

Module










6

Reinforcing
school-site
supervision



Module 6

.....REINFORCING SCHOOL-SITE SUPERVISION

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Introduction

Schools need to take responsibility for their own improvement, in order for that improvement to be profound and sustainable. However, schools cannot be left on their own in this effort. They need supervision and support. This conviction has been expressed regularly throughout these teaching modules, and this sixth module looks at the implications of stronger school-site responsibility as far as supervision and support services are concerned.

Many countries are allowing schools greater leeway in their own supervision and evaluation. This forms part of a wider policy, which argues that the distance between external supervision and the school or the classroom is too wide for supervisors to have a long-lasting impact on teaching and learning. Attempts to bring supervision closer to the school have taken different forms: further decentralization of the service; the establishment of school clusters and resource centres; and the creation of a special category of master teachers. The preceding modules have examined in detail the strengths and weaknesses of these reforms. They have led to a somewhat sobering conclusion: such strategies have had to overcome very similar challenges to the more traditional supervision services.

The strategy presented in this module goes further: supervision becomes an internal school process that should be integrated into the school's daily management and operation. This offers a challenge both to the schools, who will need to develop a new culture, and to the supervisors, who will have to find a new identity, a new role, and a different working style.



What this module will discuss


This module consists of five sections.

A first section briefly describes the background to the present demand to reinforce school-site supervision. The second section presents and discusses a framework for school-site supervision that integrates the different actors in a holistic perspective.

Two actors are especially important: the school principal and the community. *Section 3* looks in more detail at the potential contribution of both and at the implications for management.

Actors need to work with tools. One such tool, which has gained much popularity in recent times and can be considered a key instrument for school-site supervision, is the school development plan. This is discussed in *Section 4*.

The last section offers a number of answers on what is a core interrogation: what will be the role of external supervisors when increasing emphasis is put on internal supervision?



Expected outcomes

At the end of this module, participants should be able to:

- understand the reasons for the present trend towards school-site supervision;
- identify the main actors and their possible role;
- discuss the management implications of strengthening the role of the school principal and the community in school supervision;
- appreciate the usefulness of school development planning; and
- discuss in detail the roles that external supervisors can play to strengthen school-site supervision.



Reasons for reinforcing school-site supervision

As mentioned earlier, there is a worldwide trend to reinforce school-site supervision and support practices. Many reasons can be put forward to explain this trend, of which the following seem particularly important.

- Policy-makers have become aware that many of the basic problems that schools, mainly in underprivileged areas, are facing – such as teacher absenteeism, problems of maintenance of school buildings, irregular school attendance – can only be properly solved at school level.
- Too many programmes for quality improvement have been imposed on schools from above and failed. Ministries have realized that quality improvement cannot be imposed from outside. In the end, it is the teacher, together with the principal, who has to deliver the goods. Without their commitment, very little happens, and this commitment has to come from internal conviction. Consequently, schools themselves should be encouraged and empowered to monitor and improve the quality of the services they deliver.
- There is a growing conviction that empowerment of school-site actors (principals and teachers as well as parents and communities) is the way out to make schools responsive to their environment and to the needs of their students. It is expected that such empowerment will liberate enough initiative and creativity to enable schools to find better solutions to their own problems than the standard ones designed by central ministries. In other words, school-based monitoring and supervision is not only seen as a guarantee for better quality but also for greater relevance.
- Finally, in some cases, specific reference is made to the need to democratize the management of schools. The Education Reform Strategy proposed by the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States can be used as an example¹: “to achieve democratization, a management board should be established for each primary school. The board, which would be linked to the National Education Advisory Council, would be mandated to foster closer links between the school, the homes and the community it serves”.

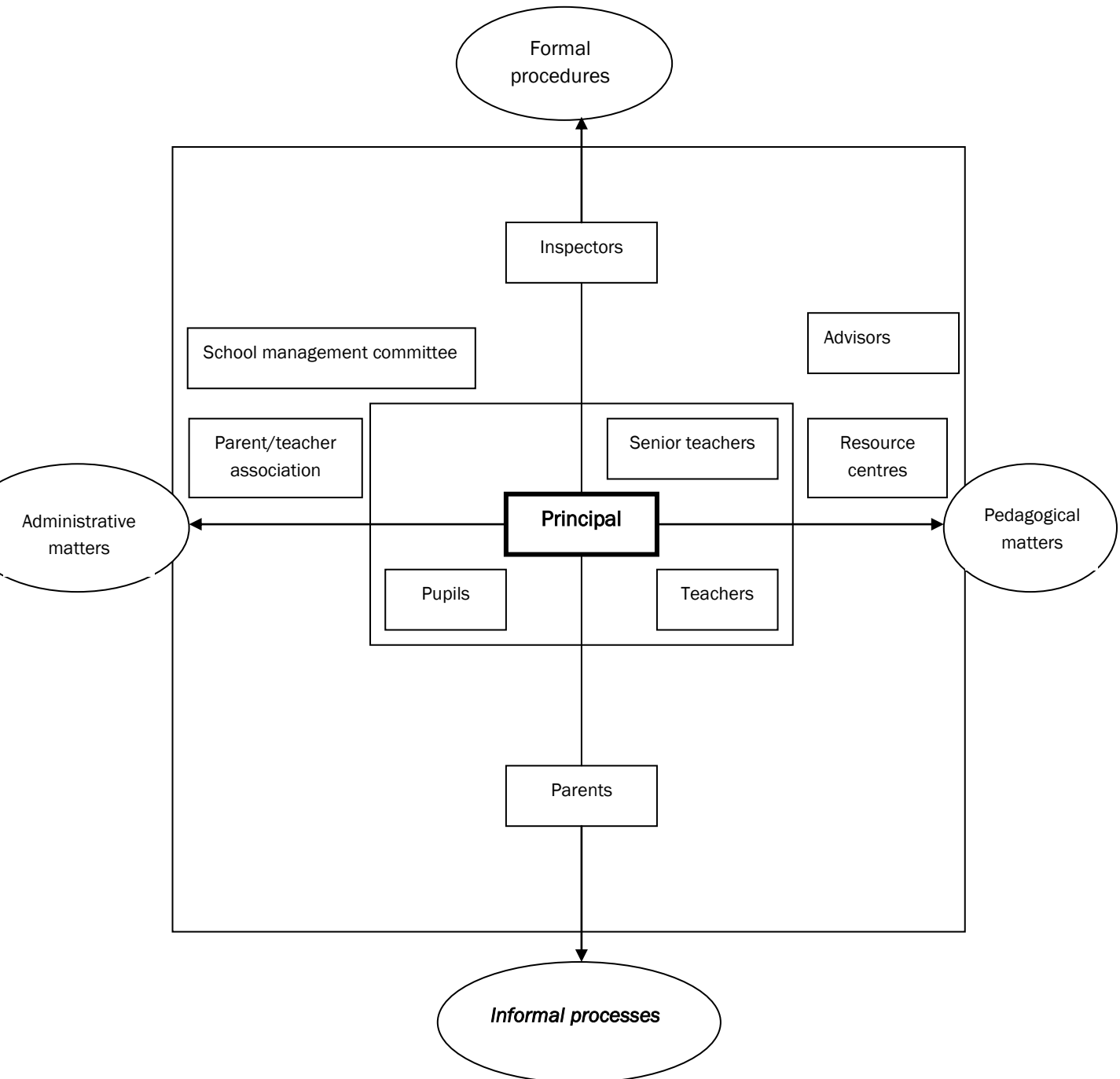
The question is: how can a school-site supervision system be conceived?

¹ Source: OECS, 2000.

A holistic framework for school-site supervision

Graph 1 below presents a framework for the discussion of this question.

Graph 1. Framework for developing the roles of different actors in school supervision



Question

Looking at the framework presented above, can you draw a few conclusions about the role of different actors?

The graph indicates that:

1. The central actor in any school supervision system is the school principal. He/she is the linking pin between the external and internal quality monitoring processes and has multiple roles to play – formal and less formal control and support in pedagogical as well as administrative matters.
2. Senior teachers are playing an increasingly significant role in the supervision and support of other teachers, especially when the school principal receives more administrative and managerial tasks. These senior teachers include the Vice-Principal, Heads of Department and, in some countries, specialized teachers who may be called ‘master teachers’. Such a category existed for instance in Sri Lanka (until 1996) and exists today in Jamaica. ‘Master teachers’ are classroom teachers paid at the same level as administrators and expected to offer close support to other teacher.
3. The other main actors at school-site level who have a role to play in monitoring quality include:
 - the teachers;
 - the learners;
 - the parents; and
 - the local community.

This is not restrictive and other actors could be considered, such as the organizing authority in the case of private schools, local government and specific NGOs involved in school improvement programmes.

4. Although the ultimate objective of in-school supervision is to improve the teaching/learning processes in the classroom, in practice it must cover the whole range of activities taking place in the school: from the most administrative ones (e.g. ensuring that records are properly completed) to the purely pedagogical ones (e.g. the proper teaching of mathematics).
5. Supervision should not be limited to formal processes. Informal processes can play an equally, if not sometimes more important role (e.g. social pressure from the parents to ensure regular presence of teachers, or informal advice given by a teacher to his/her colleague).

Indeed, most actors can play a supervisory role in both informal and formal ways. Teachers, for example, seem to be an important source of informal support for their colleagues, but such support can also be formalized through various mechanisms of organized peer reviewing. Pupils can play an important role in maintaining self-discipline. But, again, their contribution can be systemized through the creation of special student committees. Resource centres in some countries have evolved from being spontaneous initiatives taken by teachers themselves to meet and discuss professional matters informally to being real institutions in which formal capacity-building activities are organized.

6. In-school supervision cannot be separated from external control and support mechanisms. As mentioned in Module 1, quality monitoring must be looked at from a holistic perspective and designed in such a way that maximum complementarity and synergy are created between the different actors and devices. In other words, changes in supervision at school-site level should be accompanied by other corresponding changes in the external supervision mechanisms and vice versa.

Graph 1 thus tries to locate the different in-school and out-of-school actors intervening in supervision according to two criteria: the more or less formal character of their contributions and the area in which they are intervening (administrative and/or pedagogical).

Task

Using the framework presented above, you are asked to:

- identify the different actors intervening in school supervision in your country; and
- identify possible actors who are presently not being mobilized for supervision purposes.

Completing the task: some hints

In your own country, you may have a few other actors playing a role in school supervision: the local government, an NGO, a religious structure or maybe even the press and the media. Sometimes, an actor carries another name: heads of department rather than senior teacher; school board instead of school management committee.

It is possible that only a few of the actors in the graph are actually taking part in school supervision.

Keep in mind, when proposing changes by strengthening the role of some actors, that they may have an impact on actors already in the system.



Two main actors in school-site supervision

Within the current trend towards more and better school-site supervision, two actors are generally receiving special attention: the principal and the local community. What are the specific roles that each of these two actors can play in supervision and what are some of the key issues to be addressed when trying to reinforce their roles? These questions will be discussed in the paragraphs below.

The school principal

Manifestly, any transfer of quality assurance responsibilities to the school level will make the role of the principal heavier and more complex.

In the traditional school management system, the principals are expected to maintain the smooth functioning of their schools within an overall compliance monitoring system (see *Module 1*). As the local agents of the educational administration and under the direct control of the supervisors, they have to make sure that central policies are being properly implemented at school level and that official norms, rules and regulations are being applied.

Towards a new principal's role

When schools are invited to become the centre of their own quality improvement, the role of principals stops being mainly administrative and regulatory. They have to remain good administrators but, in addition, they have to become leaders capable of mobilizing the different school-site actors, of instilling vision and of introducing change and innovation.

Critical distinctions between traditional school management and 'modern' school leadership, as defined in the literature, are given in *Box 1*.

Box 1: Differences between traditional management and leadership²

Traditional management is often described as:

- orderly and stable;
- often focused on the short-term;
- a style which encourages a cool, aloof and analytical approach that separates emotion from work;
- primarily a job of control; and
- about instructions and procedures.

Leadership “is the work of alchemists”. Dedication, doggedness and difference...

- Dedication is about passion, commitment, drive or even obsession.
- Doggedness is about the capacity to keep going when things are going wrong or when you are in the midst of doubts and uncertainties.
- Difference is more than passion and doggedness. It is a mixture of personality and talent, and of openness to criticism and new ideas.

More specifically, characteristics of highly effective school leaders have been identified as follows (see Box 2).

Box 2: Characteristics of effective school heads³

Drive	Driving school improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Passion for teaching and learning• Achievement focus• Taking initiative
Leadership	Delivering through people <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leading the school community• Holding people accountable• Supporting others• Maximizing school capability
Commitment	Building commitment <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contextual know-how• Management of self• Influencing others
Vision	Creating an educational vision <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analytical thinking• Big picture thinking• Gathering information

Box 3 presents some provisional results of a research study carried out recently in seven Asian countries to find out more about how successful schools are being

² Source: Thornton, 2000.

³ Source: Thornton, 2000.

managed. The text gives an idea about the areas on which headteachers, and management teams in general, concentrate and how they proceed in order to make their school successful. It also looks at some policy implications when trying to spread successful school experiences throughout the system. It shows that, although there are some commonalities, there is no one single road to a successful school and that cultural factors should never be overlooked.

Box 3: Managing effective schools in Asia⁴

How to make a school successful?

Many successful principals pay much attention to the physical enhancement of the school. This leads to a visible result and is rather easy to implement. It also allows the involvement of all actors - students, teachers and parents. This is never a way to avoid more complex decisions, but a first step towards a wider transformation of the school.

The core to success probably lies in getting the balance right between delegation to, supervision over and support of staff. There is not one single model: in some schools, each teacher does self-evaluation and participates in peer supervision; in others, supervision is the sole responsibility of the principal and relies on the use of microphones in each classroom. Everywhere, this autonomy is accompanied by a monitoring mechanism and by incentive measures. Participation in decision-making is one incentive; formal recognition of work well done is another. Less prevalent is the use of financial incentives, e.g. to reward additional work such as remedial teaching.

One consistent strategy of successful schools is to use student assessment not only to select students for further study, but also to improve teaching quality. This is done in different ways: to identify strengths and weaknesses in learning; to spot students with problems for remedial teaching; to make teachers feel responsible; to create transparency and, in some cases, to engender competition between teachers. This however raises two wider issues. First, there could be a conflict between the assessment undertaken within the school and the external one, which generally is used simply for student selection or certification. Schools operate within a culture, which can be different from the one they attempt to promote. Second, while competition between staff may be useful, some schools need stronger collaboration.

Arguably, the aspect that characterizes successful schools more than any other is the strong focus on the student as an individual, with specific needs. This is visible in attempts to include students in decision-making, the emphasis on extra-curricular activities and remedial teaching. Contrary maybe to expectations, successful schools do not weed out 'weak' students but offer them extra help. This child-friendliness is easier to achieve when students and teachers feel a sense of belonging to the same community. This has implications for teacher recruitment.

⁴ Source: De Grauwe, 2004.

Implications for management of principals

Whatever the definition of an effective school head, putting in place a more dynamic and quality improvement-oriented school management style involves a critical analysis of the present situation of school heads and a careful identification of the changes required in order to make the new management style possible. Such a critical analysis should consider five dimensions in principal management: recruitment, role definition, working conditions, professional development and incentives. The following paragraphs discuss each of these briefly.

Questions

Examine critically the situation of principals in your country. What are the main problems encountered in relation to the five management dimensions mentioned above? What possible measures could be taken to solve some of these problems?

Recruitment

Criteria for promoting a teacher to the position of a principal are in most cases purely administrative (number of years of service, level of qualifications) and rarely criteria having to do with the candidates' pedagogical abilities and even less so with their management or leadership qualities.

To what extent is this procedure compatible with the new roles expected from the principals? Some countries have started addressing this question by placing more emphasis on the latter criteria. Others, such as Spain and certain states in Brazil, have gone a step further: they appoint principals for a limited number of years and have them elected by the school community among several candidates, which must present concrete school improvement proposals.

Role definition

Asking principals to feel responsible for the quality of teaching in their school and to play a leadership role vis-à-vis their colleagues and pupils' parents is a new requirement that implies a re-definition of the rules of the game. Not only is it necessary, in many cases, to remove practical obstacles that have hitherto forced the principal into a purely administrative role, one must also revise the statutes that govern the management of schools, the function of the principal, their responsibilities, degree of autonomy, relations with the community and the interactions among different levels of management and control. In this respect, one must not forget the special problems of small rural schools with few teachers, for which it is necessary to develop a specific management system, for example by clustering several schools around one central institution, as is already being done in several countries.

Working conditions

Too often, more responsibilities are being transferred to the schools without considering the difficult – if not sometimes precarious – conditions under which they are operating, particularly poor schools in underprivileged urban and rural areas.

- The problem of small rural schools for which special management formulas have to be designed has already been mentioned. In many cases, they do not even have a real principal. Unfortunately, most of the literature on school leadership makes the assumption that schools are of a reasonable size and have an official head.
- Furthermore, one should not forget that many schools in underprivileged areas do not even have the minimum infrastructure and equipment for an effective teaching-learning process to take place. Ensuring minimum material resources for all these schools therefore seems to be an absolute pre-condition before one can set meaningful expectations about school management.
- Finally, due attention should also be paid to the real workload of school heads: under present circumstances administrative duties are considerable and often crowd out pedagogical responsibilities. If school heads have to play new roles, delicate choices must be made and administrative activities rationalized, including by redistributing certain responsibilities among other school-level actors.

Professional development

When teachers are promoted to principal, they seldom receive the necessary training that should prepare them for their new responsibilities as head of an institution. This lack of preparation has been a major handicap for them in the past but is an even greater problem today. Indeed, the new leadership role that they are invited to play supposes new competencies, some of which are of a technical nature (techniques of evaluation and school planning) and some of which relate to human relations (mobilization, building commitment, conflict resolution, etc.). All these competencies cannot be acquired in a short induction course. What is needed is an integrated professional development strategy implemented through a variety of mechanisms and practices, including pre-service and in-service training but also tutoring and peer learning, exposure to innovative national and international experiences, etc.

Financial and other incentives

Finally, there is the issue of financial incentives, which is often neglected even in highly developed countries (such as is the case for primary school heads in France, for example). While it is certainly not enough to pay principals well in order to make them perform well, it is also true that poor salaries do, in many instances, have a discouraging effect. The new leadership role that principals are requested to play automatically leads to an increased workload and supposes full commitment and dedication. In order to make the new management system function well, a proper system of incentives must be worked out, based on a balanced mix of social, moral and financial rewards.

The role of the community

Research has demonstrated that schools do better when the community and the parents in particular are in some way or another involved in school functioning.

- Starting from there, countries as diverse as those in Nordic Europe, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Korea and many others have transferred substantial decision-making powers (including monitoring powers) from the central to the local, municipal or village level.
- In various countries, efforts are being made to set up school management boards empowered to draft school improvement plans and with a certain degree of financial autonomy.
- Some countries have made more radical reforms whereby the real management of schools has been entrusted to locally-elected school boards, which can be responsible for one or for a group of neighboring schools (e.g. New Zealand and several states in Australia and the USA).
- In some developing countries, local communities have, in the absence of sufficient government initiatives, created their own schools and monitor them themselves, e.g. in Mali, Chad and Egypt. But these are often small-scale experiences that do not affect the overall management system of schools.
- Finally, in most countries parents' associations and various forms of elected or non-elected school development committees exist at least on paper, but often do not function properly.

Serious reflection is therefore needed on the obstacles to real community participation in school monitoring and on possible ways of stimulating such participation. The text in *Box 4* reports on the results of a discussion that took place on these questions during a seminar on "Improving school efficiency in Asia".

Task

Examine critically the role played by parents and the local community in school management and supervision in your country.

What roles do the communities play?

What are the main problems encountered?

What are some possible solutions to the problems?

Completing the task: some hints

The situation is very different from one country to another and may be different from one region to another, within a country. In some cases, communities have no say whatsoever in school management – they might simply contribute to financing; in others, the community, through a school board, is the school's main manager.

Problems will occur when communities are asked to participate more intensively. *Box 4* presents five such problems, related mainly to the characteristics of the community and the political and social environment. But in many cases schools themselves refuse such community involvement, especially when it concerns pedagogical matters.

Box 4 also offers also some ideas on how to strengthen community involvement. You may wish to think especially about a programme addressed to school staff to make them more aware of the potential contribution of communities.

Box 4: The role of the community in strengthening internal school management⁵

In any context, communities can play a positive role. Unfortunately, their potential has not been fully exploited. Factors constraining community participation are many. Participants identified the following five as the most important. First, in many countries there is a lack of clear legislation empowering communities to participate in the local management of schools and defining what are the roles and responsibilities of communities and of the other partners. In the absence of such an appropriate legal framework, the administration may not be inclined to share its authority. Secondly, many countries have not yet developed suitable and efficient structures that allow communities to be involved in schools. Thirdly, the problem is compounded by the fact that, very often, democratic decision-making processes are not deep-rooted in local social interactions. Therefore, ensuring democratic representation and functioning is an important concern while promoting local-based management of schools. Fourthly, and linked very much to the previous point, people's participation at the local level cannot be divorced from local politics. In the seminar, many participants expressed the fear of increased political interference if local communities are organized to improve schools. Fifthly, for successful and sustained community participation, there is a need to develop local capacity to discuss and orient the activities. Efforts to form local organizations to improve community participation in the absence of efforts to build local capacity can be frustrating, if not counter-productive.

Therefore, to ensure stronger school-community relationships, with a positive impact on school effectiveness, national authorities should take action in three core fields. First: evolving legislation to provide a legal framework, defining with some precision the role and contribution of communities. The legislation should not constrain communities nor limit their creativity. Therefore it should be as minimal as possible, providing a framework to operate rather than imposing restrictions. Secondly: developing appropriate structures. Many countries have set up some structures, such as Parent-Teacher Associations or School Management Committees, with representations from the community. However, few have led so far to a real involvement of communities. Their membership, their constitution (should they be elected or appointed?), their relationship with the more official educational administration, and their localization in the hierarchy (should they be set up for each school, for a cluster, for a village or district?) are some of the elements that might need to be rethought. Third: organizing orientation programmes to create awareness among communities and capacity among them to participate more actively and effectively in matters related to managing schools.

⁵ Source: De Grauwe and Varghese, 1999.



School development planning: a key instrument for school-site supervision

School development planning is generally presented as the cornerstone of effective school management, the equivalent of corporate strategic planning in an enterprise.

What it is

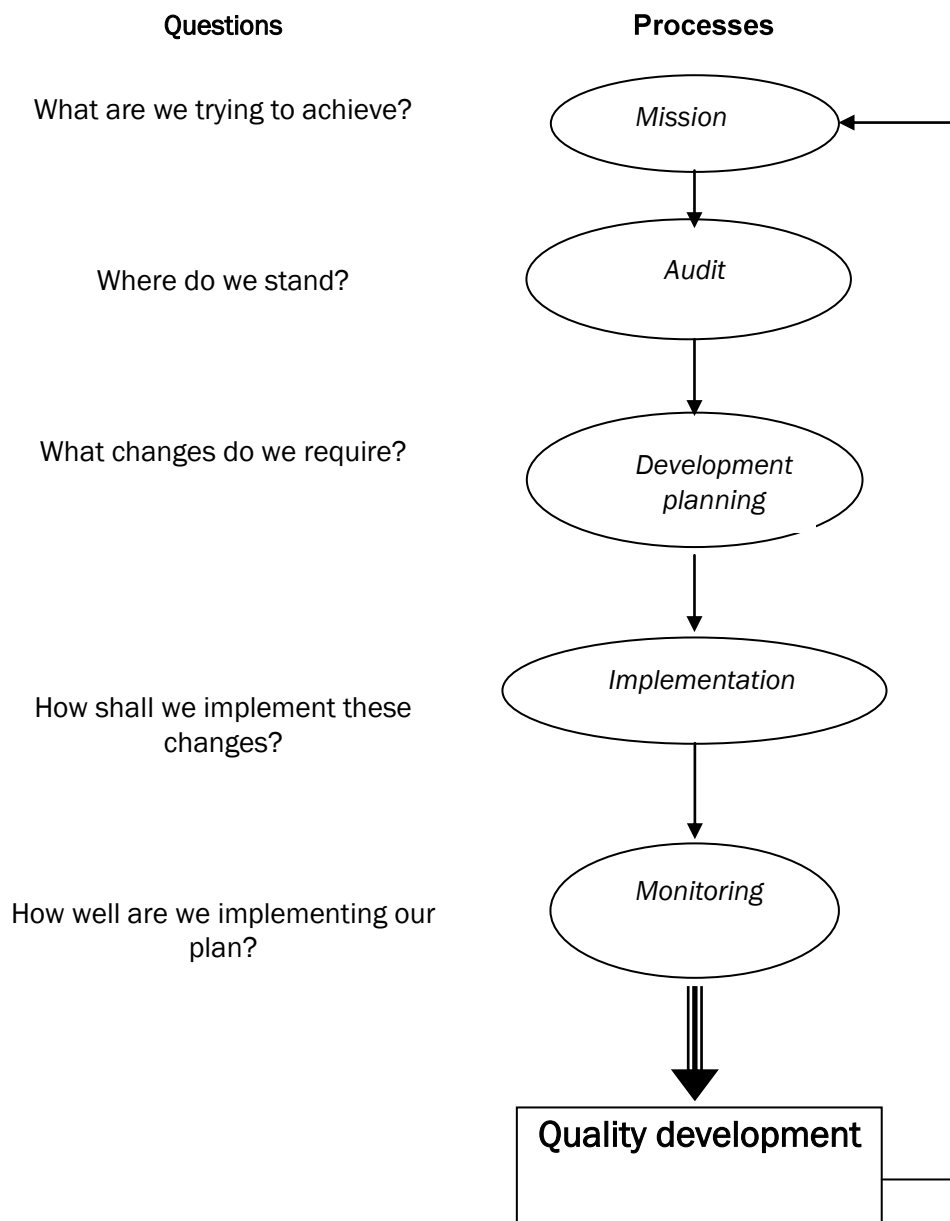
As illustrated in *Graph 2*, it is a process that should help schools in answering the following questions:

- What are we trying to achieve?
- Where do we stand?
- What changes do we have to make?
- How shall we implement these changes?
- How shall we check whether our changes have been successfully implemented?

As a strategic planning device, school development planning is concerned with long-term goals (the mission) to be translated into planned and prioritized short-term objectives and improvement actions (development planning), after careful analysis of the strength and weaknesses of the school (audit). Furthermore, the process itself of putting the improvement actions into practice (implementation) has to be systematically analyzed on the basis of appropriate indicators and followed by corrective action (monitoring).

By definition, strategic planning must be participatory in nature as the basic assumption behind it is that active involvement of the implementers (the teachers) in the whole planning process will produce better results. School development planning is therefore based on self-evaluation of their own practices carried out by the teachers themselves under the leadership of the principal. In some countries, the school board is also playing an active role in the planning process, while in others parents are equally involved to varying degrees. The point is that, the more people are participating, the more representative the plan will be and the stronger the commitment, but also the more complex and time consuming will be the procedure.

Graph 2: School Development Planning Cycle



Question

What do you feel are the advantages and possible problems of introducing school development planning?

Advantages

The promoters of school development planning often quote the following advantages:

From a technical point of view, it:

- focuses attention on specific goals and objectives;
- brings together all aspects of the functioning of the school in a systematic way;
- translates long-term goals into practical short-term improvement actions; and
- facilitates monitoring of and reporting on school improvement.

From a human point of view, it:


- gives teachers greater control over the change processes;
- increases teachers' self-confidence and commitment;
- contributes to staff development; and
- can improve the relationship between the school and the community.

Problems

Although school development planning has been introduced in many countries, it cannot be seen as a quick fix, an easy way out of the quality problems that schools are facing. In some countries or schools within countries it is working rather well, while in many others it is just an empty shell.

Some of the major problems identified in research reports and case studies are the following:

- focus on the product (the plan!) rather than on the process;
- non-participatory approach – the plan being prepared by just a few (the principal and senior teachers) in order to save time;
- too-high expectations at the beginning – introducing a new way of doing things bound to provoke some resistance and therefore will take time;
- not built on existing school practices and therefore too much seen as an additional burden;
- no linkage between school development plans and external supervision;
- no or not enough capacity-building of staff;
- no or not enough external support; and
- school development planning not taken seriously, simply because it has been introduced in a bureaucratic way as yet another assignment given to the schools.



Relation between school supervision and external supervision



Question

Reflect on the role of external supervisors within a policy that emphasizes school-site supervision. Can the external supervision service disappear; can it continue functioning as before? Should it assist schools with self-evaluation, and, if so, how?

The development of internal evaluation mechanisms evidently has an impact on the functioning of external evaluation, and in particular on the supervision service.

This section therefore looks at how internal self-evaluation and external supervision relate to each other. Here again, there is no standard practice and several situations occur.

No relationship

In some instances, there is no relation whatsoever between the two. This is the case mainly in countries where the preparation of school development plans is being officially encouraged and actively practised by some schools, but not taken very seriously by the supervisors who stick to business as usual. This situation is probably the worst as it only widens the gap between supervisors and teaching staff. Both parties might well end up using totally different frameworks and criteria for making judgements about school practices; the teachers referring to a professional or a partnership model of accountability and the supervisors to a traditional compliance or state control model (see *Module 1*).

Self-evaluation as an alternative for external supervision

In a few countries, self-assessment by schools is seen as an alternative to external supervision. The supervision functions are being totally decentralized at school/community level and external control visits are cancelled.

Example

Finland offers a good example of this model. The national inspection system was discontinued in 1991. Decision-makers felt that the benefits from external inspection and advice services were minimal and that, in view of the high level of training and professionalism of teachers, quality control could be entirely entrusted to them. Since the system was introduced, some pressure has developed to accompany this culture of self-evaluation with some effort of streamlining it by organizing optional nationwide comprehensive tests, the drafting of national performance indicators and the preparation of common evaluation procedures.

Emphasizing self-evaluation as well as external supervision

In opposition to the trend observed in Finland, most countries that have introduced school-based management have accompanied their reforms with a reinforcement of external control, in the form of regular audits or reviews. At the same time, self-evaluation by schools is considered a necessity but is given varying weight according to the overall philosophy (ideology) behind the reforms. At least two different models can be distinguished.

Self-evaluation as a preparation for external reviewing

In this model, the main emphasis is placed on external accountability and although self-evaluation by schools can have its own logic and use, it is largely seen as a preparation for the external review process.

Examples

In New Zealand, each school is requested to prepare yearly strategic plans in line with its school charter, which sets out the educational objectives for the school under the umbrella of the national curriculum framework. It should also complete an annual self-review document to be submitted to the Education Review Office. Furthermore, school personnel must complete a self-review questionnaire in preparation of the external review exercise, which takes place about once every three years.

*In **England & Wales**, realities are slightly different. Schools are involved in the preparation of OFSTED audits by providing a variety of documents and information and in the follow-up by preparing action plans for the implementation of audit recommendations. This has led, in many schools, to a voluntary practice of systemic self-review based on the OFSTED official framework. In many instances, this self-reviewing is seen by schools as a means of influencing the external audits.*

External reviewing as a validation of internal assessment

In this case, the emphasis of the accountability system is shifted towards internal school assessment, which as in the previous cases, is done on the basis of a precise framework and following standard assessment procedure. The external review process is light and consists of the checking and validating of the self-assessment prepared by the school.

Example

*The State of Victoria in **Australia** provides a good example of this approach. As in New Zealand, accountability starts with the development of a charter by each school, which has to prepare a self-review every year, while every three years a more complete one is validated by an external verifier. This external reviewing is done by only one person spending one day in school and acting as a critical friend.*

*A somewhat similar approach is used in the **Bahamas**⁶. Since 1995, the Ministry of Education has introduced a new system of accountability that dispenses with school inspection but relies on schools assessing themselves in terms of targets they set within the framework of overall goals set for the school system by the Ministry of Education. Allied to this new system is the grouping of schools into districts under the leadership of superintendents with overall responsibility for their district. The elements of this new system of accountability are as follows:*

- *the Ministry of Education sets targets for the school system in seven areas over a five-year period;*
- *each school develops goals and objectives annually in relation to the overall targets for the school system and within the imperatives of the communities it serves. These reports are submitted to the superintendent, who amalgamates them for the district;*
- *annual reports are submitted by the principals of schools in each district to the superintendent, which assesses performance in relation to the goals, and objectives set for the particular year. The superintendent amalgamates these reports and submits an annual report for the district to the Director of Education;*
- *the Annual Confidential Report is being modified to include goals and objectives set by each teacher annually with respect to the goals and objectives of the school.*

External supervision as a support to internal self-evaluation

In the two previous models, the main emphasis of the review processes is accountability rather than support. The external reviewers are not supposed to give advice or to provide support in planning and self-reviewing at school level. A different model altogether is the one in which external supervisors support school-level actors in their internal quality monitoring efforts.

Example

⁶ Source: Miller, 1999.

*A good illustration of this approach is the case of **Chile**. What happens in this case is that supervisors work together with the teachers in preparing and implementing school projects that serve as the basis for continuous self-assessment and school improvement. For this purpose, supervisors must visit schools regularly (every two weeks) and provide continuous support as needed. Their intervention is therefore purely developmental. Administrative (mainly financial) accountability is left to a special cadre of specialized accountants called inspectors, while pedagogical accountability is monitored via national standardized examinations and tests.*

In conclusion: the above presentation shows that there is no standard solution to combining external and internal supervision. A question often asked is whether this particular supervision system produces better results than the others. But there is simply no answer to that question. Different systems can produce equally good results depending on the environment in which they are operating. There is no recipe or single best solution. Each country that feels the need to reform its supervision services can find inspiration in what other countries have done, but will have to develop its own formula, taking into account its own national context and policy ambitions.

On the basis of the examples discussed above, one can confidently say that amongst the education system factors that will heavily weigh on what is feasible in trying to reshape supervision services are the following:

- the degree of decentralization and school autonomy;
- the traditional supervision culture prevailing in the country;
- the quality and professionalism of the teaching staff; and
- parental interest and the tradition of participation in education.



Lessons learned



Question:

The expected outcomes of this module were that you would understand the reasons for the development of in-school supervision, that you would be able to identify the main actors, discuss the implications of strengthening the roles of the headteacher and the community and explain what is a school development plan. Finally, you should be able to discuss the relationship between internal and external supervision. Summarize briefly what you learnt by studying this module. Does it compare with what follows?

The need for school self-evaluation follows, on the one hand, from the conviction that schools need to take responsibility for their improvement, for such improvement to be sustainable, and, on the other hand, from a desire to democratize school management.

The actors involved in school supervision are potentially a large number, including PTAs, SMCs, senior teachers and parents. The two most important actors, however, are the principal and the school community.

To strengthen their role, a series of challenges need to be overcome. The corps of school principals needs to become a genuine professional corps, which implies changes in their recruitment, working conditions and professional development. Involving the community demands that structures be set up or strengthened; that a culture of openness exist, including within the school; and that orientation programmes be organized.

One useful strategy to engender school self-evaluation is to invite all staff to participate in the preparation of a school development plan. This, however, is not a shortcut; it might take time and create conflicts within the staff.

The strengthening of school self-evaluation has an impact on external evaluation. It is important that the relationship be thought about so that internal and external supervision work together to improve the school. The relationship differs from country to country. In some cases, external supervision only validates the internal process; in others, the internal process functions as preparation for the external evaluation.

School supervision services exist in nearly all countries; they have played a key role in the development of the public education system, by monitoring the quality of schools and by supporting their improvement. However, in many countries, these services are under increasingly heavy critique, because of their failure to have a positive impact on quality of teaching and learning. This failure is, in part, the result of a strategic challenge: the mandate of the service outweighs by far its resources, and is also caused by a series of poor management and planning decisions.

Against this background, many countries have attempted to reform their supervision system. These reforms are also inspired by the need to improve educational quality and by the recent trend towards more school autonomy. Indeed, the ability of schools to use their greater freedom effectively will depend to a large extent on the support services on which they can rely, while supervision may be needed to guide them in their decision-making and to monitor the use they make of their resources. While these reforms have met with mixed success, their overall analysis allows us to gain profound insight into what can be achieved in a specific context. This set of training modules takes the reader through a systematic examination of the issues that a Ministry of Education, intent on reforming its supervision service, will face.

The public, which will benefit most from these modules, are senior staff within ministries who are directly involved in the organisation, planning and management of supervision services, staff of research and training institutions who work on school supervision, and practising supervisors.

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