Unit 13: School Development Planning

AIM

The aim of this unit is to enable the inspectors to understand the key questions and main principles of school development planning and implementation, and their role in assisting schools with drafting and implementing plans.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this unit, inspectors 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 through:

- attaining a clear understanding of the key questions and main principles of planning
- a thorough knowledge of the stages in school planning and the issues schools are likely to face at each stage
- exercising aspects of their role in school development planning.

CONTENT SUMMARY

13.1   Why Have a Plan?
13.2   Who Should Be Involved in Preparing the Plan?
13.3   What Should the Plan Contain?
13.4   How Should the Plan Be Prepared?
13.5   School Review
13.6   Establishing School Priorities
13.7   Sequencing Priorities over Several Years
13.8   Principles of Action Planning
13.9   Writing Action Plans
13.10 Presenting Action Plans
13.11 Mobilising Community Support
13.12 Monitoring the Plan
13.13 Evaluating the Plan
13.14 Reporting Progress (and Celebrating Success)

KEY SKILLS

The following skills are required for developing school development plans:
- reviewing
- prioritising
- action planning
- monitoring
- evaluating

13.1   THE PURPOSE OF SCHOOL PLANNING - WHY HAVE A PLAN?

Key Information

School development planning can be the main tool used by schools to improve pupil performance. In doing this schools look at the following broad questions:

Where is the school now?
What changes do we need to make?
How shall we manage these changes over time?
How shall we know whether our management of change has been successful?

This unit is designed to help heads and senior staff to look at these questions in the context of the preparation of a plan for a school, and the role inspectors can play in assisting schools in improving pupil performance.

There are some more specific questions which need to be addressed first if a school plan is to be owned and implemented by a school community.

Activity 13a

In groups, brainstorm reasons for having a plan. Report back and list the reasons.

Trainer's Notes

Reasons are likely to include:

* to focus on raising pupil achievement
* to identify priorities for development
* to target expenditure of funds
* to allocate tasks and responsibilities
* to ensure that all staff share the same vision and goals
* to set a time frame for action

13.2 WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN PREPARING THE PLAN?

Key Information

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"* *(including pupils where applicable).*

Activity 13b

(a) Identify the 'stakeholders' in the schools for which you are responsible.
(b) Agree which of them should be involved **in preparing the plan** and state the reasons why.
(c) Report back and list the stakeholders.
(d) Do you consider inspectors to be stakeholders?

Activity 13c

(a) In groups, discuss how pupils should be involved in the development planning process.
(b) Report back and discuss findings.
(c) Prepare a short address to pupils to inform them about their important role in implementing the plan. Be prepared to role play a headteacher and present this to your colleagues.

13.3 WHAT SHOULD THE PLAN CONTAIN?

Key Information

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

* the school motto
* the school mission
* the school aims and objectives
* a description of the context of the school and the community it serves
* school priorities arrived at through discussions with the stakeholders which span a time period of more than one year.
* action plans for the first year of the plan
* information about the school, such as the number of pupils by gender and age.

An example of a SADC school plan is included in this unit. It has sections as shown above.

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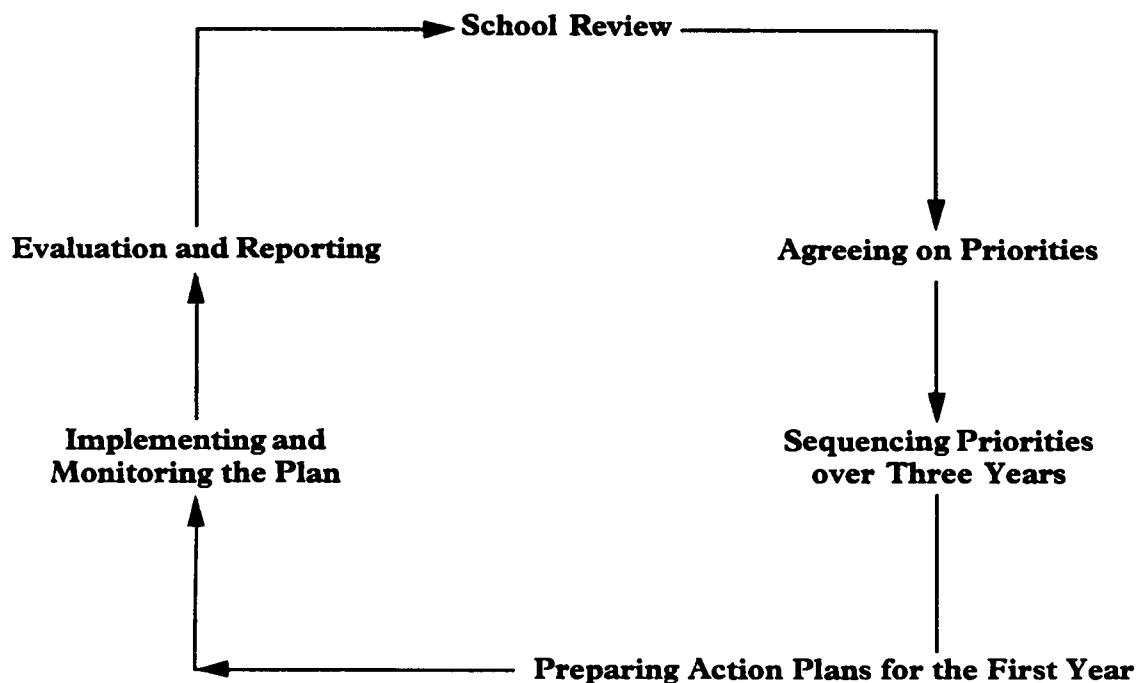

Activity 13d

(a) In groups, examine the case study of a plan for SADC secondary school. List any questions you may have concerning the study.
(b) Discuss these questions as a group to clarify any issues

13.4 HOW SHOULD THE PLAN BE PREPARED?

Key Information

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

School Review

Evaluation and Reporting

Agreeing on Priorities

Implementing and Monitoring the Plan

Sequencing Priorities over Three Years

Preparing Action Plans for the First Year

Preparing the plan involves the head and staff in the following main stages, all of which are explored later in these materials:

- reviewing the school to identify strengths and weaknesses
- agreeing and scheduling priorities over several years to build on strengths or remedy weaknesses
- preparing action plans for the priorities identified for the first year
- implementation
- monitoring and evaluation
- reporting progress to the Board of Governors/School Committee.

Activity 13e

(a) In groups, discuss the steps and agree where inspectors are most likely to be involved.

(b) Refer to the diagram on page 83 showing the stages in planning, and discuss when, within the school year, you would take each step in the cycle, and add who would be involved at each stage.

Trainer's Notes

Inspectors are most likely to be involved at the different stages of review, action planning, monitoring evaluating and reporting. This is likely to vary from country to country.

13.5   SCHOOL REVIEW

Key Information

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? Will the school grow in numbers or shrink? The head will need this information in order to plan staffing, the utilisation of classrooms and provision of other facilities that might be required, bearing in mind the gender needs of the school population.

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

- an example of a strength might be strong parental support for the school.
- an example of a weakness might be poor examination performance.
- an example of an opportunity might be an offer of sponsorship to build a school workshop.
- an example of a threat might be re-location or migration of families.

When carrying out an analysis of a school, factors which contribute to poor performance of a disadvantaged group e.g. poor performance of girls or high levels of drop out by girls should be identified and included in the analysis.

A completed SWOT analysis of a school is included in the case study.

NB: Information from the SWOT analysis should be used to complete the school context page in the school development plan.

Activity 13f

(a) As an individual inspector, think about one of your schools and complete a SWOT analysis for the school.
(b) Compare your analysis with two other members in the group.
(c) Discuss how the SWOT could be useful to the school.

Activity 13g

Take your SWOT analysis and use the information to draft a page called 'The school context' for a school development plan.

Share your draft with another member within the group, discuss it and possibly amend it.

13.6   ESTABLISHING SCHOOL PRIORITIES

Key Information

It is important that each school has a small number of priorities for action agreed by the stakeholders. Many schools attempt to do too much by having many priorities or 'wish lists' and as a consequence achieve little and get a sense of failure.

Some priorities will be revealed by the SWOT analysis, others will be revealed through inspection, supervision and performance appraisal, and others will be raised by parents. More specific subject priorities will arise from analysing examination results or observing lessons.

Activity 13h

As a whole group, brainstorm examples of priorities which may exist in the schools for which you are responsible.

Trainer's Notes

Examples of priorities might be:

- increasing the availability of learning materials
- improving the examination performance in all subjects or specific subjects
- developing a culture of reading for pleasure
- building a new classroom
- reducing drop-out rates
- increasing attendance rates.

Activity 13i

In groups discuss which processes could be used to select main priorities in the list above.

Report back.

Trainer's Notes

Processes which could be used are:

(a) Setting out criteria for selection and then voting by stakeholders on the list using the criteria. This method has the advantage of giving ownership to the stakeholders but may not be what the headteacher wants.
(b) School management team decide and report/persuade other stakeholders to back their decisions.
(c) Headteacher decides and informs others of the decision.

13.7 SEQUENCING PRIORITIES OVER SEVERAL YEARS

> **Activity 13j**
>
> In groups, discuss why it is important to sequence action on priorities over more than one year.

Key Information

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 overload in staff. This time will give time for adequate preparation and make best use of available funding.

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.

13.8 PRINCIPLES OF ACTION PLANNING

Key Information

Well written and precise action plans are key to making effective changes in the curriculum and to improving learning.

Most action plans have a structure:

• targets	What do we want to achieve?
• activities	How are we going to achieve it?
• named individuals	Who is responsible for the action?
• estimate of cost in money or time.	How much will each activity cost?
• realistic dates by which action should have been taken.	What are the deadlines?
• success criteria set out in terms of what pupils will be doing as result of the plan.	How will we know when we have succeeded?
• regular progress checking.	

Activity 13k

In groups have a look at a blank action plan and discuss the headings. Raise any questions that will clarify the structure.

In groups, have a look at a simple example of an action plan. Discuss the contents and raise any questions to clarify it.

Activity 13l

Just as the school development plan will work best if it is produced by the stakeholders, so will action plans. The first task is therefore to decide who should be involved in **preparing** each action plan. Write down who you would involve in preparing action plans within your schools.

13.9   WRITING ACTION PLANS

Activity 13m

Schools often have priorities in English, mathematics, science, local languages and gender. Action plans are therefore often written for each of these priorities.

In small groups, select one of the local subjects and decide on possible target areas in your subject for the development of an action plan.

English: Increase student activities in Form One in writing for a variety of purposes.
Introduce students in Form One to activities in speaking and listening.
Increase the opportunity for students in Form Two to read a wider range of English texts.

Science: Introduce practical science investigations into the curriculum in Form One.
Make greater use of the natural environment by all students.
Increase the number of girls taking science examinations.

Mathematics: Develop a positive attitude to mathematics by girls in Form One.
Introduce practical mathematics to all classes in Form One.
Introduce geometry to the Form One class.

Local Language: Increase use of spoken language by all pupils in the school.
Increase use of written language in Form One and Two.
Increase exam performance in the first cycle of secondary education.

Gender: Reduce the dropout rate of girls by providing a safe environment.
Encourage girls to participate in school leadership.
Encourage more boys to take home economics.

Key Information

One of the first tasks in action planning is to agree what you wish to achieve and to write this in the form of targets. Experience in different parts of the world suggests that targets can be made more precise by considering each target against the idea of a SMART target.

Each target must be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Resourced (Reasonable)
- Time scaled

An example would be:

By the end of July 1997 all pupils involved in science lessons will have undertaken at least one investigation and will have recorded the results.

75% of children aged twelve will be reading at or above their chronological age by the end of the academic year. The reading age of the remaining 25% will be less than one year below their chronological age.

It is also helpful to set out success criteria in the same way:

The drop-out rates for girls will decrease by 5% per year over the next four years.

Examination performance of girls in mathematics will increase by 10% within the next two years.

13.10   PRESENTING ACTION PLANS

Key Information

If involvement, ownership and support are to be maintained, it is essential that the action plans are presented to each stakeholder group for discussion and approval. This is especially true if groups are to be mobilised to raise funds to help the plan to work. It is suggested that the plan is presented jointly by the headteacher and head of department to emphasise the partnership approach to preparing the plan.

13.11 MOBILISING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Key Information

The construction of the plan should be followed by implementation. Both implementation and evaluation are made easier if the targets, tasks and success criteria have been identified and clarified. The success criteria form the basis for making judgments about whether targets are being met. Monitoring and evaluation 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 the implementation process. Making the plan work includes:

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

The first stage is mobilising community support.

This involves mobilising support from teachers, the School Committee/ School Board and community by sustaining their interest in the plan, being accessible where necessary to give advice and assistance, and participating in joint meetings to discuss progress and problems.

Activity 13p

(a) In small groups, list the different groups of people in the community who will need to be mobilised in support of the SDP.
(b) Give a reason for including each group and suggest how you would involve them.

Activity 13q

In small groups, discuss ways of mobilising support for your schools that you have used successfully in the past. Report your findings to the whole group.

13.12 MONITORING THE PLAN

Key Information

Monitoring is a continuous process which is built into the implementation process in order to spot problems and devise strategies to overcome them. Success checks are a means of establishing whether the targets are being met as expected. This means that the head has to reflect on the evidence collected and draw some conclusions. Success checks involve:

* assigning responsibility for collecting evidence about each target
* collecting evidence by observing in classrooms, looking at pupils' books, checking examination results etc.
* 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.

Activity 13r

(a) In groups, identify problems or blocks that may hinder the implementation of plans.
(b) Select one problem and draw up a plan to solve it.

Trainer's Note

One or two groups should present their ideas.

Activity 13s

In pairs discuss the monitoring steps provided in Key Information and make a plan for monitoring one of the schools in your district.

13.13 EVALUATING THE PLAN

Key Information

Evaluation: Taking stock takes place at the end of a planning cycle. It is the collation 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 to make the process of reporting easier.

It is a key aspect of an inspector's work to be involved in monitoring and evaluating school development plans

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Activity 13t

In pairs, plan a visit to a school with an intention to check on the implementation of the school development plan.

If it is possible, the trainer should set up a practical visit to a school.

(a) Decide who will gather evidence and take notes about: planning/ targets/whether plans or targets are being met.
(b) Undertake the visit.
(c) Discuss your findings in a group and compile a short report.

Trainer's Notes

This activity should ensure that:

* evidence of implementation of the plan is gathered
* targets are being met
* findings from the visit are discussed and a report is written.

13.14 REPORTING PROGRESS AND CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Key Information

Taking stock provides an opportunity to make a report back to the stakeholders to keep them informed and involved. Teachers, the School Committee, Parents' Association etc. are kept abreast of progress during their regular times in school. It is important to take an opportunity, once a year, to make a special report to them on the success of the school plan through, for example, the annual parents' meeting, prize-giving day, open days or newsletters.

Pupils are the most important people in the school and the plan only exists to help them achieve more, so they should be informed of the plan and involved 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.

> **Activity 13u**
>
> In groups discuss what kind of information the headteacher would need to collect for the progress report and what you could provide as an inspector.

REFLECTION

Look back over your work on development planning.

Has anything in the unit prompted you to change your own approach to planning? State what you will do differently as an inspector as a result of studying the unit.

How will you adapt your role to assist schools to plan to raise pupil achievement?

REFERENCES

HMSO (1998) *School Development Planning - A Guide for Governors, Headteachers and Teachers*, DES, UK

Hopkins, D. and Hargreaves, D. (1989) *The Empowered School*

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

FOR

SADC SECONDARY SCHOOL

Sample Plan

With acknowlegements to School Development Planning in PRISM in Kenya and INSSTEP in Uganda

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR 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 and 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 the second 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	WEAKNESSES
Full pupil enrolment	Gender imbalance - 500 boys, 300 girls
Gender balance in senior staff	
Senior staff trained	30% staff untrained Male/female imbalance in staff
Head recently promoted	Low examination performance
Agreements reached to write a development plan	Pupil/teacher ratio high at 50:1
	Eight mud thatched classrooms - security risk
	Lacks domestic/science room and workshop

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Staff development	Parents may not enrol pupils because of deteriorating standards.
To enrol more girls	Storm damage to mud thatched buildings.
The school development plan	The fund-raising may not reach its target.
Improvement in academic standards after the plan is implemented.	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	Staff Dev.
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	SADC maths workshop followed by school based workshop for all maths teachers
	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	