

Preface

Effective school inspection and advisory support is the sine qua non for ensuring quality in education. Owing to inadequate professional preparation and a serious lack of field support, many developing countries still use conventional methods of school inspection. Inspection is often limited to monitoring implementation of the school curriculum and education policies, and rarely are inspection findings used to inform the preparation of staff development strategies and school improvement programmes. It has also been observed that many programmes which aim at improving school inspection have tended to follow a reactionary approach such as creating more posts for the school inspectors, providing limited logistical support to enable inspectors to visit schools, or sending them overseas for training.

Recruitment and selection of school inspectors is still largely based on seniority, academic qualifications and some limited teaching. That the majority of school inspectors are recruited mainly from the ranks of classroom teachers rather than experienced headteachers has tended to present problems for headteachers in schools.

The rationale for the SADC-TMS School Inspectors' Training and Support (ITS) programme is therefore based on the recognition that the task of improving instructional work in schools and raising the performance of both teachers and pupils rests with all the key actors in the education enterprise including: headteachers, teachers, parents and school inspectors/advisors. School inspectors/advisors must therefore be carefully recruited and selected, and above all be well trained to perform their functions effectively in accordance with set norms.

Following the adoption of the ADEA Working Group on the Teaching Profession Work programme for 1995-97 at the Teacher Management and Support (TMS) Review Meeting held in Accra, Ghana in July 1995, eight Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe) met on the fringes of the Accra meeting to initiate a regional plan of action on improving school inspection and advisory services. The global objective of the regional plan was to improve the quality of basic education through the provision of a structured local training programme for school inspectors/advisors as well as on-going professional support. The regional TMS Working Group met in Botswana (1995); Zimbabwe (1995,1996); Zambia (1997); Lesotho (1997); and Namibia (1998) to identify priority training needs for basic school inspectors; to develop needed training modules for school inspectors/advisors; to test the training modules in all participating countries; and to conduct the first training of trainers for school inspectors in the region in Namibia in February 1998. The exercise has made a significant contribution towards local and regional capacity building in resource materials development, developing confidence among professionals and providing resource materials for training:

- Module 1 A Trainer's Guide for Newly Appointed School Inspectors
- Module 2 A Self-Study Guide for Newly Appointed School Inspectors
- Module 3 A Trainer's Guide for Inset of Serving School Inspectors
- Module 4 A Self-Study Guide for Serving School Inspectors

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Finally, in the background the consultants and lead resource persons, and the Chief Programme Officer provided excellent technical advice and management of the programme: Mr. Stephen Ngwenya (Zimbabwe), Chairperson, SADC-TMS Programme; Ms Kgomoitso Motlotle (Botswana), Secretary, SADC-TMS programme for the effective leadership of the SADC-TMS programme; Mr. John Hilsum, Consultant, UK; Ms Patricia Murgatroyd, Consultant, UK; and resource persons: Mr. Rogers Sisimayi, Zimbabwe; Mr. Geoffrey Tambulukani, Zambia; Mrs. Florence Stoneham, Botswana; Mr. Reuben Motswakae, Botswana, Ms Ntsebe Kokome, Lesotho; Mr. Alfred Ilukena, Namibia. We thank them all. Responsibility for this work within the Education Department of the Commonwealth Secretariat rested with Dr. Henry Kaluba.

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