International Education Journal, 2005, 6(3), 354-366.
ISSN 1443-1475 © 2005 *Shannon Research Press*.
http://iej.cjb.net

Transforming schools into democratic organisations: The case of the secondary schools management development project in Botswana

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As a democratic country which aims at nurturing and sustaining its envied democracy, organisations in Botswana are expected and encouraged to build and maintain democratic structures and principles. In September 1993, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Botswana and the then British Overseas Development Agency (ODA) launched an ambitious joint venture, the Secondary Schools Management Development Project (SSMDP) whose main objective was to raise management standards in secondary schools through the democratisation of the structures which had hitherto been authoritarian. This paper is based on a quantitative study undertaken in a number of randomly selected secondary schools from all over the country after a decade of the launch. The paper evaluates the extent to which the SSMDP was effective in transforming the management of secondary schools in Botswana since 1993. However, it first gives a background by reviewing relevant literature in an attempt to showcase the nature of schools as organisations.

Transforming schools, management, secondary schools, Botswana

BACKGROUND

Almost all modern organisations, including schools have the characteristics of the Weberian Model of Bureaucracy which include a division of labour and specialisation, an impersonal orientation, a hierarchy of authority, rules and regulations, and a career orientation (Ball 1987; Harber 1991; 1995; Hoy and Miskel 1996; Dambe 1996; Buchanan and Huczynski 1997; Ballantine 2001). Ballantine (2001) further contends that schools are unique bureaucratic organisations due to their different purposes and structure.

Hanson (2003) explains this structural and organisational uniqueness by referring to the concept of 'loosely coupled systems'. The looseness of system structures and the nature of the teaching task seem to press for a professional mode of school system organisation, while demands for uniformity of product and the long time span over which cohorts of students are trained press for rationalisation of activities and thus for a bureaucratic base of organisation (Bidwell 1965). Sergiovanni (1995) explains that schools have multiple goals and are expected to achieve them, although they sometimes conflict with each other. He further argues that loose coupling does not mean that decisions, actions, and programs are unrelated, but that they are only loosely related to each other. Dambe (1996) contends that "… schools are dual systems, a combination of bureaucratic approach and loose coupling", an issue supported by Hanson (2003) who declares that schools require efficiency and predictability in a rational and programmed environment ("… impersonal, universalistic, and consistent behavior") while at the same time they demand a "… personalistic, idiosyncratic and flexible behavior". It has also been argued that schools are distinctive organisations because they are expected to transmit values, ideals, and shared

knowledge; foster cognitive and emotional growth; and sort and select students into different categories.

Harber (1997) contends that schools were organised bureaucratically to teach the impersonal, contractual values and relationships. The values reinforced in schools aimed at the functioning of the bureaucracy and the maintenance of social order such as obedience, abiding by the rules, loyalty, respect for authority, punctuality, regular attendance, quietness, orderly work in large groups, response to orders, bells and timetables and tolerance of monotony. Despite the negative connotations attached to these concepts, it has been argued that bureaucracy serves a vital function in society because it is believed to be the most efficient and rational form for organisations with goals of high productivity and efficiency. Traditionally, in pursuant of efficiency and effectiveness, schools have been, and are still structurally organised along bureaucratic lines; with the common feature of tight control, a somewhat rigid and inflexible dependence on top-down authoritarianism.

Handy and Aitken (1990) argue that, unlike other organisations which have layers of full-time managers, schools have two or three at the top and a few others as part of their job. In the former category are the school head, deputy and assistant head while in the latter are heads of departments and senior teachers grade one who have to contend in most cases with normal teaching duties, thus allowing for very little time for management. Due to the nature of the structure and purposes of schools described above, the only viable options available for the management of schools were either autocracy or autonomy.

The latter method, autocracy became the most favoured by educationists and therefore dominant, with the managerial task placed in the school head's office with all decisions being sanctioned and taken at his or her desk only. The school head also assumes all responsibility as the other colleagues needed time to prepare, teach and mark students' work. Autocracy suited the bureaucratic organisation as it can be personal and charismatic or it can be exercised more formally through rules (schools rules), procedures (management manuals and supplies procurement manuals), and regulations (Code of Regulations, secondary schools regulations), and school handbooks or prospectus.

However, it should be pointed out that there are some disadvantages militating against running a bureaucracy like a school by autocracy; for instance it overloads the top of the pyramid because all decisions drift up to the top of the organisation. In such situations where management attempts to free teachers to perform their core job of teaching, they end up performing odd jobs like collecting mail, arranging sports trips, laying out the school hall for examinations, punishing students for making noise in class or not doing home work; jobs which in other organisations could be done by junior officers because management is managing – getting the job done through others. As a result, school heads end up being overworked, stressed and frustrated with a lot of backlogs of important and crucial work, and in most cases with more nutcases of heads who masquerade as tyrants or dictators to mask their insanity.

Autocracy was ideal for small systems in that it is believed to facilitate efficiency and effectiveness. Handy and Aitkin (1990) posit that "… realistically, autocracy loses touch if there are more than 15 to 20 subordinates, degenerating into dictatorship", sometimes leading to anarchy. Secondary schools in Botswana have grown, both in size and purpose, into very big and complex organisations. For instance, a small junior secondary school with six streams has 240 adolescent students, about 21 teachers, 25 support staff, 14 subjects, a large and sophisticated infrastructure, and a wide catchment area sometimes with boarding facilities and their inherent problems (profile of Lehututu Community Junior Secondary School in the Kgalagadi District of the Republic of Botswana in 2003). A senior school can have up to 1,800 students of ages ranging from 15 years to 22 years divided into 42 normal classes with various options resulting in over 20

subjects being offered, 100 teaching staff, 100 support staff and a very wide catchment area. What seems not to have changed is that secondary schools have inherited the managerial traditions appropriate to smaller and simpler places, and hence school heads are battling and struggling to run large, irrational and complex organisations (schools) in their spare time, single-handedly, autocratically and end up losing both their sanity and the quality of the output.

EDUCATION AND DEMOCRACY IN BOTSWANA

As happens all over the world, especially in the developing countries, schools in Botswana were, and to some extent are still organised along the authoritarian-bureaucratic model that predominantly is found in commercial and industrial organisations. However, Handy and Aitken (1990) warn that schools may be adopting a system of management that is already outdated as modern businesses are moving away from hierarchies to networks that are more flexible and people friendly. The authoritarian-bureaucratic model was transported to Africa from Europe during the colonial period in order to inculcate the skills and values necessary to provide the subordinate African personnel required for the effective functioning of the imperial administration. According to Harber (1997), "… the ministerial bureaucracies of states in Africa, learning from their colonial administrators, often attempt to manage schooling through strict, centralised regimes". This is further compounded by the fact that traditional political systems indigenous in most African societies were autocratic, authoritarian and paternalistic, with power concentrated in the hands of a few individuals. It has been argued further that such methods promote educational processes that are undemocratic and bureaucratic which ultimately strengthen the control of a centralised bureaucracy over teachers and students (Carnoy and Samoff 1990).

Botswana attained her independence from Great Britain in September 1966 after having been a protectorate since 1885. It adopted the Westminister type of democracy. The Government of Botswana was, and is still, committed to the ideals of a democratic society and recognised the role that education can play in reinforcing and nurturing the ideals and values of democracy for the sake of national unity (Republic of Botswana 1977). This argument has been recognised and emphasised by Harber (1989) when he asserts that "schooling should enhance democratic skills, values and behaviours necessary to sustain democratic political institutions". The importance of democracy in nation-building was also recognised by the first leaders of Botswana who made it one of the four national principles:

> *Puso ya batho ka batho* – democracy implying a voice for all the people in their future, not only in political elections but also in community, social and economic affairs as well. (Republic of Botswana 1977)

The first Commission on Education of 1977 took further the principle of democracy and emphasised that the structure and organisation of education must reflect the four national principles and that any features of the education system which impaired democracy should be changed. It was therefore emphasised that schools themselves were small communities and the life of the schools and colleges should give expression to Botswana's basic principles including democracy so that young Batswana could be expected to understand and cherish it. Unless this were pursued and achieved, and schools and colleges continued to show quite opposite tendencies, it would be meaningless to speak of democracy and the other national principles. According to the Commissioners, democracy involved giving each mature person a voice in the running of affairs and the chance to participate, directly or through representatives, in decisions affecting their lives. If democracy were to be achieved, people should have sufficient and relevant information to make wise decisions that should be respected.

The implications of implementing democracy in education, particularly schools are many and varied in nature. First, many decisions about how schools are run should be left to all the

stakeholders who are affected: "… the community and parents, professional workers in education, and the pupils themselves" (Republic of Botswana 1997). This decision calls, first, for the establishment of democratic structures such as Boards of Governors, Parents Teachers' Associations, Senior Management Teams, and many others. Second, teachers and other educational professionals should be consulted about any reforms and the resultant changes affecting their conditions of service. Such consultations require that teachers should be given the opportunity to comment on and participate in the impending changes.

Third, teachers should be involved and fully participate in the "… work of syllabus change and curriculum reform". Fourth, at the school level, this would call for school heads and college principals to hold consultations on all important matters with their teachers and lecturers through regular staff meetings and briefings. Staff meetings should represent the National Assembly as a place where school policies and decisions were made, instead of the traditional head's office. Democratic procedures, values and norms should be instilled and recognised through such activities as fair and transparent procedures in filling vacancies and electing people into committees and task teams. Promotions should be transparent and based on procedures that were understood by everybody in the school, and not only the School Management Teams.

THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

This section presents in the form of a table (shown in Table 1) the aims and objectives of the project together with the indicators of achievement and value as illustrated in an evaluation carried out in 1995 (Anderson and Basiamang 1995).

According to Anderson and Basiamang (1995), the ODA's input into the project included six Overseas Appointment Staff (OSAS): five were paired with their local counterparts under the title School Management Advisers and were based in the Regions, and the other one based at Headquarters in Gaborone was a Joint Coordinator with a local, but later became the Secondary Schools Management Development Officer. It also offered support for in-country workshops in the form of expertise. Of importance was the establishment of school clusters and School Staff Development Teams that organised and managed school-based workshops, which became the professional backbone of the project as vital information was shared among and between schools and individual teachers during such gatherings. The ODA also provided nine long-term training awards over three years and eighteen short-term attachments. Over £30,000 (British Pounds) worth of books for Education Centres' libraries and the central resource centre were made available to the project, while £305,100 were used for training. It was a joint venture and all these financial and human resources led to a new era in the management of secondary education in Botswana.

It can therefore be assumed that due to the joint venture, secondary schools would be effectively and efficiently managed; there would also be an improvement in the delivery of the academic program in schools as a result. A structured program for on-going management training was introduced through a flexi mode run by the University of Bath, with an initial cohort of 24 school heads enrolling. School-based in-service training catered for the management teams and the senior management personnel in the schools.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In order to meet the democratic requirements as stipulated by the first National Commission of 1977 and the demands of the changing times as illustrated above, the Botswana Government in 1993 entered into an ambitious joint venture with the then British Overseas Development Agency (ODA) now the Department of Field International Development (DFID) "… to raise the standards of secondary education" in Botswana (Anderson and Basiamang 1995).

Table 1. Objectives, indicators, and assessment (after Anderson and Basiamang 1995)

Project Structure	Indicators of achievement and value	How indicators can be quantified and assessed
1. *Wider Objectives*		
1.1 To raise the standards of secondary school management in Botswana. 1.2 To ensure that all secondary school resources – human, physical, financial and material – are used carefully and cost effectively.	• More efficient and effective schools. • Closer inter-relation between school and local community. • Responsible, knowledgeable B.o.Gs meeting regularly and making decisions within their powers and competence. • Universal compliance with TSM regulations and procedures.	• School records: including school log book, minutes of B.o.Gs, staff and HOD meetings. • CEO records, observations and reactions. • Visits by school management advisors, and external evaluators. • Audit reports from Auditor general Department, Financial Advisor, and private auditors. • Reports from school management advisors, EOs and subject advisors. • BGCSE and JC results.
2. *Immediate Objectives*		
2.1 To create a favourable climate among heads and deputies for innovation and change as a means of achieving better school management.	• Satisfactory audit inspections. • More efficient school timetables and organisation of teaching. • Closer links between formal and non-formal education in use of resources. • Marked improvement in EO support. • Increase in school visits by all secondary school heads Co-co/ PAL. • Positive school level contribution to the introduction of new curricula. • Teacher input into new applications of continuous assessment techniques. • Teacher attendance and support for school-based/cluster workshops.	• Reports of SMAs, EOs and subject advisors. • Records of school visits by various Ministry personnel. • Feedback from CDU and ERT and D. • Feedback from heads. • BGCSE/JC results.
2.2 To improve school learning and teaching conditions and create greater opportunities by optimising use of physical plant, teaching time, manpower, and teaching areas.	• Satisfactory audit inspections. • Tighter budget and expenditure control. • Teachers on full teaching loads. • 80% minimum use of teaching areas. • Improved student performance. • Time-tables conducive to effective learning.	• Audit reports.
2.3 To initiate, plan, and implement a structured program of pre-service and in-service training for heads and deputies.	• Teacher/student ratio maintained at 1:24 for junior sec and 1:19 for senior secondary schools. • Development of basic training programs, and long-term training program. • Procedures to monitor, evaluate, and revise such programs. • Improved managerial performance by heads in decision-making, school records, control of finance, interpersonal skills and use of correct procedures.	• Reports from school management teams, EOs and subject advisors. • BGCSE/JC results.
2.4 To reinforce the program of training by producing support materials appropriate to secondary school management development in Botswana.	• Production of support materials and their use in schools. • Procedures to ascertain and monitor use; to revise and upgrade where needed. • Closer contact and interaction between Secondary Department and individual schools.	• Reports of management teams, CEO and MoE personnel. • Feedback from trainee heads of schools through recorded visits and questionnaires. • Observations of external evaluator and coordinating committee. • Support materials exist and in use. • Positive feedback from trainees and from Ministry officials.
2.5 To establish a permanent structure of secondary education management training, with recognised routines and planned work strategies.	• No professionally isolated headmasters. • Development of a structure career ladder for teachers and school management personnel. • Programmed training and interlocking study courses, in-country, regionally, continentally and overseas, for school management personnel. • Efficient school monitoring system.	• Reports of external evaluators. • Reports from Ministry of Education personnel. • Comments of external evaluators and co-ordinating committee. • Support of Heads Conference and its Executive. • Reports of follow-up visits after workshops/training courses.

This paper therefore argues that the introduction of the Secondary Schools Management Development Project in 1993 was *inter alia* aimed at democratising secondary schools' management structures in the belief that this would ultimately enhance the performance in the teaching and learning processes. It has also been argued that the aim of introducing democratic structures at school level would enhance the democratic principles and values in society. Schools as parts of the wider social and political community that espoused democratic values and norms were also expected to reflect these both structurally and operationally; in other words they should be democratic organisations. The paper provides an initial evaluation of the impact of the introduction of democratic ideals in the domain of traditional autocratic and authoritarian school management structures.

THE STUDY

This study had five specific aims:

1. to establish the extent to which respondents knew and understood the main goals of the SSMDP;
2. to find out how the main goals of the SSMDP were (to be) achieved;
3. to establish indicators of achievement and values of the objectives of the SSMDP;
4. to identify problems encountered by the SSMDP; and
5. to identify some of the achievements of the SSMDP.

Sample

This research study targeted secondary school teachers in Botswana, with particular emphasis on members of the School Management Teams (heads of schools, deputy heads, heads of departments and senior teachers grade 1) who were randomly selected from secondary schools across Botswana. This group was targeted for two main reasons: first, because the program was tailor-made for those in management; and, second, because almost all those who were in the field at the inception of the program a decade ago are members of the SMTs and therefore are in a better position to shed well informed information. Eighty postal questionnaires were distributed to the schools.

The Postal Survey

The questionnaire

The questionnaire included a mixture of closed and open-ended questions. The closed questions were based on a five-point Likert-type scale that solicited the degree of agreement of the respondent to a given statement. The open-ended questions gave respondents the opportunity to express their own opinions in their own words.

The first two questions required the respondent to give biographic data, which in retrospect did not contribute much to the study; the next 12 questions sought to establish how the main goal of raising the standards of secondary education management in Botswana was to be attained. The respondent was to indicate his or her degree of agreement with a given statement on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from strongly disagree with 1 point to strongly agree with 5 points. The next five questions asked the respondent to showcase what the SSMDP did to achieve the main goals. The next 18 questions wanted the respondent to identify and rate the indicators of achievement and value of the objectives of the program. A further six questions required the respondent to list any problems encountered while the last nine questions asked what were achievements of the program.

The open-ended section of the questionnaire comprised five questions which sought to establish whether the respondent understood the aims of the SSMDP; whether the SSMDP achieved its aims and reasons for the answer given; strengths of the program and why; shortcomings and reasons; and the way forward. The purpose for including open-ended questions in the questionnaire was to allow respondents to give further information that might not have been captured by the structured questionnaire.

Return rate

Of the 80 questionnaires distributed, 58 were completed and returned, representing a response rate of 72.5 per cent.

Data analysis

For the closed questions, data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). For the open-ended questions, data were coded according to the emerging themes and patterns.

RESULTS AND DISCUSION

Goals of the SSMDP

Data from this category are presented in Table 2 with percentage agreement shown against each theme. It is clear from these results that the goals were met.

Table 2. Variables used to measure effects of the Project[a]

Variable	%
Raising standards of management	98
Resources used cost effectively	90
Democratising school management	89
Resources used carefully	84
Encourage efficiency in teaching and learning	78
Foster school/community relations	69
Fostering closer link between formal/non-formal aspects of schools	69
Establishment of responsible/knowledgeable Board of Governors	53
Compliance with TSM regulations	48
Empowering Board of governors through training	47
Ensuring that Board of Governors meetings are held regularly	41
Targeting Community Junior Secondary Schools only	21

[a]percentage agreement recorded

Achievement of the Main Goal

In order to achieve the main goal of raising standards of management in Botswana secondary schools, respondents agreed that the goals in Table 3 were the main achievements of SSMDP.

Table 3. How the main goal was achieved[a]

Variable	%
Created favourable conditions for heads/deputies	91
Created favourable climate in schools	91
Established permanent training structure	82
Improved school teaching and learning conditions	72
Created optimum use of resources	70

[a]percentage agreement recorded

Indicators of Achievement of Main Goal

The respondents overwhelmingly agreed with the following key indicators of achievement of the main goal of the SSMDP (see Table 4).

Table 4. Indicators of achievement[a]

Variable	%
Regular school based workshops	97
Knowledge sharing among staff	97
Establishment of school development plans	93
Existence of staff development committees	93
Establishment of mission statements	91
Establishment of effective SMTs	91
Improved managerial skills by heads	90
Existence of whole school policies	90
Power sharing among stakeholders	88
Improved inter personal skills	86
Structured pre- and in-service for SMT's	81
Improved control of finance by schools	78
Improved student academic performance	78
Dialogue with communities	66
School friendly inspections and audits	62
Clear duties of SMAs	60
Improved support from headquarters	59
Motivated heads and deputies	53

[a]percentage agreement recorded

The responses in Table 4 indicate that schools regard the main goal of SSMDP as being met.

Problems Encountered by the SSMDP

Although the program can be said to have been a great success, there were problems that were faced by those who were involved as indicated in Table 5.

Table 5. Hurdles faced by the SSMDP[a]

Variable	%
Sabotaged, resisted by headquarters	52
Aims clashed with those of TTandD	49
Structure fluid, directionless and lacked sustenance	48
Viewed as inferior by senior schools	48
Did not fit into established structure	43
Viewed at as remedial, add-on for CJSS	34

[a]percentage agreement recorded

The results in Table 5 illustrate that the program was well accepted by all stakeholders and its structures were in line with those already in existence.

Achievements of the SSMDP

Despite some of the hurdles encountered, it was apparent that the SSMDP achieved much, especially in the improvement of secondary school management in line with democratic principles. Some of the perceived achievements are shown in Table 6.

Open-ended questions

As stated above, the postal questionnaire included five open-ended questions that provided a check to responses in the closed section. The first question wanted the respondent to give his or her opinion of what the aims of the SSMDP were. The second question wanted the respondent to state whether the program achieved its aims and to give reasons why they said so. The third question sought to establish the strengths of the SSMDP, justifying why they thought they were

strengths. The fourth question wanted to establish the weaknesses or shortcomings with reasons why they were so categorised. Finally, the respondent was asked to map the way forward.

Table 6. Achievements[a]

Variable	%
Improved management capacity in schools	90
Inculcated democratic values in school management	90
Exposed lack of implementation capacity of MoE	81
Improved teaching/learning processes	79
Facilitated the gender movement in secondary schools	79
Gave birth to the PSMDP	78
Enhanced staff development in schools	76
Establishment of Flexi Mode	73
Expanded recruitment base for Ministry of Education	60

[a]percentage agreement recorded

Aims of the SSMDP

From the responses received, it is apparent that schools were, and are aware of, the aims and objectives of the SSMDP. The overwhelming majority of respondents identified the following as the main aims of the program:

- to improve the management of secondary schools in the country;
- to bring about excellence in schools through improved teaching;
- to develop coordinated staff development in schools and facilitate full-time training for managers of secondary schools; and
- to inculcate the spirit of transformational leadership in secondary schools.

Improvement of management of secondary schools

One respondent believed that this objective was achieved through the improvement of management development skills of the school heads and other senior staff in the schools, as well as to promote staff development at school level. This view was also supported by another respondent who emphasised that this was done through the development of management structures, skills and knowledge, through in-service and formal training of senior staff and sharing of knowledge and good practice among staff. In addition, one respondent believed that the improvement of management was also achieved by providing in-service workshops on management issues to promote good practice, collaborative management, greater accountability, including capacity building and problem solving skills.

Improved teaching

The SSMDP was also introduced to improve the management of schools so that the core duty of schools could be improved. From the responses received, it was evident that the program was able to improve the teaching process. For instance one respondent declared that as a result of the program, teachers became involved and informed about decisions taken by management and therefore were able to own up and worked hard for the benefit of the students. Teachers became motivated as they were consulted and participated in the management of the schools. Yet another respondent was of the view that the program arranged schools into manageable clusters for effectiveness, and teachers from different schools collaborated and prepared materials together as a team.

Staff development

As illustrated above, the SSMDP aimed at improving the management of schools. One way of doing this was through the development of a coordinated staff development program and provision of full time training for managers of secondary schools. Some respondents cited the establishment of Staff Development Committees, school-based workshops and Cluster and Regional workshops as having played a major role in facilitating staff development for school heads. Other respondents also believed that the introduction of the University of Bath program for School Heads who studied for a Masters Degree was a milestone in the development of school managers in the country. This point was further emphasised by a respondent who declared that it created a quick advancement of individual school heads to acquire Masters degrees through a flexible mode of delivery. Another structure commonly mentioned was the existence of the School Management Advisers at Regional level with their visits to schools, which kept the heads of schools on their toes. These Advisers also provided on the job training that was very contextual and economic.

Democratisation of schools

One of the aims of the program was to democratise school management and other structures. As one respondent posited, such a move would enhance school management by introducing a paradigm shift from the traditional one-man show to a more participatory management approach characterised by transparency and democracy. Another respondent emphasised that it aimed at improving team-work in educational management while a further respondent asserted that it enabled school heads to manage human resources in a democratic way, and it promoted transparency among school heads and the SMTs. Yet other respondents felt that it encouraged decentralisation at school level by allowing every member of staff to participate in the management of teaching and learning. Another respondent went further by contending that it enabled school heads to understand the importance of including students in decision-making.

The majority of respondents were of the view that the program achieved its mandate of improving the management of secondary schools in Botswana through the democratisation of schools. This point of view was captured succinctly by a respondent who asserted that SSMDP achieved its objectives as schools were democratically run through SMTs; it was no longer the school head doing the job of management alone. There was collective bargaining in all schools. It also gave birth to more women managers in education through the Women In Educational Management (WIEM).

Another respondent also believed that the aims were achieved to a large extent because school heads were trained and were being trained in educational management. School-based workshops continued to be held to improve the twin processes of teaching and learning; and schools were better managed than before the SSMDP.

One respondent posited that the program's achievements were also reflected in the availability of accountability documents such as school development plans, whole school policies, school visions and mission statements in schools.

Strengths of the SSMDP

There were some factors that facilitated the success of the program. As one respondent asserted, it was led by people who had expertise (initial team leaders and SMAs) who did not impose but believed in consultation; and were also given enough funds and resources for workshops. This view was reiterated by another respondent who claimed that involvement of some knowledgeable school heads in resourcing workshops helped in disseminating managerial skills to all secondary

schools. At least people became aware of the skills needed in the management of schools and education in general.

According to some respondents, structures such as school based staff development (workshops), staff development committees, staff development coordinators, Strong SMTs backed by support from the Joint SMAs and Coordinators, Regional Education Officers and a strong National Leader gave impetus to the program. One respondent observed and lamented at the same time that initially there was great zeal from both ends to succeed; and the programs it embarked upon had been sustained and brought about change and innovation though some died a natural death due to the transfer and resignation of the pioneers of the program. The current officers were not creative enough and could not cope with the challenges faced by the heads.

Some respondents believed that the nature of management approaches and other structures that were in existence and based on traditional practices made the ideas of the program more appealing, and therefore provided a firm base for success. One respondent declared that most of the heads, especially in the Community Junior Secondary Schools did not know anything about management as they were promoted due to lack of qualified personnel. They were therefore happy to try the new ideas. Another claimed that schools were run like private businesses before the program and most of the teachers were not happy with previous autocratic rule, therefore they accepted the program.

Shortcomings of the SSMDP

One respondent claimed that the SSMDP lacked sustainability when it came to some projects such as Peer Assisted Leadership and Co-Consultancy due to insufficient funds at school level to carry out the activities. Another respondent cited lack of evaluation structures as one of the main weaknesses of the SSMDP. Many respondents as indicated above believed that one of the main problems faced by the program was too much staff turnover due to resignation of officers, redeployment to other departments or areas, promotions and transfers of officers. The new officers were then not trained like the pioneers, and this lack of commitment to standards impaired the program. This was succinctly captured by one respondent who declared that the SSMDP started off very well but as soon as the leadership changed it lost its vigour and momentum. There were irregular follow-ups to schools. One said that it lacked direction, and had no clear vision of where it was going. Another claimed the Ministry of Education was not very supportive of the program after the contract of the donors came to an end.

The Future of the SSMDP

It is clear from the above that the program was necessary for the development and sustenance of good practice in school management. Therefore most of the respondents felt that the future of the program could be achieved through the following objectives:

- provision of the necessary resources which included human, financial and other things like time for workshops;
- appointment of more SMAs and raising the post to the level of Principal Education Officer 1 in order to retain them in office, and the appointment of more SMAs to allow for follow-up visits and continued support to schools;
- SMAs should be relieved of the administrative duties of the Ministry of Education so that they could concentrate on field-work and the establishment of SSMU (Secondary Schools Management Unit) in the Ministry; and
- sabbatical leave should be accorded to those who were doing their studies.

The way forward was summarised by a respondent who suggested that a more comprehensive strategic plan should be drawn which should be known and acknowledged by all stakeholders. An evaluation process should also be incorporated in the strategic plan. More funds should be provided to schools to facilitate school based workshops in order to promote staff development.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study indicated that the Secondary Schools Management Development Program was an overwhelming success. For instance, 98 per cent of the respondents were in agreement with the view that it met its main objective of raising the standards of management. This, according to 89 per cent of the respondents, was a result of the introduction of democratic structures, values and principles in the secondary schools education system. Team-work became the guiding principle in the management of schools whereby consultations and collaboration among stakeholders in schools were encouraged.

The results also showed that resources were used carefully and cost effectively in the schools as a result. Structures such as school based workshops and clustering of schools for purposes of sharing ideas were cost effective when compared to workshops that were organised centrally and which took teachers out of schools for a long time and paying for transport and hotel accommodation. School based workshops centred on clusters meant that such events could be held in the afternoons without students missing too much school work. Sharing of ideas led to the breaking of isolation that had traditionally characterised teaching.

As illustrated in Table 3, the main goal of raising standards of management was achieved through creating favourable conditions for heads and deputy heads (91%) as well as establishing permanent training structures (83%). Training was viewed by the program as a viable strategy in meeting its goals. Training empowered those targeted with the necessary knowledge and skills. As was the case, most of the heads of schools had no training in management but were promoted because they were good classroom teachers. Their classroom management skills which guided them could be said to have been clashing with the management of teachers who were adults.

From the above results, it must emphatically be concluded that the program was a success although it needed to be nurtured and sustained as the times and structures were in constant change. There was also a need to find out how the improvement of management impacted on the twin processes of teaching and learning.

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