# Guide for the
# participants



UNESCO
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# Introduction to the course

The need to improve the quality of education is high on the agenda in most countries, in the developed as well as the developing world. The increasing emphasis on the achievement of pupils has led countries to focus more on the functioning of schools and on the performance of teachers, as well as on the ways these can be monitored and improved.

In almost all countries, the main actor in charge of controlling and supporting schools and teachers is the school supervision service. The actions of supervisors are expected to contribute to quality improvement. However, regularly the effectiveness of this service is questioned on its functioning and criticised by decision-makers and schools. The criticisms relate, among other things, to the regularity of supervision visits, to the insufficient follow-up to reports and to the lack of impact of supervision on the quality of teaching and learning. Several countries therefore have undertaken significant reforms in order to transform school supervision into a genuine quality improvement service.

This attention to school and teacher supervision and support finds an additional justification in the present trend towards increased school autonomy. Teachers themselves, once in the classroom, have always had a significant level of autonomy. But recently, in many countries around the world, schools have received more freedom in making decisions in fields as crucial as the curriculum, staff management or the budget. The ability of schools to use this autonomy effectively will depend to some extent on the support services on which they can rely, while supervision may be needed to guide them in their decision-making.

Against this background, IIEP undertook some years ago an international research and training programme on reforming school supervision. On the basis of field work carried out in more than 15 countries in various continents and extensive analyses of the literature, IIEP developed a series of training modules and organized several training courses. This distance education course forms part of this programme. It combines an analysis of school supervision services, as they exist at present in most countries, with an agenda for reform of these services so that they play a more positive role in school improvement.

This course guide addresses the following questions:

- What are the main objectives of this course? What skills would participants acquire by completing this course?

- To whom is the course addressed? Who will be able to draw most benefit from it? What is the profile of the professionals for whom this course is undertaken?

- What is the content of the course? What issues will be addressed and what questions will be examined?

- How are the course modules made up? What sort of activities and exercises do they contain?

- How shall we, the course instructors and the participants, work together during this distance course? How will we communicate?

- What is the course schedule? What are participants expected to do during this eight week course?

Before addressing these questions, a bit of background about the course and the modules. These modules are one of the outputs of an international research and training programme which the IIEP has implemented, in collaboration with several national teams. The IIEP programme has undertaken research on existing supervision systems and on innovative

strategies in several countries in Asia, Africa and Latin-America.[1] This research was discussed at regional seminars and has resulted in a series of publications on "Trends in school supervision". The programme's intention was always to turn the research findings into training packages and courses for policy-makers, for managers of supervision and support systems and for supervisors themselves.

# Objectives

The overall objective of the course is **to make participants aware of reform strategies which can turn the supervision service into a genuine tool for quality improvement.** These strategies will focus on reformulating the role played by supervision, on reforming the organisation and management of the service and on re-examining the involvement of the school and the community.

More specifically, at the end of the course, after having studied the different modules, participants should be able to:

- situate the supervision service within an overall quality monitoring strategy;

- identify the roles played at present by the supervision service and assess its effectiveness in fulfilling these roles;

- understand the different alternatives in the organization of the supervision service and their impact on the service's effectiveness and on the quality of schools;

- prepare relevant proposals on how to improve the management (including recruitment and professional development) of supervisory staff;

- appreciate the role which can be played by school staff and by the wider school community (parents, boards) in school supervision;

- develop an overall strategy to turn supervision into a core quality monitoring service; and

- prepare a national diagnosis of school supervision.

# The profile of participants

This course focuses on the organisation and the management of the supervision service. Only limited attention will be given to methods and techniques of supervisory work. Those who will benefit most from this course, are from the following groups:

- Senior staff who are directly involved in the organisation, planning and management of school supervision services. They may be working within the Ministry of Education, for instance, as Chief Inspector, Head of Advisory Services, Senior Education Officer or Director of Primary/Secondary Education. They may also be working within autonomous supervision/inspection services.

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1 : The full list of these countries is: Bangladesh, India (Uttar Pradesh), the Republic of Korea, Nepal and Sri Lanka in Asia; Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe in Africa; Brazil (Ceara), Chile, Colombia and Mexico in Latin-America. In addition, a state-of-the-art review was prepared and monographs were written on specific experiences and innovations in Australia, Bangladesh, England, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

- In larger countries and in those with a federal structure: staff at a regional level, for instance, a Regional Director or a Regional Chief Inspector.
- In research and training institutions, staff who organise programmes for managers and supervisors of supervision services.

If possible, these people should have experience as practising supervisors in the field, and should have in any case, a good knowledge of the various quality monitoring strategies and tools being used in their country.

# The content of the course and the modules

This distance course is accompanied by a package of seven modules, together with this Guide for course participants and the *Guidelines for the preparation of a diagnosis on school supervision*.

The set of seven modules can be divided into four parts.

Module 1 explains what we understand by "supervision", and examines the concepts of "quality" and of "monitoring", which are intricately linked to the role of the supervision service. Indeed, in most – if not all – countries, the avowed aim of supervision is to monitor and improve the quality of schools and teachers. In other words, this module describes to some extent, the theoretical and conceptual context within which the supervision system operates.

Modules 2 to 5 help the reader to analyse in detail the state and the functioning of the supervision service, and its weaknesses and strengths. It focuses on four aspects, which are within the field of competence of managers of supervision services:

- roles and functions of the supervision services and of individual supervisors;
- organisation of the services;
- management of supervisory staff; and
- management of the work of the supervision services.

The starting point of these four modules are the realisation that, in many countries, supervision has not succeeded in fulfilling its core objective, namely to contribute strongly to the improvement of individual schools and teachers. These modules also recognize the reforms undertaken by many ministries. The underlying questions, therefore, are: what, in the present situation, might have contributed to this relative failure? and what alternatives have been tried out in different countries and contexts to improve this situation?

Module 6 discusses an innovative strategy, which consists of relying on in-school supervision. This implies a change in the main focus of supervision and in the main actors responsible and as such it forms part of a wider reform which stresses the need for a quality assurance approach. The implications for external supervision are therefore being carefully considered.

Module 7 is somewhat of a summary. It presents different models for the supervision service. On the one hand, is the classical supervision service, which most countries have known for many decades. On the other hand, are various alternatives which have been created more recently and attempt to address some of the weaknesses of the classical model.

The following are the titles and the main sections of the seven modules.

### Module 1: Supervision: a key component of a quality monitoring system

- A renewed interest in supervision: the reasons why.
- An operational definition of supervision services
- What is quality monitoring?
- Different monitoring systems and the role of supervision

### Module 2: Role and functions of supervisors.

- What supervisors are supposed to do
- What supervisors are doing: some evidence from research
- New trends and innovations

### Module 3: The organization of supervision services

- The organization of the supervision service: the traditional pattern
- Recent changes in the organization of the service

### Module 4: The management of supervision staff

- Recruitment
- Career development and evaluation
- Training and support
- Working and financial conditions

### Module 5: The management of supervisory work

- Supervisor/school and supervisor/teacher ratios: norms and realities
- Organization of school visits
- Reporting
- Follow-up

### Module 6: Reinforcing quality monitoring at school–site level

- Reasons for reinforcing school-site supervision
- A holistic framework for school-site supervision
- Two main actors in school-site supervision
- School development planing: a key instrument for school-site supervision
- Relation between school supervision and external supervision

### Module 7: Alternative models in reforming school supervision

- Criteria to distinguish between models
- A presentation of four models
- Beware of models

Every module starts with a brief **introduction**, followed by a very concise presentation of its content, and the expected outcomes.

In the remainder of the text, a distinction is made between the **main train of thought**, presented in a normal letter type, examples from specific countries, presented either as a box or in italics in a smaller letter type, and questions and tasks, again in a different presentation.

**Questions are included mainly to invite participants to reflect on particular problems or on the situation in their respective countries. The questions are generally, but not systematically, addressed in the text following the questions. Tasks have the same objective as the questions, but they are somewhat different: participants are asked to undertake a particular activity, which might take some time and some writing.**

The questions and tasks will broaden your understanding of the course materials and encourage further reflexion on the content. They have been particularly developed to help you make a link between the course content and the reality of your country. No "solution" is proposed to the questions and tasks, as the answers differ very much from country to country. Therefore, you will not be required to submit your responses to the course instructors.

Each module contains at the end a reminder of the **main points**.

A few modules contain **annexes**, which present more detailed information on specific issues addressed in the module.

# The course assignment

During the course, each team will be asked to prepare a diagnosis of the school supervision services in its country. This diagnosis is expected to cover the role and organization of the service, the management of its staff and of the supervisory work. Its outline follows closely that of the modules. The diagnosis should also highlight the main challenges to the effective functioning of the service, whatever reforms may have been or are being implemented and it should also, where possible, come up with suggestions for improvement.

We have prepared a document, *Guidelines for the preparation of a diagnosis on school supervision,* which is meant to help teams and participants undertake this assignment. These guidelines will be available on the course e-learning platform.

The evaluation of participants will to a large extent be based on this assignment.

# Additional reading

In the preparation of the course and the modules, the authors relied to a large extent on the research results of the IIEP project on supervision and support services. Many of the examples come from different publications which formed part of this project and which can be useful as accompanying material for the course participants. These publications as well as references to other reading materials can be found on the course platform.

# How shall we work together?

**The working modality**

Like all of IIEP's training, this distance education course aims to generate and improve knowledge and skills which should be of practical use for the participants in their professional activities related to the course theme. Therefore we place particular emphasis on active learning and interaction, based on practical exercises. Most modules of the course (2-7) are centred on the preparation of a diagnosis of the supervision system of your country. At the same time, we consider group work as a very efficient way to foster both individual learning and the development of collective and institutional capacity.

The course design envisaged for each module (or, in some cases, for a set of two modules) comprises a four-stage sequence, namely:

- Stage 1: Independent study of course materials and individual reflection on questions and tasks presented in each Module. Participants will also be requested to prepare individually the related section of the course assignment (except for the introductory module 1)

- Stage 2: Scheduled local group sessions will be organized to discuss the module and the issues it raises and the answers by participants to the questions and tasks. This session should also look at the individual responses to the course assignment, and prepare a consolidated group report to be submitted to the course instructors.

- Stage 3: The IIEP instructors will send you comments and corrections on your group submission.

- Stage 4: Local group session to discuss the feed-back on the team report received from the IIEP instructors.

## Stage 1: Independent study of materials

Your individual work for this course is of primary importance. Before meeting with your colleagues, you should first read and study the material on your own. As you read, you should reflect on and elaborate your responses for the questions, tasks and section of the course assignment related to the specific module. Your individual contribution is essential to the group interaction. The more reflections and questions you take to the group sessions, the more enriching these sessions will be.

In order to progress well in your individual work and learning, we would advise you to organize your time wisely. While distance learning offers more flexibility than traditional "classroom" instruction, it requires a lot of self-discipline. It may also end up being quite time consuming if you do not plan and organize your work in a rational way.

We also strongly recommend that you work through all the course materials at regular intervals. Experience shows that for those who "skip" certain parts it becomes difficult to follow or "catch up" in the subsequent parts of the course.

Furthermore,  you should try to relate what you have read in the module to your own knowledge and ideas: in particular, the group responses to the course assignment should not appear as something simply 'recycled' from the module's text or other existing documents, but should reflect  the group's summary and conclusions based on the individual views and experiences of its members.

## Stage 2: Scheduled group session

The group sessions give you the opportunity to work with colleagues from your institution. You and your colleagues often face similar challenges. By learning about the views, difficulties and experiences of other group members, you will be able to evaluate the similarities and differences with your own experience and possibly come up with new ideas concerning future efforts or strategies in your area of work.

Your Group Coordinator will organize these sessions at regular intervals. A central aim of the group sessions is to discuss the individual responses to the course assignment in order to prepare collectively a group response to be submitted to the IIEP instructors.

## Stage 3: Interaction with the IIEP instructors

The Group Coordinator will be requested to send the group responses to the IIEP instructors via the course platform. The instructors will provide you with their comments on your work within a week. Their feedback and remarks are meant to help you to improve your understanding of the course content, as well as to deepen your reflection on related aspects of the preparation of your national diagnosis.

## Stage 4: Feedback sessions

After having received a detailed response from the IIEP Instructors to your group report on a given part of your diagnosis, the Group Coordinator should organize a brief working session in order to discuss this feedback with all group members and thus consolidate your knowledge. This can be done at the beginning of a group session.

If after reading and discussing the comments of the IIEP instructors with the other team members you would still like to have further clarifications and information, please do not hesitate to contact the IIEP instructors.

### The role of the Group Coordinator

Each group is required to nominate a coordinator from among its members. This will ensure the organization and scheduling of the course activities. The coordinator will facilitate the work of the group as a whole. However, each member of the group is responsible for carrying out the individual work in a timely way.

Given the importance of the role, a second member of the group should be nominated as replacement in case the coordinator is absent at any time. This should be done before the course begins.

The role of the Group Coordinator is of utmost importance. They are expected to undertake the following tasks:

- Remind participants of the work schedule and tasks to be carried out individually;
- Schedule meetings for the group sessions in accordance with the overall work schedule (see below);
- Direct the discussions in the group according to the section of the assignment to be completed;
- Organize group work in such a way that a written response to the assignment will be prepared in a timely manner;
- Post your team responses to the assignment on the course platform on the required date; and

- Record the participants' attendance at the group meetings on a list and send it to the IIEP course team at the end of the course.

Group Coordinators should have access to the internet and be proficient in using a computer.

*The most important tasks of the Group Coordinator is to keep participants working as a team, to maintain the course schedule and to ensure that group answers are sent to IIEP no later than the indicated deadlines.*

# Using an e-learning platform

This course will be organized on an e-learning virtual platform. You will receive your user name and password to access this private platform, as well as a user manual before the course begins. All the messages from the instructors, the course documents, your contributions to the course assignment, the instructors' comments and corrections, etc. will be posted on the platform. This will give you access to documents to be shared among all participants. At the end of the course, the platform will remain accessible and become a useful resource for your future consultation.

Please note that a copy of all the messages posted on the platform will also be sent to your e-mail address. If you experience any difficulties accessing or using the platform, you can use the following email address as a 'hotline' and every effort will be made to assist you: isupervision@iiep.unesco.org.

You are advised to access the course platform every day. If you have not yet been using an e-platform on a regular basis, it may not be easy at first, but will quickly become so. Through the platform, you will often receive messages on the course procedures and content. Reminders of the assignments to be undertaken and the dates on which group responses are due will also be posted.

Do not hesitate to send your own questions, whether in relation to the content of the course, or any technical problems. The IIEP course team is available to respond to any of your questions. It is only through active collaboration that all participants will get the maximum benefit from the course.

You should set aside an average amount of five hours per week. We have requested the head of your organization to make a commitment to this course and to ensure that course participants are available to work on the course this average amount of time.

# Course certificate

Upon completion of the course, a UNESCO/IIEP Certificate of participation will be awarded to all those participants who have successfully contributed to completing the course related assignment, namely the preparation of a diagnosis on school supervision.

Regular attendance in group meetings and systematic participation in the forum discussions organized throughout the course will be major requirements to obtain the certificate. Each Team Coordinator will have to keep register of individual attendance. Certificates will only be awarded to those participants who have participated actively in at least 75% of all the group sessions.

# The course schedule

17 to 28 January 2011

The objective of this phase is mainly to get to know each other: the IIEP course team; participants; their teams and organizations. This phase also aims to test communication on the course e-learning platform.

During the pre-course phase, Team Coordinators will receive a parcel with the course training materials. Once they have received it, they will organize a meeting to distribute the materials to all team members. This face-to-face encounter will be an opportunity to meet each other and discuss the way your team will get organized to work throughout the course.

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Module 1

Supervision : a key component of a quality monitoring system

31 January to 4 February 2011

Individual task: Read module 1 and prepare your individual responses to the questions and tasks.

Team work: Meeting to discuss the module's content and compare individual responses. No assignment is associated with this module.

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Module 2          Role and functions of supervision
Module 3          The organization of supervision services

7 to 11 February 2011

Individual task: Read module 2 and 3 and prepare your individual responses to the questions and tasks. Complete the section of the national diagnosis related to the role and the structure of the supervision service in your country.

14 to 18 February 2011

Team work: Meeting to discuss the modules' content and compare individual responses to the questions/tasks as well as work completed for the national diagnosis.

21 February 2011 (deadline) →

Each team coordinator should post the group report on the course e-learning platform (latest date)

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| Module 4 | The management of supervision staff |
| Module 5 | The management of supervisory work |

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| 21 to 25 February 2011 | Individual task: Read module 4 and 5 and prepare your individual responses to the questions and tasks. Complete the section of the national diagnosis related to the management of supervisory staff and the management of supervision work. |
| 28 February to 4 March 2011 | Team work: Meeting to discuss the modules' content and compare individual responses to the questions/tasks as well as work completed for the national diagnosis. |
| 7 March 2011 (deadline) → | Each team coordinator should post the group report on the course e-learning platform (latest date) |

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| Module 6 | **Reinforcing quality monitoring at school-site level** |

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| 7 to 11 March 2011 | Individual task: Read module 6 and prepare your individual responses to the questions and tasks. Complete the section of the national diagnosis related to school-site supervision.<br><br>Team work: Meeting to discuss the module's content and compare individual responses to the questions/tasks as well as work completed for the national diagnosis. |
| 14 March 2011 (deadline) → | Each team coordinator should post the group report on the course e-learning platform (latest date) |

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| Module 7 | **Alternative models in reforming school supervision** |

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| 14 to 18 March 2011 | Individual task : Read module 7 and prepare your individual responses to the questions and tasks.<br><br>Team work: Meeting to discuss the module's content and compare individual responses. No assignment is associated with this module. |

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**Finalisation of the diagnosis of the supervision system of your country**

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| 21 to 25 March 2011 | Team work : During this week your group will review and finalize the diagnosis that you have been preparing throughout the course. |
| 28 March 2011 (deadline) → | Each team coordinator should post the group report on the course e-learning platform (latest date). |

**Concluding phase**

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| 28 to 31 March 2011 | IIEP will send you a questionnaire at the beginning of the week for you to evaluate your experience in the course. |
| 31 March 2011 (deadline) → | You should complete your questionnaire (latest date). |

# Who are the course instructors?

The IIEP course team is composed of: (i) the overall course coordinator and one of the two instructors, Anton De Grauwe; (ii) the second course instructor, Candy Lugaz; (iii) Shérazade Mihoubi, course assistant and (iv) Jimena Pereyra, in charge of communication and pedagogical aspects of the course.

**Anton DE GRAUWE (Course coordinator and instructor)**
**IIEP Senior Programme Specialist**



Holder of a PhD in Sociology from the *Institut d'Etudes Politiques* (Paris) and an MSc in social planning in developing countries from the London School of Economics, Mr De Grauwe has worked as a secondary school teacher in the Caribbean (1986-1989) and as an Associate Expert in educational planning in the UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar (1991-1994). Since joining the IIEP in June 1995, his training and research work mainly concerns quality improvement in basic education and management reforms.

**Candy LUGAZ (Instructor)**
**IIEP Assistant Programme Specialist**

Candy Lugaz joined IIEP in 2002. She holds a degree in Political Science (Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Lille, France), and Master's degrees in European and International law (University of Lille, France), and in European and Latin American relationships, with a specialization in co-operation for development (Institut des Hautes Etudes sur l'Amérique Latine, Paris III). Candy Lugaz is presently part of the Governance and Management team, and works in particular on school management in a context of decentralization. She has also carried out research in the field of basic education, with a specific focus on the links between education and school feeding programmes.

**Shérazade Mihoubi (Course Assistant)**
**IIEP Programme Assistant**

Shérazade holds a BA in translating (Arabic-French-English) from the University of Algiers, Institut de Traduction et d'Interprétariat d'Alger. Since she joined IIEP in May 2004, she has been working with the *Technical Assistance and Sector Planning* Unit.

**Jimena PEREYRA (In charge of communication and pedagogical aspects)**
**IIEP Assistant Programme Specialist**

Jimena Pereyra completed her studies in education sciences at the University of Buenos Aires (Argentina) and holds a Masters degree in International Cooperation in Education at the Sorbonne University in France. She joined IIEP in March 2006. Prior to this, she worked in the field of higher education as a research assistant for the Argentinean Ministry of Education. Since joining IIEP, Jimena Pereyra has been in charge of the design and implementation of distance education courses on topics related to educational planning in different regions of the world including Africa, Asia-Pacific and the Arab Region.

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.

*The authors:*

Anton de Grauwe is a Programme specialist at the IIEP. Gabriel Carron was until 1999 Senior Programme Coordinator in the same institute. Both coordinated between 1996 and 2004 an extensive research and training program on "Reforming school supervision and support for quality improvement".