

Module

4

Management of
supervision staff



Module 4

.....MANAGEMENT OF SUPERVISION STAFF

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Introduction

The performance and effectiveness of supervision and support personnel depend on different factors: the roles and functions assigned to them, the organizational structure within which they operate, their workload and the ways in which their work is managed. These issues are discussed in modules 2, 3 and 5. This module looks in detail at a crucial set of factors that have an impact on the motivation and the effectiveness of supervisors and relate to the management of the profession and of individual staff members.


It is clear that the attitudes and competence of individuals are influenced strongly by the training and support they receive, either while preparing to enter a profession or when on the job, as well as by their working conditions and financial incentives. Much also depends on the profile of the individual who enters the profession, which is a function of the recruitment criteria and procedures, and is inspired by their main roles. Equally influential are the career opportunities open to them.

While central level managers of supervision services may find it difficult to have a direct influence on the ways in which supervisors undertake their daily work, they have a lot to say, and can therefore implement many reforms in the management of supervision staff. Such reforms, if thoughtfully undertaken, can have a significant positive impact on the quality of the supervision service.



What this module will discuss

This module will look systematically at five core issues in the management of supervision staff. A first section examines the issue of recruitment, the different criteria used in various countries and innovative practices that have been tried out with some success. The second section examines the career development opportunities available to supervisors and the strategies used to evaluate and assess their work. The availability and quality of professional training and of support instruments are discussed in the third section. *Section 4* examines two preoccupying areas in many countries that have a de-motivating effect on supervisory staff; namely the working and financial conditions.



Expected outcomes

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

- identify the different elements of the management system of supervision staff that have an impact on the work of supervisors;
- discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different recruitment criteria and procedures;
- appreciate the importance of career development and evaluation of staff;
- identify the characteristics of an efficient training and support system for supervisors; and
- discuss the importance of working conditions and financial incentives and suggest measures to improve on the existing situation.



Recruitment

The recruitment of supervisors is a somewhat contentious issue in many countries. The effectiveness of recruitment depends on two aspects: criteria and procedures.

Most countries use a combination of two criteria: qualifications and experience. But the precise balance between these two differs very much from country to country, as do the type of experience (as teachers and principals) and the minimum qualifications required. In addition, an important question is whether other criteria (such as negotiation and leadership skills) should be taken into account, and if so, how? The following three sub-sections will examine three types of criteria: experience, qualifications and human skills. This will be followed by a much briefer discussion of recruitment procedures and by a presentation of some innovative recruitment practices.



Tasks

In your own country, identify the recruitment criteria used. Have these recruitment criteria undergone change recently? If so, what is receiving more emphasis and less emphasis?

Do you feel that these criteria allow your country to select the most appropriate individuals for the job of supervisor?

Completing the task: some hints

To answer the first question, you may use a table similar to Table 1. It distinguishes between qualifications, experience and age, which in most countries are the main criteria. The emphasis put on the one or the other indicates the priorities of decision-makers: some might feel that high qualifications will make for a good supervisor; others prefer teaching and school management experience.

There can be significant differences between countries due to at least two factors: the role of the supervisor; and the qualifications of teachers.

Quite a few countries have changed the criteria in recent years, in part because of changes in those two factors but also because they are unhappy with the present profile of supervisors. More specific criteria, such as those related to human relation skills, are more difficult to apply.

There should be a clear link between the role assigned to supervisors, their desired profile and the recruitment criteria, as we will explain in the following paragraphs.

Recruitment criteria

Experience: how much and what kind?

In many countries, experienced teachers are promoted to supervisory positions on the basis of seniority. The minimum number of years of experience required varies between countries (see Table 1). In many countries, regardless of the minimum requirements, the position of supervisor is seen as the last promotion in a teaching career. In others, supervisors, even if they are relatively young at the time of their recruitment, remain in that position for the rest of their active lives due to the limited potential for further promotion. The result is that the average age of supervisors is rather high.

Example

*The IIEP case studies show the following data: both in **Sri Lanka** and **Korea**, the majority of supervisors are aged 55 years and above. Currently, in Korea, 76.4 per cent of all supervisors are over 50 years old. The Assistant Thana (or District) Education Officers (ATEO) and the District Education Officers, the field level supervising staff in **Bangladesh**, are relatively younger, with 53 per cent in the age group below 45 years. In fact, 11 per cent of these are 25-35. This is due to the high proportion (50 per cent) of ATEOs being recruited through open competition and the relatively high level of educational qualifications prescribed, which does not favour practicing primary school teachers.*

*In **Tanzania** and **Zimbabwe** about two thirds of primary school supervisors are over 50, and more than half in **Namibia**. None of the Tanzanian supervisors are under 40. Secondary supervisors in Botswana and Zimbabwe are, on the other hand, younger: in Botswana, only one out of a total of 28 is over 50, and in Zimbabwe this is true for only about one third of the total staff of 156. Two factors explain this difference: recruitment rules, which demand higher qualifications, generally held by the younger staff, coupled with the relatively recent creation of these posts.*

*In **Mexico**, what is most striking is that the age range is very wide: 13 per cent of inspectors are less than 35 and some even under 25 years of age; about 20 per cent are over 50, with some beyond retirement age.*

Questions can be raised about the undesirable effects of a relatively old age profile on the innovative capacities of inspectors and advisors. Already in 1979, a number of these effects were noted within the Latin-American context¹: “there is little transfusion of fresh blood into the management body (...) Young teachers, especially when fresh from the university, arrive in schools full of new ideas, which cannot be properly adjusted to ‘realities’ when headmasters and supervisors are too out of touch for real dialogue to take place. Fruitful cooperation between theory

¹ Source: Olivera, 1984, p.115

and experience is then replaced by more or less polite hostility (...) The most common complaint is about the authoritarianism that creeps in”.

But the problem is not only one of seniority and numbers of years of experience, but very much about the nature of that experience.

Questions

Should experience as a principal be required?

Should the experience be in the same level of education (primary, secondary) as the supervisory position?

Should the teaching experience relate to the subjects being supervised?

The answers to these questions vary from country to country depending on the traditions as well as the specific roles and functions of the supervisors. Manifestly, subject advisors at secondary level should have some experience of teaching in their respective subject areas but may do without experience as a principal. The problem is mostly with local level supervisors, who have multiple roles to play of control and support in pedagogical as well as administrative matters. A specific problem could exist when the same supervisor is in charge of both primary and secondary schools. This may particularly be the case in smaller countries that can only with difficulty organize different services. But even bigger ones, such as Nepal or Sri Lanka, have been or are in the same situation. In such a context, it regularly occurs that most supervisors have experience as headteachers of primary schools, as secondary principals might not consider a move to a supervisory position to be a promotion. As a result, their working relations with secondary school heads are not as smooth as they should be.

In many other countries, Botswana and Zimbabwe, for instance, a separation exists between primary and secondary school supervision. In such cases, secondary school supervisors can be recruited directly from amongst those who have occupied a senior teacher's position in school. At secondary level, most supervisors are expected to be subject specialists and many therefore have a background as

heads of department, not as school principals. The result is that supervisors with only a senior teacher's experience are often disregarded by school heads who consider them to be their juniors. The fact that some supervisors are occupying a post with a lower grade than secondary principals aggravates the issue.

A solution could lie in the creation of a special cadre of 'supervisors of principals', as is done for instance in Zanzibar. They form a small group whose main task is to control and give advice to heads of schools, in particular where management is concerned. They obviously have experience as principals.

Table 1. Recruitment rules of external supervisors in selected countries

Country & Post	Procedure	Age limit	Qualification	Experience
Bangladesh ATEO	50 % promotion of departmental candidates	45 years	2nd class masters	Not specified
	50 % open competition	30 years	2nd class masters	Not specified
Korea Junior supervisor	Competitive examination and interview	No official specification	College graduate	5 years in education (of which at least 2 years in teaching) or 9 years (of which at least 2 years in teaching) for those without college degree
Sri Lanka Education officer class III	25 % open competitive examination	22 - 26 years	University degree	To be acquired after recruitment if not acquired before
	45 % limited competitive examination	25 - 45 years	University degree or trained teacher certificate	5 years' teaching experience
	30 % promotion on merit	No official specification	-	3 years' experience as a principal
Sri Lanka Master Teacher	Competitive examination and interview	N/A	Trained graduates or trained teachers	Belong to class I or II of teachers' service
Botswana (primary)	Open advertisement and interview	No official specification	Diploma	Successful primary school head for three or more years
Botswana (secondary)	Open advertisement and interview	No official specification	Diploma and teaching qualification	8 years' teaching experience and senior position in school
Tanzania	No standard procedures; identification, at times interview	No official specification	Diploma	5 years' teaching experience and outstanding performance
Zimbabwe	Vacancy circular, shortlist and interview	No official specification	B. Ed.	Practising head or lecturer (at teacher training college)

Academic qualifications: an alternative for experience?

The relative emphasis to be placed on qualifications as compared to experience is another delicate issue. If preference is given to experience, supervisors in certain countries may rapidly be less qualified than many teachers simply because the level of education of newly recruited teaching staff is increasing year after year. A country like Tanzania for example, where the minimum qualification for primary school teachers was upgraded from O level (end-of-secondary school) to Diploma in the late 1990s is facing this type of problem. But to ignore experience altogether could be equally problematic. In Bangladesh and Nepal, where qualifications are given priority, lack of practical primary school experience of supervisors (and in the case of Nepal, resource persons) is one of the major criticisms voiced by the teachers.

If the basic task of school supervisors is indeed to provide guidance to teachers for improving their classroom teaching, they themselves must be well versed in the task of teaching. The choice between qualifications and experience needs to be guided by a vision of the expected role of the supervisor but also by the need for them to be accepted and respected by school staff.

Human relation skills: a neglected prerequisite?

It is interesting to notice that, in most countries, little attention is being paid to other recruitment criteria that may be equally – if not more – important than teaching experience and academic qualifications. Personal qualities such as creativity, innovativeness, leadership and communication skills are rarely explicitly considered, even though they are increasingly identified as essential attributes of a good supervisor.



Questions

If human relation skills need to be taken into account, how can this be done?
What will be the impact on the recruitment procedures?

Recruitment procedures

Thus far we have examined the criteria used to select supervisors, but a strongly related issue concerns the procedures followed. In many countries, the procedure is simply one whereby a post is advertised. Candidates are pre-selected on the basis of the recruitment criteria, a shortlist is made up, generally (though not systematically) interviews are held and a candidate is selected. In most instances, the whole selection process remains pretty much academic if not bureaucratic, and it is doubtful whether this permits proper assessment of the human competencies mentioned above. At times, political factors play a role, especially in countries where a public service post remains a scarce and valuable opportunity.

Opening up the posts to external recruitment can bring in some new blood to the service and help it to benefit from skills exercised outside of the school sector. It has one disadvantage though: it probably adds to the lack of career development opportunities in the education sector and especially among teaching staff. The examples given in *Table 1* and the experience from many other countries show that, generally speaking, recruitment remains fairly similar nearly everywhere. Completely transforming the recruitment process is easiest to do where there has been a profound political change or a radical and comprehensive reform of the service.

Innovative practices are being tried in order to take into account a more comprehensive set of criteria and at the same time overcome some of the problems of bureaucratization and stagnation. A few examples are as follows:

Fixed-term contracts

One possibility, tried out for instance in Spain, is to employ teachers on short-term (e.g. three-year) contracts as inspectors. The anticipated advantages were: younger staff, with a better feel of what goes on in schools; and individuals who could easily set up a collegial and thus a mutually trusting relationship with teachers. Spain implemented this model in the 1980s, in line with the democratization of society after the end of the Franco regime. Problems rapidly cropped up, however²: “the alleged instability and wasteful nature of this model (given that the selection and training of inspectors involve too substantial an investment of time and cost to justify dispensing with and replacing inspectors at the very point when they have just managed to master the requirements of the job) led to a legal amendment, permitting these inspectors whose work has been positively evaluated by the appropriate education administration to remain in post indefinitely”.

Part-time supervisors

In Ceara, a state in north-east Brazil, supervisors are selected from amongst the best performing teaching staff and combine teaching and supervisory, mostly advisory, activities. This is seen as a privileged way of making sure that supervisors remain in touch with teaching practices and develop collegial relationships with the supervised staff. The same system originally applied in the case of master teachers in Sri Lanka. They also were appointed on a part-time basis. They had to spend two days a week in their school and three days in the field. Since 1996, however, master teachers have become full-time officers. They have also changed name and are now called ‘in-service officers’.

In some countries, headteachers play the role of supervisors of the neighbouring schools. This is the case for quite some countries where school clusters have been set up. In such cases, however, these headteachers seldom have a supervisory authority;

² Source: Alvarez Areces and Perez Collera, 1995, p. 159.

they are in charge of the administration of the cluster and of supporting the teaching staff. The situation is somewhat different in Senegal, where different headteachers form a team that visits the schools within their area to give advice but also to supervise. They are not inspectors as such and cannot discipline teachers, but they do write reports on these school visits, with recommendations for improvement.

Out-contracting supervision

In the UK, teams of inspectors contracted by OFSTED carry out school inspection. Only inspectors accredited by OFSTED can be part of a team and only registered inspectors can lead inspection teams. They all work for contractors who tender for contracts to inspect schools. In March 2003, OFSTED had a roll of 1,176 registered inspectors and 7,083 accredited team inspectors. To become a registered inspector, an accredited inspector must meet special standards of effective team management and monitoring. Registration, which is renewable, lasts for three years, but may be terminated in the case of unsatisfactory performance. Each inspection team must also include one lay inspector, trained and approved by OFSTED – a person with no links to education, whose main role is to ask the questions that parents and the general public would ask. There were 623 lay inspectors in March 2003 – a significant decrease from about 1,800 in 1997. This reflects a certain doubt about the added value of such lay personnel in an inspection.

Electing supervisors

In the province of San Luis in Argentina, an innovation was started in the late 1990s as part of a reform programme of the supervision service. It consisted of organizing elections for school supervisors (who are at the same time administrators of a particular region). This was done because, previously, supervision posts were political and the candidates therefore had to have the necessary political connections. It was felt that an election would make the whole process more transparent and allow for a choice without undue political influence. Teachers and parents were among the voters. Each candidate supervisor had to propose a plan for the further development of the region. Everybody could in principle be a candidate but, not surprisingly, most candidates had experience in education.



Career development and evaluation

Career development perspectives are one of the most powerful incentives used in any work setting. The issues to be debated here are: What are the career prospects for newly appointed supervisors? How are they being evaluated, namely what are the criteria on which supervisors' evaluations are based?

Limited scope for promotion

Because of the pyramidal structure of education ministries, career prospects for supervisors are normally limited. The scope for promotion to higher levels within the administrative system is rather narrow and the time lag or waiting period before seeking promotion is often long. In many countries, the only way up is the way out of school supervision, or even out of educational administration as a whole.

Examples

*In **Botswana**, the decentralization process has brought about some change by enabling more movement within the service. Senior staff in secondary schools can be promoted to the post of supervisor without having experience as headteacher. However, as supervisors, they will then be on a lower grade and salary scale than some secondary principals, a position that renders their inspection job very difficult.*

***Tanzania** has one specificity: supervisory officers belong to the same cadre as teachers. As such, there are no differences in conditions of service, salary structure or other benefits. This also implies that some teachers can be of a higher grade than their inspecting officers, a situation similar to that of secondary supervisors in Botswana.*

*The **Sri Lanka** Education Administrative Service consists of a three-tier hierarchical structure. Promotion from level 3, which is the basic entry level, to level 2 is through a competitive examination followed by an interview. Officers at level 3 are generally required to have served 10 years before being promoted to the next level. From level 2 to level 1, the promotion comes after a long period of service and the criteria are based on merit and seniority.*

*The Assistant District Education Officers in **Uttar Pradesh** have to wait for a long period, 18-20 years or more, before promotion and a large number of them retire from their posts of first appointment.*

Korea has attempted to address this problem by developing an original career pattern that offers the possibility of horizontal transfers between the positions of supervisor and of headteacher. In this way, Junior School Supervisors can be promoted to School Supervisor but also be transferred to the post of Vice-Principal of elementary and middle level schools, while supervisors can be transferred to the post of principals (see *Annex 1*). Many supervisors apply for a vice-principal or principal post, as a move in this direction is considered to be a promotion. The working conditions of supervisors are very hectic in comparison to those of principals or vice-principals and, moreover, the latter have more social prestige and authority. This scheme has therefore to some extent had an unintended effect, as it has made the supervision profession less attractive.

In conclusion, prospects for career development seem to be much restricted, which does not mean that they cannot be used as a motivational factor. Much will depend on the criteria being applied for promotion, which raises the issue of evaluation procedures.

Evaluation systems

The monitoring and evaluation system for supervisors is generally a reflection of the bureaucratic set-up of the education departments. Within the hierarchical structure, the higher officer is expected to monitor the work of the junior officers. In many countries, annual confidential reports are written by the immediate controlling officers, which are then followed up by the reporting and reviewing of officers at higher levels. These reports form an important input into deciding promotions.

Question

What criteria do you feel are the most appropriate to evaluate supervisors?

The evaluation of supervisors' performance is more complex than it may seem. The simplest assessment criteria concern the numbers of visits made and reports written, but this gives little information about the quality of the work performed or its impact on schools. These criteria could also have a perverse effect: supervisors will focus their attention on undertaking the required number of visits and prepare the expected number of reports, rather than taking the time to ensure that such visits and reports are useful and comprehensive. It could be argued that, in the present context, supervisors should undertake less, but more intensive visits, and take their time to discuss at length with the principal and the teaching staff.

Examples

*In four southern African countries (**Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe**), supervisors are assessed mainly on the basis of the quantity of their work: the number of visits made and the number of reports written. However, when the IIEP was undertaking its research at the end of the 1990s, two valuable changes were being introduced:*

- *emphasis on a few other factors that provide a more complete view of their performance, e.g. their handling of teacher misconduct (in Botswana) and the guidelines they prepare (in Zanzibar); and*

- *evaluation as more a participatory activity than one imposed from outside by the superior – in Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe, supervisors are evaluated by comparing their actual performance to plans and objectives that they themselves defined at the beginning of the year.*

The monitoring and evaluation procedures seem to be more streamlined in Sri Lanka (see *Box 1*). The Ministry has issued specific guidelines on the basis of which regular monitoring of supervisors is to be carried out. It also specifies the way in which monitoring reports are to be prepared. Such an approach helps to make the evaluation more transparent, which in turn renders the system more credible. However, it is not clear to what extent this more ambitious and more time-consuming procedure has actually been implemented. It is evident that undertaking such a comprehensive evaluation, which may allow for greater subjectivity, is more complex. In quite a few countries, the trend is towards giving all staff a positive evaluation, so as to avoid conflicts.

Box 1: Monitoring the work of supervisors in Sri Lanka

Within the hierarchical system, all officers have to submit to the superior officer a monthly advance programme of work and a progress report of work done.

Guidelines issued by the Ministry for monitoring specify the following:

- i. analysis of log entries made by the supervisory staff on their school visits; this may be done by taking a stratified sample of schools covering a time period of 6-12 months;
- ii. regular meetings with the supervisory staff; and
- iii. analysis of supervision reports submitted by the supervisory staff.

The monitoring report prepared on the above basis will normally refer to:

- a. the quality of work carried out by the supervisors;
- b. the impact of supervision on the school;
- c. aspects that are covered and left out in supervision; and
- d. abilities and weaknesses of the particular supervisor.

Korea also has a fairly systematic approach for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation. Assessment, which is important for promotion, is carried out annually in December and focuses on the supervisors' ability, attitude and work output. This is done according to fixed standards as indicated in *Box 2*. The assessment covers the following five aspects: character; dedication to work; guidance and management of education; guidance and management of teachers; and management of administration and educational research. Not surprisingly, problems with assessment still occur, as the criteria used for evaluation remain very broad and as a result much still depends on the subjective judgement of the assessor.

Box 2.: Monitoring the work of supervisors in Korea

Ability and attitude		
<i>Character</i>	<i>Dedication to work</i>	
Philosophy on education; pride and awareness as an educator; commitment to education; self-education and dignity; interactivity; creativity.	Ability to carry out orders, give directions and issue guidance; ability to abide by the law; co-operation; ability to solve problems; ability to show a positive attitude towards revamping; ability to maintain harmony between seniors and subordinates; ability to offer assistance.	
Work Output		
<i>Guidance and management of education</i>	<i>Guidance and management of teachers</i>	<i>Management of administration and educational research</i>
Knowledge of national policy; ability to give operational guidance to schools and school curricula; ability to organize the conditions of teaching.	Ability to assess teachers and fairness in personnel matters; plans, methods and achievements of guiding educational research on schools.	Rationality, accuracy and effectiveness of applying plans; educational research and work output (method and amount of contribution).

Looking for more objectivity and transparency is one possibility for improving traditional evaluation procedures. Monitoring, however, is likely to remain a relatively formal routine exercise if it is not linked in one way or another to the results obtained by the supervisor in school quality improvement terms. Traditionally, schools alone are held accountable for quality improvement while supervisors stand aloof. However, in several developed and developing countries today, supervisors are requested to leave their outsider's position and work together with schools to improve quality; that is, to move from an authoritarian external control attitude to a participatory internal problem-solving approach. Under these circumstances, the question raised in certain corners is whether accountability for results should not also become a joint responsibility of supervisors and school authorities. This, however, raises various questions and constraints, including the following:

- a need to change the supervision culture from one of control to advice and guidance;
- the possibility of identifying with some precision the impact a supervisor has on a school's results and achievements; and

- an assurance that supervisors have the tools, the time and the working conditions needed to exercise an impact on schools.



Training and support

The need for professional training of supervisors is largely recognized. Yet arrangements made are seldom adequate in most countries. In the absence of capacity-building opportunities, the availability of support instruments gains in importance. The following paragraphs first examine two types of training – induction and in-service – before looking at the support instruments that are of use to supervisors.

Induction training



Question

What induction training is available in your own country? Do you consider this to be sufficient and of practical value?

Countries that organize systematic induction courses are still the exception rather than the rule. In several European countries (France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Ireland), training of newly appointed supervisors is standard practice. The duration of the courses varies from 3 months (followed by 5 months probation supervised by a tutor) in the Netherlands to a full year of training in France (see *Boxes 3 and 4*). In at least two French-speaking countries in West Africa, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal, all inspectors used to undergo a two-year training programme at the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* (a Higher Teacher Training College) before occupying their posts. The training is meant to improve their supervisory skills and also to strengthen their knowledge of various subject matters. In recent years, due to budgetary cuts, the number of inspectors who participated in this training has decreased.

Box 3: Training of supervisors in France³

The *Inspecteurs d'académie* (district-level inspectors), recruited by competition, receive one year of training before being appointed the following year to full responsibility in an *académie*. At the end of this second year, they are tenured, provided that they receive favourable reports from the Director of the Training Course and from the *Recteur* of the *académie* (Regional Director) to which they were first assigned. The year of training is provided at the *Centre national de formation des personnels d'inspection et de direction* (CNFPID) (National Training Centre for Inspectors and Heads of Administration).

- This training is organized on the principle of alternating place and content. Periods at the Training Centre (22 weeks in total) alternate with periods in an *académie*, where trainees are involved in on-the-job activity (15 weeks in uninterrupted periods of 4-5 weeks each).
- The Centre's training makes appropriate allowance on the one hand for theoretical training, given in lectures by recognized professionals from inside or outside the National Education system, and on the other hand for practical activity and written work.

Box 4: Training of supervisors in the Netherlands⁴

Prior to 1989, the induction of new inspectors was the responsibility of the various individual sub-inspectorates. The usual procedure was for the chief inspector to ask an experienced inspector living nearby to introduce the new member of staff to the work and to advise and assist him/her during the first few months. The new inspectors, however, were charged from the first day of their appointment with the supervision of schools in a particular area, and their tutors were unable to find enough time due to the normal pressures of routine work; for this reason, the procedure tended to produce less of a sound, systematic introduction to the work than desired, especially in cases where the two parties were not housed in the same premises.

In mid-1989, a new procedure was applied relating to the induction of new inspectors:

- there is a three-month induction period, during which the inspectors are not yet charged with the supervision of schools;
- of the working days in the initial three months, 20 are spent on a uniform induction course, the main aims of which are to lay down the theoretical basis for the work and to establish a frame of reference within which the newcomers could function;
- the remaining days are spent on intensive, on-the-job training under the aegis of the newcomers' own sub-inspectorates on practical training for the job; and
- a period of individual supervision by the tutor, beginning after the first three months, lasting a further five months and gradually decreasing in intensity. During this period, the new inspector is already in full operation as an inspector and bears full responsibility for his/her own actions.

³ Source: Hopes, 1991.

⁴ Source: Hopes, 1991.

Few countries, especially in the developing world, have an induction training system that is as comprehensive and efficient as in France or the Netherlands.

Examples

*Of the five Asian countries that participated in the IIEP project, only **Sri Lanka** provides similar long-term training of about 6-12 months, which is generally residential. In **Korea**, new supervisors are offered a non-compulsory four-week training course. In **Nepal**, prospective supervisors can take part in the B.Ed programme offered by the University, but this not at all a systematic arrangement, while in the other countries, **Bangladesh** and **Uttar Pradesh**, no systematic induction courses are available except for some brief orientation on general administrative procedures.*

*In the African countries that took part in the IIEP study, the situation is equally worrying. Brief formal induction training programmes (one or two weeks) exist in **Botswana** and **Zimbabwe** and used to exist in **Tanzania** until budget cuts led to their virtual disappearance. Even in the first two countries, not every newly appointed supervisor attends these courses.*

There are different reasons for the absence of systematic induction training: senior decision-makers' lack of interest in such training; lack of financial resources; lack of human resources – or personnel capable of organizing such training; and finally, lack of institutions with experience and expertise in this area.

Many countries informally rely on some mentor system, whereby a new recruit accompanies a more experienced supervisor for a few weeks. Supervisors generally consider such training both useful and cost-effective. It could be argued that the practitioners themselves offer the best training, but it could also be true that such training leads to a reproduction of existing practices and leaves little opportunity for a renewed vision.

In-service training

In-service training is essential if supervisors are to keep abreast of new trends in curriculum, teaching, learning strategies and school management. This training must be practice-oriented to ensure that supervisors are not cut off from what is going on in the classroom or end up operating on a wavelength different from that of the teachers they are supposed to supervise. Experience has also shown that in-service training can be a strong motivating factor.

Arrangements for in-service training vary from country to country. Where they exist, they are usually short-term courses organized on an ad-hoc basis by training institutions without a specific mandate in training supervisory staff. In most countries, some in-service training courses take place but they are not integrated within an overall capacity-building programme and do not focus sufficiently on supervision issues. Many of them are ad-hoc affairs related to the implementation of particular projects. Supervisors, however, ask for more training, particularly better-organized programmes with more relevant content. In many poorer countries, budgetary constraints have been especially hard on training, resulting in a significant number of staff not having the opportunity to attend courses recently.



Task

Can you identify some topics that practising supervisors might find most useful in an in-service course?

Completing the task: some hints

The topics you identify will probably be guided by two reflections: on the one hand, what are the main tasks of practising supervisors; on the other hand, what are the areas in which they have not had training recently. Indeed, it is important that in-service training be very practical in focus and not repeat what is already explained in pre-service courses. To ensure its relationship with the daily experiences of supervisors, it could be useful when defining an in-service training programme to interview or question a number of supervisors and ask them for the themes on which the training should focus. It is equally useful to invite a few (retired) supervisors who you feel are among the most competent to participate as resource persons in the training programme.

Support instruments

In addition to training, to some extent the performance of supervisors will also depend on the quality of the professional support instruments that are put at their disposal. Two such instruments of particular importance are supervision guides or manuals and a regular database to prepare and monitor the supervision work.

Question

What is the situation of your own country in this regard? Are guides or manuals available? Is there a rich database? Are these instruments used?

Supervision guides and manuals

While most countries have prepared pro-forma supervision reports, it remains true that this most basic instrument is not available everywhere. What is equally worrying is that more sophisticated and more useful instruments are far less prevalent.

Examples

*Among the countries that took part in the IIEP project, **Bangladesh** and **Mexico** have arguably the most complete instruments. Bangladeshi supervisors use a checklist containing about 150 items to be covered during a full inspection. However, in the eyes of many supervisors, the quality of the instrument leaves much to be desired. It lacks structure, contains too many items and is inconsistent with the report forms. In addition, due to the rather difficult working conditions, supervisors spend little time in schools and their visits are short. As a result, they tend to cover the checklist quickly, which reinforces the ritual nature of the visit.*

*The supervision manual in **Mexico** identifies five stages in the supervision process: planning, organization, integration, direction and control. Within each of these stages, ten 'areas' are to be covered: planning and programming, human resource management, material resource management, financial resource management, school control, support services, educational outreach, private schools, school organization and management of technical-pedagogical matters. The manual makes a further distinction between technical-administrative and technical-pedagogical functions. The 21 administrative functions of the supervisor are related to 26 such functions of the principal and nine of the teachers; the 12 pedagogical functions relate to 20 to be performed by the principal and 22 by the teachers. For each of these functions, the manual offers a series of suggestions for development-oriented activities as well as with whom such activities should be implemented and the appropriate period of the year to do so.*

*A useful and complete set of supervision tools exists in **England & Wales**, where OFSTED produced a 'Framework for the inspection of schools' and consequently a complete Handbook for the inspection of schools (of which the framework constitutes the first section). The handbook gives detailed guidance on how to proceed with inspection visits, including prototypes of questionnaires and other data collection instruments to be administered. Unlike other such manuals, copies of the framework are made available to schools and the general public can purchase copies of the handbook. This has helped in making the inspection process more effective in different ways: on the one hand, it allows schools to better prepare the inspection visit and to better understand its aims and procedures; on the other hand, it can be used by the schools themselves to start an internal evaluation. Some authors therefore consider that making public the inspection methods has strongly contributed to school improvement in recent times.*

There continues to be some discussion about the impact of these manuals on supervision work. Three positive points can be mentioned: they are undoubtedly helpful to the supervisors themselves and to the schools; they can turn the inspection visit into a more objective exercise, and, thirdly, by informing schools and teachers of the issues on which supervisors focus they lead to a more transparent process. Some teachers and supervisors have, however, been more critical and believe that such a framework or guide can become a straitjacket for the schools and the inspectors, as they are not sufficiently flexible. These instruments then turn the work of some, if not most supervisors into a ritual mechanic activity, devoid of personal reflection and initiative.

Database

One more expression of the policy neglect of supervisors manifests itself in the fact that supervisors seldom have access to an appropriate database concerning the performance and quality of schools and teachers. Indeed, very few supervisors have indicators at their disposal that would allow them to identify needy schools and teachers for more intense monitoring as well as prepare themselves for their visits. One reason can be the simple absence of such a database; another the lack of linkage and communication between those in charge of statistics and the supervision service.



Task

Which indicators on schools should be available in such a database for it to be useful to inspectors?

Completing the task: some hints

To complete this task, it is useful to return briefly to the first module, where we looked at the different factors having an impact on quality. These were divided into inputs – process – outputs.

Concerning inputs, we need basic information on numbers of pupils and teachers, but also on the quality of the teaching force (experience, qualifications, training). For process, you may think of indicators such as drop-out and promotion rates of students, turnover of teachers and the number of supervision visits recently received by the school. Obviously, exam results will be important, by school and in comparison with other schools within the same region or district.

Examples

*Very few supervisors are in the commendable situation of the **German** inspectors, who “have access to a wide range of statistical data, for example, on destinations after primary school, the percentage of children repeating a class, the number of educationally disadvantaged children in each institution, and socio-economic data on the school population”⁵.*

*In **England & Wales**, OFSTED has developed a nearly unique database on schools composed using school inspection reports. Parts of this database are published yearly in the Primary PANDA report (Performance and Assessment). This is an inspection tool designed to provide discussion points for inspection. It can also be used as a management tool for school self-evaluation. It provides the following basic information:*

- *school results on two key stages during primary education;*
- *the percentage of pupils achieving a given threshold at both stages; and*
- *the average performance of all pupils in the year group taking the test.*

In addition, in order to allow the user to interpret these results, the school’s results are compared with three benchmark categories: national averages; averages for ‘similar’ schools, namely schools with similar free school meal eligibility; averages for a second group of ‘similar’ schools, namely those with similar prior attainment.

The database also contains ‘value-added data’. These measures compare the relative progress made by pupils in the school between Key Stage 1 and 2 with the progress made by pupils nationally and pupils in ‘similar’ schools.

Other relevant information includes pupil mobility, the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, the percentage of pupils whose first language is not English and the percentage of pupils with special educational needs. In the 2003 report, there was an increased emphasis on performance over time in response to schools and inspectors requesting historic data to help them undertake trend analysis.

As was mentioned, the examples above are quite exceptional. In general, easily used data on schools are difficult to find. This is even more deplorable when it is realized that in many countries supervisors play a role in collecting data, only to send them immediately to the central authorities.

⁵ Source: OECD, 1995, p. 92.

Working and financial conditions

When examining working conditions, several factors must be considered:

- the availability and quality of offices;
- the availability and quality of office equipment;
- the availability and quality of support staff;
- the availability and quality of transport; and
- the housing situation and distance between home and office.

Of course, the material and human support services at the disposal of supervisors vary widely from country to country depending on the general level of development. In more developed countries, office facilities and transport, for example, are not much of a problem, whereas in some of the poorer developing countries, they may well be one of the main obstacles to the efficient implementation of supervisory work.

The following paragraphs present a resume of the situation in four countries of the Southern African region at the end of the 1990s.

Examples

*A suitable working environment implies, as a minimum, that supervisors have a separate office space and the basic tools to function efficiently. Probably the most important tools are a computer (or at least a typewriter), a filing cupboard and a telephone. From that point of view, and at the risk of simplifying, one could say that working conditions are distressing in **Tanzania**, acceptable in **Zimbabwe** and rather good in **Namibia** and **Botswana**.*

In the latter three countries, most staff have a separate office or at least sufficient office space. Most also have a telephone (quite a few have a fax), and a filing cabinet; an increasing number have a computer, although many, such as those posted at regional level in Botswana, have to make do with a typewriter. The contrast with Tanzania is striking. There, very few supervisors have what could be called an office. Most work in empty office space, alone, without equipment, without direct linkage to regional, zonal or central officers. This is not simply de-motivating, but seriously hampers the functioning of the service. The absence of a working typewriter or computer makes report-writing an excessively difficult endeavour and limits the time that can be spent on other more meaningful activities. It is somewhat startling that a relatively cheap item such as a filing cupboard is absent in so many offices. Filing reports, so that they can be used afterwards and referred to when necessary, is almost a pre-condition to ensuring a positive feedback to and follow-up of visits.

*But the most fundamental issue is of course transport. Recruiting officers and paying them salaries, without giving them the possibility to go out and visit schools, is hardly a good investment. All countries, but especially Tanzania and Zimbabwe, experience constraints in this regard. Not only is there a lack of vehicles, the available ones are badly maintained in some cases or used for other purposes than school visits. Ensuring the availability of transport is a priority for any policy aimed at improving supervision services. Attempting to 'save money' by cutting budgets across the board can be self-defeating. Cutting the transport availability of district staff condemns this personnel to remain in their offices, unemployed, without the possibility to visit schools, their very *raison d'être*.*

Faced with financial constraints, what alternatives are open to managers of supervision services to improve the working conditions of their personnel? This is undoubtedly an

issue that is difficult to solve. A claim should be made for a stronger financing of the service in tune with the policy-declarations that emphasize the role of quality monitoring. But as long as this is not the reality, a few strategies might be of use:

- all supervision offices should be provided at least with a set of basic equipment. What precisely should be considered 'basic' will depend very much on the context of each country, but undoubtedly some form of transport, an office with a telephone and a filing cabinet will be among those basic tools;
- the demands on supervisors should be adapted to take into account their resources. Asking supervisors to prepare reports on all visits and to distribute them widely makes little sense if these same supervisors have to work without a secretary, a computer and a photocopying machine;
- some rationalization of resource use might be possible. Two options seem to have some potential. There is a need to look carefully at the distribution of staff over the different levels and to determine whether some staff are not undertaking the same job, but are posted in different offices. In several countries, the decentralization of more supervisory tasks to the district level has not led to a cut in staff at the regional and central levels, although the workload at those levels has been lessened. A second strategy consists of asking supervisors to focus only on the most needy schools (an issue to which we will return in *Module 7*); and
- in budgets available to district offices, it could be very useful to clearly identify funds that are earmarked for school supervision and support in order to prevent them from disappearing into the overall budget of the office.

Finally, an improvement incentive to be managed properly relates to the financial conditions under which supervisors operate.

Again, salaries will differ with the development level of the country. As supervision and support personnel belong to the public service, their salaries are decided upon in accordance with its rules. Consequently, they should be analyzed within a comparative perspective in relation to salaries of other officers with comparable experience and qualifications. A particularly important reference point is the salaries of principals. Indeed, where some principals are better paid than some supervisors (as is the case in quite a few countries), supervisors may find it difficult to exercise their authority and leadership.

In the Asian, African and Latin American countries that participated in the IIEP project, salaries did generally not seem to be a major issue. Although supervisors are not always happy with their salaries, they seldom list them as a major complaint.



Lessons learned



Question:

The expected outcomes of this module were that you would be able to identify the management decisions which have an impact on supervision staff and help to improve their competence and motivation. You should have an insight into the different options concerning recruitment. The module also discussed the characteristics of efficient career development, evaluation, training and support systems. It commented on the importance of working and financial conditions. Summarize briefly what you learnt by studying this module. Does it compare with what follows?

Staff management decisions relate to various issues. The most important are: recruitment criteria and procedures; career development and evaluation; training and support; financial and working conditions. It is important that these different elements are inspired by a similar vision of the role of the supervision service and of the profile of a successful supervisor.

Most countries want supervisors to have classroom and school management experience and robust qualifications. These demands are not always easy to combine and it may be necessary to focus on one, e.g. experience. Few countries pay much attention to human relation skills, though they are very important. If they have to be considered, there may be a need to change recruitment procedures and also contractual arrangements.

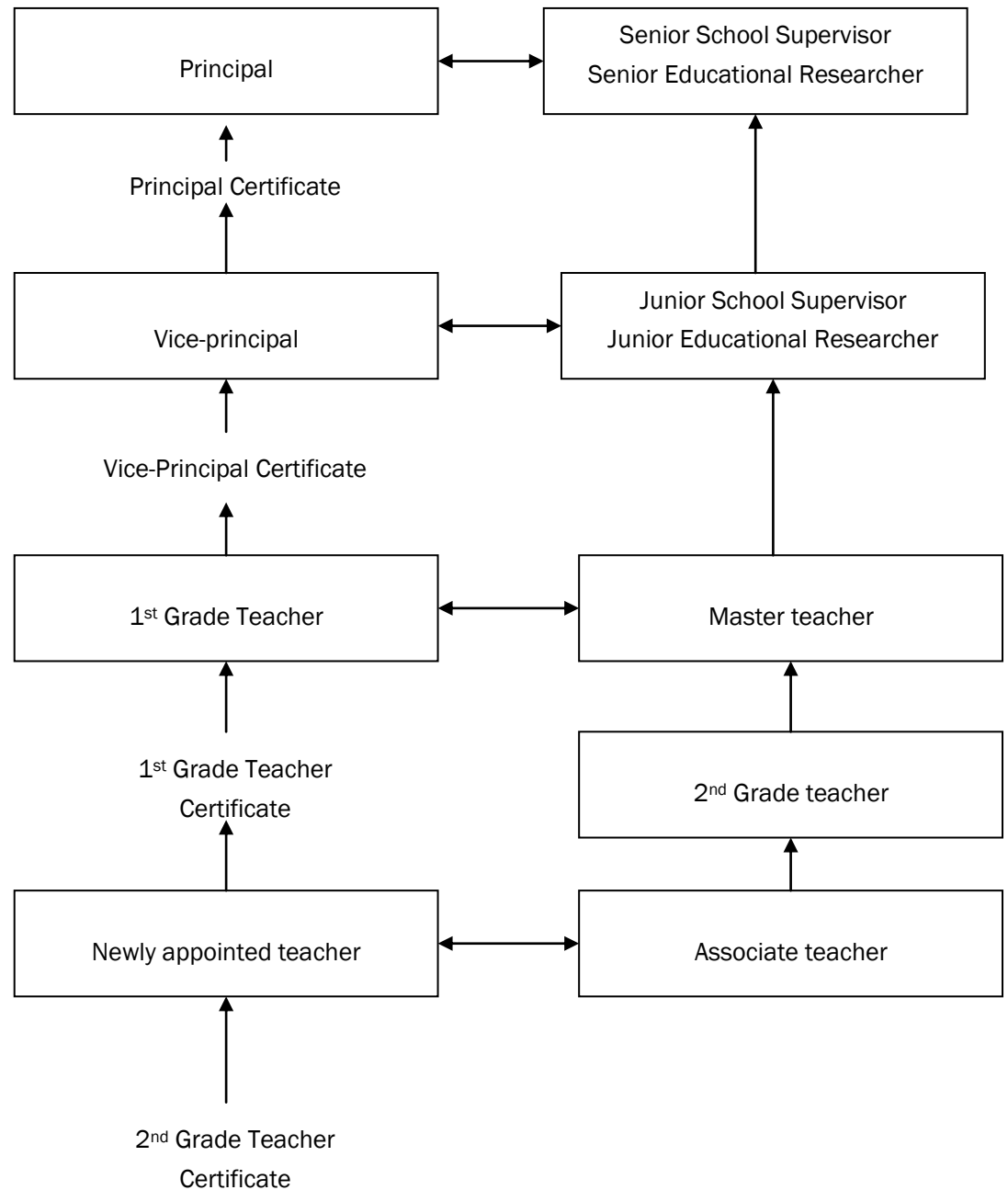
In general, promotion opportunities for supervisors are limited, which may be a source of de-motivation. Some countries have allowed a regular shift from teaching or principal post to supervision and back. It is crucial that evaluation mechanisms go beyond a simple administrative assessment and take a wider look at the performance and impact of supervisors. Evaluation and promotion should be closely linked.

Training is useful to improve the skills of supervisors, and works as a source of motivation. Few countries have the resources to organize systematic induction training. In-service training programmes are useful, especially when they are of immediate

relevance to the supervisors' needs and are integrated into a long-term program. Providing supervisors with guidelines, manuals and school data is a fairly straightforward and very useful way to supporting their action in the field.

Many supervision services face severe financial constraints. There is no short-term solution. Many services may be obliged to reformulate their mandate and focus on the schools most in need of their intervention.

Annex 1: The career ladder of supervisors and school managers in Korea



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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