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General Introduction

What is our purpose?

It is widely recognised and agreed that one of the key factors influencing school effectiveness is the nature and quality of the leadership and management provided by each school head.

This series of modules has been written to provide school heads with a source of practical ideas about ways in which they may become better managers of better schools. The material does not present much theory; instead each reader is required to draw on their own individual experiences and to evaluate their own circumstances and practices, in order that they may apply the lessons learned in their schools. Like other professionals, school heads need to accept a large measure of responsibility for their own self-development and for the development of their schools.

The extent to which these materials have a practical impact on school quality will only become clear over time, but school heads should fairly quickly be able to identify some examples of how they have changed the way they manage their schools and how their schools are better as a result. Heads may wish to share ideas with their school colleagues, District Education Officers and Inspectors, and discuss with them what they are doing, and how these materials are helping to improve their practice.

Who are the materials designed for?

These materials are written primarily for practising school heads of both primary and secondary schools, whether government or private, with whatever type of curriculum. We hope that principals of other educational institutions, including teacher training colleges, will find these materials of use.

We are not aiming just at newly appointed school heads, undergoing induction. At whatever career stage they may be, school heads know that there is always more to learn. The expression 'You can't teach an old dog new tricks' only applies to those ready for retirement.

Some readers may still be teachers who hope, one day, to become school heads; these materials are also for them.

Management skills are also required by many others involved in education, from the Minister or Commissioner of Education, through to District Education Officers and their staff, inspectors, school governors, private school owners, and even, in some aspects, parents and members of the community. These materials are for readers who belong to any of these groups, and who are interested in improving school

performance. **What are the methods of study?**

Since these materials are written for a variety of people, let us move from describing readers specifically as 'school heads' to something more direct and personal: 'you'.

Self-directed study: One of the main ways in which we hope you will use these materials will be through self-directed study or open-learning. By self-directed study we mean that you, the readers, choose when and what you want to study. Because everyone has a different background, in the experience we have and in the character of our schools, our learning needs vary considerably. We hope within the seven modules, each of which consists of between five and eight units, you will find something new and relevant to your needs. You may study the modules in any order; indeed many units may be studied on their own.

The modules may be studied by individuals working on their own, or in informal or formal study groups.

Individual study: A large part of our learning takes place on our own, perhaps reading and thinking quietly in school, or even at home. We hope that these materials will be available for you to do this. Then you may select what you want to learn, in the order and at the pace of study you choose. In this way you are not put under any immediate external pressure, but may work out for yourself what may best apply to you and your school.

Informal study groups: Of course you do not have to study these modules only on your own. The materials could and should be used by you with other heads in your locality, coming together informally, in peer groups or study circles, perhaps at a local teachers' centre, to review your work and share ideas. Within your own school members of staff would benefit by looking at topics together. If you have a school development committee the materials should prove a useful source of ideas. The materials could also be used by your Association of School Heads, either at district or national level, during workshops or at your annual meetings. Your association might appoint from the members a training officer, to be responsible for initiating, facilitating and co-ordinating training programmes.

Formal groups: These materials can also be used in a more systematic way to cover all school heads at formal workshops organised by District Education Officers, or for more advanced specialist courses, by a national management training institute, a teachers' college or a university faculty of education.

Distance learning: These materials can also be adapted for distance-learning courses and for use by the media, whether in print or broadcasting.

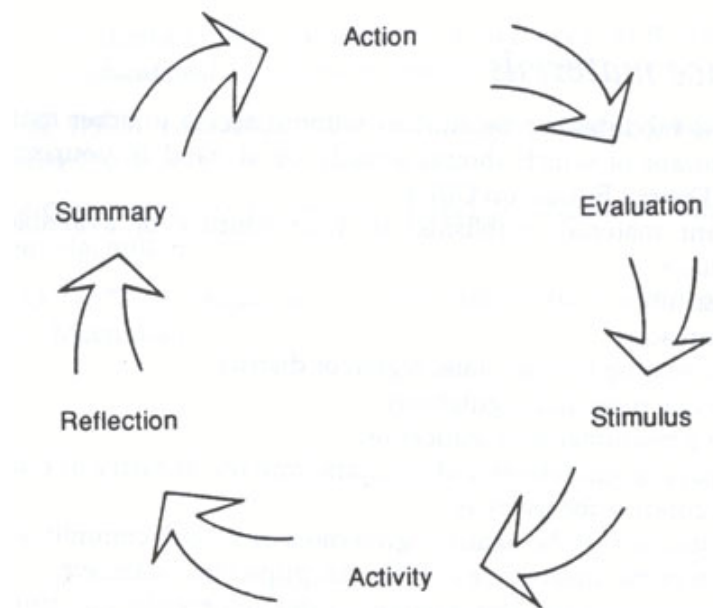
How is the content related to change in schools?

These resource materials are written in an interactive style which requires your participation. More than that, they require a commitment on your part to introduce into your school beneficial changes, which are relevant, cost-effective and accepted

by your staff, pupils and community.

Each unit contains a variety of stimuli which are intended to get you thinking, to capture your interest and to open up the topic. These include activities like drawing up checklists, answering questions, gathering data, and discussions with your colleagues, whether teachers in your school or other heads. Whilst you are doing the activities you will be involved in reflection, in which you are encouraged to think through issues, to reconsider standard practices, and to seek alternative solutions to solving problems. Within the units there are regular commentaries which draw together loose ends and consolidate principles. The study of these resources will not be complete until there is some action by you in the way in which your school is organised and managed, following guidelines included in each unit. Evaluation, especially self-evaluation (which also relates to the concept of reflection above) is the last element in this cycle.

The cycle of learning within each unit is illustrated below:



How are the modules and units organised?

Each module has a standard general introduction (which you are now reading) and an introduction which is specific to the unit.

Each unit is written in a standard form, as follows:

Introduction: This provides an overview of the contents of each unit and provides a link between the units in the module.

Individual study time: An estimate is given of the amount of time you will require to study the unit on your own, including all of the activities. Of course, if you are working in a group it is likely that more discussion will be generated and thus more time will be required.

Learning outcomes: These provide a series of statements about what you might expect to cover and learn if you complete a unit.

Activities: These require your involvement, perhaps by drawing on your experience, or through the gathering of data. Sometimes an activity comes at the start of a section, and sometimes an activity follows a piece of text. It is important that you do all the activities, as they form the core of each unit and provide the basis of the interactive approach to learning used here. As the activities vary considerably in character you should read the instructions carefully.

Comments: Avoid looking at the sections which follow most of the activities until you have completed each one. The comments are intended to provide a discussion of some of the points you may have identified in the activity. They are not intended as model answers.

Summary: This appears at the end of each unit to pull together the ideas which have been brought out.

Reference materials

None of the modules can be studied without access to other materials, the most important of which should already be at hand in your school or at your local District Education Office.

Important materials published in your country or available in your school include:

- the constitution
- education acts
- by-laws relating to your state, region or district
- civil service rules and regulations
- executive instruments on education
- policy papers, guidelines and circulars from the Ministry of Education
- code of conduct for teachers
- the constitution of the board of governors or school committee
- annual reports, speeches, exam results, pupil/staff data, etc.
- school account books, stores ledgers, rules and regulations, timetables, circulars, report forms, minutes of meetings, etc.
- pupils' exercise books and work.

You should also look out for books about the history and development of education in your country, and within Africa. In addition there are usually many useful articles on current educational issues in newspapers and magazines, and on radio

and TV.

You should also have to hand a good dictionary.

Readings

In addition there are very many books on management, including educational management. We would suggest you look for these in your local bookshops and libraries; it is possible that the Association of School Heads in your country produces an up-to-date list of current management materials and where they may be obtained.

However, it is unlikely that many titles will be readily available to the average school head, particularly those in rural areas. We hope that the publication of these modules will encourage more people to write complementary texts and for publishers to ensure the availability of relevant books on educational management wherever schools are located.

Here we have limited the list of books to those written specifically for educational managers in Africa.

Adesina S (1990) Educational Management, Enugu: Fourth Dimension

Asiedu-Akrofi K (1978) School Organisation in Modern Africa, Tema: Ghana Publishing Corporation

Chung F (1988) Basic Principles of Administration, Harare: College Press

Fagbulu A M (1972) Administrative Practice for Teachers, Ibadan: Evans

Mbamba A M [Editor], with Nwagwu N A and Joof M B (1992) Handbook on Training Methods in Educational Management, Harare: Unesco

Mbamba A M [Editor], with Nwagwu N A and Joof M B (1992) Book of Readings in Educational Management, Harare: Unesco

Mbiti D M (1976) Foundations of School Administration, Nairobi: Oxford University Press

Musaazi J C S (1982) The Theory and Practice of Educational Administration, London: Macmillan

Ozigi A O (1977) A Handbook of School Administration and Management, London: Macmillan

