THE LESOTHO NATIONAL INTEGRATED EDUCATION PROGRAMME:

A CASE STUDY ON IMPLEMENTATION

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Thesis submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of

Education of the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education

1995

SUMMARY

This research is a collaborative exploration of the implementation of the National Integrated Education Programme of Lesotho at the piloting stage, focusing on two contrasting pilot schools. The literature review (Part I) establishes key criteria which inform the search for a relevant, sustainable, effective and appropriate basis for policy development in relation to the education of disabled children in developing countries. Part II describes the search for a methodology, which became a process of 'engaging with difference' as an outsider, Westerner, non-disabled professional. Four stipulations underpin the research; that it should directly benefit the Lesotho programme, it should provide lessons to influence policy and practice at a wider level, it should meet academic criteria, and finally it should inform my own professional development as an overseas advisor with Save the Children Fund.

A research team of six people collaboratively researched two pilot schools during a four week period in Lesotho. Collaboration permeates design, data collection, analysis and interpretation. Collaborative conclusions relate to the conditions associated with 'positive' and 'negative' responses to integrated education in each school, and recommendations relate to action by programme coordinators and participants.

My personal retrospective reflections correspond to the four stipulations outlined above, and I conclude by proposing that both research process and integrated education programme development should be seen as 'development issues'. This has major implications for the role of outsiders in facilitating research which aims to promote programme development. Outsiders need to facilitate programme participant's own analysis and problem-solving in a spirit of sharing knowledge and skills, not to impose their own concepts and technologies.

STATEMENT ON THESIS CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

The presentation and structure of this thesis reflects the nature of the research itself, and consequently is somewhat unusual. Firstly, both the location of the research (Lesotho) and the methodological approach which draws heavily on development studies literature, are likely to be unfamiliar to the reader. Therefore, this thesis contains an unusually large number of appendices and illustrations which aim to provide a context for the reader. In addition, visual presentation is central to the methodological approach which aims to validate non literacy-based cultures, and drawings and diagrams are not just 'illustrations' but are a major form of communication in this thesis. Names of schools and children have been changed to respect confidentiality.

Secondly, the structure of the thesis deviates slightly from the recommended format because an understanding of the main thesis (Part III) depends on and originates from the preceding two parts. Part I is the literature review (the first essay), and Part II presents the methodological orientation (the second essay). For ease of reference, the literature search bibliography follows part I, and the references to Parts II and III are a second bibliography at the end of the thesis. These bibliographies reflect sources used for this research as stated in the MEd Handbook (p16), not just references cited in the text.

The sources of information for the literature search (Part I) are accessible English language material, both published and unpublished, with a focus on Africa and the last two decades. In Parts II and III, the information is derived from the research experience in Lesotho which is original. The methodological approach is unique to this research but draws mainly on development literature for inspiration and guidance. This thesis consists of my presentation of the original work of the research team (including myself), and also my own original retrospective reflections. The main thesis (Part III) does not exceed 15,000 words excluding figures, tables and appendices.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

Abbreviations:

CBR   Community-based Rehabilitation

DEO   District Education Officer

DRT   District Resource Teacher

LNFOD   Lesotho National Federation of Associations for the Disabled.

PA   Parents Association

PRA   Participatory Rural Appraisal (Appendix F)

SCF   Save the Children Fund

The Team   The Research Team consisting of the Special Education Unit (four people), a LNFOD representative and myself.

The Unit   The Special Education Unit in the Ministry of Education who coordinate the Programme

Glossary:

Lesotho   the country,

Mosotho   an individual person of the majority race in Lesotho,

Basotho   the plural of Mosotho

Sesotho   the language of the Basotho people

Pitso   a public meeting open to all adults and a forum for local policy formulation

Chief   traditional community leaders

Repeaters   children who stay in the same class and repeat a year, often several times.

PART I

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE RELATING TO THE EDUCATION OF DISABLED CHILDREN IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

INTRODUCTION

As Disability Advisor in the Overseas Department of Save the Children Fund, my key task is to 'lead the process of policy development' in relation to work with disabled children in SCF's programmes in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. This is primarily a process of learning from SCF's own experience in the field within the context of relevant research and practice. SCF's organisational goal is to promote of the Rights of the Child, within the context of their family and community. Strategically, SCF's approach is to work in partnership with local communities, non-government and government agencies, and to respond flexibly according to context. My own perspective is as a Western (1), able-bodied professional, and a key aim of this review is to make this perspective more overt and self-critical.

The particular focus of my research is the SCF-supported integrated primary education programme in Lesotho. This is an innovative programme which is aiming to make primary education accessible to disabled children. Its pilot phase is about to be evaluated and it may well be a model for other countries. The key questions that this review is aiming to answer are:

- What does the literature contribute to our knowledge about the education of disabled children in developing countries (2), particularly in Africa?
- In what ways does it present information or insights which will contribute positively towards the development of relevant, effective, sustainable, appropriate policy and practice?

The review begins with an overview of the main categories of relevant literature. This is followed by the main section which consists of a critique based on the extent to which existing literature is reliable, meaningful, relevant, valid, innovative and comprehensive in the light of above questions. I then present a brief discussion of an alternative approach which addresses some of the weaknesses inherent in the current literature, and conclude by discussing how the lessons learnt from this review will inform my own research. My parameters are published material on the education of disabled children in developing countries with a particular focus on Africa, unpublished material which I have access to through SCF and partner agencies, and other types of recorded information such as video, minutes of meetings, oral histories and personal communications.

CATEGORIES OF LITERATURE

Two striking features characterise the literature as a whole; the paucity of accessible published literature and the dominant influence of a small elite in terms of authorship. My own ERIC search revealed less than 25 articles relating to education and disabled children in developing countries. Peters (1993) found only 8 addressing special education from a cross-cultural perspective. The vast majority of the literature is produced, validated and influenced by a small number of western special education professionals, as reflected in Mittler, Brouillette and Harris (1993) which although intended as a global overview, has only 3 out of 20 chapters written by authors from developing countries.

I have identified 5 broad categories of literature for the purposes of this review; global overviews, African situation analyses, overviews relating to other developing countries, literature focusing on particular themes or strategies, and finally that which is of interest primarily in its questioning of assumptions. I will begin by placing the literature in its historical context.

The International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP) in 1981 together with various United Nations initiatives marked the start of a period of consolidation and convergence of thinking in relation to disability (Olusanya 1983), and generated a significant growth in production of literature. More recently, the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand 1990) focused on the rights of all marginalised groups to basic education. Prior to that, UNESCO had been involved in appraising the situation in relation to special education services since the 1960s (UNESCO 1960, 1970, 1974), whilst other literature had primarily focused on the rehabilitation and medical aspects of disability (eg Commonwealth Fdn 1977).

Two key texts have had a major influence on subsequent literature. The <u>World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons</u> (United Nations, 1983) has the following key features; the adoption of the World Health Organisation (WHO) definition of disability, the use of disability statistics ('1 in 10 people are disabled'), and the promotion of a three-pronged global action plan; prevention, rehabilitation and equalisation of opportunities. The WHO <u>Training Disabled People in the Community</u> (Helander, Mendis and Nelson, 1980) launched the concept of Community-based rehabilitation (CBR) which has met with a uniquely high level of unqualified support (O'Toole 1993), and is meant to encompass educational provision for disabled children.

Global overviews presented by Mittler (1980, 1986, 1993a) and Hegarty (1993) have their roots in the above documents, and encapsulate the dominant international special education perspective which permeates the majority literature. This perspective is characterised primarily by the nature of the problem statement and the proposed solutions which follow from this. Firstly, UN statistics are used to demonstrate that there are large numbers of disabled children who lack access to services in developing countries. This is assumed to be a bad thing, further compounded by the nature of developing countries which are characterised by sickness, death, disease, poverty and lack of services (Mittler 1993a, Wiesinger 1986, Csapo 1987). The problem is located in both the disabled child and the developing country. Solutions for the child are proposed in terms of prevention and cure, and a series of rehabilitation strategies, including education, which would integrate the child into society. The principles underlying special education are seen to be both simple and universal, and are based on rights (Hegarty p15). Developing countries are recommended to prioritise and develop political will in order to solve their problems. Finally, based on the assumption that both the problems and solutions are clearly defined and universally acknowledged, the key issue is seen to be merely one of implementation.

Jonsson (1993) presents a more in depth analysis by acknowledging the origins, changes and complexity inherent in concepts of special education. He also acknowledges the major role that social and economic issues play in determining policy and practice in developing countries. But although he does examine some key assumptions, the underlying principles and his conclusions are not fundamentally different; he sees the main problem as one of implementation which is dependent on the political will of developing countries.

The majority of the literature focusing on Africa also reflects the dominant perspective discussed above, is descriptive rather than analytical, and focuses on formal provision (Abang 1992, Abilla 1988, Csapo 1986, 1987, Okyere 1994, Possi 1994). Ross (1988) draws together the UNESCO experience in Eastern and Southern Africa in the early 1980s. Although primarily a description of formal provision, brief mention is made of the fact that education of disabled children does happen non-formally in African society, and there is also an interesting account of an alternative community-based programme (Arnold 1988).

Exceptions to this dominant perspective can be found in the early 80s and in more recent literature. Olusanya (1983) presents a discussion rather than a reiteration of the issues raised by the IYDP and the World Programme of Action (UN 1983), and does not assume that the issues are simple, clear or universally relevant. By way of contrast, Mba also writing in 1983, presents an alternative but simplistic view; only the Church has done anything worthwhile for the education of disabled children in Africa, and therefore, the Church not the government should increase it activity.

The most recent UNESCO reports on Africa reflect the developments in concepts and language within Western literature on effective schooling and inclusive education (Ainscow 1991, Visser and Upton 1993). For example, UNESCO (1993) draws on the experience of 9 African countries and advocates unanimous support of 'inclusiveness', and a broadening of the concept of 'special needs' to include other marginalised groups.

Kisanji (1993a) presents a thorough overview of existing service provision in Africa but also highlights issues relating to policy and practice which are often ignored. Firstly cultural belief

systems need to be taken into account otherwise programmes are liable to fail or be inappropriate. Secondly, apparent consensus may in fact be Western dominance;

> 'African countries, despite their stated educational policies, have in the main left special education to 'follow the wind' of their external pioneers.' (p161)

Thirdly his analysis of the problems of implementation goes further than the 'political will/priorities' reasons given by Western writers. He highlights areas of weakness including; the conceptualisation of special education as a field for specialists, reliance on external funding, concentration of services in urban areas, irrelevant curricula, 'brain drain' of special education teachers and rivalry between international and national agencies (p169-170).

The majority of literature focusing on other developing countries is again descriptive and focused on formal provision (Armfield 1992, Carpenter 1987, Chua Tee 1986, Quah 1990, UNESCO 1988, Xu Yun 1992). Some challenges to thinking and alternative perspectives are provided by Mike and Christine Miles (1993 and other writings) on the cross-cultural aspects of learning disability. There are also discussions of the Western influence (Madison et al 1986), acknowledgement of traditional good practice (Matthews et al 1977), and thoughtful discussions on integration and inclusion (Dept of Ed Papua New Guinea 1992, Kohli 1993, Lao M.of Ed. 1994).

Categories of literature according to theme or strategy focus on the following subjects; integration/mainstreaming, teacher training/professional development, alternatives to formal schooling, and categories of child according to impairment or age. I will briefly highlight some of the key characteristics of this literature which will be discussed in more depth in the

critique.

Discussions of integration/mainstreaming reflect a wide range of interpretations of the concepts (Abang 1992, Bakare Ayo 1992, Barnartt and Kabzems 1992, Malinga 1991, Mariga and Phachaka 1993). By far the most radical discussions come from the South Africa experience (Kriegler and Farman 1994, Skuy and Partington 1990). There are some pertinent accounts of the justifications for integration, and the problems and successes of implementation (Barker 1994, Fazelbhoy 1989, Save the Children reports from Vietnam 1993b, Laos 1994, Thailand 1993a, Sun 1989, Tuli 1993, Wang and Rule 1992,).

In the literature on categories of children, more challenging contributions are made by the literature on deaf education (Joutselainen 1993) and on learning disabilities or mental handicap (Guma Mongezi 1992, Kriegler 1989, Peters 1993, Miles C and M various publications, Serpell, Mariga and Harvey 1993). Authors focusing on early childhood education draw attention to the importance of alternatives to formal schooling (Brouillette, Thorburn and Yamaguchi 1993, collection in Mitchell and Brown 1991, Phachaka 1990).

A major contribution of literature focusing on professional development, is the move away from a focus on the individual child, towards teacher responsibility for the learning of all children (Ainscow 1993b, Bowman 1986, Brouillette and Brouilette 1993, Cates and Kinnison 1993, Mittler 1986, UNESCO 1985).

The literature on alternatives to formal schooling includes discussions of CBR (Helander et al 1980, 1993, O'Toole 1993, Thorburn and Marfo 1990) and Portage approaches

(Brouillette and Brouillette 1992, Mariga 1992), but does not so far have much impact on the mainstream international special education literature. Mike Miles (1985 and subsequently) has argued strongly for the recognition that disabled children are already present in mainstream schools, prior to 'integration' programmes. This phenomenon he terms 'Casual integration'. Kisanji (1981) and Tungaroza (1993) have also done studies on this subject.

Literature which questions assumptions falls into two broad categories; Western-originated discussions on the conceptualisation of special needs and disability (Ainscow 1991, 1993a 1993b, Barton 1993, Booth 1988, Slee 1993a, 1993b, Swain, Finkelstein, French and Oliver 1993), and literature stressing cultural perspectives. Susan Peters' pioneering work <u>Education and Disability in a Cross-Cultural Perspective</u> (1993) challenges the dominant international special education perspective. She highlights the fact that existing literature is not only very scant, but is based on a range of unchallenged assumptions and ignores cultural bias. Cross-cultural perspectives are also discussed by Brown 1991, Connors and Donnellan 1993, Dalais 1988, Guma Mongezi 1992, Harry and Kalyanpur 1994, Hawkins 1989, Heath and Levin 1991, Kriegler 1989, M Miles 1989, 1991, Miles and Miles 1993, Putnam 1979, Serpell, Mariga and Harvey 1993.

CRITIQUE

I will begin with a critical review of the majority literature in terms of three predominant characteristics which influence or underpin the development of policy and practice; the nature and use of hard data, the presentation of key concepts and cultural assumptions. I will then focus on four issues which the majority literature mostly ignores, but which have major implications for the development of policy and practice and are raised by a very small number of authors; participation, indigenous knowledge, sources of influence and evaluation.

A glance at the global, regional or country situation analyses reveals a plethora of 'facts' and figures which aim to set the scene in relation to the education of disabled children. What purpose does this information serve, to what extent is it reliable, valid and useful information? Two of the most common sets of statistics quoted refer to the numbers of disabled children/children with special needs, and to formal provision.

Quotes on numbers of disabled children/children with special needs in developing countries range from 31 million (Mittler 1993a), through 117 million (Brouillette 1993) to 160 million (Hegarty 1993). This reveals a huge inconsistency in figures quoted in the same year of publication. However, a key problem with disability statistics is that definitions and perceptions of disability and special needs vary widely according to context and culture (Stubbs 1993a) and there is no standard methodology. What is presented as fact, is in reality a conceptual and cultural issue.

Apart from issues of reliability and validity, the extensive use of this type of 'hard data' in the literature has a number of consequences. Firstly it encourages the belief that statistics are necessary for policy development and service provision. Abang (1992) states in relation to Nigeria;

> 'of critical importance is the lack of a national survey of disability. Adequate allocation of funds for programs can only be made when there is a clear knowledge of the number of people being budgeted for.' (p18).

Saunders and Miles (1990) question this assumption in <u>Uses and Abuses of Surveys in Service Development Planning for the Disabled - the case of Lesotho</u>. They argue that there is sufficient relevant data for planning purposes, surveys can be wasteful of resources and delay implementation, they can be counterproductive especially when not followed up with services (expectations are raised then dashed), and more reliable and relevant data can be obtained once services are established.

Secondly, the assumptions and implications inherent in the presentation of these statistics remain unacknowledged and unchallenged. The actual numbers of disabled children are assumed to be the problem (Csapo 1986, 1987, Mittler 1993a, Okyere 1994, Wiesinger 1986), therefore the solutions focus on prevention, cure, and making the child as normal as possible. Statistics do not focus on negative attitudes, policies and institutions which exclude or do not respond positively to the needs of children, which would in turn lead to solutions based on changing attitudes, policies and institutions.

Statistics relating to formal provision are another example of 'hard data' commonly found in the literature. Mostly formal provision for disabled children is interpreted to mean special

schools or units. The questionnaire used in the review of special education in 58 countries (UNESCO 1988b) interprets provision as ranging from boarding schools through to support teaching in regular classes, and according to 7 classifications of disability. Together with data on the numbers of children enroled in special education provision, this data is taken as an indication of the status of special education in a country. Again, the problem is one of presenting an issue which is completely dependent on how it is conceptualised, as if it were purely a matter of straightforward factual information.

The presentation of this data has within it a number of unsubstantiated assumptions. Firstly it assumes that disabled children/children with special needs are a clearly defined group. Secondly it assumes that their needs are clearly defined and also special. Thirdly it assumes that the lack of planned, formal, imported special provision means that disabled children receive no education of any relevance or value within their communities. This third assumption also establishes a premise for research and situation analyses which ignore or dismiss community approaches to education, 'casual integration', and alternative formal approaches such as CBR. Fourthly, it encourages a 'more is better' (Peters 1993) approach, and countries with the larger numbers of statistics relating to children registered and special provision are seen to be more advanced (Abilla 1988). Ironically, in Zimbabwe where segregated special education provision was more 'developed' than in other sub-saharan countries, the opposition to integrating disabled children into mainstream schools appears to be stronger than where 'special' provision has been less developed. (Barnartt and Kabzems 1992). Finally, it is assumed that only if children have been screened, assessed, labelled and registered are they benefitting from formal education (DANIDA 1993, Kristensen 1991), thus excluding schools which respond flexibly to pupils of differing ability without labelling them.

The types of statistics presented in relation to developing countries also reinforces a deficit model of the developing country (Milton Keynes World Development Centre 1992). Indigenous knowledge, skills and practice is ignored or dismissed as irrelevant. The wider economic and political context and the role of West in relation to the cause of problems is not addressed.

I have discussed how the presentation of 'hard data' disguises the conceptual issues which underlie these facts and figures, and yet have major implications for the development of policy and practice. I will now discuss how the key concepts of special educational needs/special education and disability are presented in the literature.

Olusanya, in his discussion of disability in Africa, refers to UNESCO's 1973 definition of special education;

> 'an enriched form of general education aimed at enhancing the quality of lives of those who labour under a variety of handicapping conditions; enriched in so far as it makes use of specially trained educational personnel who are aware of the application of methodological advances in education and of technological equipment to offset certain types of handicap. In the absence of such intervention, many handicapped are likely to suffer a degree of social incompetence and inadequacy and to live well below the level of their potential' (UNESCO 1973, cited in Olusanya 1983, p12)

In this definition, special education is distinguished from ordinary education by two criteria. Firstly by its target group, in other words any education of 'disabled' children is labelled special education (Abang 1992, Anson Yevu 1988, DANIDA 1993, Ross 1988). Secondly by its teachers who are specially trained. It is also seen to be essential for the social and educational well-being of these children who have 'special' needs. The belief that special

educators are essential for the development of special education, which is in turn essential for disabled children has had, and continues to exert a major influence on policy and practice in developing countries (Csapo 1986, 1987). It has formed the basis for the development of a specialist system in Kenya (Abilla 1988) which is held up as a model (DANIDA 1993, Kisanji 1993b, Kristensen 1991) yet has not been evaluated.

The origins, historical development and on-going debate surrounding the concepts of special education and special needs have been well documented in Western-based literature (Ainscow 1991, Barton 1988, Barton 1993, Fulcher 1989, Slee 1993a, Tomlinson 1982). According to one of the pioneers of the term, special needs has always been a debatable concept;

> 'the concept of 'special need' carries a fake objectivity. For one of the main, indeed almost overwhelming, difficulties is to decide whose needs are special, or what 'special' means' (Warnock, cited in Ainscow 1991 p45)

Yet there are some key differences in the way in which these concepts are presented in the literature relating to developing countries. The concepts are more often presented as fixed and self-evident rather than fluid and debatable. Another consequence of their foreign nature is their selective or inaccurate transmission, often by a limited number of Western professionals; at a conference on integrated education in Thailand, one delegate described how 'integrated education' had been understood to mean all types of disabled children (visually impaired, learning disabled, physically disabled) being educated together in one big special school (SCF 1993a).

As the concepts and debates originate in the West, there is also a significant time lag before

they take root in developing countries, by which time they have often been discredited in current Western thinking (Barnartt and Kabzems 1992). UNESCO makes considerable efforts to make current thinking available to developing countries, for example a recent African seminar report (UNESCO 1993) reflects a radical departure from the 'child as problem' model towards the concept of 'inclusiveness' which places the onus on schools and the environment to adapt to meet the needs of a diverse range of pupils. However, the vast majority of the research which supports the development of these concepts (effective schooling, inclusive schools) has taken place in Western countries, and the deeper social/political and economic issues which leave developing countries to continuously 'follow the wind' of their external pioneers (Kisanji 1993) have not been addressed.

Disability is another concept, integrally related to that of special needs, but with its own history, development and complexity. It also highlights the 'selective exportation' issue particularly well. Its use in the literature on developing countries has been influenced by the WHO definition (UN 1983) which reflects an individual, medical model and defines disability largely in terms of deviance from the norm; children with impairments who are limited or unable to function 'normally' are classified as disabled, if they cannot fulfil a normal role, they are classified as handicapped.

Another key influence is the Western education legislation (Warnock 1978), which includes in its definitions of handicap, not just organic impairments such as visual and hearing impairment, but behaviour and emotional 'handicaps' and learning disabilities. Kisanji (1981) in his pioneering survey on handicapped children within mainstream schools in Tanzania includes characteristics such as jealousy, shyness, self consciousness, boisterousness and

pilfering in his definitions of behavioral and emotional handicap. There is an increasing literature (particularly from South Africa, discussed later) which challenges the objectivity of these definitions.

In the West, the concept of disability has gradually moved away from the concept of special educational needs, as increasing numbers of children who were not seen as 'disabled' were recognised as experiencing difficulty in schools. Also it was recognised that many 'disabled' children (for example wheelchair-users) did not have special educational needs, but required accessible buildings and a change of attitudes. This separation is even more apparent in the inclusive education literature referred to earlier (Ainscow 1991), in which the environment not the child becomes the target. Whilst this approach has met with substantial support from professionals, parents and disabled people, it ignores some of the key issues in relation to the education of disabled children.

The original consumers of special education, disabled people in both the West and developing countries, particularly Africa, have been increasingly vocal on education over the last decade (Khalfan 1994, Malinga 1991, Rieser and Mason 1992). They introduce the disabled peoples' perspective on the concept of disability into the special education debate. Disability is no longer seen as an individual characteristic, but as a form of discrimination which society exercises against people who look or behave differently (Barnes 1991, Barton 1993, Swain et al 1993). 'Disabled person' is also a statement of identity, in much the same way as the term 'black' has been used to promote positive identity and raise awareness in relation to the issue of racism (Oliver 1991, Swain et al 1993). Whilst this conceptualisation is in line with the 'removal of barriers' approach of inclusive education, the issue of identity is more

complex. Interestingly, Olusanya expressed reservations about integration from the identification perspective;

'a disabled child in a normal school environment may experience problems of identification as he compares himself with normal children rather than children with similar disabilities.. the objective of sending him to a regular school in the first instance may therefore be defeated' (Olusanya 1983, p13)

Finkelstein (1993) expresses doubts about the success of integration in terms of its promotion of a positive identity for disabled pupils. He points out that curriculum materials do not portray disabled people, and there are few disabled teachers to act as positive role models, so ultimately integration is not promoting the empowerment of disabled children. These issues of definitions of disability and identity are ignored in the literature relating to special education in developing countries.

I have focused on the relationship between the conceptual debates in the West and their largely selective and simplistic representation in literature relating to developing countries. In addition, a range of culturally-specific assumptions underlie the issues of special education, disability, education and childhood. The still current belief in a universal 'culturally immune' methodology is expressed in a proposal for 'cross-cultural collaborative research' to support an pre-school integration project in Mauritius;

'culture-free methods of investigation would be used to look at the child's development, psychophysiology and family relationship, his pattern of relationship with other children in given situations and his potential for learning' (Dalais J C in Ross, 1988)

Putman writing in 1979 assumes that learning disability is an objective reality, and that when

it is not recognised by a society, this is because the education system is not sufficiently developed. This view is still common (Yoder and Kibria 1987).

Although not reflected in the majority literature, several authors have produced pioneering critiques in this field. Peters (1993) in her book <u>Education and Disability in Cross-Cultural Perspective</u> has made a pioneering and important contribution which challenges the basis of much of the existing literature. Speaking as both a disabled person and a professional, she argues that concepts such as disability and education are by no means self-evident and are culturally and context dependent. Her work builds on the concept of disability as defined by the disability movement highlighted in the previous section, and draws on the literature on comparative education and the conceptualisation of learning difficulty within special education. She states that both disability and education as social constructs, and as such needing to be defined within the context of individual countries. A major innovation is her development of four cultural paradigms of disability and education which can be applied to the structure and practice of schooling in a range of cultures.

Two authors who must take much of the credit for bringing the 'cultural issue' to the awareness of Western special education professionals are Christine and Mike Miles, who explore their experiences and beliefs through a focus on Pakistan (chapter 7 in Peters, 1993). They present a detailed critique of concepts of childhood and the child (Miles C 1991), stating that these differ substantially between cultures. They conclude;

> 'the problem is that Western special education is based on ideas about children, childhood, development and learning that differ substantially from those common in Pakistan. Ordinary people can quite quickly get used to technology.. but it is not clear that middle class notions of childhood and learning **can** be absorbed in less than

several decades - regardless of whether they should be' (Miles and Miles 1993, p210)

In Lesotho Hawkins (1989) describes how the concept of childhood does not exist under Lesotho law, rather the population is divided into 'majors and minors' the latter being unmarried males or females who are not heads of the family. In Lesothan primary schools, pupils may be in their late teens or twenties, having spent their younger years herding animals.

Notions of childrearing, concepts of childhood and notions of health and sickness are found to be profoundly different in Navajo American Indian society (Connors and Donnellan 1993). Behaviour is seen as part of the person not a disability, and there is a much greater tolerance of difference and reluctance to force conformity than is found in Western societies. An impairment is seen not as a defect, but as a neutral aspect of a person which contributes to their identity as a whole. The encroachment of white society is actually introducing disability where it did not previously exist (Connors and Donnellan 1993, p279).

A study of mental retardation in African societies (Serpell, Mariga and Harvey 1993) also demonstrates clearly the differences in conceptualisation. For example, African societies place a higher value on social rather than technological aspects of intelligence, and more value on social responsibility than autonomy. They state that research on child development has been conducted through western filters.

Major challenges to the cultural relevance of learning disability and special education are posed in literature from South Africa (Kriegler 1989, Green, Donald and MacIntosh 1992, Guma 1992, Kriegler and Farman 1994, Skuy and Partington 1990). Guma speaks of special

education as a political construction, and also stresses the need for

'paradigms of teaching to promote, encourage and enable people in their struggle to define their sense of self' p133.

Kriegler (1989) questions whether the learning disability paradigm is relevant in South Africa, and with Farman (1994), questions the philosophy of mainstreaming which leaves regular educational practices unquestioned. They stress the need to go beyond mainstreaming, and to change the 'root culture' (Ainscow 1991). The links between cultural sensitivity, power and professionals are acknowledged. They are also explored in Heath and Levin (1991) in relation to early intervention programmes, who suggest a strategy for ensuring cultural sensitivity, which involves 'professionals sharing power and thus losing control and becoming vulnerable' (Heath and Levin 1991, p89).

The above examples from Pakistan, Lesotho and Navajo society demonstrate that what the key concepts at the heart of the subject of the education of disabled children in developing countries are not only debatable, but may not exist in some cultures. The political situation in South Africa has given a major impetus to the questioning of key Western cultural assumptions, but the issues are equally relevant to the development of policy and practice in all cultures.

I will now briefly highlight some of the issues which in the course of my review, have emerged as crucial to the subject, but are noticeable by their absence. It is no accident that some of the strongest challenges to the dominant international special education perspective are emanating from South Africa where the issues of power, control, culture and participation

are integral to any debates on educational policy and practice. The issue of 'who participates' in defining concepts and producing literature is not seen as relevant.

In relation to disabled people, there is a growing literature which argues that disability-related research which does not involved disabled people makes no contribution to the lives of disabled people (Barton 1992, Oliver 1992, Werner 1987). In relation to teachers, the work of Schon (1983, 1987) and Hammersley (1993) on teacher participation and control in research have gained increasing support. In relation to parents, the problems of professional dominance and the 'myth of partnership' are highlighted by Beth and Kalyanpur 1994, and Whittaker 1994. Yet the issue of who participates in research and debate relating to developing countries is absent in the international special education literature; the few professional writers who are from developing countries are trained in the West and are dependent on Western academic institutions or donor agencies for their careers. The voices of disabled people, parents and other community members from developing countries have yet to be heard or acknowledged as important.

Another major gap in the literature is what can be termed 'Indigenous Technical Knowledge' (ITK); a term taken from development literature and described by Chambers (1992) as

> 'the growing recognition by development professionals of the painfully obvious fact that rural people were themselves knowledgeable on many subjects which touched their lives. What became known as indigenous technical knowledge was then increasingly seen to have richness and value for practical purposes.' (p7)

This includes firstly traditional beliefs and attitudes. The studies by Connors and Donnellan on Navajo society and Serpell, Mariga and Harvey 1993 were discussed earlier, but despite

their evidence of radical differences in concepts and perceptions, such studies are rare. Secondly, the occurrence of 'casual integration' referring to disabled children who are attending primary schools apart from planned and formal interventions is found to be common by Kisanji 1981, Mariga and Phachake 1993, Miles 1985, Tungaraza 1993 and Yoder and Kibria 1987). These very few studies also reveal that teachers often find appropriate ways of supporting the learning of these pupils, yet studies on the status of special education largely deny or dismiss this as irrelevant, and rarely build on it in planned programmes. Miles (1985) attributes this to the beliefs; 'what is not planned should not exist' and a resistance to the idea of success without professionals.

Thirdly there very few references to the fact that communities have cared for and educated their disabled members for thousands of years outside formal schooling. Anson-Yevu (1988) in reference to Ghana states that in the traditional system, disabled children would follow the normal pattern of boys being apprenticed to artisans to learn a trade, and girls being attached to women to learn mother-craft. Severely disabled children would usually be fed and cared for in the extended family. Fourthly, the origins of formal provision are usually attributed to Western missionaries (Abang 1992), but a scrape beneath the surface by Miles (1994) exploded this myth and revealed that the first school for the blind was run by a blind Indian teacher.

Two other major gaps are sources of influence and evaluation. Throughout this review the influence of the United Nations (WHO, UNESCO) has been apparent, yet the function, role and limits of UN agencies is never discussed. The effects of the 'New World Order' in terms of the increased power of major donor agencies (Seaman 1993) such as DANIDA to

determine policy and practice in developing countries is not mentioned, yet is increasingly the seen to be at the heart of the development debate (Graham-Brown 1991). Whilst literature on what should be done in developing countries abounds, there is a surprising lack of literature giving examples of the 'success' in a developing country context, of the programmes and approaches that are advocated. Discussions on the criteria by which success should be judged are also lacking.

ALTERNATIVES

Based on my critique of existing literature, and the gaps inherent in it, a more reliable, valid, relevant, meaningful and comprehensive literature would reflect the following four characteristics. Firstly it would include a discussion on the status, function and relevance of information. It would draw on the extensive development literature (Davies 1994, Chambers 1993, Edwards 1989, 1994) which discusses power relationships in the acquisition and use of knowledge, and the professional role in this.

Secondly, and following on from this, the methodologies of collaborative action-based research which discuss alternative, culturally diverse approaches to accessing, storing and communicating knowledge (such as oral history, visual records, video, drama, storytelling) would be incorporated (Chambers 1992, Gosling and Edwards 1993, Slim and Thompson 1993).

Thirdly, conceptual assumptions need to be made overt, and discussed from a cross-cultural perspective. Finally, the whole issue of the education of disabled children in developing countries needs to be seen within the development context. In the 1980s, 'development' has been reversed, the poor are getting poorer, there has been a decline in access to education (Graham-Brown 1993) and health services (Werner 1993) in developing countries. The 'New World Order' and its impact on the subject has to be taken into account.

Part of the problem with the subject of education of disabled children in developing countries is that it suffers from a lack of identity as a discipline or part of a discipline, and it operates in relative isolation from other relevant disciplines. Therefore it does not benefit from the research in other disciplines, and lacks accountability. An alternative approach would aim to acknowledge these difficulties, to draw on other disciplines where relevant, and to locate the subject within a development framework.

CONCLUSION

My review has revealed that in general, the literature is weak in terms of the reliability and relevance of hard data, un-acknowledged and uncriticised concepts and cultural bias. Major gaps are discussions relating to participation, indigenous knowledge and skills, sources of influence and evaluation. The literature as a whole is sparse, dominated by a small elite, and suffers from a lack of identity and isolation from other relevant disciplines.

However, the review has also revealed examples of authors who challenge assumptions and make significant contributions in terms of information and insights which can contribute positively to the development of relevant, effective, sustainable and appropriate policy and practice. The views of these few authors, together with relevant insights from other disciplines, form the basis for the development of an alternative set of criteria which should ideally characterise the literature, and which will inform my own research.

To summarise, my research on the integrated education programme in Lesotho will attempt to ensure that the following criteria apply. Concepts will be clarified and discussed from a cross-cultural perspective. Indigenous knowledge, attitudes and practice will be acknowledged and will form a basis for programme development. Issues will be discussed within the relevant economic and political context. The purpose of the research will be to inform policy and practice in ways which are relevant, effective, sustainable and appropriate. Bias and sources of influence will be acknowledged. Finally, my own role will be one of collaboration and participation rather than of control, and my perspective will be self-critical.

This is a tall order, limited by the paradox of pluralism, which means that no matter how many false perceptions I manage to transcend, by virtue of being human, my contribution will inevitably by limited and biased. By acknowledging this, my contribution can, I believe, be a valid and relevant one. In the words of Sally Falk Moore;

'there is a huge polemic leap from recognising the existence of an important blind spot to arguing that there is a total incapacity to see. The jump seems unjustified and needlessly destructive...There are more and less responsible interpretations. Careful work is careful work.. it is worth doing.' (Moore, 1994, pp 80, 82)

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PART II

ENGAGING WITH DIFFERENCE:

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

In my literature search, I concluded by presenting a set of criteria by which my own research could be judged (p25), and which aimed to avoid the weaknesses and fill the gaps I had highlighted within the majority literature. My research on the Lesotho Integrated Education programme applied these criteria as follows; it aimed to directly benefit the participants of the programme, to acknowledge the cross-cultural perspective, to use culturally relevant approaches to accessing, storing, communicating knowledge and to build on indigenous knowledge and skills. It was conducted collaboratively with a self-critical perspective. This essay portrays my search for and development of a methodology inspired by these criteria. The essence of this journey has been an exploration of how I can meaningfully 'engage with difference'; as a foreigner, outsider, and Western non-disabled professional. My methodological challenge is related to a 'broader epistemological approach or research strategy' not just 'data collection techniques' (Vulliamy 1990, p2). This challenge is:

How can I facilitate a valid, ethical, useful enquiry in the context of different cultures and languages, acknowledging different power relationships, reconciling different agendas, and using approaches which will be empowering rather than exploiting for a wide range of very different people?

There are three distinct stages in my methodological process; preparing it, living it, and learning from it. These correspond to the three stages of the research; firstly, my own preparation in the UK from late 1993 to early 1995, secondly, the collaborative research in Lesotho over four weeks from February-March 1995, and thirdly, my own analysis,

reflections and initial dissemination of findings from April 1995 onwards. The structure of this essay corresponds to the first two stages of the research and methodological process; preparing it, and living it. The final stage (the retrospective learning) will be discussed in Part III.

My preparation stage is discussed firstly in relation to four key stipulations which underpin and inform the research. I then discuss the choice of focus, the role of the literature, personal preparation and the beginnings of collaboration with colleagues in Lesotho. The second section is a critical account of the process of methodological adaptation, development and creation 'as it was lived' during my time in Lesotho including the collaborative and personal concurrent analysis of this process. This was an experience of collaborative creation, professional and personal development which I want to present 'in tact', as authentically as possible, without obscuring it with a smoke-screen of retrospective analysis and add-on literature references. Descriptions of specific data collection techniques referred to in this essay are presented in Appendix H.

PREPARING IT: Foundations, Focus, Influence and Inspiration

The values and goals of Save the Children Fund together with my own particular role within the organisation (outlined in Part I, p2) determine two essential stipulations for this research. Firstly, my role is to support the development of overseas disability programmes, and therefore my research should be of direct and immediate benefit to a specific programme. Secondly, my role as a global advisor means that the research should contribute to the

influence of policy and practice at an international level with donor agencies and policy-makers. The third stipulation is that this research should meet the particular Master's degree academic criteria. In addition to these in a sense non-negotiable stipulations, I have a personal agenda relating to my own professional development; to improve my own awareness and skills in 'engaging with difference'. Tension between these four stipulations permeated the research process and is illustrated in this essay, then discussed and summarised in Part III.

I chose the Lesotho Integrated Education Programme as the focus of this research for the following reasons. On the basis of previous visits and internal reports (Mariga et al 1991-94, and Miles S, 1989-94), it seemed to be an example of a particularly pioneering and radical approach to integration which could have significant lessons for policy development. Secondly it was relatively easy to access (compared to other SCF IE Programmes (3)). Thirdly, the programme coordinators who were excellent practitioners did not have English as a first language, therefore my contribution could be of some practical use in documenting and disseminating their achievements. Finally, my literature search revealed that there is a severe shortage of quality research on integrated education in Africa, resulting in both programme isolation, and a weak basis for development of culturally-appropriate programmes.

During my preparation stage, the Western educational research literature helped to spark off initial ideas and to clarify and validate my own personal methodological strategy which was arising from a blend of principles, preferences and pragmatics. However, the complex individual accounts of research process were were often confusing and frustrating and did not

provide practical guidelines or support. On the other hand, the development literature particularly on 'PRA' (Participatory Rural Appraisal) became increasingly relevant and supportive (4). The following is a brief overview of the contributions made by these different categories of literature.

The literature relating to the 'emerging new paradigm' (Reason and Rowan 1981, Lincoln and Guba 1985 and others) was a key influence on my thinking and the sentiments expressed in the 'New Paradigm Research Manifesto' (Reason and Rowan 1981, p489-491) to a large extent are those on which this research is based. Vulliamy (as one of the rare writers on educational research in developing countries) argues that the 'input/output' quantitative nature of most educational research in developing countries contributes little to an understanding of processes. He advocates the use of qualitative research techniques particularly in relation to educational innovation (Vulliamy 1990, p17), which applies to the Lesotho programme. However his research projects involved 'rigorous and sustained periods of field work', and were not particularly helpful in terms of my planning for a small-scale project.

Literature on classroom action research provided powerful examples and arguments for teacher's abilities to develop themselves professionally (Alfricher et al 1993, Kemmis 1993, Hopkins 1985, Nixon 1991, Winter 1989), and was useful in illuminating the dialectical nature of theory and practice in education (Kemmis and McTaggart 1982). But it left me with questions about my role as an outsider and cultural relevance; did action research require teachers to have a certain level and type of critical/creative thinking ability?

Literature on cooperative, collaborative, interactive and participatory enquiry (Cunningham

1988, Heron 1988, Reason 1988, Torbert 1981) offered examples which validated my intention to develop a relevant, appropriate and purposeful collaboration with colleagues in Lesotho. Several dilemmas and dangers are highlighted, including that of participation being a 'means to lubricate outside interventions' (Swantz and Vainio-Mattila, 1988). However, the cross-cultural perspective was minimal, and my concerns relating to distance and different cultural perceptions were not alleviated.

The literature from disability research by disabled people, argues for the full involvement of consumers in research focusing on disability, in order to promote real improvements in their lives (Barnes 1992, Barton 1992, Morris 1992, Oliver 1992). This influenced me to include a disabled representative in the research team. Also, my own organisation SCF had been increasingly highlighting the issue of child participation, which is ironically noticeable by its absence in most education literature. This debate is fuelled by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Save the Children 1995b), and there is now a small but increasing development literature on this subject (Johnson et al 1995, Kar et al 1992), but nothing relating to disabled children. Involvement of disabled children would be a key objective of the research.

A recurring theme and major contribution from feminist writers (Stanley 1990, Stanley and Wise 1983) is the breakdown of boundaries between subject/object and subjectivity/objectivity, resulting in a need to acknowledge personal bias. Writers such as Oakley (1981) and Marshall (1981) helped un-pick assumptions about objectivity, and affirmed research as a dialectical process of human interaction. This emphasis on the behaviour and attitudes of the researcher is also reinforced in the development literature

discussed later.

As an outsider visiting a programme in a distant culture and country for a short period of time to carry out a small enquiry, I needed a flexible format. I decided that the term 'collaborative exploratory case-study' most accurately reflected my intention; to explore in depth, with my colleagues in Lesotho, an aspect of the IE pilot programme, and 'tell the story' of this in a way which would inform, challenge and hopefully inspire. However, key texts on this approach (Merriam 1988, Yin 1989) were based within a Western cultural context and again were not particularly relevant or helpful in planning.

The development literature (particularly Chambers 1983, 1992, 1993, 1994, Slim and Thompson 1993, Theis and Grady 1991, Guijt et al 1994) became my greatest inspiration and most useful resource both prior to and during my visit to Lesotho in that it acknowledged the depth and breadth of the cultural, linguistic, social, power-relationship, literacy-level difference that I was intending to engage with. But more importantly, the pragmatic origins and purposes or PRA have ensured that it is accessible to a wide audience in content and form; it uses simple language and is in short booklets, and is presented in a range of visual and audio-visual formats (Myrada 1992, Theis and Grady 1991). Therefore it could be shared with co-researchers in Lesotho, whereas the Western educational research literature was alienating and inaccessible. (Appendix D gives an overview of PRA.)

PRA also had limitations in relation to this research. It had been developed from and for agricultural programmes, with hardly any application to children's education programmes, and nothing relating to disability. Therefore it would need adapting and developing.

Cunningham's (1988) use of the term 'preparing' rather than 'planning' is very apt in my own situation. In addition to acquiring knowledge and skills, I also needed to prepare myself in terms of developing a confident yet open mindframe. My preparation took place thousands of miles away from the location of my enquiry, and despite previous visits to the country, I had very few certain expectations. At worst, political instability sparked by changes in South Africa could render the whole project unviable. Other concerns were that my potential collaborators were being polite and would not have time or enthusiasm, and that teachers is schools would be overworked, underpaid and so 'different' in their own educational backgrounds that there would be no basis for communication. As a lone outsider, I felt that my own particular personality would determine whether we 'clicked', and if not, then valid collaborative research would be unlikely. I was unable to adequately visualise the context, to the extent that I was uncertain even of the uncertainties. Once in Lesotho, I would also be thousands of miles away from support including my peer group, tutors, and literature, and phones and faxes would not compensate for the amount of physical distance which made me feel vulnerable. To balance these concerns, I had enough experience of the country and of working in different cultures, security as part of a global organisation with a long established base in Lesotho (5), and sufficient confidence in being able to build on previous contact with colleagues, that I felt extremely excited about the potential for a mutually rewarding adventure.

Collaboration actually began during a brief visit I made in early 1994, when I was able to broach the subject of my research with the Special Education Unit (which consisted of three people who coordinate the Integrated Education Programme) and the SCF Field Director. The Unit welcomed the idea of a small-scale research project which would contribute towards

their own agenda of piloting the integrated education programme. During the next few months in the UK, I worked together with the Unit to produce a chapter on the Lesotho programme for a forthcoming publication (Khatleli, Mariga, Phachaka and Stubbs, 1995), which helped highlight key issues and improve collaboration. Towards the end of the year, plans for the research field visit began to be finalised through an exchange of faxes, and it was decided that the research would contribute towards a later comprehensive evaluation, both in terms of rehearsing methodology, and highlighting key questions. The Ministry of Education requested an official proposal and this outlined the background, aims, objectives, methodology, issues relating to participation, and timescale (Appendix C). Overall, distance and other priorities meant that collaborative preparation was less than I had originally intended during this preparation period, and only really began when I arrived in Lesotho.

LIVING IT: Collaborating, Creating, Exploring and Experimenting

Building Bridges

The structure of the four week research period in Lesotho was as follows. The first week was spent on establishing the research team and collaborative design. Two schools were chosen as the focus; one had responded 'positively' to integration, and the other 'negatively'. The second and fourth weeks were spent at these schools. The third week was a time or reflection, analysis and further training in the use of data collection methods.

Monday, 13th February: I'm in Lesotho, jet-lagged and sweaty and L came to welcome me in my very own cool rondalla which will be my home for the next month. She came straight to the point, and warned me what I had let myself in for; everything takes a huge amount of organisation, plans don't always work, the Ministry wanted to know what its all about, if it rains it will be very difficult in the mountains, the LNFOD representative (disabled person team member) got a job two days ago and is now unavailable, the Ministry has appointed a new Sp Ed team member but he has only just started work, another team member has to go for physiotherapy everyday and so cannot come on the field trips... (Personal research diary)

Collaboration had begun; the rest of the week was a time for building bridges between my ideals and Lesotho reality. The framing of the research as a 'pre-evaluation case study' as stated in the Research Proposal was very important in allaying the fears of the Ministry of Education and the Unit about the word 'research'. It both located the research firmly within the normal course of the project cycle, and also provided a very practical, meaningful and relevant purpose. The next task was to begin to get to grips with the concept and realities of collaboration; I felt that the Unit wanted to support me in whatever it was I had come to do, but they were not quite sure what that was, how relevant or useful it would be, what would be expected from them and whether they would be able to meet those expectations. As the initiator of the research, my challenge was to find a balance between clearly stating my own views on the basic components of the research, and encouraging input and 'ownership' from the start.

One of these basics was the establishment of a research team. There were now four members of the Special Education Unit and a new Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) representative had almost been confirmed. This meant a core team of six people reflecting a mix according to gender, disability, outsiders and insiders, and different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Basotho, Zimbabwean and British). During the school

visits, this team would be broadened to include District Resource Teachers (DRTs) and District Education Officers (DEOs), both necessary in order to cooperate with the Ministry, and teachers and parent representatives. The core team then discussed aims and possible outcomes of the research.

During the first two days, we identified key questions, choice of schools, brainstormed key topics and sub-topics, discussed methods of data collection, and examined our own assumptions and bias, including criteria for identifying the 'positive' and 'negative' schools. The fact that the Unit had identified these schools themselves because they had a real desire to understand what was happening promoted ownership. The main resource I was using at this stage was a PRA training manual (Theis and Grady 1991), which outlined the different stages of research design very clearly and had summaries which could be photocopied to all members (Appendix E). But the lack of braille or tape meant that it was not accessible to Mr A, our visually impaired team member.

I then suggested that team members work in pairs (as 'homework') on a couple of topics and devise relevant indicators and data collection methods which we had discussed earlier. This felt risky because I did not yet know the team members well enough to ascertain whether they were interested or informed enough to fulfil this task. The response to this 'homework' was a reassuring milestone; each pair produced more than enough material to form the basis for very practical and detailed group planning. It also revealed a range of different skills within the team, and helped integrate the newest member of the Unit into the whole process. A much greater depth of knowledge and skills seemed to be revealed through team members working on their own or in pairs than within the large group meetings, when perhaps

courtesy and humility were constraints.

At this stage, I made a conscious choice to focus on building trust and relationships, rather than to ask probing questions about the indicators or methods chosen, unless central to the research orientation. One member of the team talked about the research in terms of acquiring information from the teachers/pupils/community. This lead to a discussion on the difference between facilitating action research, and the type of research which extracts information from subjects for the benefit of researchers. Our final preparation consisted of making a matrix which linked relevant knowledge, skills and experience which we predicted would be needed with each member of the team (Appendix G). This helped reveal the different and complimentary strengths of each member.

Throughout this first week, there had been difficulties finding a time when everyone could meet without interruption, and pre-arranged commitments (such as a parents' day) threatened the proposed schedule. It was a personal challenge for me to let go of my 'ideals' and to 'go with the flow'. I was also aware of the huge discrepancy between my own 100% availability and the Unit's on-going and substantial commitments and responsibilities as Ministry employees. Their full and real involvement would be difficult without making unrealistic demands and therefore being a burden rather than a support, which would contradict the first key stipulation of the research, that it should 'be of direct and immediate benefit to the programme'. It was also difficult for me to use my 'extra' time in ways which didn't just reinforce the idea of it being just 'my research project', but I managed to address this by doing the donkey work of typing up notes from our meetings, making myself more familiar with data collection tools, as well as the continuous activity of analyzing and shaping the

whole process day by day.

Despite the very real progress made during the first week, I experienced an increasing sense of anxiety in relation to apparently conflicting agendas of the research and the suitability of our preparation:

> Thursday, February 16th: ..I am concerned that the visit to the school will be nothing more than a series of predicable interviews on passive groups of people trying to do what is expected of them.. am I as usual, being over-ambitious?.. I feel confused about the objectives of the research; is it me gaining insights?, gaining lots of 'evidence' for 'them out there'?, transferring skills to the team? rehearsing the evaluation? improving the programme? helping the Sp Ed team to learn about their impact?, are these compatable? ...I am currently placing more emphasis on the collaboration and research process than research results.. (Personal research diary)

Co-existing with my anxiety was a feeling shared by the group that it was time for action; the felt need for preparation had been exhausted.

Ups and Downs in the Mountains

After an eight hour drive to the most remote rural and mountainous area of Lesotho, we reached the site of the 'positive' school (Appendix A). Towards the end of the planning week and on arrival, the Unit were very much taken up with logistics; food, accommodation, transport and responding to bureaucratic procedures, leaving me with plenty of time for anxiety. I was aware that although we had identified topics, indicators and methods, we did not have written classroom observation checklists, or lists of probe questions for semi-structured interviews, or a detailed schedule of who was to do what, and when; we were not

measuring up to my perception of Western educational research standards. But at this stage, the team definitely felt we had planned enough. I became aware of my own personal and cultural 'written checklist' bias, whilst my colleagues were from and worked in predominately oral cultures. In addition, really detailed planning could only happen in collaboration with the staff of the school, by 'bringing them on board' our research journey.

Consequently, the first day was very much a sense of plunging into unknown waters. After a brief introduction, the teachers returned to their classes and we divided ourselves up to observe. With only a mental checklist, I was initially uncomfortable in the classroom, but soon became absorbed in the process of taking in and noting down what I saw and heard. Mr A, my visually impaired interpreter was doing his own 'aural observation'. The pre-defined topics and indicators proved a stimulus and framework. After each team member had observed a couple of classes we then had two group feedback and analysis sessions lasting almost three hours in total, involving all the teachers and district staff. Each observer presented their observations, and then the class teacher had a chance to respond before a discussion began. The research 'took off' during these sessions; we at last had some practical experience on which to build. The 'aural observation' worked very well, as Mr A contributed a lot of detail on the verbal interaction both of teacher and children. Much of the learning took place with very little input from myself, as teachers experienced insights from the different perspective of the observers, in an atmosphere of mutual support. As people presented, it became obvious that some 'observations' were much more judgemental than others, and so I was able to give examples of the difference between describing and interpreting or judging a happening, whilst acknowledging that in the end, the perspective is always personal.

I had not predicted the richness of the group feedback sessions, and I was then faced with a dilemma;

> Should we focus in on the observation methodology, or keep expanding out to try more techniques?.. Maybe spending too long on observation is just me grasping for control and certainty again. Its feels more risky trying different methodologies, but will that mean that we just go through a lot of half-baked attempts at research and end up with nothing substantial? (Personal research diary, 20th Feb)

In the end, I opted to 'go with the flow' and consolidate the observation. So far I had taken a supportive, facilitating, 'back seat' role, which began to feel a little uncomfortable; I felt I was not seen to be giving very much. For this reason, and as a break from loosely structured discussion, I decided to lead a more structured workshop on observation facilitating the group to compile a checklist based on their own experience. Again, my focus was on the group's learning process, rather than on ensuring that my own ideas were represented. The response to this session was very positive; it gave us all a chance to acknowledge and validate our learning which had occurred the day before, trust and respect increased, and I felt I was 'paying my way'. This also marked another level of letting go; although I was keen to try different data collection methods, it felt more authentically collaborative to follow the group energy and interest. However, this increased the tension I felt between serving programme needs and fulfilling my academic research agenda. My question was; what counts as rigour?

In addition to large group feedback and analysis sessions, the research team met each evening to evaluate the day and plan the next, which some team members initially felt was a bit unnecessary. This highlighted a discrepancy between my personal and academic need for

'thoroughness', and the team's sense of what was good enough for practical purposes. It also felt like a cultural and personality issue. The Western and my own tendency was to be perfectionist in relation to work and people, obsessed with the written word, speedy, well prepared, and above all in control. The other team members were from Southern Africa, and in general displayed an acceptance of things and people as they are, a preference for face-to-face communication, a great deal of pragmatism, a much greater tolerance of the unexpected, a different sense of time, and a lot of patience. This tension was also internal:

> I suppose the tension I feel is nothing more than a familiar internal one between my natural ease with chaos as part of the creative process, and my anxious obsession with order/clarity/thoroughness/perfectionism (Fax to tutor, 27th Feb)

On the second day, we visited neighbouring schools which were collaborating with the main pilot school. We piloted a data collection method which we had developed collaboratively, which later came to be called 'APE'; Anonymous, Personal Evaluation (Appendix H ii). During the feedback session, issues were clarified and debated, and a level of consensus was established. The results of this exercise surprised me, and revealed a hidden assumption. In the large group, teachers had been reserved and confused about the methodology. I expected a few short sentences and much repetition, yet the depth of perception and analysis of their own experience was impressive. The next day, the summary was also fed back to the large group at the main school where it provoked a very lively discussion with a validating and problem-solving focus.

Meanwhile, Mr A and other team members conducted focus groups and individual storytelling sessions (Appendix H iii, iv) with a selection of disabled (6) and non-disabled

children. The children were enthusiastic but team members found that the younger ones did

not respond to storytelling approaches, and semi-structured interviews were used instead.

Team members were experimenting with finding ways to help the children communicate their

experiences of being in school. Again feedback sessions were lively, practical and valuable.

However, the 'ups' of our mountain experience were about to be balanced:

> I had been expecting the un-expected, and this proved to be wise...on the morning
> of the third day, we arrived at the school and found that the children gathered for
> assembly were all silent. We were handed a note which said that the previous evening
> during the storm, four children had been struck by lightening and killed... two were
> ones we had interviewed the previous day.. (Fax to tutor, 27th Feb)

Any needs of 'the research' were dropped at this stage, and traditional customs were

respected. We were however, assured that we could continue, although the memorial service

necessitated a curtailment of our visit by one day. On the third day, the team carried out

semi-structured interviews, storytellings and focus groups with the DRT, DEO, parents,

teachers and a children's group at the main school. The methods chosen reflected our desire

to be as exploratory and open-ended as possible with both parents and teachers.

We found that both parents and teachers responded extremely well to being asked to 'tell

their story'; teachers stated that this helped them to understand their own experience. They

seemed to have more control of the process than if they had been responding to questions;

they were communicating to us what they wanted to communicate, rather than having

information extracted from them. However, there was quite a large discrepancy between the

different team member's application of these methods and the records produced. Myself and

another member produced pages of almost verbatim notes after such exchanges, whereas

other team members had fairly short responses under probe question headings. It was never fully resolved as to whether this was due to team member personalities, the storyteller's natural reticence, or difficulty in taking notes simultaneously. It may well be a combination of all three, and certainly the last factor was significant. This again raised for me cultural dilemmas of oral versus literacy based, and different notions of rigour. We had decided against tape-recording because of its potential intrusiveness and because we did not have the time or human resources to make transcripts and translations.

Feedback sessions triggered team member's memories, and comments on both content and interview process were often made which were not recorded in personal notes. Summaries of these discussions were recorded on flip charts. As a team, our techniques together with note-taking improved with experience. In PRA:

> Every interview or observation is more important than the previous one, as the team continuously builds on previously accumulated learning experience. (Theis and Grady 1991, p32)

Learning through mistakes and 'embracing error' are also key principles:

> Face-to-face field experience is the key... by applying the principle of optimal unpreparedness, it is usually best to start sooner than seems safe or sensible to newcomers; not to wait, but to *start, stumble, self-correct, and then share* (my italics, Chambers 1992, p25)

I was becoming increasingly aware of the importance of my own attitudes and behaviour as an outsider. My fourth research stipulation relating to learning about how to 'engage with difference' was becoming for me an increasingly important focus of the research. It also provoked feelings of vulnerability, because of my incompetence in mastering basic Sesothan

phrases, remembering lots of unfamiliar names, and sometimes clumsy social skills. However, I was able to compensate to a large extent by sharing my musical interest and skills with children and teachers (Appendix L).

On the fourth and final day, we made a home visit to the family of a disabled child who was now at home due to a broken wheelchair. The emphasis was on communication and relaxed rapport rather than on fulfilling a preconceived agenda. During the feedback session back at the school, a case study developed spontaneously around the girl in question. References to her had cropped up in teacher interviews and previous general discussion, and the very lively debate concluded with an action plan to address the problem of her non-attendance at school.

The range of activities we facilitated, together with the team approach, ensured an increasing triangulation in terms of our data collection. We gradually got to know the children we had observed in the classroom, heard about from teachers and parents and spoken to ourselves, and there were some heartily expressed differences of perception and opinion.

Earlier on in the week, the team had introduced the teachers to some diagram-based activities, inspired by PRA, but created specifically for the school situation. These 'Mountain Profiles' and 'Support Diagrams' (Appendix H v,vi) were presented on the last day, but the curtailed visit prevented a full discussion. However, teacher had clearly benefited from carrying out the activities on their own, and the research team felt excited and confident about their use in the second school. The overwhelming feedback from the teachers prior to our departure was extremely positive, as much in relation to the new methods they had learnt, as to the content of the learning.

Resting and Reflecting

The third week was a time for writing up notes, evaluation, and planning for the visit to the second pilot school. The attitude of the team had moved from one of blind faith to personal conviction; the practical experience of engaging in the research activities had brought about understanding and enthusiasm. The team reviewed methodology as part of the overall evaluation of the first visit. We realised that certain activities would have benefited from better planning and preparation, but acknowledged that this realisation is useful for the future, but could not have been done prior to the practical experience, when the purpose of the planning was not understood. The team realised that learning new methods takes time and experience to be fully understood.

The second visit to the 'negative' school was likely to be more challenging, and the team felt the need to become more familiar with the methods as a preparation. We therefore held a day's workshop on PRA methodology, during which we revised our learning so far and then practised using methods in relation to the programme as a whole. For example, a Support Diagram was drawn which showed the extent of the two-way influences on the programme (Appendix H, p159). The day highlighted the visual bias of these methods, and the need to create approaches which would be suitable for visually impaired people. Training videos of PRA in India and Kenya (MYRADA 1992, SAGA 1993) were also shown and discussed.

At this half way stage, I personally felt very excited and humbled by the whole interactive learning process in which I was now deeply emersed; external audiences in the UK seemed to be very remote and superfluous to the research process. Validity was a 'felt' experience

because of the team's and participants' committed quest for insight into their own practice, and their pragmatic rigour. This resulted in an increasing tension between what felt appropriate and 'good enough' for the purposes of the programme and the Unit, and my personal academic agenda:

> I am uncertain about whether I have collected enough data.. I could have collected more if we hadn't fed back to the teachers, and if it hadn't been collaborative or action-based!.. has the data been collected in a rigorous enough way to satisfy academic standards?... real collaborative action research does involve handing over control (and does make me feel vulnerable)... I feel confused between process and content, both are a focus of the research but this feels messy... there has to be some way to make this 'messiness' valid.. (Fax to tutor, 27th Feb)

The Ultimate Challenge

The team were apprehensive about the visit to the second school, previous visits had been very difficult and unproductive and this would be a real challenge to the efficacy of our participatory 'empowering' approaches and methods. Although the Unit had informed the district office of our impending visit several months earlier, the teachers informed us that they were given only had two days notice. Their welcome was unenthusiastic, and they immediately set about listing reasons why this was a very bad week for our visit, and they did not have any time for us. We tried to persuade them to change their minds, but this approach was obviously failing, and so we handed over responsibility for the decision to them. We stated clearly our perception of what a unique and golden opportunity this would be for them and us, but acknowledged that this may not be possible, in which case we would quite simply leave and contact another school. Then we left them to make their own choice.

On our return, to our amazement, they stated that they would allocate some teachers for several hours per day.

We began immediately with the Mountain Profiles and Support Diagrams (Appendix H v,vi), with the teachers working in two groups. The team were available to offer clarification on the method, but otherwise we were uninvolved. They then displayed their diagrams and talked about them to the group. This whole activity took hardly more than an hour, but was a major catalyst in establishing rapport, understanding and empathy. Prior to the activity, the teachers were very well aware that their involvement in the programme was not highly rated, they were therefore defensive and closed when 'confronted' by face-to-face communication. By 'handing over the stick' to them, they took complete responsibility for the content, process and communication of their learning. By the use of visual methods, they were also freed from the constraints of having to use any exclusive jargon which they did not own, or any restricting language. The teachers' personal involvement grew during the week, and on one bus trip home, two teachers were talking;

> Yesterday we were thinking that we were sacrificing our time and should be working for the sports day. Today we feel our preference is to be in the workshop... the Sp Ed team can come anytime! (Personal research diary, March 7th)

We were able to carry out many more activities than we had in the first school, partly because we ourselves were more familiar with them, and partly because we were not involved in visiting any other linked schools. The diagrammatic and visual activities on the whole worked better than classroom observation and storytelling. This may be because we wanted to 'go with the flow' of the success of our initial activities, and so spent more time

on them, but is may also be because they are less threatening than observation and face-to-face approaches. In addition, we were able to experiment with more activities with children, such as Daily Profiles and Ability Drawings. The visit ended with a very positive group evaluation of the previous three days, and a stirring speech by Mr A, speaking of his personal experience of disability and the need for teachers to open their doors to disabled children; any remaining resistance was dissolved in tears at this point.

In this essay, I have described the development of the methodological orientation underpinning the research as it happened prior to and during the research. Part III which presents the collaborative findings and analysis of the research, is illustrated by detailed examples of the practical application of this methodology. My own retrospective reflections and conclusions in relation to this methodology only make sense in the light of this collaborative research experience, and therefore are presented in chapters 4 and 5 of Part III.

PART III

THE LESOTHO NATIONAL INTEGRATED EDUCATION PROGRAMME:

A CASE STUDY ON IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

The Lesotho research is a collaborative exploration of the implementation of the National Integrated Education Programme at the piloting stage, focusing on two contrasting pilot schools. Collaboration and exploration are key characteristics permeating and influencing both content and process of the research. The scope of this study reflects the stage of development of the programme; the research aims to investigate the process and impact of the piloting stage, not to question the fundamental principles or direction of the programme as a whole. This in-depth study will feed in to a later, broader-based evaluation of the whole programme.

The structure of this thesis corresponds to the three stages of the research discussed in Part II (p); preparation, collaborative research in Lesotho, and retrospective personal analysis and conclusions. Chapter 1 sets the scene with a brief introduction to Lesotho in relation to education and disabled children. More general background on Lesotho and on the situation in relation to children and disability is presented in Appendix B. I then introduce the Integrated Education programme as a whole, setting the context for the research. This is followed by details of the research topic and questions as defined by the research team. This chapter concludes with an introduction to to the analytical approach and reporting style which informs this thesis.

Chapters 2 and 3 correspond to the collaborative phase of the research based in Lesotho, and I present the research findings and collaborative analysis, interpretations, conclusions and recommendations based on Pilot Schools A and B respectively. In order to validate and

respect the collaborative nature of this research, in these chapters I adopt an approach similar to that taken in Part II. I present the collaborative process as authentically as possible, avoiding personal retrospective analysis. This is not to deny that this is 'my' account of 'our' research, and will inevitably and appropriately reflect a personal perspective. Also in order to condense the extensive material, I summarised the results and discussions according to my own categories, aiming to ensure that they correspond as closely as possible to the team's perspectives.

The final two chapters reflect my own personal perspectives. In chapter 4 I presents my retrospective reflections in the light of key stipulations outlined in Part II; that the research should benefit the programme, inform policy and practice at a wider level, and address academic criteria. The fourth stipulation, that the research should influence my own professional development is incorporated into chapter 5 which draws out key lessons and focuses on implications for the future.

CHAPTER 1   SETTING THE SCENE

Education in Lesotho

The provision of education in Lesotho is a joint venture between the government, churches and the community. The government pays teacher's salaries, but buildings are often owned by churches, and parents pay fees. Overall, conditions in primary schools have improved in recent years, with higher school attendance and exam passes, but malnutrition has increased due to the prolonged and recurrent drought situation. About 78% of children attend primary school but drop-out rates are high:
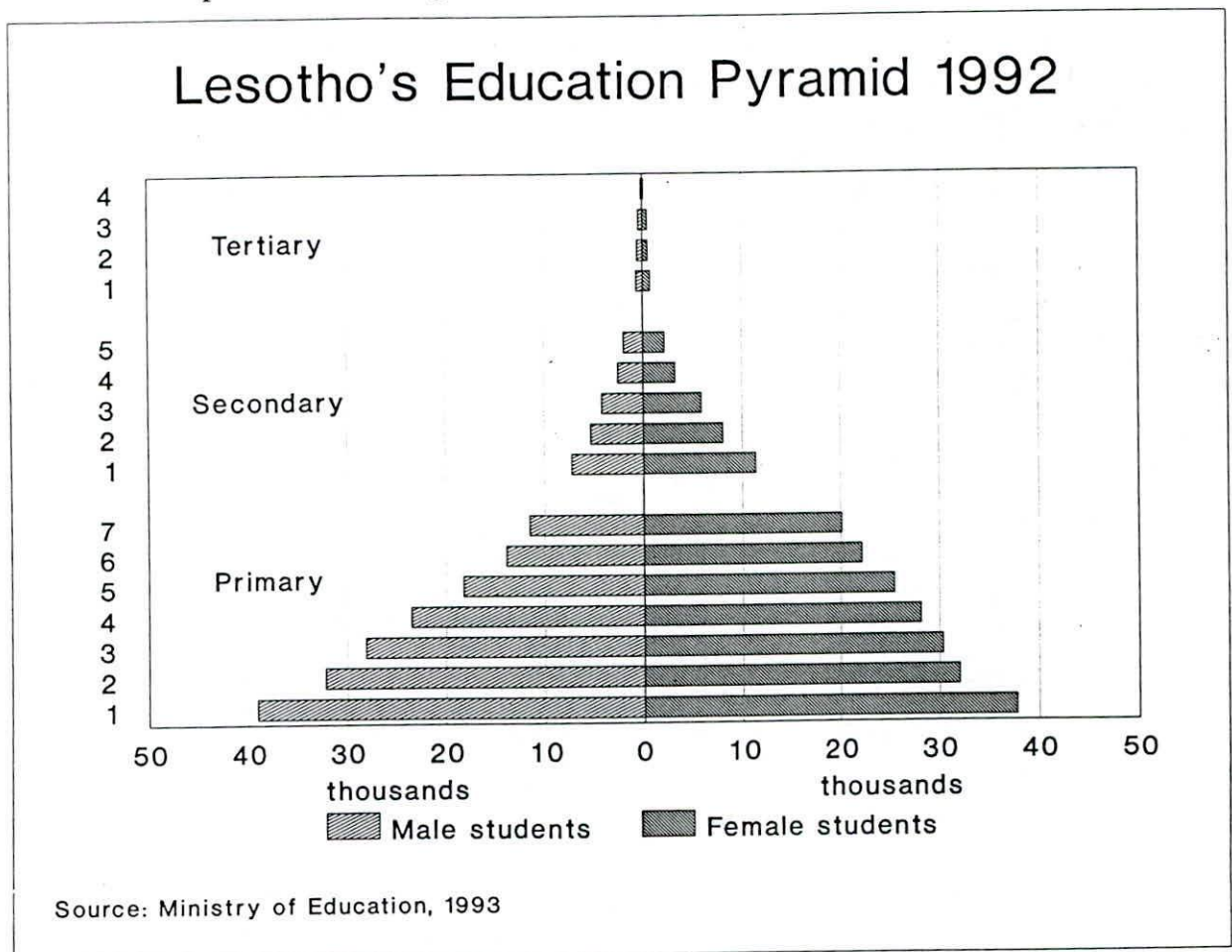

FIGURE 1: Drop out Rates in Lesotho

Girls outnumber boys in Lesotho schools, particularly in higher grades. This is attributed to families requiring boys for herding, and traditional initiation rites. Other key problems include; high repeater rates, lack of infrastructure such as water, classrooms and latrines, poor pay of teachers, teacher training standards, un-affordable fees and poverty of parents, poor accessibility in mountain areas, lack of early childhood education facilities, over-age students, over-crowding and exceptionally high pupil-teacher ratios (the average is 54:1, but in some poor areas is over 100:1). In addition, the overall relevance and flexibility of the system and curriculum has been questioned particularly in relation to rural areas. (Gay and Hall (ed) 1994, Gill 1995, Khatleli et al 1995).

The National Integrated Education Programme

In 1987 the Lesotho Ministry of Education commissioned a consultant to draft special education guidelines. The report highlighted that existing institutions violated traditional care-taking traditions, were costly, unable to meet majority needs, and were even detrimental to children's well-being (Csapo 1987). Integration was recommended as the only viable, sustainable and appropriate means of providing education for disabled children. In 1991, the Special Education Unit was founded within the Ministry of Education. It initially consisted of two people; a Senior Inspector who had been seconded by the Ministry to train in Special Education in the USA, and an advisor from Zimbabwe funded by Save the Children Fund who had extensive international experience of both Community-based Rehabilitation and Integrated Education.

The Unit began its work with a six month feasibility study (Mariga and Phachaka 1993) which not only provided a wealth of relevant information, but involved local communities from the start. Interviews were conducted with 2,649 teachers, over 1,000 parents and a sample of children in 314 primary schools (26% of the total) throughout Lesotho. A key finding of this study was that over 17% of children within primary schools were having problems with the existing curriculum and teaching methods:

PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES		
Disability	Number with disability	% of all children
Visual Impairment	3363	2.3
Hearing Impairment	2100	1.4
Physical Impairment	660	0.5
Learning Disability	18264	12.5
Mentally Handicapped	635	0.4
Epileptic	354	0.2
Others	73	0.1
Total	25449	17.4
Source: Mariga and Phachaka, 1993		

FIGURE 2: Primary School Children with Disabilities

The Unit chose ten pilot schools representing a range of attitudes towards integration and a wide geographical spread (Appendix A). The key characteristics of the programme can be summarised as follows:

- a strong focus on changing attitudes, knowledge and teaching methodology in order to enable a broader range of children to benefit within a mainstream environment.

- the programme targets mainstream teachers and does not intend to develop separate cadres, training courses, certificates or salaries

- 'integration' refers to facilitating children's learning in mainstream classrooms, not special units. Existing special schools will operate as resource centres.

- the involvement of parents' and disabled peoples' organisations is seen as central; both were represented on the curriculum committee which critiqued materials developed by the Special Education Unit

- children with all types of impairment and a wide age range are being targeted, to reflect the existing situation within primary schools

The three year piloting phase has the following objectives; awareness-raising at all levels, development of new curriculum materials (providing information relating to disabled children, and intended for integration into the mainstream curriculum), in-service training of all personnel in ten pilot schools, parent-training, development of culturally-appropriate assessment and programming methods for individual children and broad-based networking in order to promote collaboration between all sectors and levels of society. Sustainability is encouraged by ensuring that training is fully integrated, resources are kept to a minimum, the government demonstrates commitment through budgeting and staffing, and most

importantly, that careful consideration is given to the participatory process.

A detailed description of this programme written by myself together with the Special Education Unit during the preparation stage of the research will be published in September (Khatleli, Mariga, Phachaka and Stubbs, 1995).

Research Topics and Key Questions

The overall focus and origins of the research were discussed in Part II (p42,47). At the start of the collaborative planning week in Lesotho, the research team agreed that the overall goal was 'to explore in depth the impact of the pilot programme on two pilot schools'. Key questions were;

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the programme so far, as perceived by the teachers, parents, children and wider community?

- What are current constraints and how can they be overcome?

- What are current opportunities and how can we make the most of them?

- What are the issues which should be explored further in the comprehensive programme evaluation?

These questions were in a sense 'starting blocks' for the team to begin their journey of exploration. They did not provide a rigid framework for the research, or limit its direction. The team then identified six key topics which would form the focus of the research:

- impact on disabled children,

- teacher development

- whole school environment

- family involvement and perceptions

- wider community involvement and perceptions

- disabled adults involvement.

Appendix F shows the sub-topics together with examples indicators drawn up by the team. The 'process of change' was considered to be a topic which ran throughout the others.

Analytical Approach and Reporting Style

The approach taken to analysis and reporting stems from the overall methodological orientation and reflects the nature and purpose of the research, and influences the style, content and structure of this thesis. Key issues are not only in relation to *how* analysis and reporting are undertaken, but also in relation to *who, why, what and when?* The PRA approach stresses that local people should be facilitated to do their own analysis and disseminate their findings in appropriate accessible ways:

PRA analysis is context-specific in terms of both content and process. It is therefore against the very objective of PRA to impose a model of analysis on local people. (Guijt et al, 1994, p150)

The style, quality and depth of analysis are determined by the purpose of the research, which changes according to the different stages of the research. Figure 3 shows the analytical sequence followed in this research, and illustrates how at different stages, different people carry out analysis on different aspects of the research, at different times, and through different processes. At every stage, analysis is a systematic, critical process of making sense of the research experience (both content and process) in ways which are relevant, meaningful and useful.

There are two main analytical stages in this research which correspond to the thesis structure outlined in the introduction (p63). <u>Collaborative analysis</u> characterised the collaborative research period in Lesotho and is presented in chapters 2 and 3. My <u>personal retrospective analysis</u> is presented in chapters 4 and 5, together with my conclusions and recommendations for further exploration.

Analytical Sequence: The task	WHAT?	WHO?	WHEN?	HOW?
1. Identifying key issues	Secondary sources, Unit experience	Unit and S	Preparation time	1. By collaborative writing 2. Fax exchange
2. Refining the focus; identifying key questions	Team interest and experience	Research team	First week	1. Group brainstorm, 2. Individual homework
3. Filtering initial information and experience	Activities such as observation, interviews, etc	All engaged in activity	At time of activity	1. Process of seeing/hearing 2. Deciding what to record
4. Group analysis; deciding what is relevant, meaningful, useful	Feedback from activities	Research team plus teachers	Same day, or next day	1. Presentation then free discussion 2. Facilitated discussion
5. Research team evaluations	Process and content of each day	Research team	Evening	1. Group systematic review of process and content, and planning for next day. 2. Individual reflections.
6. Review of first pilot school visit and revision of plans for second visit	Process and content of Mokhotlong visit	Research team	Week following the visit	1. Evaluation exercise 2. Group discussion
7. Research team end of project evaluation	Whole research experience	Research team	Last day	1. General discussion 2. Evaluation exercise 3. Review of initial research questions
8. Initial dissemination	Key lessons learnt	S	Months following	Presenting papers at conferences (Stubbs, 1995), seminars for colleagues
9. In-depth personal retrospective analysis	Whole research experience	S	Months following	1. Process of writing for academic audience, 2. Re-reading of literature 3. Discussions with peers and tutor
10. Applying research findings	Different aspects of research experience	S and all involved	Until no longer relevant or interesting	1. Internal reflection 2. Communication to others 3. Production of different types of documentation for different audiences

FIGURE 3: ANALYTICAL SEQUENCE AND APPROACH

Key: S - myself

CHAPTER 2   PILOT SCHOOL A

I begin this chapter by introducing the context and background to the school. The structure then reflects the cumulative and collaborative learning process as it happened in Lesotho. This began with an introduction through classroom observations. We then gained an overview of successes and constraints which was followed by in-depth individual perspectives from teachers, parents and district staff. The learning concluded with children's perspectives, a home visit, and finally an overview of support networks. The itinerary was heavily influenced by the teachers' own schedule and commitments, but the team also tried to carry out activities in a sequence which moved towards deeper and more focused learning. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of the visit (process and content) by the research team.

Background

Mokhotlong district is situated in the northeast mountains area of Lesotho (Appendix B, photo 17). It is one of the poorest and most remote areas of Lesotho, and primary education is subject to most of the problems highlighted in chapter 1 (p66). The pilot school in this district (which I will call St Davids) was chosen as a research focus by the Special Education Unit prior to my visit because of its 'positive' response to the programme. The criteria were:

- wide dissemination of knowledge and skills to neighbouring schools,

- good follow-up of individual children

- acting on their own initiative

- involving other agencies

- promoting parental involvement and encouraging their independence,

- asking for help appropriately

- good documentation and record-keeping.

The research team wanted to know:

- why is the school so positive?

- what is their motivation?

- does the programme empower the teachers?

- are disabled children making progress?

- how have teachers dealt with constraints?

- what is the impact on the family, school and community?

The 'puzzle' was the fact that the school was situated in one of the most deprived areas, where lack of motivation and low standards would be the normal expectation. The team discussed bias and listed hypotheses about why the school was apparently positive; because it wanted to improve its status with the Ministry, because they were in a remote area and wanted to make an impression, because they have more obstacles to overcome and so they try harder, because all the key people have been positive since the beginning.

St Davids is owned by the Catholic church with class sizes of between sixty and eighty children. The overall conditions (buildings, class sizes) were good in relation to the district as a whole (Photos 1 and 2). From the beginning, St Davids involved three neighbouring schools in the programme, which reflected much poorer conditions (Photos 3 and 4).

Photo 1

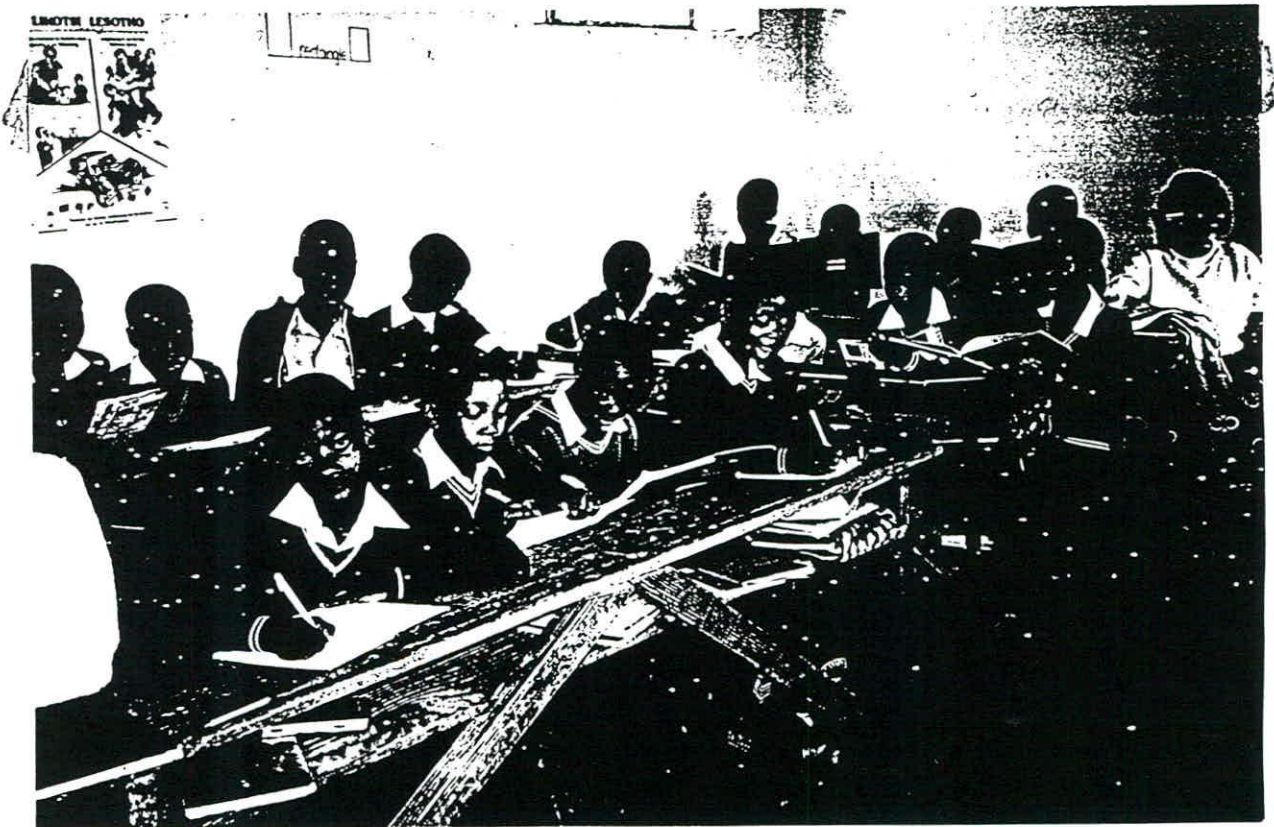St. Davids School in the mountains of Mokhotlong; children gathering for assembly.

Photo 2

Taken during a classroom observation at St Davids. A teacher from another class observes from the back.

Photo 3

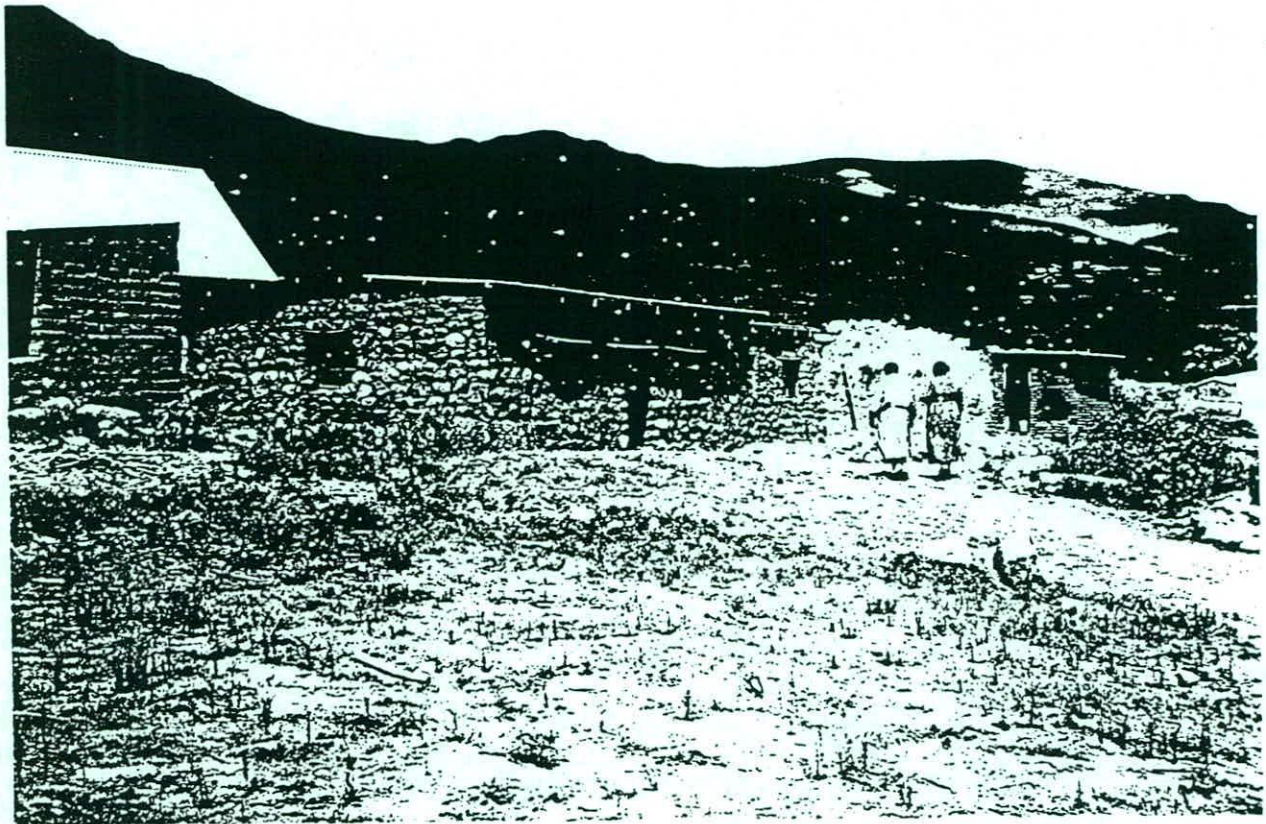St Davids neighbouring schools have overcrowded classrooms...

Photo 4

....and poor condition of buildings. The school kitchen is on the right.

Classroom Observation

Six classes in St Davids were observed by team members during the first day. The observers were located at different points along the continuum of insider/outsider perspectives, ranging from experienced Special Education Unit members who had visited the school regularly, to myself as a foreigner with no language skills and very little prior exposure. The richness of the learning from these initial observations is illustrated by the following example of a classroom observation conducted by myself and Mr A (Photo 2). Figure 4 shows extracts from my recorded notes and a classroom plan. Mr A recorded his 'aural observations' by memorising.

My feedback to the teachers, research team, DRT and DEO (henceforth referred to as 'the group') was intentionally selective and presented in such as way as to reflect the purpose of this stage of the research; to facilitate a constructive critical learning process for programme implementers. I began with positive feedback about the active style of the teacher and the drawings on the walls, I then stated that I was very happy to see so many children with learning difficulties putting their hands up and being involved in the lesson, and that I noticed the time she spent with the child with hearing impairment, and her attempts to meet a wide range of demands on her time. I could then state my observation that often the children with learning difficulty did not have a chance to answer, and that maybe this was a missed opportunity to encourage their learning. A lively debate then ensued around the issue of treating children with learning difficulties the same as the others, or giving them extra attention. The group concluded that these children should be given a chance to answer, but they should not be a special focus of attention. Mr A added that he had been happy to hear

that the child in the wheelchair (whom I will call Moses) was asked to write on the board

like any other child, and not treated as if he was passive and dependent (Photos 5 and 6).

Classroom Observation. Standard 4, age range; 9 yrs upwards. My notes:

- 34 children, 16 boys, 17 girls, 4 with LD, 1 HI, 1 PH (teacher information)
- Sesotho lesson, picture taken round class then stuck on board.
- Teacher has animated lively style,
- boy with hearing impairment sitting next to us; she involves him a lot and used sign but does not speak at the same time
- child in wheelchair sitting at front
- on walls; posters of diseases, maths shapes, drawings by children, nutrition information, alphabet pictures
- children with learning difficulties putting their hands up but not getting a chance to reply
- child in wheelchair replies and goes up to the front of the class like the others.
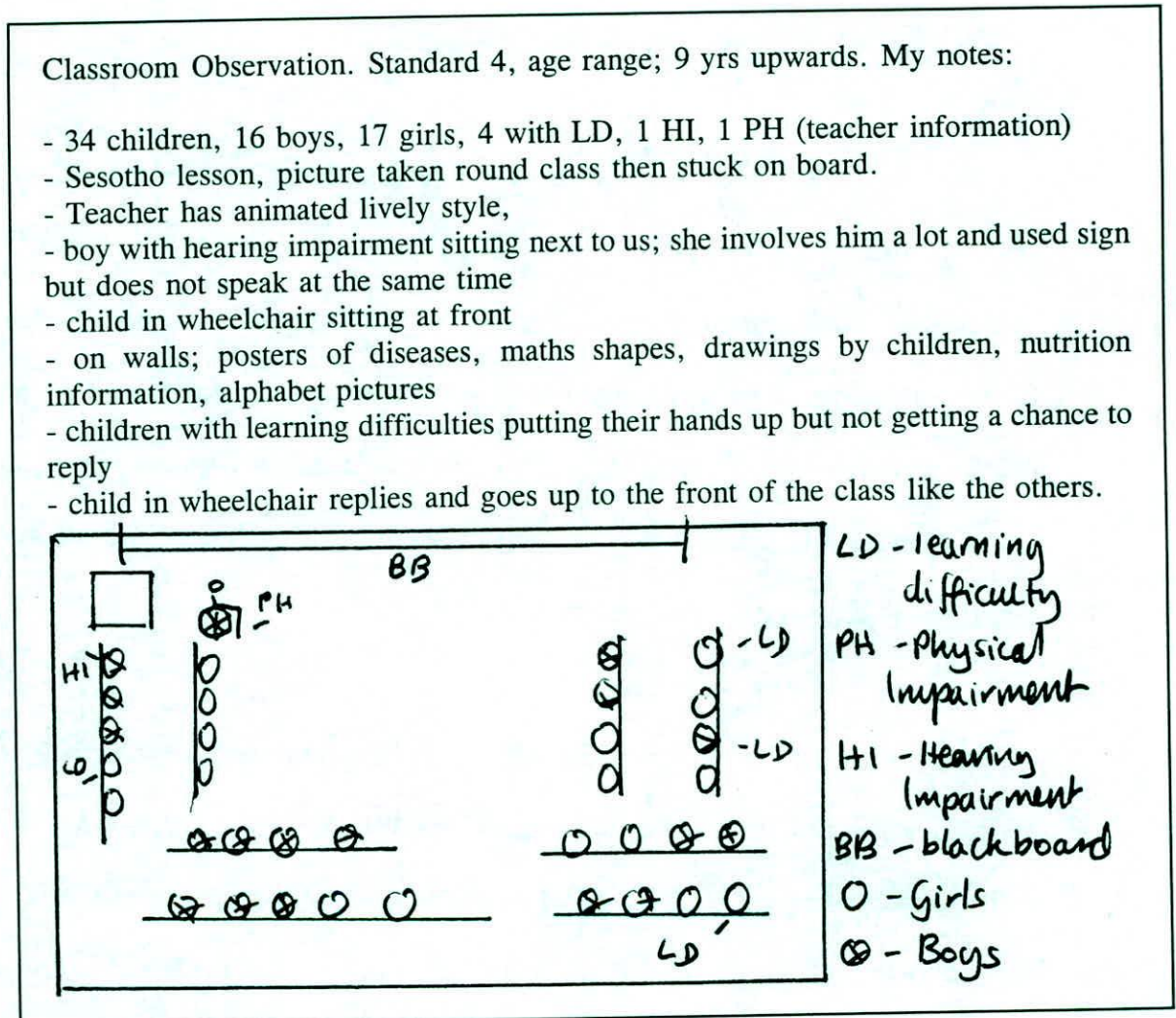

FIGURE 4: Classroom Observation, Personal Notes

Another debate arising from this feedback related to the seating position of the children with

learning difficulties. As shown in my classroom plan, one of these children was sitting in the

back row, which could possibly imply that the teacher had not thought to bring her near the

front so that she could concentrate and be given more attention. I tried to avoid stating any

judgement, and asked the teacher to comment on the seating situation. She said that she had intentionally spread the children round the room sitting them next to 'bright' children, so that they could get help and would not be segregated, but she knew their location and was aware of their difficulties.

Another classroom observation presentation revealed a different approach; children with learning difficulties were seated together on the front row. Again, rather than making judgements, the class teacher was first asked to comment. She stated that this was also intentional, and made it easier for her to give direct help to these children. The teachers discussed the pros and cons of these different approaches between themselves, and the research team praised the teachers for their conscious choices about children's seating, stating that there was no right or wrong approach.

Figure 5 shows a group summary of the lessons learnt from the classroom observations. The learning arose from teacher's explanations about their classroom situation and through group debate and challenge. Debates focused on the nature of punishment, relevance of children's backgrounds and children's participation in their own learning. Each feedback was influenced by the preceding one, and topics of relevance to the group emerged in a process of self-selection and were 'triangulated' through the accumulation and interaction of different perspectives.
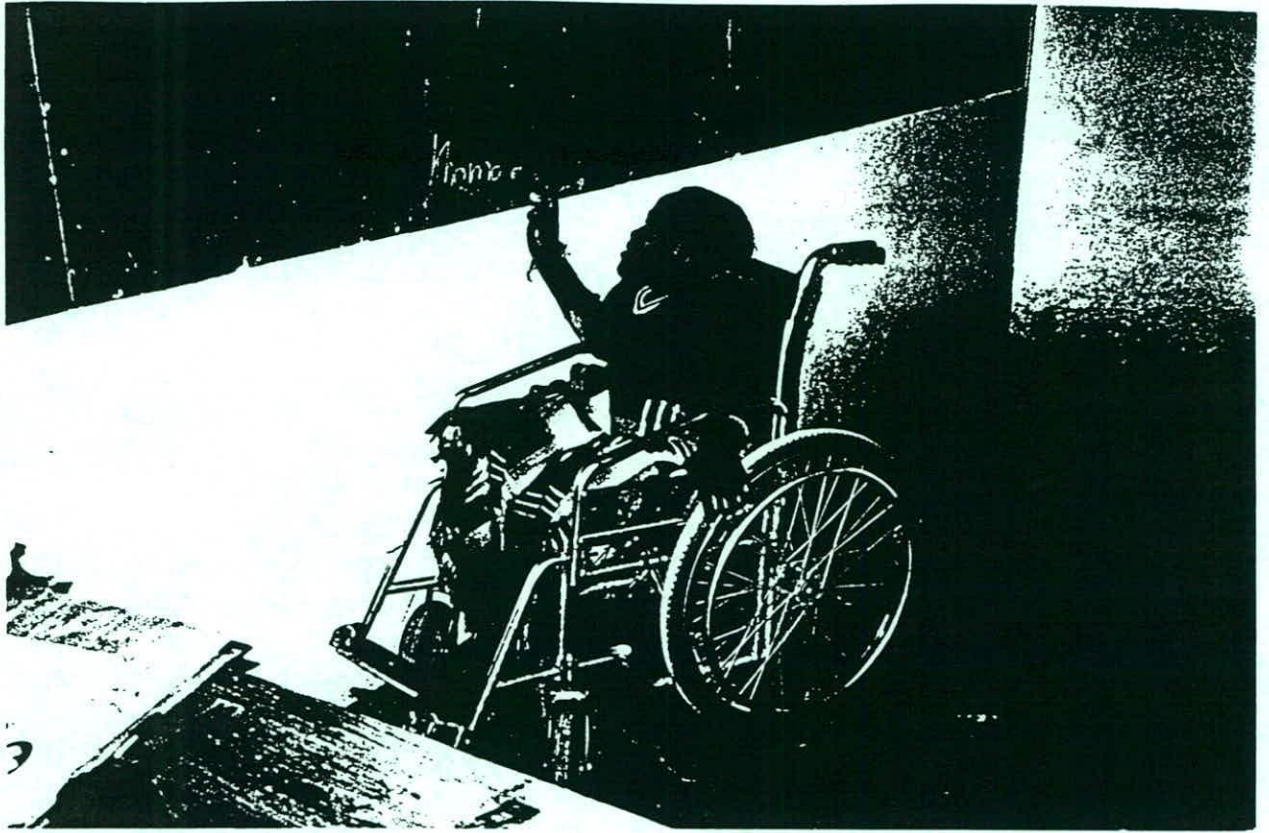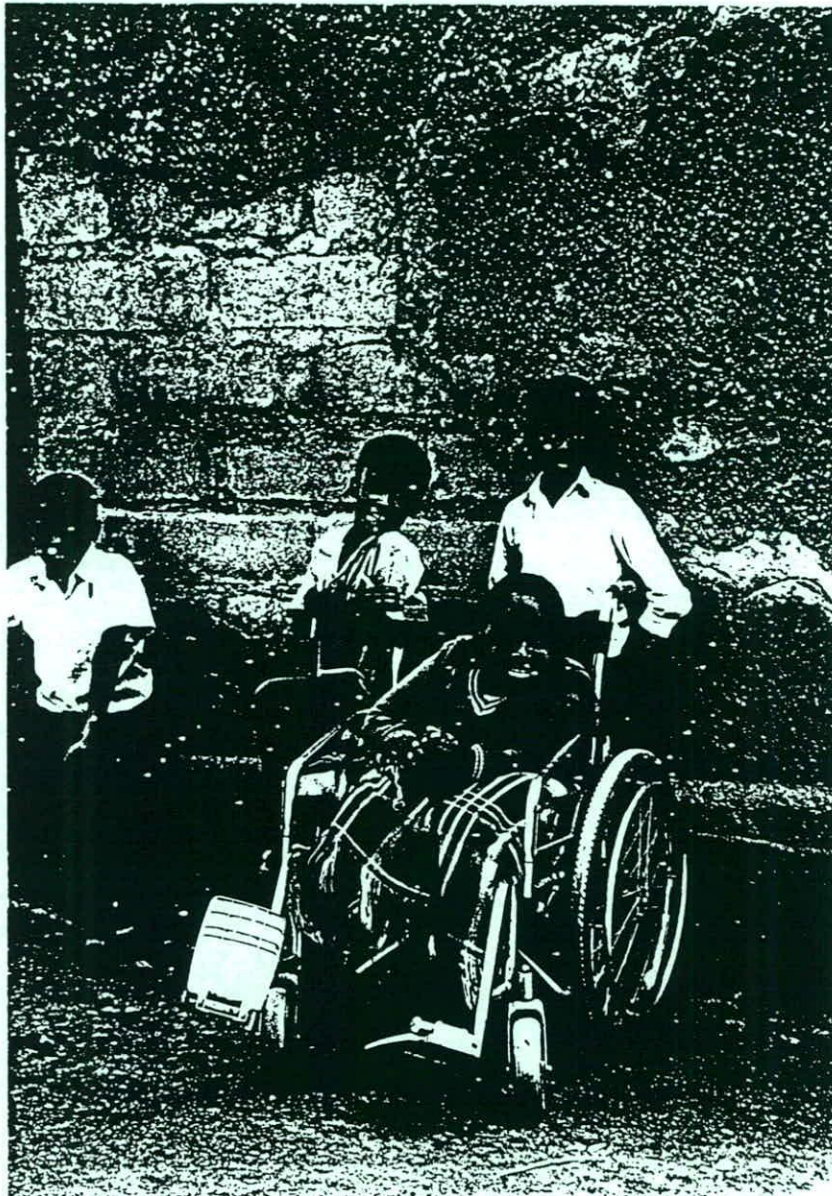
Photo 5

Moses writing on the blackboard during a classroom observation session...

...and relaxing with friends at lunchtime.

Photo 6

Summary of Classroom Observation Feedback Session

(As summarised on flip-chart by the group)

Questions and issues highlighted;
1. Should behaviour be confused with disability?
2. Does punishment always benefit the child?
3. We need to find out more about 'lazy' children
4. There needs to be a balance between giving necessary attention and not drawing attention to assessed or disabled children; there is a big difference in treatment between children with learning difficulties and those with more visible disabilities.
5. Information on the home background can provide important information relevant to children's learning.
6. Consultation with children can help teachers make better decisions about children's learning.
7. Teachers need a chance to explain their actions; most teachers had made conscious decisions about the assessed children, about seating, how to relate to them, their activities etc; these were not obvious to an outsider.

Overall conclusions on classroom observation;
1. Having observers in the classroom was useful; it had brought many things to teachers' attention.
2. The discussion and feedback session was very useful and lively.
3. The methodology is useful because teachers can do it with other classes.
4. The Special Ed team were impressed that teachers knew so much about each others children; this showed that they spoke to each other and interacted.

FIGURE 5: Classroom Observation - Lessons Learnt

Programme Successes and Constraints

On the second day, we visited neighbouring schools which had started to implement the programme as a result of St David's dissemination. We gained an overview of their perceptions of programme successes and constraints through the APE activity (Appendix H ii). Eight teachers from a neighbouring school took part (Photos 7 and 8). The main categories of these successes and constraints are shown in Figure 6.

SUCCESSES	CONSTRAINTS
1. Benefits to families	1. Inadequate technical knowledge and skills
2. More positive attitudes and beliefs about disabled children's learning	2. Lack of time
3. Benefits of interaction between children	3. Lack of equipment
4. Increased teacher knowledge and skills,	4. Some teachers still negative
5. Improvements in the learning of disabled children.	5. Parents; some are still over-protective or uncooperative.
	6. Lack of transport for children and teachers

FIGURE 6: Summary of APE Activity

Teachers felt that families benefited because children were no longer hidden, teachers and parents were sharing and learning from each other, and that the programme helped parents discuss their problems freely. They felt that interaction between children was improved because the programme created 'love and friendship between disabled and non-disabled' and children learnt appropriate behaviour from each other.

Appendix I summarises the problem-solving discussion on constraints. For every constraint apart from lack of transport for disabled children, a proposal was made for overcoming it. One particularly lively discussion was in relation to the 'lack of time' issue. During this debate, the strong, positive leadership being offered by the DEO became apparent. Her basic principle was 'you have to make time!'. One teacher had commented that they were 'slaves of the syllabus' and therefore unable to spend time on the programme. Others argued against this during the group session an in later interviews:

Even without the programme, we would still have to cope with individual differences. We always got brighter children to help with slower children, now we can ask physically disabled children to help those with learning difficulties... who is the syllabus for? we cannot sell our children short just in order to finish this book called the syllabus! (notes from group discussion)

Even before the IE programme, most of us did not complete the syllabus... I find that having the knowledge of assessing strengths and weaknesses helps me to understand the student's needs individually (team member notes, teacher interview)

Individual Perceptions: Teachers, District Staff and Parents

Six out of seven teachers from St David's were interviewed. The main aim was to encourage the teachers to 'tell their story' of the implementation of the IE programme (Appendix H iii). These stories express perspectives on the integration process which are both rich and personal. I present the content according to key themes illustrated by the words of class teachers (CTs) themselves as recorded by team members, in order to reflect this richness.

Attitudes towards disabled children had been changed by the programme:

Before training I did not know how to help them... before we didn't think they could learn, we really couldn't admit them to school, we also thought the other pupils wouldn't help them... I was inclined to be afraid of some disabled persons..' and now; 'After training I had a better understanding and I am very happy to work with them.. my fear is disappearing... We teachers are like the disabled, we are weak in some things, we decided to change towards people; our lives changed and we began to love this programme (CT)

In relation to *successes,* teachers felt that drop-out and repeater rates were reduced. Some children with learning difficulty were now in high class positions. They felt that spending

extra time on disabled children developed social responsibility in non-disabled children.

Teachers gave examples of individual *successes:*

> My success story is of a child in a wheelchair (Moses) who was over-protected and not allowed to attend school. Soon after our training we urged the mother to let him come to school to learn and to mix with the others. We succeeded because we educated the non-disabled students on disabilities and prepared them for the integration of the child with physical disability. Therefore when he came to school he was welcomed; they helped him move from place to place and assisted him with his class work. During weekends they come and take him to church for the service. He is a student much interested in his school work. (CT) (Photos 5 and 6)

Unusual Constraints:

> when we want workshops the church could have ceremonies happening; sometimes they clash. On Fridays we have to take everything down from the walls, we cannot leave children's work there for parents to see. This is because sometimes people come a long way for services and they sleep in the hall, they pull down the work from the walls to sleep on it and make fires with it to keep warm. How can we encourage parents to come and see their children's work? This is a problem, because parents have also contributed towards the buildings. (CT)

Teacher's *approaches to work* with disabled children included; exercising patience, showing love, giving more individual attention, planning for them individually, facilitating group work, asking peers to help, spending extra time with them and involving parents and siblings:

> I make sure I give myself ten minutes at lunch time and after school to follow their programmes. I give them frequent assignments, and give parents work for them at home. Parents return their work and come and discuss it with me. The boy in the wheelchair... I gave his sister responsibility to make sure he did the work.. if there is no help at home they cannot do their homework. (CT)

Job satisfaction had improved overall:

> I enjoy teaching more. The programme has equipped us with different techniques for our so-called normal pupils; even after hours we stay and prepare. (CT)

Photo 7

Classroom observation at a neighbouring school. The average class size is over 100.
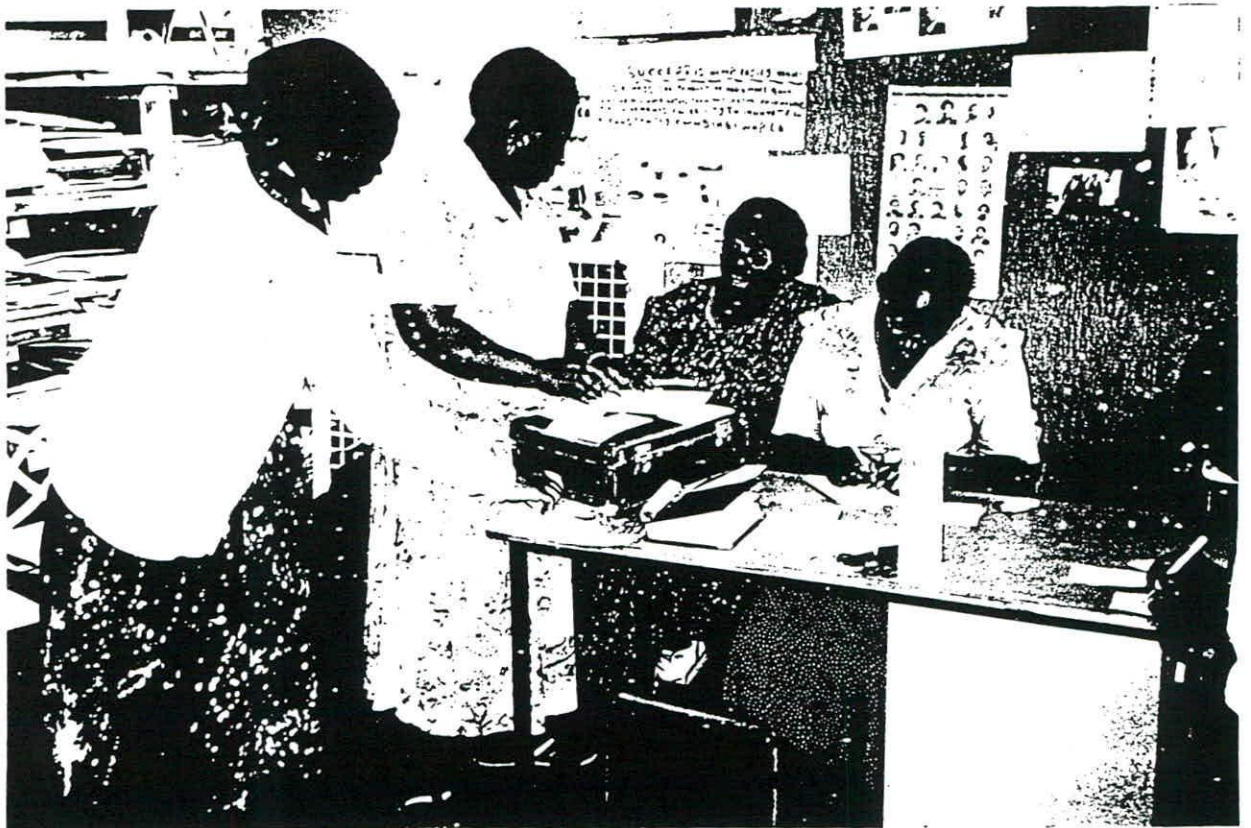

Photo 8

Teachers from this school carry out the 'APE' activity.

In relation to *the community,* teachers felt that the community worked 'hand-in-hand' with he programme. Some parents were still over-protective, but they basically needed training and support. One mentioned that the Parents Association had been formed in order to promote sustainability; 'so they do not depend on anyone's help'.

In terms of suggestions for *improvements,* training was a common theme. They praised the training they had received so far, but stated the need for more follow-up training, more teacher input on workshop agendas, more focus on severe disability, more teachers to be trained in other schools, and for more workshops to take place at district rather than central level (Photo 9). Infrastructure (more classrooms), resources (more teachers) and 'dedication and support' were also highlighted.

If government support ended, most teachers felt that the programme would continue. If it did eventually collapse, both teachers and children would feel let down. The *vision for the future* was that integration should become part of the whole system of education, promoting the independence of disabled children:

> My future vision is that the programme will help everyone in the country, the growing generation. Education is for all. All these neglected people - neglected for a long time - they have their right to education! Especially because we learn a lot from them. (CT)

The district education staff (DEO and DRT) showed their commitment by a high level of involvement in group sessions and by making both supportive and challenging contributions. Their interviews reinforced many of the issues raised by teachers and contributed more detail in relation to the early stages of the programme, and factors contributing to its success. As

result of their own attitude change, both had decided to fully commit themselves to supporting the programme. To begin with, they promoted participation of parents and chiefs by organising meetings and their own community questionnaire survey. Teachers then began to assess children, make referrals and draw up individual (curriculum-linked) programmes. Both the formation of the parents association and dissemination to other schools happened very early on in the programme, and they also linked with every available network such as existing in-service training programmes. Disabled adults were also recruited to the committee of the parents association.

They felt that success was due to the following factors; building on existing techniques such as the 'multi-standard teaching technique', being devoted, good planning, strong motivation, a rolling programme of in-service training workshops, and the goodwill of all concerned. They acknowledged that their own strong leadership was important; 'people expect leadership... it was my duty to help'. The DEO stated that she helped with ideas, transport and also 'typing of reports makes people feel the work is valued.' Some early signs of the wider impact of the programme included; parents bringing younger children for assessment, increased social responsibility in non-disabled children and professional development in terms of skills to cope with all types of individual difference.

They acknowledged constraints but felt that most could be overcome in time, and in response to the question 'what if the central level support stopped tomorrow?', the DEO was unequivocal;

The programme would continue, I have no doubt about it. The teachers already feel it is necessary. *It would be like asking a repentant person to return to their sins!* That is not good, the teachers would lose interest in teaching. We would be returning to our selfishness again. (DEO interview)

St Davids had invited parents to meet us one afternoon, and the team interviewed five mothers by asking them to 'tell the story of their child from birth'. (Appendix L lists the probes questions). They appeared comfortable in the school and were very happy to tell their stories. They gave detailed information on the the child's history and their early struggles. All said that they were isolated and received little support from neighbours or the extended family, sometimes neighbours were unkind.

Now that their children were in school, life had improved in many ways, two mothers had been able to get jobs. They had noticed improvements in their children's learning, for example in maths, reading and writing. One mother described how her daughter hid her work if she had done badly, but was now showing her more and more school work, and was therefore improving. Another stated that her child refused to let her help, because 'my teacher knows more than you do'.

At home, most children were involved in a range of activities including gardening, looking after other children, herding, helping siblings with homework, watering crops, cooking, washing clothes and collecting firewood. They had several concerns about their children including their difficulties in learning, physical difficulties, and future potential for employment and independence. Two mothers wanted their child to go to secondary school, but had no money, and were worried that teachers would not be able to help with their physical needs. Overall, they were pleased with the school support and progress being made;

the problems are decreased; he was lonely and worried at home. Now he is able to read and write, we couldn't teach him at home. His progress is encouraging and I am not worried about his schooling. I began work as a cook when he started school, in the holidays I look after the piggery. (Mother of 'Moses' in Photos 5 and 6)

Children's Perceptions

Focus groups and semi-structured interviews were carried out with a range of children (both disabled and non-disabled) from St Davids school and two neighbouring schools (Appendix H iv) (Photo 10). Throughout the visit, the research team observed a high level of social integration and mutual support; children were keen to push wheelchairs and to use sign, and also to play football together and to be together as friends. The facilitators wanted to hear their views about integration, about their self-perception, about the ways they interacted with each other, and about their successes and problems at school.

The children were aware that some of them were disabled, or had difficulties in certain aspects of school work. The children discussed this without embarrassment, and gave the impression that they were just describing the way things were, in much the same way that they would give information about height or age; 'I can't hear clearly... I don't understand maths very well'. Some were keen to be listed as disabled; 'I can't see clearly when I look at something bright for a long time!' They stated that teachers helped them in a number of ways, including using sign and helping with spelling. The non-disabled children spoke of how they helped disabled children:

Photo 9
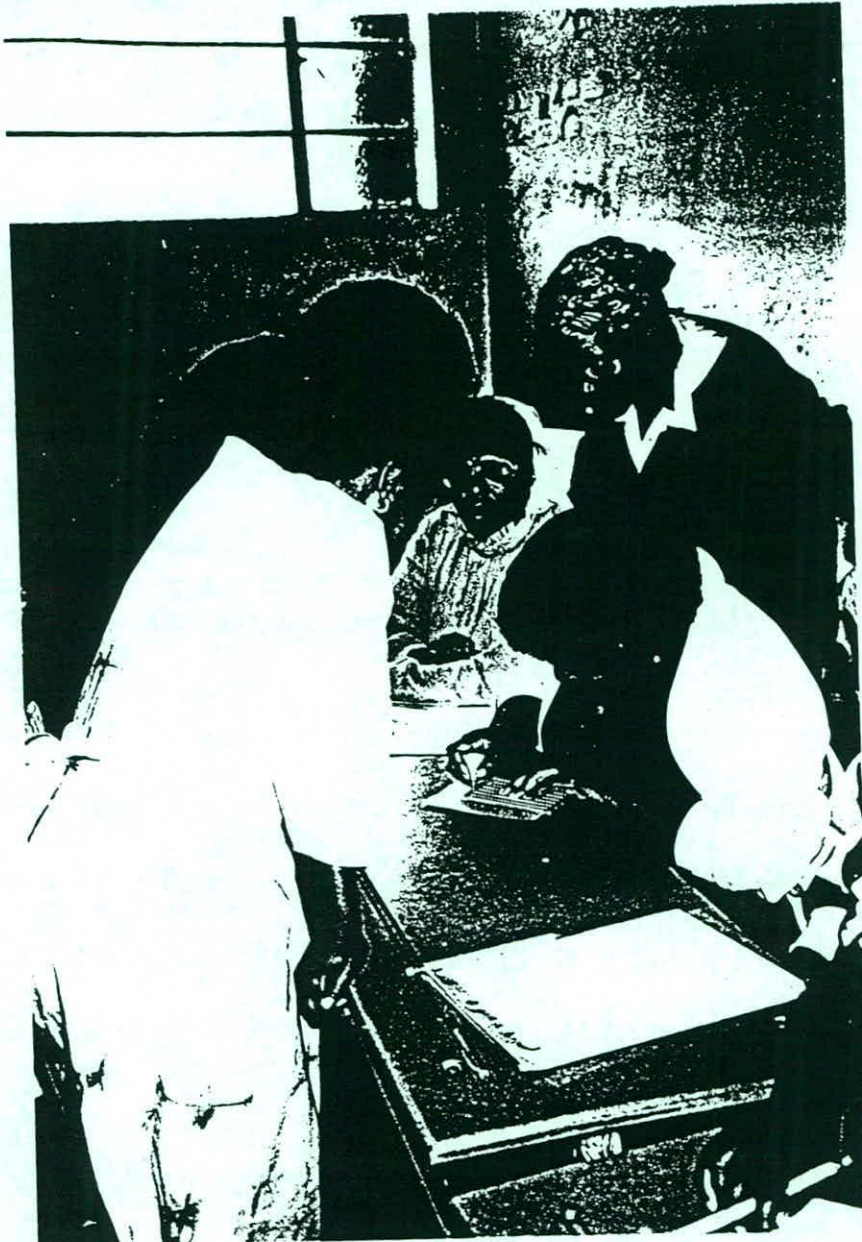
Teachers practicing during a braille follow-up workshop.

Mr A (on the right) facilitates a children's focus group together with other teachers.

Photo 10

we make those who can't see feel what they don't know.. we push wheelchairs, help them with what they don't know.. I walk home with a boy and when he gets sick (epilepsy), I wait for him and then take him home.. (focus group)

The disabled children also knew their contributions:

we lend them things when they forget,.. we help them in subjects they don't know,.. I lead songs (a visually impaired young woman with a beautiful voice). (focus group)

As in any classroom, relationships were not always smooth; the non-disabled children found it a problem when 'they understand slowly,.. they do bad things without realising it... we have to help them avoid dangerous things'. But the disabled children also had some problems; 'when the teacher asks the class to be quiet, they don't obey and I can't hear'. The overall consensus was that they need each other, and could not imagine being separated:

'we would lose our good friends... we should not be separated... we play together and help each other with homework.' (focus group)

The feedback sessions later in the week became a series of mini case-conferences on individual children, arising from the cumulative information gathered in the range of activities. Many problems were solved; the teacher of a child with hydrocephalus who suffered headaches and pain when bending to write was advised how to adjust the writing surface. A mother of a child who used a wheelchair had complained that she was struggling to care for him now that he was heavier, so the teachers discussed ways in which someone (maybe from a CBR programme, or disabled person's organisation) could visit the home, help design some appropriate aids, and teach some 'ADLs' (activities of daily living; dressing, toileting). This mother was also worried about the child's physical needs at secondary school, and so teachers decided to visit and raise awareness. Another boy was

missing school because of herding, although he wanted to be a teacher. Teachers felt that this was not a good reason and the mother was 'just following tradition'. They decided to visit and discuss the issue.

The group concluded that it was very valuable to hear more about the background of children, but there was debate about where the role of teacher ends, particularly as teachers were already taking children to clinics, negotiating access to wheelchairs and making home visits as the following discussion illustrates.

Home Visit

The team plus teachers visited the home visit of a child whose name had cropped up in a range of discussions during the week (Photos 11 and 12) Informal interviews and discussions were held with the mother, two relatives and the village chief. Lalla was observed in her home with her mother, as she demonstrated newly acquired skills such as writing and cutting. She is fourteen years old, has cerebral palsy and had been making excellent progress since she began school eighteen months earlier. She is now at home since her wheelchair broke, although for a while she borrowed a neighbour's wheelbarrow to get to school. Teachers are concerned about her progress, and she misses school.

The debate focused on transport, support to her learning, and access to physiotherapy. One teacher suggested that teachers buy a wheelbarrow, but others felt this was inadequate, and that the extended family should be encouraged to take more responsibility both for transport

and in terms of supporting the mother. They decided to go and raise awareness with the family. Teachers already visit the home, and they discussed using older pupils to help her learning and developing a proper home-based programme. However, others felt that the social benefits of schooling were very important and efforts should focus on getting her to school. Access to physiotherapy was a major problem, as Lalla was heavy to carry, the buses were often full, and the physiotherapist was often too busy to see her. The DRT offered to visit the therapist to persuade him to make a home visit. The lack of any community-based rehabilitation programme was felt to be a major disadvantage.

Support Networks and Mountain Profiles

On the last day, teachers from St Davids and the three neighbouring schools presented their own Mountain Profiles and Support Diagrams (Appendix J v,vi)). The Mountain Profiles would have been more useful at the beginning to give an overview, but they did reveal the way in which staff turnover and teacher's strikes had hindered the programme's progress:
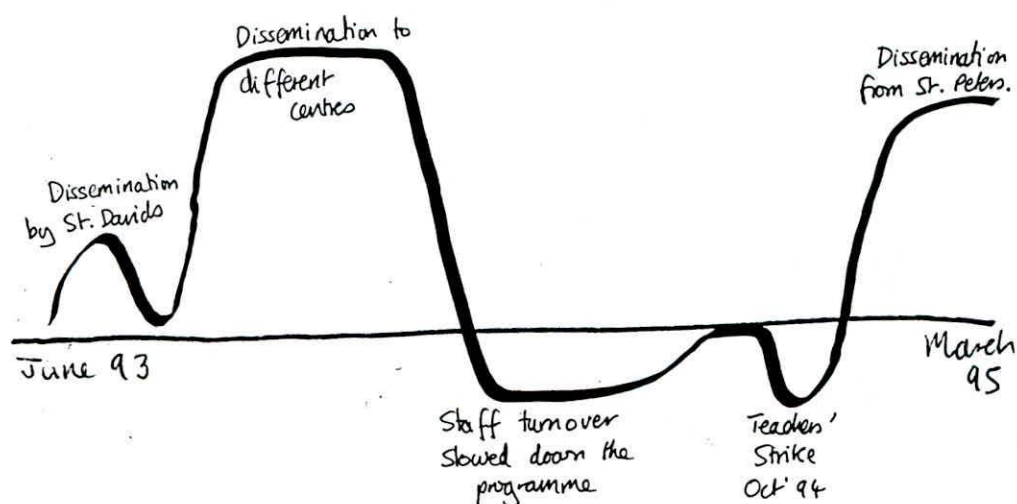

FIGURE 7: Mountain Profile

Of greater interest were the results of the Support Diagrams. Schools perceived that they received support from more sources than they gave support to. Figure 8 is an example from one of the neighbouring schools. Altogether, the schools named sixteen different sources of support; DEO, DRT, Special Education unit, chiefs, parents, other schools, the church, school managers, peer groups, pupils, community, relatives, clinic, workshops, disabled people and the town clerk. The research team felt that these results demonstrated the important role of different sectors of the community, as well as teacher's perceptions that they were highly supported.
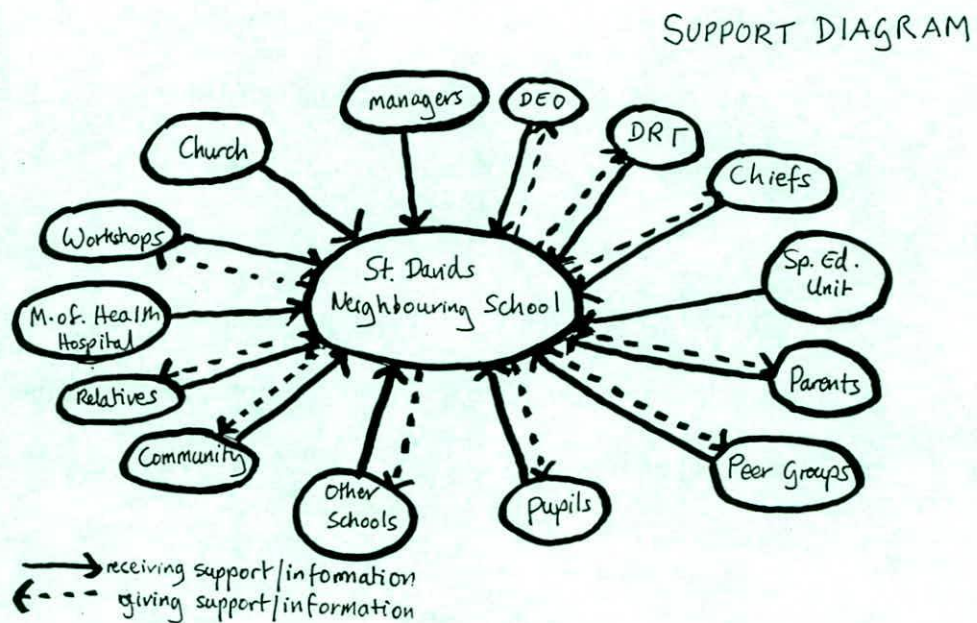
SUPPORT DIAGRAM

FIGURE 8: Support Diagram

Due to the curtailment of the visit (Part II, p55), there was no time for a lengthy evaluation, but there was a short feedback session in which teachers were unanimously positive about both the content and methods of the week. One teacher interviewed at the end of the week stated her views;

This week has been very, very useful. The observation; sometimes we do things without being aware. The feedbacks helped. The techniques for interviewing parents were also useful. Before when we requested information, they didn't tell us the truth; I like the method of giving hints, and the storytelling. Before, we didn't know how to ask questions. When you (the team) came, I told myself, 'I am going to learn from these people.. (teacher interview)

Conclusion and Recommendations: Research Team Evaluation

The research team met during the week following the visit to evaluate and to plan for the visit to the second pilot school. The team carried out an evaluation exercise (Appendix H x) followed by an in-depth discussion. The team concluded that the conditions which seemed to contribute to the positive approach to integration were:

- the high level of participation from the programme's inception, by a wide range of people at all levels in the community; parents, chiefs, other schools, clinics, churches, local administrators

- strong leadership and support from key people particularly DEO and DRT

- parents are fully involved in the school, teachers visit them in their homes, and they have been encouraged to take responsibility through the formation of a PA

- the programme addressed an existing problem which was already recognised by teachers; how to cater to individual difference, and to reduce drop-outs and repeaters

- obstacles such as high pupil/teacher ratio and lack of resources were not an absolute barrier to integration; commitment was a more important factor

- there is a very strong community spirit, and community responsibility seems to be valued more highly than individual development, therefore teachers feel they have a duty to help, and they also expect other pupils to develop social responsibility

- the teachers and district staff had experienced the programme as a sort of religious conversion; they had 'seen the light' and now saw that disabled children had rights and could learn, so they would not easily give up

- life is generally very hard in this district, and teachers are used to dealing with hardship and overcoming obstacles, and so they do not feel the demands made on them by this programme are impossible to meet

The team felt the initial questions posed in relation to this school (page 74) had been answered to a large extent; teachers seemed to be genuinely motivated by a sense of community responsibility, religious conviction and humanitarianism, and they did perceive it as empowering in the sense that many felt that their teaching skills and job satisfaction had improved. The disabled and children were definitely making progress in their learning and socially, and there were no examples given of children who was not improving. Teachers had dealt with constraints through extensive collaboration, frank discussion, personal commitment and above all through the support of key people such as the DEO and DRT. The team felt that 'enthusiasm is top to bottom and sideways'.

In relation to impact on the wider community and families, the team felt that parents' feedback and the home visit had been positive, but that in the end, we did not focus sufficiently on this topic in order to really draw conclusions. Fathers and siblings were not interviewed, and only one chief from the wider community. We were not clear about the role and status of the Parents Association, or about disabled adults involvement. It was recognised in hindsight that focusing on the wider community had been ambitious.

Informal conversations and observations revealed that not surprisingly, everything was not perfect. One teacher felt that the DRT was biased towards St Davids school, and should spend more time on the others, but the Unit stated that St Davids was the formal pilot school, and his first duty was to this school. One particular teacher who was very keen tended to have a higher proportion of disabled and assessed children in her class; the team were concerned that keen teachers could be exploited. Another teacher felt that the head teacher only paid lip-service to the programme, and refused to have disabled children in her own class. The team felt that they had gained no insight into why the headteacher was apparently negative; her personal interview had been very positive. The team speculated that maybe she was afraid of failure, and of not living up to expectations if she taught such children. The public 'face' of the school had without doubt been extremely positive, but the team were aware that there were still some teachers who were not so sure. The significant issue was however, that there was a critical mass of positive energy which seemed to be drawing others along, regardless of any resistance.

In relation to methodology, the team were impressed with the diagrams (Mountain profiles and Support) and the APE exercises which teachers could carry out independently and which generated a large amount of information in a short time. The feedback sessions were highly valued, and the team realised that these sessions needed more time than the exercises themselves. The team appreciated the chance to hear 'teachers doing most of the talking about their own schools'. The focus groups with children were also felt to be particularly valuable, although the team regretted not having more opportunities to work with children due to the curtailment of the visit.

Photo 11

Lalla at home
with her mother...

....and relaxing
with friends

Photo 12

CHAPTER 3   PILOT SCHOOL B

The second school chosen by the Special Education team (which I will call Moshoe) is located in the Southwest lowlands area, just over an hour's drive from Maseru (Appendix A). Although the district itself is one of the better off economically (Gay and Hall, 1994), the retrenchment of mineworkers from South Africa has contributed to community disruption with disputes over grazing, burning of houses and violence.

The Special Education Unit were concerned that this school was responding 'negatively' to the programme based on the following criteria:

- attendance at workshops is poor, with high drop out rates

- they are unwilling to cooperate during visits

- they keep files hidden

- they make explicit comments such as 'you are wasting our time'

- they do not believe it is worthwhile

- teachers sit in the doorway stopping the team entering

The Unit remembered that they were anti-integration during the feasibility study. They felt that the teachers saw their role as teachers of bright children. The 'puzzle' in this case, was not only that the school was in a comparatively well-resourced area and near the capital, but that for many years, there had been a hostel for physically disabled girls who were attending the school, therefore teachers were used to teaching disabled children. The team felt it was not logical that they did not want training to help the children they already had in their

classes. The team posed the following questions:

- do they have knowledge and skills to work with disabled children?

- do they have sufficient training?

- why was the residential unit opened?

- why are they negative given that they have the hostel?

- how do they define their role as teachers?

The team listed their hypotheses as to why the school was negative; they are collecting disabled children to impress donors, it is controlled by the bishop, they feel it is extra work, they feel they already know more than the Special Education Team, they want to maintain a charity approach, they feel self-righteous about what they are doing. Mr A contributed background information, saying that a major problem with the school was that it was totally controlled by the church in a very top-down way. Decisions are made by the bishop, and implemented by the priest with no involvement of teachers.

The research purpose for this school was primarily to enable the Special Education Unit to understand the situation and offer more appropriate support, by offering teachers a chance to explain their views and their problems and by gaining insights from observation and feedback. The structure of this chapter reflects the cumulative learning process of the research as a whole, and the week in particular. There was no intention to repeat the research process followed at St Davids; the approach was related to the specific research objectives for Moshoe School, and built upon the learning experience of St Davids in terms of both process and content.

The Unit had already encountered a very defensive atmosphere, and so the task of building trust took precedence over collecting 'data'. Therefore the team decided to focus on activities which were least confrontational and an initial overview was gained through the Mountain Profiles and Support Diagrams activities. The success of these led to a more in-depth focus on successes and constraints through the APE exercise and School Performance Flow Diagrams (Appendix H vii). The team also did some classroom observation and gained personal perspectives from individual interviews with teachers and family members. More time was spent on children's activities including focus groups and drawing.

On arrival, the team were taken to meet the sister in charge of the disabled girls' hostel. She stated that the hostel originated several years ago when a foreign priest had collected disabled girl children from villages and founded the hostel. All decisions with respect to the children were made by the bishop, and teachers had no say. Of the fifteen residents, five were currently in primary school, and the rest in secondary or vocational training. Selection was made on a 'first come, first served' basis; parents applied from all over Lesotho. Problems with fees resulted in the child being returned home. The sister was newly appointed and unable to answer further questions.

Gaining a Programme Overview

Once teacher commitment to the research had been gained (Part II, p59), the seven teachers were divided into two groups to create their own Mountain Profiles, an activity which generated lively discussion.
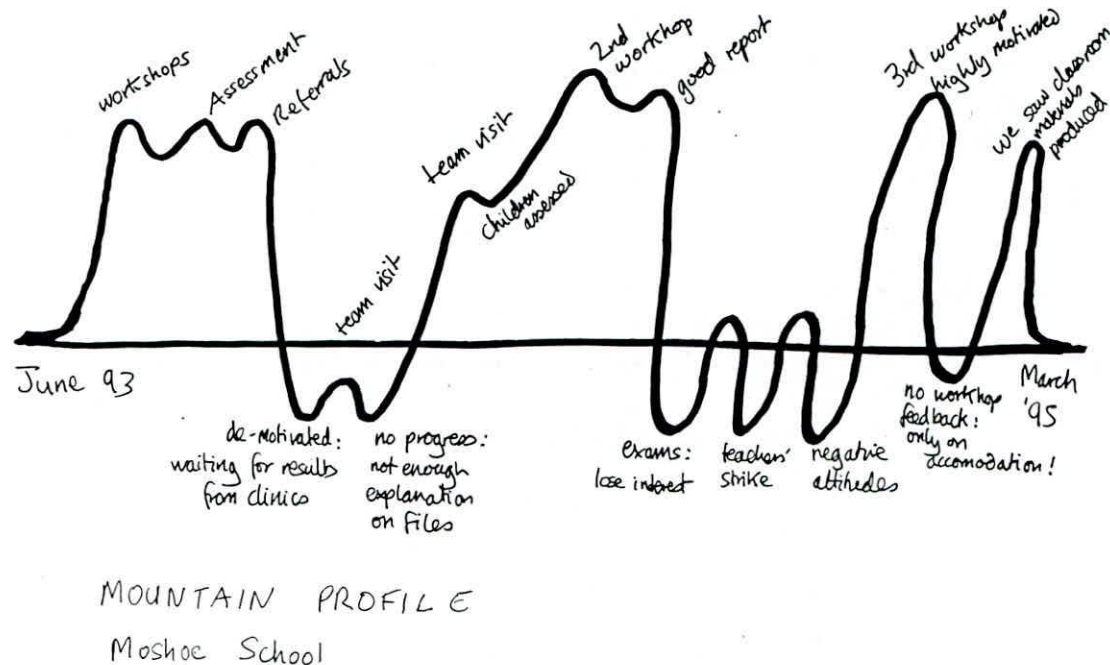
Figure 9 shows the Profile from one group:

The hand-drawn mountain profile includes the following labels:

workshops · Assessment · Referrals · team visit · team visit · children assessed · 2nd workshop · good report · 3rd workshop · highly motivated · we saw classroom materials produced

June 93

de-motivated: waiting for results from clinics · no progress: not enough explanation on Files · exams: lose interest · teachers strike · negative attitudes · no workshop feedback: only on accomodation! · March '95

MOUNTAIN PROFILE
Moshoe School

FIGURE 9: Mountain Profile, Moshoe School

The teachers gave their own feedback on these activities, filling in detail and discussing the issues raised. The research were amazed at the detail and insights gained from this short exercise. They team saw at a glance the very real nature of the constraints, but more importantly, the teacher's own insight and honesty relating to their situation. The teachers themselves were pleasantly surprised that they had enjoyed the activity, and felt that reflecting on their experience was useful.

The two groups then compiled Support Diagrams, which revealed an immediate contrast with St Davids. Both groups perceived that they were giving out more support than they were receiving.

Figure 10 is an example from one group:
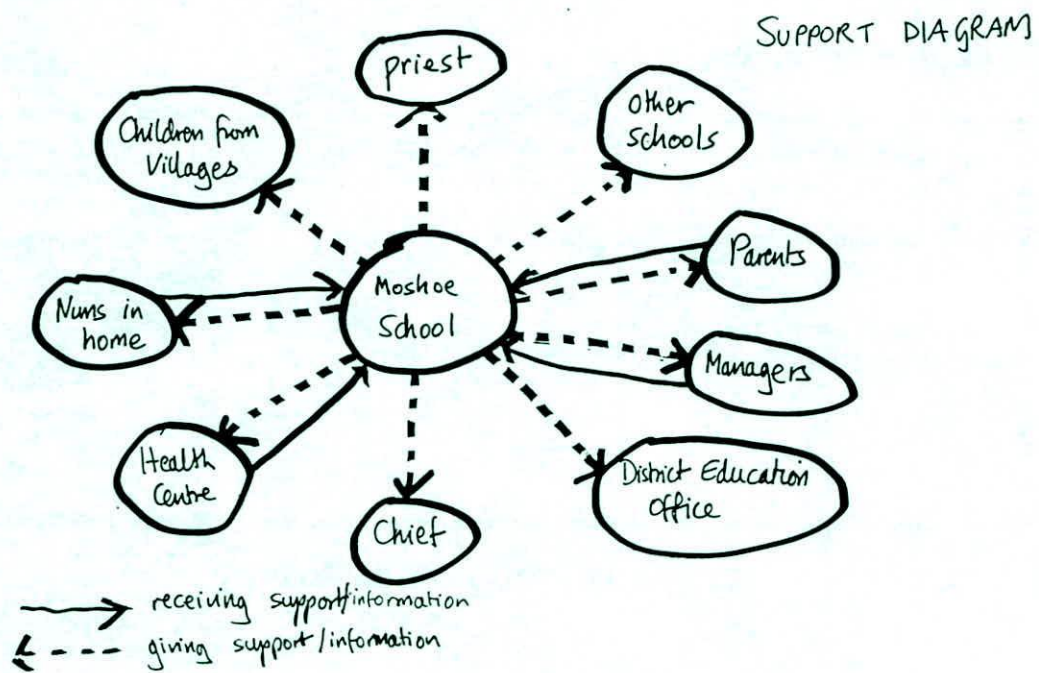
FIGURE 10: Support Diagram, Moshoe School

Again the research team immediately gained a deeper understanding as to why the teachers lacked motivation; they perceived themselves to lack support, whatever the 'actual' level of support.

Successes and Constraints

The teachers then carried out the APE exercise, and again there was a marked contrast with St Davids neighbouring school in the results. Teacher's comments were very basic and less analytical, eg. 'shortage of time' (written comment from Moshoe teacher), compared with 'in class we had problems at times because the disabled need more time than the others - we don't mean they should not be there but we implore our Ministry to give us more teachers'

(written comment from St Davids neighbouring school teacher). Figure 11 shows a summary of the results of the APE exercise.

SUCCESSES	CONSTRAINTS (in common with St Davids)	ADDITIONAL CONSTRAINTS
- disabled children's learning (reading, writing etc) - hidden and neglected children now being exposed - increased teacher knowledge	- lack of time, - large class sizes - children living far away - parents being ashamed	- lack of support, - lack of interest in special education - difficult technical language in materials and files - children not improving.

FIGURE 11: APE Summary

In the feedback session, some teachers were more positive than others, and there were mixed opinions about overcoming constraints. Some teachers stated that many pupils have improved, and that the programme has helped professional development, and resulted in increased knowledge and skills:

> The pupils have benefited. Before we neglected them and now we are patient enough to help. We give more attention in leisure time, breaks, lunches; we give them special work and we are aware of them in class. Now we know not to put a visually impaired child near the sun.' (teacher comments, feedback session).

Issues such as syllabus constraints were also discussed, but the only challenge came from the research team; teachers accepted that their priority was to finish the syllabus, and the children who learned more slowly held this process up. Class size (between sixty and eighty, much less than in the neighbouring schools of St Davids) was seen as a major constraint, with the ideal being seen as between forty-five and fifty. There was a lengthy debate about teachers returning from workshops who were supposed to feedback to the whole staff. There

was a lot of laughter which the team sensed was evasive and the underlying issues were not revealed.

The team asked the teachers how the programme could be improved, and the discussion focused almost entirely on incentives. Teachers felt that they should get some sort of reward for teaching disabled children. Suggestions were certificates, extra money and scholarships for overseas travel. Underneath these suggestions was the assumption that only some teachers would have responsibility for disabled children, and the research team tried to stimulate a debate on this issue, but no conclusions were reached.

The teachers had enjoyed the diagram activities and were keen to do more. Later in the week, the team facilitated the School Performance Flow Diagram activity (Appendix H vii). The aim of this activity was fun, and the encouragement of teacher's own 're-membering' of their personal experience, which then gave them more insight into the experience of their pupils. Figure 12 is an example illustrating how factors such as access to food, distance, climate and herding affected school performance:

FIGURE 12: Flow Diagram

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE
FLOW DIAGRAM
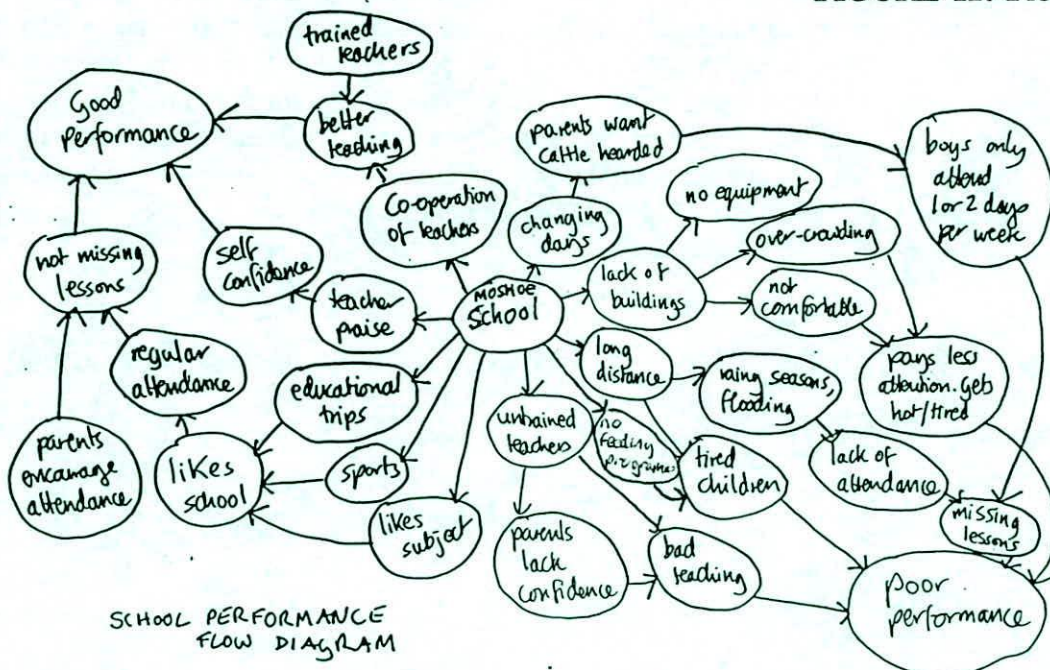
Individual Members: Teachers and Family Members

Seven teachers were interviewed, excluding the headteacher. The team had decided to draw out their overall approach to teaching in order to be less threatening and to gain some insight as to why disabled children seemed to present a problem. The interviews revealed two distinct levels of experience; four had been at the school around twenty years and the others less than six. These newer teachers felt that there was a resistance to new ideas. Teachers felt that the school's strengths were its high exam results, its good performance in sports competitions, and the policy of allowing teachers to focus on particular subjects. To maintain high exam results, pupils coming from other schools have to sit a pre-test, which if they fail, they start at a lower grade.

Teachers perceived the school's main problems as lack of facilities (water and toilets), few teaching materials, lack of support and over crowding. One teacher was very open about internal problems;

> Leadership tends to have leanings towards friendships rather than cooperation. Special education has been having problems even though we are giving the impression that we are happy. The last few visits by the Special Education team have been characterised by un-welcoming attitudes. When one returns from workshops, people are always to busy to get feedback. In sports pupils do well because it is prioritised; in singing we do not do well because we are denied the opportunity to practice. (teacher interview. Photo of singing; Appendix L)

Teachers gave examples of how they had struggled with disabled children prior to the programme:

> She had disabled hands.. I loved her very much but she spent three years in school without achieving anything. Eventually her parents took her away.. I only wish I had had special education training, then I could have won her. (teacher interview)

They felt that the programme offered them skills which could help them deal with such situations. Six teachers gave examples of how the programme had changed their attitudes, or improved their knowledge and skills. Some examples include; putting clever children in charge of small groups, spending more time with slower learners, involving disabled children in more activities, getting children to work in pairs, putting visually impaired children in the front and writing in big letters on the blackboard. A younger teacher was enthusiastic but could not show this in the group;

> I only hope the training will continue. If the project did discontinue, I would definitely continue with the work, because in this school the disabled children are already enroled. I am ready to share my knowledge with others; teachers, students and families. My vision is to continue and to become one of the Special Education officers as a resource person.. (teacher interview)

Some of their methods however were not taken from the training; shouting loudly at children who couldn't hear, and dividing the class into ability groups. They stressed the need for more training and more support, and suggested the following improvements; taking more care over who was selected for training workshops, inviting other schools to workshop feedbacks and allocating a single teacher with more knowledge to support the others. Overall, these individual sessions provided an opportunity for teachers who disagreed with the group 'consensus' to state their view.

Two mothers and an aunt were interviewed by myself and Mr A. We were immediately struck by how reserved and uncomfortable they were in comparison to the mothers at St Davids. A mother of a boy with albinism (7) (whom I will call Thomas) talked enthusiastically about her son but had little to say about the programme:

> I have cattle at home, he looks after them. At weekends, he ploughs, collects grass and goes to Church. He likes praying a lot and gardening. He has many friends, they help each other with assignments. The only problem is he cannot see at school. Last year he got glasses. Teachers help him by making him sit at the front, but sometimes he refuses. I visit the school regularly but the teachers have not visited at home. His performance is not too good; he has now repeated two years and failed standard 4. I am unemployed, his father works in the mines and I have six children.' (Mother interview) (Photos 13 and 14)

Observation

The team spent some time observing six classes, but not as much as at St Davids, and the feedback discussions were less fruitful. The team's overall impressions were that the classes were exceptionally well disciplined (which is highly valued in Lesotho) and high academic standards were encouraged. In one lesson all the children were standing up 'in order to make them concentrate', and teachers encouraged a lot of participation from the children in terms of writing on the board and answering questions.

Not all classrooms had disabled children, but in those that did, teachers were aware of their difficulties, and had made similar conscious decisions about seating as in St Davids. Learning methods were adapted for individual children, for example asking a child to draw a picture on the topic that others were writing on. However, children were in general only praised if they answered questions correctly at the right time; the competition was tough.
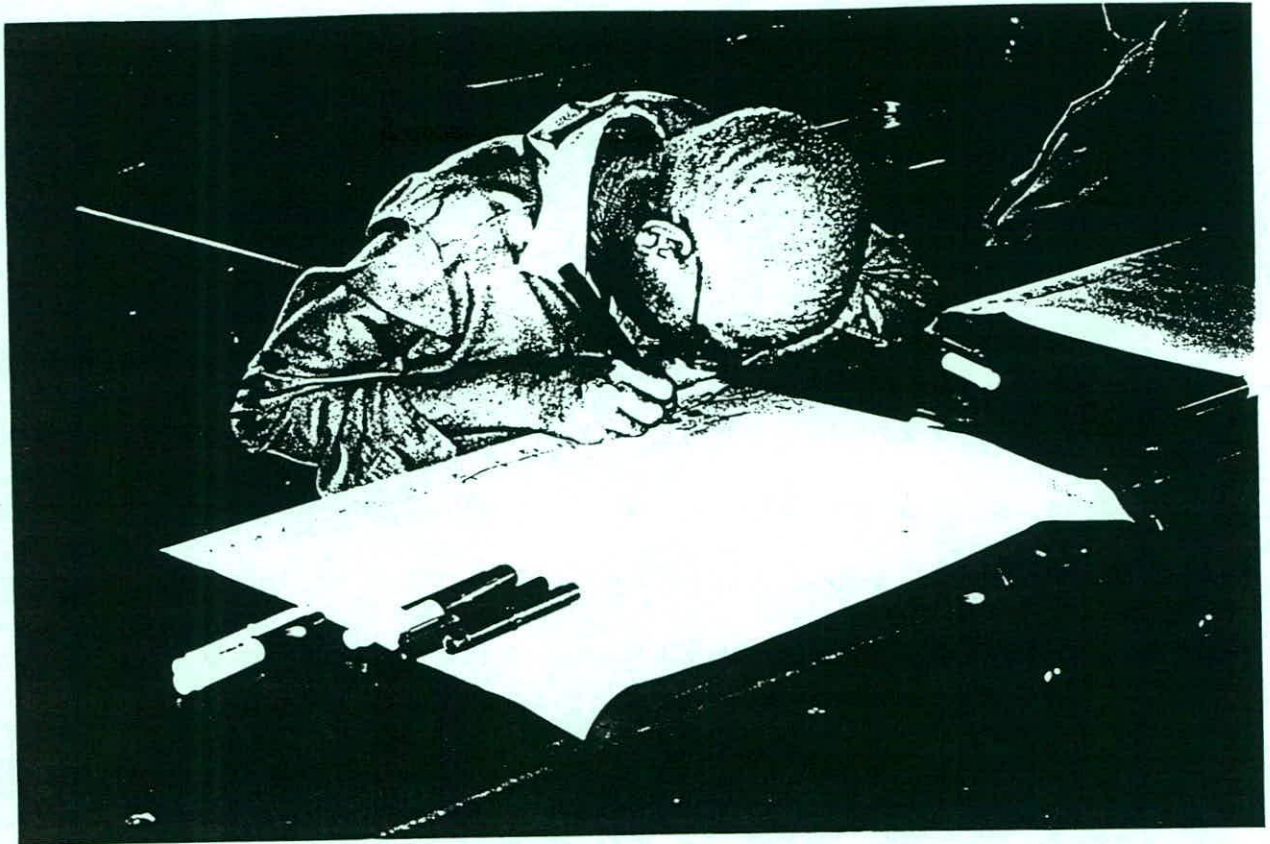
Photo 13
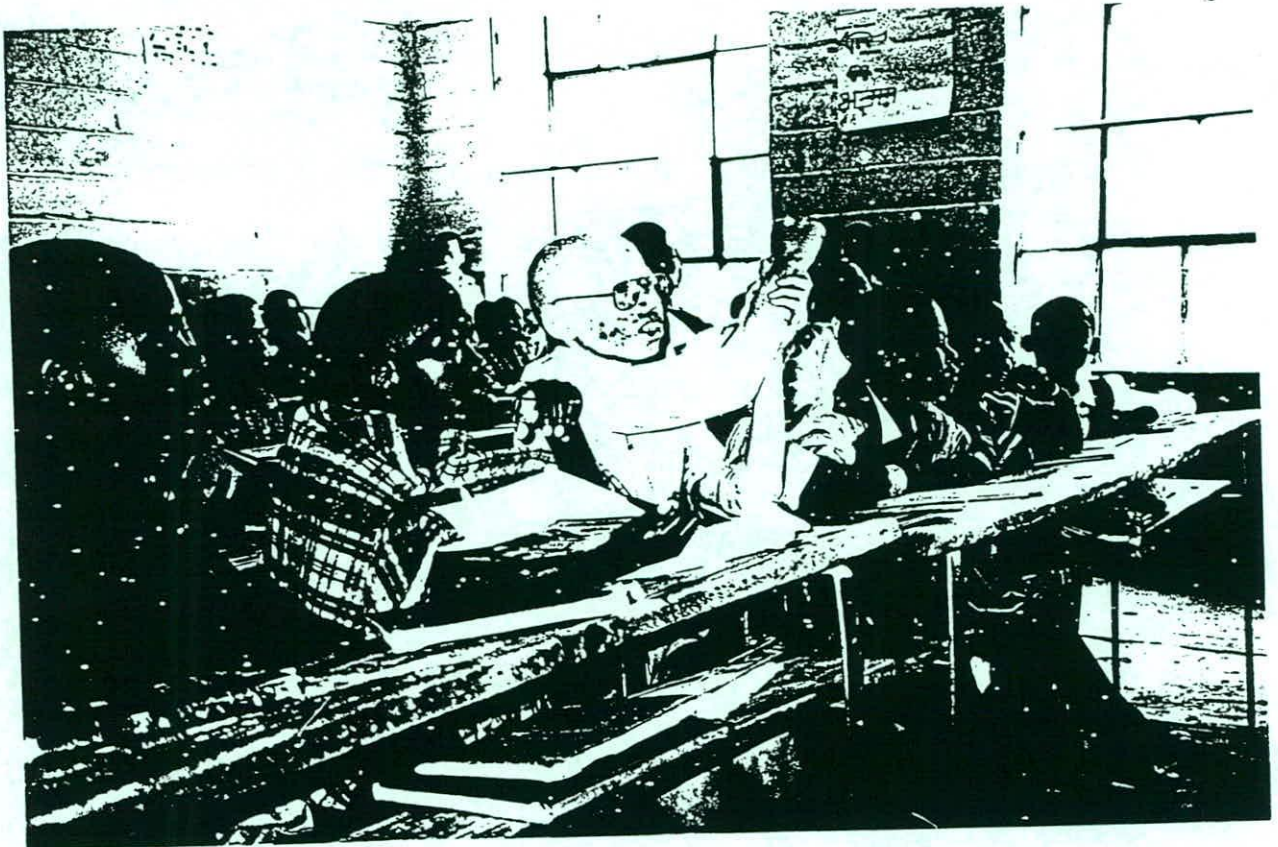
Thomas drawing a daily activity profile...

Photo 14

...and sitting at the front of the class so that he can see the board.

Children's Activities

The team facilitated focus groups with a range of children, and in addition, piloted Daily Activity Profiles and Ability Drawings (Appendix H, viii,ix). As a warm up, groups of children were asked to draw maps of the school and its location (photo 15), then Mr A lead a focus group with a group of older boys. Their responses to probes were very similar to those of the children at St Davids. They spoke of how they helped each other and how they enjoyed being together:

> It's nice having them here because we play with them. The disabled children help us in subjects we don't know. We pick up their books if they fall down, we get them water, we help them in maths. (boy's focus group)

We then facilitated activities with the girls from the hostel and some disabled boys (Photo 16). These children were between the ages of eleven and thirteen and had a range of different impairments; visual impairment, skin problems, missing limbs, hydrocephalus, epilepsy and hearing impairment. The Ability Drawings showed that the children were involved in a range of activities which they enjoyed; household activities such as being at home, sweeping, preparing meals, eating, drawing water, and other activities such as playing football, cycling, playing with friends, playing netball and going to church (Appendix M).

The children then compiled Daily Activity Profiles which illustrated the children's own perceptions of their lives, and the way school related to their home life. The teachers were not used to children's perspectives being sought, and found it difficult to stand by without 'helping'. The team and the teachers were amazed at the amount of detail that the children

presented about their lives; the girls' gambling sessions in the afternoons and one boy taking peaches from the tree (Appendix N). A summary of the content of these profiles is presented in Appendix M. Thomas (Photos 11 and 12) whose mother was interviewed drew pictures which confirmed his mother's perspectives; that he enjoyed church and spent a lot of time herding cattle. (Appendix M iii, Appendix K boy A)

In discussion, the children stated that they enjoyed being together at school and they gave examples of mutual help and support:

> we lend them pens, if they have problems with study we help them. They help us by carrying things, drawing water, telling me if I don't hear something, helping me when I fall sick (epilepsy). We wouldn't like to go to a special school, it would be bad, we wouldn't be able to help each other, we would have no play mates. (children's drawing group)

Teacher's Evaluation

On the last day, teachers carried out an evaluation exercise (Appendix H x) and gave their feedback. They all praised the methods particularly the diagrams and drawings. They valued the opportunity to reflect on their experience and to spend more time thinking about the programme, and also about their own school experience through the flow diagrams:

> the drawings can say and mean a lot... I have learnt more about my own poor performance while I was at school, I was lacking in many things.. (teacher evaluation)

Photo 15

Children presenting their work after the map-making warm-up activity.
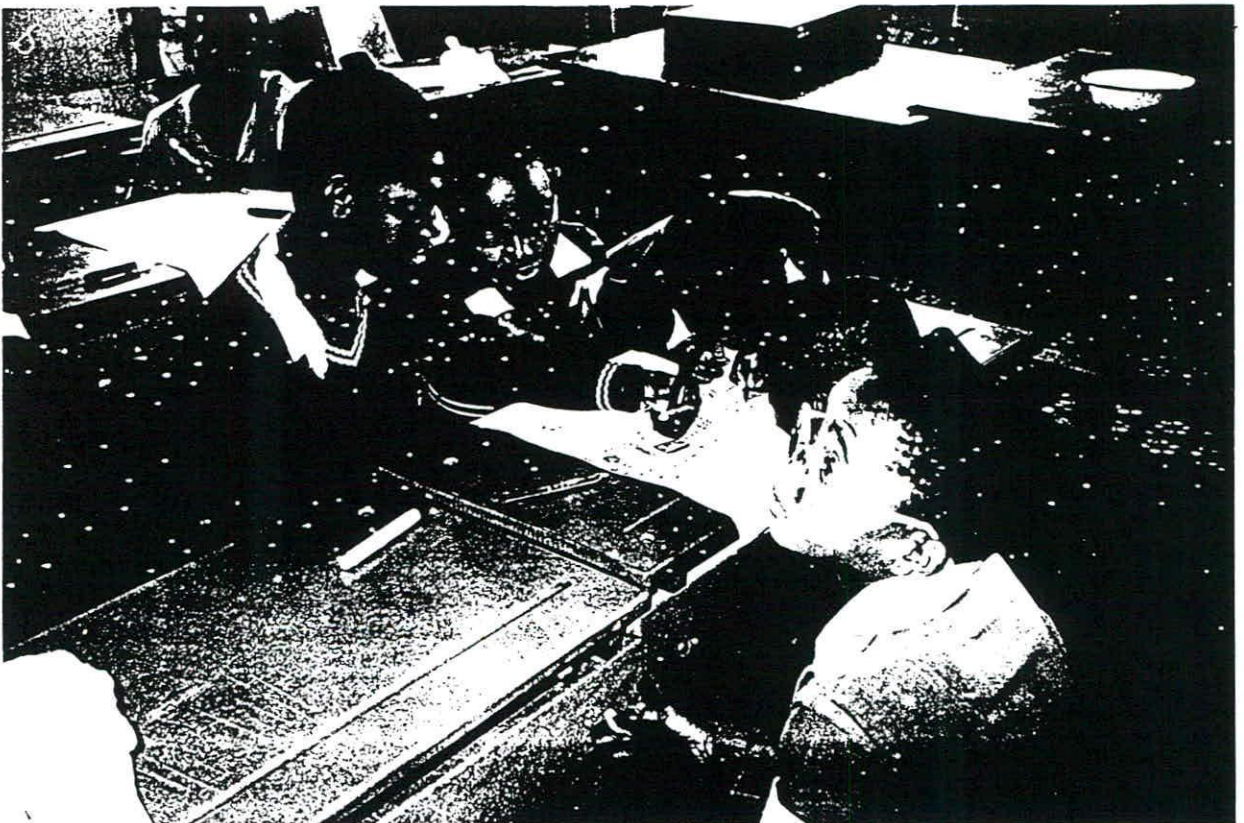

The girl's group drawing their daily profile diagrams

Photo 16

All felt inspired to try harder and felt that they understood the programme more. They also enjoyed the interviews and the fact that everyone had a chance individually to discuss what was happening. Feedback sessions were also valued, as a chance to 'open the mind to solutions.'

In terms of action points, they suggested that the Special Education team should make more visits, they also suggested that they themselves should make more sacrifices and attend workshops. At the very end of the visit, Mr A gave a speech as a representative of LNFOD. He used striking metaphors such as the local staple food 'papa' which needs the 'integration' of water and grain in order to succeed. He also appealed to the religious sense by stating that God had not put people on the planet in separate locations, with disabled people in one area; 'the earth is for all'. He gave examples of cruel treatment he had received as a visually impaired child, when teachers would put chairs in his way so that he fell, and implored teachers to give disabled children a chance. His speech inspired a wave of contrition, many supporting quotes from the bible and a strong determination to improve on their former practice.

Research Team Evaluation

The team felt that the learning from this visit went far beyond their initial expectations. The team felt that they learnt important lessons about the very real difficulties teachers were facing, and the conditions which constrained programme implementation. These were:

- lack of any support from key people such as the DRT and DEO

- when they had tried to give information to others (using their own time and resources) such as the priest, parents, schools, district staff, they had received nothing in return and so had given up

- lack of positive leadership; head teacher had other priorities such as academic standards and sports competitions

- hostel for disabled girls was founded by a missionary priest and imposed on the school, with no training or support

- as the hostel was not their responsibility and they were aware of special schools in Maseru, they felt that specialists should be responsible for disabled children

- decisions about the disabled children in the hostel were made by church authorities with no consultation

- the school was under a lot of pressure to maintain a high academic reputation and good exam results, which was threatened by enroling and spending time on pupils who had learning difficulties

- teachers perceive their main role as teachers of 'able' children; children who learn quickly and in the normal way, and children who are good at sports

- there was a very strong status quo; a core group of teachers had been at the school for several decades, and younger teachers with new ideas had little influence

- their initial negative attitudes led to poor attendance at workshops, which lead to lack of knowledge and skills, which reinforced negative attitudes

By way of contrast, the team was impressed with the children's feedback and overall appearance; they did seem to be happy, well-cared for and enjoying school. The team had been impressed with the openness of the children during the focus groups and drawing activities. The school obviously had many strengths which were not highlighted by the particular focus of the IE programme.

In Moshoe school, the team found that although they learnt a lot from the actual activates, that they were also 'reading between the lines' more so than at St Davids. Challenging teacher opinions was more difficult without the intermediary support of district staff (DEO and DRT). The team had focused on supporting teachers to examine their own practice and solve their own problems, and had often kept personal opinions to themselves. For example, the Unit felt that teacher's complaints about technical language in materials and files were unjustified because training had been given during the workshops which they had not attended, therefore they lacked the knowledge and skills.

Another key issue was the type and extent of disability which the children who attended the school portrayed. Although the hostel was intended to solve the transport problem for children with mobility impairments, in fact the whole school site was not wheelchair

accessible, and all the children in the hostel had impairments which did not really effect their capacity to cope with the existing school environment and curriculum. Admission to the hostel seemed to favour more academically able children. The team heard rumours of more severely disabled children being sent home by the church because they were 'too severely disabled'. Overall the teachers still saw disability as the problem of the individual child, rather than of their own attitudes and teaching methods; the child would be expelled rather than the school adapt.

The team had been shocked by the teacher's attitude to the parents and relatives who came for interviews. They were ignored, teachers turned their backs on them, and they were not asked to sit down, or given any refreshments. The two mothers who were interviewed had stated that teachers never visited their homes, and the overall feel was that parents were not considered important in school life.

In relation to the initial questions (p101), the team concluded that although some teachers did had some knowledge and skills, in general these were not sufficient because they had not attended the training. The team had learnt more about the origins of the hostel, which confirmed the initial view that teachers were not involved. The school's emphasis on academic achievement exaggerated the difficulties experienced by 'slower learners', who were therefore considered to be problems. The Unit took note of the constraints and suggestions for improvements highlighted by teachers and decided to offer more direct support to the school, but also to challenge district staff to fulfil their responsibilities.

CHAPTER 4   PERSONAL RETROSPECTIVE REFLECTIONS

In the previous two chapters I presented an account of the collaborative research as it happened in Lesotho. At the end of this period, the research team felt a strong sense of completion; lessons had been learnt, conclusions drawn and recommendations made in relation to each of the pilot schools, and were summarised in the evaluations at the end of each chapter. In the context of the methodological approach which informs this research, it is not appropriate or meaningful for me to tamper with the collaborative research results by imposing any out-of-context analysis or interpretation onto these group findings. Instead I present a personal retrospective critique of the research experience as a whole, guided by the four stipulations introduced in Part II (p41-2), whilst recognising that the issues are complex, inter-related and not easily categorised. My critique aims to highlight key issues and questions raised for me by the research experience, which I believe deserve further investigation. The thesis structure has intentionally focused on the collaborative stage of the research; there is not space to explore these issues in depth, and it is not my intention to propose solutions.

Firstly, I examine issues in relation to 'benefits to the Lesotho programme' at both national and community level. I then discuss some implications of the research for policy and practice at a wider level. Thirdly, I address issues in relation to academic criteria. My reflections on the research's impact on my professional development are incorporated into Chapter 5.

Benefits to the Programme

There is always something to be learnt from any new experience, and therefore people 'benefit' from the experience, particularly when facilitated to become aware of their learning. The questions I ask myself here are; what was the nature and extent of this benefit for programme coordinators and community members, and was the research a worthwhile investment for the programme?

In Part II, I discussed my concern that the research could be a burden to the Unit in that they had many other priorities and demands made on them by the Ministry. During the research team final evaluation (Appendix H,x) the team acknowledged the problem of conflicting priorities which the research had presented. I feel there are lessons to be learnt in relation to timing, focus and research initiation. Firstly, the limited time scale of the piloting stage meant that the Unit had a tight and heavy schedule to fulfil. As committed professionals they had welcomed the idea of the research but in practice, they did have to sacrifice most of their own time, and delay aspects of their schedule. In addition, the research did not focus on the Unit's ongoing activates of monitoring files, running braille and sign workshops and developing curriculum materials, which meant that it did not directly support their daily activities. Although the Unit had chosen the focus precisely because they did not normally have the time, it did create conflicting priorities.

In future, I would try to ensure that research periods were integrated into the project cycle from the beginning, and that the focus was supportive and relevant if time was an issue. On the other hand, projects do have a tendency to develop their own momentum of relentless

action with a danger of developing self-sustaining myths, and critical reflection often happens too late or not at all (Chambers 1983). It is probably never the 'right time' for stopping and reflecting, and focusing on gaps or impact may in the end help ensure that the project really achieves what it set out to do.

At community level, these issues were less relevant; the research did address their daily concerns, was negotiated to fit in with their daily duties, and took only a few days of their time, not a whole month. The extent of teacher's learning is apparent in the previous chapters; time will tell whether the research makes a lasting impact.

Benefit to disabled children and their families is related to the definition of 'benefit' and model of disability (6). In this research, these benefits were achieved as follows. Firstly, the activities with disabled children and their mothers validated their perspectives; they spoke of (or drew) their experiences and they were heard and seen. They experienced 'outsiders' responding positively to their reality. In addition, teachers drew up many action plans relating to individual children and their families, which if implemented, will result in 'direct benefits'. In the second pilot school, the benefits to mothers were dubious; they had been told to come to the school and lacked trust, involvement and understanding.

One dilemma in specifically targeting disabled children in the research, was that to an extent, they received 'special' attention. This raises complex issues, but the research attempted to address them through ensuring that difference was valued, that non-disabled children were involved, that children defined their own abilities and disabilities and that Mr A facilitated children's activities and provided a positive role model.

In conclusion, I believe that despite making demands on coordinators, the research did benefit the programme in a range of ways, and was a useful investment particularly in helping develop critical thinking skills at all levels. However, the bottom line was that I had initiated the research and had a vested interest in its 'success'; the Unit were not only supporting their own learning, they were also supporting me. Maximum programme benefit will only be achieved if all involved have a similar vested interest.

Relevance to Policy and Practice at a Wider Level

I will consider this in relation to three aspects; methodology, testimony and content.

The emerging 'grounded theory' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) of this research relates to methodology, and emerges from process rather than 'data'. This reflects a major shift in focus which occurred during the research from 'me learning about the programme' to 'facilitating other's learning, and learning about facilitation'. My research journey began as a search for a basis for the 'development of relevant, effective, sustainable and appropriate policy and practice' (Part I, p2) in relation to the education of disabled children in developing countries. It has led me to conclude that this basis is to be found in the communities where disabled children live, and in the approach and processes which enable 'outsiders' such as myself to meaningfully engage with them.

This approach was developed from and informed by PRA methodology, which had itself originated from the experience of outsider's attempts to engage with, and promote the development of poor, rural communities in developing countries. The approach which

emerged in this research had the following characteristics based on key PRA principles:

- it *validated local knowledge* and perceptions (teachers, mothers, children)

- the *behaviour and attitudes of outsiders* was central; listening, being flexible, aiming to serve the agendas of participants, being self-critical, embracing error

- it *facilitated participants' own learning* and problem solving, using approaches which encouraged teachers to define and analyse issues of relevance to them

- diverse and culturally *appropriate methods* were used; oral testimony, visual methods (by-passing the need for literacy)

- it sought the *individual perspectives* of the most poor and marginalised people (women, disabled people, children, rural peoples),

- it applied *'trade-offs'* in relation to purpose and principles of the research by not acquiring data for the sake of it, and by applying a pragmatic rigour (the principles of 'optimal ignorance' and 'appropriate imprecision', (Appendix D)

- the design, data collection, analysis, interpretation and action plans were developed in *collaboration* with programme coordinators and participants.

As the research was pioneering in its application of PRA to an integrated education programme, the methodology has several unique and innovative characteristics. These relate to the disability focus, and the use, adaptation and creation of methods for school situations. At the time of this research, there were no examples of PRA being used in relation to disability, and very few relating to children (Johnson et al 1995, Guijt et al 1994). This research facilitated the participation and expression of children with a range of different impairments, and there is a huge potential for further exploration. In addition, the presence of a disabled person on the research team highlighted the contribution that disabled people can make to the research process as facilitators, role models and through their own particular skills. (e.g. 'aural observation')

The use of different methods (diagrams, testimonies, observations) in contrasting situations highlighted the 'contextual appropriateness' of these methods in terms of their capacity to confront or empower. In the high trust situation of the 'positive' school, confrontational oral/observation methods seemed to work well. In the low trust situation of the 'negative' school, the more empowering diagram/visual methods (where outsiders relinquished control) were more effective. Again, further exploration is needed.

The research generated the creation of new visual methods such as Mountain Profiles and Support Diagrams which were inspired by PRA approaches, but developed for school situations. These are not fixed creations, they will be improved on and adapted in future situations; the model that is being offered is one of a creative response to an individual situation, not a blueprint.

The oral and visual testimony of marginalised groups and individuals is another significant contribution that this research makes to a wider audience. The written word bias of development is a key reason why local people's voices are so rarely heard (Slim and Thompson 1993). This is particularly true of the voices and images of rural women, disabled people, children, particularly disabled children. Many millions of dollars are spent on programmes 'for disabled children', yet their voices are never heard, their perspectives are unknown and ignored, and not just in developing countries. Consumer contribution to the development of policy and practice in relation to integrated education is still very rare. The testimony of disabled children, parents, teachers in this research is important not because it 'adds colour' to an account, but because policy-makers, practitioners, consultants and funders of integrated education programmes (and of all development programmes) need to listen to the actual voices of those for whom the programmes are intended if they genuinely wish their inputs to be relevant, appropriate, sustainable and effective.

I have illustrated the wealth of testimony generated by this research by direct quotes and original drawings and diagrams, but the scope of this thesis unfortunately limits this feast to a few tasters. Future documentation will aim to disseminate this testimony widely in all its richness.

Finally I consider the wider relevance of the specific content of this research as presented in chapters 2 and 3. These findings are not in themselves generalisable to other situations; this was never the intention of this research. The notions of 'naturalistic generalisations' (Stake 1978) and 'reader generalisability' (Merriam 1988) are relevant here. Each reader of

this research will relate these findings to their own existing 'picture' of integrated education in developing countries. My experience is that this research contributed to my own 'picture' in four ways; by filling in detail, highlighting gaps, providing new detail, and by 're-drawing' (challenging assumptions). This thesis has accounted for the process of producing the 'collective picture' which inevitably reflects the personal perspectives of the individuals involved. The following are examples of the ways in which the research contributed to my own individual 'picture', but for other readers, these examples would be different.

One assumption I had prior to the research was that high pupil/teacher ratios, severe lack of resources and remote environments would be major obstacles to successful implementation of integration programmes. The experience at St Davids challenged this assumption and demonstrated that these obstacles were not absolute barriers; in other situations, they may be, but it should not be an assumption.

Another assumption I had was that teachers, parents and children themselves would feel that giving extra attention to disabled pupils threatened the learning of the non-disabled pupils. Yet teachers stated that it helped other pupils because they developed 'social responsibility'. This highlighted my cultural assumption that individual development would be valued over and above duty to the community (I knew this in theory, but had not experienced it) and for me was one of the key lessons from this research.

Examples of how my awareness was deepened include more insight into the role that children (including disabled children) play in the family economy; looking after animals, fetching wood and water etc. This highlights questions for me about the role of schools and the

relevance of the curriculum particularly in relation to poor families. My awareness also deepened in relation to the role of good leadership in programme implementation. Again, this does not imply that successful integration will only happen where there is exceptional leadership (such as the DEO and DRT). It also highlights the precarious nature of successful programmes with charismatic leadership; people move on, and long term sustainability may be even more difficult in such situations.

An examples of a highlighted gap is a strong realisation that the lack of a community-based rehabilitation (CBR) programme had a major impact on the potential success of the programme, and gave teachers more work and complex dilemmas. The examples of Lalla and the boy in the wheelchair at St Davids highlighted the holistic nature of integrated education; wheelchairs, physiotherapy, self-care skills and family support are integral to a child's education. Yet in the West they are problems belonging to Social Services or the Health Service. In future I would aim to ensure that these issues are highlighted at programme planning stage, and make attempts to address them through liaising with or encouraging the development of CBR at the start of an integrated education programme.

It is tempting to turn some of these personal lessons into generalisations, but this would be dangerous, as a key lesson of the research was that assumptions cannot be made about people's attitudes, capacities, skills, knowledge and overall situation. The generalisation in the end has to relate to methodology; the lessons confirm the need for an open and flexible attitude, and a willingness to 'have one's picture re-painted'.

Academic Issues

I distinguish two issues in relation to the requirement that this research meet academic criteria. Firstly, the *logistics* of a formal degree course and submission requirements impose parameters on the research in terms of timing, structure and reporting format. These parameters presented real dilemmas and were often directly opposed to promoting maximum benefit to the programme. For example, time limits meant that the research could not be re-scheduled or lengthened, and time used for thesis writing could have been spent producing a video, drama or user-friendly documentation as more culturally-appropriate means of dissemination. Secondly, the more difficult and interesting issue relates to the Lesotho research *'standing up as research'*, whether or not it contributes to an award-bearing course. After discussing the role of the literature in my retrospective phase (Part II discussed its role in the preparation and collaborative stage), I then present my reflections in relation to the cultural underpinnings of research, authorship and accountability, notions of rigour, collaboration and power.

The key issues at the heart of the Lesotho research are mirrored in the writings of all 'new paradigm' researchers (particularly Lincoln and Guba 1985, Reason and Rowan 1981, and Reason (ed) 1988). However, the actual creative process of this research was akin to composing an original piece of music (8), in the sense that during the process of composition itself, listening to other composers (whether Mozart or Jo Bloggs) is not only distracting, but could completely sabotage the creative process. In addition, the capacity of a piece of music to powerfully communicate itself does not depend on comparisons with other compositions. In my own retrospective reflections on the 'collaborative composition'

of the Lesotho research, the Western-based literature has more often been confusing, irrelevant and distracting than inspiring or helpful, partly due to the closeness of the experience and also its cultural context rather than its overall relevance. For these reasons, and because of the particularly pioneering aspects of this research and its contextual and collaborative basis, extensive reference to other literature is not appropriate and is intentionally minimal in this thesis.

My key questions are; does this count as research? by what criteria? according to what and whose conceptualisation of research? and what is the 'bottom line' in terms of defining research? As an advisor, all of my work is about posing questions, listening, learning, analyzing and communicating and is in a sense, an on-going 're-searching' of experiences and ideas. The Lesotho research differs from my normal approach in that both the process itself and the communication of this process are particularly and overtly systematic and critical. It is characterised by a rigorous level of accountability which aims to explain, justify and critique decisions, processes, actions and conclusions.

The Lesotho research raised issues about the Western cultural underpinnings of research. There are conventions relating to how 'truth' is communicated; through logic and facts rather than through myth and story as in many oral cultures, demonstrated by the use of the term 'anecdotal' (from the Greek for 'unpublished') which is often used in a derogatory way to undermine oral testimony (Slim and Thompson 1993). Oral testimony challenges this convention:

the credibility of oral sources is a different credibility..the importance of oral

testimony may not lie in its adherence to facts but rather in its divergence from them, where imagination, symbolism, desire break in (Portelli 1981, cited in Slim and Thompson 1993, p156)

In reflecting on the Lesotho experience, I have reservations about the extent to which my continued focus on written records, and my encouragement of others to make records, ultimately undermines oral culture. Slim and Thompson discuss this danger:

the 'tape-recordings' and 'ball-point pens' of oral testimony collectors risk being the first part of a process of cultural 'rot' (Slim and Thompson 1993, p151)

It would seem to be a Western problem that we need to validate oral traditions through writing about them. The research challenged my assumption that the main value of memory was its capacity to recall 'actual' situations, rather than appreciating it as a creative process which gave 'insights into how people make sense of their lives and social worlds' (Slim and Thompson, 1993)

There are also dangers in relation to oral testimony. The people exposing themselves are usually particularly vulnerable and less powerful than the researchers. Their testimonies can be used against them (Rudduck 1993), and if researchers set about to 'penetrate, expose, interpret and discuss all aspects of a community's culture' (Slim and Thompson 1993), then the process becomes intrusive and destructive. This came across strongly in relation to the mothers at the second school, who were rightly defensive and unwilling to communicate their lives in a situation of no trust. In Part II, I describe how I felt uncomfortable with just

'learning' and felt I needed to offer something in order to 'pay my way'. This is a dilemma, because too often Westerners have been convinced that they had everything to offer and nothing to learn. The attitudes and behaviours underpinning both learning and supporting and the integrity of the researcher would seem to be key here.

Another cultural underpinning or research is the value placed on 'questioning' and the 'extractive' nature of knowledge 'acquisition'. When I explained and tried a 'devil's advocate' approach with team members, some were shocked and could see no purpose whatsoever in unnecessarily challenging people. It seemed to go against the cultural values of supporting each other and avoiding confrontation, unless lives or serious issues were at stake. I now have questions about the ethics of questioning (particularly of a challenging nature) find my assumption challenged that questioning is automatically 'a good thing'. I feel there is a distinction between questing within both self and the situation - 'enquiry', and an approach focusing on the acquisition of knowledge - 'acquiry'. For me, questioning the experience of others gave way to listening to the authors of this experience.

This notion of 'authorship' is central to the research, and it's *authority* and *authenticity* is derived from the *authors* of these experiences; the teachers, children, families and the Special Education Unit. It is to these authors, that the research is primarily accountable. There is a dilemma in trying to make the research accountable to an external audience in a different culture and context in terms of different notions of rigour. In this research, I experience my rigour as relating to a breadth and depth of self-critical awareness permeating the whole process, rather than to the application of any preconceived method or system. In the collaborative phase, the rigour was pragmatic and integral to the purpose and meaning of the

research as defined by the people involved. The rigour was in a persistent, conscious and critical and collaborative quest for insights which would lead to programme improvements. I described this as a 'felt' validity in Part II.

This pragmatic rigour is based on optimal rather than maximal levels of data collection and analysis, which again conflicts with the conventions of Western research; this research did not intend to 'expend exhaustive effort in collecting relevant evidence' (Yin 1989, p146). But my own 'academic' agenda gave rise to considerable anxiety on this issue during the research process, documented in Part II. In retrospect, I feel that our 'pragmatic rigour' had its own validity, but more work needs to be done to find ways to legitimise this against traditional research criteria.

The collaborative nature of the research raised several dilemmas. Many times I 'let go' of my own agendas, curiosity, notions of 'thoroughness' in order to support the collaborative process. Cunningham and Torbert also highlight this dilemma (Cunningham 1988, p173, Torbert 1981, p142). The research led me to reflect on the parameters of collaborative research; if the aim is to dissolve boundaries between researcher and researched, then does that imply that an illiterate parent, or a child with learning difficulties can be a co-researcher? An underlying principle is that everyone (maybe apart from a very small minority of severely intellectually impaired people) can analyse their situations and make interpretations and decisions about their lives. Whether this is 'research' or not, depends on how systematic and overt this process is. This would seem to contradict authors such as Yin who suggest that case study research is a difficult, specialised activity:

Much intelligence is demanded of the explanation builder... non of these strategies is easy to use... novice investigators are especially likely to have troublesome experiences' (Yin 1989, p125)

As novice investigators, our troublesome experiences were much more in relation to accessing Western educational research literature than to interpreting and analyzing the research findings to our own satisfaction.

Finally, a pertinent issue is that although people have this capacity to analyse their experience and change their lives, in situations of extreme poverty and oppression they do not have the power. Swantz and Vainio-Mattila (1988 p131) highlight this in their report of a Kenyan research project, by stating that it is not the degree of participation which makes successful research, but the extent to which it leads to emancipation.

CHAPTER 5   CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

In this short and final chapter, I reflect on the research journey as a whole and suggest areas for future exploration. This journey can be compared to an initial collaborative exploration into a relatively unknown territory.

Part I established the context and overall aim of this exploration. Initially the intention had been to un-earth 'treasures' and to bring them home. Part II describes how the the journey itself became a key focus; engaging with fellow travelling companions, inventing modes of transport and discovering that the journey was also internal. Chapters 2 and 3 of Part III describe how the 'treasure' was uncovered and revealed to us by community members, but the desire to take ownership of it and bring it back to show to others had by this time waned. I realised that the treasure belongs to the people of the community; their concerns, their knowledge, their skills, their interests. My focus became one of learning, listening, supporting and questioning my own role in the situation. The journey highlighted many dilemmas in relation to travel and exploration, and I attempted to engage with these dilemmas and issues in chapter 4.

The follow-up to the conclusions and recommendations presented in chapters 2 and 3 will be the responsibility of programme coordinators in Lesotho. These findings are already informing and being incorporated into the broad-based final evaluation of the pilot programme. Further collaboration is likely in relation to the production of further documentation of the research, in formats accessible to different audiences.

Integrated Education and Research as 'Development Issues'

My main conclusion arising from the research experience as a whole, is that integrated education and related research should be perceived as 'development issues' (5). In chapter 4 I argued that the emerging 'grounded theory' of this research related to the approach and processes by which outsiders such as myself meaningfully engage with the communities where disabled children live (p121). This methodological orientation was inspired and informed by PRA, which can be termed a 'development methodology' in that its whole *raison d'etre* is to promote development in poor rural communities through a developmental process. This methodology in turn gave rise to a shift in the research focus from acquiring knowledge to facilitating learning. This learning aimed to promote programme development and was located within a broad community context, incorporating family concerns and acknowledging local socio-economic conditions. Figure 13 contrasts this developmental approach to programme development with a more extractive or directive approach:

	DEVELOPMENTAL	NON-DEVELOPMENTAL
Process	* Dialectical, organic, facilitating, sharing * Building on local knowledge, skills, practices * 'Their' agendas	* Extractive * Directive * Outsider's agendas * Outsider's control
Aims	* To promote participant's personal and professional development; 'empowerment' * To promote programme development in collaboration with participants	* To increase outsider's knowledge * To transfer technical skills; 'special education'
Context	* Holistic, multi-sectoral * Socio-economic conditions * Family concerns	* Limited, narrow * Schools and classrooms out of context

FIGURE 13: PROMOTING PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

This is by no means a fully-fledged model. It attempts to show that research which aims to promote programme development should itself be developmental. The following are some general implications for the future arising from the Lesotho research:

- bridges need to be built between the relevant disciplines of development studies, special education, disability studies and community-based rehabilitation.

- in particular, special education needs to be located within a development framework, and to learn from development studies.

- PRA methodology needs to be adapted and developed for children's education programmes.

- more work needs to be done to influence PRA to focus on disability, particularly on disabled children. Currently PRA stresses the need to respond to difference according to gender (Welbourn 1991,1992), age, ethnicity and poverty levels, but it ignores disability yet disabled people exist in every community.

- children's participation in development, including disabled children, should be promoted by policy-makers, donors and practitioners. Consumer participation is increasingly seen as central to effective and appropriate programme development (Burkey 1993) and children are the consumers of education.

- Developing Countries have much to teach the West in relation to responsible and

appropriate use of resources, community support, and pragmatic integrated education. Ways need to be found to communicate these lessons.

- documentation and reporting formats need to be developed which will be accessible to people in the communities on which they are based, including disabled people.

- the notion of integrated education and related research as development issues requires that the West and developing countries work together to develop 'new paradigm' research which is authentically collaborative and promotes emancipation.

The role, behaviour and attitudes of outsiders is integral to this development perspective. My personal agenda that this research should 'improve my own awareness and skills in relating to difference' was initially perceived as a sort of optional outcome, but became central to the research. Throughout this thesis, particularly in Part II, I have given examples of the ways in which my own personal attitudes, behaviour and cultural beliefs affected and were influenced by the research process.

A concluding principle in this research is that research is in essence a natural activity which can be undertaken by anyone who has a capacity for 'autonomous, self-directed action' (Reason and Rowan, 1981, p489) regardless of literacy levels, age or disability. This is not to deny that this research requires its own rigour. In my experience, the role of research facilitator is central here in developing and maintaining a commitment to a rigorous level of critical awareness of both self and process. I experienced that the 'problem location' of

research shifted from outside the myself to within; research inevitably became an experience of personal and professional development. This links into the redefining of professionalism (Chambers 1993, 1994) which has its origins in the work of Schon (1993, 1987). Chambers states that 'the problem is not 'them' (the poor), but 'us' (the not poor)' (1993, p13).

To conclude, I summarise lessons I have learnt in relation to my own professional development which I propose have a wider relevance to any 'outsiders' wishing to 'engage with difference'. In order to facilitate the development of relevant, effective, sustainable and appropriate policy and practice in relation to the education of disabled children in developing countries, our role is to:

- *facilitate not complicate,*

- *catalyse not inhibit*

- *support not control*

- *learn more than to teach*

- *listen more than to question*

- *'embrace error' rather than avoid failure*

- *to validate 'authors' rather than to be authorities*

- *to disseminate knowledge rather than to accumulate*

These sentiments are not new:

Act for the people's benefit. Trust them; leave them alone.

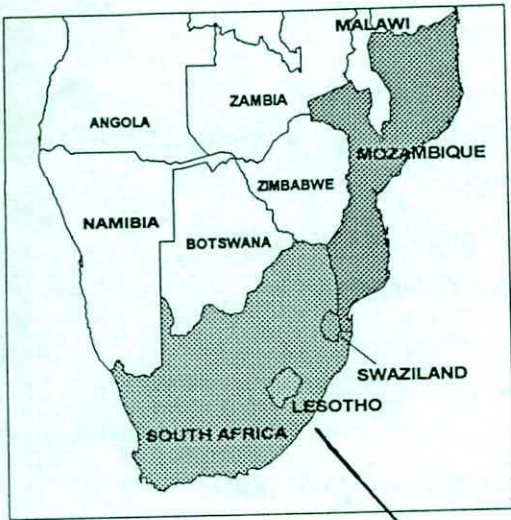(Lao Tzu, 400 BC, translation by Mitchell 1988)

NOTES

1. The terms 'Western' and 'the West' refer primarily to the economically wealthier countries of Northern America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. I use the term because of its familiarity to the reader, whilst recognising that terms such as 'North' and 'South' are increasingly replacing 'West' and 'Developing Countries'.

2. For the purposes of this study, the term 'Developing Countries' will refer to the countries of Africa, Asia apart from Japan and Latin America. I am using this term because of its familiarity to the reader, but it is important to acknowledge that 'developing countries' have been since the 80s, in economic terms, often getting poorer. I also wish to acknowledge that these countries are highly developed in a range of ways apart from economically, and the term should not be taken to indicate inferiority.

3. Save the Children Fund supports IE (Integrated Education) Programmes in China, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Lesotho. In addition, integrated education is an important component in CBR (Community-Based Rehabilitation) Programmes in a range of countries in Southern and Eastern Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Lesotho is currently the only major IE programme supported by SCF in Africa.

4. Over the last few decades, Western attempts to promote development in the 'Third World' have become increasingly professionalised, giving rise to a new discipline of 'development studies'. The 'development literature' corresponds to this new discipline, and is very wide ranging in its philosophy and content and incorporates many different definitions of the term 'development'. In relation to this research, the main influence is from literature which supports a people-centred, participatory, empowerment-orientated development (Robert Chambers and others) rather than the macro economic and materialistic 'development' encouraged by major donors such as the World Bank.

5. SCF began work in Lesotho in 1961 with a child feeding scheme. An office was

established in 1963. Since that time programmes have diversified to include juvenile justice, 'riders for health' (provision of motorbikes to village health workers), school feeding programme, drought relief and individual child support. Disability work consists of three complimentary programmes; the Scott Hospital Community-based Rehabilitation programme operating in one district, support for disabled activist's training by the national disabled people's organisation (LNFOD) and support to the National Integrated Education Programme. An ex-patriot Field Director manages the whole programme with the support of office staff and technical advisors, one of whom is the Special Education Advisor from Zimbabwe who coordinates the Integrated Education Programme together with Senior Inspector employed by the Ministry.

6. 'Disabled children' refers to children with perceived impairments (physical, hearing, visual, intellectual) and children who are 'disabled' by traditional curriculum and teaching methods which do not support their learning. In such situations they have 'learning difficulties', but with flexible child-centred approaches, they can learn in their own way and at their own speed. Disability is thus defined not as a fixed characteristic of the child, but as a consequence of the attitudinal, physical, methodological, curricula barriers which prevent children with different 'needs and speeds' from full participation in education. Successful programmes are not judged by their capacity to 'cure' a disabled child, rather by the removal of barriers to their acceptance and participation.

7. Albinism is the condition of having a congenital absence of pigment in the skin, hair and eyes. People with albinism can have visual problems and can be discriminated against due to their difference.

8. My first degree was in music, so this analogy is based on personal experience.

MAP OF LESOTHO   APPENDIX A

Lesotho

Pilot school A

BHUTA-BUTHE

LERIBE

MOKHOTLONG

BEREA

Republic of South Africa (orange Free State)

Maseru (Capital city)

MASERU

THABA-TSEKA

MAFETENG

QACHA'S NEK

Pilot School B

MOHALES HOEK

Republic of South Africa (Natal)

QUTHING

KEY:

◆ Pilot schools in Integrated Education Programme

ANGOLA
ZAMBIA
MALAWI
MOZAMBIQUE
ZIMBABWE
NAMIBIA
BOTSWANA
SWAZILAND
LESOTHO
SOUTH AFRICA

AN INTRODUCTION TO LESOTHO

General

Lesotho, known as 'the mountain kingdom' is surrounded by the Republic of South Africa, and covers an area roughly one and a half times the size of Wales. Harsh winters and high altitudes make much of the country inaccessible in winter. The population is estimated at two million, mostly consisting of Basotho peoples whose language is Sesotho.

Lesotho was a British Protectorate for over a hundred years until independence in 1966, and English is taught in all schools. Throughout its history, Lesotho's economy and stability has been inextricably linked to that of South Africa, where a quarter of the male workforce has sought employment in recent years. (Khatleli et al 1995, Save the Children 1995). This has resulted in nearly 30% of families with no male head, and consequently women have taken an increasingly prominent role in Basotho society. However, the recent retrenchment of mineworkers from South Africa has contributed to a 50% unemployment level, and is placing considerable strain on family stability.

With new developments, in South Africa, Lesotho's future as an independent country is uncertain, and foreign donor agencies are losing interest (Thacker 1995). The Church has a very strong influence in Lesotho, and makes an important contribution to both the health and education systems.

Children

Lesotho society is based upon an extended family structure which incorporates a complex system of responsibilities and reciprocities. Children belong to and are cared for by the whole family, not just biological parents. This structure is supported and perpetuated by Basotho indigenous education and customary law (Simms 1986). The concept of 'childhood' is culturally specific:

> Under Lesotho customary law, the concept of 'childhood' does not exist but the population is divided into two entities; 'major' and 'minor'. A major is the head of the family: a minor is an unmarried male or a females who is not the head of a family. (Hawkins 1989, p7).

Lesotho ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992, which together with

changes in statutory law is having an increasing impact on child rights understanding and practice. In 1992, up to 30% of children had an absent father in South Africa, leading increased female responsibility and a lack of male role models (Thacker 1995). However, the extended family network means that a Mosotho child is hardly ever left alone, and the lack of a father is not so crucial as in Western nuclear families (Blair 1986). Recently, the retrenchment of South African mine workers has led to a rise in unemployment and in some areas, contributes towards a breakdown of traditional family structures.

Disability

> The traditional beliefs and practices surrounding disability are a complex mixture stemming from practical experience, the need for survival, spiritual beliefs and traditional attitudes to health. (Khatleli, Mariga, Phachaka and Stubbs 1995)

When a visibly disabled child is born, this is traditionally perceived as negative and the mother is held responsible. However, in order to please the spirits and prevent greater misfortune, she believes it is her duty to care for the child. A variety of coping strategies exist within traditional Basotho culture including non-formal education focusing on self-care activities supported by the extended family, as social integration and responsibility are very highly valued in Basotho society (Khatleli et al 1995). Prior to the 1980s, specialist provision for disabled children had been the responsibility of non-government agencies, churches and individuals, and a few small institutions had arisen.

During the Decade of Disabled People (1983-1992), organisations of disabled people and parents began to demand rights including education for their disabled children. The Lesotho Federation of Organisations of Disabled People (LNFOD) is a strong and vocal advocacy group, and its chairperson is now a member of parliament. Community-based rehabilitation (CBR) programmes operate in several parts of the country, facilitating local parents and disabled people to help themselves and obtain services. It is in this context of increased awareness of human rights that the Integrated Education Programme had its origins.
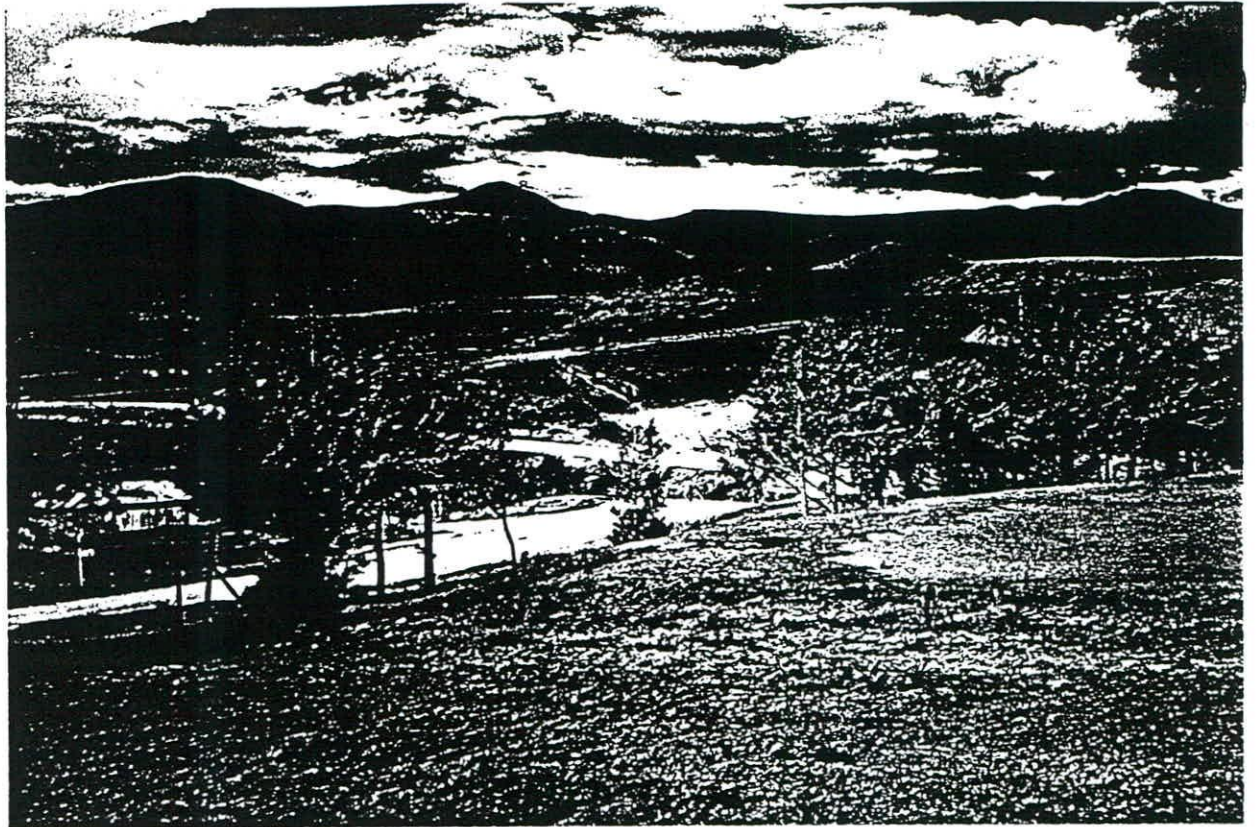
The mountains of Mokhotlong

Photo 17

Traditional Basotho homes

Photo 18

RESEARCH PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO THE M.of Ed, LESOTHOAPPENDIX C

<u>The Lesotho National Integrated Education Programme:
A Pre-Evaluation Case Study on the Pilot Programme</u>

Background:

The Lesotho National Integrated Education Programme is a pioneering approach to making primary education accessible to all children. In Save the Children Fund's global experience, it is one of the most innovative national programmes on integration in the world today. It has many lessons to teach not just other developing countries, but also the developed countries who are increasingly trying to find ways to promote effective and sustainable education programmes with fewer resources.

As Overseas Disability Advisor representing SCF at the international level, I have found that there is a great shortage of information about successful integration programmes in developing countries, and I regularly talk enthusiastically about the Lesotho programme. During conversations with the Special Education team, it became apparent that although they are regularly monitoring the pilot programme, they would welcome an opportunity to investigate the impact of their programme more deeply, and would find a longer, more focused visit from myself helpful. I am registered at the University of Cambridge Institute of Education for a research-based Master of Education course, and this study will also form part of this research. The Cambridge Institute has been very involved in the development of the UNESCO Special Needs in the Classroom Project, and so has a wide international experience. The main focus of the visit however, will be an in-depth preparation for the evaluation, and the academic writing-up will only be one of many outcomes.

The Evaluation later in the year will try to get a broad overview of the programme, and cover all aspects, together with links with other disability programmes. This pre-evaluation study will focus on one or two pilot schools, and try to discover the ways in which the implementation of the programme has affected the children, school and community. This will hopefully help to identify some **key questions** for the evaluation. Therefore it will be a **small-scale participatory research project with feeding into a full-scale evaluation.**

Aim: To explore the impact of the integrated education programme on one (or two) of the pilot schools.

Objectives;

1.   To prepare for the Programme Evaluation by identifying key questions and issues raised by the community and Special Education team

2.   To learn from the experience in the pilot programme in order to continue to improve practice in the future

3.   To support the Special Education Team, teachers and community members in the development of their own monitoring and evaluation skills (reflecting on experience,

involving communities).

Methods;

1. The overall methodology will be a **collaborative case study**. During the first week of the visit, the Research Team (including at least the Special Education team and myself) will finalise the design of the project, defining the topics, key questions, methods and time plans. My role will be as a facilitator, not as a director. The agenda will be produced by the whole team. In previous discussion, the issue of 'attitude change' has been highlighted by the team as one which they would like to investigate further. Other topics may be added.

2. The specific research methods will be taken from current **educational action-research** practice, which focuses on teachers themselves investigating their own practice, and is aimed to help people improve what they do, and is not a dry academic approach. Some methods will also be used from **Participatory Rural Appraisal** techniques which have been found very effective in helping communities participate in their own programmes

Participation;

1. Teachers who are able to be involved in the study will benefit from reflecting on their experience of the programme, and analysing the various successes and problems they have encountered. They will learn a variety of techniques which can help them continuously appraise their work and make their teaching as effective as possible.

2. Children will be encouraged to participate drawing on Child-to-Child approaches and actively involving them in helping improve the integration of disabled children in their classes.

3. As parents are central to the programme, families and other community members will also be involved in helping identify what have been the most successful aspects of the programme, and what the impact on their lives has been.

The overall focus will be to highlight and strengthen the positive aspects of the programme, and help all involved find ways to continue to improve the programme. In terms of the curriculum and curriculum materials, the study will highlight the strengths and constraints in current practice, which the evaluation will then be able to follow-up. It will not be a curriculum evaluation in any detailed sense.

Timescale

The detailed planning, data collection and analysis will take place between 13th February and 15/16 March.

AN INTRODUCTION TO PRA
(PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL)

The following introduction to PRA is taken largely from Robert Chambers' Discussion Paper 'Rural Appraisal: Rapid, Relaxed and Participatory' (1992). His working definition is:

> A growing family of approaches and methods to enable local people to share, enhance and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act' (Chambers 1992, preface)

It is considered to be a particularly useful planning tool for external agencies because it can be used effectively by outsiders to plan quickly and effectively:

> Participatory Assessment (PRA) is a particular form of *qualitative research* used to gain an in-depth understanding of a community or situation (Gosling and Edwards 1995 p144)

Origins

PRA has its origins in activist participatory research (as inspired by Friere, 1968), applied anthropology, research on farming systems and agro-ecosystem analysis in developing countries, and rapid rural appraisal (RRA) techniques. The latter developed as a result of dissatisfaction with many of the problems inherent in 'rural development tourism' (brief rural visits by urban professionals who proceeded to misunderstand and misrepresent the rural perspectives). In RRA the focus was on ensuring that the learning was relevant and appropriate, but it was still elicited and extracted by outsiders. In PRA the emphasis is more on sharing and ownership by local people.

Characteristics

> In PRA the behaviour and attitudes of outsider facilitators are crucial, including relaxing not rushing, showing respect, 'handing over the stick', and being self-critically aware. Modes of investigation, sharing and analysis are open-ended and often visual, by groups and through comparisons..Evidence to date shows high validity and reliability in information shared by rural people through PRA (Chambers 1992, preface)

The overall aim of PRA is that development programmes should be designed and controlled by communities affected by the work, rather than outside agencies. The PRA process should reverse power relations and seek out the most marginalised groups and individuals and promote their empowerment. PRA is growing, developing and spreading throughout many developing countries, and more recently its potential in the West has started to be explored. However, this spread at grass roots level has yet to be matched in institutions of higher education.

Key principles

- triangulation; team members, tools and techniques and sources of information
- trade-offs through principles of 'optimal ignorance' - knowing what it is not worth knowing, and 'appropriate imprecision' - not measuring more than is needed.
- off-setting bias; seeking out the poorest and most marginalised people
- reversals of learning
- learning rapidly and progressively
- seeking diversity
- facilitating; role of outsiders
- self-critical awareness and responsibility
- sharing

Methods

A vast range of methods are used, and are being adapted, developed and created all the time. Much use is made of 'key informants', semi-structured interviews, mapping, modelling, diagrams, stories, brainstorming. Methods used in this research are outlined in Appendix H

Reversals

Reversals of normal modes of learning are a key feature in PRA. These include:

- from closed to open
- from individual to group
- from verbal to visual
- from counting to comparing
- from extracting to empowering
- from reserve to rapport
- from tedium to fun

> it is common practice for the outsider to become redundant as the process takes off (Chambers 1992 p47)

Dangers

Dangers include; people jumping on the bandwagon with the wrong attitudes, rushing and not spending time listening and learning, formalism and the urge to standardize and codify in the name of quality, and finally rejection by those who feel threatened by a 'people's methodology.

> it is not books of instructions, but personal commitment, critical awareness, and informed improvisation, which can best assure quality and creativity' (Chambers 1992 p50)

> PRA is one expression of a wider paradigm for effective action in the contemporary world. (Chambers 1992 p66)

Chart 19.1

STEPS OF DESIGNING A RESEARCH PLAN

Clarify Goals & Objectives of the Study

↓

Choose Main Topics

↓

Prepare List of Subtopics, Indicators, and Key Questions

↓

Identify Sources of Information for Each Subtopic

↓

Select Tools to Gather and Analyze Information

↓

Design Research Tools
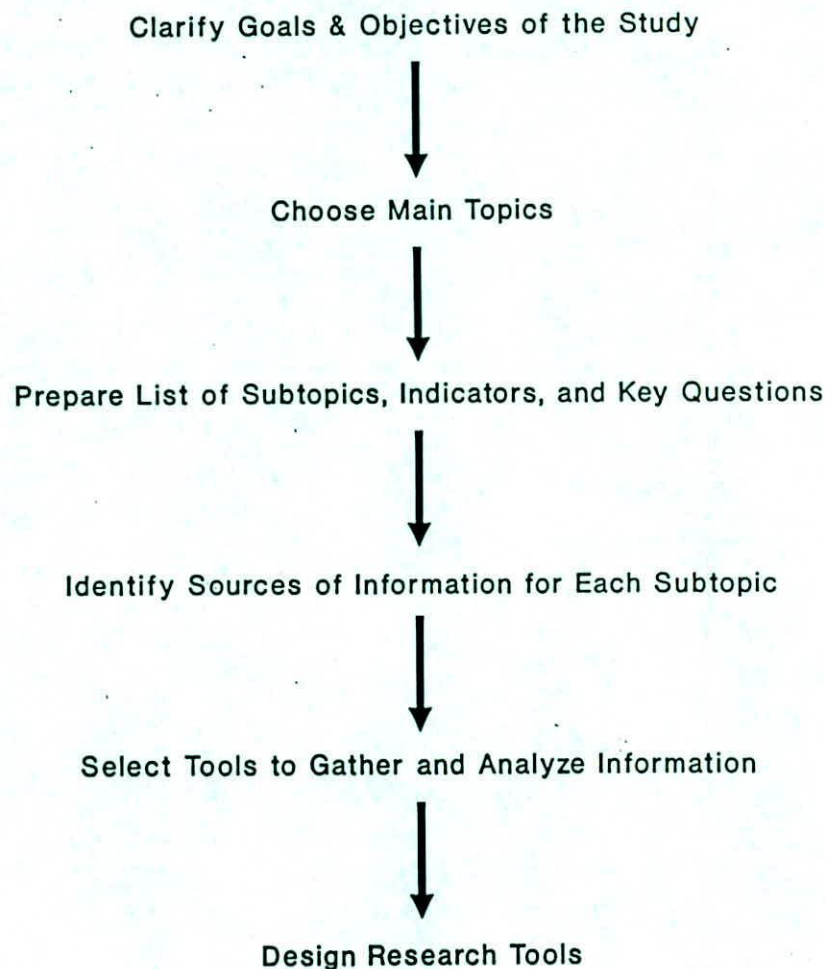
Handout 19.3: Guidelines for Designing a PRA

- When something is too complex to be approached in one piece, develop an outline for it, break it down into manageable parts, and deal with each part in turn. But don't lose sight of the overall picture or get lost in details. Regularly switch from these small steps to the overall picture. This method can be used for developing a research plan or research tools, planning, information gathering, analyzing data, or writing a report.

- In developing a research plan distinguish clearly between different levels: topics, subtopics, key questions, and indicators to avoid confusion during the fieldwork.

- Start with something easy, as this makes the team and the informants more relaxed (design the plan and the tools accordingly).

- When clarifying goals and objectives, topics and subtopics, sources of information, and indicators, and when designing the research tools, run through a list of questions starting with: what, why, who, for whom, how, where, when, what for, which, with what. For example, when designing a PRA plan, and when choosing your tools and indicators, ask yourself:
  "Who needs the information?"
  "What are we trying to find out?"
  "How will the results be used?"
  "What is the scope and depth of information needed to address the research problem?"
  "What kind of information do we need?"
  "What degree of accuracy is required from the data?"
  "How will the information be collected?"
  "Who will collect the information?"
  "How can community members participate in the appraisal?"
  "Who can or should participate?"

- Review secondary sources, interview key informants, and use your own knowledge to identify the main topics, hypotheses, and key issues of the PRA.

- Move from the general to the specific. Establish a framework of reference which is then filled in with more detailed information like a puzzle. Clarify what needs to be understood before moving to the next level of knowledge (e.g., get an understanding of the available natural resources and land rights before gathering detailed information on specific farming practices).

- Move from material to ideological and from general to specific topics (e.g., natural resources -> sources of livelihood -> household economy -> beliefs, attitudes, values -> problems and possible solutions). Leave discussions of problems and sensitive issues until the end. Structure both the whole PRA and the interviews accordingly.

- Think of analysis early on, using analytical tools throughout the PRA.

- Think of ways to involve community members (especially women and other disadvantaged groups) in the analysis of the collected information as much as possible.

TOPICS AND SUB-TOPICS, and EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS   APPENDIX F

TOPIC	SUB-TOPIC
1. Disabled child	- behaviour - learning - self esteem - social relations - own perceptions
2. Teacher development	- knowledge/skills - daily routine - confidence - enthusiasm
3. Whole school	- environment - interaction between teachers - non-disabled children - teacher roles
4. Family	- involvement of disabled child - resources; time, energy, money - siblings - grandparents - attitudes to disabled child
5. Wider community	- neighbours - community key people - other organisations - external donors - dc/family interaction with community
6. Disabled adults	- role from beginning - opportunities - constraints - current involvement - impact at community level

Examples of Indicators:

Teacher Development

- feelings about disabled children
- success stories
- constraints overcome
- enthusiasm
- confidence
- information dissemination

Disabled Child

- attention span
- participation
- new skills
- physical appearance
- following rules
- interaction with peers

TEAMSKILL MATRIX

Knowledge, Skills, Experience,	L	D	P	M	A	Loc	S
* Knowledge of Culture/Cultural Sensitivity	(*)	*	*	*	*	*	
* Sesotho Language		*	*	*	*	**	
* Knowledge of Families/trust						*	
* Knowledge of teachers/trust	*	*	*			*	
* Relating to children	*	*	*	*	*	*	
* Observation skills	*	*	*	*			**
* Listening Skills				*	**		**
* Drawing/diagrams							*
* English Language							*
* Writing Skills							*
* Research/Evaluation Skills	*			*			
* Methodology;							*
- storytelling	*	*	*	*	*		*
- Semi-structured interviews	*	*	*	*	*		*
- Role play					*		*
- Music				*			*
* Report writing	**						(*)
* Organizational	*			*			*
* Note-taking	*			*	*		*
* Group facilitation				*			

The aim of this exercise was to highlight different research team member strengths, and skills/experience needed for the research, not to limit people to one particular skill.

L, D, P, M - Special Education Unit members

A - Lesotho National Federation of Associations of the Disabled representative

Loc - local community members

S - myself.

PRA METHODS USED IN THE RESEARCH

i) Classroom Observation

Initially research team members used the topics, sub-topics and indicators drawn up in the planning week in order to provide a focus for classroom observation. Team members observed in pairs, and at times other class teachers would join. Later, a small workshop on classroom observation resulted in the group (team and teachers) drawing up their own checklist. The key topics were; teacher-pupil relationship, pupil-pupil interaction, child participation, teacher style, any surprises, and observer self-reflection. For each topic, indicators were listed. For example, for child participation; children asking questions, answering questions, following instructions, looking interested, writing on the board, using teaching aids, presenting their work. For observer self-reflection; position in classroom, level of distraction to class, feelings about observing, own attitude, levels of judgement. Feedback sessions were held on the same day, and after the observer had presented their observations, the class teacher gave her response, before the group debated the issues.

ii) Anonymous, Personal Evaluation (APE)

This exercise was developed by the team in order to enable teachers to individually and anonymously present their perspectives on the successes and constraints of the programme. Two flip chart papers were placed on the floor with the titles 'successes' and 'constraints/problems'. Teachers were each given 'post-its' or small pieces of blank paper on which to write their comments. These were stuck or placed on the corresponding flip-charts. A team member then collected them and read them out to establish levels of consensus and they were discussed and summarised on another flip chart. Follow-up consisted of listing the key constraints and debating which ones could be overcome, and which ones were beyond teacher's control. Teachers wrote their responses in either English or Sesotho.

iii) Semi-Structured Interviews and Storytelling

Semi-structured interviews are a key tool in PRA. Key-informant interviews seek to interview people with special knowledge of the community or subject. In the Lesotho research key informants were teachers, district staff, parents of disabled children, disabled children themselves and a village chief. The team decided to take a 'storytelling' approach by asking the teacher/parent to 'tell the story' of the programme/life of their child. This worked very well in some situations, but in other situations, the team used 'probe questions' in order to stimulate response (Appendix L). Very young or shy children did not respond to the storytelling approach, and therefore team members asked them specific questions. The team aimed to establish relaxed rapport by their attitudes and by interviewing people in informal environments, for example sitting on the floor with the mother in the home visit. Sesotho or English was used, and I interviewed people together with Mr A, who provided a simultaneous interpretation which I then wrote down.

iv) Children's Focus Groups

Mr A, the LNFOD representative was present at each of these activities, either facilitating or participating. This was important in order to provide a positive adult role model for the disabled children, and to ensure that the facilitator style and questions were not reflecting a charity-model of disability. A major advantage was that Mr A could ask questions about disability in a manner which was culturally sensitive, and yet with a disability rights perspective. Singing was used as a warm-up activity, and to provide breaks in the discussion. The focus groups were mixed with both disabled and non-disabled children, and were informal discussions on perceptions of integrated education.

v) Support Diagrams

The production of diagrams by community members is a key method in PRA. This simple activity was designed to provide information about the contacts that a school has with different groups, organisations, individuals, and the nature of these contacts. It can be carried out individually or in groups. Teachers are asked to draw their own diagram after a demonstration. Arrows indicate whether support or information is being primarily offered or received, as in the example overleaf and on pages 94, 103, 155, 156. They have been redrawn in order to preserve confidentiality.

vi) Mountain Profiles

This activity was designed in order to provide an overview of teacher's perceptions of the 'ups and downs' of the programme; factors which contributed to its success, or hindered its progress. A 'time line' was drawn across the middle of the page, and then after an initial demonstration, teachers drew their own profiles, as in the example on p154 (original) and on pages 93 and 102. Again, this can be carried out individually or in groups. This activity worked particularly well as an initial activity, which could then be developed through more in-depth activities such as APE and interviews. This 'cumulative sequencing' of activities is another key feature of PRA. Pictures or symbols could be used instead of words.

vii) School Performance Flow Diagrams

Flow diagrams are a common method in PRA. These School Performance Diagrams were adapted from examples in an account of PRA in Uganda (Guijt et al, 1994). They were carried out with teachers, but could equally be used with children. The aim was to show the school environment factors which lead either to good or poor school performance. Teachers were asked to remember their own school-days in order to consider these factors, rather than trying to imagine what their pupil's experiences were. Examples are on pages 106, 155. They have been redrawn in order to be more legible.

<u>viii) Children's Daily Activity Profiles</u>

Profiles are also a common method in PRA. The aim of these children's daily activity profiles was to validate disabled children's lives, and also to gain insights into the roles disabled children play in the household, and their perceptions of how their time is spent. Children (either individually or in small groups) were asked to draw their daily activities in segments along a time-line. Team members then talked through the profiles with them to establish what the activities were. There was not time to really explore this method with a wider group. Original examples are on pages 154, 164 and 165.


<u>ix) Children's Ability Drawings</u>

Again this method was devised in order to validate disabled children's lives, by focusing on their 'abilities' rather than 'disabilities'. They were asked to draw pictures of the things they could do and their favourite activities. Examples are on pages 161-163.

<u>x) Evaluation Exercises</u>

For school A, the final evaluation was informal due to the curtailment of the visit. In school B, teachers were given small pieces of paper and asked to write down three things they had learnt during the week, and one action point. These were then read out and discussed, and additional feedback was given. The research team then highlighted and validated the positive learning experiences of the weak, and committed themselves to continued collaboration.

The research team carried out evaluations on each of the schools and then a final evaluation on the whole of the research. For each school, they wrote comments on post-its according to different headings on flip charts. These were; 1. The three most important things they had learnt about the programme, 2. Any useful methods they had learnt which could help with on-going monitoring and evaluation, 3. Things which didn't work well which could be improved, and 4. Key issues or questions which need further follow-up. These were then discussed.

For the final evaluation, the research team discussed the research experience in terms of its structure, achievement of their objectives, impact on their knowledge and skills and feedback on the style of the research facilitator (myself).
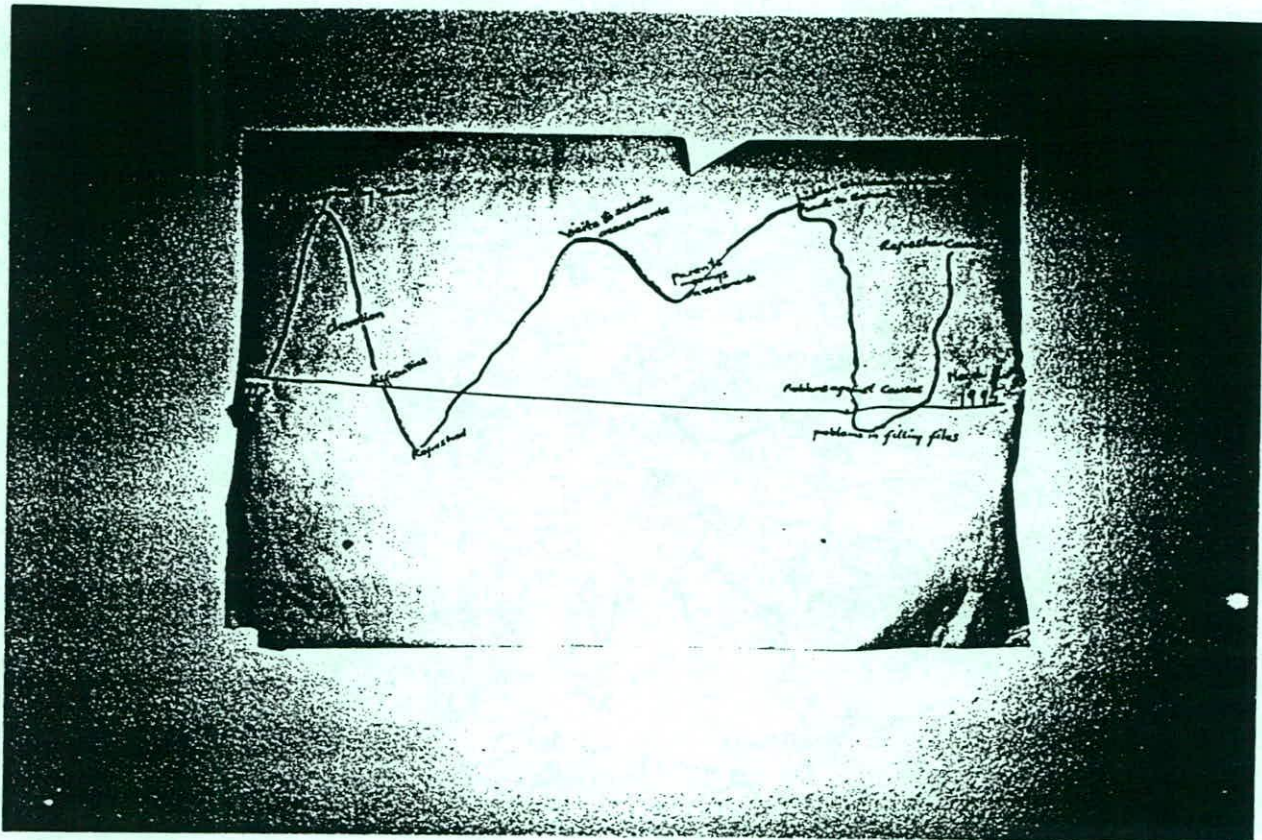
An example of a Mountain Profile by teachers from School B
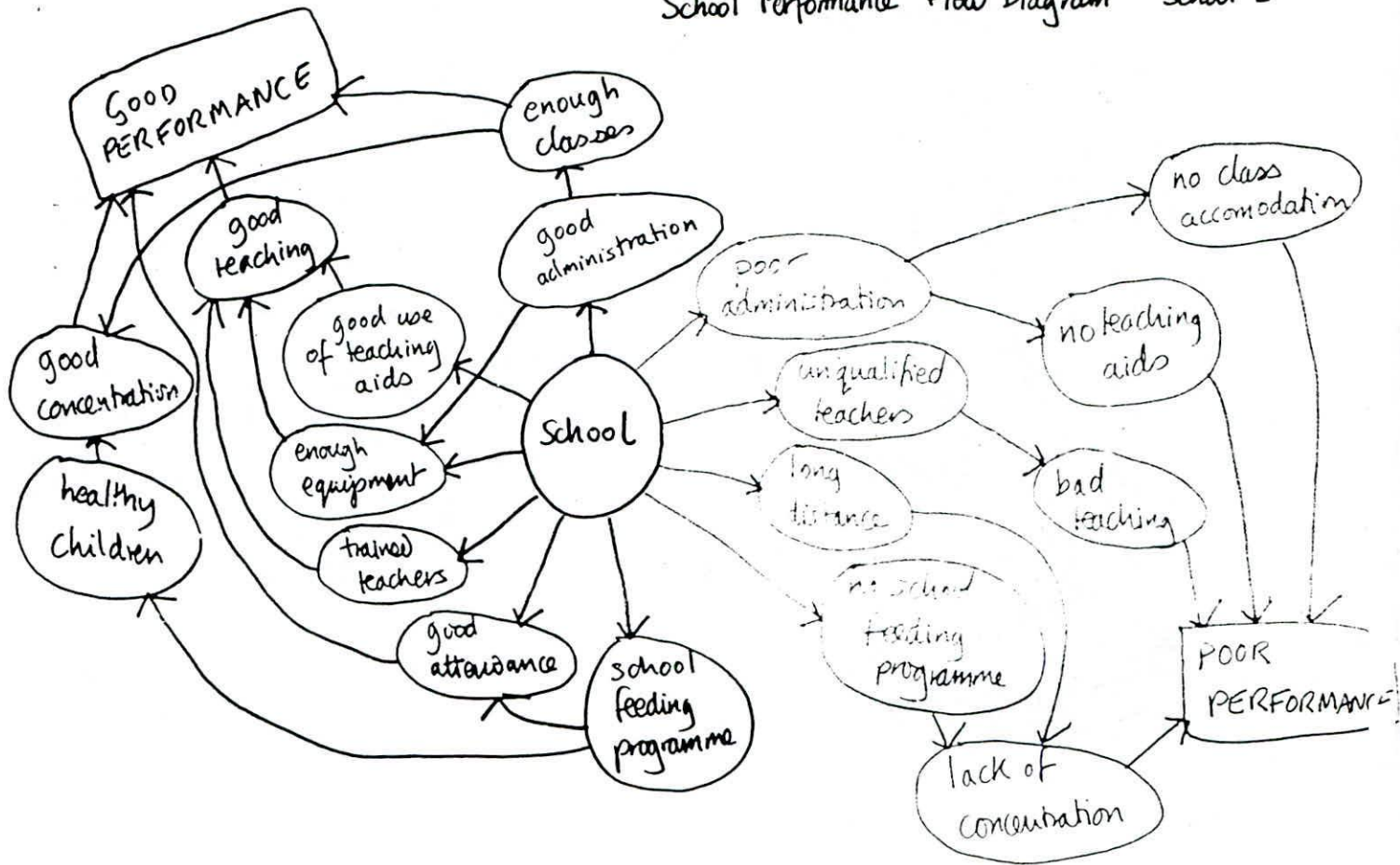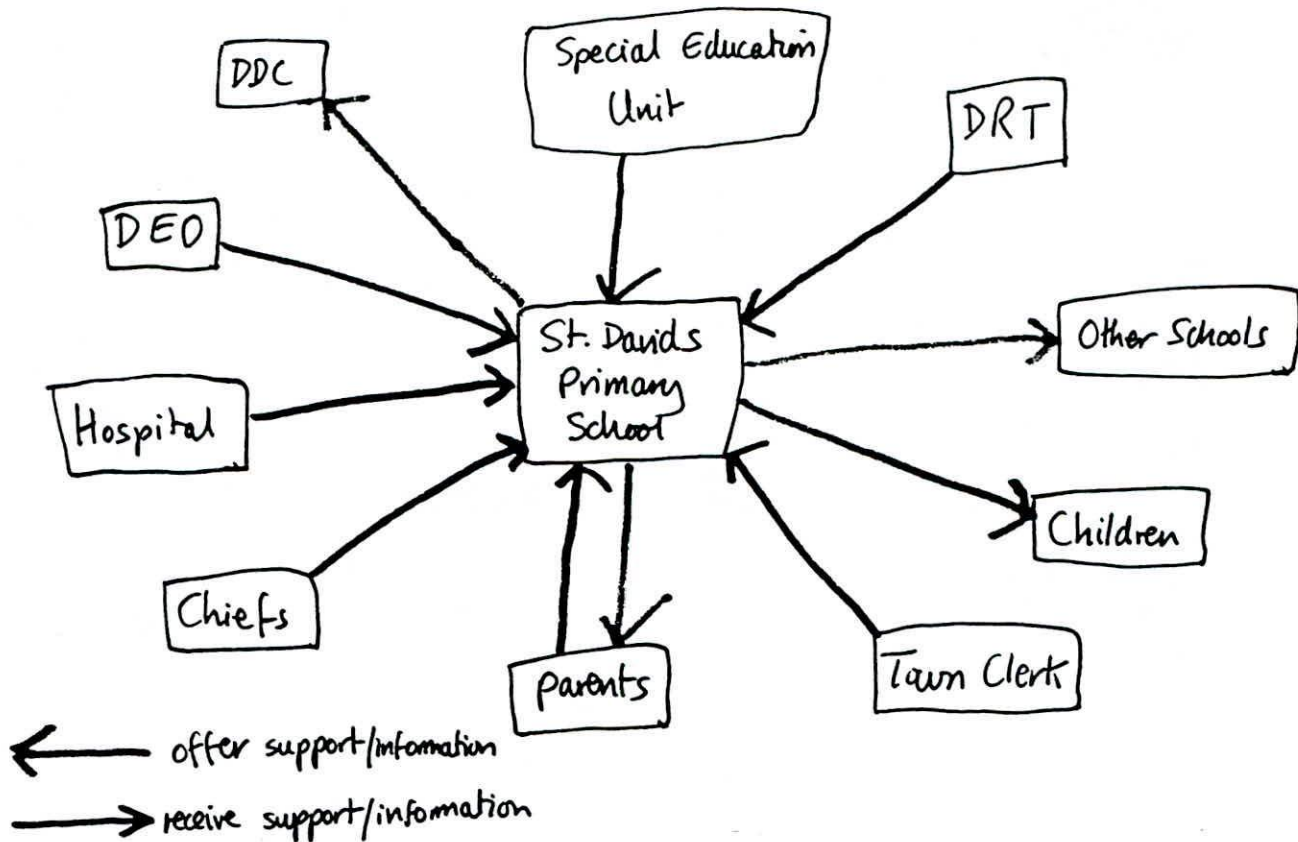
Photo 19
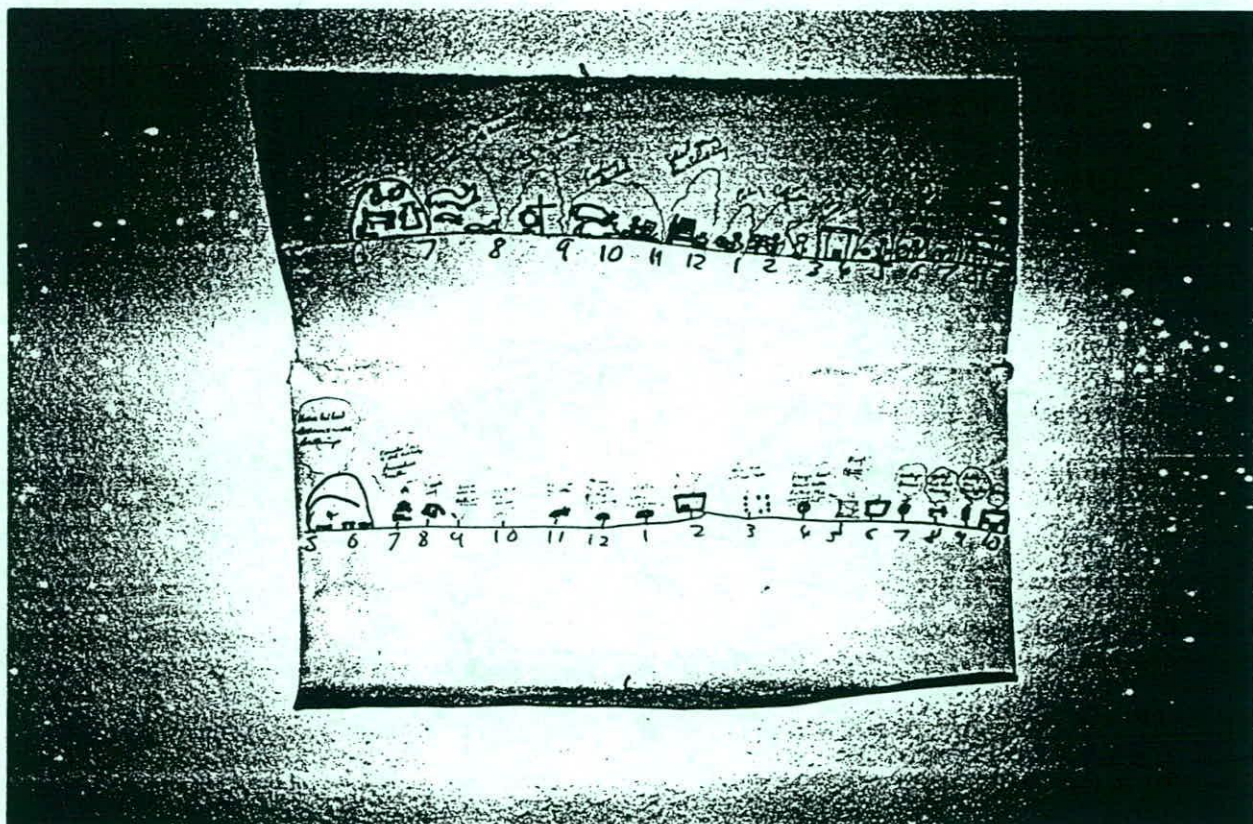
Examples of Children's Daily Profiles from School B

Photo 20

School Performance Flow Diagram   School B

Support Diagram   School A

← offer support/information

→ receive support/information

Support Diagram

INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA

Outer ring (international): Budapest ILSMH lt, France sp ed, London global CBR, Ireland sp ed, Wales Sp Ed, Israel, Canada ILSMH Inclusive Ed, Jamaica Postage, Iceland Sp Ed, Italy Sp Ed, Mexico Sp Ed / CBR, Seychelles Sp Ed, Namibia Sp ed + home-based, USA sp ed, Sweden sp ed / CBR, Thailand sp ed / CBR, Singapore Sp Ed, India ECD, sp ed, CBR, Spain Sp Ed

Middle ring (Africa): Pretoria optima cet., Malawi, Tanzania sp ed, Uganda sp ed, Zanzibar CBR, Capetown M h, Zambia, Nairobi DPI / Rehab Int. Cent., SAFRO Swazi, Ethiopia Sp, New S.A., United State ed Sp S.A., Mozambique sp ed, Zimbabwe sp ed, Nigeria ECD, Botswana Sp ed

Inner ring: UNICEF, SCF, Parents, CBR, Col/fed, SAFRO, Sp Ed (centre), Mat Ed, M of Ht, NTC, Sp school, TRS, Nat, T. Assoc

Arrows labelled: training, info, D-f-10, R-Papers, lecturing, CBR Postage, info/lt, etc.

Legend:
Giving support to
Receiving support
- - -> Some support given
——> Some support received

ST DAVIDS 'APE' EXERCISE: OVERCOMING CONSTRAINTS   APPENDIX I

CONSTRAINTS	HOW TO OVERCOME: Group discussion
1. Technique; - communicating with children who do not speak - not clear about programming - lack of skills and resources for children with profound disability	- programming will be followed up by Sp Ed team - a sign language workshop has just been held to help with communication - lack of knowledge is being addressed through workshops
2. Time - how to find time for disabled children, - time for learning sign and braille - time to take history from parents - need for more teachers - slaves of the syllabus; integration slows syllabus down	- lack of time is always an issue; you have to make time! - you must find time to take the child's history - Mof Ed 5 year plan states that there will be more teachers - the syllabus problem is a matter of attitude
3. Equipment - wheelchairs; Ministry should provide - lack of teaching aids - lack of classroom facilities	- M of Ed should negotiate with M of Health about wheelchairs - there has been a workshop on the production of teaching aids with local resources
4. Attitudes - some teachers are still negative - other positive teachers get more workload	- teachers are becoming more positive
5. Parents - some are uncooperative, and still hide children - parents lack of money; cannot take them to the doctor - parents think that it is Gods will and they should do everything for them; over protection - parents cannot pay school fees - some parents don't tell the truth about the child's birth history	- parents are becoming more cooperative - teachers have been taking children to the clinic where they have negotiated to receive free medication - over protection should be taken up by the PA; once the child leaves home to go to school this decreases - if parents pay for non-disabled children, they should pay for their disabled children! - lack of fees is an issue for the Parents Association; they should treat their children equally
6. Geography - schools are far from each other - children live far - lack of transport prevents dissemination	- the DEO has ensured that transport has been available when necessary; if you have a problem you should contact the education office - the bigger transport problem is for the disabled child who cannot get to school

PROBES USED FOR INTERVIEWS

TEACHERS	PARENTS
1. What are your feelings about disabled children?	1. Are there any changes in the child?
2. What are your success stories?	2. What is the child's role in the family?
3. How have you overcome constraints?	3. Does the child interact with other children?
4. What is your approach to education in general?	4. Who takes care of the child?
5. How do you deal with disabled children?	5. What is your involvement with the school?
6. Is your training and the techniques you have learnt sufficient?	6. What support do you get from other family members?
7. What would happen if the project suddenly stopped?	7. How do you see the future of your child?
8. Are you ready to share with others?	8. What impact has the programme had on your time/resources?
9. What is your vision for the future?	
10. How is your job satisfaction?	
11. Are you aware of any ill-treatment of disabled children?	
12. How can support be improved?	
13. What is your perception of community attitudes?	

SUMMARY OF CHILDREN'S DAILY PROFILES

	Girls Group; in hostel	Boy A	Boy B	Boy C
a.m.	- draw water - bathe - make beds - go to church - dining room - sweeping - go to school - classes - break - class - lunch	- make bed - heat water - bathe - comb hair - oil body - brush teeth - get dressed - looking after horses - herding 9 cattle - taking cattle to drink	- get up - wash - eat breakfast - look after animals or go to school - go to church - feed animals - go to school - eat	- get up - heat water - wash - comb hair - dress - eat - go to school - classes - eat lunch
p.m	- gambling - class - go home - play - go to prayers - go to bed	- eat corn while herding - putting the cattle in the kraal - cows eat - play football - play chess - eat dinner - make bed - put out the light - sleep	- get peaches from trees - look after animals - come home from veld - play football - eat - put away dishes - sleeping	- play football - go home - eat - watch TV - sitting at home - reading - sleep

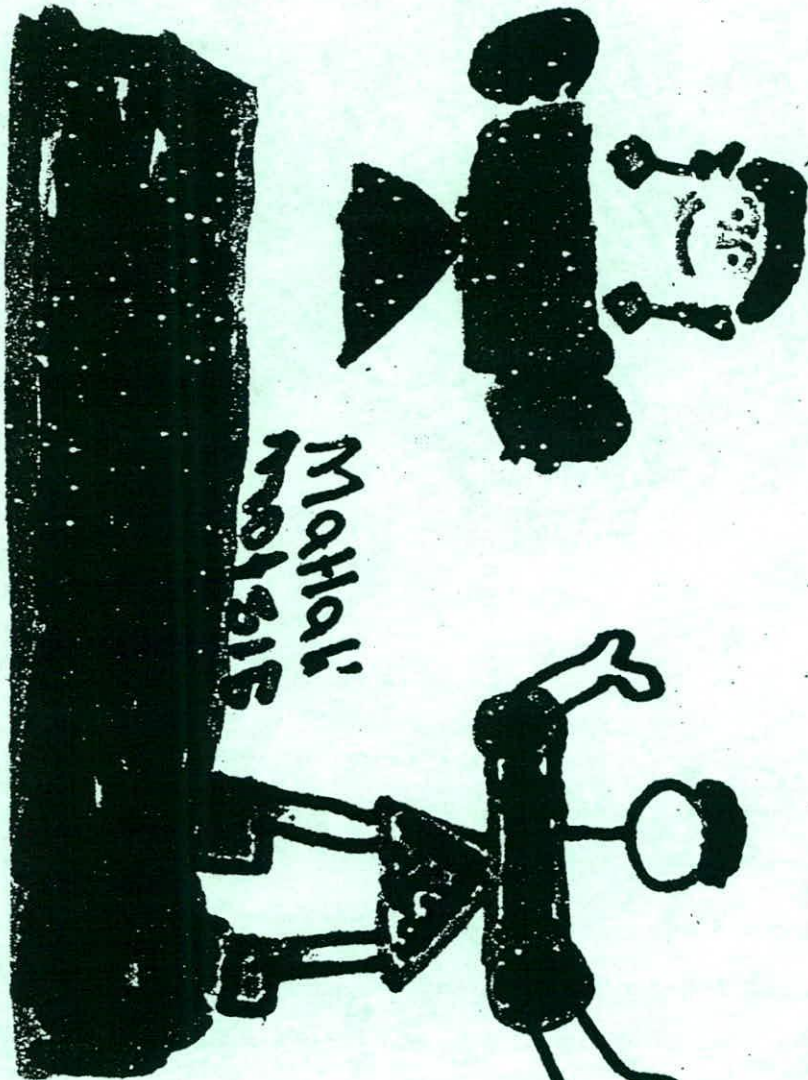Compiled from drawings of disabled children at Pilot School B.

Photo 21

Singing practice at Moshoe
School. Teachers feel they
could win competitions
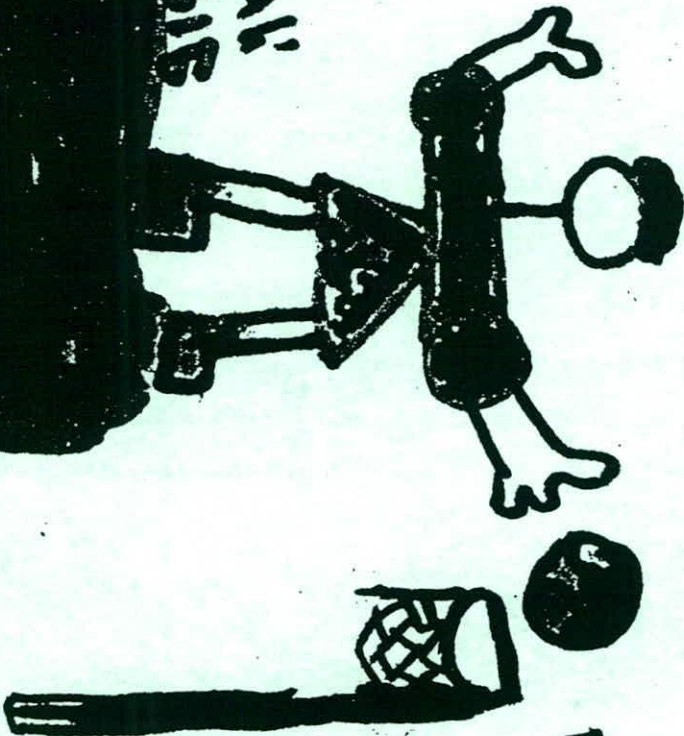if they were given more
time to practice.

Teachers enjoy a break
listening to tape recordings
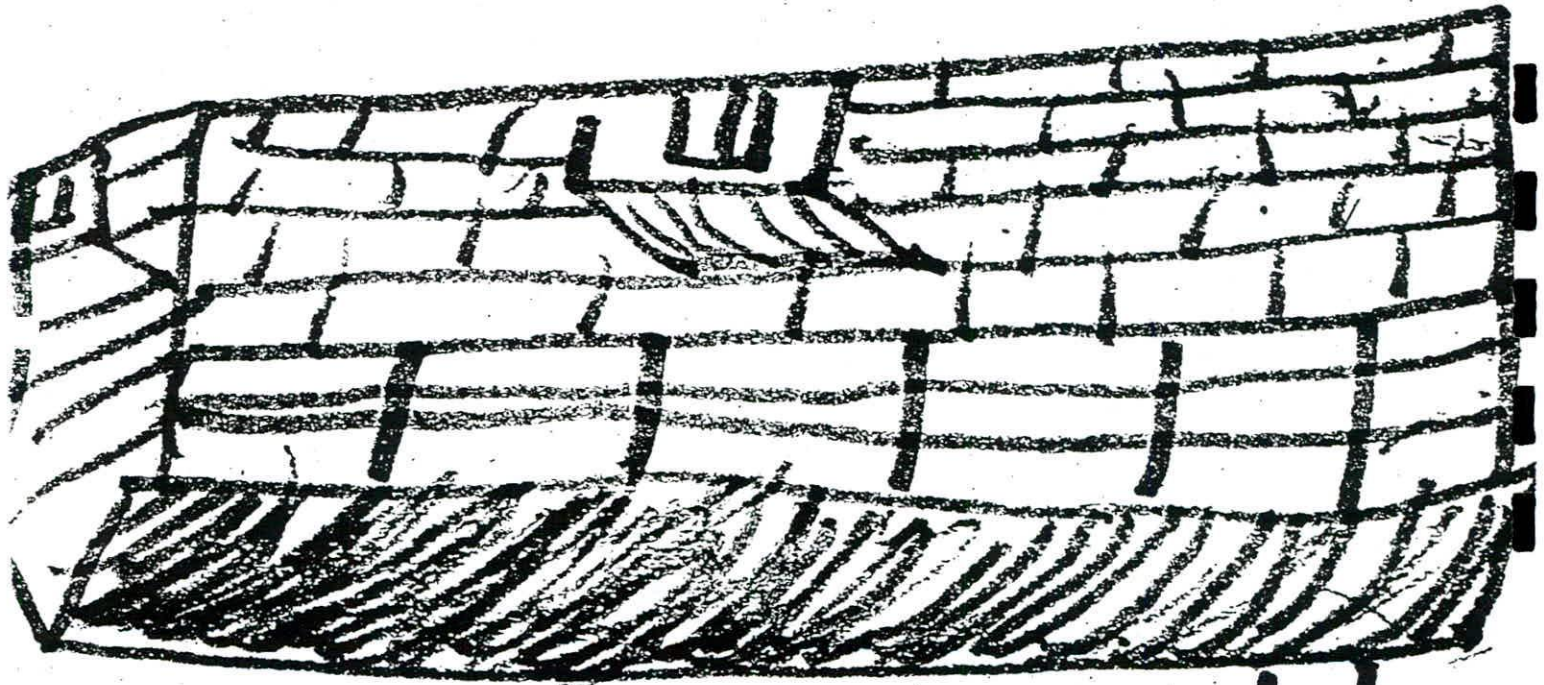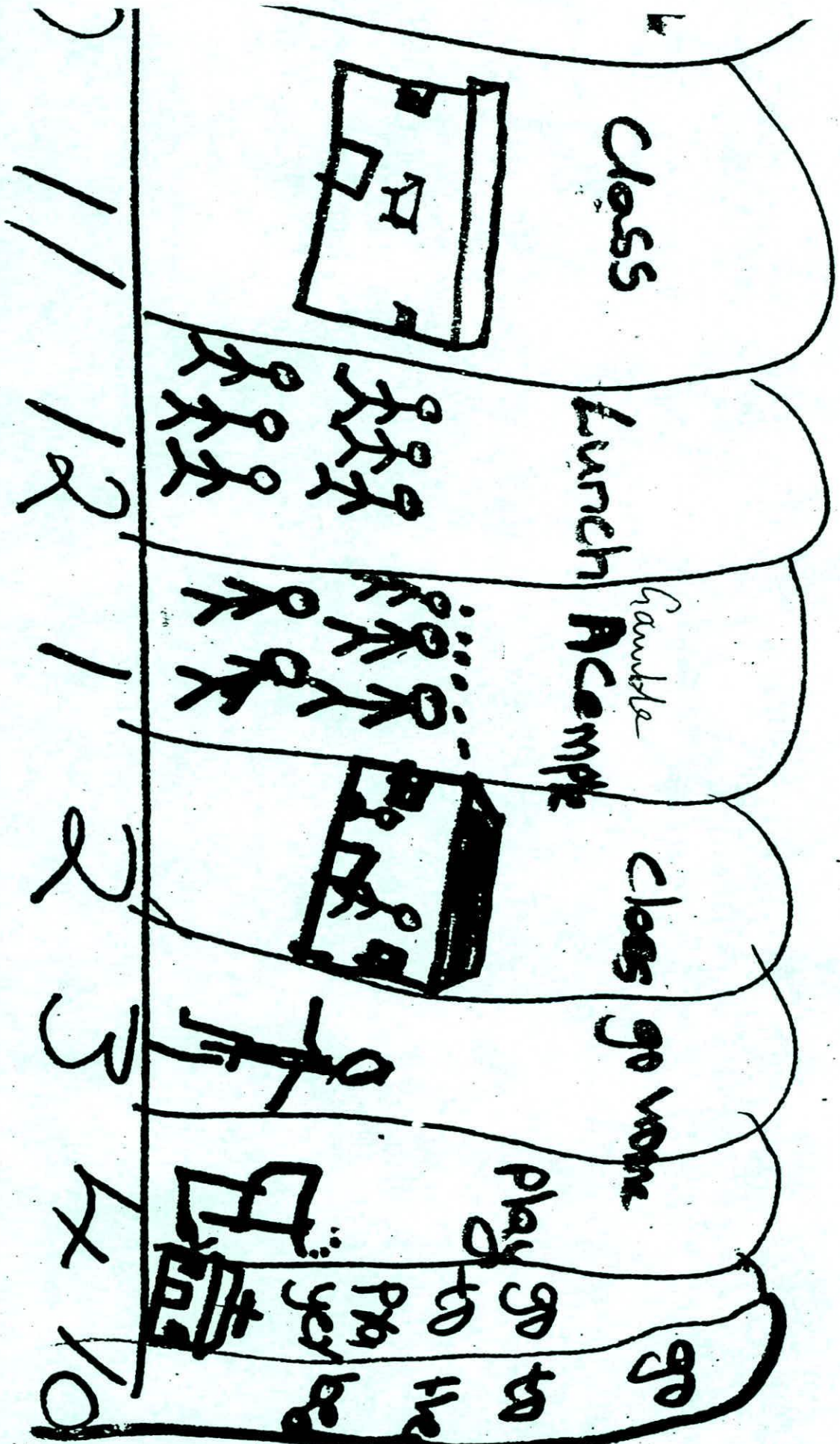I made of their children singing

Photo 22

My house

- net ball
- sweeping in the house
- drawing water

Going after animals
if not going to school.

Going to church

Feeding Animals

School going
Pen & School bag

Eating Getting ready

8   9   10   11   12   1   2

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