colleague who is a specialist in the siSwati language. She read through the translated responses and made spelling and punctuation corrections. The duration of the interviews with the parents was an hour each.

The researcher also interviewed two MoET officers on separate dates. The interviews were held at their work stations. The interviews were conducted in English but most of the time the Senior MoET officer responded in siSwati, so the researcher occasionally probed in siSwati as well, to get clarity and confirm a response. The responses were recorded and the researcher took notes of the responses. The duration of the interview with the Senior MoET officer was 2 hours. She gave elaborative responses and the researcher would time and again seek clarity or pose a follow up question. The recorded responses were transcribed and a follow up was done to clarify some of the responses. The notes from the officer's responses were also incorporated. The Regional Primary School Inspector was also interviewed in English but she code switched her responses by responding both in English and siSwati. The responses were recorded and the researcher also took notes of the responses. The recorded interviews were transcribed and the notes incorporated in the data. The duration of the interview was 2 hours and 30 minutes. This is because there were

distractions during the interview process with colleagues coming into her office and she also responded to phone calls.

#### *4.5.1.2 Focus group interviews*

Focus group interviews were conducted to collect data from the learners who have been involved in the FPE programme since its inception, namely Grade 6 learners. Grade 6 was selected because initially, all the interviews were planned for 2014, at which stage Grade 6 was the highest Grade affected by the programme, but due to unforeseen circumstances some of the participants were interviewed in 2015 only, when the programme had progressed to Grade 7. In all the schools except school B, the learners had been interviewed in late 2014, after the researcher received the ethical clearance certificate. The researcher then kept to the initial plan and interviewed the learners of school B in 2015, despite them being in Grade 7. The reason why the researcher maintained Grade 6 as the highest level, was to ensure consistency with regard to the number of years learners had experienced FPE. The School A learners had to be re-interviewed, however, because neither the recorded nor the field notes had been well captured. The recordings were not audible and the written field notes were incomplete. Since these learners were re-interviewed in 2015, they were now in Grade 7. This had a negligible effect on the study because the students were re-interviewed at the beginning of 2015 and were able to provide more information about Grade 6 than about Grade 7.

The learners' interview schedule differed slightly from those of other participants. Focus group interviews were conducted for the learners, whereas the other respondents (head teachers, teachers, parents and MoET officers) underwent individual interviews. The reason for these differences was that the learners' questions needed to focus on their context, since they were the recipients and beneficiaries of the FPE programme.

According to Welman et al (2010), focus groups consist of interviewees that are brought together in one venue to express their opinions on a set of questions posed to them. By bringing the learners together, the researcher was able to obtain information from them about their experiences as recipients of FPE since its inception. By contrast with the views of Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2010), the learners were regarded as an existing social group with similar experiences; hence their views in the context of this study were significant. This enabled the participants either to support each other or to differ from each other as they responded to the questions asked. This enriched and added insight to the study, it also helped in triangulating the findings of the study. Focus group schedules were administered to the learners during the focus group interviews. The learners were asked questions by the interviewer (researcher) in English and they responded in English. It is only in a few instances where they code switched to siSwati. The researcher posed a question and allowed the learners to respond in turns, and time and again they would debate and the researcher would further probe the learners. All the learners in all the groups freely expressed their views and showed a keen interest in the discussions. The learners' responses were recorded and the researcher also took notes of the responses. The recorded responses were transcribed and the notes incorporated.

#### *4.5.1.3 Observation*

This research also used unstructured observations, which Terre Blanche et al (2010:310) regard as necessary to interpretive research because "[u]nstructured observations are impressionistic, in the sense of noting down what one sees as one sees it". The researcher did not only note down what was directly seen, "but also on the peripheral context in which the observation occurs" (Terre Blanche et al 2010:311). FPE requires a school to provide the necessary facilities for quality education to be realised, therefore observation of the environment in which the research was being undertaken, was crucial. Aspects like

the physical environment were observed, and this enhanced the quality of the study (Hancock 2002). Since this study was undertaken in schools located in different geographical locations, the observations also provided some insight into the effects of the different locations on the physical environment. In addition classroom observations were carried out to determine how teaching under the FPE programme is taking place, what the numbers of learners per class are, what the classroom and seating arrangements are, and what facilities and equipment are available at the school. The learners were also observed in terms of cleanliness, uniforms and overall participation in class. In addition the language of instruction and pedagogical approach used by the teacher were observed.

Head teachers and teachers play an important role in the pursuit of quality education, but this can only be realised if they accept and are invested in the policy being implemented. Hence they too were also observed from this perspective during the interaction process. This helped the researcher either to verify or to nullify responses by respondents, which resulted in further questions being posed, based on the observed responses (Hancock 2002). To achieve this, an unstructured observational protocol was used. As explained by Lodico et al (2006), observational protocols include brief phrases or questions identifying the types of actions, features of the setting or interactions that need to be focussed on during the observation.

Lodico et al (2006:136) indicate various ways in which observation can be carried out, namely by using "complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant, and the complete observer". Carcarry (2009:13) notes that qualitative research data collection approaches include "participant observation, observation, documentary analysis, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, biographical methods, case studies, interviews and focus group discussions". The researcher in order to undertake qualitative research

was careful to note the characteristics of both the physical setting in which the observation took place and the individuals being observed (Hancock 2002). Put simply, the researcher played the role of observer in this study.

#### *4.5.1.4 Document analysis*

Bowen (2009) and Bogopane (2013) both note that document analysis has been used as a qualitative data collection method for many years. Bowen (2009) states further that documents used in this manner should be documents that have not been developed by the researcher but are an integral part of the institution or environment that is being studied and therefore cost-effective in terms of access (Bogopane 2013:225). Terre Blanche et al (2010) believe that document analysis is an easier method of data collection than conducting interviews or undertaking participant observation. This is because the researcher need not go directly to the site or transcribe information obtained from interviews or observations. Terre Blanche et al (2010) also stipulate that documents can be more extensive than interview transcripts and field notes. According to Bogopane (2013), documents that can be used for document analysis include the minutes of meetings, agendas for meetings, office documents, office memos, newspaper articles, magazines, office newsletters and public publications. Bogopane emphasises that if document study is used as a data collection method, it is imperative that certain methodological criteria should be met, for example that the documents should be authentic. The researcher accordingly ensured that the documents studied were authentic.

Since document analysis is another form of qualitative data collection and the study focussed on the implementation and sustainability of FPE in Swaziland and the interplay between policy and practice, it was imperative to analyse policy documents as well as studies on the performance of the policies. In analysing these documents, it became

important to come up with conclusions about the relationship between the policies concerned and what was actually happening in the implementation of FPE. The following documents were interrogated:

- the FPE Act of 2010
- the MoET's EDSEC Policy of 2011
- MoET Circular 14 of 2012
- MoET Circular 16 of 2013
- MoET Circular 17 of 2013
- the MoET Annual Education Census report of 2013
- MoET Circular 36 of 2014
- MoET Circular 39 of 2015
- school registers from 2010 to the present date
- the FPE implementation guidelines entitled Guidelines for Schools and Communities on the Implementation of the Free Primary Education (FPE) Programme of 2009
- the MoET FPE Monitoring Report of 2010
- National Framework for Food Security in Schools – Swaziland (MoET & NERCHA)
- GoS assessment reports of FPE Programme from 2010 to 2014
- the Constitution of 2005
- the Children's Act of 2012
- the National Education and Training Improvement Programme (NETIP), March 2013 (amended in 2015)

#### **4.6 Trustworthiness**

The researcher was aware of the debate with regard to the reliability, objectivity and validity (both internal and external) to ensure trustworthiness of quantitative research findings as opposed to that of qualitative research findings.

Loh (2013) believes that the issue of reliability, generalisability and validity crop up in any study, resulting in unnecessary debates, because each research is drawn from different epistemological and ontological perspectives or paradigms. Advocates of the positivist

paradigm under which quantitative research falls, argue that qualitative research is unscientific (Carcary 2009) because its findings are not tested for reliability, objectivity, generalisability or validity. Shenton (2004) states further that positivists question the reliability and validity of qualitative work because it is undertaken in natural settings. It is because qualitative research is undertaken in different settings from those in which quantitative research is undertaken, that its trustworthiness is valued differently.

In determining the trustworthiness of qualitative research, issues associated with the dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability of the findings are considered to ensure their rigour (Anney 2014). Naturalist investigators such as Guba have since come up with alternative criteria to those of positivists (Shenton 2004). For example, they suggest testing credibility instead of internal validity, transferability as opposed to external validity or generalisability, dependability rather than reliability, and conformability instead of objectivity (Shenton 2004; Loh 2013). The work of Lincon and Guba with regard to the use of these criteria has been recognised by many within the qualitative research community. However, this criterion has proved to be very influential, and is mostly used to test the quality of qualitative research findings (Loh 2013). It is on these grounds that the researcher chose to follow suit in this study.

Morrow (2005), Carcary (2009) and Anney (2014) agree that the criteria are determined by the philosophy underpinning of a study. According to these authors, the paradigm underpinning a study determines the criteria used for evaluating the trustworthiness or rigour of the findings.

The researcher did not apply the positivist criteria of reliability, objectivity, generalisability and validity, because the philosophical frame of the study was interpretivist/constructivist. The researcher therefore rejected the positivist criteria

because of the researcher's belief that the "meaning of the phenomena varies across contexts, moreover in the interpretivist paradigm the researcher is not considered as objective because the researcher is part of the research (Carcary 2009). For similar reasons an inductive approach to data analysis was adopted, because qualitative research relies on logical inference through trying to understand the phenomenon being studied and the fact that it has multiple realities (Carcary 2009).

Furthermore, the researcher concurred with Terre Blanche et al (2010:51), who states that "the meaning of whatever it is that the researcher's investigating depends on the particular situation an individual is in". Therefore the thick description used in qualitative research enables others to relate the research results to their situations (Borrego, Douglas & Amelink 2009). The researcher therefore believed that this should pass the trustworthiness test. Trustworthiness in respect of dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability was applied in this study, because detailed descriptions of the procedures followed in the course of data collection and analysis were provided (Lodico et al 2006). Thus the researcher ensured that conventional qualitative data collection and analysis procedures were meticulously followed.

#### **4.6.1 Credibility**

Before delving further into each of the trustworthiness tests used in qualitative research, it is worth noting that Lincoln and Guba (1985) stress that there is a close link between credibility and dependability, because the former influences the latter (Shenton 2004). As has already been noted in 4.6, credibility is preferred over validity in qualitative research. Pitney (2004) notes that internal validity concerns itself with whether the instrument used achieved what the researcher intended to achieve. In qualitative research, on the other hand, the researcher conducts interviews and makes observations, and is therefore also the



research instrument. Anney (2014:276) defines credibility as "the confidence that can be placed in the research findings". Credibility further considers whether the data is a true reflection of the original participants' data and whether the views are the original ones expressed by the participants. Credibility concerns itself with whether what is captured, corresponds with what is actually happening in the context, and whether the researcher's intentions are being achieved (Shenton 2004).

Credibility in qualitative research is achieved by using numerous strategies such as triangulation, member checks, and peer review (Shenton 2004). Loh (2013) draws on the Lincoln and Guba (1985) criteria, which include, prolonged engagement, persistent observation, member checks, peer debriefing and negative case analysis. Anney confirms what has already been mentioned by Shenton and Loh, and adds reflexivity, interview technique, establishing the researcher's authority of and structural coherence.

When conducting this research, the researcher used both methodological triangulation and data triangulation. The data was collected by conducting individual interviews and focus group interviews, carrying out observations, writing field notes and undertaking document analysis. Several data collection sources were utilised by involving different participants. This helped the researcher to verify the findings. The researcher also reflected on the data and to a certain extent used negative case study analyses and improved the research questions, especially after having discovered new information that initially did not form part of the research questions. Negative case study analysis is defined by Lietz and Zayas (2010:197) as "a strategy used when a researcher deliberately seeks contrasting evidence". Citing Frankel these authors explain that deviant cases determine whether a qualitative researcher adequately looked at the research question. Therefore upon identifying the inconsistency, the researcher altered the research questions to investigate the matter

further in conversations with respondents who were yet to be interviewed. Negative case analysis also involves a researcher implying that a study produces typologies which require the researcher to revisit the data after it has been categorised in order to ensure that all the constructs of the phenomenon are accounted for (Shenton 2004). This was the reason for the slight amendment of the research questions that has been mentioned. This is consistent with the fact that qualitative research data analysis is ongoing and begins immediately when the first set of data is collected (Lietz & Zayas 2010).

The issue of typology in case study research is further explained by Levy (2008:3), who claims that a simpler and more useful typology can be constructed by focusing on the theoretical purpose and research objectives of the study. Lietz and Zayas note that negative case analysis is also used during the data analysis process, which was the case in this study due to contrasting perspectives forming part of the findings. The researcher also conducted member checks with some of the participants to clarify and solidify some of the findings. The findings were then triangulated by comparing the information gathered from the different respondents to determine whether they matched or not. This information was verified further based on information from documents and literature. The same procedure was used for the focus group discussions held with the learners.

#### **4.6.2 Dependability**

In qualitative research, the dependability criterion is used instead of the reliability criterion. Reliability is concerned with repeating research with the same participants, the same environments and conditions yielding the same results. This is not possible in qualitative research, however, because the social phenomenon associated with the research is not static, hence neither can the results be (Shenton 2004). Carcary (2009) is of the view that, since social phenomena cannot be replicated, it is unlikely that, should the same

study be repeated in qualitative research, the same results would be obtained. He notes that this is because, over time, conditions and circumstances change. Dependability, on the other hand, is the degree at which the reader regards the findings as convincing and "sound" (Terre Blanche et al 2010:90). This is achieved by producing a credible, rich account of the evidence and a detailed, rich description of the data it emanates from. Dependability is also achieved by providing honest, authentic information on how the data was collected and analysed (Terre Blanche et al 2010), and by ensuring that findings are not invented or misinterpreted. In this study, the researcher met the dependency criterion by providing details of the data collection procedure used, as well as a detailed description of how the data analysis was conducted and the how the coding and decoding were performed.

#### **4.6.3 Transferability**

Anney (2014) defines the transferability of a qualitative study as the degree to which its results can be transferred to another context and other respondents. According to Anney (2014), the researcher must facilitate the transferability of results by using thick descriptions and purposeful sampling. Thick descriptions enable others to replicate a study using similar conditions in other settings. This entails providing extensive details of the methodology and context used in a research report (Pitney 2004). Transferability can also be achieved by paying attention to the design of a study and using a multiple sites design, which is what the researcher did in this study (see section 4.3.2, the third paragraph). Analysing and formulating themes from the data collected at these multiple sites, which in this study are the schools and the two different MoET sites, where the officer who are participants in the study were interviewed suggests that the study can be conducted in other environments as well, which was the case in this study (Pitney 2004).

#### **4.6.4 Confirmability**

Shenton (2004) likens confirmability in qualitative research to objectivity in quantitative research. Confirmability concerns itself with ensuring that experiences and ideas are indeed those of the informants participating in a study, and not the researcher's. Confirmability can be attained through triangulation, and by supporting any decisions made and methods used (Shenton 2004). Confirmability can also be undertaken by member checking. Loh (2013) defines member checking as the process of sharing the final report, specific descriptions or themes with the participants, so that they can contribute and interpret the findings. Due to time constraints the researcher was unable to do member checking. The researcher only managed to do follow ups with some of the participants from whom the researcher sought clarity after doing the transcriptions and looking through the data. However, the researcher requested a colleague to proof read the work and that can be categorised as a form of peer validation. This is because the colleague made comments that were valuable to the study. Anney (2014) supports the triangulation notion and adds that confirmability can be ensured by means of an audit trail and by keeping a journal. As it has already been stated above, triangulation was also used in this study to confirm the findings. An audit trail and reflective journal were also utilised, thus the researcher is confident that this study meets the requirements for confirmability (Loh 2013).

#### **4.7 Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations are an important aspect of research (Creswell 2007; Tsoka-Gwegweni & Wassenaar 2014) concerned with issues related to plagiarism, honesty, respect for human rights, etc. the researcher attended a number of research workshops and contact session discussions on plagiarism among other topics, and realised that plagiarism is indeed academic or intellectual theft. She therefore ensured that it was avoided in this

study. Wherever other authors' work was used, it was duly referenced both in the text and in the list of references.

Another ethical condition that was met for this study, was obtaining proper permission from the MoET to access the schools where the research was undertaken. To achieve this, letters seeking permission to conduct the study in the schools were mailed to the MoET Director of Education. The Director at the Ministry of Education then issued a letter to all the schools that were to participate in the study, notifying them that permission and approval had been sought from the Ministry and had been granted. The letter was not only meant for the schools, but it also included the MoET officers who participated in the study. The letter from the Director acted as a gateway for entering the schools. The Head teachers in all the schools received a copy of the letter. At each school the researcher sought an audience with the Head teacher and explained to them what the study was all about. The researcher also requested the Head teachers to request the Grade 6 teachers, to identify three (3) girls and three boys in Grade 6 who would participate in the study.

In all the schools the Head teachers requested the teachers to have an audience with the researcher to explain about the study on the first day that the researcher went to the school. The researcher explained to the teachers what the study was all about and also requested them to participate. In some of the schools the Head teachers were willing and cooperated with the researcher. This was with the exception of School A Head teacher and the Grade 6 Teacher. The Head teacher and Grade 6 Teacher in School A were suspicious of the researcher's intentions. This was because there was a case that the school was being investigated for by the MoET. In that case, the researcher being an officer from a department under the MoET, observed from their actions and behaviour that at first they thought the researcher was under cover and had come to investigate them. Nonetheless, on

account of the letter from the Director of Education, they cooperated. The researcher undertook this exercise twice at School A because of the the turn of events with regards to Head teacher 1, in relation to the investigation by the MoET.

The Head teacher 1 for School A was suspended and replaced by another. The second Head teacher responded positively and was willing to participate in the study. He too was given a copy of the letter from the Director of Education, as well as a letter requesting him to participate and the consent forms, which he signed. The Head teacher in School D was very receptive and cooperated but as the study continued the researcher read between the lines and also gathered information from the grape vine, that the School D Head teacher was also not comfortable. This happened despite the fact that the researcher explained to the Head teachers and teachers that they were not obliged to participate and could decide to withdraw if they so wished during the course of the study. The Head teacher for School D probably without communicating his intentions indirectly withdrew. He never honoured appointments and was never found at the school. The researcher had to negotiate with the Deputy Head teacher, this was after the Deputy Head teacher had hinted that the Head teacher could be deliberately opting out and was indisposed because he was on sick leave. There are two Deputy Head teachers in School D because it is a big school. They held the reins in the absence of the Head teacher. One of them opted to be interviewed by the researcher. This was after the researcher had been to the school on several occasions to interview the Head teacher. The Head teachers and teachers received letters from the researcher requesting them to participate. They also received consent forms which they signed and returned.

The Grade 6 teachers who participated in the study selected the learners who participated and forwarded the letters seeking permission for them to participate in the study to their

parents. They also forwarded the parents' letters of consent to the learner's to give to their parents and the learner's assent forms which they signed after their parents had approved. All the parents approved except one in School C. The Grade 6 teacher in the school re did the exercise and requested another learner to replace the boy whose parent did not approve. The Teachers also organised the appointment dates and notified the researcher. The researcher explained the study to the pupils and they were asked if they wanted to participate. After they had agreed to participate, the researcher explained to the pupils that everything that would be discussed during the focuss group discussions would be kept confidential. Each learner was given a confidentiality form that they signed, to assure them that confidentiality would be kept. The focus group discussions were only undertaken after all the parents' consent and learners' assent forms had been received. The researcher occasionally went to the school to find out if the forms had been returned.

The Teachers also organised, selected and liased with the parents who partipated in the study. The teachers also explained about the study to parents and arranged the appointments on behalf of the researcher. They forwarded the consent forms of the parents who participated on behalf of the researcher and the parents submitted them on the appointment days. The researcher explained to each parent before interviewing what the study was all about. All the parents were willing to participate in the study. The researcher approached the Officers who participated in the study herself. The researcher explained the purpose of the study and also gave them the letters requesting them to participate, as well as the letter of approval from the Director of Education. The Officers all agreed to participate and filled in the consent forms. Appointments were made with them and they honoured them.

Over all informed consent was also sought in writing from all the participants who participated in the research. The participants were informed about how the research would be conducted and what the research topic was. In addition participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time if they wished to do so. In the same letters, the issue of confidentiality was addressed. Participants were informed that their identities would not be disclosed but that pseudonyms would be used. This is what Howe and Moses (1999) refer to as privacy. Privacy is therefore a central ethical principle driven by confidentiality (Howe & Moses 1999:24). In addition, it was not specified from whom and from which schools data was collected, and instead the pseudonyms for schools were used. Respondents are referred to as learners, teachers or head teachers, as the case may be.

#### **4.8 Data analysis**

Hoepfl (1997) defines qualitative data analysis as the organisation of data into manageable units to enable the researcher to synthesise it by searching for important patterns. This is essential, because qualitative data tends to become bulky and unmanageable. According to Hancock (2002:16), data analysis in research involves "summarising the mass of data collected and presenting the results in a way that communicates the most important features". In this study, the data was analysed from the interview transcripts, observation field notes, and documents using the thematic and document analysis methods of data analysis. These methods of data analysis were used because they were suitable for qualitative data analysis (see Miles, Huberman & Saldana 2014; Creswell 2014). This approach to data analysis is supported by Creswell (Sa), who stipulates that accumulating raw qualitative data can result in the researcher being buried by data and being unable to analyse it. Creswell (Sa) emphasises that data analysis should take place immediately.



This phase of data analysis is referred to as primary analysis, and is followed by categorisation and concept formation.

During the primary phase of this study, the data was examined and identified; key aspects, as well as those that was contradictory or inconsistent and those related to the literature and to emerging themes, were compared and contrasted. It is worth noting that this approach still left the data in a chaotic state, therefore it was analysed further by means of additional categorisation. At this stage, some of it was discarded because it was of no use or overwhelming, as indicated by Creswell (Sa). Thematic and document analysis was then used because they enabled the resercher to search for patterns and identify important categorises. This paved the way for concept formulation through the identification of critical themes that emerged from the interview transcriptions and field notes and through inductive analysis. The transcribed data was mostly in English, where with the exception of two parents, a head teacher and the senior MoET officer, all the participants had preferred to respond to the questions in siSwati. Their responses were transcribed in the language of their choice and where necessary translated into English during the data analysis process and the writing of the findings.

The identification of themes from raw data is referred to as open coding (Strauss & Corbin 1990 in Hoepfl 1997; Alhojailan 2012). The themes were identified by using inductive approaches and thematic analysis. The data was coded and reduced, and categories and themes were formed. The information drawn from this process was incorporated into the remainder of the research questions and the theoretical framework based on the use of similar words, phrases and categories (Alhojailand 2012). Welman et al (2010:211) state that "theme identification is one of the most fundamental tasks in qualitative research". Welman et al also define themes as constructs that are identified before, during and after

the research. The constructs of this study hinge on issues of policy formulation, the FPE policy, implementation of FPE with education as a human right, equality, barriers to access, equity, school culture, quality of education, socio-economic status, and sustainability of FPE, governance and EFA. These categories were analysed further by reducing the large chunks of data and organising them into meaningful themes that could be described or explained in context.

The researcher began the data-analytical journey proper by reading through the data corpus line by line and attempting to reduce it by categorising the themes into preliminary codes according to the area that each data set spoke to. While categorising the data inductively, the researcher interpreted it and ensured that she understood the meaning behind some of the respondents' responses. The researcher also incorporated the researcher's field notes into the relevant categories, noting that analysis actually began at that stage, and that "data reduction is a form of analysis that sharpens, focuses, discards and organizes data in such a way that final conclusions can be drawn and verified" (Miles & Huberman 1994:11). There were overlaps in some of the data set themes; the data set was therefore placed under one theme only with the intention of considering the overlap once the data had been sorted and cut further during the reduction and coding process. This was duly done. The researcher was fully aware of the fact that each extract could be categorized in more than one theme.

As the coding process progressed, however, this was taken into consideration, and some of the key elements of extracts were included according to their thematic categories. In this study, multiple data sources were used based on the premise that the study centred on the implementation and sustainability of a set policy. Carefully aligning and scrutinising practice on the ground became imperative, therefore the policy documents that inform the

issue being studied were analysed. This helped the researcher to incorporate coding content into themes in a way that was similar to how interview transcripts are analysed.

Having presented the narratives regarding the preamble and procedures of the data analysis of this study above, the researcher can verify that Braun and Clarke's (2013) six phases of thematic analysis were followed to properly analyse the data in detail, as shown below:

1. Phase 1. The researcher first familiarised herself with the data through the transcription and translation processes.
2. Phase 2. Next preliminary data analysis was undertaken using reduction methods, code identification and labelling. The data extracts were placed into the tabulated categories they belonged in, which resulted in 34 categories, some of which overlapped in terms of codes. This was not regarded as problematic, however, because the data was further reduced and collated. This was the first coding cycle, and because the exercise was performed manually using WordPerfect, the raw data was extracted from the data corpus by copying it and pasting it into the relevant categories based on codes. School codes and participants' designations were entered into a column next to the extracted text. The reason for this was to ensure that the data set and the designation of the relevant respondents derived from the first coding cycle were not lost. Simultaneously, the data segments were sorted and organised into categories. This was done because coding linked the data to the idea and the idea to all the data related to that idea (Saldana 2008). Saldana is also of the view that when codes are brought together based on their similarity, regular patterns and categories which can be analysed emerge. This enabled the researcher to interpret some of the data during the first cycle; therefore a column was added to the table for indicating an analysis of the category. Alhojailan (2012) refers to the coding process as being the first

principle of qualitative data analysis, and notes that it enables the researcher to identify and focus on the key areas. Codes in this study therefore helped the researcher capture both a semantic and a conceptual reading of the data (Braun & Clarke 2013; Miles & Huberman 1994).

3. Phase 3. The next step consisted the second cycle of the reduction process involved reducing the categories to three and the codes to 33. However, after looking at the coded data again, some of the codes were converted into categories because of the huge amounts of data they contained. After the third cycle of the coding process, I was left with seven categories and 44 codes. It is important to note that Saldana (2008) makes a distinction between codes and themes. According to this author, codes and categories are explicit words, phrases or sentences drawn from the raw data, while themes are understated and inferred expressions of the raw data. This was taken into consideration when the codes and categories were interpreted.

4. Phase 4. The subsequently themes were then identified and collated using all the data related to the relevant themes, based to a certain extent on Huberman and Miles's (1994) interactive model, which Alhojailan (2012) refers to as a thematic model. Using this model enabled the researcher to interact with the data using multiple methods of data display while simultaneously reducing the data. The data was displayed by developing a thematic network. Attride-Sterling (2001) explains how thematic networks facilitate the structure and depict the themes in text. So this process was followed, the data was interpreted, and conclusions drawn and verified, as outlined in the model in figure 4.1:  
Sourced from Attride-Sterling 2001

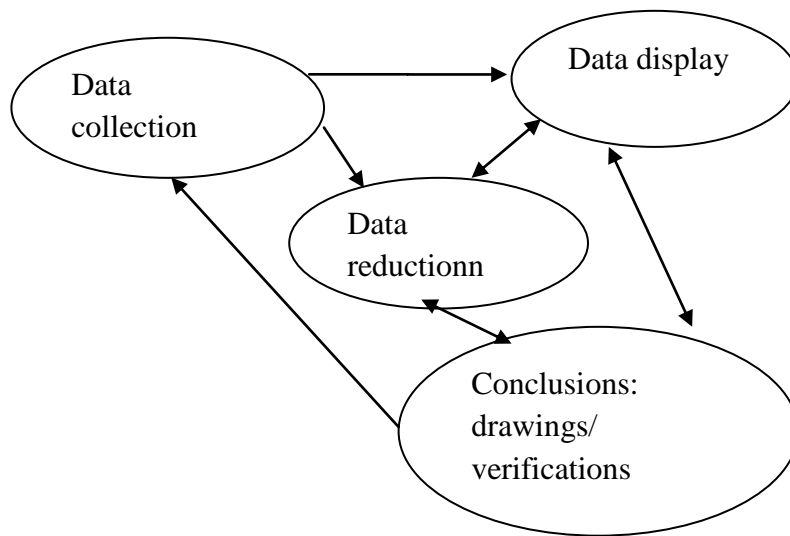


Figure 4.1 Thematic data display network (Attride-Sterling 2001)

5. Phase 5. Applying the above model assisted greatly in developing themes from codes derived from both the data and the data display. This was consistent with Braun and Clarke (2006), who recommend the use of visual displays when sorting codes into themes. This was done after raw data extracts had been tabulated in the first, second and third data coding cycles and reduced to categories and codes. Using the data display to sort the codes enabled the data to be further reduced, organised and merged.

6. Phase 6. The third cycle resulted in the codes and categories illustrated in figure 4.2 being derived and the display being formed. These are displayed in according to the explanation in phases 2 to 4 above. The codes displayed in figure 4.2 were then further merged into categories according to the characteristics that related to the categories, based on the analysis. The categories were analysed further, and this resulted in the seven themes shown in figure 4.2. The themes were then used as a basis for the findings and discussion, in conjunction with the document analysis, the theoretical framework, and the literature review, supported by the data transcriptions.

**Themes/ Concepts**

1. Inequitability of Education and Marginalised children 2. FPE Implementation Outcomes 3. FPE Governance 4. Teaching and Learning Methodologies 5. Challenges Related to the FPE Programme 6. Top- Up Issues and Sustainability of Programme 7. The Textbook Saga and Accountability.

**Categories**

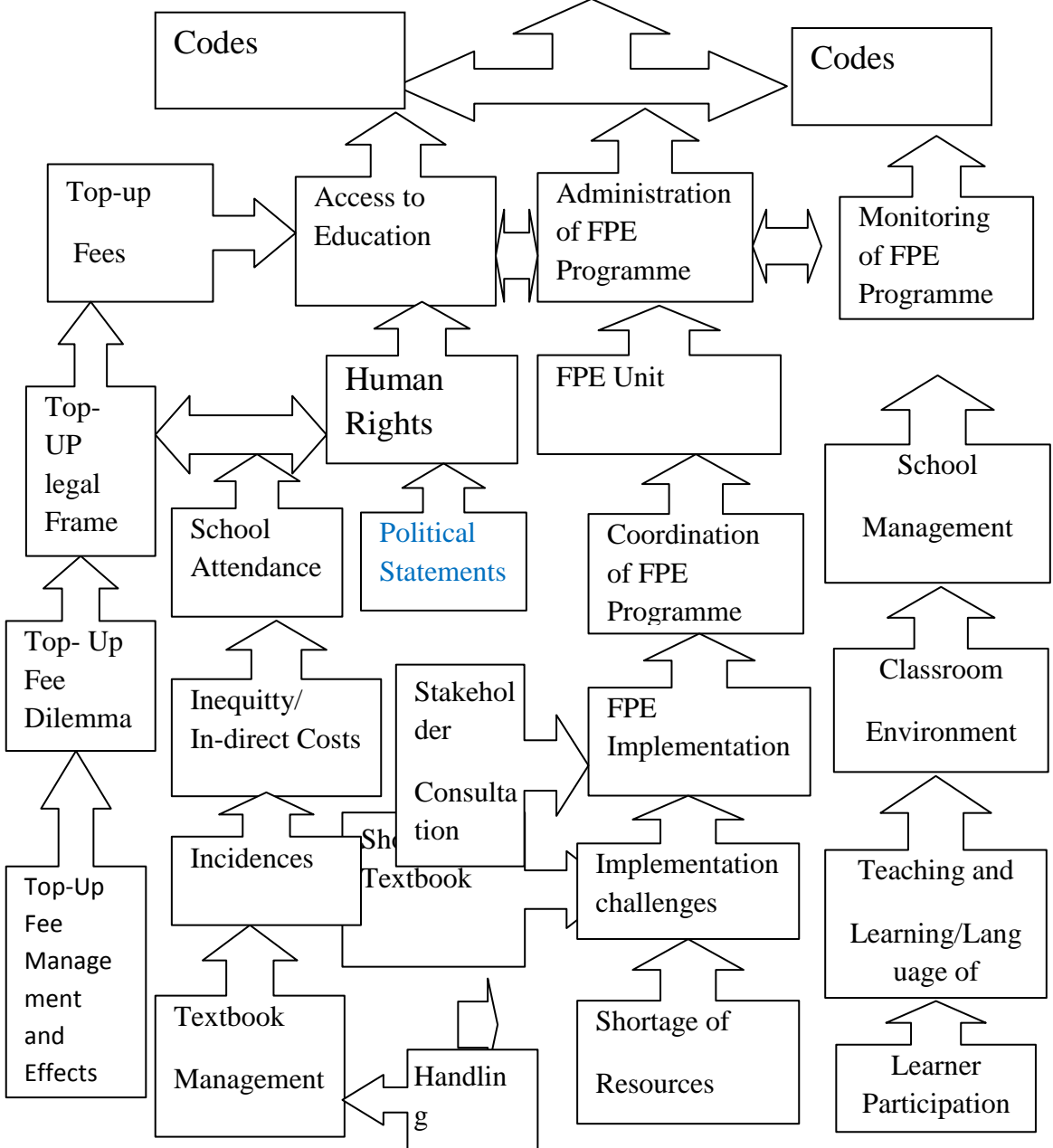


Figure 4.2: Presents the seven themes of this study (Source: the researcher)

In addition, the documents and policies that speak to the study were analysed. This was necessitated by the fact that the phenomena being studied were based on the implementation of policies that are obviously documented. Newspaper articles were also included in the document analysis to further enrich the raw data collected, and to compare the events described in the articles with what was said by participants be happening on the ground. Bowen (2009) explains that document analysis is an important aspect of qualitative research, and indicates that, despite the importance of document analysis in qualitative research, procedures used by even researchers are frequently not well documented. Bowen defines document analysis as a systematic way of reviewing and evaluating printed and electronic data.

Yin (2006) lists six sources that case study evidence should be drawn from and documents are included in the lists. Yin is of the view that each source has an array of data or evidence. Yin then explains why each of the six sources are important in case study evidence. Yin posits that documents in case study research are used to connect and corroborate evidence from other sources. Yin also points out that information from documents can be used to confirm specific detailed information from other sources and also states that newspaper articles provide good information. Bowen (2009) adds that documents can be used as supplementary data to contextualise data collected from interviews, and also to verify interview findings. It is important to note that, from the outset of this study, documents played a pivotal role in shaping the research questions used. The nature of the study dictated this, because the policy being implemented is contained in several documents and accounts of the events related to the study appeared in newspaper articles. The concepts related to the study were also drawn from documents.

It is worth noting that documents are mostly analysed according to content, however, since this study was interpretive and used thematic analysis in collaboration with an inductive approach, content analysis was disregarded. Instead, the information drawn from the documents was incorporated into the relevant themes. The document analysis approach used, assisted in interpreting the themes that were already formulated from the raw data to analyse and verify them further and draw conclusions. This approach is supported by Miles and Barnes (2005), who believe that document analysis enables a programme to be assessed and provides an understanding of the processes that a programme has undergone. They state further that this enables the researcher to provide a rich description of issues related to a programme. They also explain how newspaper articles can be used to assess the impact of a programme. It was for this reason that the approach became very relevant to this study, and enabled the researcher to analyse the interplay between policy and practice in the FPE programme.

#### **4.9 Chapter summary**

This chapter clarified the philosophical position of the study as being constructivist/interpretivist based on the researcher world view. It then described the research approach of the study as having been qualitative and the research design as that of a case study. The sample population and the sampling technique used were described, as well as the data collection methods and types of questions and instruments used during the data collection process. The chapter further discussed how trustworthiness was established in the study, how data analysis was carried out, and what procedures were used. Lastly the limitations of the study were discussed.



## Chapter 5

### Data presentation and analysis

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data and its analysis based on categories and themes or concepts derived from the coding and classification of data obtained from individual and focus group interviews, as highlighted in chapter 4. Data derived from observations and documents analysed were also included in the data presentation and analysis. Data was analysed in the context of how the FPE programme is being implemented in the sampled schools, how the implementation plays out in the light of policy and practice, and what the implications may be regarding the sustainability of FPE.

The data set was analysed based on comparisons in terms of similarities, contrasts and deviations. Wherever participants' verbatim responses were provided, they were either placed in inverted commas or indented and italicised.

#### 5.2 Categories and participants

The participants consisted of four Grade 6 teachers that is one teacher from each of the four sampled schools, School A, B, C and D. The teachers were individually interviewed. Four head teachers from three of the four schools were interviewed. The Head teacher of School D was indisposed therefore the Deputy Head teacher was interviewed in his place. However, in School A, two different Head teachers were interviewed, because there was a change in administration during the course of the study. These two Head teachers at school A were named Head teacher 1 and Head teacher 2. Head teacher 1 was the initial head teacher when the study began, but as the study progressed, he was replaced by head teacher 2. One parent was interviewed in each school. Grade 6 pupils were engaged in a focus group discussion in each school. In school A two focus group discussions were held

due to technical difficulties with the recording in the first session. Therefore the group that had previously been interviewed was in Grade 7 when the second interview took place. One senior education officer from the MoET and one regional inspector from the Manzini region were interviewed.

Table 5.1 shows the themes and subthemes (categories) that were developed after the data had been coded sorted and reduced. Source developed by researcher.

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Subthemes (categories)</b>
FPE and access to primary education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Access as main goal of FPE</li> <li>2. Benefits of FPE</li> <li>3. Effects of top-up fees on access</li> <li>4. Other barriers to access</li> <li>5. Access to education as a human right</li> <li>6. Sustainability of access to education through FPE</li> </ol>
The top-up fees dilemma	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Schools and top-up fees</li> <li>2. Top-up fees and management of school funds</li> <li>3. Head teachers' perceptions of the FPE grant</li> <li>4. Top-up fees monitoring mechanism</li> </ol>
Implementation of FPE in Swaziland	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stakeholders' understanding of the FPE policy</li> <li>2. FPE policy implementation guidelines</li> <li>3. Consultations</li> </ol>
Administration of the FPE programme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Progress of the FPE programme and changes</li> <li>2. Building of school infrastructure and the FPE package</li> <li>3. Sustainability of the FPE package</li> </ol>
Textbook management and distribution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Management of textbooks</li> <li>2. Textbook shortages</li> </ol>
FPE challenges	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quality of education</li> <li>2. Teacher training</li> </ol>
Teaching and learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Classroom environment</li> <li>2. Learner participation and behaviour</li> <li>3. Curriculum and language of instruction</li> </ol>

## **5.2.1 FPE and access to primary education**

### *5.2.1.1 Access as main goal of FPE*

Access to education and equity are the major aims of FPE (Swaziland 2009; Swaziland 2011b). Several factors have created barriers to education under FPE, however. The issue

of top-up fees has been one of the main barriers, even though there are others. Nevertheless almost all the participants in this study believed that FPE was introduced to ensure access to education for all children. This assurance is on the basis of education being a human right as articulated in both the Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland and MoET Sector Policy of 2011. This assurance is also perhaps likely influenced and informed by the UN declaration for human rights, which underpins the human rights theory. Access was viewed as the essence of FPE by everyone with the exception of a few participants, who had some reservations about the issue of access due to various reasons.

The participants' positive perceptions of access were consistent with the Ministry's goals, such as those contained in the National Education and Training Improvement Programme (NETIP) of 2014, which describes access and equity both as strategic objectives and as outputs of FPE. In addition the MOET's EDSEC policy (2011b), as highlighted in the reviewed literature, which stipulates that the basic objective of FPE is to expand participation and to ensure that all children, irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds, have access to quality education. This objective is also stated in the MoET's 2009 Guidelines for Schools and Communities on the Implementation of the Free Primary Education (FPE) Programme. It is in light of this objective that the MOET introduced FPE and the supply of free textbooks to all learners in public primary schools. The Ministry has also aligned itself with global, regional and national policies in a bid to provide educational opportunities for all. All of these aspirations are outlined in the MoET's Guidelines for Schools and Communities on the Implementation of the Free Primary Education (FPE) Programme (Swaziland 2009).

The participants of this study were of the opinion that FPE has given some children access to education, and indeed some of the participating pupils came from low socio-economic backgrounds. These were some of the responses from the participants in this regard:

Interviewer: *From what socio-economic backgrounds do the learners from this school come?*

Head teacher, school B: *Most of the children in this school are from very poor households, and that is why FPE is good for them. Some do not have parents and stay with grannies. We go to the extent of asking learners to donate uniforms that they no longer use to the other learners.*

Head teacher 2, school A: *Learners are from a low economic background. Parents are not well educated.*

The latter head teacher's assertion that some of the children come from low socio-economic backgrounds can be confirmed by analysing one of the parents' responses with regard to the nature of their occupation and the income that can be derived from this occupation.

The parent from school A, who was interviewed, said she did not work but sold fruit at the market. (She didn't seem to regard self-employment as proper work.)

Parent: *Cha! angisebenti ngitsengisa emarkete. (No, I do not work, I sell at the market.) Ngiyatsengisa emafruitsi emarkete. (I sell fruit at the market.)*

Women (parents) who earn an income through selling fruit at the market fall within the low income bracket. Interestingly, even though the above parent was self-employed, she described herself as unemployed because of the low socio-economic status associated with selling fruit. She did not consider what she did for a living as employment. To her this became a reason why FPE was important to her – it had given her children access to education.

This was confirmed a parent at school B.

*Parent: I think it is good, because some parents are not able to pay the school fees for their children; because of the FPE many children are attending school. Before that, some children were out of schools and hired as herd boys and kitchen girls.*

Through the focus group discussion it was ascertained that the learners at school B were of the same view as the parents quoted above. They referred, however, to some of the barriers to education as being the indirect costs involved, which according to them prevent learners from low socio-economic backgrounds from attending school. They all claimed that some children were out of school because they could not afford to buy school uniforms. When asked how these children could be helped, they suggested that government and the school should donate uniforms. This confirmed what the Head teacher of school B said about the school donating uniforms to those in need. Based on the suggestion from the learners, it could be inferred that the donation of uniforms forms part of a culture they are familiar with. However, the acquisition of uniforms seemed to be one of the barriers to education. This was how the conversation went (school B, learners):

*Interviewer: Do you know any children who are are not at school?*

*Siviwe: Ye.*

*Interviewer: Why are they not at school?*

*Lungile: Some of their parents cannot afford school uniforms.*

*Interviewer: What must be done so that they come to school?*

*Siviwe: The parents must work or sell fruit, or borrow money from others. Food and money should be donated to them by government and other people who want to help, and the school can help by donating.*

The barrier caused by the uniform issue was confirmed by the senior MoET officer. She mentioned how parents keep children at home because they are embarrassed to send them

to school without the proper school uniform. Interestingly though according to the EDSEC Policy (2011b) FPE is supposed to be compulsory. Furthermore, the FPE Act of 2010 also provides for compulsory education. Parents, who do not send their children to school, could therefore be prosecuted. The Senior MoET officer was questioned on the subject.

Senior officer: *Sengulabo nje labancane lotfolo kutsi uyesaba kutsi sengitamumikisa nalelelihembe uma akacoshwa lomuntfu?, kunaloko kwesaba. (It is just these few challenges, where you think I will send the child to school with the worn-out shirt and they will be sent home for wearing a worn-out shirt. That person has not been sent home, but you are just embarrassed to take them to school because of the state of the uniform.*

It is worth noting that the issue of uniforms is problematic also because both the FPE Act and the implementation guidelines state that parents should ensure that learners wear the prescribed school uniforms and come to school clean. This barrier has resulted in some children dropping out of school, however, and some even enrolling with the SEBENTA National Institute under the Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) Programme.

Senior officer: *Lakunye letinombolo utsi Make Manana tiyakhula ngale, laba labacoshelwela tiunyufomu. Utsi tiyakhula ngale ngakuye letinombolo lokusho kutsi bayasitsatsela labantfwana. (The SEBENTA National Institute reports that the numbers are increasing on their side, which means the numbers in the formal school system are decreasing, and they are increasing in the NFPE, it is probably those who drop out because of school uniforms.)*

The Non-Formal Primary Education programme was established to cater for the over-age learners so that they too can have access to education. Section 5.1 of the FPE

implementation guidelines, under the heading "Access to free primary education", reads as follows with regard to how learners should access education:

The Ministry of Education and Training has widened admission in Grade one from six (6) years to nine (9) for Grade one (1) and seven (7) to eleven (11) years for Grade two (2) in formal schools. Children aged 10 years and above shall be catered for under the Non-formal Upper Primary Education (NUPE).

It seemed, however, that despite this plan, schools were admitting older children. This was inferred from the various complaints by some of the teachers and head teachers that some of the children were too old. It was not clear whether the schools ever got to see the FPE implementation guidelines, because they did not seem to be aware of the age provision for both the formal and non-formal learners. On the other hand, some of the learners dropping out of school because of uniform issues and enrolling at SNI seemed to fall within the formal school age range.

*Senior officer: Yes, lawomaguidelines nase are beyond that, kwatsiwa NUPE, SEBENTA akasale abavulela, kungabi bantfu labadzala kuphela. (The guidelines are not being followed with regard to the age range of learners who should attend SNI. It was then decided that even those learners who are within the formal schooling age range should be admitted to SEBENTA.) Akusale kuba nebantfwana ngoba sesibatfola along the way kwekutsi bafanele babuye ku FPE kantsi sebadzala. (Those guidelines state that, once the learners are above these age ranges, NUPE and SEBENTA need to be informed and requested to accept the learners, although they are not adults but a bit older for Grade 1 and 2.)*

Another issue that seemed a common reason for girls dropping out of school was pregnancy. This was mentioned by the regional inspector for primary schools, by head teachers and by learners.

Learner, school A: *Girls drop out because of pregnancy. Boys also drop out because they are addicted to drugs (cigarettes, dagga and glue). Others it's because they are old and become embarrassed. Some think school is wasting their time so they drop out to find jobs (cleaners, cleaning yards and security).*

Inspector: *There are dropouts, bantswana bayamitsa, nalokutsi nje kute i-clear policy kutsi umntswana umover nini esikolweni. (They do drop out – learners become pregnant and there is also no clear policy that stipulates when learners should move to another school.)*

The Head teacher of School B concurred that pregnancy contributes significantly to their dropout rate. Surprisingly, she highlighted that some of the learners fall pregnant even in Grade 4.

#### *5.2.1.2 Benefits of FPE*

The benefits of FPE are considered to be overarching, and the attainment of the FPE goal and objectives is seen as of vital importance. The key benefit of FPE is access to education by all learners, irrespective of their socio- economic backgrounds. The reality of this claim is evident because in section 2.4 of the literature Muyanga et al. (2008) gives an account of how the gross enrolment rate in Kenya rose from 92% in 2002 to 104% in 2003. This increase was because of the introduction of FPE in Kenya in 2003. Lekhetho (2013) reports the same scenario in Lesotho where there was a tremendous rise in the net enrolment rate from 69 % in 2000 to 84% in 2006. Aluede (2006) also expounds how



Nigeria also experienced an increase in enrolment in 1976 when UPE was introduced. İşcan et al (2014) reports the same in Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana and Zambia.

The benefits of FPE in Swaziland were confirmed by the participants. One of the learners in the focus group discussion at school B attested to the fact that, were it not for FPE, she would not have been able to attend school.

*Thembi: It helps all Swazi children to go to school. Yes, it has helped me. I started Grade 1 because of free primary education to learn more. It helped learners who do not have parents.*

The Head teacher of school B agreed, but was also of the view that the FPE grants paid by government should be increased because they are insufficient. This is a common view that Head teachers have, as revealed by Dlamini (2015) in the Swazi Observer newspaper article. Dlamini reported that Head teachers were complaining that the suspension of top-up fees was making them unable to run schools effectively and efficiently. This implies that Head teachers are of the view that the money provided by Government is inadequate. Interestingly contrary to this view, Dlamini (2012) in the literature section (2.6) criticises the Government for allocating each learner with a large grant, yet there is no accountability mechanism that has been put in place. On the other hand the Head teachers' views are similar to the ones categorically pointed out by Kenya (2008) and Akech and Simatwa (2010), in the literature concerning the grants paid by the Government in Kenya being insufficient.

A typical view of a Head teacher towards the grant provided by the Swaziland Government is revealed below.

Head teacher, school B: *Government said every child should go to school, which would be good if the money could be increased.*

Interviewer: Is the purpose of introducing FPE being achieved?

Head teacher: *Yes, it is, because every child is attending school right now. We have big numbers.*

Inasmuch as the general feeling of participants was that FPE was introduced to provide access to education, it was interesting to note that this was not appreciated by all the participants. Head teacher 2 at school A seemed to have some misgivings.

Interviewer: *Do you think FPE benefits the learners?*

Head teacher: *It does, to some extent, though actually I am not sure if it benefits the learners or it is the burden removed from the parents.*

Interviewer (laughing): *What do you mean?*

Head teacher: *Because they are not paying school fees now, they only buy uniforms, government provides almost everything, even stationery.*

Interviewer: *That is the whole purpose, so that every child has access to education and hence the reason why I asked if you think it benefits learners, especially those who come from poor backgrounds.*

Head teacher: *Iyah! For those it does, if they are serious about school, because some are just here.*

It could be inferred from these responses that the participant was not in support of the idea of FPE and access to education. The researcher interpreted his responses as an

unwillingness to acknowledge that FPE has provided access for all learners. This attitude aligns with Turner's view in section 3.3.2 (human rights theory) that there is a contest with regards to rights being entitlements. This attitude is also exhibited in a court case in the Eastern Cape in South Africa, wherein the plaintiffs in a case argued that the lack of teaching and learning facilities in schools was a violation of the learners' basic right to education. However, no judgement was made in this case, yet the plaintiffs' notion was supported by the South African Schools Act of 1996, Section 5A (2) (McConnachie & McConnachie 2012). This is evident in the response portrayed by the Head teacher at School A. The Head teacher cited above seemed to believe that the move by government to introduce FPE was not a good one. His response was that parents no longer pay school fees, and there were undertones of disapproval of the situation – understandably so, because head teachers have never subscribed to the programme, and there has always been an issue around parents' not paying school fees. This is evident judging by the confusion that has existed since FPE was introduced. The confusion has been brought about by the schools charging top-up fees and the MoET changing positions in its stand regarding this matter.

#### *5.2.1.3 Effects of top-up fees on access*

The top-up fees issue is later discussed in detail as a separate topic, because based on the literature reviewed, the top-up fee saga is one of the most contentious issues surrounding the FPE programme (see section 2.6). It has undermined efforts to provide access and ensure equity, which are the fundamental aims of FPE – more so because the FPE implementation guidelines (Swaziland 2009:3) stipulate in no uncertain terms that FPE is "a consolidated programme aimed at creating an environment characterised by minimum barriers to quality primary education". This challenge is not only unique to Swaziland. İşcan, Rosenblum and Tinker (2014) in the literature (section 2.5) espouse how in Kenya,

the charging of levy fees has defeated the purpose of FPE. In addition to this, Akech and Simatwa stipulate how levy fees have led to the failure of educational needs of the marginalised being met. Parajuli and Archarya (2014) report how each time the Government in Nepal abolished school fees, they in some way crept in. Parajuli and Archarya (2014) attribute this to poor planning by the Government. One of the types of barriers specified in the FPE implementation guidelines is financial barriers, be they direct or indirect, such as those associated with paying school fees, purchasing textbooks or exercise books, or contributing towards the construction of school infrastructure. The implementation strategy in the guidelines states that grants will be provided to cover schools' operational expenses in lieu of school fees, which would be abolished in all public primary schools. However, the top-up fees issue is inconsistent with this definition and the implementation strategy. The financial barrier to education is confirmed by local newspaper reports, for example in the following piece by Winile Masinga in the *Swazi Observer* dated 14 September 2014:

The top up fees according to the FPE policy are to be authorised by the Ministry of Education but some principals have been reportedly charging the top up fees without the Ministry's approval. The top up fees have resulted in too many pupils dropping out as they had no one to settle the remainder of what government had paid. When King His Majesty King Mswati III opened Parliament in February, he pronounced that every child should be in school and further assigned the concerned stakeholders, including government, to go find a solution on the issue.

The top-up fees issue has been the biggest hurdle since FPE was introduced (see the problem statement in section 1.3 and section 2.6). It threatens the sustainability of the programme, especially with regard to access to education for every learner, irrespective of

his or her socio-economic background. It is unfortunate that some head teachers do not appreciate or embrace the intentions of the programme. They are more concerned about the amount of money government pays in the form of FPE grants per child, which they view as being too little, which they feel makes it difficult to run schools. This claim is the subject of some controversy, however, and is further discussed in the sections on the top-up fees. It is important to note, however, that the top-up situation has been so serious that the King intervened and made a pronouncement from the throne, which rendered it a policy statement. This section of the King's speech reads as follows (Swaziland 2014):

All Swazi children deserve access to quality education. It is in this vein that government should work with schools and parents to formulate the best funding mechanism with the objective of eliminating the top-up fees that deprive children of their opportunity to benefit from it.

The King's pronouncement which by law is a decree supports the principles of justice, as articulated in the speech and aligns with the Brundtland Commission, which places emphasis on the principles of justice (Meisch & Voget-Kleschin 2015). Immediately after the King had made this pronouncement, the MoET issued Circular 36, entitled "Re-admission into class of pupils from all levels who have been expelled from classes and/or not admitted into classes for failure to pay top-up fees" (Swaziland 2014b).

The circular stipulated as follows:

1. All principals of schools had to permit all pupils who had been expelled from classes and/or not admitted to classes for failure to pay top-up fees to return to classes with immediate effect.
2. Other issues regarding this subject were being reviewed, and representations would be sought from all relevant stakeholders.
3. All principals were expected to comply with the circular forthwith.

After the King's pronouncement a task team was formed by cabinet, as provided for in clause 2 of the circular. This was confirmed by one of the participants, the senior MOET officer, who was directly responsible for primary schools:

Interviewer: *After all the confusion on the top-up what does government intend doing about it?*

Senior officer: *Ngulenzaba yale task team. (It is up to the task team.)*

Interviewer: *Vele nyalo according to Circular 39, no top-ups. (So now according to Circular 39 there are no top-ups.)*

Circular 39 was issued by the MoET on 25 February 2015, after it was realised that some schools continued to charge top-up fees and to withhold learners' report cards for owing top-up fee. This circular was entitled "Re: Suspension of top-up fees and withholding of examination results". It read as follows (Swaziland 2015):

1. The Ministry reminds all Head teachers that all pupils in Grade 1 to Grade 7 shall not be charged Top-Up fees pending finalization of the discussion of Report on Top-Up by the Government.
2. For pupils in Form 1 to Form V, no monies shall be added to fees paid by Government.
3. All schools still withholding learners' Examination Results and end of year performance reports for "Top-Up Fees" are instructed to release these with immediate effect failing which disciplinary action shall be taken against them.

During the interviews, the senior MoET officer explained further about the top-up fees issue and the task team.

Senior officer: *No top-up until further notice from the task team. Ungasibuti nge task team, we were not part of it. (Don't ask us about the task team, we were not*

*part of it). Babe Magagula (the minister) watsi i-report seyiphumile seyise cabinet.  
(The minister said the report is now out.)*

In an attempt to gain a better understanding of the issues around the top-up fees, the researcher proceeded to pose further questions to the senior MoET officer.

*Interviewer: Is it with the intention that itophindze ibuye itop up? (Is the intension that the top-up fees should be reinstated?)*

*Senior officer: Asati what will come out nalokutsi barecommenda kutsini. (We do not know what will happen and what has been recommended.) Uyabona, but we know that the report has been completed and submitted to cabinet. Simele kutsi salekuphuma iverdict bayikhulumise bona noma iyarivokhwa noma iyacubeka, noma kute i-top up hhulumende utongeta. (We are now waiting for the verdict to be presented on whether the top-up fees are being revoked or will continue, or will be totally stopped and the government will increase the money paid as grants.)*

Still on the issue of the head teachers' attitudes or views towards the FPE programme, another participant, the regional inspector for primary schools, explained as follows:

*Inspector: It is possible that there are head teachers who are unhappy about FPE, and maybe to a certain extent, one can say they used to be able to build at their own discretion. If they wanted to add a new class, build a teacher's house, it was up to them. But now with government monitoring money so closely, that opportunity has been taken away from them. And even EU and labanye labasitako (and others who are assisting). Sometimes they say build, start the foundation then we gonna help you.*

Interviewer (interrupting): *That is Micro-Projects.*

Inspector: *Yes, if they don't even have money to start working on that, then they lose out. But there were head teachers, I think, who were just happy to have money to spend in any way that they found was fit for them, which now they feel government is putting a lot of pressure.*

It is evident that there is conflict between head teachers and the Ministry with regard to top-up fees, which some head teachers are still insisting on charging, despite every effort by the Ministry to stop them from doing so. Clause 3 of Circular 39 goes as far as to stipulate that failure to heed the dictates of the circular will result in disciplinary action. The conflict arose due to the belief held by head teachers that the amount paid by government as clearly stipulated in the FPE Act of 2010 is insufficient, and as implementers of the policy they are of the view that their voices should be heard. This status quo depicts the top-down approach to policy implementation since no consensus has ever been reached between the players in the FPE saga. The directives have been from top to bottom and hence the outcry from the policy implementers for their voices to be heard. During the interviews, this was stated by most of the participants, including the senior MoET officer. The senior MoET officer mentioned that, when the FPE Act was drafted and the amount to be paid by government decided upon, the issue of inflation was overlooked.

Senior officer: *I-challenge lesi nayo nguleyema fees kutsi solo emalapho since inception. (The challenge we have, is that the FPE fees have remained the same since the inception of the programme.) I-Act ayizange yafaka i-provision yekwe kutsi ato review kanjani. (The Act did not make provision for how the fees should be reviewed.) Solo sema ku 560 lesacala ngaye despite kukhula kwetinfo lange*



*phandle, despite kukhula kwe curriculum, yona ya assumer kutsi simo siyohlala sinjengoba besinjalo ekucaleni. (The fees have remained at 560, which was the initial amount when the programme began, despite the increase in the cost of things, despite the expansion of the curriculum.).*

Either than Government overlooking the issue of inflation regarding that the top-up fee saga began at the very onset, when FPE was introduced, it can be inferred that there is a lack of understanding of education being a human right by head teachers. It can also be inferred that their understanding or knowledge of human rights is insignificant to them. This assertion is based on the literature in 2.6 that indicate how in developing countries the issue of education being a human right is neither here no there, citing Pakistan and Nepal as cases in point. This in Swaziland is further exacerbated by the non- functioning of the Commission on Human Rights and Public Administration, which is supposed to investigate constitutional violation of human rights. When government started rolling out the Free Primary Education (FPE) programme in 2010, some school principals found that they could not expediently execute their administrative duties since the money paid by the state was not enough; hence the introduction of top-up fees to supplement these funds... principals argued that that the money paid under the FPE programme was not enough to meet their running costs.

The regional inspector for primary schools was also of the view that the grant paid by government was insufficient, and that the increases in the price of goods that would occur over the years had not been considered.

Inspector: *Ksutsi nakatsi (when they say) Bethu 560 nga 2009 (560 in 2009) is good for Grade 1 in 2015, is that same 560 still enough for Grade 1? Government*

*also missed out on that one, tintfo tiyanyuka, solo yema i-FPE. (The prices of things have risen but the FPE amount has remained the same.)*

It should be noted, too, that the manner in which head teachers handled the matter did not comply with the policy directives of the FPE Act of 2010. This state of affairs matches with Lipsky's description of street level bureaucracy, as the Head teachers are implementing FPE in the way they see as best (see 3.2.1). According to the section 12(1), a committee of a public primary school intending to ask parents to pay top-up school fees over and above the grant paid to the school by government should submit a written request with justification to the minister for approval before implementation. According to subsection (2), the committee should only implement the top-up fees referred to in subsection (1) after it has received the approval of the minister in writing.

However, schools were and some are still charging top-up fees without seeking permission to do so as laid down in the Act. Zweli Sukati (2014) reported in the *Times of Swaziland* that the principal secretary (PS) informed head teachers at a meeting they had been invited to by the minister to discuss issues pertaining to the education system, that the Ministry would not help them break the law. This was after they had insisted that the grant paid by government was insufficient. They also mentioned that they could no longer pay the support staff at the schools, and attempted to negotiate for the Ministry to allow them to charge top-up fees. Sukati (2014) described it thus:

"The Free Primary Education programme is governed by an Act of Parliament. I do not think what school principals and school committee chairpersons are saying is that the Ministry should help them in breaking the law," said Muir. "But that is exactly what is happening now." He said the issue of top-up fees was going to be addressed accordingly but no one should expect the Ministry's help in breaking the law.

The fact that this meeting occurred, was confirmed by the senior MoET officer.

Senior officer: *Ngingenta nayi i-example yakaHhohho nayi imihlangano beyentiwe ngu minister, kwahijackwa lowakhe umhlangano lobekatsi utaba zonal ku khulunywe lama issues ekutsi how best labantfwana bangeke bacoshwe ne kutsi kunga sustaineka kanjani. (I can give an example of the Hhohho region at zone meetings hosted by the minister. These meetings were hijacked and instead it was these issues related to the top-up fees which were discussed, and also how best to prevent the learners from being sent home and how FPE could be sustained.) Nekutsi siyawutfole umcondvo wekutsi batsini. (It was also to get to know what the Head teachers were saying about the top-up saga.) Kuyenteka nje kepha at a very small scale. (This is what is happening on a very small scale though.)*

It seems that what was discussed at this meeting was that there are no forums on which head teachers can voice the challenges they have been encountering with regard to FPE. So when the minister hosted a regional courtesy meeting as the new political incumbent after the 2013 national elections, head teachers used this platform to express their frustrations regarding FPE. The minister's meeting was therefore completely "hijacked" by the Head teachers, who aired their grievances about the FPE programme and in particular the issue of the top-up fees. The senior MoET officer also clearly stated that there have been few such opportunities for head teachers to discuss their challenges in respect of the FPE programme.

#### *5.2.1.4 Other barriers to access*

One of the participants, the inspector for primary schools in the Manzini region, was asked whether the FPE programme aims were being fulfilled. She responded in the affirmative but added that this had resulted in classes being overcrowded. When further prompted about the aim of access having been reached, she responded disparagingly and contradicted her earlier statement. This is clearly reflected in the last part of her statement.

Interviewer: *Is the purpose of introducing FPE being achieved?*

Inspector: *Yes, it is, because every child is attending school right now – we have big numbers.*

Interviewer: *That is very serious, and then do you think wena eh! i-FPE iobjective yayo (the FPE objective) that is mostly access, is being fulfilled?*

Inspector: *Somewhat, somewhat, there is access but access to what?*

Interviewer: *To schooling.*

Inspector: *Access to class in a classroom, that is all. Konje njena loku losokutfole klasini eyi for me ayi! (But what you now get in the classroom is really being compromised.)*

It seemed as though he was trying to put across that, in as much as learners have access to schools, the education they receive, is not quality education, which is just as bad as having no access. The issue of quality education is part of the SDGs agenda because it is one of the goals that were not achieved through the MDGs. Most countries were able to achieve access to education or UPE, but the quality of education became a concern and still is in most countries. Instead, FPE has been viewed as having contributed to the decline in quality education. This view is well articulated by CREATE (2010:6) who even calls the situation the "enrolment shock on the quality of learning and teaching". The massive enrolments caused a shortage in desks, chairs, textbooks and other important materials which contribute to the quality of education (CREATE: 13 see section 2.4)

It also emerged during interviews that access and equity, two of the goals of FPE education, were not being met because of the hidden costs previously identified. These

include paying for school uniforms, school trips and travel from home to school. This was revealed by the learners and the senior MoET officer.

Senior officer: *Uyati ubute emachallenges eFPE, kusele indzaba ye-uniform. (You asked about the FPE challenges and the issue on uniforms was left out.) Iseyi challenge ngoba labanye bantfwana bakhishwe kutsi bête i-uniform. (It is a challenge because some children drop out because they do not have uniforms.) Kusho kutsi yihidden cost, noma other costs letifana ne uniform, timali tekudla, neku travela, labanye bakhashane naletikolwa badzinga. (It means there are hidden costs, for example for uniforms, for food and for travel, as some live far from the schools.)*

This belief was also held by Thoba and Lungisa, learners at school C.

Interviewer: *Are there children who are out of school? And if so, why are they not at school?*

Thoba: *Yes. Because their parents are deceased and they lack school uniforms.*

Interviewer: *What do you think should be done so that those who are out of school should come back to school?*

Lungisa: *Relatives should assist them to buy school uniforms.*

Regarding equity, when FPE was introduced, inclusive education had been part of the package. However, it seems as though schools were unprepared for this part of the package. Based on the observations made in the classes, no learners with prominent special needs issues were identified. Even at school D, which was intended to be among the model schools designated for this particular endeavour, their presence was not at all evident in the Grade 6 class that the researcher observed. It was possible that these

learners had not been progressing to the next class and were hence not present in the class. The school D Teacher who was interviewed at the school, confirmed this.

Teacher: *There have been challenges with children who have disabilities yet the school was not well prepared.*

Interviewer: *Are these children still there?*

Teacher: *There is one in Grade 2. Some of them have dropped out, especially those who were older. Some of them were discouraged to be with small children. Children with disabilities should go to special schools, because the teachers in special schools have been trained to deal with such children. Teachers are scared of these kids, and it is stressful for them to handle such.*

The Deputy Head teacher at School D complained that they had not been receiving support from the Ministry or from the SEN Unit in this regard. This is despite the fact that FPE is supposed to be inclusive and non discriminatory against children that have special needs. The Teacher in school D portrayed a lack of knowledge of human rights for children with special needs and that placing them in special schools is discriminatory and a violation of their human right, as well as the principles of social justice (UNESCO 2008). The inclusion discourse aligns with the values that underpin modernisation and perceive children with special needs as holistic human beings who have the same rights as all other children (Marks 2009).

Deputy Head teacher: *The inspector refers parents to us those with special needs and we have not been trained as a school and we need to regularly be trained, and the Special Education Unit does not keep a close eye on this work.*

In order to introduce inclusive education in conjunction with FPE, the MOET's EDSEC policy (2011b:11) stipulates:

Every Swazi citizen has equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities and shall be protected from all forms of stigma and discrimination including those based on faith, culture, gender, disability, orphanhood, economic vulnerability or HIV status.

This principle is further emphasised in the inclusive education framework within the same policy. The rationale for the principle is described in the framework as being rooted in the basic human right to education, and it shares many of the goals and approaches of the EFA movement. The policy objectives of inclusive education as articulated in the MOET's EDSEC policy (2011b:18) read as follows:

- To assure that every learner in Swaziland has meaningful participation and achievement in the teaching and learning process
- To ensure that:
  - every child is entitled to enrol in a school near where he/she lives;
  - no child shall be denied access to education at any level on the basis of disability;
  - the education system accepts difference, exercises no discrimination and respects individuality of each child;
  - all attitudinal and physical barriers to inclusive education shall be removed in public, private and other schools and institutions

When FPE was introduced in 2010, the MoET's EDSEC policy was a draft document, but because these intentions were already contained in the draft, the MoET through the SEN Unit emphasised the need for every child to have access to education based on these guiding principles. The policy encompasses an inclusive education framework, thus when head teachers were oriented in respect of FPE, this aspect was included in the orientation

process. However, it would seem as though the process was enforced too abruptly, and as though no direct assistance or monitoring of the process have been received from the MoET. This was evident from the responses received from the participants in this regard.

It is also likely that schools were so overwhelmed by all these developments that they did not know how to respond appropriately to the challenges that arose. The excerpt below from the response of the Head teacher at school C substantiates the researcher's interpretation.

Head teacher: *Children with learning difficulties have been coming in, there has been no support for children with severe visual impairments. We had to refer one such child to a special school.*

It was therefore evident that access for learners with special needs was still a challenge, because the schools did not have the necessary facilities and the teachers did not have the necessary skills to handle the learners with special needs.

#### *5.2.1.5 Access to education as a human right*

The challenges associated with access to education have proven to be a threat to the essence of FPE and to the right of every child to receive access to education as a human right as articulated by the Human Rights Declaration of 1948. The challenges that have since emerged, and the barriers that have been experienced in FPE as indicated by participants in this study, have proven to be a violation of the right to education. In this regard, the Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland of 2005, Section 6 and 29) specifies that:

Every Swazi child shall within three years of the commencement of this Constitution have the right to free education in public schools at least up to the end of primary school, beginning with the first grade.



The FPE Act of 2010 stipulates that:

(1) Except as provided in this Act every Swazi child enrolled at a public primary school is entitled to free education at that public primary school beginning with Grade 1 up to and including Grade 7.

(2) For avoidance of doubt, a Swazi child enrolled at a public primary school shall not be dismissed or excluded from school on the ground that the Government has not paid the fees due.

Furthermore the MOET's EDSEC policy (2011b:3) in response to the provisions of the Constitution stipulates as follows:

The Ministry is intensifying its efforts in the implementation of equity and competitiveness driven reforms. At primary/basic school level, the Ministry of education and Training's objective is to expand participation, ensuring that all pupils, irrespective of their social or economic circumstances, have access to quality education. To this end, the Ministry continues to subsidize education through the provision of 'free' textbooks to all pupils at primary school level, physical infrastructure, facilities, furniture and equipment, educational grants and subventions and the rolling-out of the Free Primary Education (FPE) programme.

The second section of the Act stipulates that learners should not be expelled, but that has not been the case – some have been excluded or expelled for not paying their fees, as is evident from the responses of participants in this study. This means learners' right to education has been violated. It is important to reiterate that the Ministry itself contributed to the confusion on the top-up fees issue, as the literature shows. In 2012, the MoET issued Circular 14 (2012a), which instructed head teachers to take legal action against parents who refused to pay pop-up fees. The circular was entitled "Re: Non-admittance of

orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) for failure to Pay "top-up fees", and reads (see the problem statement in sections 1.3 and 2.6 for details):

1. It has been brought to the attention of the Ministry of Education and Training and the Deputy Prime Ministers office that orphaned and vulnerable children are not admitted in schools for failure to pay upfront the so called "Top-Up Fees".
2. The Ministry of Education and Training in conjunction with the Deputy Prime Minister's Office implore all Head teachers and all others concerned to admit pupils into schools without first demanding payment of "Top-Up Fees" as a condition for admission.
3. Instead of turning back pupils who do not have the requisite "Top-Up Fees" an arrangement should be made between the schools and the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the said pupils as to when and how the "Top-Up Fees" will be paid.
4. If parent or guardian(s) fails to honour the agreement and/or arrangements, the school should send at least three reminders to the parents(s) or guardian(s).
5. If the parent(s) or guardian(s) despite the reminders, refuse, fail and/or neglect to pay the "Top-Up Fees", legal action for the recovery of same should be taken against him or her.

This circular was not consistent with the FPE legal framework, namely the FPE Act of 2010. It also overlooked the conditions that had been set for charging top-up fees. Head teachers took advantage of the loophole created by Circular 14 and also disregarded the set procedures as stipulated in the FPE Act of 2010. Inasmuch as the contents of the circular discouraged schools from expelling learners who have not paid top-up fees, it is worth noting that section 3 of the circular did not explicitly state that learners should not be expelled. Furthermore, the contents of the section were contrary to the provisions of the FPE Act of 2010, which stipulates in no uncertain terms that parents will not be expected to pay school fees. The issuing of this circular resulted in serious conflict arising between

parents and head teachers, which led to the MoET releasing Circular 17 (Swaziland 2013c), entitled "Re: Suspension of top-up fees and withholding of examination results".

It read thus:

1. The Ministry advises all Head teachers of schools that all pupils in Grades 1 to Grade 7 shall not be charged Top-Up Fees except in compliance with the Free Primary Education Act of 2010.
2. For pupils in Form 1 to Form 5 no monies shall be added to fees paid by Government.
3. All schools that have collected Top-Up Fees from learners without written permission and approval from the Minister for Education and Training should refund such funds to guardians and parents in the most cost-effective way deemed fit by the school and School Committee.
4. Finally, all schools still withholding learners' Examination Results and end of year performance are advised to release these with immediate effect.
5. This Circular supersedes any other circular on the subject particularly Circular No. 14 of 2012 entitled "Non-admittance of Orphans and Vulnerable Children for failure to pay Top-Up Fees"

Despite the release of this circular, some schools continued charging top-up fees and withholding report cards, hence Circular 39 was issued in 2015. As a matter of fact, the incident that made the MoET aware that some schools were not adhering to Circular 17 and Circular 36 and that led to the issue of Circular 39, was touched on during an interview with the senior MoET officer.

Senior officer: *It is, ikhona, basabacosha ngekutsi akurepotheki kahle, site lama statistics kahle. (It is still there they are still sending them home for the top-up fee, it is just that we do not have the proper reporting mechanisms and statistics.) But*

*uhle uva, kungenteka kutsi lokufika kwale circular kuwentile umehluko ngoba bebefika la basishayele tincingo batali bakhala. (You sometimes get to hear about it, but I think the release of the government circular has eased the situation. Parents would call the Ministry and complain.) Uyabona nje, lo head teacher wala eMbabane Central uya disputa kutsi bekacosha bantfwana for i-top up kantsi tsine sinayo i-evidence. (For instance, the head teacher in one of the schools in Mbabane denies that he was sending children home for the top-up fee, yet we have evidence.) Kwafika gogo la, samu refera ka REO. (A grandmother of a child came to report this issue and we referred her to the REO [Regional Educational Officer].) REO took up the matter, soyaphika, utsi umbuzo ukhona yini lomntfwana esikolweni, bekangekho. (The REO took the matter up but the head teacher is now denying the whole thing and the big question is, is the child at school?) Ngicabanga kutsi lendlela bo REO lese bayibambe ngayo, once beva kutsi kukhona lokwentekile bayitsatsela etulu vele. (I think the REOs are handling this issue well; when it comes to their attention they urgently address it.) Nale circular iphuma nje, kungcindzetela kutsi akuse kume kubanjwa kwema report. (The circular was released to ensure that reports would no longer be withheld.) Phela nga December angikayi elivini ngoba besisebenta lokubanjwa kwema report. (You know, last December I couldn't go on leave because of this whole report- withholding saga.) Sesifuna kutsi sifune head teacher anike bantfwana emareport. (We now needed to find this head teacher so that we could instruct him to release the reports he had withheld.)*

*Interviewer: It was chaotic hey!*

*Senior officer: Kakhulu! Sebabambe ireport, umtfwana akati noma uphasile, kutsi nakuvulwa sikholwa utfole kutsi ufeyilile. Wena lokutsi ufeyilile ngabe udeale nako*

*ngema holide, sohlangana nako nakuvulwa sikolwa. (Very much so! When children's reports are withheld, they are unaware how they have fared, and if they have not fared well, knowing this during the holidays before school's open gives them time to deal with the situation, instead of finding out when schools open in January.)*

It is unfortunate that, in the midst of all of this, achieving equity and access to education is proving to be a challenge because of the barriers to access which have emerged – especially the one regarding top-up fees. Interestingly the FPE Act of 2010 defines "free education" as the education of a Swazi child at primary level without the parent of the child or the child having to pay tuition fees for that education. It should be noted that the top-up fees referred to in the Act were specifically meant to be applied for, together with justifications, and to be levied only if the minister approved the application. Instead, schools took advantage of the situation and enforced Circular 14, even after it had been revoked by means of Circular 17.

#### *5.2.1.6 Sustainability of access to education through FPE*

The factors that have been mentioned with regard to access to FPE and the violation of learners' human right to education also hinge on the sustainability of the FPE programme. The objectives of FPE as articulated in the MOET's EDSEC policy have been highlighted, however, in the light of the ongoing challenges in respect of access to education, the sustainability of the programme has become questionable. If learners are experiencing barriers to access, the objective is not being achieved, and hence the programme is not sustainable. The sustainability of the programme depends on the political will of government. Thus far government has shown that there is political will to ensure the

programme succeeds. This is evident from the budget allocation towards the programme since its inception as highlighted in the literature review, section 2.3.

The biggest challenge is dissatisfaction among school officials with regard to the money paid by government, as highlighted in section 5.2.1.3. The question now is whether government would be willing and able to increase the money it pays in the form of FPE grants. It is important to note that the sustainability of the programme has a direct effect on the development agenda of the country, which hinges on human capital development, Swaziland being among the top ten middle countries as articulated in the country's Vision 2022 National Development Goals (NDS) (Swaziland 1999).

The MoET's AEC report (Swaziland 2013a) also reports that there has been a decline in the enrolment rates and that some of the children are dropping out of school, and that this defeats the GoS Vision 2022 National Development Goals on human capital development, contained in the NDS of 1999. This means it also defeats the principles of modernization, which hinge on education being a vehicle to economic growth, through human capital development (Harber & Oryema 2014). The report describes the barriers to access as having been caused by the top-up fees and other costs. It adds that dropouts could also be due to the top-up fees charged by schools. The report notes further that there has been a decline in the Grade 1 enrolment, and that this could probably be attributed to the requirement of registration fees in addition to the top-up fees. According to the AEC report (Swaziland 2013a:17), the sustainability of the FPE programme is therefore at risk.

An excerpt from the AEC report reads as follows:

A national drop of about 3000 pupils at primary level indicated there were serious issues that were creeping into the education system. These were challenges to sustaining the FPE program and need to be addressed before the system reverts to what it was before 2010.

This situation could perhaps also be attributed to the issue raised by the head teacher for school B.

Head teacher: *Another problem is the differences in the age of the learners who come to school for extra -curricular activities and drop out when the ball games are over. The older learners also struggle academically because they have not been in class for some time and are unable to adapt to the learning part of school.*

These remarks refer to the fact that some of the older learners enrol to participate in sports – especially soccer. However, when the sports season comes to an end and the focus returns to learning, they find themselves faced with learning challenges and drop out. Enrolment in schools for such reasons is also a threat to the sustainability of the programme.

On the other hand, it is important to note that the GoS is attempting by all means to address some of the hidden costs that have become a barrier to access and equally to the sustainability of FPE. In fact, the office of the Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) is piloting a project whereby some of the hidden FPE costs will be covered by government. This was highlighted by the senior MoET officer.

Senior officer: *Awukafundzi ephepheni last week, kukekwavela kutsi DPM nelihhovisi la DPM ka department yaka Social Welfare sebacalakwa emagants, OVC grants, basa piloter etinkhundleni, sebasethe ngisho icriteria yekutsi bobani labo latobanika lama grants, atobanganani, ekwenta ini, atfolwe kanjani. Niyawukhumbula lomhlangano lapho basibita khona emahhotela Ezulwini, lapho bebayositjela khona kutsi hulumende u-engager i-consultant kubuka these other costs langasiko ekufundza. (Didn't you read in the paper last week that the DPMs*

*office under the Social Welfare Office has started providing grants for OVCs? They are piloting the programme at the moment. They have developed criteria based on who will be eligible, how much they [the grants] will be, what they are for, how they will be disbursed. Do you remember the meeting in one of the hotels at Ezulwini, where we were informed that government is engaging a consultant to look at the other costs that are not about teaching and learning?)*

The other possible hidden cost that government in Swaziland has been addressing is that of hunger, being cognisant of the fact that learners cannot learn if they are hungry. Government has been providing schools with food to cater for this need. The provision of food to learners has also become part of the FPE package. This enables and motivates learners to come to school and helps to keep them in school, and can therefore be viewed as having a positive effect on the sustainability of the programme. Government's awareness that hunger is one of the barriers to education is well articulated in the National Framework for Food Security in Schools – Swaziland: Schools Food Security Framework (Swaziland 2014a), which specifies that:

The MoET recognises that one of the barriers to quality learning and teaching is hunger given the increased number of the OVC in schools. As part of its mandate the Ministry endeavours to provide nutritional support to all public primary and high school learners through the provision of universal school feeding.

During the focus group discussions, learners expressed how the provision of food at their school helped those who lacked food at home. The teacher at school A agreed that learners were benefitting from the programme because government fed them. The school A learners all seemed to agree, and stated that they were benefitting from the free food.



Mandla: *It is important to get free food.*

Interviewer: *Why do you think so?*

Interviewer: *Why is it important?*

Lomalungelo: *Because you might come to school hungry, but when you get to school you might find food.*

Primrose, school C: *It helps orphans because all children have to learn. They can get free food.*

The school A teacher felt that the feeding scheme was "ok" and seemed to approve of it.

The Head teacher for School C complained, however, that the food distributed by government was insufficient.

Head teacher: *The food provided by the government runs out; the school then has to buy the food from the school fees. There is an allocation in the FPE allocation for food. In the school there are about 660 children – we use about 45 kg of beans per day. Government provides 69 bags of maize, 19 bags of beans and 19 bags of 50 kg rice.*

This Head teacher went on to say that there was no allocation for food in the fees paid by government, which is also contrary to the provisions of the Inqaba School Development Plan (SDP), because it contains the food and nutrition pillar. (These pillars are listed in section 5.3.1.) The right of schools to allocate funds in terms of this pillar was confirmed by the senior MoET officer.

It is important to note, however, that the food delivered by government as part of the Schools Food Security Framework depends on the amount of food that is available to be

provided to the schools, which in turn is determined by the World Food Programme (WFP) guidelines of 2008. This is based on the recommended daily consumption per pupil per day of basic foods, namely: cereals 150 g, pulses (red speckled beans, peas, cow peas) 40g, vegetable (sunflower) oil 15g. The ration that schools are expected to cook every day, are based on these requirements, and the amounts provided to the schools, other than what they buy, is also based on these requirements and on the number of learners. Table 5.1 is based on a table from the Schools Food Security Framework, and shows the ratios to be cooked for a school, based on the requirements and the number of learners.

Table 5.2 Ratios to be cooked per school based on the WFP requirements and the number of learners in the school (Source: National Framework for Food Security in Schools – Swaziland: Schools Food Security Framework: undated, page 17)

Children Present	Cereals (maize, sorghum) 150 g per pupil per Day	Pulses (red speckled beans, peas) 40 g per pupil per Day	Vegetable (sunflower) oil 15 g per pupil per day
50	$50 \times 150 = 7,5 \text{ kg}$	$50 \times 40\text{g} = 2 \text{ kg}$	$50 \times 15 \text{ g} = 0.750 \text{ kg}$ $50 \times 16,5 \text{ ml} = 0,825 \text{ litres}$
100	15 kg	4 kg	1,65 litres
150	22,5 kg	6 kg	2,475 litres
200	30 kg	8 kg	3,3 litres
250	37,5 kg	10 kg	4,135 litres
300	45 kg	12 kg	4,95 litres
400	60 kg	16 kg	6,6 litres
500	75 kg	20 kg	8,25 litres

When the food provided by school C is compared with the table above, the 45 kg of beans that the school prepares is far more than it is expected to provide. This is probably why the school runs out of the food provided by government. The 50 kg x 19 bags of rice that School C receives from government amounts to 950 kg. There are 660 children in the school and the daily requirement per child is 150 g for cereals, which means the school needs  $660 \times 150 \text{ g} = 99 \text{ kg}$ . Therefore in total, this amount can be used for  $950/99 = 9,6$  days. However, it is important to note that the rice supplements the 69 bags of maize that the school also receives. It is unfortunate that the amounts have not been specified

therefore it is not possible to estimate the expected number of days that it could be used in relation to the daily ratio requirements.

It should be noted that the above daily requirements are probably suitable for normal, stable eating patterns, where there is no deprivation, scarcity or hunger; however, they might not be sufficient under the prevailing circumstances. Whatever the case may be, school C's use of the pulses far exceeds the Framework's requirements.

Part of the grant that government pays has been allocated for food. This budget allocation for the school feeding scheme is clarified by Linda Jele in the *Times of Swaziland* (2015:4–6). Jele illustrates the breakdown of the FPE grant paid by government, showing how much is allocated to each expenditure item for each child per Grade level. The breakdown is presented in table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3 Breakdown of the FPE grant paid by the Swaziland government

<b>Grade 1 and 2</b>	<b>School fees</b>	<b>E80</b>
	<b>School feeding</b>	<b>E150</b>
	<b>Wages (support staff)</b>	<b>E15</b>
	<b>Sports</b>	<b>E25</b>
	<b>Utilities</b>	<b>E60</b>
	<b>Maintenance</b>	<b>E80</b>
	<b>Bank charges</b>	<b>E150</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>E560</b>
<b>Grade III and IV</b>	E560 plus E20 for technical subjects	
<b>Total</b>		<b>E580</b>
<b>Grade V</b>	E580 plus E30 each for Home Economics and Agriculture	
<b>Total</b>		<b>E640</b>
<b>Grade VI</b>	E580 plus E70 each for Home Economics and E40 Agriculture	
<b>Total</b>		<b>E670</b>
<b>Grade VII</b>	E670 plus E340 for examination fees	
<b>Total</b>		<b>E1010</b>

Source: Times of Swaziland Jele, 2015

This breakdown is consistent with the grant allocation for each Grade level provided by the schools covered in the study, including School C. The breakdown shows that E150 has been allocated for each child for school feeding.

In his report, Jele (2015) breaks down the E150 per child according to the approximately 180 days a child spends at school in a year, which means the amount for food per day is 83 cents. (Jele seems to have divided the 150 by 180 to come up with .83.) A head teacher in Jele's study felt that, considering the fact that many schools are situated in rural areas and that there are a large number of orphaned and vulnerable pupils, this amount was not enough (Jele 2015).

It seems that due to economies of scale, the school feeding programme is sustainable in schools where the enrolment rate is high, but where the enrolment rate is low, it becomes a challenge. An additional challenge to the sustainability of the feeding programme is that the amount of E150 per child has remained unchanged while the cost of food has escalated. This depicts a situation that the feeding scheme policy formation process had a loop hole, it would seem like issues pertaining to the size of the school were over looked. It typifies the top- down approach to policy making where decisions are centrally made without engaging those who will be responsible for implementing the policy. This aligns with Sarfo and Baah-Mintah (2013) who argue that government institutions undergo many lengthy bureaucratic processes which often result in low productivity and inefficiency. Addressing these bureaucratic problems and ensuring effective implementation involves the provision of adequate resources.

During the interviews for this study it became evident that the Head teacher for School C was not familiar with the Inqaba SDP. She complained about having to build toilets, yet one of the pillars of the Inqaba is allocated to water, sanitation and hygiene. In other

words, schools can utilise the E80 allocated as school fees in the grant, as well as the E80 allocated for school maintenance, to build toilets under the water, sanitation and hygiene pillar. This pillar does not rely on the grant allocation only, but is one of the priority projects funded by the Ministry as part of the FPE package. All schools need to do, is submit a request to the MoET's Planning Department. This was clarified by the senior MoET officer during her interview. The ignorance of the Head teacher of School C can probably be attributed to her lack of experience – when she was interviewed, she had had only two years' experience in this position. There is also no induction course for new head teachers in the education system, which was mentioned by the senior MoET officer.

*Senior officer: Nalokutsi ngicabanga kutsi kulekhisha ngoba bo head teacher betfu basha labanengi with loku retire lokunengi lesekukhona. (I also think [it is] because most of the head teachers we have are new, most of the older head teachers having retired.) Kudzingeka vigorous continuous in servicing of these new head teachers in all the components, singabhuki i-finance yodvwa, sibuke konkhe. (That being the case, there is a need for vigorous in-service training to be undertaken, not only in finances but in all areas.)*

The literature shows, however, that there have been many developments in regard to the SDP issue. For example, there have been some audit queries that head teachers have had to respond to in parliament under the Parliament Public Accounts Committee (PAC). Anomalies have emerged with regard to the building of school toilets, for example. Procedures are being flouted by the MoET's Planning Department, as a result of which building materials that have been allocated to the schools for this project, have been lying idle at some schools. This turn of events was reported in the *Swazi News* (Mhlongo 2016:6):

The Ministry of Education and Training Development Planning Department was yesterday exposed as being the main cause of the many irregularities regarding the supply of building material in rural schools ... the department was accused by the PAC of having caused confusion in schools by taking over a project that was previously assigned to the Micro Projects office ... schools received the materials for the project but neither used it nor continued with the work due to the confusion caused by the Planning Department.

The Head teacher who was being questioned by the PAC admitted to have leased it to either neighbours or other schools. Head teachers argued that they found themselves with no alternative but to leave the building material lying idle as they could not afford the labour that was needed to complete the project. Before the planning Department took over the project from Micro Projects the schools did not have to worry about the labour to construct the toilets.

Another anomaly that was queried by the PAC was why the MoET's Planning Department had delivered materials to some schools Micro-Projects (a department under the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development) had already delivered materials to. The Controlling Officer at the MoET, who was responsible for signing for the release of funds, responded to the query by saying it was an oversight. This is true to Hill and Hupe (2002) who note that policy is understood differently by those who interpret it and may base their actions on different assumptions from those who formulated the policy. In the implementation process, it may go through modification and in some cases subversion.

This situation reveals that there are a number of underlying issues concerning the management of the FPE programme resources. This unfortunately impacts negatively on the FPE programme's plans and advancement. It also renders the programme unsustainable in the sense that the FPE package then becomes incomplete. This results in

head teachers being frustrated and wishing they could use their own discretion, as was the case before FPE was introduced.

Another irregularity identified by the PAC was the lack of coordination between REOs and head teachers. This was based on the fact that the problem of building materials lying idle at schools was identified by the officers of the Auditor General's office when they went to do audit checks. The PAC was of the view that, if the audit checks had not been done, the anomalies would have remained unnoticed, yet REOs are expected to keep track of all items delivered by the MoET to schools in the regions. These observations by the PAC are consistent with the findings of this study with regard to the poor monitoring of the FPE programme by the REOs and regional inspectors, as highlighted in section 5.2.4

In addition to the grants, government also provides each learner with textbooks and stationery (Swaziland 2011b). This means government's commitment to FPE exceeds the E560 paid per child. This was confirmed by the learners themselves and by the senior MoET officer interviewed.

Senior officer: *Mine ngekubuka kwami it is going very well because what the package lehambisana ne FPE ngiyibona isachubeka, iyachubeka kahle, emaisues ekutsi ichubeka kahle is another issue, kepha because the package itanekutsi we will pay grants to every child kupublic schools bekusachubeka kahle. Iphindze the package itsi; we will provide textbooks, exercise books and stationery, kuse ngakajiki lutfo and iratio yetfu yekusupplier tincwadzi is one to one, aba sherishi. Hulumende usetsembekile kwanyalo. (Based on the researcher's personal observation, the FPE programme is progressing well; however, there are challenges. Government has been faithful in this regard for now. Our textbook provision ratio is 1:1, and that has not changed.*

Two learners at School C and D respectively, Skhumbuzo and Sifiso, confirmed that they received textbooks and learning materials as part of the FPE package.

Skhumbuzo: *We receive exercise books to keep till the end of the year.* (He repeated this several times to emphasise his point.)

Sifiso listed the learning materials received by them, other than textbooks, as exercise books, rulers, food, and for Grade 5 and 7 also instruments.

Based on the participants' responses, the researcher concluded that, because there is political will and commitment by government, the FPE programme was sustainable. The efforts that the Government of Swaziland has made towards FPE are commendable when comparisons are made with other developing countries. Pakistan and Nepal, being cases in point, as already highlighted above and in the literature (section 2.7. 2). It is also worth noting that in as much as Swaziland seems to be ahead these countries operate in different contexts and some of the challenges they encounter are different. A typical example of such a scenario is the early marriages of girls in Nepal which is a barrier to access to education there (Trynudik 2013) and it is not the case in Swaziland. Nepal and Pakistan have experienced civil unrest (Wagle 2012) and Pakistan (2014), which Swaziland has not experienced. There is the caste system in Nepal which hinders children from certain lower castes from interacting with those from higher castes (Shiwakot 2009; Wagle 2012; Trynudik 2013) yet Swazi's in Swaziland are of one ethnic group. Nevertheless Swaziland still needs to address the stagnant grant provided by government as it does not respond to inflation. The challenges would need to be addressed, however especially the issue of the FPE grant possibly being insufficient and not keeping abreast with inflation.



### 5.3 The top-up fees dilemma

As clearly shown in this study, the top-up fees issue appears to be one of the most controversial facing FPE in Swaziland. It continues to be so to this day, because head teachers are dissatisfied with the grant paid by government. On the other hand, government is also dissatisfied with the way in which some schools manage the funds.

#### 5.3.1 Schools and top-up fees

The issue of access to education seems to be a challenge and needs to be seriously addressed by the Ministry. The views of participants in this study on the top-up fees issue varied. For example, head teacher 1 of School A, when asked whether the school charged top-up fees, said they did not. Yet the learners said they had at some point paid E100 for building new classrooms. During a focus group discussion, the matter was explored with learners at School A.

*Thulani: We pay for school trips. In Grade 3 we paid for building of classrooms, E100.*

*Daniel: The Grade 2s even now are paying the E100.*

Thulani added that the building was incomplete because other parents were refusing to pay.

*Thobile: The building started when we were in Grade 3, 2011.*

*Interviewer: What happened to learners who did not pay the E100?*

*Thembi: Nothing happened to learners who were not paying.*

*Interviewer: Are they still paying the E100?*



Siviwe: *Kute lesikubhadalako ngaphandle kwa 2011 lapho sabhadalela khona kwakhiwa kweliklasi. Sasikhokha 100 emalangeni. (There is no money that we pay other than the E100 that we paid in 2011.)*

The researcher subsequently returned to School A for a follow-up visit. As the researcher was interviewing Head teacher 2, who had replaced Head teacher 1, the school secretary entered the Head teacher's office to make a photocopy. The Head teacher invited her to participate and respond to some of the questions.

Interviewer: *And then the issue of top-up. Does your school charge top-up?*

Head teacher: *No.*

Interviewer: *No? Has your school ever charged top-up(laughing)?*

Head teacher (as secretary enters the office): *Maybe I can find out from her (to the secretary). Did you ever charge top-up?*

Secretary: *Angati kutsi ungakubita kutsi yitop up yini, but they were paying i-building fund." (I don't know whether you can refer to it as top-up, but they were paying for the building fund.)*

Interviewer: *What were they going to build?*

Before the Head teacher could respond, the school secretary quickly replied.

Secretary: *The two classes that side (pointing towards the classrooms).*

Interviewer: *Didn't the government build extra classes?*

Secretary: *They did build, bakha lawa laletulu, 7 classes. (They built the ones up there, 7 classes (pointing at where the classes were).*

Head teacher: *Iyah! I think that was a sponsor from EU, and the two here, it was the parents and then Micro-Projects was supposed to complete the structure.*

Interviewer: *Yes, what I want clarity about, is why were the two classes built when there were the seven classes, noma, it is a project that existed before Free Primary Education was introduced.*

Head teacher: *I am not so sure kutsi kanjani but the main thing kwaba kutsi kune congestion lamaklasini. (I don't know how that happened but the main issue is, there was overcrowding in the classes.)*

Interviewer: *Overcrowding because of Free Primary Education?*

Head teacher: *Yes.*

During the researchers visit to the school, the researcher saw the incomplete classrooms building that the top-up fees were being charged for herself. The learners in their responses mentioned that the building was incomplete because some parents refused to pay the money. The new Head teacher said that Micro-Projects had been meant to complete the building. The irony was, however, that government through Micro-Projects had already built seven classrooms to accommodate the overcrowding. This was confirmed by the school secretary, as shown above. This seems to confirm the claim that head teachers are not embracing FPE because they are no longer able to benefit financially from school projects in the way they had before FPE was introduced. The reason for this was that the introduction of FPE was accompanied by stringent regulations on how schools should be run and how school funds should be administered.

According to the senior MoET officer who was interviewed, there is a FPE programme package that schools are expected to follow. The package requires schools to develop a School Development Plan (SDP) budget. Schools are expected to prepare and submit the

plan to the REOs). It is only after they have submitted the plan that schools may request payment of the FPE grant. The development plan is articulated in the MoET's FPE implementation guidelines of 2009 under section 5.10, which reads (Swaziland 2009):

All Public Primary Schools shall be required to prepare comprehensive annual School Development Plans (SDP), indicating the activities the schools plan to undertake during the school year and annual budget approved by the School Committee and parents. Regional inspectors shall provide guidelines and support on how to prepare a costed SDP.

During the interview with, the senior MoET officer she also reiterated that schools are expected to develop a SDP.

Senior officer: *But nayo i-FPE itenayo ne package yeku budgeta. (Even then, the school FPE programme has a budgetary package.) Ngeko kutsi kudzingeka i school development plan lecaza kutsi itosebentiswa njani lemali. (Schools are supposed to develop a school development plan which gives a breakdown of how they intend utilising the FPE funds that they receive from government.)*

However, when the officer referred to the SDP, she did not mention that it was explained in the implementation guidelines. Instead she stated that schools were supposed to budget according to the seven pillars of the Schools as Centres of Care and Support (SCCS) manual, which has been dubbed Inqaba locally. The Inqaba framework is made up of seven pillars, and the schools are expected to budget within the perimeters of these seven pillars or essential services, which are: (1) Health care; (2) food security; (3) psychosocial support; (4) safety and protection; (5) quality teaching and learning; (6) HIV and AIDS, gender, and life skills; and (7) water, sanitation and hygiene.

Despite this, head teachers interviewed claimed that they were unable to develop schools because they could not charge top-up fees.

Head teacher, School C: *No, there is no top-up in the school. When we had our annual meeting with the parents, this was a project we had not completed. We followed the procedures for top-up and got no response from the Ministry. But because it was agreed that each family would pay E170, some have paid and the majority did not pay, and we were unable to do anything about that because the FPE policy does not allow for learners to be sent home because they have not paid. This money was used to renovate the school toilets. Kute ngoba, kute i-top up. (Nothing, because there is no top-up.)*

The irony behind School C's complaint is that they wanted to build toilets, which are included under the sanitation pillar in the Inqaba framework. This means there was no need even to consider charging top-up fees. They could have included the activity in their development plan and used the FPE funds paid by government. This of course is not considering that schools are of the opinion that the FPE grant money is insufficient to run schools – hence the need for top-up fees. Interestingly, the Head teacher at this school said no top-up fees had been paid, yet she made mention of the E170 that the parents agreed to pay but failed to pay. She also stated that the school could not do anything about this because the policy forbids schools to send learners home for failing to pay top-up fees. In this way, therefore, she indicated her knowledge of the FPE Act and indicated that the school had charged top-up fees. This was also confirmed by the learner and teacher participants, even though they all gave different figures from those mentioned by the Head teacher.

It was also interesting to note that the reasons for charging top-up fees given by the learners and the teacher differed from that stated by the Head teacher. The researcher asked the learners whether their parents paid school fees. Lungisa, Vusi and Bheki said no, while Thoba and Lungisa specified that their parents paid money for electricity for a water pump. When asked how much their parents paid, the children were uncertain and had to discuss it among themselves. They eventually determined that it had been E280.

The School C teacher had a different perspective.

*Teacher: The school charges a top-up fee of E175 per learner. This arrangement is between the parents and the school, more so because it is a mission school. This money is used to buy cleaning and teaching materials.*

The findings suggest that this school went ahead and charged the top-up fee without obtaining permission to do so. This assertion is based on the statement the Head teacher made earlier, namely that the school submitted a request to charge top-up fees for the toilet building project in terms of the FPE Act, but that they received no response from the MoET. Since head teachers are at the implementation end of the policy cycle, the researcher is of the view that the implementation challenges are as a result of poor planning. Freeman (2013) in the literature section 2.2 gives an elongated policy cycle that hinges a lot on implementation. This reasoning implies that the Inqaba SDP and the implementation guidelines of 2009 do not hold much weight in strengthening the FPE implementation agenda. Meanwhile if the elongated process would be emulated much could be achieved in as far as policy implementation is concerned. The inclusion of implementation and compliance monitoring in the cycle informs the stakeholders who are supposed to monitor the implementation process on what their role is. The use of the word compliance communicates the importance of their role and instils an obligatory sense. Freeman's

elongated policy cycle also places emphasis on implementation evaluation. It is unlike the other policy cycles that focus on policy evaluation which can be broad. The explicit focus on implementation evaluation and promote accountability, transparency and sound management strategies. This aspect seems to be lacking throughout the Swaziland education spectrum, when the issue of FPE and its governance is holistically assessed.

We can also infer that the overall implementation mechanism at the meso level of the system is adversely affected by conflict between parents and head teachers. In this particular case, the Head teacher claimed that there had been an agreement with the parents, however that the parents had not honoured the agreement and the project had been aborted. The same thing happened at School A. It was evident to the researcher that parents at these schools were embracing FPE as it stood, whereas head teachers were dissatisfied with the FPE grant paid by government.

### **5.3.2 Top-up fees and management of school funds**

The Ministry seems to be under the impression that schools are unwilling to follow the Inqaba framework because it does not benefit them financially. Under the previous dispensation, they used to benefit from projects because they received kickbacks from the suppliers. The senior MoET officer claimed that head teachers used to benefit the most from building projects, which explained why they had been fond of building. Yet the erection of infrastructure by Micro-Projects can be accommodated under the FPE package, and schools that require classes to be built, need only to submit such requests to the MoET's Planning Department.

*Senior officer: No bayaphosisa phela Inqaba manual noyibuka phela lo seven pillars guide the Head teachers. (They are untruthful – when the Inqaba manual is examined, it becomes clear that the seven pillars guide the Head teachers.)*

*Unfortunately bona bafuna kwenta loku lokuta banika ema kickbacks loku lokuku manual lokutsi fanele ubite umuntfu we psycho social support ato bafundzisa kute i-kick back lo ngayi tfolo. (Instead they want to embark on projects that will enable them to benefit financially. They shun the activities in the the Inqaba manual that will not benefit them financially, such as engaging a resource person to come and empower them professionally regarding psycho-social support at the school, because they cannot get kickbacks from such an activity.) They are fond of lokwakha because lokwakha because naba yo tsenga le etitolo batfola 10% bese batsi abavumeleki kwenta tintfo kute lo seven pillars covers every development lo khona esikholweni. (They were fond of building because they used to get 10% kickbacks from the suppliers of the building materials. Then they claim that they are not allowed to do things.*

On the same subject the regional inspector for primary schools in the Manzini region also mentioned that head teachers were accustomed to spending school funds as they pleased. However, now that government through the FPE programme is enforcing schools finance regulations, this has created tension between head teachers and the Ministry. As mentioned earlier on, in this section and in section 5.3.1 of the study, the management of schools, in particular the management of funds, leaves much to be desired. This is evident when looking at the number of head teachers being attended to by the PAC and other subsectors in the MoET. These were either cited as being involved in corruption or merely not doing their managerial duties as mentioned in section 5.2.1.6 of this study. It is important to note that both MoET officers that participated in the study point out that head teachers were accustomed to the old order of kickbacks and hence their resistance to change. This can be likened to a culture that they were accustomed to and the introduction of FPE is threatening the status quo. Ogola (2010) in section 2.2.1 explains how culture



determines the achievement of educational goals. Since the introduction of FPE requirements and expectations call for a change of culture in the way things have to be done, it poses a challenge to the Head teachers. Peter and Swilling (2014: 1605) corroborate change as being aligned to the behavioural change theory. They explain that the behavioural change theory is underpinned by the complexity theory because change in its very nature is about “values, beliefs, norms and behaviours”. The basis of the unwillingness by head teachers to adapt to change was expressed by the Regional Inspector for Primary Schools as follows:

*Inspector: But there were head teachers, I think, who were just happy to have money to spend in any way that they found was fit for them, which now they feel government is putting a lot of pressure.*

The Ministry’s impression is therefore to a certain extent justifiable – more so when one considers School A’s scenario of charging top-up fees to build classes when the Ministry had already done so. That school project was not completed and still remains uncompleted, which means the resources which were used for the project were wasted. In response to issues or situations like this, the Ministry released Circular 16 to all schools including secondary schools on the 15th of January 2013. The circular was entitled "Re: School funds". It reads (Swaziland 2013b):

1. It has come to the attention of the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) that a number of head teachers are carelessly utilizing school funds without complying to the Schools Accounting Regulations of 1992.
2. Section 12.1 of the Schools Accounting Regulations of 1992 provides that the incumbent always on the Head of the school (sic) to ensure that all funds under his control are spent wisely and for the right purposes. Meaning that funds/ resources contributed to the school are extended and used solely for educational purposes

3. As Head teachers are Accounting Officers in schools, and responsible for all financial transactions they are reminded of the following:

- (a) Public monies should be spent for the purpose for which they are authorized for;
- (b) Head teachers are instructed to comply to the Schools Accounting Regulations of 1992;
- (c) Income received in schools should be recorded like any money spent, and should be accounted for transparently;
- (d) Head teachers should desist from "shylocking" with parents monies
- (e) Transactions pertaining to the use of school funds should have in place all original copies and attachments safely kept for the access of Auditors
- (f). Diversion of school funds is of serious nature and Head teachers who are in contravention of the provisions of the Schools Accounting Regulations of 1992 will be prosecuted.

Inspector: *But there were head teachers, I think, who were just happy to have money to spend in any way that they found was fit for them, which now they feel government is putting a lot of pressure.*

Wonderboy Dlamini (2015) reported in the *Swazi Observer* that government was concerned about the ever-escalating number of head teachers who were being reported to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) for the misuse of school funds. He quoted from a speech the Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) delivered at a head teachers' farewell function. The DPM decried the fact that the reporting of head teachers by the PAC for the misuse of school funds and their prosecution for forgery and fraud was becoming a common occurrence.

The senior MoET officer, who was interviewed, also mentioned that head teachers were misusing school funds; she stated that, when they were called to answer to the PAC, they

claimed not to have financial management skills. According to her, some of them tried to take advantage of the Minister of Education and Training by running to him to plead their case and ask him to intervene on their behalf. The senior MoET officer also mentioned how the minister was concerned about the fact that the number of the cases being brought before the PAC were increasing.

Senior officer: *Bamtsatsa for granted kutsi bekangu president waka SNAT. (They take the minister for granted because he used to be the president of SNAT [the Swaziland National Association of Teachers].) Utsi lomunye waya akhala wamsukela ekhaya atihlalele watsi manje la batsi imali Watsi hamba phela uyoyi accountela, manje mine ngito kusita ngani, uta kimi utsi angi kwenteni. (He says another one came to him at his home lamenting, and he said, go and account for the money – what do you expect me to do?)*

The senior MoET officer went on to say that she found it strange that head teachers claimed not to have financial management skills only when they got into trouble for mismanagement of funds. (The participant in below uses Rand and not Emalangeneni which is the Swazi currency because in Swaziland both the South African Rand and local currency are used)

Senior officer: *Mine angati yesisi kutsi kuyi challenge kutsi bête ema-management skills, loku lakwentako lokuncane In-service kwenele. (I don't know what the challenge is; it cannot be that they don't have financial management skills.) They don't want, yi- attitude. ((They don't want to attend financial management workshops – it's an attitude.) Loku lekufanele bakwente akudzingi i PhD. (They do not have to have a PhD to do what they need to do.) It is simple ku filer i-receipt. (They just need to properly file some receipts.) Imali uyireceive kahle wabhala 100*

*ku receipt, nase yo bhanga wa bhanga 80 Rand. (You receive the money and record it as 100 Rand, but when you deposit it at the bank, you deposit 80 Rand.) Uphi lo 20 Rand ngoba phela labhukwini ubhale 100 Rand? (Then what happened to the 20 Rand?) Nekutsi ngati kamhlophe ngiyakutfuma thishela uyo bhadala imali yema sports, wati kutsi i-joining fee ngu 350 kepha mine ngibhala lisheke la 500. (For instance, when 350 Rand has to be paid for sports, knowing very well what the amount ought to be, I sign a cheque for 500 Rands.) Uyaphi lo 150? (Where does the 150 go to?) Ok, wekugibela thishela, liphi ke lithikithi lebus lathishela, nobe loyo petty cash lotosayinwa nguwe, na sihlalo we school committee approve leye kwekutsi lemali yasebenta loku? (If it is for the teacher's travel fare, then where is the travel ticket? Or the petty cash that you will sign for, and the school committee chairperson's approval that the money was signed for?) Umbuzo lomkhulu mine lengihlangabetene nawo utsi, lasekufute ngisho kutsi lemali ngiyisebentise kuphi, ngulabese ngisusa umsindvo khona. (The biggest question that I ask myself, is when one is supposed to declare how the money has been used. It's then that issues begin to show up.) Kepha lesikhatsi ngiyisebentisa bekute inkinga. (But when the money is being used, there are no issues.) Bese utsi mine angizange ngiwafundza ema accounts. (Then I declare that I never did accounting.)*

The senior MoET officer elaborated further on how concerned the Minister of Education and Training was about the mismanagement of school funds by head teachers.

*Senior officer: Kodvwa minister bekakhala ngako kutsi tiningi letikolwa instead kwekutsi tehle, instead tiyandza. (The minister was also saying the schools about which there are audit queries are now too many, and that instead of decreasing in numbers, they are increasing.)*

The extent of embezzlement from school funds is also coming to the fore, because now that government is paying, head teachers are expected to account for the money. Government is now also more diligent about the auditing of schools' accounting books, in the course of which some financial anomalies are being identified. During our interview, this was highlighted by the senior MoET officer.

Senior officer: *Tonkhe letintfo hhulumende bekatententi ngoba bekutimali tebatali, bekatayiboni le-seriousness yako. (All along government was not responding to these things, because it was the parents who were paying and carrying the financial burden, and therefore government was not aware of the seriousness of the mismanagement of funds.) Kepha nyalo ngobaseyiphuma lakuye soyayibona kutsi iyadlabhatiseka, soyabona. (But now that government is paying, it has realised that the funds are being mismanaged.)*

The minister's concern about the increase in the number of head teachers who have had to answer to the PAC for the embezzlement of school funds have also been reported on by the local print media. Some of the amounts that head teachers are alleged to have embezzled, are alarming. For example, Mdluli (2016a) reports in an article in the *Swazi Observer* on an ex-principal who has vanished with E99 000 (equivalent to R99 000 in South African currency). The article reported that the MoET was having difficulty tracing the Head teacher because he had left for the UK.

In another article, Mdluli (2016b) reports that a principal has allegedly fled to the UK after looting E2.9 million. The report states that the Head teacher of a primary school in the Manzini region embezzled E2 928 428.64 in the period 2006–2009. It is important to note that this happened before FPE was introduced in 2010. This can therefore be regarded as one of the reasons why head teachers are not taking kindly to the MoET's E560 in school

fees: previously they had charged whatever they wanted to, and this gave them the leeway to spend the money as they pleased.

Therefore, when the FPE programme was introduced and head teachers' accountability increased, it did not sit well with them. One of the Head teacher's who had to answer to the PAC in respect of irregularities found at his school, was head teacher 1 at school A, who was initially interviewed for this study. He was subsequently suspended without pay for 18 months by the Teaching Service Commission, the hiring body for teachers, which is also responsible for disciplining teachers for financial misconduct.

Jele's (2016) article in the *Swazi Observer* corroborates the fact that suspension without pay is being used as one of the major forms of disciplining teachers and head teachers who steal school funds. Other forms of discipline include transferring them to other schools. I interviewed the Head teacher concerned at the end of 2014 and subsequently returned to the school to do a follow-up interview at the beginning of 2015, which happened to be the day on which head teacher 1 was suspended. The Head teacher was open with the researcher about his his suspension and was in a sombre mood.

The issue of corruption being involved of the implementation of FPE is not unique to Swaziland. The same situation is reported to have occurred in Nigeria, where it thwarted the entire purpose of UBE (see Etuk, Ering & Ajake 2012).

### **5.3.3 Head teachers' perceptions of the FPE grant**

The mismanagement of school funds tends to call the legitimacy of the claim that the FPE government grant is insufficient into question. Another pertinent issue that was raised by some of the Head teachers interviewed on the subject, was that schools differ and therefore need to be treated differently. For instance, the Head teacher of School B was of

the view that government should have considered the fact that schools were not the same and that therefore the payment should not be the same amount per child for each school.

Head teacher: *I think government should sit down and look at the circulars. The schools are not the same: some need the top-up and some don't. It depends on the numbers in the schools. If the school is small, then it becomes difficult to run the school. Another problem is that, ever since FPE began, government is paying the same amount. Yet the costs of running schools have increased. Having both circular no 14 and 17 was confusing.*

At the minister's meeting with head teachers in Mbabane on the 7th of March 2014, one of the issues raised by the Head teachers was that they were now unable to pay their support staff; according to them, the government grant was insufficient (Sukati 2014). According to Sukati at the same meeting principals also sought clarity on what needed to be done, while consultations were ongoing with regard to the top-up issue, because school coffers had run dry. They claimed that support staff had not been paid for months, government had not deposited monies into school accounts, while parents were demanding a refund for the top-up fees they had paid. The report went on to mention that this was despite the fact that the top-up fees had been for an amount agreed upon with parents to supplement that particular school's budgets (Sukati 2014).

In the same vein Dlamini (2015) reported in the *Swazi Observer* how head teachers were complaining that they were unable to pay their support staff and that it had become difficult to retain them, especially the secretaries, because schools' salaries were below market value. According to Dlamini, the Head teachers claimed that the suspension of the top-up fees had really placed them in a difficult position.

Zwane (2015) attributed the decline in the standard of education to the scrapping of the top-up fees:

When government started rolling out the Free Primary Education (FPE) programme in 2010, some principals found that they could not expediently execute their administrative duties since the money paid by the state was not enough hence the introduction of top-up fees to supplement these funds. Prior to introduction of the programme, school fees varied from school to school hence the principals argued that the amount paid under the FPE programme was not enough to meet their running costs.

At the minister's meeting about top-up fees, the principal secretary questioned whether such fees were justifiable at all (Sukati 2014):

For instance, there is no justification for any primary school, here in Manzini for example, to charge Grade I pupils E3 000 as a top-up fee. There is just no justification and neither has a school advanced reasons why they would want to charge a primary pupil in Grade I E3 000.

The regional primary school inspector who was interviewed in this study also referred to this, saying that her grandchild attended one of the schools in the Manzini region that charged top-up fees.

*Inspector: I paid top-up E2400, and in a parents' meeting, when the Head teacher explained what the money was needed for, parents understood and parents said they are going to keep on paying top-up, and they have been doing everything within their power to get government to let the Head teacher charge top-up in their school. It is a pity that not all parents can afford it or are for this idea, because some parents they come straight from the meeting to say eyi! vele bachubeka bayasi-charger lapha uyabo! (They are continuing to charge us!)*



The top-up issue is a threat to the sustainability of the FPE programme, as well as to equity in terms of access to education. A situation has arisen in which public schools charging high top-up fees are creating a socio-economic divide and an environment characterised by private school features. This phenomenon differs slightly from that in most other countries, where parents transfer their children from public schools to private schools (Tomaševski 2006). There are signs of a phenomenon similar to that described in the literature now also emerging in Swaziland, however: the AEC report (Swaziland 2013a) indicates that there has been an increase in the enrolment of learners at private schools, despite FPE being offered at public schools.

#### **5.3.4 The top-up fees monitoring mechanism**

The top-up dilemma therefore threatens the sustainability of FPE, despite the Ministry having made numerous efforts to stop schools from charging it. The biggest challenge has been the non-existence of proper mechanisms to monitor the situation. The monitoring that does occur, is ad hoc: because the EU pays Grade 1 school fees and demands accountability, the books for that Grade are audited at all schools at the end of each year. Since this was initiated, many anomalies with regard to the usage of FPE funds have been discovered by EU auditors. One of the anomalies has been the levying of top-up fees. The Head teacher for School B confirmed this.

*Head teacher: Ever since I became head teacher, there have been no meetings on FPE. Auditors check if there are top-ups, and if they find that the school is charging top-up fees, they request to see a letter from the MoET that proves that you have been permitted to receive top-up fees from parents.*

Since the Grade 1 FPE fees are paid by the EU, the Grade 1 school accounts are now audited annually. The assistance provided by the EU has therefore had an unforeseen

additional benefit for the Ministry, because their audits have revealed some of the irregularities that are happening in schools. This is one obstacle to FPE that the GoS probably did not anticipate, hence proper monitoring mechanisms were not considered. Notably though, an FPE office was appointed and two officers within the Ministry redeployed to monitor progress on the implementation of the programme and to fulfil the administrative duties entailed by the programme. Their workload is extremely heavy, however, therefore they are unable to visit schools themselves to perform the actual monitoring. There also seems to be no proper coordination between them and the primary school inspectors. Yet, when the FPE programme was introduced, more primary school inspectors were hired to monitor schools. The reason behind the establishment of the FPE Unit was to coordinate all FPE activities, as noted by the senior MoET officer.

Senior officer: *Tsine lahhovisi letfu sangetelwa bahloli ngoba sekubonakala kutsi umsebenzi uyandza. (More inspectors for this office were hired because the workload had increased.)*

Interviewer: *Labahloli be FPE? (Inspectors for FPE?)*

Senior officer: *For primary education as a result of the FPE programme. Kwase seku-establishwa nale Unit le. To coordinate ema activities la purely FPE. (This Unit was also established to coordinate the FPE activities.)*

Despite all these mechanisms being established, however, the lack of coordination between the inspectors and the FPE Unit can be inferred from the responses of the regional primary inspector when asked about this matter. Morojele (2012) expresses the same sentiments (see section 2.1) that the lack of a proper monitoring mechanism for the FPE is a sign of lack of implementation strategies that are sound, as well as, lack of

planning. This can be inferred from the following responses from the Regional Primary School Inspector.

Interviewer: *Aren't you monitored by the chief inspector on what you are doing?*

[The acting chief inspector for primary schools at the time was also one of the officers in the FPE Unit.]

Inspector: *We are supposed to be.*

Interviewer: *What about the Free Primary Education Unit – what is its role?*

Inspector: *I have no idea.*

Interviewer (interrupting): *When do they ever come in?*

Inspector: *I have no idea what they do. The only time we met with them, was sometime last year, when we had complained that our peers, secondary peers, ahamba ayowenta i-capacity building yabo workshop, kwasha kwacima. Tsine silibala kuhlala la asatani nekwatana. Saba meeta-ke last year. (Our secondary peers were having capacity building workshops.) Yet we are just stuck here and we never meet to be capacitated, we don't even know each other as regional inspectors for primary schools. So we met them about that last year. It was the first time we met with them.*

The Head teacher for School C also decried the unavailability of inspectors.

Head teacher: *These days the inspectorate hardly comes, they last came two years ago. However, they never came with solutions – they would always complain and find fault.*

The regional inspector for primary schools confirmed that they have difficulties in performing their core duty, which is monitoring schools. She gave many reasons for this, but one aspect that she highlighted, was that they find themselves having to carry out additional duties at the Regional Education Office besides their core duty.

*Inspector: It is a touch-and-go situation, eh! I am saying it is a touch-and-go situation because at the beginning of every term, we sit down and make a plan, but during the course of our duty, during the course of the term, we find out that we are constantly engaged in the other duties. Besides school inspection and even when we do go for school inspection we don't get an opportunity to make a follow up. Actually, which I find is very important because it is the one which should be giving us feedback.*

She further emphasised how additional duties tend to take up all their time. Yet the implementation guidelines stipulate that regional inspectors are to guide and support schools in preparing SDPs. Additional duties that take up all their time suggest complex ways in which policy shapes and is shaped by leadership. This according to Bell and Stevenson (2009) in (section 2.2.1) fails adequately to explain the actions and practices of leaders at both the organizational and operational levels. It is with regard to this that if the Primary School Inspectors are performing duties other than their core duty, which is monitoring schools, they cannot guide and support schools.

*Inspector: The issue with any other duty is that it comes upon you even when you are in a kombi [the government transport that inspectors use], when you have phoned that school and told them you are coming, in comes the other duty and that one is from our supervisor so there is really no way you can negotiate. You can't go there because I had planned to go there.*

The primary school inspectors in the regions are supervised by the Regional Education Officer, who also expects them to carry out duties related to the Regional Office. This leads to the duties conflicting. This lack of monitoring of the schools enables them to get away with charging top-up fees under the Ministry's very nose, unless parents lay a complaint. Another challenge is generally caused by the nature of the government-aided schools, which are mostly mission schools: they tend to want to do things as they please. Some of the schools that refused to stop charging the top-up fees were these schools, as related by the regional inspector for primary schools.

*Inspector: This office has called a meeting and spoken to them very strongly against what they are doing, such that it led to our coming into disengagement with School G because we couldn't see eye to eye over this, but there are other schools like this, other government schools ungatsi ingu one point something i-top up yakhona. (where the top-up fee is one thousand and something(meaning and above). The Head teacher has been called to this office naye, vele ever since we got here the schools around town baya bitwa bakhulunyiswe. (We call a meeting with them and talk to them sternly.)*

The situation is further complicated by the attitude of those who are expected to monitor the programme. The regional inspector who participated in the study said they were doing their utmost to control the situation and ensure that schools did not charge top-up fees. Her attitude made it clear that she was not in favour of the entire setup. Such an attitude could have a negative impact on the way in which the programme is monitored.

*Inspector: Eeh! I think government should have engaged parents ngendlela letsite, nakatsi utoniketa imali ku primary education kwakufanele abafundzise kutsi (in a way that*

*parents had to be made aware that they had a role to play because they still have to be responsible.) That one missed, Government missed. It was like with free primary education, it is now free everything, freeing them from even taking part emsebentini webantfwababo (participating in their children's work) because abasenandzaba (they no longer care). Teachers' number1 complaint that you find that batali abasayingeni indzaba abalahlekelwa lutfo. Uyaphindza noma wentani it is none of their business. (Teachers' main complaint is that parents no longer care whether their children repeat or not – they have nothing to lose.)*

The situation is exacerbated by the confusion that reigned prior to the release of circulars 36 and 39. The meeting which was held to address the issue of top-up fees was a typical example of this confusion, as the decision arrived at, was inconsistent with the FPE Act in terms of the procedures that had been laid down for charging top-up fees. The researcher questioned the regional inspector for primary schools about this. Such incidences are attributes of poor implementation mechanism (see Nishimura et al (2009) in section 2.3

*Inspector: There was a time whereby they had a meeting with the chief inspector primary then. I think it was in 2013, kwaba ne meeting, a special meeting with the schools that are charging top-up. Kwabesekuvela naliligama lekutsi abasalesebatsi ye building fund. (It was then decided that they should refer to it as building fund.) Yabekwa kutsi (It was decided that) it should only go up to 200 Emalangeni. It shouldn't exceed 200. Schools like Guava bayi charger bachubeka nalokwakha. (Schools like Guava charged it and continued with using it for building.) Ngoba they had a project yekwakha (Because they had a building project) as you can see. But some of these schools around here bayachubeka ba charger lemali yekwakha (are charging building fund.)*

The decision made at the meeting referred to above, namely that schools could charge as much as E200 (R200) for a building fund, was also contrary to the provisions of the FPE Act and section 5.12 of the FPE implementation guidelines (Swaziland 2009) in respect of the construction of classrooms and special teaching rooms. The guidelines specify as follows:

Any Public Primary school intending to construct a Grade one or two classroom or any other structure related to teaching and learning shall apply in writing to the Ministry of Education and Training through the Regional Education Office; indicating the need for an additional classroom or special teaching room. The Ministry through the Planning Unit shall visit the schools to assess the need and accordingly advise the Ministry.

Another deficiency in terms of monitoring of the programme is that some officials, who are meant to coordinate the programme, have been denying any knowledge of the circulars issued by the Ministry. For instance, when the senior MoET officer was asked about Circulars 14 and 17, she replied that she did not know anything about them, and also sarcastically asked what they were all about. As she was responding to this question the senior officer was emphasising that as the FPE Unit she and her colleagues were not engaged when these circulars were drafted and issued. All that they got to hear about them was from the grapevine and hence the sarcasm when responding to the question and also politely making a mockery of the interviewer. Politely meaning not intending to despise the interviewer but trying to point out what the state of affairs was really like.

Senior officer. *Ngumaphi lama circular? Asiwati tsine, asizange sawatfola (Which circulars? We do not know about them and never received them.) Kulamanye ema organisations tintfo tiyenteka ucabange kutsi bayati kantsi abati. (In some*

*organisations things happen and you assume the people know when they don't.) Sivetele kutsi beyikhuluma ngani. (Tell us what is was all about.) Tsine lesikwatiko ngunaba bo 36 labatsi claimani masinyane, nanaba bo 39 labaphumile. (The ones that we know of, are Circular 36, which urged schools to submit their claims as soon as possible, and 39, which was issued recently.)*

The researcher used the word "sarcastically", because later the Senior MoET Officer stated that they would from time to time hear about the circulars in the MoET corridors. She also claimed that the only time she specifically or officially learnt about their existence, was when she attended a meeting at the MoET. This meeting was held because the Swaziland Principals Association (SWAPA) came to enquire about the confusion surrounding the circulars. She explained that her role at that meeting had been only to listen. According to her, the person who would be in a better position to respond to questions about Circulars 14 and 17 would be the principal secretary.

It should be noted, however, that at that time the senior MoET officer had not been the acting chief inspector for primary schools, but an FPE officer. Nonetheless, an FPE office would still have been expected to be fully aware of the circulars concerned, because they specifically touched on FPE and contained stipulations that the FPE Unit would have had to apply. The circulars themselves had therefore become policy directives which needed to be implemented, and since the key mandate of the FPE Unit is to coordinate all FPE activities, their knowledge of circulars would have been pivotal in order for them to execute provisions contained therein. The Unit's lack of engagement is therefore telling, as it points clearly to poor implementation mechanisms. This turn of events also confirms Mokate (2014) emphasis on stakeholder consultation.



The regional inspector for primary schools also stated that she did not have copies of Circulars 14, 17, 36 and 39, and asked what issues Circulars 14 and 17 addressed. She enquired whether the researcher could provide her with copies of the circulars. This was cause for concern, because ensuring that the circulars were enforced at schools formed part of her monitoring duties.

Interviewer: *Do you have circular 14 and 17?*

Inspector: *La addressa ini Bethu? (What do they address?) Ngiyakhumbula akhuluma ngawo. (I remember them being mentioned.)*

As stated by Paudel (2009), the situation highlighted above indicates that issues of policy and practice in developing countries pose challenges due to poverty, political uncertainty and the extent of stakeholder participation. On the other hand Milu (2012) is of the view that the entire FPE agenda promotes neocolonialism and world capitalism, which entrenches imperialist education practices. Milu claims further that governments in developing countries use the Freirian banking model to design and implement policy, which results in the voices of other FPE stakeholders being marginalised and educational inequalities being perpetuated. Milu (2011) bases this assertion on the use of critical pedagogy, which critiques the power relations that influence FPE and believes that they are intended to maintain the imperialist status quo. This is evident from the prevailing situation, where officers that are supposed to monitor and coordinate the programme are marginalised and the parents or guardians of learners from low socio-economic backgrounds are voiceless.

The excuse offered by schools charging top-up fees is that the money paid by government is insufficient for the everyday running of schools. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the amount of E560 paid per child since FPE was introduced in 2010 has remained

unchanged at each grade level, where the cost of living has escalated. This begs the question how ready government was to implement the programme. Judging by the period in the runup to the introduction of FPE in Swaziland, government was not ready, but was compelled to implement FPE because of pressure from civil society in terms of the Constitution – which was influenced by international protocols that the country was signatory too. This seems to be consistent with Milu’s argument regarding imperialist education practices.

The top-up saga was one of the many issues that led to civil society threatening mass action in 2015 against schools opening in January 2016, to compel government to release the task team report on the top-up issue. Zwelihle Sukati (2015:5) reported that the General Secretary of the Swaziland National Association of Teachers (SNAT) had claimed the following:

The schools are dysfunctional; so much that they will soon become day centres where children just come to sit with teachers having no work to do save to take roll calls. Protest action was the only way to wake up government from her slumber. We had raised a concern on the FPE and top-up fees to say since government started the programme in 2009, the money paid by government has been the same amount of 570 per child per year for the past six years now.

It should be noted that both the year of inception of the FPE programme and the amount paid by government per child cited by the SNAT Secretary General were inaccurate. FPE was introduced in 2010 in Grades 1 and 2, not in 2009. It was introduced in both grades in order to eliminate the backlog caused by government’s failure to introduce it in 2009. And the amount paid by government is E560 per child, not E570 as stated by Secretary General. It is also interesting to note that, when the issue of the grant paid by government

is raised, nothing is ever mentioned about government's provision of textbooks and stationery to all learners at the primary level. In the researcher's opinion, some comments about FPE, such as schools being day-care centres, are exaggerated and cannot be justified.

#### **5.4 Implementation of FPE in Swaziland**

During its implementation, FPE experienced a number of teething problems. There is nothing sinister about this, as it is a common phenomenon when new programmes are applied. What is of concern, however, is the lack of understanding of FPE policies of key stakeholders due to their non-engagement in the policy formulation process and their not being consulted. A great deal of confusion has also surrounded the implementation of FPE. Some of these issues have already been highlighted, but most of them hinge on the top-up issue. The policies guiding FPE, which were formulated during the implementation process and then declared null and void thereafter, have also contributed to the implementation challenges that exist.

##### **5.4.1 Stakeholders' understanding of the FPE policy**

The FPE policy is spelt out in numerous frameworks, some legal and some sectoral. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland of 2005 and the FPE Act of 2010 are the legal frameworks for FPE. Prior to the existence of the FPE Act, FPE guidelines were prepared and compiled by the MoET. However, nowhere in the guidelines was it mentioned that key stakeholders were engaged in the process. The MoET's EDSEC policy (2011b), which was formulated to give effect to the Constitution, is a sectoral policy document that addresses FPE issues. As the FPE programme was being implemented, other sectoral documents in the form of circulars were released in response to issues that were unfolding as the programme was being implemented.

The circulars that were issued, namely Circulars 14, 16, 17, 36 and 39, were categorically official policy documents. Since planning in the schools is based on the Inqaba framework, it too qualifies as a policy.

Interestingly, none of the Head teachers interviewed referred to this framework to indicate that it was being used as a guide. Overall knowledge and understanding of the policy documents varied among participants. Some participants knew about them while others did not. Several had only a vague understanding of their intent rather than of the FPE intent.

Head teacher 1 at School A had some understanding of the country's obligation to comply with international conventions. This was indicated by his response to a question regarding the purpose of FPE.

*Head teacher: We were also informed that the government had signed international conventions and that the purpose of FPE was to ensure that every child has access to education at the primary level.*

Meanwhile Head teacher 2, who replaced the first one at the same School, said they did not know the policies and only learnt on the job.

*Head teacher 2: We just don't know the policies and therefore it is time for us to implement we have to do a careful job and therefore we have to know the directions. In this case we get to know about these things whilst we are on the job, so it becomes difficult. It is also somebody else's ideas, so it takes time, it takes time to align yourself with them, so it becomes difficult really.*

The School A teacher also said he did not know the FPE policy.

Teacher: *I do not know the FPE policy.*

A similar situation was found at School B, when one of the teachers was interviewed.

Interviewer: *Do you know anything about the FPE Act and Policy?*

Teacher: *No, I do not know. I know that it is in the Constitution and that government was not prepared, and that government was taken to court and had to roll out free primary education.*

Interviewer: *Do you know about the FPE and EFA conventions that the country is obligated to and has ratified?*

Teacher: *No, I do not.*

The Head teacher at School C was fully aware of the international conventions that relate to FPE.

Head teacher: *I know about the universal Human Rights of 1948, I know about Jomtien conventions where the EFA with the MDG are the main drivers that geared FPE.*

None of the parents knew about the FPE policy, despite the FPE Act stipulating the role of parents. However, parents were never informed about their role; in fact, teachers have been complaining that parents have abandoned their role since FPE was introduced. The parents who were interviewed did seem to know what was expected of them as parents, however, despite not being aware of their role as stipulated in the FPE Act. The Act requires parents to report to the school, to prevent absenteeism, and to care for a child's health. They also have to ensure that the child attends school, adheres to the school's codes and regulations, and takes good care of school property. Parents are also cautioned not to

engage in misrepresentation. The key aspect that most of the parents interviewed seemed to be aware of, was that FPE enabled all learners to attend school. Some said they did not know why FPE was introduced. In terms of what their role was, they said it was to buy school uniforms and ensure the learners did their homework.

The senior MoET officer said it was unfortunate that parents did not know the Act yet have a role to play in terms of the Act.

Senior officer: *Kwakulukhuni, angitsi nje umtali nakatokutsi hamba batokubona esikolweni, kantsi yona le Act iyasho kutsi i-responsibility yemutali yini, iyaku stater konkhe loku Kutsi uma umtali angakwenti konkhe loku, kuyo kwentekani. But yetfu le Act sila ehhovisi, asiyati kute labantfu lekufanele bayati bayi understande batosibambisa. (It is worse when parents pass the entire burden to the school, where the Act specifically states what the role of the parent is. It specifies what will happen if parents do not fulfil their obligation. But we are the ones who know the Act and not the other stakeholders, therefore we are all supposed to know and apply it so that we move towards one common goal.)*

One of the parents from School C said she did not know what FPE was all about, but thought it was for enabling every child to access education.

Parent: *Yebo ngoba bayachubeka nemfundvo yabo kwami kutsi ngitsenge i-unifomu. (Yes, because they are continuing with their education, my role is to buy the uniform.)*

Interviewer: *Ngabe uyati yini kutsi lelihlelo lasungulwa leni? (Do you know why the FPE programme was introduced?)*

Parent: *Angati kahle kepha ngicabanga kutsi bekwentelwa labo bantfwana labangakhoni kubhadalela sikolwa kutsi bakhone nabo kutfola imfundvo. (I am not so sure but I think it was introduced so that even children who are unable to pay for school can access education.)*

It seems as though no implementation plan was put in place for the introduction of the FPE programme in the schools, hence head teachers find themselves having to figure out for themselves how they should go about doing things. Everything seems to happen randomly, as indicated by the head teacher and teacher at School B. This has created some implementation challenges. Of even greater concern, however, is that the purpose and objectives of the programme have not been properly communicated to ensure a common understanding of them. The Head teacher and teacher at School B elaborated.

Head teacher. *The Ministry called the Head teachers to a meeting and informed them on how schools should be managed now that the FPE programme was being introduced. Ever since I became head teacher, there have been no meetings on FPE.*

Teacher: *Teachers were not prepared for the implementation of FPE, as stated. That is why it is not effectively implemented in the schools.*

As noted in section 2.3, countries that tried to implement FPE immediately after gaining their independence failed to do so because of poor planning, unclear implementation mechanisms, supply driven policies, political and economic crises, and a decline in the quality of education. The lack of consultations when FPE was introduced in Swaziland is a typical sign of improper planning, which has led to the use of an inadequate implementation mechanism.

#### **5.4.2 FPE policy implementation guidelines**

In November 2009, the MoET compiled the FPE guidelines entitled Guidelines for Schools and Communities on the Implementation of the Free Primary Education (FPE) Programme. The FPE Act of 2010 and the Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland are the legal frameworks that are intended to guide and inform all other guidelines. The implementation of FPE, especially in terms of School Development Plans (SDPs), is based on the Schools as Centres of Care and Support (Inqaba) Manual. The MoET's EDSEC policy (Swaziland 2011b) and the MoET circulars that have been released during the implementation process are also guidelines in respect of the implementation of FPE.

The key guidelines intended for use during the implementation process are the ones which have been listed in the document analysis list, as the FPE implementation guidelines of 2009. These guidelines were specifically developed for the FPE agenda. Therefore they should be regarded as the operational documents that inform all the others. It seems as though the document referred to most frequently, however, is the Inqaba manual and not the guidelines. During the interviews, the senior MoET officer made mention of the guidelines only once, and did not elaborate. When asked what framework was being used for the FPE programme, the officer seemed a little confused about what precisely the question meant.

Interviewer: Since the FPE Act and MoET policy came into effect after the implementation process in 2010, what implementation framework was being used by the MoET?

Senior officer: *Nawubuta nge framework ubuta ngentfo lekanjani? (When you say "framework", what do you mean?)*



Interviewer: *Maybe what is it that was put in place kutsi (that) this is how we are going to implement FPE.*

Senior officer: *Ema regulations solo kute, kwasenjetiswa nje le act. Kwagcinwa ngema guidelines. (There are still no regulations; the Act was used and guidelines at the end.)*

From the above it can be inferred that the guidelines are not regulations, yet it is the guidelines themselves that should regulate the manner in which FPE is implemented. This clearly shows that key stakeholders have not been engaged in the decision-making process, yet are expected to ensure that the programme is well coordinated and implemented.

On a different note, the senior MoET officer referred to the FPE Act provision that the FPE grant should be paid as soon as schools have opened. The guidelines also stipulate how payments must be made. Participants' failure to refer to the guidelines was an indication that they were not being followed. As mentioned in 5.4.1, the people who are supposed to be implementing the guidelines are not familiar with them. The question is therefore: What are they implementing? As was also indicated in 5.4.1, none of the schools that participated in the study made mention of the implementation guidelines – not even when questions were posed about procedures that schools are expected to follow to request assistance.

### **5.4.3 Consultations**

A top-down approach was followed in the formulation of the FPE Act, probably because of the manner in which FPE was introduced in Swaziland after the legal challenge by the Ex-Miners Association – even though the Supreme Court of Appeal ruled in government's favour (see section 1.2). Government subsequently announced that the programme would

be introduced progressively in 2010, and an FPE Bill was drafted within a short space of time. The extreme haste with which the Bill was drafted, prevented key stakeholders from participating in its formulation, hence they were not consulted. This meant that the people on the ground, who were supposed to implement the FPE policies, were not familiar with them. This gave rise to a great deal of chaos at the very beginning of the implementation process, as described in sections 5.3 and 5.4.1. Interviews were held with participants who were involved in implementing the programme, for example the Head teacher and a parent from School A, as well as the Head teacher at School C.

Head teacher 2, School A: *We have to be consulted.*

Parent: *Parents played no role when FPE was introduced.*

Head teacher, School C: *I first heard about the introduction of FPE through the media and then through the Ministry of Education and Training, Special Education Needs Department. No head teachers were consulted about or represented when the FPE Bill and policy were developed. As far as I know, the introduction of FPE culminated from the Millennium Development Goals, which Swaziland had to join the rest of the world to achieve.*

This lack of consultation with key stakeholders has been a flaw in the implementation of the FPE programme, and has resulted in no proper implementation plan being developed. Even the policies that guide the FPE programme have never been discussed with the stakeholders: there is no forum that provides a platform for the discussion of issues pertaining to the programme. The teacher for School D confirmed this.

Teacher: *We read about it from papers we were not formally informed about FPE. We were not told it was the Head teacher who informed the teachers and they had to prepare themselves.*

The approach used for School D differed from that used at the other schools, because the school was chosen as pioneer school for inclusive education. The Deputy Head teacher recounted the school's experience in respect of them being consulted beforehand.

Head teacher: *The school was chosen as a pioneer school. The inspectorate came to inform the school that it has been selected to be a pioneer school, and when FPE was introduced we were expected to admit all children, including those who were disabled. We still have them and they are progressing. They are not assessed like the other children.*

The Deputy Head teacher went on to say that no support was received from the Ministry.

Head teacher: *It was not done in a correct way; teachers were not trained to teach learners with different abilities. The learning is not effective; however, the learners are enjoying being with other learners, even though they are not benefitting.*

As highlighted earlier in section 5.2, another challenge that the FPE programme is faced with is that, in the absence of a proper implementation plan, new head teachers are not inducted, and have to implement the programme by trial and error. The situation was explained by the head teacher for School B, who was appointed as head teacher after the FPE programme had been introduced.

Head teacher: *The Ministry called the head teachers to a meeting and informed them on how schools should be managed now that the FPE programme was being*

*introduced; ever since I became head teacher, there have been no meetings on FPE.*

The lack of consultation with head teachers was affirmed by the senior MoET officer, who stated that head teachers were called to a meeting to be informed regarding how to submit claims for the FPE grants that were being paid by government. This was probably the meeting that the head teacher at School B had referred to.

*Senior officer: Kwaba ngulokutsi nasesibabitile siyobatjela kutsi nitabo claima kanje. (We called a meeting to inform them how they should claim.) Kepha kutsi singene kuma discussion sibachazele konkhe sangasakwenti, sesibona letinkinga tabo top-up. (We were not able to discuss and explain everything with regard to the programme. It was only later, when we discovered the top-u-p problems, that we engaged with them in discussions.) Sesihamba siba-advisa kutsi fute bente kanjani tintfo letinjalo, but kute le guideline. (We advise them on how to go about things, but there are no guidelines.) But muva siyawa developa lama guideline kutsi ifanele kucelwa kanjani i-top-up. (We are now developing guidelines on how the top-up should be requested.).*

The irony behind the senior MoET officer's statement is that the FPE Act of 2010 provides for situations in which schools may request permission to levy top-up fees. The senior officer's statement did not reflect understanding of the fact that the FPE Act itself was a legal guideline. She went on to say that head teachers were wondering why top-up fees had been suspended when the Act had not been revoked, while they had not been following the procedures in terms of the FPE Act before the top-up fees had been suspended. This indicates that they were deliberately not doing so and taking advantage of the poor monitoring mechanisms of the FPE programme and schools at large.

Senior officer: *Ngoba le Act iyakubeka lokwekutsi when there is a need for a top-up. (Since the Act contains a section making provision for when there is a need for a top-up). Ngulapho bema khona nalamuhla kutsi imisweleni ngoba le Act ayikarevokhwa phela.(The question now being asked, is why top-up fees have been suspended when the FPE Act has not been revoked.)*

When asked further about the suspension of top-up fees in accordance with Circular 39, she mentioned that the FPE Unit was not involved in the establishment of the task team which was mandated to investigate the top up saga.

The head teacher for School B was of the opinion that, because head teachers were running the schools, they should have been engaged from the outset.

Interviewer: *What do you think could have been done better when FPE was introduced?*

Head teacher: *Yes, by inclusion of principals when all of this was introduced, as they are the ones who run the schools.*

The regional inspector for primary schools stated that inspectors had not been consulted or represented when the FPE Bill was drafted. They had been asked for their input in the development of the MoET's EDSEC policy, however, as they had been requested to state their concerns about their work on the ground. She also did not mention any knowledge of the FPE implementation guidelines – this despite the fact that section 5.10 of the guidelines stipulate the role of regional inspectors to be that of supporting and guiding schools to cost and prepare SDPs. It stands to reason, however, that regional inspectors could not fulfil this function effectively if it was not communicated to them.

Both the FPE implementation guidelines and the Act specify the role of parents, but it seems as though parents have not been made aware that they have a role to play. This is because they too were not engaged or consulted; as far as they are concerned, their role is to buy school uniforms. Yet according to the implementation guidelines they are also expected to participate in the annual SDP process. The parent from School C confirmed that she had not been consulted.

Parent: *Cha batali kute imibono noma lesakwenta mayelana leluhlelo lwemfundvo yamahhala. (No, there is no input that we as parents provide towards the FPE programme.) Satiswa sikolwa nemsakato ngaloluhlelo. (We were informed by the school and the media about the programme.)*

The FPE implementation guidelines is entitled "Guidelines for schools and communities on the implementation of the free primary education (FPE) programme", yet none of the parents who participated in the study ever attended a meeting at community or regional level.

Interviewer: *Are any meetings called by the MoET to inform parents on FPE, especially at the regions?*

Parent: *So far there is no meeting that I have heard of.*

The parent for School A mentioned that they did have meetings, however, they were not FPE related but called to discuss the school's needs. This may have been the SDP meetings that are referred to in the FPE guidelines, however, this was not explained to parents. This has led to them being ignorant of their role, which was confirmed by a parent from school A.

Parent: *Asikase saphindze sabanawo umhlangano lapho sikhuluma khona nge FPE, kepha sibanayo imihlangano leminye leholwa tidzingo talesosikhatsi. (We have not had another meeting where we discussed about FPE; instead we had meetings and discussed issues related to the needs at that moment.)*

The parent from School C stated that they did have meetings at school, where they discussed how best they could improve the school. This was consistent with some of the roles prescribed for parents in the FPE implementation guidelines. This seemed to indicate that some of the schools were adhering to the FPE implementation guidelines, although the parents were not aware that they were doing so.

On the other hand, the senior MoET officer acknowledged that neither stakeholders nor teachers learnt about the Act. She believed that the programme had not been done justice at its introduction.

Senior officer: *Bantfu abatanga, nale Act abayati bayiva nje, kantsi nalabothishela abatanga vele kutsi kwentekani, what is the meaning of this? (Stakeholders did not get to know about the Act and still don't – not even teachers know about it and about what is actually happening.) Lengifuna kukusho kutsi cha we did not do justice kuloku, ayizange vele ingena kahle. (What I want to say, is that we did not do the programme justice – it was not introduced properly.)*

The senior officer further confirmed that there was a lack of collaboration between the schools and the MoET, and that, in her personal opinion, schools did not understand FPE, meaning then that they do not know about the FPE Act.

Senior officer: *Ngibuka lendlela yekutsi asibambisani, akusiko kutsi abafuni (From my observation the fact that we are not working collaboratively with*

*schools gives me the impression that the teachers and head teachers do not understand FPE.) It is because they are not aware of their roles, they are not aware of what is involved in FPE.*

## **5.5 Administration of the FPE programme**

As previously mentioned, when the FPE programme was introduced, an FPE Unit was established to coordinate all FPE activities. Its role is administrative in nature. It has also been stated that the programme is being poorly managed, and that the implementation process is therefore not being well administered. Furthermore, coordination between the different departments within the Ministry is ineffective, and this has resulted in chaos prevailing with regard to the administration of the programme. In some way or another, this has affected the programme's progress. The programme also seems to be faced with administrative challenges with regard to infrastructure development in the schools. However, inasmuch as there are challenges in the implementation of the programme, it would seem that it could be sustainable because there is political will.

### **5.5.1 Progress of the FPE programme and changes**

The introduction of FPE has brought changes in the way schools are administered. These changes have not all been welcomed. The schools are now more accountable with regard to the management of their funds, as already stated in section 5.3.2. According to many head teachers, however, schools are now unable to develop because projects have been stalled.

In addition, the teacher at School D said that, now that FPE had been introduced, there was a shortage of teaching and learning materials. Based on her own observations, I felt that School D was one of the larger schools, which should have been benefiting more from



the grants paid by government. As highlighted earlier (see section 5.2.1.3), besides paying grants government also supplies schools with textbooks and stationery, which constitute learning materials. The grants may also be used to purchase other teaching materials and stationery for administrative use under the teaching and learning pillar, as stipulated in the Inqaba manual. The teacher at School D explained the situation.

*Teacher: The materials for teaching are no longer sufficient, and as a teacher you have to improvise. The FPE money comes late, and the amount paid by Government is not adequate for running a school.*

The issue of the late payment of the grants was also mentioned by head teacher 2 at school A, but when asked to clarify which fees were paid late, he confirmed what the senior MoET officer had stated, namely that it was the payments for the Grade 1 fees that were delayed. She also explained that this was because Grade 1 was paid for by the EU, and that because of their bureaucratic policies, payments were delayed. For the other Grade levels, the first tranche was paid even before schools opened. She further explained that this was because the progressive implementation of FPE had reached the last Grade level and all the grades were now part of the system. She went on to say that, provided schools submitted the names in time when schools closed in December, payments were received timeously. She further mentioned that, before all the school grades had been fully incorporated into the system, the payments had been made according to the FPE guidelines.

When participants were asked during the interviews whether any changes had occurred since FPE had been introduced, they responded in the affirmative. The School B teacher and a parent from School A are cited here.

Teacher: *Well with the emptying of the coffers there were bound to be changes because there is now a shoe-size budget. The classes are now bigger, and the maintenance is no longer the way it used to be. The government has been very strict with spending of money.*

Parent: *Yebo lukhona lushintjo ngoba bantfwana abasacoshwa ngoba bangakabhadali njengoba bekwenteka lokwa basatibhadalela. (Yes, there have been changes, because learners are no longer sent home for owing school fees, as was the case when they were paying for themselves.)*

The views of the School A learners were interesting.

Thembi: *Now that there is a new head teacher, there have been changes in the school. We have the bins around the school and the uniform, there are less people who come late to school, the rules are tightened now. We are happy there is order. No one does what he or she feels like.*

When the learners were asked whether they had done as they pleased before, they responded "Yes" in unison.

Daniel: *Also the teachers.*

Siviwe: *There is a change because there is a new head teacher, Deputy Head teacher and new teachers.*

### **5.5.2 Building of school infrastructure and the FPE package**

The FPE implementation guidelines specify that government will, in the short and medium term of the implementation of FPE, gradually remove all physical, financial and socio-cultural barriers to education. The guidelines further stipulate that, in order to remove physical barriers, government will provide schools with infrastructure and facilities. The

guidelines specified that schools should not budget for the construction of classrooms for Grades 1 and 2 in 2010. No mention was made of provision for higher grades in subsequent years, however, and this proved to be a loophole in the guidelines. School A took advantage of this loophole and start charging parents for a building fund for Grade 3 children, where government was already building seven classrooms at the school (see section 5.3.1).The guidelines also directed schools not to budget for school furniture from the grant funds, but again focused on the provision of school furniture for Grades 1 and 2. No mention was made of how furniture would be provided in subsequent years as the implementation progressed.

The guidelines also specify that government will collaborate with its development partners in the provision of equipment. The provision of desks and chairs therefore forms part of the FPE package. It also includes the provision of learners' stationery, textbooks, classrooms, clean, potable water and food under the schools feeding scheme. The package is given effect in the Inqaba manual, the FPE implementation guidelines (Swaziland 2009) and the schools feeding scheme framework. In respect of the schools sampled for this study, their situations in terms of the availability of infrastructure, equipment and facilities seem to differ.

Head teacher 2 at School A related how they followed the set procedure to acquire furniture, to no avail.

Head teacher: *There are insufficient desks and chairs. These are requisitioned from the REO to get the donor funded classroom furniture, but they do not come forth.*

The inadequate supply of donor funded school furniture was addressed by the regional inspector for primary schools.

Inspector: *What I can say, is that it is unfortunate that the donor who is these days giving furniture, says we should select schools and we do and bring forth the numbers that we find in the schools but the donor only donates up to a hundred. No matter the number, like School C is a big school, if they would get only 100 chairs it would be good for only one class. So, but otherwise we keep on, we make the recommendations, actually that is as far as we can go. It is unfortunate for this school, and especially the schools around town are the ones which are impoverished. The old schools that one would think, a school like St T, even it does not have enough furniture. St M they don't have furniture. They are right in town!*

This was not found to be the case during classroom observations at school A, where every child in that particular class had a desk and a chair. The learners confirmed that there were shortages, however; it the class observed may have been an exception. For instance, Banele at School A emphasised that there were "insufficient desks and a shortage of chairs, some sit on buckets". Muzi, in the same school, exonerated the head teacher of any wrongdoing in this regard by explaining that the head teacher "had done so much". This suggested that the head teacher's efforts in ensuring that there were no shortages of chairs or desks had been noticed by learners.

The situation at School C was appalling – in the class that was observed, there was evidently a serious shortage of desks and chairs: some learners were sharing chairs, others were using makeshift chairs and had no desks. Lungisa, a learner at School C, stated that there was a shortage of desks and chairs and added: "We sometimes sit on buckets. The chairs break and are not replaced."

The head teacher at School C was also dissatisfied with the situation.

Head teacher: *No money has been allocated for the payment of school fees. Our school has not received any furniture, even when a requisition is made to government there has been no response.*

Interestingly the parent that was interviewed for this school said the Ministry had given the school desks and chairs but that they had not been enough. (The reason for this was probably because each school was only entitled to a hundred of the desks and chairs donated by UNICEF.)

Parent: *Litiko letemfundvo likelasinika ema desk netitulo kepha solo tiyashoda letotintfo ngoba nalokusikolwa sakwemukela akuzange kwenelise. (The Ministry of Education gave the school desks and chairs, even though there is still a shortage because they were not sufficient.)*

Aside from a shortage of desks and chairs, the overall upkeep of the school, based on the researcher's observation was not good. Inasmuch as it was an old mission school, there were signs of it not being maintained. The classroom observed contained no cupboards or notice board – only a chalkboard. It even lacked a ceiling. The classroom arrangement was disorganised because of the shortage of desks and chairs. It was also dirty.

It was evident that some of the learners came from poor backgrounds. Some of them wore threadbare uniforms, and others wore jerseys which did not match the school uniform.

The school grounds were not well kept, and surfaces were either irregular or covered in gravel only. The safety of the learners was therefore being compromised, as they could easily get hurt. The state of the grounds did not comply with the safety and protection

pillar that the school is supposed to adhere to as dictated by the Inqaba manual. The obviously unsafe state of the school environment indicated that the school was not being properly monitored by the MoET inspectorate.

The teacher at School B said that the teaching and learning materials were inadequate, while the learners said the desks and chairs were sometimes either too big or too small.

*Thulani: Some of the chairs are small in size they were meant for Grade 1s. Some of the desks are higher than the learners.*

At School D, James, one of the learners, stated that they had desks and chairs, implying that there were no shortages. This tallied with the classroom observation at the school: all the learners in the observed class had desks and chairs.

The FPE package also includes the provision of textbooks and stationery, as highlighted in section 5.2.1.4. At the schools sampled for the study, several discrepancies and irregularities were found in regard to the provision of textbooks and stationery. All the schools acknowledged that they received the stationery provided by the MoET.

At School A, even though the learners had received the stationery, they were not using it; instead they were expected to buy two quire exercise books. The reason they gave, was that the exercise books provided by the ministry were too small and did not accommodate the notes they had to write at the upper primary level. The learners here were asked about the provision of learning materials and stationery by the school. The first question was whether the stationery they received from the school lasted the entire year. Lomalungelo replied that it didn't. The researcher asked the learners what happened when they ran out of stationery. Phetsile

explained that they bought two quires in Grade 7. I was astonished and asked whether they actually bought these themselves. Both Phetsile and Muzi confirmed that they did.

Researcher: *Okay, please tell me about the stationery that you buy.*

Muzi: *Two quires for RE, English, Mathematics, Agriculture, Home Economics.*

The researcher continued to prompt the learners in order to determine what happened to the stationery provided by government. All the learners in unison responded that they used them for studying.

Textbook management and distribution emerged as a separate dilemma. School A showed signs of poor management of textbooks. The learners acknowledged that they received free textbooks, but said that they were stolen. This implied that they were stolen by other learners to sell to learners at other schools. In order to understand why there was a shortage of textbooks at School A, The Researcher asked the learners why the textbooks were not enough. The learners gave different responses.

Banele: *Some steal them, to sell them to learners in the other schools.*

Nolwazi: *The Grade 6 steal the Grade 7 books to sell them to the nearby school, then they pay.*

Interviewer: *But every school receives free books, why would they sell them?*

Nolwazi: *I think if you lose the book you pay for it.*

Interviewer: *But in this school you don't?*

Muzi: *Yes, that is why there are not enough books, because when I was doing Grade 6 the teachers told we should bring the books to them, but some didn't.*

Interviewer: *So they sell them to the others because in this school they are not strict about bringing the books back?*

Muzi: *Yes.*

The learners at Schools B, C and D also acknowledged that they received free textbooks from government. The School B learners disagreed about whether they received all the textbooks. This was probably because the textbooks that the learners said they did not receive, were Agriculture textbooks, and Agriculture was an elective, so it did not affect them all. One of the learners, Lungile, insisted that the number of Agriculture textbooks had also been insufficient.

The School C learners had the same sentiments as those in School A and said the books got lost, and those at School D said they sometimes shared textbooks.

The School B teacher also complained about the shortage of textbooks.

Teacher: *Not adequate – the teaching materials are old, and because the school is struggling financially and cannot buy new ones with the large numbers more are required.*

The textbooks and stationery seemed to be adequate in the class observed at School B. Each learner had his or her own, at a 1:1 ratio, as prescribed by the MoET's EDSEC policy (Swaziland 2011b). Learners did claim that there was a shortage of books, however, and that they went missing. One learner also remarked that textbooks were sometimes shared.

Based on classroom observation at School D, most of the learners had textbooks. The few who did not, had either left them at home, or had lost them. They also all had stationery.



The FPE package, under "school facilities and equipment", also includes the provision of clean, potable water and sanitation facilities. As this falls under the Inqaba water, sanitation and hygiene pillar, schools are supposed to submit their request for such facilities to the MoET's Planning Department through their respective REOs.

The senior MoET officer related how the Ministry had been ensuring that such facilities and equipment were provided to schools, and that the Ministry had been providing clean water. She also elaborated on what schools needed to consider to effectively meet their needs.

Senior officer: *Hygiene, sinawo yini emanti, ema means ekutfola emanti yini, indzawo yetfu kute ema-borehole, emathange, ubhalela litiko uyacela. Beka supplier emathange in the past five years asupplier emathange etikolweni Nangingakutjela kukhona sikolwa langafike ngatsetsa, ngatsi kube ngitenetruck ngabe ngihamba nalo, ligicika lapha phansi. Bangalisebentisi. (In terms of hygiene schools should under the hygiene pillar of the SCCS framework consider if they have clean water. If the schools do not have boreholes they can officially make a request to the MoET and request for water tanks. In the past five years the Government has been supplying schools with water tanks. If I would let you know how irresponsible some schools are you would just wonder in shock. There is a school in the Shiselweni Region where the water tank supplied by government was just lying idle in the school and just rolling on the ground and not being used. (A siSwati expression that describes the extent of how disgusting a matter is). That day I was so annoyed that I rebuked the headteacher and told him that if I had a truck I would be taking the water tank along with me.) Sifaka ema gutters to harvest the water. Hhulumende utsenge ema-tanker kutsi nyalo ebusika kukhona*

*lekubo Lubonjeni. iShiselweni lapho kukubi kakhulu khona. Nyalo ema-tanker arRegional kuna one, one per region bese kukhona le central to support. (We also install gutters at the schools, so that schools can harvest rain water. The Government has also bought water tankers to supply schools with water especially during the dry winter season. The focus in the provision of water tanks to schools has mostly been for schools in the Lubombo and Shiselweni Regions because they are the ones mostly affected by the dry winter spell and water shortage. The Government has purchased a water tank four each of the four geographical regions and there is also another one that is central and on standby to assist in the regions should the need arise). Sekutsi you want clean water niyakaWater, nitsenga lelithikithi, emanti akhona akaduli, acwale ema 9000, utsenge ema 9000 nyalo hhulumende, akusiko nalama 5000, wetse lamathange omabili bantfwana banatse emanti lahlobile. (It's just that when you want clean water, you purchase it from Water by buying the ticket. Their water is not expensive, and it fills 9 000 litre tanks. Government now purchases 9 000 litre tanks and not just the 5 000 litre ones. Both tanks are filled and children then get clean water.)*

### **5.5.3 Sustainability of the FPE programme**

There were mixed feelings from participants about the sustainability of the FPE programme in Swaziland. Some of the participants complained that the government grant was insufficient. Another felt that government should build more classes and employ more teachers to curb overcrowding. The senior MoET officer was of the opinion that the programme was sustainable thanks to political will. One participant felt the programme was not sustainable, however, because of the country's economic challenges. Another

participant said the programme was not sustainable because it was simply not working out.

Head teacher, School B: *It is sustainable, but government should add more money – the numbers in classes are big and the teachers are not coping. That is why we need more teachers and more classes.*

Teacher, School B: *I think government should try and employ many teachers. Some schools have less classes but high enrolment rates. Government should employ teachers. There is a lot of preparation that should have been done and budgeted for. A lot of money is needed for this FPE. It is not workable because the money is little. Government is paying little money because what parents were paying was more. The government is doing a shoddy job. Parents who have money do not take their children to public schools; instead they take them to private schools.*

Head teacher, School C: *With alternatives FPE can be sustainable. The money needs to be altered.*

Senior officer: *Kusenale political will, so it is sustainable. (There is political will, so it is sustainable.)*

Interviewer: *So in other words we believe that it is sustainable in Swaziland?*

Senior Officer: *Maybe sustainable in the sense that whenever there are cuts on the budget, they never cut on FPE. Ngicabanga kutsi yayitfola i-political will. (I think the political will is there.) Ngive bakhuluma ungatsi inkhosi iyimentionile espeechini sayo. (During his 2015 birthday speech, the King mentioned something about FPE.) Ngive etindzabeni, umentionile ema programmes like FPE kutsi*

*umalive libambisene sitokhona kuchubeka. (I heard from the news that the King mentioned programmes like FPE and said that, if we as a nation work together, we will be able to progress.) Wabekisa nge FPE ngiyona leyayitfolo i-political will. (He used FPE as an example, so it has political will.)*

Deputy Head teacher, School D: *The FPE programme is not sustainable; it is not working.*

Teacher, School D: *FPE is not sustainable looking at our economy, in the years to come. Government cannot be paying for so many children.*

Some citizens do not appreciate the FPE programme because they fear that government is directing all its resources towards the programme at the expense of other important things such as tertiary education, which is more expensive than primary education. There is also the fear that the FPE expenditure will affect government servants' salaries. The regional inspector for primary schools was questioned on this topic.

Inspector: *I am afraid. I am just looking at free primary education now going into being free basic education or something like that. Kutsi what is government doing kutsi ato-generator imali kutsi atochubeka asiholele kutsi ngalelinye lilanga siyoke sihole yini. (I wonder what Government is planning to do to ensure that we continue to get paid with FPE becoming free education. Well, that is the fear I have, whether one day we will not be paid our salaries.) Which comes back kutsi government should engage ema-parents, ema-parents kukhona indlela lefanele abe-engaged ngayo hhulumende, sibonisane kutsi singenta njani. (Government should engage parents.) Because parents are able to pay e-primary.*

Interviewer (interrupting): *Not all.*

Inspector: *Not all of them but nyalo sitoba nebantfwana labanengi labafundze. (Right now we will have many children that go up to Grade 7, and then what? But at least free primary education having been fulfilled at secondary level, that is their issue, that is a different issue. It is a different issue kantsi banengi batali bebangeke ba-afforde kufundzisa eMvasi kunasePrimary. (There are many parents who won't be able to afford paying for university but can afford paying for primary education.) Emafethi bekabafundzisa ePrimary kepha eCollege ngeke vele emafethi aze akhone. (Selling "fat cakes" makes it possible to pay for primary education but not for college.)*

## **5.6 Textbook management and distribution**

The management and distribution of the textbooks that government provides as part of the FPE package seems to be beset with difficulties. Participants who responded to questions on textbook management and distribution felt that the textbooks were there, but that there were no proper mechanisms in place to monitor distribution. It was found that there are also no proper management and accountability processes with regard to the textbooks. This has resulted in textbook management being prone to corruption. Interestingly the corrupt practices are found among the learners, as was highlighted in section 5.2.1.3. Most of the information regarding the management and distribution of textbooks was obtained from the regional inspector for primary schools, because the REOs receive the textbooks and manage their distribution to the schools.

### **5.6.1 Management of textbooks**

The senior MoET officer when asked about the poor management of textbooks in schools acknowledged that the Ministry was fully aware of the problem.

Senior officer: *Free primary education doesn't mean that (umtfwana nakalahle incwadzi) it is okay when a child has lost a book.*

The School C head teacher mentioned that the free textbooks and stationery that government provided were poorly handled. She also felt that the textbooks and exercise books were not valued. She placed the blame on parents, however, and stated that parents had shown no interest in their children's education since FPE was introduced. This was a general feeling of all the participants except the parents and the learners.

The teacher who was observed at School A also voiced serious criticism about the management of textbooks and the lack of a policy in this regard. The teacher felt that FPE promoted wastage of resources, and noted that there was no regulation in place regarding what should be done if a learner lost a textbook. The teacher complained that the way in which the learners handled the textbooks, left much to be desired. She also said it was unfortunate that the school was not doing anything about it, so the learners did as they pleased. She felt that the learners were not being taught to be responsible and to value things.

According to the senior MoET officer, the Ministry had made attempts to address the issue of poor management of textbooks.

Senior officer: *In 2011 we visited ema-regions kutsi siyo epowerisha ticolwa, bayacelwa kutsi nakakha emaklasi ente ema Kabete. (In 2011 we visited the regions based on the instruction of the director of the MoET to empower teachers in the regions in respect of the safekeeping of the textbooks in schools.) As a result they were requested that when Micro-Projects builds classes they should also put fitted cardboards for the safekeeping of the textbooks.*

It was also complained that textbooks were delivered late to schools, and that sometimes schools receive fewer books than they had ordered. This was a sign of poor management and distribution of the books. The researcher can confirm this, because when the regional inspector was being interviewed, she received a call from a head teacher asking that she organise and arrange for social studies books to be delivered to his school because he had not received his order.

*Inspector: Even though they do receive books but sometimes they come late and they are not according to their order, sometimes they have received less than what they have actually ordered. Uyabona kule (you see with this) issue is another great challenge. One, books come late, two, when they open the box sometimes they find it is not what they ordered, three, sometimes what is in the box is not the number that they had ordered. When we do the supplementary forms, fill them up, supplementary orders they also take forever. Right now there is a newly appointed head teacher who has found kutsi ka Grade 5 bate nje incwadzi kute ye social, ye singisi kute neye siSwati (that there are no books for the Grade 5 learners for Social Studies, English and SiSwati).*

When the regional inspector was further prompted on this issue, the response indicated that the management and distribution of textbooks were handled poorly by the REOs. To gain a deeper understanding of the management and distribution of textbooks, I conducted a further interview with the regional inspector for primary schools.

*Interviewer: What happened?*

*Inspector: The former head teacher retired, he was tired.*

Interviewer: *Ok, but what happened to the orders?*

Inspector: *Wa (He) ordered but they never received the orders.*

Interviewer: *They are still at the REOs?*

Inspector: *He is the one nje lengitsi akete siyofuna sibone kutsi singatfola ini. (He is the one I was talking too, whom I told to come so that we could look for the books and see what we could get.) Now it is May bantfwana seba fundze kangakanani. Bate tincwadzi. (It is now May – how much have the learners learnt without books?)*

The late delivery of textbooks was confirmed by the head teacher at School C.

Head teacher. *Poor quality exercise books, textbooks are delivered very late, sharing of books, sometimes we deliberately order excess stock so that we have surplus stock which we can use in the next year to respond to the late delivery of the textbooks by government.*

The issue of the poor management of textbooks in schools was also raised by the teacher whose teaching was observed at School A. She lamented that the textbooks were not well kept in the school. She even said she wished there were a textbook policy that schools would be compelled to adhere to. Her assertion was corroborated by the learners, who said that textbooks were stolen and sold to learners at other schools. The regional inspector for primary schools also decried the lack of a proper textbook management system.

Inspector: *Ba order phela, uyabona even lapho Bethu kute i-system le in place letsi if kagrade 1 ku odwe so many textbooks, 50 for Grade 1 last year, lo 50 loyo fanele*



*asebente over a period of 4 years. Ah! Ah! na next year batophindze ba ode futsi. (They order and because there is no system that is in place, they order 50 books for Grade 1 this year and another 50 next year. Meanwhile the same books should be used over a 4-year period, next year they will order again.)*

Interviewer (interrupting): *It is an expense on Government.*

Inspector: *Uyabona imali le mosakala ngetincwadzi. (You see the amount of money wasted on books is unbelievable.)*

It would seem, however, that the poor distribution of books is also caused by the publishers, and not only the REOs. In May 2015, the regional inspector for primary schools related how the REOs had not received Grade 1 siSwati textbooks for the 2015 academic year.

Inspector: *Li office laka REO alikatitfoli tincwadzi tesiSwati ka Grade 1 bete tincwadzi teSiswati ka Grade one. (The REO has not received siSwati books for Grade 1.)*

Interviewer: *Why?*

Inspector: *Macmillan akazange akhichite. (Macmillan did not produce enough books.)*

Interviewer: *So there are still challenges in the distribution of the books?*

Inspector: *Exactly sisi, in the distribution of books eyi! That is one of the bottomless pits.*

When the regional inspector was prompted regarding whether ensuring that schools have sufficient teaching and learning materials was not part of the inspectorate's core duty, she

agreed, but also lamented that not all inspectors saw it as such. This gave the impression that there was no clear understanding among the inspectors in the Manzini region regarding what their role was.

Interviewer: *Okay, the issue of textbooks and the distribution of textbooks: what has the inspectorate done about that, because it seems to be a challenge?*

Inspector (laughing): *We talk about it but-ke more than anything Bethu the inspectorate working with an officer lebaka kaECCD besiyesibuke kutsi bo teacher ba-order kahle yini tincwadzi. Sibanike i-guidance lapha eku-odeni kutsi sikolwa lesinjena solo site tincwadzi Lawo maproblems njena lesihlangana nawo tikolwa siyatama kutsi as letotikholwa longu pastoral inspector wato, sitsi utibuke tikolwa takho, tite yini tincwadzi kahle Kepha nakona loko intfo le personal ngoba. (The inspectorate works with the ECCD [early childhood care and development] officer. We check whether teachers have ordered the books correctly and give guidance on the orders, and we keep in touch with Macmillan simu (and) update that this and that school still has no books. We try to assist those schools that we are pastoral inspectors of and find out if they have books but even that it is kind of like it is a personal thing because some inspectors just don't feel it is part of umsebenti wabo (their duty).*

The regional inspector for primary schools related how, when she joined the inspectorate at the REO, no one was in charge of textbooks and therefore she was tasked with the duty. She also mentioned that she worked together with an ECCE officer in the region. Their task was to monitor and assist schools in placing orders for textbooks. They also created a database that would show them how the distribution of the books was progressing. Based on the data, they identified irregularities.

Inspector: *There is a school lesa oda kwafika 71 boxes, it is a big school, but nalapho uyatibuta kutsi bafika ku 71 bekute yini letinye tincwadzi letifanele tisebente. (There was a school that ordered 71 boxes. You then ask yourself whether there were no books at the school – even though it was a big school, you wonder why they would order somany.) I-supplementary yakhe yaletsa 35. (Their supplementary order was 35 boxes.)*

The Regional Inspector reported the issue to the then REO and requested her to query the abnormal order with this particular head teacher. The Regional Inspector and her colleague tried to withhold the order until they received a satisfactory explanation from the head teacher through the REO. The inspector fell about laughing and proceeded with the story.

Inspector: *Eyi! I don't know but nje she came back and said uyati indzaba yale tincwadzi ikhulunywa le eMinistry nine la compilani le data. (She came back to us and told us that issues pertaining to books were handled by the Ministry, and that our job was merely to capture the data.) It was like she was saying to us let it go.*

Interviewer (interrupting): *No, that was wrong!*

Inspector: *So tsine what we did we just record tincwadzi tingaka (the books), so many boxes go to a school. So ngale linye lilanga ubowenta study utobuka leti nombolo. (Some day you should conduct a study on this.) Unfortunately batsi this lady sohambile (has since left), but we have the data. Then it is something else you can see there is a lot of things going on.*

The explanation for the above incident is that the REOs are an extension of the MoET and are supposed to manage and oversee all activities at regional level. In regard to the management and distribution of textbooks, this office is the first recipient in the

distribution chain of the textbooks and should be transparent and accountable. The manner in which the inspector related the incident gave the impression that she suspected that there may have been some corrupt practices at play. She also gave other accounts that suggested that there is a great deal of wrongdoing related to the ordering and managing of textbooks.

*Inspector: Sometimes we visit the private schools. When we get to the private schools you find the box, nititsenge kuphi. Ukhandza tincwadzi for School X, emabhokisi la bhalwe lawo angitsi ubhala lapha ngephandle kwelibhokisi. Lifike njani lase X libhokisi lapha Macmillan nakadispatcher letincwadzi. (You wonder where they bought them from. You find boxes marked School X, which is the name of another public school. When Macmillan dispatches the box, she writes the name of the school that the box is supposed to be dispatched to. The question is how did the School X box get here?)*

The inspector was asked why private schools did not handle their own orders and payments. She responded that they had requested the REO to query this with the MoET lest they found themselves having to account to the Public Accounting Committee.

*Inspector: And then emaprivate schools eta la atotsatsa tincwadzi. (Then private schools come here to collect books.)*

*Interviewer: Why don't they order and pay? I don't understand angitsi. (Are they not allowed to order and pay themselves?)*

*Inspector: Don't put this one down but nje it happens kutsi baya order bête batolandza. (They order and collect the orders.) Mine na this lady we went to Make REO and told Make REO that nati ticolwa letingasito tahulumende titfola*

*tincwadzi la tiyabhadala, tibhadala kuma accounts officers etfu. Asati kutsi tibhadala malini because Macmillan aka invoisi sikolwa. (The lady I was working with and I went to the REO to inform her that there were private schools receiving textbooks and paying the REO's accounts officers for them. We do not know how these schools pay, because the publisher does not invoice schools but invoices the government.)*

Interviewer (interrupting): *U-invoisa hhulumende u-invoisa once, u-invoisa hulumende. (Macmillan invoices the Government and not schools and does it once a year in line with the orders that have been received)*

She also gave an account of another incident that implicated an accountant at the REO. She had initially requested that the information she provided on these two incidents should be off the record, however the researcher could not agree to this because the information revealed serious malpractices related to the management of textbooks that needed to be addressed. When the researcher subsequently requested her, together with all the other participants, to verify that what she had said had been correctly captured, she was not pleased about these incidents having been recorded, even when the researcher reminded her of the agreement. The excerpts below are important.

Inspector: *Sachubeka sabuta, then this new accountant came I called him ngamuhlalisa phansi to ask him kutsi kanjani kantsi lesinye sikolwa sitsi sibhadale E10 000. (We continued enquiring about this, then this new accountant came I called the accountant and sat him down and asked why one of the schools paid E10 000 and brought a paper with a stamp from the accounts office instead of presenting a report ). Instead of kwekutsi site nereport site neliphepha lelikanje angibekise ngitsi Enjabulweni, bese sekugcoijwa sitembu sema accounts. (She then*

*showed a record sheet that they use for recording the textbooks that are dispatched by the publisher and then by the REO to the schools. She explained that instead of writing a report all the information pertaining to the textbooks is recorded in the record sheet)*

*Interviewer: I wonder if the money even goes into the Government coffers.*

*Inspector: I don't know.*

*Interviewer: Yah! There is a lot!*

*Inspector: Besesiyati kepha leyetincwadzi, nje nalama accounts, uyabona this thing itasibophisa. (We now know about the issue of the books and the accounts – you know this will get us arrested [speaking figuratively].) Mine I am washing my hands from tincwadzi. (I am washing my hands on the issue of the books.) Ngingumuhloli, it is not part of what lengacashelwa kona. (I am an inspector; it is not part of the job I was employed to do.) Angisafuni, kuyangigulisa. (I rest my case – this makes me sick.) Another one came and paid two thousand batsi akayishiye la e-registry ngayitsatsa e-registry ngayibeka la (and was told to leave the money at the registry). I took the money and put it here [pointing at her desk drawer].) Wafika lo accountant ngatsi nayi imali ibhadalwe nguthishela utsatse tincwadzi lentasi, kantsi ni-accepta hard cash, ayiyi ngani lemali lapha e-revenue. (The accountant came and I said here is the money. You people receive hard cash – why isn't the money paid at the revenue right across from here?) Any ways nayi. (In any event, here it is.) Ingitfusile kutsi lemali ibhadalwa la. (It shocked me that the money was paid here.) Watsi hhayi it is the old accountant it is the one that has been here losebenta kanjalo. Wahlala wangangikhulumisi. As long as lemali beyila edraweni lami. (The accountant said it was the old accountant who set up the*

*status quo. Then the accountant was not talking to me for some time –for as long as I kept it in my drawer.) Unfortunately the REO was on leave and was bereaved, so bengicabanga kutsi utobuya ngimunikete, kwatsatsa sikhatsi, ngabona kutsi sengitokufa ngendlela tinshashu besengishayelwa tona langephandle. (I kept the money because the REO was away on leave for a long time, and I wanted to give it to her when she returned. I was compelled to give it to the accountant before the REO returned, however, because of the threatening comments she was making; I feared for my life.) I called her and gave her the money.*

The inspector added that this was just a simple thing that government needed to address by putting in place clear mechanisms that would enable private schools to place their orders and be invoiced. They would then be able to pay for their orders at the revenue office and receive their receipts. She believed that this would sort out the entire matter. It should be noted that the FPE implementation guidelines stipulate that government will provide free textbooks to public schools. The inspector elaborated further.

*Inspector: This one is just straightforward Enjabulweni akusiso sikolwa sahulumende. (This one is straight forward Enjabulweni is not a public school. She was merely making an example of this school, not that this school is implicated in the textbook debacle. It is not a government school.) Government akasinikete i-invoice. Noma bangabhadala i-deposit ya E3 000 lapha e-revenue angatiwa kutsi wamalini ngoba asati vele ekugcineni kwako konkhe, mine angiyati kutsi ingumalini incwadzi. (Government should invoice the school, even if they can pay a deposit of E3 000 at the revenue office, because at the end of it all we don't know how much they should pay.)*

### 5.6.2 Textbook shortages

There seems to be a shortage of books at schools, despite the fact that government is providing schools with free textbooks through the REOs. There are many factors that this can be attributed to, and they hinge on the poor management of textbooks by the REOs, as highlighted in section 5.6.1. During interviews, the shortage of textbooks was confirmed even by a parent from school A, who said that she was unable to help her child with homework because there were no textbooks. She went on to say that parents found themselves having to buy textbooks in order to assist the children with homework.

Parent: *Sibatali kufanele sitsengele bantfwana tincwadzi khona batokhona kwenta umsebenzi wesikolwa ekhaya. (We as parents have to buy the learners' textbooks to enable them to do their homework.)*

The question is, where do they buy them from? Primary school textbooks are not for sale; they are distributed to the schools and the children free of charge.

The shortage of textbooks was confirmed by the head teacher at School C.

Head teacher: *The challenges in the implementation of FPE have been shortage of textbooks. There is a shortage of textbooks, which forces learners to share books – this is because the distribution of books is poor.*

The MoET is fully aware of the shortage of textbooks at schools. The Swaziland EFA Country Progress report (UNESCO, UNICEF and MOET 2015) also refers to the shortage of textbooks, despite the MoET objective for every learner to have all the textbooks in a ratio of 1:1. The report reveals that in 2007 only one child out of every 100 did not have a textbook. It would seem, however, as though the number of children without textbooks



has increased dramatically over the years. According to the 2009 report, one in four Grade 6 learners did not have textbooks.

## **5.7 FPE challenges**

Most of the issues covered in this study, form part of the challenges faced by the FPE programme: the top-up fees, which are a barrier to access, as are hidden costs; a shortage of resources; a lack of proper implementation monitoring mechanisms; poor administration of the programme; government grants not having kept up with inflation; a lack of consultation with key stakeholders; and the lack of understanding of and appreciation for the importance of the programme among key stakeholders who are supposed to implement the programme.

### **5.7.1 Quality of education**

Other challenges that emerged from the data gathered were overcrowding and the hiring of teachers who are either not qualified to teach primary school pedagogy or are not teachers by profession. The inadequate monitoring of teaching and learning by the inspectorate as well as by head teachers is also a challenge. All of these factors compromise the quality of primary school education in Swaziland.

The teacher at School B was of the opinion that government should employ more teachers.

*Teacher: With the overcrowding in the classroom it is a challenge because we do not implement the top-up fee whilst schools in urban areas charge top-up fees and we don't, so this influences the influx of learners from the urban schools, who avoid paying the top-up fee to come to peri-urban schools like this one. If government would totally scrap out the top-up fee we would not have such large*

*numbers. Government should increase the number of teachers so that the pupil/teacher ratio can drop.*

The teacher further lamented the overcrowding, which led to large numbers of scripts having to be marked. He explained that at his school they specialised, and that, because there were three streams, he had to teach the learners in all three streams the subjects he specialised in.

*Teacher: Yes, there are challenges, ever since the introduction of FPE there has been an influx of learners – one to 60. I have to teach three streams on a daily basis, I have to mark 180 scripts, which is a challenge. We specialise in the school, but as primary school teachers we are expected to be able to teach all the subjects. I teach English, Social Science and Religious Education.*

The regional inspector for primary schools felt that the quality of the teachers that were employed, left much to be desired. Although the teachers who participated in this study were all qualified teachers, the inspector's view was probably based on the overall situation.

*Inspector: Another thing I think is the issue of teachers – the quality of the teachers in the schools. We still have schools where the head teacher is the only one who is appropriately qualified. We still have a need for primary school teachers, appropriately qualified primary school teachers. We have people from SCOT [Swaziland College of Technology] who never did anything in education teaching in the primary school. We have lawyers, we have people with diplomas in law, teaching in the primary school. We do not have programmes for inducting these people.*

The senior MoET officer held the same view as the regional inspector, and also raised the issue of teachers without the appropriate qualifications teaching at primary schools. She mentioned how this had a negative impact on the quality of education.

*Senior officer: Another challenge that we have, is that of teachers – we are allocated teachers who are irrelevantly qualified for primary school pedagogy and have a post-graduate diploma in Education, who are Bese kuba yi-challenge kona lokuba upgrader. (Upgrading them becomes a challenge.) Mane kutsi site le finance yekutsi sibatsatse on board, sitsi nyalo senibekwe la nayi i-crash course, lehle itsi three weeks, three weeks baze bajwayele kuba se klasini. Ngiloko lesi kubukako, kusho kutsi kutsintsa kakhulu ngala ka quality. I-quality akusiyo lesingatsi singajabula ngayo nasibuka letotintfo leto. (It is unfortunate that we do not have the finances, otherwise we could have offered them a three-week crash course to familiarise with the pedagogy. That is what we are concerned about, it seems to affect the quality of the education; when we consider these things, we are not pleased with the quality.)*

The shortage of appropriately qualified teachers is also reported in the Swaziland EFA Country report for 2000-2015 (UNESCO et al 2015:21), where it is noted that the high demand for primary education has created a need for additional teachers. There is a shortage of appropriately qualified teachers, however. According to the AEC Report (2013 a), which is cited in UNESCO et al (2015), 25% of the primary school teaching staff is not appropriately qualified to teach at that level. This necessitates employing inappropriately qualified teachers to teach on the primary level – mainly teachers qualified for the secondary level. The quality of education on the primary level is therefore being compromised.

The regional inspector also complained about head teachers failing to play their supervisory role in schools, despite internal monitoring being their responsibility.

*Inspector: Another thing which I find is a challenge, is the monitoring. The head teacher as the resident inspector, monitoring the teachers it is a challenge – such that as an inspectorate we have drawn up an instructional supervision form for the head teachers trying to enforce them to at least supervise every teacher at the school at least once a term, so that they are the first to get them.*

The issue of overcrowding could be the result of schools having expanded to accommodate the influx of learners after the FPE programme was introduced. However, the expansion did not match the number of teachers available. The issue of the shortage of teachers was also raised by both the head teacher and the teacher at School C. This was confirmed by the senior MoET officer.

*Senior officer: Kuyi challenge kutsi akukhuli, 110 posts muncane, ngoba sebema ngaye lowe FPE bona abasawa ngeti emapost lamanye. (Yes it is a challenge, because the number of teacher's posts has not increased – it has remained at 110 per year, and this is the quarter allocated to FPE, the department is not adding other posts but sticking to these.) Tiningi letikolwa, ukhandza kutsi letinye ticala letreble streaming. (There are many of these schools and others have trebled their number of streams.)*

This challenge results in schools not being built at the rate required by the MoET's EDSEC policy (Swaziland 2011b), which stipulates that there should be a school within a radius of 5 km from each learner.

Senior officer: *Angitsi yi ideal, i-policy ikhuluma nge ideal but nyalo there are those schools njenganati REO Lubombo lativetile. Labantfwana bebatravelisha ema kilometers lamanengi kakhulu. Angitsi lelengikushoko kutsi sesiyakucola sibuyela emva siyahlakula, kusho kutsi sesiyo-observer labo 5km, kube netikolwa, manje inkinga emapost amile ngale ka Public Service. (That is the ideal: the policy states the ideal, but as it stands right now, there are schools, such as the ones mentioned by the REO in Lubombo, where the learners travel long distances. What I am saying, is that we are now going back to the drawing board and considering providing schools within the 5 km radius, but the problem is getting teaching posts from the Ministry of Public Service, because they only provide the FPE annual quarter and nothing beyond that.)*

The senior MoET officer also indicated that the introduction of FPE had created a challenge in regard to some children having moved from one school to another. When schools failed to record these shifts, this created confusion. Some of the head teachers found themselves with audit queries when the auditors discovered these anomalies. The fact that learners could now easily shift from one school to another meant that they were now able to live with either one of their parents, which had not been possible in the past. This was because parents frequently migrated from rural to urban areas to find work, but in most cases could not afford the school fees in urban areas. The introduction of FPE solved this problem. The regional inspector for primary schools said this was why most of the overcrowding occurred in urban areas. Overcrowding compromises the quality of education, because teachers are unable to give each learner the attention he or she deserves. The MoET's EDSEC policy (Swaziland 2011b) stipulates a teacher learner ration of 1:40, however.

Inspector: *One, we have schools that had a small enrolment but now they have been inflated. There are also schools that had large numbers of learners but now, because of FPE for example, the schools in the rural areas, where parents are employed somewhere in the textile firms, the children used to stay at home because it was cheaper schools and cheaper there. Now, those schools were big schools, but as soon as everything was free, even in town, they brought their children. Now the children influx la emadolobheni (in towns) went up. Then lena ienrolment (the enrolment) dwindled in the rural area.*

This assertion is confirmed by UNESCO et al (2015), which indicates that the average teacher pupil ratio is 1:31, but that, because of rural to urban migration, one now finds that there are 60 children in an urban class while in a rural class the numbers can be as low as 20. The report reveals that this is due to "resource biasness" because urban schools are better resourced, which means education has become inequitable.

### **5.7.2 Teacher training**

Another issue that is closely related to the quality of education, is that of capacitating teachers appropriately. When the FPE programme was introduced, most of the teachers stated that they were not equipped to handle the changes it would bring. The teachers from the different schools were asked for their thoughts in this regard.

Teacher, School B: *Teachers were not prepared for the implementation of FPE as stated, that is why it is not effectively implemented in the schools. I for one have never attended a workshop. I was wondering when I will get the chance to attend any workshop. At these workshops the teachers are introduced to methods of teaching.*

Teacher, School A: *No, there was no in-service training on FPE.*

Teacher, School C: *In other government ministries they train their staff. Teachers need to know their rights, as it is of now there are issues that can be addressed ... Teachers need to be revived and the training should be ongoing.*

The senior MoET officer confirmed that no training had been provided to teachers in preparation for the FPE programme.

Interviewer: *What steps were taken to prepare teachers for the implementation of FPE?*

Senior officer: *Nothing was done for teachers concerning FPE.*

When the officer was questioned further about whether teachers had been capacitated, she replied that the Inqaba manual used by head teachers for planning empowered them.

Senior officer: *Lemanual ya developa through the introduction ye Free Primary Education iyaba empowerisha. (The manual was developed when FPE was introduced; it empowers head teachers.)*

She added that the Ministry was also using other means and was being assisted by the development partners.

Senior officer: *Nyalo na EU bese asisita kutsi asitrainele ti-school committee. (Recently the EU [European Union] has been helping us train school committees on handling finances.*

She also made mention of a literacy boost initiative that is driven by World Vision.

Senior officer: *Siyezama ngetintfo letiningi. (We are trying in many ways as I mentioned earlier on.) Njengoba ngisho kutsi nema partners utfola kutsi ayachamuka njengabo World Vision nabo literacy boost bato boosta yona le quality in the schools, ngoba akufuneki le quality siyishiye ngemuva. (We are trying in many ways, and our development partners also assist us, for example World Vision is driving the literacy boost, which on its own is enhancing the quality of education, which is of the utmost importance.) Ngoba akufanele le quality siyishiye ngemuva. (Because we should not disregard the quality of education.)*

The head teacher at School C, however, said they attended workshops where they were trained in financial management.

Head teacher: *The Ministry of Education and Training provides week-long workshops yearly to train teachers about personnel and financial management, in relation to FPE.*

When the researcher further probed whether it was teachers or head teachers who were trained, the response remained the same.

Head teacher: *Yes, they do provide head teachers with in-service training.*

The head teacher at School B also confirmed that head teachers were trained on a regular basis.

Interviewer: *Does the MoET provide any form of in-service training for principals?*

Head teacher: *Yes, they do.*



Interviewer: *If so, how often are these trainings held, and in what areas is one trained?*

Head teacher: *I have been there once.*

However, when she was asked whether the school provided any form of professional development for teachers, she said that it didn't.

The Deputy Head teacher for School D confirmed that they were trained on a regular basis.

Deputy Head teacher: *We attend workshops for siSwati and English, and the Examination Council of Swaziland hosts workshops on the exams and to assist us help the children.*

## **5.8 Teaching and learning**

Classroom observation was undertaken in all the schools sampled for the study. Key aspects observed, included seating arrangement, availability of teaching and learning materials, facilities, classroom environment, language of instruction, teaching methods, and teacher learner interaction.

### **5.8.1 Classroom environment**

Classes at all the schools used twin desks, with the exception of the class at School C, which was equipped with only a few of these desks and chairs. The rest of the furniture was makeshift in nature. The classroom walls were dirty and needed painting. There was no ceiling or in built cardboards. The classroom overall was in a pitiful condition and uninviting as a learning environment.

At School D, on the other hand, each learner had his or her own desk, but it was so crowded that the teacher had little freedom of movement. The classroom was small, yet there were 51 learners. In order to fit them all in, the desks against the walls were facing the front, while those at the centre faced each other and the side walls. Most of the learners had textbooks, and those who didn't, had either left them at home or lost them.

At School A and B the classrooms were big: all the learners had desks and the teacher could move freely in the class. The classroom at School B was equipped with a notice board, even though nothing had been pinned on it. Almost all the learners at School A had textbooks and stationery. The textbooks were not used during the lesson, however. At first it was difficult to understand why the textbooks were not used, but later it became clear that it was because the lesson would consist of a debate.

### **5.8.2 Learner participation and behaviour**

At all the schools, the learners behaved well and responded when asked questions. At School A the lesson that was observed was an English one, and the language of instruction was also English. The learners fully participated, because various methods of learning were used. The lesson consisted of a debate about the topic "Should learners use cellphones?" The class was divided into ten groups of six children each, which had to discuss the topic in their groups. The ten groups were then further split into two groups, five being in favour of the debate topic and the other five against. Each of the groups discussed the topic and wrote down their points. Thereafter a representative was chosen from each group to take part in the debate – thus there were five participants in favour and five against. The rest of the class were judges and were expected to award the participants points. Participants were rated out of two for dress code and out of eight for how well and clearly they presented their arguments. All in all, the lesson was a success, and the

learners enjoyed it. The teacher was able to manage the class, despite there being 60 learners. This aligns with Hanusek's (2003) view that more than the size of the classroom it is the quality of the teacher that determines the effectiveness of a lesson.

The lesson observed at School B was an English one on tenses. The interaction between the teacher and learners consisted mostly of the learners responding to questions posed by the teacher by raising their hands. At times the teacher would partially state the required responses, and the learners would all complete the answer together. The language of instruction was English, but the teacher frequently switched to a southern siSwati dialect which is strongly influenced by Zulu. Since there is not much difference between Zulu and siSwati, the learners did not seem to have any difficulty understanding what the teacher was saying. The teaching methodology used was a question and answer method. The teacher wrote the questions on the board and the learners orally responded to the questions. At one point the teacher wrote a sentence containing blanks on the board and nominated a learner to fill in the blanks. He then asked the rest of the learners whether the blanks had been properly filled in, and they corrected the answers where needed. The learners were also given a textbook activity to complete, and the teacher went around checking their work. He was unable to check everyone's work, however, because the period had ended. He did not seem to be concerned about this. The learners seemed to understand the teacher's instructions, because they responded accordingly. However, in comparison to the approach that the teacher in school A used, the learners there were more engaged in the learning process than those in this school.

At School C the lesson which was observed, was an Agriculture one. It was based on what learners were expected to do as practicals. The teacher gave instructions using both siSwati and English. She also asked questions to ascertain whether the learners fully

understood what was expected of them, to which the learners mostly responded in siSwati. They too asked questions to clarify certain points. They responded freely to the teacher's questions. Both English and siSwati were used as languages of instruction. The learners received instructions from the teacher and posed questions to her, and the teacher also asked questions. They then proceeded to the field to do their practicals, which included watering their maize fields and feeding the chickens. The duration of the lesson was one hour.

At School D, a Mathematics lesson was observed, and the topic was telling time in seconds. The language of instruction was English. The teacher used a question and answer learning methodology, and the learners participated by solving problems written on the chalkboard. They wrote their responses to the problems on the chalkboard on a voluntary basis, and the rest of the class discussed the written responses. The learners were then given an activity to do in the class, and the teacher moved around checking what they were doing and whether they had the learning materials. She did not mark their work therefore the lesson was not evaluated. This means that neither the learners nor the teacher obtained feedback on whether the lesson had been understood or not.

### **5.8.3 Curriculum and language of instruction**

All four the sampled schools used the Swaziland National Primary School curriculum, meaning they all used the same curriculum. The free textbooks provided by government had been developed in accordance with the curriculum.

In all four sampled schools, the learners informed the researcher that their medium of instruction was English. The teachers' who were interviewed, also said it was English, but that they code-switched and used both siSwati and English because sometimes the learners

did not understand. This code-switching is supported by the MoET's EDSEC policy (Swaziland 2011b), in terms of which both siSwati and English are mediums of instruction from Grades 1 to 4. Teachers are informed to use the language of their choice, depending on learners' understanding. The policy further states that if most of the learners lack an English-medium preschool background, they should be taught in siSwati. The policy stipulates, however, that this should be done at the lower Grades up to Grade 4, whereas the teachers who were interviewed, were upper-primary teachers who taught Grade 6, yet they were using both languages. The irony is that teachers are expected to translate the instructional materials into siSwati because they are written in English. The policy (Swaziland 2011b:25) in this regard reads as follows:

This does not mean that teaching and learning materials that are in English shall be translated into siSwati; however, what it means is that teachers in the first four Grades of school have the liberty and freedom to use siSwati as a medium of instruction where learners have difficulties in understanding what is taught.

It is important to note that in Swaziland English enjoys preeminence. The MoET's EDSEC policy (Swaziland 2011b:25) states it as follows:

All children going through the school system in Swaziland are expected to learn siSwati. Therefore, siSwati will continue to be taught as a subject at all grade levels in the school system. SiSwati as a subject remains a core subject in all schools and at all grade levels.

It is worth noting that in the external examinations both at primary and secondary levels, English is considered to be a passing subject (UNESCO, UNICEF and MoET, 2015: Swaziland EFA Review Report 2000-2015), if a learner fails English, he or she fails the year, irrespective of how well they have done in other subjects. This places schools in an

awkward position because they have to make sure learners understand English well, which does not apply to siSwati. The perception is therefore that English is more important than siSwati, despite the MoET's EDSEC policy asserting that they are on a par.

Sampled schools described their practice in this regard. The School A teacher was also asked what language of instruction was used in their school.

*Teacher: It is supposed to be English, but we use both siSwati and English. Some teachers teach in siSwati because some learners do not go to pre-school. There are many challenges that are encountered because of language.*

The School A learners agreed with their teacher. The researcher did observe, however, that the School A learners had a very good command of English

When they were prompted on the language issue, one learner, Mandla, responded that both English and siSwati were used when they were learning siSwati. The learners all said they understand what they were being taught, but when anyone did not understand, their teacher would interpret into siSwati. The researcher asked what they did when they didn't understand. Nolwazi responded that they asked the teacher to interpret. The researcher asked whether they thought they should be learning in siSwati instead of in English. Muzi and Banele both said no at the same time. Banele repeated: "We should be learning in English only". Phetsile interrupted, however: "No, we should be using both. siSwati is difficult". Muzi emphasised again, "We need to learn English". The researcher then asked them why learners failed siSwati. Muzi explained, "They fail siSwati because some do not know how to write".

The parent interviewed at School A was uncertain as to what medium of instruction the school used. She did know, however, that they were encouraged to speak English.

Parent: *Angati kutsi babafundzisa ngaluphi lulwimi. Lengikwatiko kutsi bayabagcugcutela kutsi bakhulume Singisi esikolweni. Loko kubenta kutsi bakhone kusikhuluma kahle. (I don't know what language is used when they are being taught. What I do know, is that they are encouraged to speak English, which enables them to speak it fluently.)*

The teacher at School C said that both siSwati and English were used as mediums of instruction.

Teacher: *The medium of instruction are both siSwati and English. Most teachers teach in siSwati; English is not encouraged in the school. This is bad, because the learners lack English as a foundation. The learners cannot express themselves in English. I have taken my child to an English-medium school and ask myself about the children I teach and how they do not have an English background and hence do not understand when taught in English.*

However, School C learners, for example Primrose, said the medium of instruction at their school was English, and that teachers revert to siSwati only when the learners did not understand. The researcher prompted them further.

Interviewer: *What language do you think should be used when you are taught?*

Bheki: *We should be taught in English because it is important.*

Vusi: *Yes, sometimes when we are taught in English we do not understand.*

The School C parent said that in her view, learners should be taught both in English and siSwati, because they were equally important.

Parent: *Totimbili letilwimi siSwati neSingisi, ngoba timuncoka. (Both languages, siSwati and English, because they are both important.)*

The School D teacher said the medium of instruction at the school was English, and when further questioned on whether siSwati should be used as language of instruction, she was completely against the idea.

Interviewer: *What language do you use when you teach your learners?*

Teacher: *English*

Interviewer: *Do the learners understand the concepts they are being taught using this language?*

Teacher: *Some do, some don't, some do not understand because some are pushed without being able, and some have to use siSwati.*

Interviewer: *Do you think they should be taught in siSwati?*

Teacher: *That would kill our kids. These kids love their language. They like speaking siSwati. It would kill them if they would not be taught in English. English is there to help them, and without English they will not be able to communicate with the outside world.*

The parents and learners at School D confirmed that the language of instruction used in the school was English; however, the learners did say that when they did not understand, the teachers explained in siSwati.

Interviewer: *Do you know what language is used when your child is taught?*



Parent: *Yes, English.*

The researcher posed a similar question to the learners at School D.

Interviewer: *When you are taught, what language is used by the teachers?*

Ayanda: *They mostly teach in English, and when we do not understand, we are taught in siSwati. During the siSwati lesson, we are taught in siSwati.*

At School B, the teacher said they used English as a medium of instruction, and used siSwati only when learners did not understand.

Interviewer: *What language do you use when you teach your learners?*

Teacher: *We mainly use English as a medium of instruction.*

Interviewer: *Do the learners understand the concepts they are being taught using this language?*

Teacher: *Some do, some don't, some do not understand because some are pushed without being able and some have to use siSwati.*

Inasmuch as English is considered more important than siSwati, the mother tongue, it was inferred from the interviews that some learners do have trouble grasping some of the concepts that are taught in English. This could have an adverse effect on learners' performance. At School C, the teacher noted that learners were taught in siSwati. He did not approve of this, and mentioned that it was for this reason that his children attended private schools. The overall sense obtained by I was that siSwati is considered less important than English.

## **5.9 Chapter summary**

An analysis of the data presented in this chapter points to the benefits of FPE as expressed by the participants of this study. The analysis also indicates, however, that access to education is being barred by the levying of top-up fees and by other barriers such as indirect costs. This chapter showed how school funds are managed and that some funds are being embezzled by certain head teachers, for example the head teacher initially attached to one of the sampled schools. Head teachers' perception of the FPE grants as being insufficient was highlighted. The monitoring of schools with regard to top-up fees, which were suspended but are still charged in some schools, was investigated. Stakeholders' understanding of the top-up policies was also discussed. The extent to which stakeholders had been consulted in policy formulation and the effects of the FPE programme came under the spotlight.

This chapter also illustrated how the FPE programme is being administrated and school infrastructure provided. The study clearly showed how sustainable the FPE programme in Swaziland is. This chapter also unravelled the management of textbooks as well as corrupt practices associated with textbooks. The quality of education and of teachers, were raised and questions probed about them. Based not only on observations but also on additional methods of data collection, the issue of language of instruction as well as other issues were examined in the light of their importance to the interplay between policy and practice regarding FPE in Swaziland. In summary, this chapter formed the nucleus of the findings of this study, which will be presented and discussed in depth in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **Findings, Summary and Conclusion**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the findings of the study. The conclusion and the recommendations are then extrapolated from the findings, and the direction for future research is highlighted. These aspects are based on the premise that the study sought to investigate the implementation and sustainability of FPE in Swaziland in terms of the interplay between policy and practice.

As has already been elucidated in Chapter 5, the results of this study were derived from an analysis of the data that were collected at four schools in the Manzini region of Swaziland. Head teachers, teachers, Grade 6 learners and a parent at each school were interviewed. The learners were interviewed together in a focus group, while the others were interviewed individually. Two officials from the MoET were also interviewed. One of these officials was a regional inspector of primary schools at the Manzini Regional Education Offices and the other was a senior MoET official stationed at the MoET headquarters in Mbabane. Further, policy documents were also used as data sources.

Seven themes and subthemes were derived from the gathered data. They form the key findings of the study and hence the basis for the discussion that follows.

#### **6.2 Research questions restated**

##### **Main research question**

How is free primary education (FPE) in Swaziland being implemented in relation to policy and practice, and is it sustainable?

### **Sub-research questions**

- What are stakeholders' understanding of FPE?
- How is FPE being implemented in Swaziland schools?
- What gaps are there between policy and practice, if any, and how can they be overcome?
- How sustainable is the FPE programme in Swaziland?

### **6.3 Discussion of findings**

Since there is an overlap among the themes and subthemes on which the findings of this study were based, the discussion on the findings is laid out in such a way that it allows the themes and subthemes to be presented logically rather than itemising them. This was necessary for ease of understanding and also helped in summarising the findings. In addition, it helped in identifying whether or not the findings were linked to the reviewed literature and the theoretical framework.

#### **6.3.1 The understanding of FPE**

The findings suggest that most of the participants understood the purpose of the FPE programme as providing access to education for every child in Swaziland, irrespective of their socio-economic background. The participants also had an understanding that education is a human right. However, this view was not necessarily based on an awareness of human rights and their relationship to education, but rather on an understanding and appreciation of the fact that education is a vehicle for a better life and better life opportunities. This line of thinking actually aligns with the notion associated with modernisation theory, in terms of which Harber et al. (2014) posit that education pioneers wealth, economic growth and development. In the view of the participants, this is the core imperative behind the introduction of FPE. The FPE is backed by the Education for All

(EFA) global agenda, which emphasises education as a human right and as key to improving learners' lives. This view of the participants is in line with Swaziland's philosophy on education; Swaziland acknowledges and embraces the fact that education is a human right and that every child has a right to education as stipulated in the Constitution (2005), the MoET's EDSEC policy (Swaziland 2011b) and the FPE Act of 2010.

The modernisation theory, as illuminated in the theoretical framework chapter of this study (thesis), is one of the fundamental theories of the country's (Swaziland) development vision. The vision, namely, that by 2022 Swaziland must have attained First World status, is articulated in the National Development Strategy (NDS) of 1999, as cited in the literature and further emphasised in policy statements from the throne. When the mission is scrutinised within the Swazi context, it underlines the contents of the NDS, which states that "By the Year 2022, the Kingdom of Swaziland will be in the top 10% of the medium human development group of countries founded on sustainable economic development, social justice and political stability" (Swaziland 1999:4). The strategy further supports the meaning of the vision as follows: "What this vision states is that 25 years from the year 1997, Swaziland will have considerably improved its world standing in terms of measurable indices of human development" (Swaziland 1999:4). It also acknowledges that this can be achieved through education, health and human resource development. The strategy emphasises the need to ensure that human capital development is fully enhanced. Interestingly, the participants and most of the learners were of the view that FPE is important because it enables all learners to have access to school, so that they may be better people in the future. This view of the learners aligns well with what is articulated in the Swaziland (1999) document. Beyond this, the participants' views are also aligned with modernisation theory, which holds that modernisation is linked to modern values.

Fagerlind and Saha (1989) maintain that the modernisation theory is linked to five sets of variables which consist of modernising institutions, modern values, modern behaviour, modern society, and economic development – these form the basic assumption of this theory. Hence, the vision to attain First World status, as articulated in the NDS, fits this assumption. The country has realised that this vision can only be achieved through education. While Harber and Oryema (2014) postulate that modernisation transforms complex differentiated and agrarian societies into modern and industrialised ones, Marks (2009) notes that such a transformation decreases the social divide associated with ascribed socio-economic status and backgrounds. Therefore, Swaziland's Vision 2022, as articulated in the Swaziland (1999), is a vision which aligns well with the tenets of modernisation theory, particularly that aspect which attributes modernisation to human development through education (McClelland 1969; Inkeles & Smith 1974; Fagerlind & Saha 1989). This thus implies that failure to effectively and efficiently implement and sustain the FPE programme will have far-reaching consequences for the country's development agenda. This is because FPE plays a pivotal role in providing access to education for everyone and thus contributes to fulfilling the country's human development agenda as espoused in the Swaziland (1999).

In as much as the participants understood and appreciated that the FPE programme is supposed to enable learners to access education, there are those who had their reservations in this regard. For instance, the regional inspector for primary schools, when asked about this, responded sarcastically with "access to what?" She further responded to her own question by saying "yes, access to class", implying that although the learners are in class she doubted whether they were in fact accessing education. It would seem that these reservations did not relate to concern for the learners, but rather arose from more selfish reasons, such as the fact that the funds being used to pay the FPE grants could threaten the

future availability of funds to pay government servants'/workers' salaries. This sentiment is confirmed in the literature, in a study conducted by the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD 2012), which revealed that various stakeholder voices had expressed the same view in this regard. The report reveals that some of these voices are to be found within the MoET itself, as well as issuing from other government quarters. The argument that they raise here is that the amounts paid by government for the FPE programme are so high that they believe that this has contributed significantly to the present financial woes that the GoS is facing.

The Regional Inspector portrayed lack of understanding of the whole essence of FPE, let alone that education is a human right and hence the need for all children to have an opportunity to education. In addition to this it is worth noting that the MoET is very young with regards to policy formulation and implementation. In the literature this is spelt out and explained that according to the MoET EDSEC Policy (2011b, see section 2.2.2.) prior to this policy no education policy existed. Instead there was the Education Policy Statement of 1999, National Development Plans which were basically more nationally oriented and not sectorally specific. This is in the sense that the sector was more a recipient of the plans than the pioneer.

According to the CEPD study, the FPE programme is unsustainable and that once it has been rolled out throughout the primary phase the financial burden on government will have taken its toll. It is worth noting that at the time that the CEPD conducted the study, the government had frozen salary increases for government workers for a period of three fiscal years, beginning in April 2010, the year FPE was introduced. The freezing of salary increases was intended to ease the financial pressures the country was faced with, as articulated in the Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland (GoS) 2010/2011–2014/2015

Fiscal Adjustment Road Map (FAR). In agreement with CEPD's findings, the views of the participants in this study, especially the head teachers, reflected a lack of ownership of the FPE programme. The fact that they do not believe in the programme may have a negative effect on their commitment to it and the manner in which they carry out their duties.

On the other hand, there were mixed feelings about the funds being used to pay for primary grants. Some of the participants felt that instead the government should be using these funds to pay for tertiary education, which they viewed as more expensive. This view was expressed by both a teacher at School C and the regional inspector for primary schools. It would seem that the benefits emanating from paying for many primary school learners as opposed to one tertiary student were not well understood by these participants. This allegation is well explained in the UNESCO et al (2015) Swaziland EFA Review Country report, which states that in the past ten years the education budget allocation has been biased towards tertiary education. The report underlines that less than 1% of the population was enrolled at university level, yet they accounted for 35% of the education resources. This is despite the fact that 77% of the school-going population is enrolled at the primary level, yet only 38% of the budget was allocated to primary education. The UNESCO et al (2015) report specifies that learners who drop out of school do not in any way benefit from the highly subsidised tertiary education budget.

There seems to be a difference between government priorities and those of the participants that decried the change in focus from tertiary education and the commitment of government funds to paying for primary education. The participants who were of this view were the senior MoET officer, the regional inspector for primary schools and the teacher in School C. Clearly, they lacked an understanding that many children had been excluded from accessing school prior to the introduction of FPE. This claim is indicated in the



MoET's National Education and Training Improvement Programme (NETIP) document (Swaziland 2014), which reveals that in 2008, the net enrolment ratio (NER) was 84%, but rose to 92% in 2010 when FPE was introduced. The MoET's AEC report (Swaziland 2013a) confirms that the NER has increased ever since FPE was introduced although it has decreased – in 2012 the NER was 95,6% but in 2013 it declined to 92,6%. Furthermore, the report reveals that 300 pupils dropped out of primary schooling in this period. This dropout is attributed to the top-up fees. This suggests that fees are a barrier to access to education and hence the need for FPE. The dropping out of learners' due to top-up fees is a common phenomenon of FPE as previous section illuminated (see 5.2.13).

The head teacher for School A expressed his reservations about FPE opening doors for learners to access education and said it only benefitted the parents because they no longer paid school fees. In the researcher's view, he overlooked the benefits of the programme for the learner. This attitude and his clouded judgement can probably be said to be related to the frustration expressed by the other head teachers who participated in the study. They complained that the grant paid by government per child is small and needed to be increased. However, they did show an understanding of the fact that FPE was meant to enable all children to have access to education.

The lack of appreciation of FPE as demonstrated by the head teacher for School A is a common feature in most developing countries as the literature reveals (see Kitamura [2009] in section 2.2.3 and Paudel [2009] in section 3.2.1 of this thesis). This is because in developing countries public sector capacity is not well developed (Kitamura 2009). This notion concurs with that of Paudel (2009), who stipulates that some of the theoretical perspectives that underpin implementation theories as applicable to FPE are Western, where the education context differs from that in developing countries. Paudel explains that

the context differs in terms of the economic and political landscape, stakeholder participation and the uniqueness of each developing country, coupled with poverty, limited policy-making capacity and programme implementation. As has been mentioned previously, the EFA agenda is a global agenda which places expectations that are Western oriented. In view of the characteristics of developing countries, in particular limited policy making and programme implementation, such expectations make demands that are difficult to meet. This is reflected in this study's findings with regard to implementation, which highlighted stakeholders' lack of knowledge of the policies that underpin the programme they are expected to implement.

The difference between developing and developed countries can be further understood through the writings of Ogola (2010), who posits that a society's social needs and culture shape the way education policy and goals are perceived by that particular society. Having said this, it is important to note that FPE is a relatively new phenomenon in Swaziland. It is also important to appreciate that the prevailing practice since independence has been the provision of government scholarships for tertiary education. Accordingly, concern in this regard was highlighted by some of the participants (the senior MoET officer, regional inspector for primary schools and the teacher for School C) who were not happy with the introduction of FPE because it was transforming the culture that they were accustomed to.

The above concern voiced by participants was exacerbated by the fact that when the transition was made the policy players used a top-down approach to introduce FPE, forgetting that there was an already existing culture that needed to be considered and possibly addressed. On the same note, the top-down approach with regard to decision making and policy formulation is a typical example of an existing culture and, consequently, the lack of ownership or buy in and the dissatisfaction expressed by those at

the bottom who are supposed to be at the forefront of the implementation process. It is in light of this practice that this is the case. As highlighted in the literature based on Ogalo's explanation with regard to the role played by culture, there is a need for a change in mind set and in the way things are done in order for change per se to be embraced. Bell and Stevenson (2006) add another dimension to this, pointing out that situations are contextually and power relation driven. They note that there is a relationship between leadership, policy and power, such that "a failure to fully understand the complex ways in which policy shapes and is shaped by leadership, fails adequately to explain the actions and practices of leaders at both the organizational and operational levels" Bell and Stevenson (2006:9).

It is worth mentioning that the top-down approach to policy formulation results from these power relations, hence the non-engagement of policy implementation stakeholders at the policy formulation stage. However, the argument of policy makers in this regard could be that the situation and the pressure placed by the litigation of FPE made this difficult. In the background information and literature perused for this study, it is pointed out that the response to the litigation did not make room for stakeholders' engagement to even be considered. As a remedy, borrowing from Curtains' (2000) writings, emphasis should be placed on the importance of consulting the end users in the policy formulation stage and of seeking wider stakeholder inputs at that stage. Had this been the case in this study the impasse that exists with regard to the top-up fees which are a barrier to access would not have occurred. Curtains also mentions that engaging stakeholders in the policy formulation process decreases implementation barriers.

### **6.3.2. Understanding of the FPE policies**

In as much as most of the participants understood that the essence of the FPE programme is about access to education for all children, none of the teachers indicated that they had knowledge about the FPE policies and international conventions related to EFA. Most of them revealed that they had first heard about FPE from the media and were later informed by their head teachers that FPE would be introduced. One of the teachers interviewed (School C) mentioned that it was introduced because worker unions took government to court. Some of the head teachers interviewed indicated that they knew a bit about the EFA goals but none made mention of the FPE Act of 2010, which is the legislative instrument for the programme. The head teachers who had no understanding of the policies at all were those who were teachers when the programme was introduced in 2010 and they were only promoted afterwards. This means that even when the teachers were informed about the introduction of FPE, they were not made aware of the policies relating to the programme. Policy implementation according to Subroto (2012) is not a linear progressive process and the complexity of its making results in some steps being skipped, compressed, in pre-set disposition, policy paradigms or mental mapping of the actors which disrupt the smooth progression of implementation. This is one of the reasons why policy makers end up overlooking the role of stakeholders, resulting in detrimental policy implementing challenges (Subroto 2012).

Subroto's (2012) view above (2012) gives light to the reason behind the lack of understanding of the FPE policies by stakeholders. It also explains the causes of the negative effects on the implementation of the programme. This is because questionably so, how can the implementers of the policy implement something that they are not familiar with or do not understand. This is a typical example of the negative effects of a top-down approach to policy implementation which exhibits a linear relationship between policy

goals and implementation, as espoused by Fischer et al (2007). Fischer et al are of the view that this requires proper bureaucratic procedures which need to be put in place in order for the implementation process to be well executed. However, Fischer et al's (2007) view can be criticised because of the red tape associated with bureaucratic procedures and how they waste time and result in delays. This is evident in the case of the FPE programme and it was further exacerbated by the fact that the bureaucratic procedures that exist are not put in place effectively. Knowledge of the FPE Act and the FPE implementation guidelines should be at the stakeholders' fingertips. In this regard, Sarfo and Baah-Mintah (2013) point out that, bureaucratic processes result in low productivity, inefficiency and loss of money and become detrimental to the government budget. The same applies to the international historical background relating to the introduction of FPE – lack of knowledge does not assist stakeholders to appreciate the essence of FPE and, hence, expecting them to work towards achieving the FPE goals is expecting rather too much.

All that has been discussed with regard to policy understanding and implementation so far does not seem to fit the definition expounded by Babooa (2008) in the literature (section 2.2) on public policy, which FPE is. Sarfo and Baah-Mintah (2013) stipulate that for policy implementation to be successful, adequate resources need to be made available, clearly spelt out systems of responsibility and hierarchical supervisory methods of control need to be put in place. Based on the findings of this study in relation to participants' understanding of policy, the researcher underline that all the suggested requirements for successful implementation, as highlighted by Sarfo and Baah-Mintah (2013), are found wanting in as far as the FPE programme in Swaziland is concerned. It became evident in this study that schools lack resources in terms of school furniture and toilets in some schools, and abuse or mismanagement of school maintenance funds would seem to be the

order of the day. Furthermore, the FPE programme is not properly supervised or monitored by the MoET. This finding corroborates Mazmanian and Sabatier's (1989) assertions that challenges related to financial resources management and hierarchical integration are among the key issues affecting the implementation of policies across institutions or organisations.

While the participants in this study did not specifically mention integration complexities as an FPE challenge nor did they link them to the FPE Act, the researcher recalls that the statute that informs FPE is the FPE Act and it does have a provision that allocates the use of the financial resources paid by government in the form of the FPE grants. It is important to reiterate Subroto's notion and consider that policy implementation is complex (Subroto 2012). It is in light of this that Peter and Swelling (2014) unpack the complexity theory by pointing out that it constitutes a complex system. The complex system has multi-agent systems, which are embedded in multi systems, sub-systems and components of sub-systems. Peter and Swilling indicate that this goes beyond the actors in the system, which in this case would be the participants in this study and the rest of the actors involved in implementing FPE in Swaziland. This line of thinking is based on the integration of complexities, which has been highlighted above and how the participants in this study did not link any of their responses to the FPE Act. This infers that the participants' association of FPE to the Act was wanting and the reason for that is the poor coordination and synergy within the system.

To this end, it can be said that the major challenge with the FPE Act of 2010 is the financial resource structure, which is not well considered in the light of persistent inflation. This should have been considered; therefore the researcher opines that this will remain a challenge in the implementation of FPE policies if the Act is not amended. In the

researcher's view of, this will continue to be a problem in years to come because amending an Act can be a long process and, as such, this aspect of the statute was not well thought through.

The FPE Act of 2010 and the Constitution of 2005 do provide for the hierarchical integration of FPE supported by the implementation guidelines, but the challenge lies in its execution. There is no proper synergy in the education system that to ensure that the hierarchical integration is well executed. This then further extends to the issue of the decision-making mechanism being affected. A case in point is the ignoring of the decision on school development projects, which is supposed to be made by the MoET before schools can embark on such projects. Since there is a lack of coherence and synergy, schools override the statutory requirements and do as they please. This results in the implementation of programmes that are unable to properly structure the implementation process.

The challenges surrounding the understanding of the FPE policies and their implementation are exacerbated by the attitudes of stakeholders, as reflected by some participants in this study. Furthermore the findings in this study reveal that there is a lack of a proper monitoring mechanism, as well as commitment and leadership skills in implementing officials. In addition to the elongated policy cycle link these are what Matland (1995); Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989) in the theoretical framework (section 3.2.1) refer to as non-statutory variables affecting implementation. Of the sixteen variables listed and categorised by the afore-mentioned theorists, three specifically apply to this study: tracing the problem, statutory variables and non-statutory variables. Non-statutory variables include the attitudes and resources of constituency groups. The attitudes of the Head teachers in this study to the programme, emanating from the sense that the grants

paid by government are inadequate, partly resulted in them having a lack of commitment to the FPE programme.

The FPE policy is a public policy as the reviewed literature depicts. Babooa (2008) defines public policy as a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors. In the case of this study the actor and set of actors are those whom the FPE policy requires to take action. Considering that the programme is meant to be implemented in the school setting it becomes imperative for the actors in that setting to understand the course of action and to act on it. The studies of Bastedo (2004) and Cheruto and Benjamin (2010) indicate that the interaction between the external environment and the school is something that cannot be neglected if FPE policy is to be reasonably understood in the context of implementation, because schools form part of the social system and are influenced by the environment within which they operate (Potokri 2016).

The lack of knowledge and understanding of FPE policies demonstrated by participants, who are key stakeholders, especially those who are supposed to implement the policies, is worrying. This is because it thwarts the successful implementation of transformational programmes such as FPE. It also renders the school unable to adapt to the demands of the external environment. A typical case in point is evident in School C because most of the things that the school was battling with are well articulated in the FPE implementation guidelines of 2009 and the Inqaba SDPs. The challenges that the head teacher said she was faced with gave the impression that she did not have a clue about the guidelines or the SDP initiative. This can be attributed to the lack of consultation of stakeholders as pointed out by the Head teachers in the findings, that they were not consulted (see section 5.3.4). The elongated policy cycle also advocates for stakeholder consultation. Mokato (2014) in the literature emphasise on the importance of stakeholder consultation and actually



specifies that stakeholders need to be engaged from the policy planning stage. Mokate (2014) also notes that this is very important if implementation is to be successful. Had this been the case, the challenges that the Head teacher in School C was battling with would not have happened at all.

Some of the head teachers' responses seem to be genuine and as such out rightly expressed that they do not approve of the FPE programme as shown in section 6.1. In relation to that head teachers feel the grant paid by government is inadequate. It is therefore very likely that because of this, they choose to behave as if they were ignorant of the policies. At School C, the head teacher related a case in point. She told how they had agreed with the parents to embark on a toilet building project and the parents were supposed to pay a certain fee towards this project; meanwhile the FPE Act of 2010 stipulates that when schools embark on such projects they need to agree with parents and then seek approval from the Minister of Education and Training through their respective REOs, but this was not done. According to the FPE Act a committee of a public primary school intending to ask parents to top up school fees over and above the fees paid to the school by the government shall submit a written request, with justifications, to the Minister for his approval before implementing such top ups. Interestingly, the parents in School C ended up not paying the agreed amount and the project subsequently failed. It is important to note that there was no need for the school to go to such lengths. This is because the project they wanted to embark on forms part of the seven Inqaba programme pillars, which schools are expected to comply with when budgeting for their SDP. This then poses the question as to whether School C followed the FPE SDP. The findings indicate that the SDP plan entails complying with the seven pillars in the Inqaba manual: health care, food security, psychosocial support, safety and protection, quality teaching and learning, HIV

and AIDs, gender, and life skills, water, sanitation and hygiene. In this case, School C's toilet project fell under the last pillar on the list.

The non-compliance of head teachers in this study with the Inqaba framework can probably be linked to what is revealed in the UNESCO et al's (2015) Swaziland EFA Country Report 2000–2015, which acknowledges that the Inqaba programme is not being monitored in the way it should be. As such it can be assumed that schools are not being assisted in the manner that they should. This means if the Inqaba programme were properly monitored schools would be aware of the alternatives that exist and would use them to fulfil their plans. In fact it can be concluded that the lack of knowledge of the FPE policies by the participants and schools is detrimental to their ability to function efficiently and effectively.

### **6.3.3 Consultation and policy formulation**

The fact that head teachers were not consulted when the FPE policies were formulated could be another reason why they do not support the programme. The participants all said they were not consulted and complained bitterly about this. The lack of a clear understanding of the FPE policies and the fact that the head teachers do not fully buy into the programme is an indication of the consequences of not engaging them from the outset, even though they are the ones who are supposed to implement the policy. This finding concurs with Jele's (2015) report, which indicates that head teachers are dissatisfied with the manner in which the FPE programme was imposed on them. Meanwhile, drawing from and reiterating the literature, Curtains (2000) in his journal article titled 'Good policy making: how Australia fares', posits that good policy making requires consulting the end users of any formulated policy. Curtains's emphasises the way the separation of policy making and delivery creates barriers for those who implement the policies. To this end he

notes that good policy making requires end users to be given ample opportunity to participate in policy formulation. This was not the case in Swaziland following the confusion that resulted from the interplay between FPE policy formulation and implementation. According to participants (the senior MoET officer and the regional inspector for primary schools) in this study, the confusion was not at the school level only but even within the Ministry itself (see section 5.2), where circulars relating to FPE were released, yet the government unit responsible for coordinating all FPE activities did not know about them, bearing in mind that the circulars themselves are policy documents.

#### **6.3.4 The implementation of FPE**

The implementation of FPE in Swaziland has been faced with various challenges. These challenges have to a large extent frustrated the accomplishment of the key goal of introducing the programme from the outset. The main objective of introducing FPE was to enable every child to have access to education, irrespective of the socio-economic background they come from, as articulated by policy documents relating to the programme as they have been spelt out and previously elaborated. However, due to several factors surrounding the implementation of FPE this has not been the case. Kinyanjuli et al. (2008) consider school fees and other FPE implementation problems to be an unfortunate situation because it deprives learners from enjoying the benefits associated with being educated.

#### **6.3.5 Stakeholders engagement in the FPE programme**

One of the factors surrounding the challenges associated with the implementation of FPE is the lack of buy in by head teachers and teachers. This can be attributed to the fact that they were not engaged when the FPE Act and implementation guidelines were formulated. This was underlined by the head teachers who participated in the study. They were indeed

right to say that the policies were imposed on them. The imposition of the policy on stakeholders (the participants) suggests that the implementation of FPE policy in Swaziland was not only poor but also lacked vigour. This is because the participation of the implementers at the policy implementation stage was not according to the expectations at the micro level, as was the case at macro level, as advocated by Fischer et al (2007) (see section 2.2.1). With this in mind, the researcher opines that the interaction between the macro and micro levels in terms of the goal and agenda setting of the FPE policy is equally poor. The non-engagement of head teachers in the FPE policy, as one of the findings in this study, has an adverse effect on the running of schools. The lack of a proper platform where all stakeholders can come together, to share ideas, on how best to address the programme and the challenges further exacerbates the engagement difficulties. The senior MoET officer who is in charge of the FPE activities and also acts as overseer at the primary school level confirmed that such a platform had not been put in place to address issues that might arise as the programme was being implemented.

In this study, inadequate funds emerged as one of the findings. This is one of the factors that have seriously affected the implementation of the FPE programme in Swaziland. This finding resonates with the literature. Head teachers insisted that the amount paid by government is insufficient for running the schools; this agrees with the findings of the CEPD (2012) and Simelane (2012). Schools (as articulated by the participants) are of the view that the amount paid has in real terms declined from the amount that was paid by the parents prior to the introduction of FPE. It is in light of this that head teachers are of the view that when the decision on the amount to be paid by government was made they were not consulted and hence the financial challenges that the school claim they are faced with.

In the researcher's opinion the legitimacy of the head teachers' claim is questionable because some of the allegations they made are exaggerated and void of truth. For instance, in the literature a head teacher who was interviewed by a reporter from one of the daily newspapers said the top-up fee is required because the grant paid by government is not sufficient to pay for all the expenses that are incurred by the school; they listed support staff salaries, the school feeding scheme and stationery (see Sukati 2014, in section 5.3.3).

This was also indicated in the findings, yet the FPE Act of 2010 breaks down the E560 grant per child and allocates E150 to the school feeding scheme. In addition, the government also provides food to schools through the school feeding scheme project. Government also provides stationery to learners and has allocated E80 for school fees, which is supposed to be used for miscellaneous expenditure and school stationery as classified under this category. The Act also has a break down for a night watchman, cook and school secretary of E150 per child which is taken from the E560. (These are the support staff members that the head teacher above was referring to.) It is important though to note that the size of the school matters, as mentioned by one head teacher in this study. The schools with low enrolment rates do not enjoy the economies of scale that the schools with large enrolment rates do. Another challenge is that the E560 has remained fixed ever since the FPE programme was introduced.

The narratives of some participants in this study illuminate that the FPE Act did not make provision for inflation, thereby compounding the problem of inadequate funds. Despite the grant being a challenge to FPE in Swaziland, the E560 paid by government, when the programme was introduced in 2010, is higher than that paid by Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi and Uganda, but lower than the Republic of South Africa pays, as the reviewed literature reveals (see CEPD 2012). However, Kattan and Burnett (2004) are of the view

that fees cannot just be eradicated because they have an effect on the quality of education. The authors postulate that there is a need for appropriate measures to be put in place to ensure that the revenue that would have been received from school fees is substituted so that there is no decrease in the funds received when school fees were being paid for by parents.

In as much as the FPE grant is the major source of funding for the FPE programme, which is perceived to be small, the top-up fees being charged by some schools are ridiculous. This has resulted in the authenticity of the motive behind the top-up being questionable. In the light of this, some head teachers have had to account to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) for mismanaging school funds. In other words, the FPE programme is riddled with corruption which has also contributed to the inadequate funds further dwindling.

In addition, the PAC has identified some anomalies in the way the MoET handles issues of head teachers who mismanage school funds. This has resulted in the PAC requesting an audience with the Teaching Service Commission, the body responsible for hiring, disciplining and firing teachers, to get to the bottom of this anomaly. The PAC is of the view that the disciplinary action meted out to head teachers has some loopholes and is not impartial. The PAC cites a case where a head teacher was suspended without pay for stealing food from the school feeding scheme. (Coincidentally this head teacher is head teacher 1 in School A in this study). The head teacher was expected to retire soon and the amount that equates to the value of the food that he stole was to be deducted from his retirement gratuity. The value of the amount stolen was estimated to be around E28 000 as indicated in the findings. On the other hand a head teacher who had embezzled close to E500 000 was merely transferred. This scenario serves to show that there are serious

management and administrative challenges within the MoET itself. Furthermore, this highlights serious cases of poor corporate governance at the MoET. This being the case, it means some head teachers are so accustomed to mismanaging school funds that the introduction of FPE has proven to be a stumbling block to them and that is why FPE is unpopular with many head teachers.

The corruption syndrome among the FPE stakeholders, as this study reveals, is not unique to Swaziland but extends to or prevails in various countries where FPE has been introduced. For instance, a study by Etuk, Ering and Ajake (2012) points out how funds meant for the Universal Basic Education (UBE, same as FPE) programme in Nigeria were embezzled and this thwarted the whole implementation process. The issue of corrupt practices being a common feature of education systems in developing countries is not only an African challenge. It is also common practice in other developing countries outside Africa, such as Pakistan. As Ahmad, Rauf, Rashid, Rehman and Salam (2013) report, primary education in Pakistan is in a bad state because it is engulfed with political interference, nepotism, corruption and neglect. When the purpose of the programme, namely access, is defeated, it deprives the learners, especially those from poor socio-economic backgrounds, from experiencing upward mobility.

On the other hand, it is worth noting that the issue of top-up fees is not unique to Swaziland, but as disclosed in the literature, Kenya faced the same challenges. The issue of top-up fees emanates from the claim by head teachers that the amount paid by government for the FPE grants is too small. In other countries such as Kenya the same claim was voiced out as such head teachers ended up charging parents an extra levy (Akech & Simatwa 2010). The levy charged in Kenya had similar effects to those experienced in Swaziland. This because learners who could not afford to pay the levy

dropped out of school. It worth noting that even in Kenya the consequences of charging levy fees, thwarted the whole purpose of FPE. The learners who were initially marginalised because of lack of funds ended up not benefitting from the FPE programme, when in fact it was meant to enable to have access to education. This was a violation of their constitutional right to education. Gleaning on the situation of charging learners top up fees in Swaziland the same sentiment holds. The Swazi children who have had to drop out because of top fees have been violated of the right to education. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland clearly stipulates that every Swazi child has a right to free education in public schools. This argument was advanced in detail in the literature in section 2.6.2 wherein Rogers (2010) elaborates on the case analysis of the court case against the GoS with regard to the introduction of FPE at the time, which did not align with the timeframe articulated in the Constitution.

Rogers gives some interesting insights on constitutional dissonance in Swaziland and reveals the gap which exists between the Constitution and legal norms and actual practice on the ground. Rogers' (2010) description typically denotes what is actually going on and hence the disregard of the constitution with regards to the provision of FPE in schools. The children's right to education are seriously being violated with impunity. This is despite the fact that the Constitution affords the children this right and so does the FPE Act. This further implies that the FPE legal frameworks are not given the serious legal consideration that they deserve. This state of affairs is unfortunate because it is these legal frameworks that legally underpin FPE. In one instance only, the PS at the MoET pointed out that head teachers wanted the MoET to assist them in breaking the law, an incident that has been discussed at length in previous writings (e.g section 2.6.2.). The culture of constitutional dissonance that Rogers refers to, further exposes the legislators stand point, this is because they are expected to be the ones who ensure the FPE Act and the



Constitution are protected and adhered to. However, for political mileage by appeasing head teachers they query why the top-up fees were suspended. This constitutional dissonance has been so serious such that the King stepped in to ensure that the top-up issue was addressed. Hence the release of Circulars no. 36 and 39, whose contents are well articulated in the findings, (see section 5.2.1.3). It is also important to note that despite the fact that charging top-up fees is illegal, no legal action has actually been taken against those schools that illegally charge such fees; instead parents have had to either toe the line or alternatively their children who are disadvantaged have had to drop out of school.

Notably, even civil society has not made attempts to take action and neither have the Human Rights Commission and Public Administration. The Human Rights Commission and Public Administration are supposed to investigate complaints that hinge on the violation of fundamental human rights and freedoms, which FPE is. However, that has not been the case despite the fact that the commission knows its mandate as indicated in the literature (see section 2.6). One of the challenges that the commission articulates is that it does not have the financial means to carry out its duty. It is worth noting that the under legitimating of education as a right in Africa is common, as espoused by Talbot and Sacco (2013). This is despite the fact that most of African countries are members of the UN and also signatories to the Declaration on Human Rights of 1948, which contains a clause on education as a fundamental human right (Mokate 2014; Krishnaratne et al 2013; Irfan 2008). In fact, Irfan advances this issue by postulating that if the human rights discourse is just a policy formulation statement and is not implemented then it is mere rhetoric. This status quo is actually a developing country phenomenon because even outside Africa, in countries such as Pakistan and Nepal, getting children to attend school can be a mammoth task. This is because parents would rather keep them at home to do chores or to work in

low income jobs and engage in early marriages, as highlighted in the literature (section 2.7.2).

The top-up saga unfolded in many ways to the extent of exposing the MoET decision-making shortfalls, as revealed in the findings, where Circular 14, which contradicts the FPE Act 2010, was released by the Ministry. The irony of this circular is that it has given head teachers a reason to charge the top-up fee. When the Ministry realised its mistake, it released Circular 17 to counteract the previous one. However, the damage had been done. Reversing the first circular became a cumbersome task because head teachers stood by the first circular, since it favoured what they wanted, which was to charge and receive top-up fees. The findings reveal that this resulted in some children dropping out of school because they could not afford to pay, thus defeating the whole intention of FPE. The findings also indicate how in the midst of all of this within the Ministry itself there was confusion because even the FPE unit itself was unaware or had not been informed about these circulars. The findings also indicate that the effects of Circular 14 have been so bad that the head of state, King Mswati III, had to make a pronouncement about a lasting solution being reached with regard to this issue. The findings reveal that it is in light of the King's intervention that Circular 36 and 39 were released, whose contents are articulated in the findings (section 5.2.1.3).

Through these circulars the Ministry has tried to control the damage by using threatening coercive means. This is a typical policy implementation technique in a top-down approach. In the theoretical framework, Zelvys (2004) explains how in order for a system to function well it is imperative for the parts of the system to connect and link accordingly because a system is a series of interrelated and interdependent parts such that the interaction of any part affects the whole system. The top-up saga in the system reveals that

there is a disconnection within the system because the interaction between participants or stakeholders has not been flowing well. This is a sign of a weak system, which is supported by systems theory (see section 3.1 in the theoretical framework). The disconnection is within the Ministry, between the Ministry and head teachers, head teachers and parents. This is evident in the fact that parents are totally against the top-up fees. This is despite the head teachers claiming that they had agreed with parents to charge the top-up fees. This disconnection has created serious implementation challenges.

Furthermore, the procedures for charging the top-up fee were not followed as stipulated in the FPE Act of 2010, where schools after agreeing with parents to charge a top-fee for developing the school were supposed to request permission from the Minister of Education and Training to do so. However, as revealed in the findings this has not been the case. This situation is a good example of Matland's ambiguity/conflict model in terms of the low ambiguity and high conflict paradigm. The reason for categorising the situation in this category is because the issue on the procedure that needs to be followed to receive permission to charge the top-up fees and the conditions under which permission may be sought by applicants is well articulated in the FPE Act. The Act further defines free education and clearly stipulates who is eligible to benefit from free education – none of these things are in any way ambiguous. The policy implementation goals are very clear. Despite all of this there are still serious implementation challenges: the Act is flouted and the Ministry in the beginning contributed to this when Circular 14 was released and when, as revealed in the findings, head teachers were advised by a senior Ministry official to charge the top-up fee as a building fund and did not advise them to follow the procedure in the FPE Act. This also further opened doors for the schools to do as they pleased with regard to the top-up fee.

### **6.3.6 Monitoring of the FPE programme**

The implementation of FPE is not well monitored which therefore negatively impacts on the quality of education provided by the programme. There are many factors that contribute to this situation. The major factor is a structural one this is based on the researcher's inference of the findings. By structural, the researcher implies that the structure of the MoET at regional level is supposed to be decentralised. All the officials' report to the REO but at the same time they are also accountable to the heads of their section at headquarters or at the other work stations under the MoET. The REO offices have their own mandate as well and utilise officials from the different sections to fulfil this mandate. This means that the officials who work at the REOs offices have to carry out their own key mandate as well as that of the REOs. This means that the regional primary school inspectors who are supposed to monitor the programme have vast and complex job descriptions. The same applies to their chain of command. It seems as if their core duty is refracted by the numerous other tasks that they end up having to do and in that way it ends up being least important. They find themselves doing mainly REO administrative duties rather than actual monitoring, which is their core duty. Moreover, they report to a myriad of bosses, some of whom are at headquarters, such as the chief inspector for primary schools and the senior inspectors of secondary schools subjects, yet they are primary school inspectors. This is in the absence of subject senior inspectors at the primary level and the fact that at the primary level they are supposed to monitor all the subject areas. The regional education officer in the region is their immediate supervisor. It can further be inferred that everything is done without a proper plan being followed. Even when their plan on a particular day is to go to schools to monitor them, that plan can be changed and they can be instructed to carry out another task that was not planned for. This then defeats

the purpose of the plans that are put in place at planning meetings at the beginning of every school term.

This further enables schools to get away with many poor practices because they lack the necessary supervision from the MoET personnel. It also results in some head teachers being lax in conducting their own supervisory role thus compromising the quality of education. The findings in this section reflect that there is poor coordination and much confusion in the education system.

### **6.3.7 Other costs incurred by government**

There are costs that are incurred by government other than the payment of grants for school fees. Findings regarding costs indicate that government not only pays grants but also provides stationery, textbooks for learners and food under the school feeding scheme (see section 2.1.6). In addition, government supplies schools with water tanks so that they have potable water. The government also finances school infrastructure by building classrooms to address overcrowding and provides teaching and learning facilities and equipment (see section 5.5.2). Teachers and MoET personnel salaries are also paid by the government. Ever since FPE was introduced there has been an increase in teachers' posts, as indicated in the findings in section 5.7.1. Furthermore, when FPE was introduced in 2010 the number of regional inspectors for primary schools was increased. This was meant to strengthen the monitoring of primary schools by inspectors (see section 5.3.4 in the findings). However, this has increased the government payroll and is an additional cost for the FPE programme.

### **6.3.8 FPE indirect costs, facilities and other resources**

Another factor that contributes to the poor implementation of FPE is the hidden costs that become barriers to access to education. However, this factor is not only unique to

Swaziland. Indirect costs include transportation, uniforms and so on. These have led to some learners dropping out of school because they cannot afford them. Findings in this study include government interventions with regard to the uniform barrier. The DPM office, as revealed by the senior MoET officer who was interviewed, is currently piloting a programme to provide uniforms to remove the barrier.

Facilities are inevitably very important for quality enhancement and expansion. In an attempt to expand schools to accommodate the demand for primary schooling, government has built additional classrooms to enlarge schools. Through this study, I noted that some of the classrooms under construction in sampled schools were incomplete and in some case abandoned. Despite attempts to build more classrooms, the Ministry has been unable to build schools within a radius of 5 km from learners' homes as clearly articulated in the MoET's EDSEC policy (Swaziland 2011b). The challenge of building more schools to address the issue of access can also be linked to the shortage of teachers which has not been addressed by the Ministry responsible for allocating teachers posts.

Findings that relate to facilities disclose that some of the sampled schools in the study were short of desks and chairs. Even schools that had received desks and chairs as part of the FPE package still had a shortage. Apart from government, donors have also provided this furniture. Based on the testimony of a participant that the donor provided only a hundred desks to each school, one may conclude that this is not sufficient for schools or the FPE programme. The FPE implementation guidelines state that school furniture will be provided to schools in collaboration with government development partners. However, the government did not adequately commit itself in this regard but left this task to be the sole responsibility of development partners. This could be because of the financial constraints that the government was faced with when the programme was introduced. In the sampled

schools, except for one class in one school as observed, there were insufficient desks and chairs given participants' evidence that learners use of buckets as seats and other forms of make-shift desks and chairs. Muyanga et al (2008) report that Kenya was also faced with similar shortages, as well as a lack of teaching and learning facilities and they are of the view that this undermines the quality of education. This notion is also expressed by Nishimura and Yamano (2008); Kenya (2008). Sawamura and Sifuna (2008) advance on this decrying the way the Government of Kenya focused on quantity and overlooked quality, which is contrary to what is articulated in the policy documents such as the Children's Act of Kenya, the Dakar Framework for Action and the Millennium Development Goals (see Kenya 2008:63). These authors attribute this to the focus on quantity instead of quality education as a result of the politicising of FPE. The reviewed literature indicates that the lack and perhaps inadequacy of teaching facilities in schools is tantamount to the violation of the learners' right to quality education. McConnachie and McConnachie (2012) make reference to two court cases in the Eastern Cape in South Africa, where the applicants argued that the lack of facilities in their schools was a violation of learners' right to a basic education. This assertion holds because lack of such facilities undermines quality teaching and learning.

The findings in this study include overcrowding. Overcrowding in sampled schools was severe and highly noticeable. Classroom congestion, as observed in one of the sampled schools, where the teacher could barely move to check learners work illuminates the severe nature or extent of overcrowding that comes with FPE. The afore-mentioned shortage of teachers and facilities is a common factor in most of the developing countries, as explained by Muyanga et al (2008). Accordingly, an increase in enrolment which often leads to overcrowding is a predominate feature of FPE. Further, it often results in a

shortage of facilities and equipment in the form of desks and chairs, as well as qualified teachers as shown in this study.

With regard to teachers, this study among its other findings revealed that some of the teachers teaching in the FPE programme are inappropriately qualified and do not have primary pedagogy skills; as such this compromises the quality of education. The Swaziland EFA Progress Report 2000–2015 (UNESCO et al 2015) corroborates this. The literature reveals that the quality of the teacher does matter. For example, Nakabugo (2008), who observed teachers in both small and large classrooms in South Africa, concluded that the class size did not determine the effectiveness of teaching and learning but the pedagogy used by the teacher did. This therefore has serious implications for the effectiveness of teaching by the inappropriately qualified teachers that are employed in Swaziland primary schools. Nakubugo's conclusion is supported by others, such as Qiang and Ning (2011); Hunsek (2003); Nakubugo (2003). These researchers also undertook overcrowded classrooms studies and insist that the quality of the teacher is determined by the pedagogy used by that teacher.

The Swaziland situation is more than just overcrowding; it is coupled with the already mentioned negative factors of inappropriately qualified teachers and the shortage of teaching and learning materials. All these factors combined become lethal and to a certain extent do prevent the achievement of quality education.

In the theoretical framework, Paudel (2007) raises similar issues when he explains how policy implementation in developing countries is not easy because of the economic challenges these countries find themselves faced with. He lists other factors such political instability, weak state structures, unarticulated policy participation, poor policy evaluation, rare participation of lower level stakeholders because policy making in most cases is



centralised, being faced with more difficult problems than those encountered by developed countries and limited resources.

Challenges as illuminated in the above paragraphs threaten the sustainability of FPE because developing countries do not have the financial muscle to sustain the programme. This is the case even though developing countries fully appreciate the overall aim of FPE. Richards (2011) attributes the introduction of FPE by developing countries irrespective of their economic strength is because it was imposed by developed countries. Richards, in support of Milu (2012), views this as neo-colonialism under a human capital agenda, which is one of the theoretical frameworks underpinning FPE. The human capital framework underpins and legitimises the UPE agenda because it is believed that investing in human capital is associated with economic growth and development (Knight, Lietz, Nugroho & Tobin 2012). Richards further advances the neo-colonisation argument by explaining how dependence on donor funds, which FPE is tied to, reinforces the colonial dependence of the past because of the conditions attached to these funds. A case in point is the payment of the Grade 1 fees by the EU. The study reveals how in 2013 when there was a teachers strike, the EU wanted the money that they had paid for the duration of the strike to be refunded to them. The Swaziland government had to pay this money despite the fact that the teachers strike was beyond the government's control. Another case in point that supports Richard's assertion is the issue of the structural adjustment policies which were imposed on developing countries, which resulted in the education gains of the past being reversed (Kimani 2012).

The literature on developing countries outside the African continent, for example Pakistan and Nepal, confirms that this is a developing country phenomenon because these countries are faced with the same challenges faced by those in Africa. Their challenges are also

exacerbated by the political instability that Paudel (2009) makes mention of and which were highlighted in the other sections of this chapter (see section 2.7.2). Ahmad et al (2012) reveal that the education system in Pakistan is dogged by a lack of visionary leaders and political will, a lack of monitoring mechanisms and poor follow up of the implementation of educational policies, poor evaluation of educational policies, inadequate financial allocation and a lack of engagement of stakeholders at the policy formulation, implementation and evaluation stages. All of these characteristics are a reflection of the implementation failure which is described by Paudel (2009) as being typical in developing countries.

#### **6.3.9. The FPE agenda**

FPE agenda setting is about the manner in which FPE in Swaziland was introduced and the conditions that prevailed when FPE was introduced. The policy cycle places agenda setting as the first step in the policy-making process. Agenda setting is the process by which problems come to government's attention. In Swaziland's case the FPE programme came to the government's attention through the Constitution. This constitutional clause was in response to the Jomtien EFA agenda of 2000 and the Dakar Framework for Action of 1990. From the literature it would appear that Swaziland was compelled to embrace FPE initiatives by virtue of being a member state of the UN. The manner in which FPE was introduced, as explained in the background of this study and the literature, is also a reason to agree that Swaziland was compelled to do so.

An implementation framework for the FPE programme, dated October 2009, is an indication of the extent to which preparations by the Ministry had been done towards the implementation of the programme. The basis of this inference is on the premise that the development of the implementation framework was done after the court case that led to

the introduction of FPE. This means that prior to that time, there was no plan in response to the Constitution and the time set for the introduction of the FPE programme. With this in mind, it is reasonable to state that when the plan to introduce FPE was made it was made under pressure. Nambalirwa's (2010) study also suggests that countries on the African continent found themselves in a precarious position of trying to meet the international EFA agenda deadline in terms of implementing the EFA goals, of which FPE forms part. Further to this, Nambalirwa indicates that the manner in which FPE was introduced in many countries resulted in the poor planning and implementation of FPE programmes. The FPE Act itself was only enacted after FPE had been introduced in 2010 as a legal framework for the programme. This also indicates that from the time the Constitution was adopted in 2005 up to 2009, which was the stipulated time period for the FPE programme introduction, no plan was made to have a legal framework for the programme. It was only once the programme had been introduced that the Act came into being.

Therefore the agenda-setting stage was ignored. To add to this, it would seem that the next stage in the policy-making cycle, namely, policy formulation which involves putting in place policy formulation options, was also not afforded the attention it deserved because of the pressure that had been exerted on government. This then, as with the interviews with participants in this study, reveals that stakeholders were not afforded an opportunity to contribute to the formulation of the FPE Bill before it was promulgated. Furthermore, because it came into effect when the programme was already up and running the stakeholders did not have enough time to get acquainted with it, internalise it and embrace it. This state of affairs fits pretty well with the explanation advanced by Samawura and Sifuna (2008) in the literature; that is, that politics resulted in FPE being introduced under budgetary constraints and that this is a common feature in Southern Africa.

The third stage of policy-making cycle is decision making. This has to do with the government adopting a particular course of action. The events that unfolded and which have been described since FPE was introduced in Swaziland suggest that no particular action plan was adopted and hence the confusion that has prevailed, especially in terms of decision making. The abrupt decisions and their withdrawal have created a serious implementation dilemma and have further exposed the lack of good management and leadership skills within the MoET, a situation that extends to the school level.

Stage 4 of the policy cycle is policy implementation which has been discussed at length in this chapter. These findings have a bearing on the fact that the other stages, such as agenda setting, policy formulation and policy making, were not effectively carried out and consequently the implementation of the programme has been adversely affected. The interplay between policy and practice in this regard is inappropriate because most of what is in the FPE framework is not there on the ground; that is, in practice. In sum, what is happening or practised by stakeholders, in this case head teachers, teachers, parents, the regional inspectors, the FPE officials and the senior MoET officer who were interviewed, differs from the contents of the policy documents and frameworks.

The last stage of the policy cycle is the evaluation of the programme, which requires it to be closely monitored and evaluated using appropriate evaluation tools. The evaluation of the programme is supposed to assist in the identification of the FPE policy challenges so that they are addressed accordingly. However, this has not been done with the exception of the small amount of evaluation work done by EMIS, through the AEC, which was in place even before FPE was introduced. It is through this census that the MoET has been able to access the NER, the repetition rate and the dropout rate. Participants' revelations, particularly those of the regional inspector for primary schools and the head teacher for

School C, pointed out the poor monitoring of schools by primary school inspectors who are responsible for monitoring. The lack of established evaluation tools for evaluating the FPE programme and the absence of mention of such intentions in the FPE Act and the FPE framework underscores the inadequate monitoring and evaluation that FPE in Swaziland is subject to. When the magnitude of the investment in the FPE programme is considered, it is worrying that there is no proper monitoring and evaluation tool available for the FPE programme. All of these gaps typify the top-down approach of policy implementation. This is supported by what Paudel (2009) describes as the failure of developing countries to formulate and implement policies which are mainly Western in nature.

#### **6.3.10 School development projects**

With regard to SDPS, the findings in this study point out that some of the sampled schools claimed that ever since FPE was introduced SDPs have come to a halt. Although the senior MoET officer who participated in the study disputed this and mentioned how the Ministry had been building seven classrooms per school. In the researcher's view, however, this is still not enough in light of the magnitude of classroom and school overcrowding in general. In addition, the bureaucratic process to be followed in order to obtain facilities that enhance school development is not user friendly, as participants noted. Central to the process is a directive instructing schools to forward requests to the MoET's Planning Department. This is aimed at regulating building practices in schools. This has not however been entirely successful because head teachers often neglect that directive and go ahead to embark on building projects because it is from such projects that they receive 10% kickbacks. Nonetheless, the introduction of FPE, as some participants (e.g. the senior MoET officer) noted, meant that head teachers are unhappy because they

cannot collect these kickbacks as such projects are now under the Micro-Projects unit at the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development.

The findings in section 5.2.1.6 reveal that there are anomalies with regard to the SDP being followed. This anomaly was identified by the PAC when attending to audit queries that head teachers had to respond to. It turned out that even the officials in the Planning Department, who are supposed to respond to requests from schools with regard to building school toilets, were flouting the SDP, which is clearly spelt out in the MoET's FPE implementation guidelines (Swaziland 2009). This has resulted in building materials purchased for building toilets lying unused on school grounds. Instead of the officials in the Planning Department mandating the Micro-Projects Department to build the toilets at the schools, the PAC discovered that they were procuring and delivering the materials at the schools. The schools thus found themselves faced with the challenge of having to fund the building of the toilets themselves instead of the Micro-Projects Department. Since this initiative was not in the plan they were unable to pursue it and therefore the materials remained at the schools unutilised. This is a waste of government resources. One example is that in some schools deliveries of building material have been duplicated, being delivered by both the Planning Department and Micro-Projects.

It is clear from the above that head teachers are not the only ones not following the SDP in accordance with the FPE implementation framework. Indeed, the framework is also ignored by officials. This implies that procuring building materials for themselves is preferred not only by head teachers but also by the officials referred to in this scenario. This implies that there is a fondness for procuring building materials because of the monetary gains associated with it, as suggested by the senior MoET officer in section 5.3.2. This then illustrates the extent of the corrupt practices that are connected to SDPs.

The afore-mentioned scenarios could be one of the reasons that head teachers do not take kindly to the suspension of top-up fees, as highlighted in section 6.2.3. Section 5.3.1 elaborates on the procedures that the FPE Act of 2010 lays out with regard to the requesting of top-up fees for building infrastructure in schools. However, now that the top-up fees have been suspended by Circulars 36 and 39 (see section 5.2.3.1), as elaborated in the findings, the second option in the FPE Act is now of no effect: that is, the option that allowed schools to request permission from the Minister of Education and Training to charge top-up fees. The head teachers consider the suspension of the top-up fee to be illegal because the Act has not been amended. It is interesting that when the Act favours their interests they cite it, but when they view it as prejudicial they pretend to be ignorant. Ironically, before the top-up fees were suspended, it was found that they were not following the procedures in the Act as they would charge the top-fees without making a request to the Minister. This is contrary to what is in the Act and is in effect illegal, but they were nevertheless quick to mention that the Act has not been amended.

The assertion made by the senior MoET officer of the presence of corrupt practices, especially with regard to schools embarking on building projects, then holds true. This is supported by the fact that in one of the schools that participated in the study, although the Ministry had built the seven classrooms that were earlier referred to, the school still managed to make the parents pay a top-up fee thus not following the procedure in the FPE Act. Consequently, the parents abandoned the project along the way and the incomplete building remains an eyesore at the school. This is another typical example of a waste of resources.

Happenings in schools vis-à-vis the attitude of head teachers towards the building of classrooms contribute to the implementation failure of the programme. The action that schools take through head teachers typifies Lipsky's bottom-up street level bureaucratic approach to policy implementation. However, it does not fully qualify for this category because in most cases of bottom-up street-level bureaucracy, the officials get the work done using their own methods, which enables them to cope with their work because it is generally work that is very demanding. In most cases they are not driven by corruption but to make life easy for themselves. This is however, not the case in the Swaziand context because the FPE policy implementers are totally not in favour of the programme. There are no means or strategies that they have come up with to ensure the programme is implemented in what ever way that they deem fit. To respond to the alleged corrupt practices that schools were said to be engaging in, the MoET released Circular 16 of 2013 (Swaziland 2013b), warning head teachers to desist from mismanaging school funds (see the contents of the circular in section 5.3.2). The release of this circular endorses the aforementioned assertion made by the senior MoET officers that corrupt practices are happening in the schools.

### **6.3.11 The gaps between policy and practice**

The gaps between policy and practice in this study hinge on the disjuncture that exists between FPE policy and practice at all levels of the FPE programme. This was exaacerbated from the very outset by the Ministry itself, at the upper bureaucratic level where the policies are made, formulated and endorsed. There are many incidents that have occurred that signify that there is a disconnection among the policy players. These include instances where the Ministry released policy documents that contradict each other, such as the FPE Act of 2010 and Circular 14 of 2012. After realising this mistake the Ministry then released Circular 17 of (Swaziland 2013c) (all these frameworks and their contents



are discussed in chapter 5 and the sections referred to in this chapter as well). Given the fact that the Act is the legal framework and its strength should be evident and given the importance that it deserves, it is interesting to note that this is not the case and therefore this speaks volumes about the respect for the rule of law in some quarters. This is because the time frame between these policy documents was sufficient for the FPE Act to be internalised, protected and advocated for to the key stakeholders. This particularly in light of the fact that they were not consulted, as has already been mentioned.

The gaps are then a lack of understanding of the importance, function and role of a legal framework. Rogers (2010), who analysed the court case between the Ex Miners Association and others vs the MoET, states that the judgment made by the high court of Swaziland was weak because "it did not follow the reasonableness test" (Rogers 2010:3), a test which is well articulated in South African socio-economic rights case law. Rogers defends his reference to South African case law by bringing to the fore the fact that Swaziland has never had a problem with developments in international law and the law of others. Rogers further holds that Swaziland constitutional case law has much in common with that of the United States and South Africa, thus justifying their use in the comparison in his study. Rogers argues that the Swaziland judgment found that there was a flexible minimum core right that every individual Swazi child was entitled to and should claim from the state. Rogers maintains that the court avoided issuing a "structural interdict or exercising a supervisory jurisdiction" (Rogers 2010:3) and states that the court did say it could have adopted that approach if it seemed there was no solution with regard to the issue. This argument now has a bearing on the way things have been happening in Swaziland because, as Rogers (2010) also mentions, there is a constitutional dissonance between text and reality. He explains that the dissonance is "the gap between the formal constitutional and legal norms and the actual practice of the government and the citizens"

(Rogers 2010:9). He further states that this is common in every jurisdiction but it is most prominent in developing countries and for that reason Swaziland is no exception.

This information sheds light on the nature of the gap that exists between FPE policy and actual practice on the ground. However, this gap is arguable when it comes to the discussion that was highlighted before Rogers' issue was introduced; that is, the fact that the Ministry overlooked the Act at the very beginning of the FPE programme.

The researcher is of the view that it is outrageous for the Ministry to have ignored the FPE Act, as is suggested by the contents of Circular 14. This is because the FPE Bill from which the Act originates was drafted by the Ministry. The drafters of the Act from the Ministry of Justice were informed by the MoET what the contents of the Bill should be, which implies that these were given considerable thought. So for the Ministry to then turn a blind eye and issue a circular that contradicted the FPE Act is confusing and disturbing. Indeed, this supports Roger's assertion that there is a dissonance between the laws, as well as policy and actual practice in this case. However, it worth noting that this dissonance is unnecessary because the Act qualifies as the legal norm that Rogers refers to. If the legal norm is what is obtaining then the Act should have been upheld.

Another gap that can be identified between policy and practice is the lack of appreciation of the purpose of FPE. It would seem that this is why the head teachers have no empathy for children who cannot pay the top-up fee. The fact that a proper monitoring mechanism is lacking is also detrimental; despite the fact that the top-up fee has been suspended, some schools are still charging it and getting away with it. In line with Circulars 36 and 39, as earlier described (see section 5.2.1.3), schools that are found to be expelling learners, withholding learners' reports and charging top-up fees will be dealt with accordingly. The findings in this study reveal that those who are reported by parents are dealt with.

However, this means that those who are not reported get away with it because in the absence of a monitoring mechanism the Ministry is unable to identify such cases.

Head teachers playing ignorant of the FPE Act when it suits them and then doing an about face when it no longer suits them are a typical example of the dissonance displayed by citizens as mentioned by Rogers. This is because they were ignoring the Act before top-up fees were suspended, but they now complain that the Ministry's move to suspend top-up fees without amending the Act is not acceptable. Yet the head teachers were not following the Act to the letter from the outset. This disrespect for the rule of law extends to the citizenry. The top-up saga has had adverse effects on the learners from poor backgrounds because many have had to drop out of school. In addition, their economic status has not enabled them to seek legal redress for being deprived of their right to education as stipulated in the Bill of Rights in the constitution. Despite the fact that the Swaziland Commission of Human Rights and Public Administration was established in September 2009, it has done little except to release a report in 2011 citing a desk top review of the laws in Swaziland that are in conflict with the Constitution, or are ambiguous, and those that spell out human rights. The report also recommends that these laws need to be amended so that they align with the Constitution.

The report cites clause 3.4.1 of the National Social Development policy of 2008, which states that "it is national policy to protect and promote the rights of children and ensure that their basic needs are met and that they are provided with opportunities to reach their full potential". This being the case, in the event that this does not happen there should be a way that makes it possible for the vulnerable in society to be protected and if their rights are infringed this should be redressed. The Commission for Human Rights and Public Administration should be one of those bodies that assist in such matters but its operations

and existence is unknown to the people at grassroots level. Moreover at-risk learners are not aware of ways in which they can be assisted. This is on its own is a gap because they (learners) end up giving up and not enjoying their basic human rights which include education, thus constituting a serious gap in ensuring that learners benefit from the FPE programme, as a human right. The MoET's EDSEC policy (Swaziland 2011b) acknowledges that education is a basic human right but it does not spell out how the Ministry intends ensuring that children enjoy and benefit from this right and what is to happen in the event the right is violated.

### **6.3.12 The sustainability of the FPE programme in Swaziland**

The sustainability of FPE in Swaziland needs to be looked at closely, as this study has attempted to do. Opposing responses were received in this study. For example, some participants were totally against the FPE programme for fear that the large sums of government revenue needed to pay for FPE would be at the expense of government employees receiving a pay rise. The other issue related to government paying for FPE instead of tertiary education, which is more expensive than primary education. Some participants felt that all parents could pay for school fees even those on a meagre income. This kind of thinking coming from people who are educators is disturbing and a threat to the sustainability of the programme. They lack appreciation in supporting and making opportunities available for every child to access education results in them not pushing the FPE agenda, even though this forms part of their core mandate.

### **6.3.13 Sustainability of the FPE programme and the grants paid by government**

Some participants, especially the learners and parents, appreciated the need for FPE, even though others were of the view that government should increase the grant that is paid because it is insufficient and makes the running of schools difficult. In terms of

sustainability of the programme, insufficient funds can be a challenge because schools are then unable to procure the resources required for effective teaching and learning. This issue also results in head teachers charging parents top-up fees illegally, which results in learners who cannot afford these fees dropping out of school. This being the case, it may be said that the programme is unsustainable. However, on the other hand, in line with Widok's (2009:43) definition of sustainability in the theoretical framework as "the capacity of the system to maintain output at a level approximately equal or greater than its historic average with the approximation determined by the historical level of variability", it is possible that the programme may be sustainable.

When the FPE programme was introduced the level of output was greater than its historical level of variability due to the escalation of the enrolment rates, as pointed out in the findings drawn from the documents analysed. For example, in 1999 the NER was 75% but in 2012 it had increased to 95% (UNESCO et al 2015). However, thereafter there was an insignificant decline in the NER from 95,6% in 2012 to 92,6%, as indicated in the MoET's AEC report (Swaziland 2013a). The report further states that 300 primary learners had dropped out of school during the same period. The report attributes the drop out to the top-up fees and other costs that are a barrier to access to education and also a threat to the sustainability of the FPE programme. This is supported by the literature where the Educational Quality Improvement Program 2 (EQUIP 2 2007) reports that FPE is not fully implemented because even when school fees are abolished they make a comeback and sometimes the collection of the school fees is illegal. The EQUIP 2 report further states that in two-thirds of the countries studied where school fees had been eliminated, they were still collected illegally. The situation is similar in Swaziland.

Oketch and Rolleston (2010) report that when FPE was introduced in schools in the Kisumu region in Kenya, the population of learners far outnumbered the facilities in the schools, but when a levy or user fee was introduced learners who could not afford it dropped out, mainly because of user fees in the form of tuition and compulsory uniforms which served as barriers to access to education. Such occurrences are similar to one reported in the MoET's AEC report (Swaziland 2013a) and are a threat to the sustainability of the programme.

Arguably, when FPE was introduced the Swaziland economy was not doing well and probably the E560 was the best government could offer. However, this grant has not increased since the programme's inception and thus is the reason schools have reverted to charging top-up fees. The EQUIP 2 (2007) report also indicates that the issue of FPE sustainability is real because it is influenced by a lack of sufficient donor funds, economic decline and competing country needs. The top-up situation has remained the same even though the Head of State, the King, pronounced that the issue of top-up fees should be addressed once and for all. The response from the Ministry was the release of Circular 39, suspending schools from charging top-up fees and announcing the formation of a task team to come up with a solution as directed by the King. This study reveals that the Minister of Education some time ago mentioned that the FPE investigation on the grant amount report to address grant issues was now ready. However, up till now it has not been released. Even though the participant who revealed this information did not know what the contents of the report were, she was optimistic that it would recommend that the FPE grant be increased.

The sustainability of FPE can be linked to issues of social justice because sustainability is about distributive justice, which hinges mainly on human rights and also depends on

political justice (Acker-Widmaier 1999). This notion is supported by UNESCO (2007); the Berkshire encyclopedia. The Berkshire encyclopedia notes that sustainability is practically directed towards economic health, ecological integrity and social justice. On the hand the UNESCO (2007) places emphasis on none discrimination aspects to education. UNESCO (2007) gives an account of results that culminated at the seventh consultation of member states on the implementation of the convention and recommendations against discrimination in education of 1960. The results from the consultation recommended: the elimination of discrimination in education, promotion of equality of educational opportunities and universal access to education of good quality. Therefore, for a consensus to be reached there is a need for transparency on this matter (FPE) on the government's part by releasing the task team report and discussing the issue honestly with the relevant stakeholders. The lack of a proper forum where issues regarding the FPE programme can be openly discussed and addressed by government and stakeholders is indeed a challenge and a threat to the sustainability of the FPE programme, as the participants in this study noted. There has indeed been a lack of transparency which, according to Widok (2009), is one of the social values that underpin social sustainability. The other social values included in Widok's theoretical sustainability framework are fairness, balance, equality, wellbeing, equity, health and safety.

The top-up issue is a challenge to these values. Drawing from the theoretical framework on sustainability it is worth noting that Acker-Widmaier (1999) in Christen and Schmidt (2012) is of the view that the right to a decent life through education not only entails a theory of intra- and intergenerational distributive justice but also one that regulates institutional action, i.e. political justice. The political justice concept suggests that each person has a right to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic rights and liberties, which is compatible with a similar scheme of rights for all (Rawls 1971) supported by UNESCO

2008. This in the researcher's view of should be ongoing, that is, from one generation to another. It is in light of this that if the FPE programme is to be sustained the objectives, aims and goals of the programme should be adhered to. This will in turn enable the children from disadvantaged backgrounds to enjoy the opportunities enjoyed by those from favourable backgrounds.

#### **6.3.14. Political will and economic situation**

The senior MoET officer was of the view that the FPE programme was sustainable because there is political will on government's side. She said it is for this reason that government declared education as a priority area and has shown commitment to this by ensuring that even when there are cuts in the fiscal budget they do not affect education. Since FPE was introduced in 2010, government has time and time again confirmed its commitment in the budget speeches and continues to do so, as highlighted in the literature reviewed in this study. However, this commitment does not in any way ensure the sustainability of the FPE programme. This is because there are many factors that contribute to sustainability.

For instance, Nishimuko (2007) reports on the FPE programme in Sierra Leone. From this report Sierra Leone is a typical case in point in as far as political will is concerned. In Sierra Leone despite the government's tireless efforts to fully support the FPE programme, the programme was surrounded by a myriad of challenges that threatened its sustainability. The reasons for these challenges hinged on that country's history of an ongoing civil war. The outcome of the civil war was a negative effect on the education system and the economy of the country. Nishumuko (2007) further reports that 70% of the Sierra Leone population lives below the poverty line of \$1 per day. The economic situation in that country in terms of poverty levels is not much different from that of Swaziland.



According to the Swaziland MDG Report of 2012, 63% of the population lives below the poverty line. The country's economy continues to suffer, as reported in the 2015/2016 fiscal year budget speech. Accordingly, the country has experienced a decline in economic growth as well as a slowdown in economic activity. The Minister of Finance further mentioned that: "Real GDP growth slowed down to 2,5 percent in 2014, from an estimated growth rate of 3 percent in 2013" (Swaziland 2015). This has had an impact on the sustainability of the programme.

The preceding paragraph suggests the link between finance and sustainability. Ogola, Olembo and Mse (2014) explains that education requires large amounts of money because schools need to be constructed, teachers paid, and facilities and equipment provided. So this suggests that a country has to be economically sound in order to accomplish FPE sustainability. This assertion is supported by Muthangya (2008) who states that the sustainability of FPE in Kenya is beyond the scope of the government's education budget and the country's economic performance. Avenstrup, Liang and Nelleman (2004), in their study on "Free primary education and poverty reduction: The case of Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi and Uganda" are also of the view that in light of the limited resources in these countries the sustainability of the FPE programmes is a concern. Khumalo's (2013) study, "Swaziland effective delivery of public education services", does support happenings in other countries but specifically questions the sustainability of FPE in Swaziland by highlighting the inadequate learning facilities and limited infrastructure to support the FPE programme, which are all subject to the availability of finance.

#### **6.3.15 Quality of the teachers and supervision**

The sustainability of the FPE programme is also determined by the quality of the teachers who implement the programme because the quality of programme output contributes to

programme sustainability. This assertion is supported by Kenya (2008) that the hiring of unqualified teachers compromises the quality of education. The issue of the hiring of inappropriately qualified teachers is tantamount to hiring of unqualified teachers. This issue has been referred to at length in the previous chapter (see section 5.7.1). It is important to note that none of the teachers and head teachers that participated in this study are inappropriately qualified, as indicated in their demographic information. However, it is worth mentioning that a majority of them were holders of a Primary Teacher's Diploma, while one had a Primary Teacher's Certificate, one a Bachelor of Education and another a Master of Education.

The poor supervision of the FPE programme is another factor of concern. The programme is not being well supervised both at the school level and at Ministry level. Failure to supervise the programme creates a gap in the identification of problems which end up being left unattended. This unfortunately affects the learner. For instance in one of the sampled schools in the study the learners themselves mentioned how under the leadership of the former head teacher everyone did as they pleased. They mentioned that now there was a new head teacher things were changing and that there was order in the school. The new head teacher only joined the school in mid-2015, however. Interestingly, there was a vast difference in the demographic information of these two head teachers.

The differences in qualifications of the two teachers at School A have already been mentioned in a paragraph prior to this one. However, the other demographic attributes of these head teachers are as follows: The former head teacher was older (59 years) than the head teacher who followed him (47 years). The former had 11 years' experience as head teacher while the latter had four years' experience as a Deputy Head teacher and only three months' experience as a head teacher. Though not conclusive from the data comparison

one can infer that the qualifications of these head teachers had a bearing on the kind of leadership skills they exhibited. This assertion is qualified by the description given by the teacher whose classroom was observed in this school. She complained about the manner in which the textbooks were being managed in the school and how this was a waste of government resources. Since the latter head teacher was relatively new in the school it can be inferred that the point of reference in this case still points to the former head teacher with regards to the way the textbooks were managed. One wonders how many other head teachers run schools in this manner. Another question that comes to the fore is, if many schools are run like this, then how sustainable is the programme in terms of quality.

All in all if the issues related to the sustainability of the FPE programme were addressed and a common aim reached by all players, then sustainability would be realised. However, under the current circumstances the sustainability of the programme is at risk. It is worth noting, however, that in comparison to the other countries that introduced FPE much earlier and have made several attempts, Swaziland in her first attempt has done pretty well and has managed to reach the 2015 EFA goal by having the first cohort of FPE complete the primary level.

#### **6.4 Summary of findings**

In this section, the researcher scrutinised the findings that agree with the reviewed literature and those that do not, and also examines the link between the findings and the theoretical framework.

##### **6.4.1 Findings that link to the literature**

The findings in section 6.3.1 on the FPE policies concur with the general purpose of FPE being to provide equal opportunities to all learners irrespective of their socio-economic

standing. There is also a general understanding by the participants of the study that education is a human right. The findings also align with the thinking that education is an engine for economic growth at both the macro and the micro level. This perspective links well with the country's NDS of 1999.

The findings revealed that officials within the Ministry were sceptical about the sustainability of FPE and were of the view that it would destabilise government resources and affect the payment of government officials' salaries. There was also a concern from some of the participants about money being invested in education at the primary level, which they viewed as being affordable for parents. They were of the opinion that it would have been better to invest in tertiary education because it is unaffordable. However, this opinion revealed the participants' ignorance regarding the comparative rates of return on the two investments. This view is based on the fact that this has been the norm in Swaziland, with the government sponsoring tertiary education instead of primary education. This thinking aligns with what Ogola (2010) refers to as the prevailing culture in the education system and exposes the challenges associated with changing the culture. Bell and Stevenson (2006) view the situation as being a result of power relations and exclusion. Findings indicate that the lack of appreciation of FPE by some of the participants is because as key stakeholders they were not consulted or simply excluded and hence the lack a clear understanding of the importance of FPE. The findings in section 6.3 in relation to an understanding of FPE policies reveal that the participants in the sampled schools did not understand the policies they are supposed to implement. This then has led to serious implementation challenges and understandably so because how can one implement what one does not understand. This phenomenon is linked to what Fischer et al (2007) refer to as bureaucratic processes. Sarfo and Baah-Mintah (2013), however, view these processes as causes of low productivity, inefficiency and the wastage of

resources. This is a feature which is evident in the implementation of the FPE programme in Swaziland. The FPE programme lacks the fundamental elements that relate to successful policy implementation. These elements are also pointed out by Sarfo and Baah-Mintah (2013) and they include the availability of facilities, properly spelt out systems and hierarchical supervisory control.

Section 6.3.4 in the findings looks at the level of consultation which was undertaken at the policy making stage of the FPE programme in Swaziland. The findings specify that none of the participants in the study were consulted. This lack of consultation of key stakeholders could be one of the reasons they neither know nor understand the FPE policies. Curtains (2000), supports this assertion and is of the opinion that policy implementers need to participate in the policy-making process so that they understand them well. The regional primary inspector who participated in study opined that the lack of consultation occurred even within the Ministry itself. She also said that, as officials who are supposed to monitor the programme, they were also not consulted. The FPE Unit in the MoET, which the senior MoET officer is a part of, also claimed ignorance of some of the circulars that were released by the Ministry, yet they are the ones who have to ensure that schools adhere to these circulars.

Findings on the stakeholders' engagement in the FPE programme point to a lack of buy in from stakeholders at school level (see section 6.3.6). The head teachers who are supposed to supervise and ensure that the programme is implemented well in schools are not doing so and hence its poor implementation. The researcher is of the view that the policy-making process has been poor from the outset, drawing this conclusion from Fischer et al's (2007) explanation of decision making in all the stages in the policy-making process. Furthermore, no platform has been put in place to address the challenges faced by the

schools with regard to the FPE programme. What is key in these findings and also cuts across all of the sections is the claim by head teachers that the grant paid by government is insufficient for running the schools. The head teachers use this argument to legitimise the need for a top-up fee to be paid by parents. The gap in the FPE Act and the fact that it is not being adhered to was exacerbated by Circular 14, which was released by the Ministry, the contents of which were contrary to what was stated in the FPE ACT (2010). These findings concur with the literature which indicates that this was also the case in Kenya, where head teachers ended up charging parents an extra levy. This resulted in learners dropping out of school and the whole essence of FPE was defeated, as is the case in Swaziland.

Such behaviour violates the right of the child to access education. This suggests why Talbot and Sacco (2013) decry the under litigating of education as a fundamental human right in Africa. This is despite the fact that African countries are members of the UN who have ratified the 1948 Convention on Human Rights (see Mokate, 2014; Krishnaratne et al, 2013; Irfan 2008).

The claim that the grant offered by government is insufficient brings many issues to the fore and is central to the implementation of the FPE programme in schools, with the top-up fees being the bone of contention. Apart from the grants, the government subsidises a number of items such as stationery for all learners, textbooks and food in addition. In support of the literature (Kattan & Burnett 2004), head teachers in this study argued that the grants are far less than what the parents used to pay in school fees. Kattan and Burnett (2004) point out that reducing school revenue from what it used to be when parents were paying compromises the standard of education.

A number of corrupt practices were identified in the sampled schools hinging on the mismanagement of the grants paid by government. The literature indicates that corruption with regard to FPE is common in developing countries such as Nigeria (see Etuk, Ering & Ajake 2012), Pakistan and Nepal (see Ahmad et al 2013).

The findings in section 6.3.8 indicate that there are other expenses that the government pays in addition to the FPE grant. However, head teachers do not seem to appreciate that. They tended to dwell on the fact that the grants are insufficient and never consider that the government also provides textbooks and stationery for all learners in public primary schools. This provision is clearly highlighted in the MoET's EDSEC policy (Swaziland 2011b). The findings in section 6.3.4 in relation to other costs, facilities and resources indicate that in some of the sampled schools in the study there was a shortage of learning resources in particular desks and chairs. To improvise learners were using buckets to sit on. The literature reveals that the shortage of resources in schools is not unique to Swaziland. Muyanga et al (2008); Nishimura and Yamano (2008); Kenya (2008); Sawamura and Sifuna (2008) all mention that Kenya was faced with the same challenge. These authors also note that this state of affairs compromises the quality of education. In the same vein, McConnachie and McConnachie, referring to a similar situation in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, state that the shortage of teaching and learning facilities violates the learners' right to education.

The findings in section 6.3.7 point out that the lack of supervision of schools by the regional primary school inspectors could result in poor quality education. This defeats one of the goals of EFA which is quality education. This assertion is supported by the international trend that has since emerged of assessing the quality of education using international assessment tests, as pointed out by Lietz and Tobin (2014). In Swaziland the

same trend is revealed, for instance the MoET (2013) AEC report drew data from the SAQMEC test to assess the status of education quality in Swaziland.

The findings in section 6.3.16 show that overcrowding can result in a shortage of both facilities and human resources (teachers). This results in unqualified or inappropriately qualified teachers being hired to salvage the situation as is the case in Swaziland. The literature notes that this affects the quality of education because quality education is influenced by the quality of the teachers, an assertion that Nakabugo (2008), Qiang & Ning (2011); Hunsek (2003) support. These authors further stipulate that it is not actually the overcrowding that leads to poor quality education but rather the pedagogical approach used by the teachers, which is in turn associated with the quality of the teachers.

The findings in section 6.3.10 reveal that the stages of the policy-making process and the policy-making cycle were ignored when the FPE policies were formulated. The literature in this regard indicates that this is not unique to Swaziland. Nambalirwa (2010) is of the view that countries' poor planning with regard to FPE programmes is due to them trying to meet the EFA 2015 deadline, notwithstanding the fact that some of them were experiencing economic challenges. Samawura and Sifuna (2008) are of the view that this is because the FPE agenda has taken a political twist and hence countries introduce it under financial constraints in order to gain political mileage.

The findings in section 6.3.12 conclude that there are gaps between policy and practice. Accordingly, the gaps are as a result of the high court judgment made with regards to FPE. Rogers (2010) is of the view that the judgment should have followed the "reasonable test" and granted a structural interdict or put in place supervisory jurisdiction. The court did not find it necessary to do so because government had intentions of introducing FPE and thus the court felt that the issue had been resolved.



The findings in section 6.3.15, which related to the sustainability of the FPE, correspond to what EQUIP 2 (2007) reports on how abolished school fees are reinstated illegally. This is evident in Swaziland with regard to the top-up fees. The EQUIP 2 report states that studies that have been undertaken have found that this has been the case in two-thirds of countries where FPE has been introduced. Oketch and Rolleston (2010) specify that this has been the case in Kenya. EQUIP 2 (2007) ascribes this to insufficient donor funds, economic decline and opportunity costs.

Regarding the findings in section 6.3.15 on political will and the economic situation, Nishimuko (2007) points out that in Sierra Leone there was strong political will but because of other factors the sustainability of the FPE programme was under threat. In the MDG report (Swaziland 2012c), poverty was identified as the chief factor and hence a need for FPE to remove education access barriers. Being a country with budgetary constraints, Swaziland experienced problems in funding FPE because it requires large amounts of finance, as Ogola, Olembo and Mse (2014) has noted.

The findings in section 6.3.16 indicate that there was a difference in the head teachers' management and leadership styles at School A in this study reveals. The younger, less experienced and more qualified head teacher exhibited better management and leadership skills than the old, more experienced but less qualified head teacher. The findings then inferred that qualifications influence the quality of the work performed. This assertion is supported by the work of Hanushek (2003). The researcher is of the view that there is a great need for investing in in-service training for teachers to improve the quality of education, especially in relation to the pedagogical approaches used.

#### **6.4.2 Findings that do not link to the literature**

The findings in section 6.3.1 do not feature in the reviewed literature but instead align with some of the documents used in the document analysis of the study, namely, UNESCO et al (2015) EFA Country report, the MoET's AEC report (Swaziland 2013a) and the MoET's NETIP document (Swaziland 2014). The documents criticise the bias towards investing in tertiary education rather than primary education and discuss the relative rates of return. These are contrary to the participants' disagreement on this issue. Nonetheless, there is an indirect link to the literature with regard to developing countries being in the infant stage in comprehending issues related to policy implementation and, hence, the ignorance in regard to the rate of return that can be derived from FPE (Kitamura 2009; Paudel 2009). The failure to engage key stakeholders in policy making justified the litigation around FPE which resulted in its haphazard introduction and hence the implementation challenges.

The findings in sections 6.3.3 and 6.3.6 also link to the FPE Act with regard to the implementation of FPE being challenged by the inadequate grants (E560) being paid by the government for each child. This aspect of the FPE Act is not discussed in the literature but it is in the findings of the document analysis, as a breakdown of the amount allocated to each budget item in the Act. The MoET's FPE Implementation Guidelines (Swaziland 2009a) and the Inqaba programme SDP are also used to analyse the level of conformity to them by the schools, as the FPE programme dictates that they should be used as guidelines in the running of the FPE programme. However, the findings reveal that this has not been the case, citing School C as a case in point. The issue of the FPE Act being ignored by schools when building school infrastructure is highlighted in this section as well. The UNESCO et al (2015) document reveals that the Inqaba policy is not being monitored; hence the ignorance and non-compliance of schools to the FPE Act of 2010 and the FPE

Implementation Guidelines (Swaziland 2009), which embraces the Inqaba SDP programme, are compounded.

In section 6.3.4 the finding drawn from a newspaper article written by Jele (2015), supports the participants' allegations that they were not consulted. One of the school principals who featured in the article complained that as principals FPE was imposed on them.

The findings in section 6.3.4 that are linked to the document analysis and the information revealed by the senior MoET officer and the regional inspector for primary schools point out the lack of consultation within the MoET. The findings in section 6.3.6 show that ever since FPE was introduced many head teachers have had to answer to the PAC for mismanagement of school funds, which they claim are insufficient. At the same time the PAC found that the manner in which the MoET handled the disciplining of head teachers who mismanaged school funds was not impartial and questioned this.

The findings from the document analysis also reveal that it took some time for the Ministry to realise the constitutional dissonance described by Rogers (2010). In response to this anomaly the PS in the MoET informed the head teachers in no uncertain terms that the Ministry would not help them break the law (Sukati 2014). To address this issue the Ministry released Circulars 36 and 39 in a bid to stop schools from charging the top-up fee. This was after the Head of State, the King of the Kingdom of Swaziland King Mswati III, made a pronouncement from the throne that the issue of top-up fees should be settled once and for all. To try and put a stop to the situation the Ministry through the circulars has been using coercive and threatening means to stop head teachers from charging the top-up fee, a move that has to some extent proven futile.

The findings in the data analysis (section 5.5.1) reveal that the process by which textbooks are provided to learners by government is not well managed. Hence, there is a shortage of textbooks in schools. This poses a challenge and a financial drain on the government because the textbooks are paid for but schools are not getting them. The findings further reveal that corrupt practices have since developed in relation to the poor management of textbooks. The findings reveal that this corruption is present in all part of the distribution chain, starting with the REOs who receive them from the publisher, extending to head teachers and the learners at school level. These parties (with the exception of the learners) sell the textbooks to private schools, which do not qualify for textbooks because the provision is for public schools only. The learners in School A disclosed that the books are stolen by learners in the school and sold to other learners at the neighbouring school. They revealed that in School A the management of textbooks was so poor that they were not held accountable for them when they failed to return them at the end of the year. They also revealed that some of the neighbouring schools are strict and expect the learners to replace lost books and hence the stealing and selling of textbooks by learners in School A. This incident was confirmed by the teacher whose class was observed and who decried the waste of resources that this resulted in. This situation is probably as a result of the fact that there is no framework for managing and distributing textbooks through the chain of distribution.

The findings in section 6.3.6 also point out that when the FPE Act was crafted, the inflation that would take place over the years as the FPE progressed to the different grades was not considered. Thus the amount that government pays as grants for learners' has stayed the same ever since. This oversight was expressed by the senior MoET officer who participated in the study. She took ownership of the error on behalf of the MoET. The issue of inflation has been used by head teachers to justify their illegal charging of the top-

up fee. In as much as it is true that the grants have remained stagnant ever since the FPE programme was introduced the huge amounts charged as top-up fees in schools are nevertheless not justified.

The findings in section 6.3.7 disclose that the implementation of the FPE programme is not being monitored. The findings also indicate that the poor monitoring of the programme is structural in nature. The structure of the education system in terms of the chain of command and accountability is complex. The regional primary school inspectors are accountable and report to too many people. This disrupts their plans because they find themselves moving from pillar to post trying to respond to the different commands. Since they are stationed at the regional offices they end up doing administrative work related to the regional level and neglect their core duty which is school inspection. This state of affairs results in head teachers doing as they please because they are not being supervised and allows them to get away with unacceptable practices. Some of the head teachers end up not being supervised and this compromise the quality of education.

The findings in section 6.3.9 relate to FPE indirect costs, facilities and resources that result in the hidden barriers to education. One of these barriers is school uniform which has resulted in learners dropping out of school. The findings reveal that to prevent uniform being a barrier, the DPM's office is undertaking a pilot project of providing packs for underprivileged learners (senior MoET officer).

Another hidden barrier that was revealed by the findings is that of schools being situated far away from the learners' place of residence. This is contrary to what is stated in the MoET Sector Policy which specifies that there should be a school within a 5 km radius of the learner's home. However, the findings reveal that the construction of schools has become impossible mission because it does not align with the Ministry responsible for

providing teachers' posts. The posts provided by the Ministry of Public Service are far fewer than would be required if more schools were to be built. This would result in school buildings being available but no teachers. The Government then opted rather to expand existing schools to accommodate the increase in the primary school intake. The findings point out that the Ministry of Public Service releases 110 posts per annum and these teachers are posted to schools that are experiencing shortages and to schools that have expanded. This cuts down on costs because these teachers add to the pool of existing teachers in that particular school. It is in contrast to having to provide a totally new pool of teachers for the entire school as would be the case in a new school. This was expressed by the senior MoET officer.

The findings in section 6.3.10 relate to the FPE agenda and this section reveals how government would seem not to have been well prepared to introduce FPE in Swaziland. The findings imply that the introduction of the programme was propelled by litigation brought by the Ex-Miners Association and others. This inference is based on the FPE implementation framework which is dated October 2009. FPE was introduced in January 2010 and the Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland, which endorsed the introduction of FPE in 2009, was adopted in 2005. Nevertheless, between 2005 and 2009, the government had ample time to prepare. However, based on the litigation this is a sign that the government was not ready and that the inclusion of the clause on FPE in the Constitution was done in order to be seen by the international community to be committed to the call as a member state of the UN, since EFA is a UN agenda. This assertion is supported by the fact that the FPE Act was enacted in 2010 during the course of the introduction of the programme in schools. This situation has contributed to the lack of understanding and adherence to the FPE Act at all levels of the education system. It has also contributed to the poor implementation of the FPE policies and the programme itself.

The findings indicate that the FPE programme had no action plan and hence the abrupt decisions and withdrawals resulting in implementation challenges. These when inferred reveal that there are poor management and leadership skills within the education system, which resulted in the interplay between policy and practice being misaligned. The findings also point out that the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the FPE programme are poor.

The findings in section 6.3.6 point out that one of the implementation challenges that the FPE programme is faced with is the failure of the actors to adhere to the policies because doing so deprives them of the opportunities that they have become accustomed to. One such is engaging in building projects where they get kickbacks and personally benefit in monetary terms. This has led to concern in the PAC because the practice has been identified as being common among head teachers and the Planning Department in the Ministry has also been implicated. The findings of the PAC align with the senior MoET officer's opinion that head teachers are fond of building because they benefit from it. The findings therefore point to the fact that they do not appreciate the suspension of the top-up fees and the laid down procedures for the way schools should be run.

The findings in section 6.3.12 reflect that there are gaps between policy and practice with regard to the FPE programme. The gaps that were identified were that there is a disconnection between policy and practice and among the players in the implementation process. One of the gaps identified was related to the debacle of the Ministry releasing circulars that contradict each other and the FPE Act, particularly Circular 14 with regard to the FPE Act. This undermined the legal framework for the FPE programme. On realising this, another circular, Circular 17, was released by the MoET to revoke Circular 14.

The lack of understanding of the overall goals and aims of FPE by the implementing actors at school level contributes to the gap that exists between policy and practice. Head teachers lack insight on the bigger picture that can be derived in the long run economically. Accordingly, they regard the programme as a challenge and tend to overlook the way it benefits the learners and gives them an opportunity to access to education which they otherwise would not have had.

The inability of the Human Rights Commission and public administration to offer the assistance that they should is another gap between policy and practice. The challenges that the learners are facing with regard to dropping out of school because they are unable to pay top up fees, would not be there if the Human Rights Commission and public administration were fighting for their right to education. However, because the commission was appointed without being given the tools they require, they are not in a position to fulfil their mandate. The learners are then deprived of a basic right to education, which is contrary to what is provided in terms of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution and Education Sector Policy.

The findings in section 6.3.14 on the sustainability of the FPE programme reveal that the sustainability of the programme is at risk because of the lack of buy in by the head teachers and the officials who are supposed to monitor the programme. The findings in section 6.3.6 further reveal that the FPE grant should be increased to ensure the top-up saga is ended which is in itself a threat. The findings from the AEC report (Swaziland 2013a) indicate that 300 learners dropped out in 2012 as a result of the top-up fee and other hidden costs. The findings in relation to the top-up fees conclude that the FPE programme is unsustainable.



In section 6.3.15 in relation to the findings on political will and the economic situation, the senior MoET officer expressed the opinion that there was political will on the part of government. The official supported her assertion by pointing out that it is for this reason that education has been made a priority in the budget. However, an analysis of the 2015/2016 Swaziland Government budget speech revealed that Swaziland has been experiencing an economic decline which is a threat to the sustainability of the FPE programme.

The findings stated in section 5.51 in the data analysis and in section 6.3.7 echo the fact that there is poor supervision of the FPE programme both at ministerial and school level. The findings point out that this was mentioned by learners in School A and the teacher whose class was observed. They were referring to the poorly managed textbook process in the school. This then reflects that there is also poor management and supervision by the MoET because if it were not so this would not be happening at the school.

#### **6.4.3 Theoretical link with findings**

In this section the researcher examines and discusses the findings that link significantly to the theoretical framework. The theoretical foundation for this study is the systems theory, which encompasses the modernisation, implementation, sustainability and human rights theories. The core issues common to the findings and these theories are discussed below.

Central to these issues is the implementation of the FPE policies and the overall sustainability of the programme. Implementation encompasses the action undertaken by actors to attain the set goals or the intentions of what is being implemented. In this study the intention was FPE and the actors were those responsible for ensuring that its goal(s) were met. The participants, in other words the actors who were involved in the

implementation of the FPE programme, were dissatisfied with the implementation. The study pointed out that it had been poor and had exposed the weaknesses and the fragmentation of the programme in Swaziland. Participants included head teachers, teachers, a senior MoET officer and a regional inspector for primary schools. The beneficiaries of the programme, namely, learners and parents, appreciated the introduction of FPE and the benefits derived from it. However, they pointed out the problems associated with in programme implementation, which aligned with some of those illuminated by the other participants.

Participants' attitudes towards the programme show that there is a disjuncture between the intention of most of the actors/participants and the intended goals of the FPE programme. While some of the participants noted that FPE enables learners from disadvantaged backgrounds to attend schools, which is the essence of the programme; others, for example the regional inspector for primary school, who asked sarcastically what FPE is all about, indicated a lack of appreciation and understanding of the purpose of the FPE programme. The views of participants in this regard undermine the derived benefits of the FPE in relation to the Swaziland environment where the programme is being implemented. This, in the researcher's opinion reveals the manner in which both the FPE and the programme/system operates and the interconnection/disconnection of the implementation process with modernisation, sustainability and human rights.

In as far as implementation theory is concerned, sustainability refers to the maintenance of a programme or set goal, process or outcome over time. In light of this, FPE should be sustained by ensuring that the programme runs as documented in FPE policy statements/documents and its benefits enjoyed by participants – mainly current learners and the future generations. The implementation of FPE in Swaziland, as this study

reveals, suggests that the sustainability of the programme in Swaziland is at risk. This is despite the participants in this study perceiving the presence of political will, which they attested to as being present and used it as yardstick to conclude that the programme is sustainable. I thus consider political will to be a very important aspect of the sustainability of FPE in Swaziland. However, political will should not pay mere lip service to it in order to score political points or to comply with international treaties, as is the case in Swaziland in the view of some participants (e.g. the regional inspector for primary schools and a teacher at School C). Instead, it should be a commitment based on positive actions geared to achieving in concrete terms what the policy is meant for.

Narratives from participants and the circumstances under which the programme was introduced in 2010 do not reflect the willingness that is required. This is because, for the implementation process to be successful, such willingness should be backed by elements such as proper supervision and monitoring, and the provision of resources. However, according to participants, these elements are wanting in the implementation of the FPE programme in Swaziland. Ideal willingness in view is providing FPE for all children of school-going age and upholding their fundamental human right, as advocated by human right theorists.

Human rights in the context of FPE are connected to sustainability. Both theories advocate for political and distributive justice. The FPE policies in Swaziland favour this notion and underline social justice as an aspect of distributive justice, which indeed is an attribute of human rights. In this study, it was pointed out that the human right of learners to education is violated in that some are not accessing FPE and are dropping out because of the problems surrounding programme implementation in Swaziland.

Noting the reasons participants gave for learner dropout (see section 5.2.1.1), I note that none of the participants in the study mentioned anything about measures being put in place to reintegrate these dropouts back into the school system. This reaffirms Sukati's (2013) assertion that the attainment of FPE in Swaziland is seemingly mere rhetoric and the principles related to political and social justice have thus not been applied. This is because, as pointed out by the participants, the hiccups in the implementation have not been addressed. Some of these hiccups are a result of poor governance and not committing adequate resources to the programme, even when some of the barriers were identified. Participants revealed that some of these barriers were caused by hidden costs. The most contentious barrier in the researcher's view, and a central issue in FPE implementation, is the top-up fees. The researcher is of the opinion that this is the central issue because it is the one that was referred to by all participants.

Human rights discourse is underpinned by modernisation theory because it advocates for the achievement of equality through education. It conceives education as the engine for economic development and the removal of socio-economic differences. Thembi, a learner in School B, like many other learners and some of the head teacher participants, expressed that if it had not been for FPE she would not have had an opportunity to access education because she is from a disadvantaged background. Participants in this study, particularly the learners, emphasised how education is important because it provides learners with opportunities to live better, decent lives. Modernisation is based on this premise and rests on the human capital theory and globalisation discourse.

Apart from the promotion of learners' human rights, FPE rests on the conviction that human capital should be developed, in this case the learners; so that they also maybe global citizens. (see Odeleye & Olunkwa 2014). The FPE agenda is a product of UPE and

EFA which advocates for the development of human capital based on the premise of the economic growth and development that can be derived from education (Harber & Oryema 2014; Odeleye & Olunkwa 2014).

In this study, two of the head teacher participants showed some knowledge and an understanding of the international education agenda and its connection to FPE. With this in mind, the researcher argues that if head teachers in schools had this understanding and acknowledged the agenda as a national call, then the FPE implementation challenges and the exclusion of learners would be minimal because they would fight for learners' rights and contribute positively to ensuring that resources, whether sufficient or not, were pooled and directed towards the attainment of this endeavour. Nevertheless, do not place all the blame for this failure on the head teachers. Instead she believes that from the outset the agenda was not well articulated to the actors/stakeholders who were outside the central policy making process.

It would be remiss of the researcher to give the impression that the FPE programme has failed totally. However, the truth of the matter is that if a lasting solution to the challenges is not found, the programme will eventually cease to exist. This implies that there is still room to save the situation. Considering that one of the challenges raised in this study is a lack of consultation, a robust consultation platform should be put in place to include all actors/stakeholders. In this way authoritative ways of doing things which are synonymous with the top-down approach implementation theory, which tends to exclude some stakeholders, can be avoided. Consultation is a very important aspect of implementation theory (see Abuya & Ngware 2016). To achieve anything, as consultation suggests, a consensus needs to be arrived at on how the existing resources can be pooled and what improvising measures can be used by actors/stakeholders. This is based on Elmore's

(1995) backward and forward mapping approach to policy making, which blends the top-up and bottom-down approaches to policy implementation.

With consultation every stakeholder is brought on board and the gap in policy making that was created at the inception of FPE and currently, as participants in this study expressed, can be closed. In the researchers view this would help to repair the entire FPE programme/system. To this end, the researcher reiterate, following Cheruto and Benjamin's (2010) argument, that a system needs to be open, especially if a system's success is based on cooperation, interdependence, interpersonal collaboration, unity and interactions between the actors involved. Given this, the implementation of FPE and the challenges that exist, as this study illuminates, reveal that the way the education system was functioning before the introduction of FPE in Swaziland was closed. Schools simply made decisions as they pleased outside the policy sphere. That is why their adherence to policy today is not easy for them. They are accustomed to their own culture of doing and making things happen. This is a phenomenon that is a characteristic of the bottom-up approach to policy implementation.

However, to overcome this requires government to own up to the implementation hiccups and to forge a way forward by planning, strategising and organising effectively, as elucidated by Nambalirwa (2010). All parties should come to terms with the fact that there is a need to unite towards a common purpose – that of pushing the FPE agenda. They should also ensure that they all contribute to its success and respond effectively to the demands in the external environment. Cheruto and Benjamin (2010) specify that the systems function is influence by the political, economic and social environment, facets that do not to be combining well in the Swaziland FPE implementation agenda. This will require a paradigm shift that considers learners interests first.

## 6.5 Conclusion

This study aimed at investigating the implementation and sustainability of FPE in Swaziland with respect to the interplay between policy and practice. This intention was to inform policy makers on what is actually happening on the ground. It was also intended to reveal what is not happening that should actually be happening, based on the ultimate purpose of FPE as articulated in policy documents and the literature review in the study.

The FPE programme in Swaziland was introduced in 2010 and subsequently faced a myriad of challenges. The findings in this study indicate that these challenges include shortages of facilities, equipment and materials at schools, a lack of understanding and sometimes even a pretence of ignorance regarding FPE policies on the part of the stakeholders, corruption in some schools, poor monitoring of the programme, poor textbook management and distribution, overcrowding in some schools and the unavailability of a proper platform for deliberation on the FPE programme. The study also revealed that some of these challenges were caused by the Ministry itself and, as such, reflected confusion, uncertainty, poor coordination and planning within the Ministry. This situation extends to the lower levels of policy implementation and has had a negative effect on the implementation of the FPE programme. This indeed results in and perhaps reflects the ontologies of what is actually happening on the ground, which is generally in contrast to what is stated in policy documents in relation to FPE. The most serious issue is the fact that certain policy documents have been ignored by Ministry officials who have also released contradictory policy documents.

Furthermore, stakeholders, in this case the sampled participants, were not consulted despite the use of a top-down approach to policy planning. This resulted in the implementers of the programme resisting the change that FPE policy aimed for, for

example the embargo on top-up fees and the promotion of accountability among primary education stakeholders. Head teachers have had to be coerced to obtain their cooperation. Even then because of poor monitoring of the programme some head teachers have managed to get away with what they have been sternly warned not to do, like charging learners top-up fees and sending them home for failure to pay these fees.

The programme (FPE) has also not been managed to fulfil its main objective – that of access to education by all children irrespective of their socio-economic background. This has been a result of both direct and indirect costs which have caused some learners who were benefitting from the programme to drop out, thus defeating the whole purpose of the programme. The lack of ownership of the programme by head teachers has made things worse. These issues all threaten the sustainability of the FPE in Swaziland.

## **6.6. Recommendations**

The researcher recommends that:

The barriers to access to FPE need to be addressed and possibly removed, such as the top-up fee. In addition, the issue of indirect costs to education, such as school uniforms and the distance between schools and the learners' homes, which can lead to incurring transport costs, also need to be addressed. The MoET should try to provide learners with uniforms and also implement the 5 km radius from school to home as articulated in the MoET EDSEC policy. The researcher is aware that the demographics differ depending on the area. Before embarking on this the MoET should undertake a feasibility study, based on the areas that are most affected by the shortage of schools. The Ministry should also reconsider the 5 km radius and opt for a reasonable distance because in some areas the population of learners would not match the 5 km radius and end up resulting in a waste of



resources. The MoET should also engage the Ministry of Public Service to ensure that there are teachers available to fill positions in new schools.

The MoET should also put in place a proper monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the FPE programme. The core duties of regional primary school inspectors should also be prioritised. The channels of command should be clearly delineated to avoid the existing situation which is creating the confusion that prevails. The FPE Unit at the Ministry should be engaged in all issues pertaining to FPE and should work closely with the regional inspectors for primary schools. There should be a proper reporting mechanism that provides two-way feedback between the FPE Unit and chief inspector for primary schools because the FPE Unit is an extension of the chief inspector in the absence of senior inspectors at the primary school level.

There is a need for a textbook management and distribution framework and mechanism to be put in place. The issue of textbook procurement and supply for private schools should also be addressed to curb the corruption that is as a result of the absence of such a mechanism.

There is a need to ensure that teachers who teach the FPE programme have the relevant qualifications and there should be regular in-service training for teachers. There should also be an investment in upgrading teachers' qualifications and teacher training should be a priority. This is important because it has a bearing on the quality of education offered by the teachers.

In order for the implementation of the FPE programme to be a success there should be constant interaction between players/stakeholders in the system. There should also be a proper platform for discussing FPE issues. Such a platform will help in ensuring that

schools are able to share the challenges which they encounter with top-level officials and also be engaged in coming up with strategies that will improve the programme. The availability of such a platform would also assist in ensuring that all stakeholders have a voice and are heard. Such a platform will also create ownership of the programme by all who are involved. It will also enable all stakeholders to speak with one voice.

### **6.7 Future research**

The call for future and further research is in itself an important recommendation. Specifically, given the findings of this study, conclusions and recommendations offered, I articulate the need for future and further research to be conducted on the management and distribution of primary school textbooks in Swaziland. An inquiry (research) into the hidden costs of education is also necessary because it is only when this issue is addressed that one will be able to say that FPE is truly free. There is also a need for future research to be undertaken on the progression of the first FPE graduate cohort to junior secondary school and, in addition, what the future of FPE graduates is in view of the fact that secondary education is not free, even though the EDSEC policy specifies that basic education (both primary and junior secondary) should be free and compulsory. Understanding the progression of FPE graduates could provide useful data or insights on the investment that has been made in FPE and the rates of return on this investment.

### **6.8 Limitations of the study**

The first limitation of this study is the fact that it cannot be generalised because it is a qualitative study. According to Wiersma, Allyn and Bacon (2000), qualitative research occurs in the natural setting, hence it becomes extremely difficult to replicate. In addition this study is a case study by design, which has the disadvantage that no causal inferences can be drawn from it. It is therefore only suggestive of what may be found in similar

research sites or locations (Simon & Goes 2013). Despite this, the researcher was confident that the utilisation of multiple case studies of various schools which are located in different settings in the Manzini region of Swaziland has rendered this study more generalisable. Having said that, this study was not from the outset aimed at being generalised, but at providing understanding of FPE in the Swaziland context, which the multiple case study design attempted to achieve. The study was further limited by the researcher, which may have been influenced by her expectations – more so because the nature of her job makes her privy to some information. This could have influenced the data collection and the responses of respondents, more especially during the probing process.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Permission Letter to the School

P.O. Box A50  
Swazi Plaza  
Mbabane

Head teacher

Dear Sir/ Madam,

**Re: Permission Requesting the Engagement of the Teacher and Learners at your School to Participate in a Research Study for a Doctor of Education (DEd) Thesis.**

I kindly request permission to engage teachers and learners from your school to participate in a research study that I am undertaking in fulfilment of a DEd thesis with the University of South Africa. The topic of the research thesis is **Implementing and Sustaining Free Primary Education in Swaziland: the Interplay between Policy and Practice**. The purpose of the research is to understand how policies concerning Free Primary Education in Swaziland are formulated and implemented.

The teacher that I request to participate in the study should be one who has been in the school since the inception of Free Primary Education (FPE) and preferably one that has progressed with the learners to each grade level up till now if possible. Participation of the teacher will be voluntary. The teacher will be interviewed and observed while teaching in class. Audio recordings of the interview will be made. The audio recordings will assist me to capture the interview responses. The duration of the interview session will be 45 minutes. I also request to have debriefing sessions with the teacher on other dates to clarify the information gathered.

I also request the participation of five learners who are in Grade 6, who have benefitted and been in the school since the inception of FPE. The learners will be engaged in a focus group interview. The focus group interview duration will be an hour. The confidentiality of the participants' information will be upheld and their identities will be kept anonymous through the use of pseudonyms. Participation of learners like for teachers is voluntary. Any Participant may choose to withdraw at any stage without penalty.

In the event my request is accepted, I request you to please provide me a letter of your approval.

Thank you for your co-operation in this regard.

Yours faithfully,

Bethusile P. Dlamini

(+268)7612 4548

## APPENDIX 2

### Permission Letter to Parent(s) Requesting Consent for Child to Participate in the Study

P.O. Box A50  
Swazi Plaza  
Mbabane  
Swaziland

Dear Parent,

#### **Re: Request for Consent for your Child to Participate In a Focus Group Interview.**

I kindly request your consent to engage your child..... to participate in a focus group interview for a research study that I am doing as a DEd student at the University of South Africa. The research is on **Implementing and Sustaining Free Primary Education in Swaziland: The Interplay between Policy and Practice**. The purpose of the research is to understand how policies concerning Free Primary Education in Swaziland are formulated and implemented.

The focus group interviews will be held with Grade six learners who have a part to play or stakeholder in Free Primary Education (FPE) since it was introduced. The exercise will not take more than 60 minutes. The purpose of engaging your child in the study is to gather information on his/her experience since FPE was introduced and what his/her views towards FPE are. Shared ideas or conversations of your child with other focus group participants will be of mutual knowledge benefit(s) to all. The findings of the research will be compiled or included in my final thesis. A copy of this thesis will be made available to your child's school library for anyone who wishes to know the findings of the study.

Participation of your child in this exercise will rely on your consent. Be advised that, if you wish, you may withdraw your child from participating at any time. Data collected from the interview will mainly be used for the purpose of the study and therefore confidentiality and anonymity of the whole process of interviews is guaranteed. I assure you that your child will not be exposed to any form of risk as he/she participates in this research.

Please sign the Consent Form attached to this letter, if you consent that your child be part of the study and return to the school.

Your co-operation in this regard will be greatly appreciated. Thanking you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

Bethusile P Dlamini

(268) 7612 4548

### APPENDIX 3

#### Learners Consent Form from Parent

I/We the parent(s) of ..... agree that my/our child be part of the study: **Implementing and Sustaining Free Primary Education in Swaziland: The Interplay between Policy and Practice.** The purpose of the research is to understand how policies concerning Free Primary Education in Swaziland are formulated and implemented.

I/We understand the aims of the study and the procedures involved. The purpose of engaging my child in the study is to gather information on his/her experience since FPE was introduced and what his/her views towards FPE are. I am aware that shared ideas or conversations of my child with other focus group participants will be of mutual knowledge benefit(s). I am equally aware that the findings of the research will be made available to my child's school library for him/her and others who wish to know the findings of the study to access. In addition, I have been assured me that my child will not be exposed to any form of risk. I am/ We are also aware that the focus group interviews will be audio recorded and any information that my/our child will reveal in the interview will be treated with confidentiality. I/ We hereby append my/our signature(s) for this task.

Participation of my child.....

Audio recording of the procession.....

Parent(s) signature and date .....

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **Letter to the Parent**

P.O. Box A50  
Swazi Plaza  
Mbabane

Dear Parent

#### **Re: Request for your Participation in a Doctoral Research Study Interview**

I kindly request you to participate in an interview for a research study that I am undertaking as part of my Doctoral studies with the University of South Africa. The topic of the research is **Implementing and Sustaining Free Primary Education in Swaziland: The Interplay between Policy and Practice**. The purpose for requesting your participation is to gather information from parents' views with regards to Free Primary Education (FPE).

Participation in this study is voluntary, and you can at your wish decline to participate. Be advised that anonymity and confidentiality is guaranteed. Face-to face interviews will be conducted and you are advised that the interviews will be recorded only for the purpose of data analysis. Data collected will only be for the purposes of the study.

Attached to this letter is a Consent Form which you are requested to fill should you choose to participate in the study and return to the school.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully

Bethusile P. Dlamini

(+268) 7612 4548



## Consent Form

I ..... voluntarily choose to participate in the research study as highlighted in the letter of request and appreciate that anonymity and confidentiality will be adhered to. I append my signature as a sign of my approval to participate in the research.

Signature for participation and date.....

Signature for audio recording approval.....

Researchers Signature and date.....

## APPENDIX 5

### Learners Assent Letter

Dear Learner,

**Re: Implementing and Sustaining Free Primary Education in Swaziland: The Interplay between Policy and Practice**

I request you to participate in a group discussion on Free Primary Education (FPE). The discussion will be conducted at your school and you will be asked questions which you will respond to as a group of 5 learners in Grade 6. You will share your experience/feelings and what you think about FPE ever since you started benefitting from it when you were in Grade 1 until now. Your participation will be of mutual knowledge benefit and will not expose you to any form of risk. Data collected will only be for the purposes of the research and therefore your names will not be revealed. If you are willing to be part of the discussion and your parent(s) allow you to participate please fill in the form below:

I ..... agree to participate in the group discussion (focus group interview). I also understand that the focus group interviews will be recorded using a tape recorder. I also understand that I have a right to withdraw from participating at any time I feel like and will not be penalised for my actions. My personal details will not be given to anyone.

I agree that I will participate and my parents have consented to this exercise.

Learner's Signature and date.....

Researcher's Signature and date.....

Learner's Signature and date.....

Researcher's Signature and date.....

## APPENDIX 6

P.O. Box A50  
Swazi Plaza  
Mbabane  
Swaziland

### Letter to the Head Teacher

The Head teacher

Dear Sir/ Madam,

#### **Re: Request for your Participation in a Research Study For a DEd Programme**

I hereby request that you participate in the study that I am undertaking in fulfilment of a Doctor of Education in Education Management with the University of South Africa. The topic of the study is **Implementing and Sustaining Free Primary Education in Swaziland: The Interplay between Policy and Practice.**

The purpose of engaging you as Head teacher of the school in the study is to get your views with regards to implementing and sustaining Free Primary Education (FPE) in Swaziland. I therefore request to interview you, take notes and audio record the interviews for the purposes of data analysis. The interview duration which you will engage in will not take more than thirty minutes. I also request to have a debrief session on information gathered from the study to verify its authenticity and clarify things that are unclear. The study will benefit you as an administrator and a policy implementer to understand the complexities that relate to Education Policy Formulation and Implementation. Your school will be acknowledged in the study. After publication of the study your school will receive a copy of the research report.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you can at your wish decline to participate. You are advised that information gathered from the interviews will be kept confidential and anonymity is also guaranteed. It will only be used for analysing data.

I kindly request you to please append your signature of consent for the following:

Participation approval.....

Audio recording approval.....

Thank you for your co-operation in this regard.

Yours faithfully,

.....

Bethusile P Dlamini

(268) 7612 4548

**APPENDIX 7**

**TEACHERS CONSENT FORM**

I..... agree to participate in the research on the **Implementation and Sustaining of Free Primary Education: The Interplay between Policy and Practice**. I understand that I can pull out of the research at any time and that my name will not be disclosed in the research report. I am also aware that the interview which I will participate in will be recorded and there will be classroom observations that will take place in my class. Data collected from the whole exercise will only be used for the purposes of the study. I note that I can access the findings of research after completion at my school's library following the pledge of the research to make it available there. Below I append my signature:

Teacher's signature and date.....

Researcher's signature and date.....

## APPENDIX 8

P.O. Box A50  
Swazi Plaza  
Mbabane  
Swaziland

18 March, 2014

The Director of Education  
Dr. Sibongile Mtshali Dlamini  
Ministry of Education and Training  
P.O. Box 39, Mbabane  
Swaziland

Dear Madam,

**Re: Permission To Conduct Research in Four Schools Located In The Manzini Region.**

I hereby request permission to conduct research for my Doctor of Education Thesis, which I am currently pursuing with the University of South Africa. The title of the thesis is **Implementing and Sustaining Free Primary Education in Swaziland: The Interplay between Policy and Practice.**

The schools that I seek permission to conduct my research with are; Manzini Central Primary School, Hillside Primary school, Kwaluseni Primary School and Mbekelweni Primary school. At these schools I intend interviewing Head teachers, teachers, a parent in each school and to also conduct focus group interviews with five Grade 6 learners in each school. I will also make observations of the schools where the research will be undertaken. All participants will be made aware that their participation is voluntary and they are free to withdraw from the research anytime they feel they can no longer take part. They will also

be assured that all information that they will give towards the study will be kept confidential and their true identities will not be disclosed. I also request to interview one of the FPE officers at the Ministry of Education and Training, the Chief Inspector for Primary Schools and a Regional Primary Inspector in the Manzini Region.

Your consideration of this request will be greatly appreciated. Thanking you in advance for your co-operation.

Should you have any question(s) or concerns, please contact me or my Supervisor – Dr OC Potokri, +27842671740 (Cell); +27 (012) 352 4164 (Office); Email:

[potokc@unisa.ac.za](mailto:potokc@unisa.ac.za)

Yours faithfully,

Bethusile P Dlamini

76124548 (Mobile Phone)

25052106/ 7 (Work)

Email: [Dlamini.bethusile@yahoo.com](mailto:Dlamini.bethusile@yahoo.com)

## APPENDIX 9

### Teachers Interview Schedule

1. How long have you been teaching at this school?
2. What is your work experience as a teacher?
3. What is your qualification?
4. How old are you?
5. When were you informed about the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE)?
6. How were you informed about the introduction of this programme?
7. What measures were undertaken to prepare you for the implementation of FPE?
8. Have there been challenges in the implementation of the FPE programme?
9. If so, what challenges have you encountered?
10. How can these challenges be overcome?
11. Do you know anything about the FPE Act and Policy?
12. Do you know about the FPE and EFA conventions that the country is obligated to and has ratified?
13. Do you think FPE is an important programme?
14. Do you think every child has a right to education?
15. How best could Government have introduced FPE?
16. Do you get In-Service training on a regular basis?
17. If so, what training do you receive?
18. Do you think it is necessary for you to get In-Service training?
19. Do learners in your school pay top up fees?
20. If so, how much do they pay?
21. Are all the learners able to pay the top up fee?



22. Do you think learners should pay a top up?
23. Have there been changes in the way things are done in the school ever since FPE was introduced.
24. Have the changes been for good or bad?
25. Do teachers work as a team?
26. Has the school been offering professional development programmes for teachers?
27. Has the FPE programme affected the teaching and learning process?
28. What language do you use when you teach your learners?
29. Do the learners understand the concepts they are being taught using this language?
30. Is the curriculum that is taught adequate for the learners?
31. Are there adequate teaching and learning materials in the classes?
32. Are there adequate facilities and equipment in the school?
33. What are the numbers in the classrooms like?
34. Do you think the FPE programme is sustainable?
35. If not, why not?
36. What do you think should be done to ensure FPE is sustained?

## APPENDIX 10

### Parents Interview Schedule

1. Are you employed?
2. If so, where is your place of employment?
3. What work do you do?
4. Did you, as a parent, play any role at the introduction of FPE when it was introduced?
5. Who informed you about the introduction of FPE?
6. What do you think about the FPE programme in the school?
7. Do you think the introduction of FPE was a good move by the MoET?
8. Do you think the FPE programme is important?
9. Do you know why the FPE programme was introduced?
10. Do you think every child has a right to education?
11. Are any meetings called by the MoET to inform parents on FPE, especially at the regions?
12. Has your child benefitted from the introduction of FPE? If so, how?
13. Has your child encountered any challenges ever since FPE was introduced?
14. Do you know what language is used when your child is taught?
15. What language do you think learners must be taught in?
16. Does the school charge your children a top up fee?
17. If so, how much is the top up fee?
18. Are there changes that have happened in the way the school is run ever since FPE was introduced?
19. As a parent how have you supported the school ever since FPE was introduced?
20. At parents meetings what issues do you discuss with regards to FPE?
21. Are the parents engaged in decision making in the schools?

22. Do your children have sufficient learning materials?
23. Do you think the introduction of FPE has affected the quality of education in anyway?
24. Are you happy with the way the FPE programme is being run?
25. Is the MoET supporting the school by providing facilities, equipment and infrastructure?
26. Does the school inform parents on how learners progress?
27. How has your child been progressing?
28. In what way can the FPE programme be improved?

## APPENDIX 11

### Head teachers Interview Schedule

1. For how long have you been Head teacher of your school?
2. What is your work experience both as a teacher and Head teacher?
3. What are your qualifications?
4. What is your age?
5. When were you informed about the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE)?
6. How were you informed about the introduction of the programme?
7. Were the Head teachers consulted or represented when the FPE Bill and policy were developed?
8. If there were consultations, were the consultation resolutions disseminated to you by the Head teachers?
9. What efforts were made by the MoET to orient Head teachers on the implementation of FPE?
10. Does the MoET provide any form of In-Service training for Head teachers?
11. If so, how often are these trainings held and in what areas are you trained?
12. Ever since FPE was introduced a lot has been reported by the local media like the issue of Circular No. 14 and No. 17 in relation to top up fees, what are your comments on these two Circulars?
13. What steps were taken to prepare Head teachers and teachers for the implementation of FPE?
14. Were Head teachers represented when decisions on the amount of school fees per child for the FPE programme were made?
15. What has been the impact of FPE in the school?

16. Has the school been able to retain learners since the FPE was introduced?
17. How has the repetition rate been like since FPE was introduced?
18. Has the introduction of FPE brought a change in the way the school is managed?
19. What was the purpose of introducing FPE?
20. Is the purpose of introducing FPE being achieved?
21. Do you think FPE is important for the country?
22. What do you know about international conventions that the country has endorsed and is obligated to with regards to FPE?
23. Do you think FPE is a basic human right as stated in the National Constitution?
24. What do you think could have been done better when FPE was introduced?
25. How much does the Government pay for each child per grade level?
26. Is the amount received from Government sufficient for running the school?
27. Is there any top up at your school?
28. If so, how much is it?
29. If so, do all the learners pay the top up fee?
30. From what socio-economic backgrounds do the learners from this school come?
31. Do you think FPE benefits the learners?
32. What role is now played by parents in the school now that FPE has been introduced?
33. What are the parents' attitudes towards FPE?
34. How is the introduction of Inclusive Education in conjunction with FPE working?
35. Do you think the FPE programme is sustainable?
36. Has FPE affected the quality of education?

## APPENDIX 12

### Observation Guidelines for Taking Field Notes

1. The physical environment of the schools in terms of:
  - Infrastructure- school building, classrooms, administrative offices and layout
  - Landscape
2. Facilities and equipment
  - Desks and chairs
  - Textbooks and stationery
3. Classroom observation
  - Interaction between learners and teacher
  - language of instruction
  - Teaching methodology
  - Learners responses to teachers instruction
  - Duration of the lessons and class activity
  - Sitting arrangements
  - Learner's dress code
4. Participants responses to interview questions
  - Behaviour and gestures
  - Attitude towards the questions
  - Consistency in terms of responses provided by each participant

## APPENDIX 13

### Learners Focus Group Interview Schedule

Demographic Information:

Gender of learners\_\_\_\_\_

Their ages\_\_\_\_\_

1. Does your school offer FPE?
2. Do you think FPE is important?
3. What is FPE all about?
4. Have you benefitted from the FPE programme?
5. If so, in what way have you benefitted?
6. Do you know how many you were in class when you started the FPE programme?
7. Are all the other learners that you started with progressing with you?
8. If not, do you know where they are?
9. How many of you now remain in class?
10. Are there proper desks and chairs?
11. Are you enjoying school?
12. How are you doing (well) in your school work?
13. Do you think every child has a right to learn whether they have money or not?
14. Is it important to come to school and learn?
15. Do you know any children who are not at school?
16. If so, why are they not at school?
17. What must be done so that they come to school?
18. Do your parents pay school fees?

19. If so, how much do they pay?
20. What happens to learners who have not paid school fees?
21. Are there enough textbooks for everyone in the class or do you share them?
22. Does the school provide you with other learning materials besides textbooks?
23. If so, what other learning materials does the school provide you with?
24. When you are taught what language is used by the teachers?
25. Do you understand what you are taught?



## APPENDIX 14

### Regional Inspector Interview schedule

1. Do you think the FPE programme is important?
2. As Regional Inspectors, responsible for monitoring the implementation of the programme, were you consulted or represented when the policy and bill were being developed?
3. How has the monitoring of the FPE programme been going?
4. What are the key areas that you monitor with regards to FPE in the schools?
5. Once you have done your monitoring to whom do you disseminate the report?
6. What measures are followed to ensure that the report findings and recommendations are considered?
7. As monitors of the programme are you capacitated to do your job well?
8. What challenges have schools been encountering with the implementation of FPE?
9. How has the Inspectorate at Regional level been addressing the challenges encountered by schools because of FPE?
10. From your observations, are the numbers in the classes manageable?
11. Are the teachers coping as they implement the FPE programme?
12. What support has the Inspectorate, at regional level, been providing to the schools?
13. Have there been workshops for Head teachers and teachers, to assist them to effectively implement FPE?
14. If so, what were the workshops about?
15. If not, Why not?
16. Are schools still charging top up fees?
17. What do you think about the top up of fees?
18. What has been your response as the Inspectorate to the issue of top up fees?

19. Does the top up fee enable the FPE objectives to be fulfilled?
20. Do you think the FPE grant, paid by Government, is sufficient for running the schools?
21. Since part of your job is ensuring that the quality of education is not compromised. How has the introduction of FPE affected the quality of education?
22. Do you think the FPE programme is sustainable?
23. Are schools able to retain the learners?
24. Are the learners able to progress to the next grade?
25. Are there adequate qualified teachers, classrooms, facilities, equipment, textbooks and learning materials in the schools?
26. What role is played by the Inspectorate to ensure that all these things (asked in question 25) are available in the schools?
27. Since one of the roles of the Inspectorate is to work closely with Schools Committees, when the FPE programme was introduced, were parents as key stakeholders engaged?
28. If so, how? If not, why not?
29. What has the response of parents towards the FPE programme been?
30. Do parents understand why FPE was introduced?

## APPENDIX 15

### FPE Officers Interview Schedule

1. What is the role of the FPE officer?
2. Ever since FPE was introduced in 2010, what has your office done?
3. As an FPE officer, what challenges have you had to deal with in regards to FPE?
4. If so, how have you been dealing with the challenges?
5. Does your office have a Head teachers' and teachers' training programme put in place, as implementers of the programme?
6. If so, what have the implementers been trained on?
7. Since the running of schools is monitored by Regional Inspectors in each region, is there a mechanism that has been put in place that provides reports to be presented to your office because your office cannot possibly read all the reports from every school, putting into perspective that there are only two of you in this office?
8. Are the Head teachers and teachers capacitated to sharpen their skills?
9. If so, how are they capacitated?
10. What do you think of the FPE programme?
11. Is the implementation of FPE a success?
12. Do you think the FPE programme will be sustainable especially when the Government's Development Partners stop supporting the programme?
13. What are your views about Circular 14 and Circular 17?
14. What are your views about the top up fee?
15. The FPE Act states that schools can charge a top up fee when there is a school project and that the fee must only be for a year, condition 75% of the parents approve. Who becomes a voice for the Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in this regard?

16. Does the FPE office work closely with the Deputy Prime Ministers (DPMs) office since they are the custodians of OVCs?
17. There have been complaints from schools that Government disburse the FPE grant late making it difficult for schools to operate. How true is this and what is the cause of the delay?
18. What support has your school been getting from the MoET for the FPE programme?
19. Are there sufficient teaching and learning facilities for all the learners?
20. Are there adequate facilities and equipment in the school?
21. What infrastructure developments has your school been provided by the MoET since the inception of FPE?
22. In some quarters there has been an outcry on how the introduction of FPE will affect performance of schools, what is your opinion?

## APPENDIX 16

### Chief Inspector of Primary Schools Interview Schedule

1. How is the FPE programme in the Primary Schools going?
2. Is what is happening on the ground going according to the initial plans at the inception of the programme?
3. What challenges has the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) been facing since the introduction of the FPE programme in the schools?
4. Since the FPE Act and Policy came into effect after the implementation process in 2010, what implementation framework was being used by the Ministry to implement FPE?
5. Were key Education Stakeholders engaged when the FPE framework was developed?
6. Were Head teachers and teachers oriented on the introduction of FPE?
7. Is there any form of capacity building programme that the MoET has put in place to capacitate head teachers and teachers in relation to FPE?
8. Do Head teachers and teachers understand the importance of FPE in Swaziland and how it provides with access to education?
9. If so, can you elaborate on why you think they understand about it?
10. If not, how does the Ministry intend bringing them on board so that they buy into the programme?
11. May you shed light on the confusion surrounding Circular number 14 and 17 at the beginning of the 2013 school year?
12. May you explain how top up fees issue works and why it was included in the FPE Act?
13. How does the top up fee impact on learners accessing education?
14. What is the MoET stand on the infringement of the learners' rights to education with regards to the top up fee issue?

15. Is the FPE programme sustainable in light of the country's poor economic position?
16. Seeing that the European Union has been injecting so much money into the FPE programme, when their assistance lapses, what do you think will happen?
17. Is there a plan that the MoET has put in place to ensure that everything thereafter runs smoothly?
18. Seeing that 67% of the population in Swaziland lives below the poverty line and 30% of the supposed to be labour force being unemployed, when the top fee was being considered as stated in the FPE Act, did the MoET consider these statistics and the possibility of a large number of the Swazi population not affording the top up fees?
19. After all the confusion on the top up fees what does Government intend to do improve the situation?
20. There have been complaints that the Government does not disburse the FPE funds to schools on time. What is the reason behind this?
21. There have been reports that Head teachers expel learners who do not pay top up fees, that being the case will it be possible to realise equal access to FPE in Swaziland as stated in the EDSEC policy of 2011.
22. What measures has Government put in place to ensure that all children are in school and are retained, considering that the EDSEC Policy also states that education is not only free but also compulsory?
23. Were parents consulted about the introduction of the programme so that they input on how the programme should be run?
24. Was there any input or consultation with the DPM's office, as the office is responsible for the welfare of OVCs, and therefore play the parental role for these children?

25. Is there a forum where issues pertaining to FPE can be discussed and deliberated upon?
26. How much does the Government FPE grant pay for each learner?
27. There have been media reports that the FPE grant is not sufficient for the everyday running of schools. What can you say about this?
28. What informed Government about the amount that she pays for the FPE grant per learner?
29. Is the use of the money at the schools monitored or audited?
30. If so, is it being properly managed by the Head teachers?
31. Do the Head teachers have financial management skills?
32. Does the MoET provide Head teachers with training so that they acquire these skills?
33. Does the MoET education provide the schools with the required facilities and equipment to ensure that good quality education is provided to the learners?
34. When FPE was introduced the enrolment rates increased, have all the learners been retained over the years?
35. If not, what seems to be the reason for none retention?
36. How does the MoET ensures that learners get quality education?
37. What have the repetition rates been like ever since FPE was introduced?

**APPENDIX 17**

**Learner's Confidentiality Form**

I ..... agree to participate in the group discussion (focus group interview) and understand that all information that will be gathered will be kept confidential. I also pledge that the names/identities of other participants will remain confidential even after the group discussion/interview.

I agree that I will participate and my parents have consented to this exercise.

Learner's Signature and date.....



## APPENDIX 18

*Alexa Barnby*

*Language Specialist*

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Editing, copywriting, indexing, formatting, translation

---

BA Hons Translation Studies; APEd (SATI) Accredited Professional Text Editor, SATI

Mobile: 071 872 1334

Tel: 012 361 6347

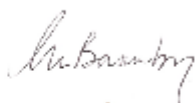
alexabarnby@gmail.com

29 January 2017

To whom it may concern

This is to certify that I, Alexa Kirsten Barnby, ID no. 5106090097080, a freelance language practitioner accredited by the South African Translators' Institute, have edited the doctoral thesis titled "Implementing and Sustaining Free Primary Education in Swaziland: The Interplay between Policy and Practice" by Bethusile P Mahlalela.

The onus is, however, on the author to make the changes and address the comments.



## Research Ethics Clearance Certificate


This is to certify that the application for ethical clearance submitted by

**BP Dlamini [49128809]**

for a D Ed study entitled

**The implementation and sustainability of free primary education in Swaziland:  
The interplay between policy and practice**

has met the ethical requirements as specified by the University of South Africa  
College of Education Research Ethics Committee. This certificate is valid for two  
years from the date of issue.

  
Prof KP Dzvimo  
Executive Dean : CEDU

  
Dr M Claassens  
CEDU REC (Chairperson)  
[mcdtc@netactive.co.za](mailto:mcdtc@netactive.co.za)

Reference number: 2014 SEPTEMBER /49128809/MC

12 SEPTEMBER 2014

**The Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland**



**Ministry of Education & Training**

Tel: (+268) 2 4042491/5  
Fax: (+268) 2 404 3880

P. O. Box 39  
Mbabane, SWAZILAND

7<sup>th</sup> April, 2014

**Attention:**

**Head Teachers:**

Manzini Central Primary School  
Kwaluseni Primary School

Hillside Primary School  
Mbekelweni Primary School

**THROUGH**

Manzini Regional Education Officer

Dear Colleague,

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FOR UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA STUDENT – MS. BETHUSILE P. DLAMINI**

1. Reference is made to the above mentioned subjects.
2. The Ministry of Education and Training has received a request from Ms. Bethusile P. Dlamini, a student at the University of South Africa, that in order for her to fulfill her academic requirements at the University of South Africa, she has to collect data (conduct research) and her study or research topic is: *Implementing and Sustaining Free Primary education in Swaziland: The Interplay between Policy and Practice*. The population for her study comprises of Head Teachers, Teachers, parents and Grade 6 learners in each of the above mentioned schools. All details concerning the study are stated in the participants' consent form which will have to be signed by all participants before Ms. Dlamini begins her data collection. Please note that parents will have to consent for all the participants below the age of 18 years participating in this study.
3. The Ministry of Education and Training requests your office to assist Ms. Dlamini by allowing her to use above mentioned schools in the Manzini region as her research sites as well as facilitate her by giving her all the support she needs in her data collection process. Data collection period is one month.

**DR. SIBONGILE M. MTSHALI-DLAMINI**  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

cc: Regional Education Officers – Manzini  
Chief Inspector – Primary  
4 Head Teachers of the above mentioned schools  
Dr. Collins O. Potokri – Research Supervisor.



Page 1

## APPENDIX 21

### A List of the Study Participants

The list uses Pseudonym names for the participants and a designated official title for one government official.

#### **Individual interviews:**

I Government officials, Head teachers, Teachers and Parents

1. MoET Senior Officer
2. Regional Inspector Primary Schools
3. Head teacher 1 School A
4. Head teacher 2 School A
5. Head teacher School B
6. Head teacher School C
7. Deputy Head teacher School D
8. Teacher School A
9. Teacher School B
10. Teacher School C
11. Teacher School D
12. Parent School A
13. Parent School B
14. Parent School C
15. Parent School D

#### **Focus Group Interviews**

II. Pupils School A

16. Mandla
17. Lomalungelo
18. Phetsile

19. Banele

20. Muzi

21. Nolwazi

III. Pupils School B

22. Siviwe

23. Lungile

24. Thembi

25. Daniel

26. Thobile

27. Thulani

IV. Pupils School C

28. Thoba

29. Lungisa

30. Primrose

31. Skhumbuzo

32. Vusi

33. Bheki

V. Pupils School D

34. Philile

35. Siboniso

36. James

37. Siyandza

38. Ayanda

39. Dumsile