

Unit 8: Management of Change

INTRODUCTION

Nothing is permanent in this world except change. The environment is always changing and consequently organisations keep changing too. Organisations are formed by society to cope with the demands that arise when changes bring about incongruence between society's expectations and reality. When the environment changes, society's means of coping with it become obsolete, hence the need for adaptation. In adapting to the changing environment, society has to develop new strategies, hence organisational change.

Change is an inevitable phenomenon. It cannot be prevented since it is environmentally driven. For it to be meaningful though, it should be controlled, directed and managed.

Managing change involves:

- understanding the forces of change and therefore being able to recognise the need for change
- understanding the factors that may work against change
- recognising the agents of change and how they bring about change
- developing a clear perception of one's role in the change process
- clearly outlining the intended goals of the change
- developing a plan with clear strategies for effecting change
- effecting the plan
- continuously evaluating and redirecting the change process towards the intended goals.

Inspectors, as managers and facilitators of educational change should understand what change involves and be able to control and direct the process so that it may lead to development. They are well placed to manage change because of their contacts with both the schools as organisations, and the government, or whoever is a provider of resources for education.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, the inspectors will be able to:

- describe change
- identify agents of change
- identify need for change in education
- describe the role of inspectors in facilitating change
- describe the school development plan as a change management tool
- assist in the drafting of a school development plan

DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE

Generally, change means alteration or modification. In an educational context, change could be in administration, curriculum, policy, structure, technology etc. Often, change in one aspect of education, results in changes in others. Educational change can manifest itself at a localised level of a school or at a national level.

Activity 8a

In what areas of education have you experienced changes lately?

COMMENT

Change is an integral part of development, therefore it is inevitable.

AGENTS OF CHANGE IN EDUCATION

Changes in education may be prompted by some of the following agents:

- **Government Legislation**

New laws governing education are often passed by a country's legislature. The resulting changes are left to the educationists to implement.

- **Societal Expectations**

According to Banks, (1976), education is a means of upward social mobility. Schools are therefore there to provide members of the society with the necessary skills and knowledge to cope with the environment. If society perceives the schooling system as not living up to its expectations this creates a need for change.

- **Employment and Labour Requirements**

Schools are a basic training ground for a country's labour force. Thus the school system has to respond to changing employment and labour requirements of a country.

- **Technological Developments**

Technological innovations have been very rapid in the latter part of the 20th century and are to continue into the next. The schools must keep up with the trend. They should take advantage of modern technology to enhance instructional methods. New technology dictates new ways of doing things, thus bringing about change.

- **International Relations**

Contact with the outside world may reveal a need to change national education systems. The "global village" phenomenon has created the need for international citizenship which makes new demands upon education.

- **Innovations in Teaching**

The science of teaching is improving and new methods and techniques are being developed. Teachers should learn and adapt to the latest innovations in order to remain effective.

- **Inspection Reports**

Inspection reports reveal both good and bad practice which promotes or hinders learning. Recommendations for improvement, when implemented, become agents of change at national, regional or school level.

- **Research**

As a scientific inquiry into a situation, research explores issues seen to be important by the researchers, and change often comes as a result of the implementation of research recommendations.

- **Demographics**

Changes in population patterns are as old as humankind. Since education is meant to serve people, there has to be correlation between population dynamics and educational reforms. Such changes could be in the size and/or the composition of the population served by the school. These could necessitate a change in the school ethos, infrastructure, curriculum and so on.

Activity 8b

List changes in your education system which you think were brought about by each of the agents identified above.

COMMENT

Some agents of change are often more forceful than others. You may find that in your area some of the agents identified are dormant.

HOW THE NEED FOR CHANGE CAN BE IDENTIFIED

- Planned change is proactive. Organisations are set up to carry out specific functions and if they no longer play that role then the need for change becomes apparent. A critical analysis of the aims of an organisation i.e. an understanding of the purpose for which an organisation was established, will enable one to judge if it serves its purpose or not.
- Changes do not only occur in education as a result of under-performance. Since change is about development, it follows that success and the realisation of potential for improvement may also act as a driving force for change. The attainment of aims may in itself trigger the urge to strive for improvement and excellence.
- Evaluating the level of attainment of goals/aims assists in gauging the performance gap and thus determines the extent and nature of change that should be implemented. The change that is necessary could be that of strategy, structural adjustment or a total shift in the focus of the organisation.
- The need for change may be identified through many other ways such as educational research, recognition of new technology and recognition of potential to improve.
- During the colonial era, the African society considered the purpose of education as largely to provide only basic literacy and numeracy skills. The post-colonial era however heralded the need for technical and professional skills for the sustenance of the fledgeling African economies, hence the societal expectations of education changed. The need for a change in the quality of the education service was identified.

The development of an education policy should normally follow wide community consultations so that the policy should portray the societal perception. The ministries responsible for education should have units/divisions of research and statistics whose duty should be to collect and analyse demographic data and recommend appropriate educational policies.

Activity 8c

Imagine you are engaged as a consultant to advise your government on the status of education in a particular institution and to recommend new institutional policies.

How would you determine the necessary changes?

COMMENT

The identification of need for change is a systematic process. It involves a development of clear understanding of the aims of the education process, evaluating and determining whether the aims are being achieved or not, identifying constraints and other influential factors.

HOW ADOPTION OF CHANGE CAN BE ENCOURAGED

Some organisations prefer stable conditions in which activities and outcomes are predictable. As such, unless circumstances bring about change, such organisations would otherwise not change. Most of the resistance to change is usually from within the organisation while forces for change are often external to the organisation. For change to occur smoothly therefore, its need has to be understood and appreciated. Its mode and process should be clear and well-facilitated.

Adequate information about the change is crucial. This information should include the aim of the change, anticipated outcomes, benefit of the change, strategies to be implemented in effecting the change, and resources and resource base for the change.

To encourage adoption of change, it is important also to:

- involve people who will effect the change in the planning for implementation so that they may own the change
- give people time to internalise the changes
- rebuild self-esteem, and confidence in people who could be feeling inadequate because of the changes
- make every participant in the change process a winner, so that the benefits of the change can be seen to be relevant and essential by all
- retrain and or develop those responsible for change since it may bring demands on people for which they may not have expertise, a situation that would threaten their core skills and competencies
- ensure availability of necessary resources so that the change may not be seen as creating demands which are beyond the means and scope of the implementers.

NB: The ability to handle resistance to change will depend on one's awareness of the sources of the resistance.

Activity 8d

Reflect on your experience as a teacher.

Think of a change, either at the school level or national level which was not well-accepted despite its good intentions.

What could you have done to make it more acceptable?

COMMENT

Understanding the nature of organisations is critical in change implementation. For change to be acceptable, the organisation needs a clear justification for why it should shift from a stable condition to a situation that may disturb the *status quo*. Information flow, and the involvement of people in planning change, are critical to the removal of uncertainties and suspicions.

FACTORS THAT MILITATE AGAINST CHANGE

Resistance to change is not always a conscious and deliberate effort. It is characterised by lack of enthusiasm which may be a consequence of many factors, some of which include:

- **Fear of the unknown.** Since change means delving into new experiences, there might be fear of scepticism about its effects.
- **Lack of information.** Implementers of change need a lot of information about the intended aims, benefits, resource implications and the implementation strategies.
- **Misinformation.** Misconceptions about a change usually develop where incorrect information is given so that people's view of the change becomes distorted, and the benefits fail to be perceived.
- **Threat to the core skills/competences.** A new development may mean that ways of doing things change, rendering the learned skills and knowledge obsolete. Unless there are immediate retraining and inservicing opportunities, resistance may occur.
- **Threat to status.** Some changes diminish the size of organisations, and since size may relate to status, the change may be seen to be a threat.
- **Threat to power base.** Some changes may be seen to reduce the influence an organisation or individual may have in society.
- **No perceived benefits.** Where the benefits are not clear, the change will be seen as an unnecessary disturbance to established and reliable ways of doing things.
- **Low-trust organisational climate.** This is where there is mistrust within the organisation such that any move, even when it is seen as a positive one, is suspected to be a trap or bait.
- **Poor relationships.** Where they abound, information flow is often inadequate.
- **Fear of failure.** People may fear to try because they are not certain of the outcomes.
- **Fear of looking stupid** because of unfamiliar procedures.

- **Custom bound.** Changes which infringe on traditions and custom are seen as a threat to identity. Not only does this refer to societal way of life but even personal traditions and customs.
- **Reluctance to let go.** Developments which are seen as narrowing one's scope of operation may be resisted for fear of losing one's role within the organisation.
- **Peer group norms.** Peer groups develop norms which characterise them, on the basis of which members will want to be identified. Unless the whole group's perception changes, individuals may not easily adopt a change.

Activity 8e

With reference to the change discussed in Activity 8d, why do you think the change was not well accepted?

COMMENT

There are naturally two opposing forces in organisations, i.e. those for change and those against change. The forces for change are normally driven by the environmental changes. The need to adapt will be felt by those in favour of change in order to maintain the usefulness of the organisation in solving the society's problems with the environment. The forces against change are usually internal, driven by the preference for stability in an organisation and the fear of the unknown and its related threats.

THE ROLE OF INSPECTORS IN FACILITATING CHANGE

While the need to provide all necessary resources to institutions for the purpose of providing quality education may be recognised, various constraints often undermine the process. The inspector role is crucial in that they monitor to see if all learners have equal access and opportunity to quality education. The inspectors identify good practices which promote quality education and disseminate these to other institutions. Where quality is found to be compromised, inspectors identify constraints and endeavour to have them removed. Inspectors therefore, facilitate change by giving advice to the government, and all key players on what immediate and long term developments they believe are necessary. The inspectors become vehicles of change in that they are a communication channel between institutions and the providers of education facilities.

The inspectors' role in facilitating a change process may be summarised as:

- identifying implementers of change and therefore providing them with relevant information
- disseminating relevant information to implementers and making sure the nature of change is understood
- ensuring provision of necessary resources to enable implementation of change
- training/retraining and/or inservicing the implementers so that they may have the necessary expertise
- continuously evaluating and re-directing the change process towards its intended goals.

Activity 8f

Suppose a new education policy is introduced in your country, how would you facilitate its implementation?

COMMENT

Inspectors are a communication channel between the implementers of change and the government, or whoever is the initiator of change in education. They, therefore, play a critical role in determining the need for change, directing change and making it understood by the implementers, and providing for its implementation.

THE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AS A CHANGE MANAGEMENT TOOL

The school is the basic unit of change in an educational setting. The school development plan, therefore, is an important part of the process of change for the purpose of realising the school's aims.

(a) THE FOCUS OF THE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The school development plan should seek to improve the capacity of a school to achieve the educational aims of the country and more specifically, it should focus on the aims and values of the school. The key areas that the plan should focus on include:

- raising standards of pupil achievement
- the development of the school curriculum and its assessment
- staff appointment and development
- enhancement of the school's organisation and management
- development of the school's premises by way of increasing accommodation capacity, renovations, landscaping, expansion of the infrastructure etc
- improvement of the school's financial position by fund raising and proper accounting
- upholding community values especially those of parents

(b) ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

A school development plan has a greater chance of success if it has the following attributes. It should:

- have a small set of realistic and prioritised objectives
- be time-bound and there should be a timescale for achievement of each of its specified objectives; a medium term plan of two to three years would be ideal for most schools
- spell out the responsibility of all stakeholders individually and collectively and is important that they all should understand and consent to their roles

- outline the resources required so that the quantity, source and management of the resources come out clearly in the plan
- be presented in a format that can be easily followed by most people in the school community.

(c) THE PLAN DRAFTING PROCESS

The following considerations are central to the school development plan drafting process:

- Where is the school at the time of planning? (current situation)
A systematic situational analysis has to be carried out to establish the current status of the school. It is only then that the school's priorities can be positively identified.
- Where does the school want to go? (aims)
It is only when the objectives are identified and prioritised that it will be clear to everybody where the plan should lead.
- How does the school get there? (strategy)
Having established the current situation and having set the objectives, the ultimate phase of the plan is to define the method of implementation including all intermediate steps.

Activity 8g

"It is very difficult for those outside the schools to improve the quality of provision within them It is the quality of the teachers themselves and their commitment to change that determines the quality of teaching and the quality of school improvement. Teachers are, on the whole, poor implementers of other people's ideas." (Rudduck, 1991).

In the light of the above comment do you think as inspectors you have a role to play in school development planning?

COMMENT

The essence of school development plans is that they are school-based. It is, therefore, proper that they should be conceived and implemented by those within the school communities. As outsiders, the role of the inspectors is to equip teachers with the skills to devise effective school development plans, and to help headteachers to monitor their plans.

HOW TO DRAFT A SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This could be based on the "C.R.E.A.T.E." model (Ministry of Education, Botswana, 1995)

- Construction of a shared vision
- Reviewing the current situation
- Establishing priorities
- Action planning
- Taking and monitoring the action
- Evaluation

(a) Construction of a school vision

School aims should arise from a firmly held vision of the nature and purpose of education. Such aims should be established in consultation with staff, management committee (board) and parents. They should be specified in a mission statement which in turn should appear in the development plan (Drake, 1993).

(b) Reviewing the current situation

There should be a concise audit of all the focus areas mentioned in (a) (page 65). Such an audit should include major developments, if any, in recent times in each of the areas. This review will form the basis for prioritisation, so it has to be evaluative.

“It would be useful here if the school would indicate which processes they are finding most effective in evaluating their work and who within the school acts as (an) evaluator(s).” (MoE, Botswana, 1995).

(c) Establishing priorities

The audit should reveal which areas need most attention and also the requirements for each area. Based on these, the objectives of the development plan can be arranged in order of priority. It is this order which will guide the timescale and resource allocation.

(d) Action planning

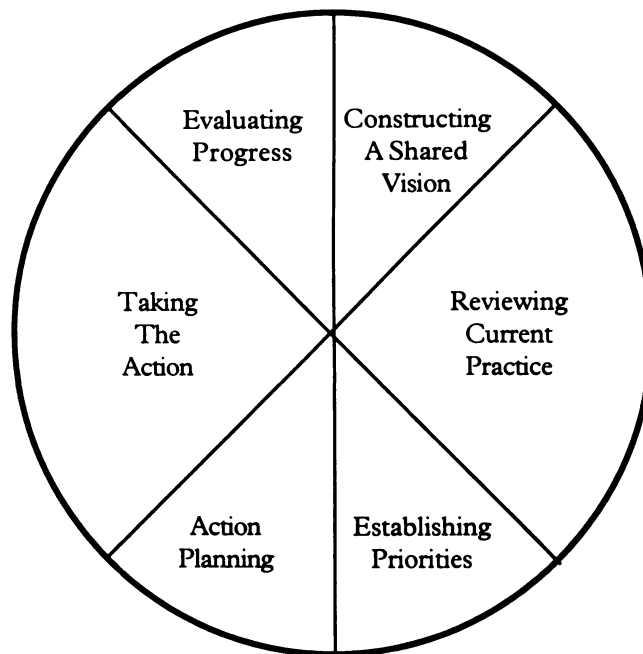
- (i) provides a schedule showing how implementation of the school plan is to be effected
- (ii) helps to clarify aspects of the plan that may be unclear
- (iii) identifies personnel within the school with tasks intended to meet the needs of the plan
- (iv) breaks up the plan period into time frames within which action on various aspects of the plan is to be taken
- (v) results in a planning sheet which normally has columns that address the following:
 - objective
 - activities - addressing the success criteria
 - date by which action should be taken
 - who initiates action
 - resourcing
 - success criteria

(e) Taking and monitoring the action

When an action plan has been made and approved, then it can be implemented with regular progress checks to monitor success and failures.

(f) Evaluation

The agreed success criteria as established have to be put to use at the end of the plan period. Below is a continuous school development plan cycle based on the C.R.E.A.T.E. model:



Activity 8h

Take one of your schools as a case study. What *three* priorities would you set to ensure effective change in the school. Action plan each one.

COMMENT

Check that you have completed each of the columns in d (v). Most school plans are weak on identifying costs/resources and in stating success criteria for monitoring purposes.

SUMMARY

In this unit you were asked to consider change in an educational context. Usually change is not spontaneous, it is triggered by specific agents some of which were mentioned in this unit. As managers of education, inspectors should have the basic skills to identify the need for change, initiate it and facilitate it. Precautions should be taken before initiating change to encourage its adoption by all role players. Some hints on how to do so were given. The ability to identify factors that act against change is vital and should not be left to chance. Inspectors/advisors are in a strategic position in the facilitation of change. It is clear that, internationally, the school development plan is being adopted and recognised as the most effective tool for managing educational change.

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