



[About the
Modules](#)

[Preface](#)

[General
Introduction](#)

[Contents](#)

[Introductory
Module](#)

[Module One](#)

[Module Two](#)

[Module Three](#)

[Module Four](#)

[Module Five](#)

[Module Six](#)

[Module Seven](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Home](#)

*[Visit our
website](#)*

Introductory Module - A User's Guide

Approaches to Using the Modules: A Guide for Trainers

A number of modules have been developed as part of the Commonwealth Secretariat 'Better Schools' programme. These modules, and others that may be produced subsequently, are intended to help school managers improve their performance. A list of the modules currently available is given on [page xi-xii](#) of each module ([on pages v-vi](#) of this volume). Background information detailing how they were produced, the target group and how they are to be used, is also given in the preface and general introduction to each module.

This guide is meant to help you use these modules in a manner that will enable you to grow and develop professionally both as an individual and as a member of a group. The guide will draw your attention from time to time to units and sections in Modules 1-7, as these are the modules available at the time of writing. Its use, however, is meant to extend to any other modules that will be produced under this programme.

While the style of writing conforms to that of others in the series, this module does not suggest study times for specific activities, believing that these units provide supplementary material which should be used in conjunction with the related modules.

Objectives

After working through this module you should be able to:

- determine and prioritise your training needs
- appreciate the need for individual initiative to enhance your professional development
- identify initiatives for self-development in which you and your staff can engage
- distinguish between training and professional development
- apply effective group processes to improve the management of your school
- plan and implement a programme aimed at improving yourself and your school.

Units

This guide is divided into five units:

[Unit 1: Demands on school managers](#)

The purpose of this unit is to make you reflect on the demands made on school managers by a wide variety of stakeholders, vis-a-vis the inadequate preparation they get for the jobs. The unit ends by suggesting how you can determine and prioritise your training needs.

[Unit 2: Initiatives for self-development](#)

In this unit you will learn of some initiatives for self-development which you can undertake at school, cluster, district and at other broader levels. The Commonwealth 'Better Schools' Programme is an example of such initiatives taken at a level that goes beyond the borders of individual countries.

Unit 3: Professional development

Here you will distinguish professional development from training from the examples given. While both training and professional development have a place in improving performance, given the resource constraints experienced by most countries, the unit emphasises the need for school managers to take the initiative in promoting their own development.

Unit 4: Working in peer groups

This unit recognises that you, as a school manager, have to work with and in groups. It therefore exposes you to some methods, techniques and procedures that you can use to get your groups working more effectively for the improvement of your school.

Unit 5: Making your school better

This unit is both a theme that runs across all the modules and a challenge to you, the school manager. If you are to make your school better than it was before you were appointed, then you should plan for its development. This unit is meant to help you manage the process of school-development planning. It includes a comprehensive series of self-evaluation guides in Appendices [A](#) and [B](#).

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