

Unit 13: School Development Planning

INTRODUCTION

Schools in many parts of the world are finding it helpful to have a development plan to assist them to manage change and many SADC countries are requiring schools to produce and use development plans.

This self-study unit has been designed to inform serving inspectors about the main principles of school development planning and implementation, and to raise issues about inspectors' roles in helping schools to raise pupil achievement through development planning.

Inspectors are playing a very crucial role in assisting schools with these plans, which are becoming the main tool through which schools are seeking to improve performance.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this unit, you will have an understanding of the process of school development planning and will be able to assist schools at appropriate stages in the planning process. You should be able to:

- explain the importance of a school development plan
- identify personnel who should participate in developing school plans
- select the content of the plan
- describe the main stages of the plan
- review and monitor the progress of the plan
- evaluate the plan
- report progress to the stakeholders.

WHY IS A SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN USEFUL?

This first question has proved to be the key to gaining ownership and commitment of staff and the school community, to planning. If people know and understand the reasons for their school plan, they are more willing to be involved and contribute to the development of the school.

We suggest that it is helpful to ask the school community to revisit this question once a year when they are reviewing their plan.

Activity 13a

Consider some of the reasons why schools in your district will find it helpful to have development plans. How can they also be helpful to the inspectorate?

COMMENT:

Here are some of the reasons why school development planning is proving to be useful:

- it helps the school to focus on raising pupil achievement
- it helps the school to achieve its mission and aims

- it can help the head and school committee to have a comprehensive and coordinated approach to managing the curriculum, staff and resources
- it provides an opportunity for the school committee, head, staff and parents to participate in the development of the school as a team
- it helps the team to focus on common goals
- it provides pupils and teachers with learning targets
- it links staff development to school curriculum development.

Besides indicating the staff development needs, school development plans can also be useful to inspectors by providing clear information about strengths, weaknesses and the priorities of a school.

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN PREPARING THE PLAN?

For the development plan to be effective, all those who have an interest in the school should be involved at various stages of its preparation. These interest groups are often called “stakeholders”.

They include:

- the inspector
- the headteacher
- the deputy head
- the pupils
- the teachers
- the support staff
- the school committee
- the parents
- the owners of the school or responsible authorities

In some countries it is mandatory that schools have school committees with elected members from the parents of pupils in each year group. These committees have overall responsibility for managing and developing the school, including forward planning.

It is also very important that the pupils are involved since the development plan affects them directly as it attempts to raise their level of achievement. Just how they are involved will depend on their age. Experience from elsewhere in the world suggests that if the learning targets are shared with the pupils, then great gains in learning can be made.

WHAT SHOULD THE PLAN CONTAIN?

The plan should contain all the important information about the school. This includes:

- the school motto
- the school mission
- the school aims which should relate to the national aims for education
- a description of the context of the school and the community it serves
- school priorities, which have been arrived at through discussions with the stakeholders, and which span a given time period
- action plans for the first year of the plan
- information about the school, such as the number of pupils.

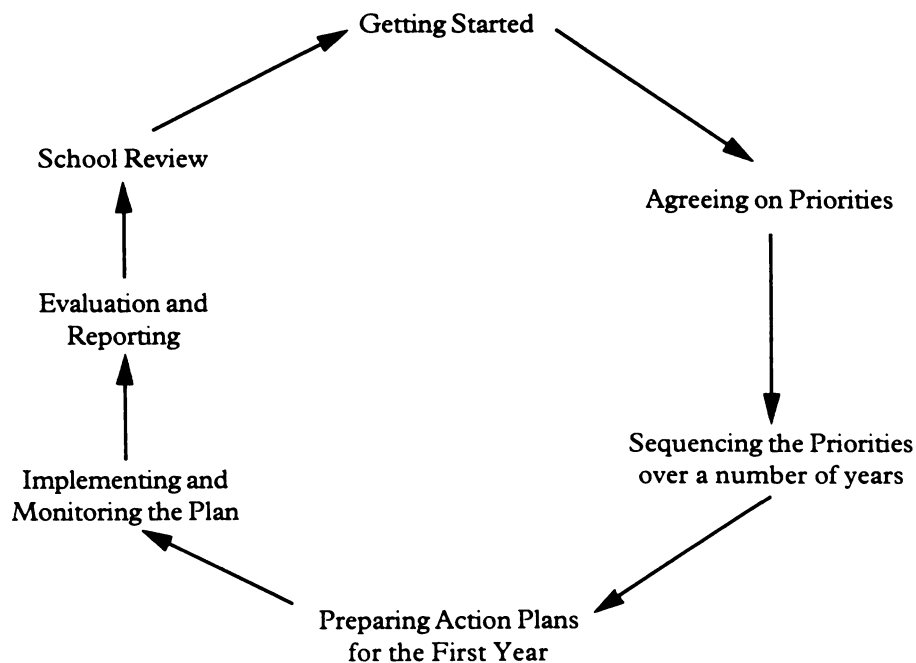
NB. It is important that in deciding on the contents of the plan, consultations are held at various levels with all interest groups to create a sense of ownership and to ensure the sustainability of the plan. It is important that the plan is publicised widely.

Activity 13b

Consider whether plans in your district have a structure such as this. If not, do you think that this kind of structure would be useful for the school plans in your district?

HOW SHOULD THE PLAN BE PREPARED?

The stages in a planning cycle can be summarised in a diagram



Preparing the plan involves the head and school committee in the following main stages:

- getting started with the school committee
- reviewing to identify strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- agreeing on and scheduling priorities over several years to build on strengths or remedy weaknesses.
- preparing action plans for each priority for the first year

Other stages in the cycle are about implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting progress to the school committee. All these stages are explored later in this unit.

Activity 13c

Schools often need the assistance of their inspector at various stages in the school development plan cycle. Consider at which stages your help will be required and how you will offer assistance to the headteacher and school committee.

COMMENT

It is important that inspectors resist the temptation to become over involved and by so doing, disempower the main stakeholders. However, experience has shown that inspectors can make valuable contributions to school planning at the review stage by providing an external objective view of strengths and weaknesses, especially if this is backed up with evidence from inspection.

This same objectivity can be applied to the monitoring stage when schools often find the presence of an external person helpful in keeping to deadlines as well as keeping the plan on track.

At the point of evaluation, inspectors can make independent judgements about the achievement of targets, and contribute to discussions about the success of the plan and next steps.

Some schools may need guidance during the implementation phase but generally this should be left completely to the school.

STAGES IN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

STAGE ONE - GETTING STARTED.

Now that we have considered the key questions it is right to look at each of the stages in school development planning, the first of which is 'Getting Started'.

The most important issue in getting started is ensuring participation by the stakeholders who must be convinced that :

- the plan will enhance the quality of learning offered to the pupils
- the plan will strengthen partnerships and unity of purpose among the stakeholders
- this partnership will enable the school to achieve its aims.
- the action plan will be implemented

It is suggested that the headteacher should work, firstly, with a small sub-group of the school committee to convince them of the need for a school plan; then with the full committee who should propose to the PTA that they too should be involved.

Another point to note is that there should be a proper system of consultation and collaboration, so that the views of all stakeholders are considered.

Gaining an Overview of the School

When forming any plan, it is always helpful to know the point from which you are starting, as well as having a 'picture' of the community which the school serves. For example, how many children are currently in the school and how many pre-school children there are in each year. This will give an indication of whether the school will grow in numbers or will shrink. This in turn helps the head to plan staffing and the number of classrooms needed.

To gain this overview, the school committee should be familiar with:

- the school mission and aims
- policies of government through the Ministry of Education
- recent inspection reports
- examination results
- attendance and drop-out rates
- views held about the school by interest groups.

It is suggested that it will be helpful, if the head and committee do a SWOT analysis of the school. This has the purpose of helping to identify **Strengths** as well as **Weaknesses** to remedy, **Opportunities** to exploit, and **Threats** to counter if the school is to flourish.

An example:

- a strength might be - good examination performance.
- a weakness might be - poor parental support for the school.
- an opportunity might be - taking part in a SADC workshop.
- a threat might be - re-location or migration of families
- a completed SWOT analysis of a school is included in the case study of SADC Secondary School.

CREATING AND SHARING A MISSION AND MOTTO

The research on effective schools, throughout the world, shows that one of the characteristics of successful schools is that they have a strong mission which is understood by the whole school community. The mission is often expressed in one or two sentences e.g.

The mission of SADC Secondary School is to provide high quality teaching to enable pupils to be knowledgeable in all curriculum subjects, and to establish a positive, friendly atmosphere in which all pupils can achieve success.

The mission statement of any school should reflect the national goals for education.

What the Mission Does is More Important than the Actual Phrase.

The mission helps to create the atmosphere or ethos of the school.
It sets standards of pupil behaviour.

It provides an overall purpose for the school and helps people to identify with it.

It provides the overall criteria for evaluating the success of the school.
If a school mission is to be owned and shared, it must be created with the stakeholders.

Many schools have a school motto which summarises the mission. The motto is a short, memorable phrase which provides daily inspiration to staff and pupils e.g.

Knowledge, Friendship and Success for All

The main leadership role of the head is to keep the mission and motto in the forefront of the minds of pupils and staff so that it is the guiding light of the school.

Activity 13d

If you were to inspect SADC Secondary School whose mission and motto are given above, how would you gather evidence to judge whether the school is achieving its mission?

COMMENT

One way of undertaking the activity would be to break the mission statement into component parts and then set up an inspection plan to gather evidence about the

achievement of each part. Some evidence will be found in classrooms, other evidence will be contained in the behaviour of pupils, the examination results and in the involvement of the community.

Agreeing on School Aims

All schools should make reference to the national goals for education when deciding what their own aims should be. If a school is to make a contribution to the achievement of these national goals, then the aims of the individual school must relate to the national goals.

The aims should also underpin the school mission and help achieve it e.g. the mission on page 95 is partly about friendship.

A school aim which relates to this and a national goal could be:

To provide education that will foster a sense of social responsibility and cooperation among pupils.

Examples of other aims are given in the development plan of SADC Secondary School.

Schools are different. Each school may, therefore, wish to have aims which reflect their individuality. Church schools, for instance, will probably have aims for pupils in religious areas.

Just as with the mission and motto, the aims must be created and agreed with the school community. They should be revisited from time to time to check that they still wish to achieve these aims in their school.

STAGE TWO - SCHOOL REVIEW

REVIEWING THE CURRICULUM

The following points are important when reviewing the curriculum:

- whether it relates to the national goals
- whether the actual curriculum which is delivered matches what is planned
- whether all pupils are achieving, whatever their ability.

Pupil achievement is central in any curriculum review.

The outcome of the review should be one or two curriculum priorities which should form the heart of the school development plan.

Activity 13e

You have been approached by one of your schools which would like to review its curriculum.

How would you assist the school to do this?

COMMENT:

Inspectors can assist in a school review by:

- planning the review with the headteacher
- setting criteria for the review
- making the headteacher aware of national goals

- undertaking classroom observation
- looking at standards of work in pupils' exercise books
- analysing examination performance
- training staff in classroom observation
- providing reports to the headteacher.

Reviewing Staffing and Staff Development of Teachers

This review should be undertaken to find out if there is a match or mis-match in staff numbers, or staff expertise, in the curriculum area which is to be a priority in the school development plan.

The review should target the following areas:

- whether there are sufficient teachers
- whether they are adequately trained
- the level of motivation
- the training needs
- whether the teachers are aware of their responsibilities as defined in the Teachers Commission Act and the Code of Conduct for Teachers.

It is important that the headteacher has all the most important information on the staff.

Where the review indicates that in-service training is required, the training selected must:

- relate to the curriculum priority in the school plan
- contribute to the professional development of the teacher
- allow for a fair allocation of training opportunities among teachers
- require all teachers to disseminate new knowledge in the form of school-based training
- identify the most appropriate form of staff development available.

Forms of staff development available include:

- school based training
- in-service courses
- seminars
- workshops
- subject panels
- examination marking
- training from Teacher Resource Centre (TRC) tutors/resource tutors

Reviewing Learning Resources

The main purpose of doing a review of learning resources is to discover what the level of provision is like in the curriculum area identified as a priority in the curriculum review. The review team will have to prepare an action plan to ensure that the teachers have the learning materials to improve the achievement levels in the subject area selected.

The review should consider the following aspects:

- What is the level of provision?
- How are the materials being used?
- Are they effective with pupils?
- What is the level of expenditure and is it adequate?
- Can the expenditure be justified?
- What is the policy on sharing resources?
- What is the official policy on procurement of materials?

One role of inspectors is to make available Learning Resources Review Formats to headteachers who should then involve their teachers in doing the review.

Reviewing Buildings

The quality of school buildings , their presence or absence, will affect pupil learning and achievement. They should therefore be reviewed and action plans formed as part of the school plan.

The head should be familiar with the requirements of the Public Health Act which specifies the standards expected of school buildings in terms of:

- minimum health standards
- rules and regulations governing their provision.

Extracts from The Public Health Act should be made available to headteachers. The head should ensure the provision of separate sanitation facilities for females and males.

Provision of appropriate facilities for handicapped children and teachers should be considered.

The head should also be aware of building regulations and by-laws which regulate materials used for construction, dimensions of classrooms, ventilation, and provision of fire escapes.

NB. Provision of buildings must relate to the school population which comprises pupils, teachers and support staff. Building dimensions should conform to national standards and space requirement per pupil.

Activity 13f

Review the documentation you have available to advise headteachers on all aspects of school review above. Ensure that you obtain any missing Acts, bye-laws or regulations.

STAGE THREE - AGREEING ON PRIORITIES

The headteacher and school committee should list the needs which emerge from the curriculum review and prioritize them.

They should do the same for the other areas they have reviewed, bearing in mind that staffing and staff development, resources and building needs should be closely related to the curriculum priorities.

In order to prioritize, the head and school committee may need to rank criteria such as urgency and cost.

Action plans, for each priority, should be formed by a small sub-committee and presented to the full committee for approval.

NB. It should be remembered that it is important to involve and consult all stakeholders in the review and prioritizing process.

STAGE FOUR - SEQUENCING THE PRIORITIES OVER AN AGREED NUMBER OF YEARS

It is important that schools take a long-term view of development, and sequence action on priorities over more than one year in order to avoid overloading staff. The committees must give time for adequate preparation and make best use of available funding. When deciding on the sequence of priorities, schools will need to consider the urgency of each priority and also their capacity to take action on each priority.

Some priorities will run on from year to year and will therefore need to be scheduled for two or three years. An example of this can be found in the SADC Secondary School Plan.

STAGE FIVE - PREPARING ACTION PLANS FOR THE FIRST YEAR

Formulating Action Plans

By this stage, the need for a school plan will have been agreed on by the stakeholders, and they will have agreed on the first priority to be included in the plan. The next step is to write action plans with a small group from the staff and committee.

Each priority should be discussed and actions agreed in terms of:

- what should be developed - setting targets for improvement
- tasks or assignments to be done to achieve the improvement
- agreeing on who will undertake the tasks
- agreeing on the time-scale by when the tasks must be completed
- establishing the costs of undertaking the improvements, in terms of time as well as money
- identifying possible sources of funding for the plan; it is suggested that a priority with limited costs be selected for year one of the plan to give time for fund-raising for more expensive projects
- identifying staff development needs and assigning tasks to help meet the required improvements
- specifying indicators of success for monitoring and evaluation; as far as possible these should be about improvements in pupil learning.

A blank action plan is included in this unit. Inspectors can make them available to heads who should complete them with a small sub-group of staff and the school committee.

An example of an action plan can be found in the case study of SADC School.

Presenting the Action Plans to the School Committee for Approval

If involvement, ownership and support are to be maintained, it is essential that the action plans be presented to and approved by, the school committee. This is especially true if the committee are to be mobilised to raise funds or provide a service to the school.

It is suggested that the presentation be made jointly by the head and chair of the school committee to emphasise the partnership approach to producing the plan.

STAGE SIX - IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING THE PLAN

The construction of the plan should be followed by implementation. Both implementation and monitoring are made easier if the targets, tasks and success criteria have been identified and clarified. The success criteria form the basis for making judgements about whether targets are being met.

Monitoring should be built into the implementation processes and should be done on a continuous basis in order to spot, and overcome, any problems that may hinder progress.

Making the plan work includes:

- sustaining commitment during the implementation period
- checking progress
- overcoming problems encountered
- taking stock
- reporting progress.

Mobilising Community Support

This involves:

- mobilising support from teachers, the school committee and the community through sustaining their interest in the plan
- being accessible where necessary to give advice and assistance
- participating in joint meetings to discuss progress and problems.

Keeping on Track/Solving Problems/Ensuring Success

Progress checking is a process of monitoring during the course of implementation. Regular checks on progress of tasks should be made against the success criteria. This will provide evidence of the degree of progress. Ways of doing this are:

- assigning someone in the team to make the checks
- reviewing progress at team meetings, particularly where decisions on future action are being made
- deciding on the nature of evidence which shows that success has been achieved
- collecting evidence from various sources
- recording the evidence and conclusions.

As implementation proceeds, a major setback may be experienced and this will involve the head in actions such as:

- providing extra support for the team
- re-assigning roles and responsibilities
- drawing on the skills and experiences of new staff
- seeking additional outside help
- “freezing” part of the action plan temporarily
- modifying the project time-scale
- scaling down action plans to manageable proportions
- postponing a target until the following year and bringing in a substitute target.

Advantage should be taken when circumstances change for the better, in order to advance the pace of progress.

Activity 13g

Consider how you would give assistance to a school in monitoring their plan. What success checks would you undertake, or suggest that the school undertakes?

COMMENT:

Success checks involve:

- assigning responsibility for collecting evidence
- enabling the team to discuss and analyse the extent of success
- noting changes in practice as a result of the plan e.g. how teachers use resources in more effective ways
- writing a brief report on whether targets are being met
- collecting reports or thoughts about whether targets are being met, with indications of what helped or hindered progress
- working out the implications for future work
- assessing the implications for anyone not currently involved in the plan.

STAGE SEVEN - EVALUATING THE PLAN

Formative evaluation can take place continuously after monitoring and evidence gathering but it is also necessary to take stock, and undertake an evaluation at the end of each year.

This summative evaluation requires the collation of information and brief analysis of progress on each of the priorities. This is the most formal evaluation activity of the school year.

The purpose is to:

- examine the success of implementation of the plan
- assess the extent to which the aims of the school have been realised
- assess the impact of the plan on pupils' learning and achievement
- determine how to share successful practices throughout the school
- make the process of reporting easier.

Reporting Progress and Celebrating Success

Taking stock provides an opportunity to make a report back to the stakeholders in order to keep them involved. Teachers, the school committee, PTA etc. are kept abreast of progress during their regular times in school. An opportunity however, should be taken once a year to make a special report to them through, for example, the annual parents' meeting, prize-giving day, open days or through newsletters.

Pupils are the most important people in the school and the plan exists to help them achieve more, so they should be informed in an appropriate manner.

Every effort should be made to celebrate success with the stakeholders in order to motivate them to plan for next year.

Agreeing on Priorities For the Following Year and Creating a New Action Plan

Stocktaking reports help to prepare the ground for the following year's plan. Account should be taken of:

- the original plan outline of priorities for the second and third years
- lessons learned from the previous year
- changes in national policies which affect the resource position
- changing needs and circumstances of the school.

A mini-review may be necessary at this stage in order to provide information for the action plan for the following year.

SUMMARY

Looking back over this unit, it is evident that inspectors play an important part in assisting schools with development planning. They provide some back-up services for headteachers, especially at the stages of review, monitoring and evaluation.

Inspectors should note that development plans belong to the school and not to them.

Note: A sample of school development plan for a SADC Secondary School is attached.

REFLECTION

Having gone through this unit, design an inspector's action plan with which you could assist your schools to prepare their development plans.

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

FOR

SADC SECONDARY SCHOOL

Sample Plan

**With acknowledgements to School Development Planning in PRISM in Kenya
and INSSTEP in Uganda**

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR SADC SECONDARY SCHOOL

THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The school has 800 pupils, 500 boys and 300 girls. Attendance has been dropping since 1995 and there are a large number of drop-outs, especially among girls. Performance in the National Exams is below average in English, local language, maths and science.

60% of the teachers are male & 40% female. Six of the teachers are untrained. Eight of the classrooms are made of permanent materials, but the other eight are mud thatched classrooms. The school lacks a domestic/science room and a workshop. The school has a new headteacher and the School Board have agreed to help prepare a school development plan.

WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE IN THREE YEARS' TIME?

- Continue to have an enrolment of 800 but with an equal number of boys and girls.
- Reduce the dropout to zero.
- Raise performance in exams to the national average.
- Replace two of the mud thatch buildings with permanent buildings.
- Build a domestic/science room.
- Reduce the number of untrained teachers from six to three.
- Have gender balance among the staff.

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

- Prepare a three year action plan to increase pupil performance in maths, science, local language and English.
- Prepare a staff development action plan.
- Prepare a building action plan.
- Sensitize the community to the need to educate girls
- Discuss the need to have equal gender balance in the staff with the DEO.

SCHOOL MOTTO

Knowledge, friendship, and success for all.

SCHOOL MISSION:

The mission of SADC Secondary School is to provide high quality teaching to enable pupils to be knowledgeable in all curriculum subjects and to establish a **positive** friendly atmosphere in which all pupils can achieve success.

SCHOOL AIMS

- To provide high quality teaching and learning which will enable all pupils to succeed in national examinations.
- To foster a partnership between pupils, parents and teachers which will lead to shared responsibilities for learning.

- To develop social responsibility and an understanding of the need to provide equally for girls and boys.
- To encourage pupils to respect their culture and the environment.

SCHOOL PRIORITIES

1st Year of Plan

- Raise achievement levels in:
- Maths
- English
- Science

2nd Year of Plan

- Same three curriculum priorities as previous year.
- Raise achievement in local language.
- Start to replace two mud thatch classrooms.

3rd Year of Plan

- Continue to develop local language, maths and science
- Finish replacing the classrooms

SWOT ANALYSIS FOR SADC SCHOOL

STRENGTHS

Full pupil enrolment

Gender balance in senior staff

Senior staff trained

Head recently promoted

Agreements reached to write a development plan

WEAKNESSES

Gender imbalance - 500 boys, 300 girls

30% staff untrained

Male/female imbalance in staff

Low examination performance

Pupil/teacher ratio high at 50:1

Eight mud thatched classrooms - security risk

Lacks domestic/science room and workshop

OPPORTUNITIES

Staff development

To enrol more girls

The school development plan

Improvement in academic standards after the plan is implemented.

THREATS

Parents may not enrol pupils because of deteriorating standards.

Storm damage to mud thatched buildings.

The fund-raising may not reach its target.

Trained teachers may be transferred

SWOT ANALYSIS FOR _____ SCHOOL

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

SADC ACTION PLAN FOR _____							
Targets	Tasks	By When	Who	Cost	Success Criteria	Monitoring	Staff Dev.

SADC ACTION PLAN FOR MATHEMATICS						
Targets	Tasks	By When	Who	Cost	Success Criteria	Monitoring
To introduce practical maths to all pupils in Form One	Discuss the need to introduce a practical approach to maths with all teachers.	Sept	HOD	1 hour	All teachers agree to adopt a practical approach.	Notes of maths team meeting
	Revise the scheme of work to include practical activities.	Oct	Maths teachers	1 day	SOW written	SOW being used
	Prepare sample lesson plans.	Oct	Maths teachers	1 day	Lesson plans written	HOD to check lesson plans
	Purchase additional equipment and materials.	Oct	HOD	\$200	Equipment and materials available	
	Agree methods of teaching and assessment.	Nov	Maths	1 hour	Assessment plan in place	HOD to check marking in maths exercise books
	Start teaching programme.	January	Teachers		All pupils involved in a practical maths lesson at least once per week	
	Prepare a plan to monitor progress.	January	HOD	1 hour		Lesson observation by HOD
						SADC maths workshop followed by school based workshop for all maths teachers