

**An Evaluation of the
Managerial Skills Training Programme
for Primary School Heads
in Zimbabwe**



By

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

B. Ed.	Bachelor of Education degree
BSPZ	Better Schools Programme of Zimbabwe
M. Ed	Masters in Education degree
MOESC	Ministry Of Education, Sports and Culture
MSTP	Managerial Skills Training Programme
SDC	School Development Committee
SDA	School Development Association
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Education Fund

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF THE BASELINE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This report presents the findings of a study to evaluate the Managerial Skills Training Programme (MSTP) for primary school heads in Zimbabwe that was jointly run by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture (MOESC) and the United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) between 1996 and the year 2000. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the impact of The Managerial Skills Training Programme, to identify gaps in the programme, to solicit perceptions on future options regarding the development of the school heads and to examine ways of ensuring and supporting efforts at utilising the skills acquired. The report covers the terms or reference for the evaluation, a theoretical background to the role of the school head in education, the methodology used to conduct the evaluation of the study, findings and recommendations from the evaluation.

1.1 Overview of School Management and Background to the Managerial Skills Training Programme

The traditional management practice in education is characterised by centralization and bureaucratic practices that rely heavily on central control of schools. In this context school headship was viewed as a promotion post mostly held by senior teachers as a kind of reward for either their experience, good teaching or a combination of both experience and good teaching. Rarely was promotion to school headship granted on the basis of learned or demonstrated administrative skills. There was also very little done to prepare the promoted teacher for the role of school headship. The assumption was that, since these were good or experienced teachers, they would be able to refine their philosophies, acquire skills and develop competencies that would enable them to manage schools successfully.

Consequently, on appointment, the school heads tended to learn on the job with very little appropriate training in management. Invariably such school heads had problems in the management of schools because they were not prepared for the increased and demanding responsibilities vested in the school head and the multiplicity and complexity of tasks involved in the management of schools. The school head's position demands more than being a good teacher and more than the teaching experience the teachers acquire. Researches have shown that a school heads knowledge and skills in school management are the key to developing successful schools. This requires that school heads should be trained and developed so that they can acquire the requisite managerial skills, knowledge and attitudes.

Current trends in the management of schools have had significant effects on the operational and developmental roles of school heads. There has been a move towards school based management. One of the main features of school based management is decentralisation which forces schools to be accountable for the services they provide. Decentralisation has also led to a shifting of most school management responsibilities to the school head. This implies that the school head is responsible for raising standards in the schools and for ensuring school effectiveness and improvement. In addition, developments in the

management of schools also show that issues of quality control, quality assurance and accountability are taking centre stage. The above implies that the school is now the major unit of change. This makes the school head a key figure in the management of change. It also implies that school heads need to change the way in which they work, think, learn and lead. This requires training and development. However, the planning and implementation of a training programme for school heads who are adults needs careful thought. It requires needs assessment so that the content and processes of training are sensitive and responsive to the needs of the participants. The activities organised need to provide the participants with opportunities for intellectual, social and educational growth. Thus, the way the participants react to the approaches of training is partly a reflection of the quality of the approaches, the materials and processes. Consequently, materials and approaches used in the training of adults should exploit the prior knowledge of the participants and examples should be drawn from the current experiences of the participants. The environment in which the participants learn should be supportive so that the participants are willing to participate, experiment and share views with colleagues. The environment should be stimulating and challenging. It should also encourage participants to appraise their performance and values.

In 1990, the Government of Zimbabwe was a signatory to the World Conference in Education held in Jomtien in Thailand. The Jomtien Conference reinforced the concept and policy of universal primary education. In addition the Jomtien Conference emphasised the improvement of quality and relevance of education. This influenced the shift of the Zimbabwean government from quantitative expansion of education to qualitative expansion in education. Thus, the school became the major unit of change and this posed a challenge on the school managers to improve education services offered by their schools.

In addition to the above, recent developments in education in Zimbabwe included the decentralisation of some management functions to school heads. This included functions such as financial management, staff development, performance management, marketing the school. This resulted in the increase of management responsibilities for school heads. Coupled with this, Statutory Instruments No. 87 of 1992 and No. 379 of 1998 establishing School Development Committees and School Development Associations respectively were promulgated outlining the involvement of communities in the management of schools and provision of resources to improve the education service. This involvement has led to parents now demanding more accountability from the school heads. Parents want to see the value of sending their children to school. Value, it can be argued, is a factor of the service provided. Thus, this situation put pressure on school heads to improve the quality of the service provided by their schools, a task which is not easy to undertake and accomplish without adequate and relevant training.

In response to the changes and developments in education, the Ministry of Education in conjunction with Higher Education institutions and other organisations embarked on initiatives to train school heads. To this end, from 1995 the then Ministry of Education and UNICEF carried out a Managerial Skills Training Programme for Primary School Heads. This was aimed at improving school management and ultimately contribute towards the improvement of quality and relevance of education. The Managerial Skills Training Programme was designed to impart skills and knowledge in specific school management areas identified through a Baseline Survey carried out by officials from the Ministry of Education and UNICEF.

1.2 Summary and conclusions of the Baseline Study

The Baseline Survey of the Managerial Skills of Primary School Heads in Zimbabwe was carried out by the officials from the then Ministry of Education and UNICEF. This Survey was meant to find out the skill needs of the Primary school heads. The findings of the Survey highlighted the following issues:

1. School heads had undergone limited training in management. Consequently, school heads did not have adequate understanding of their role and functions as school heads. There were deficiencies in the way school heads managed their schools.
2. School heads lacked conceptual skills in management that would enable them to be effective in their roles and functions as managers of schools.
3. School heads needed to be equipped with entrepreneurial and problem-solving skills and a change of attitudes in their own perceptions of their roles and functions.
4. Specific areas that needed attention in training of school heads include personnel management, public relations within the school and curriculum supervision, financial management, record keeping, planning, time management and management of school property. Specifically, school heads needed to be trained in proper communication, and involvement of all actors in decision making and motivation of the teachers.
5. School heads also needed to be trained on how to translate the mission statement of the school into objectives and objectives into action plans and activities and how to appraise the performance of the teachers.
6. School heads needed skills in planning and monitoring the effective and efficient use of their time and the time of staff members, and in the maintenance and utilisation of school property, including infrastructure and teaching and learning materials.

Specifically, the Managerial Skills Training Programme focussed on Principles of Management, Planning, Motivation, Recruitment and Selection, Delegation, Budgeting and Budgeting Control, and Leadership. Modules, handouts, teaching/learning aids and facilitators guides in these seven key areas were developed to facilitate the training of the Primary School heads. In addition, a core team of facilitators was trained in how to train adults. Workshops for the Primary School Heads were conducted with each session covering two modules. Each module was expected to be covered in two days and each facilitator was expected to train a maximum of 20 participants in each session. However, this training was carried out at a time when there were other training programmes for school heads such as the Better Schools Programme, the Bachelor of Education Degree in Educational Administration Planning and Policy Studies offered by the Zimbabwe Open University and the Department of Educational Administration in the Faculty of Education at the University of Zimbabwe. Other tertiary institutions have also since come on board in the training of school heads.

It is against this background that the MOESC and UNICEF commissioned an evaluation team to evaluate the Managerial Skills Training Programme for Primary School Heads. The main

purpose of the evaluation was to assess the impact of the Managerial Skills Training Programme for primary school heads.

1.3 Terms of reference for the Managerial Skills Training Programme

The specific objectives as outlined in the Terms of Reference were:

1. To assess whether the trained head teachers consider themselves to be better managers (e. g. in terms of increasing demand for education, increasing community participation, bringing in participatory approaches to school development, attracting more resources and utilising them more effectively, etc), and to solicit their views on what support or changes might be needed to ensure that the acquired skills are effectively utilised;
2. To determine whether the teachers, the supervisors of head teachers and the community leadership consider that their schools are better managed after the school heads have attended the courses;
3. To assess the managerial skills training programme itself in terms of gaps, relevance, and adequacy in the light of the recommendations of the baseline study and the recent decentralisation and restructuring reforms and the increasing demands on the school head;
4. To assess the effectiveness of the programme implementation process in terms of, among other variables, the approaches adopted, teaching/learning methods, the materials, caliber of facilitators and general logistics; and to suggest alternative arrangements that could be considered for adoption in the future;
5. To find out about other head teacher skills strengthening programmes currently in place or planned, and to assess the level and the potential of developing linkages and collaborative efforts.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology used to conduct the study, and the measures taken to build reliability and validity into the instruments used and the data collected.

2.1 Study design

The study was conducted through a survey in three provinces chosen by UNICEF, Mashonaland Central, Manicaland and Matabeleland South. Most of the data presented in this report were collected using self-administered questionnaires to school heads and to a sample of their teachers, as well as through interviews with regional programme managers and trainers and representatives of school development committees and focus group discussions with teachers.

2.2 Instrumentation

Following an outcomes-based approach to evaluation, where the critical measure of success of a training intervention is the on-the-job behaviour of the trained personnel, evaluation items assessed the extent to which the desirable behaviours of a good school manager were evident in the school heads day-to-day performance of their work. The items covered all the management tasks that had been identified in the baseline study.

Draft instruments were discussed between the consultants and with representatives of UNICEF, before being revised and produced as the final instruments. These measures were considered adequate in terms of building reliability and validity (content and construct) into the instruments.

2.3 Data collection

Interviews were held with MOESC officials at Head Office, UNICEF representatives and the programme manager in each province to find out how they had managed the training, the problems they had encountered, and how they evaluated the programme. Data were collected from a sample of approximately fifteen per cent of the schools in the district.

The consultants distributed to and collected completed instruments from as many school heads and their teachers as could be found along selected routes in the districts. Instructions on how to complete the instruments were verbally explained to the respondents. It was particularly emphasised to teachers that since their names nor those of their school heads were required on the questionnaires, they were to be completely objective in their response and without fear of victimisation. It was also emphasized that the participants were engaged

in an exercise of national importance for which the utmost level of objectivity was required. These measures were considered comprehensive and adequate to ensure the collection of reliable and valid information.

Data were also collected through interviews from Regional Directors or Deputy Regional Directors in the provinces sampled, Standards Control personnel in the MOESC, Zimbabwe Open University and Better School Programme of Zimbabwe personnel. Focus group discussions were held with teachers where possible.

2.4 Data analysis

Data were collected from seventy-two school heads and three hundred and ninety-eight teachers. The quantitative data were analysed using an SPSS Release 6.1 statistical package, while the qualitative data were analysed qualitatively. The results of the analyses are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis. The results of the interviews with MOESC Head Office representatives, UNICEF officials, programme managers and trainers are presented first. Demographic information is then presented on the primary school heads, followed by descriptive information about the school heads' perceived management practices as given by the heads themselves, their teachers and by members of School Development Committees (SDC).

3.1 Ministry's views on the managerial skills training programme

Interviews were held with the Deputy Secretary in charge of Primary Schools in the ministry on the ministry's evaluation of the MSTP. Ministry was grateful to UNICEF for the managerial skills programme. MOESC viewed the MSTP as one of its most successful education improvement programmes and attributed most of the success to the close collaboration between the ministry and its development partner, UNICEF. UNICEF's approach to this project was viewed as client-based and not donor-driven, and so based on the client's real needs. The carrying out of a baseline study to establish the specific training needs of the primary school heads was viewed most favourably by the ministry. The baseline study provided reliable information on which the MSTP was founded, hence its success.

The ministry wondered whether UNICEF could extend the programme to reach secondary school heads as well. Another idea expressed was whether UNICEF could consider providing the ministry with the gullies for the modules so that the ministry can, given resources, reproduce the modules for future use either in the further training of primary school heads or for the training of secondary school heads.

3.2 UNICEF's views on the managerial skills training programme

The deputy programme officer in the Education Unit at UNICEF and a programme assistant were interviewed to seek the organisation's views on the managerial skills training programme. As far as UNICEF were concerned, MSTP was a great success in certain respects although they felt that the decisive evaluation had to be that of the programme beneficiaries and the stakeholders closest to teaching and learning in the schools. MSTP had been successful in that it highlighted the current performance of heads, and consequently their strengths and weaknesses. This created a solid base for education improvement interventions, the MSTP being the first. The programme also created an opportunity for school heads to work together much more and share experiences and ideas on educational management than had hitherto been the case. The participatory approaches used both in the

conduct of the baseline study and the execution of the MSTP must have contributed to the sense of ownership and commitment that prevails in the MOESC and heads. The deputy programme officer further felt that the MSTP had beneficial spin-offs in that, based on the success of the MSTP intervention, the model of development aid was adopted in UNICEF's other programmes such as the Early Childhood Education programme.

The programme was, however not without its share of problems. It was the view of the programme assistant that the programme was very unevenly executed. Some provinces were way ahead of others, and not the same number of modules were covered in the provinces. All heads were supposed to receive training in all the six modules that had been developed but this was not the case. Some districts in the provinces did as little as one module. Again, while the intention was that all heads in post at the time of the programme should receive managerial skills training, this did not happen. There are heads who did not, for various reasons, receive the training even though attendance of the training was supposed to be mandatory. At the time of the evaluation (May-July, 2000), only about ninety percent of the heads had undergone some training yet the original programme schedule was that all heads would have been trained by December 1999.

There were problems with the modules as well. The original plan was to produce seven modules but in the end only six modules were produced. The module on communication was not produced. Feedback from course participants also indicated that the content in some of the modules was considered to be shallow.

Other areas for improvement included programme monitoring, selection of trainers, and programme planning. The deputy programme officer felt that there had been too much dependency on reports from the programme managers in the field and the occasional visit by UNICEF officers. If this programme were run again, there would be need to establish an independent joint monitoring team between the development partners which would have the power and authority to take corrective action as the programme runs, rather than wait for a summative evaluation conducted at the end.

On trainers, there is need to select the trainers on the basis of the same criteria across all regions, and not the situation with the MSTP where regions used their own criteria. It would be necessary to select trainers who held the highest professional qualifications available in the country among the primary school heads and education supervisors. Furthermore, better planning could be achieved in the number of heads that could be realistically trained in a given time period. The present programme appears to have over-estimated the number of heads that could be trained. Lastly, given the benefit of hindsight, perhaps the programme should have had an in-built self-sustenance feature. As it is, the MOESC is left with the a good programme but without the resources nor developed capacity to continue it.

All in all, the deputy programme officer felt that the MSTP had acquitted itself well, and that useful lessons had been learnt.

The other UNICEF officer interviewed was the programme assistant (Education), who was responsible for the financial management on the programme. The feedback from this officer was that the programme had stayed within budget and that the financial control systems in place had brought about this result. All regions were required to present budgets against which funds were released and accounted for. Regions were required to provide such

information as the number of workshops run, amounts re-imbursed to participants for travel, proof of receipt of the re-imburement in the form of participants' signatures against the reimbursements, and such costs as for meals and boarding for each workshop. In the event that the programme were run again, the assistant suggested a return to direct funding of programmes in the regions, with the funds being advanced to the regional directors, who would then become the regional accounting officers. This approach would speed up the implementation of the programme thereby increasing its efficiency.

3.3 Programme managers and trainers' perceptions of the programme

The managerial skills programme was a joint offering of the Zimbabwe government through the MOESC and UNICEF. UNICEF provided the financial resources and basic equipment used to conduct the baseline survey, develop the training materials, and run the training programme. As its contribution, MOESC provided the personnel for running the programme. These people were not paid additionally to their salaries.

Programme managers and trainers were selected by Regional Directors from among their Education Officers and experienced school heads. It is these programme managers who organised and coordinated the running of the training programmes in the provinces. We were told that initially programme managers and trainers developed their training programme for each year and then submitted their budget to UNICEF for release of funds. On receiving the budgets, UNICEF released funds to the requesting province and then monitored its utilisation. This approach was however, later changed to a system where the direct funding of training in each province by UNICEF was changed to one where UNICEF released funds to the MOESC for onward disbursement to the provinces. Programme managers and trainers decried this change as it introduced long delays in the disbursement of the funds, thus affecting their operational plans.

The logistics of running the programme in each province did not seem to present major problems. Suitable training venues could be secured, there were people willing to be trainers, and most of the school heads turned up for training when called to the training venue. The programme managers and trainers, however felt that the absence of a responsibility allowance for both the managers themselves and the trainers affected people's motivation and commitment to the programme. In some cases running the programme resulted in programme managers incurring personal expenses that they could not claim from either UNICEF nor the government.

The main logistical problem raised by programme managers was the delay in the release of project funds to the regions. The change by UNICEF from direct funding to the regions to the indirect funding through the MOESC Head Office which occurred mid-way through the programme was a retrogressive step. This move reportedly caused delays in commencement of training, and was largely responsible for the delay in the finishing of training in Matabeleland South and Manicaland which up to the time of the evaluation in July 2000 had not completed training which had initially been targeted to end in December, 1999.

Another issue raised by the programme managers and trainers was the absence of any certification to graduates of the programme. They felt that certificates of attendance would have further motivated school heads to attend the courses, as well as act as evidence in the future of having undertaken some management studies.

3.3.1 Selection and training of trainers

The selection of trainers was done by regional programme managers. Most of the trainers were experienced school heads, and a few were Education Officers. There was no standard criteria used in the selection of the trainers neither did the training cover the same issues in all the regions. In Mashonaland Central, trainers were required to have at least a Bachelor of Education degree over and above being experienced primary school heads, while in the other provinces the selection criteria were mainly experience as a headmaster, and being known to have facilitated in other programmes, such as Early Childhood Education and Gender programmes. However, invariably the majority of the trainers in Manicaland were school heads who either were Bachelor of Education degree in Educational Administration graduates or were enrolled on the programme.

There appear to have been differences in the content of the train-the-trainer programmes conducted in the sampled provinces. In Manicaland and Mashonaland Central, trainers were trained on the content of the managerial skills training modules, as well as on adult education methodologies. In Matabeleland South, all trainers were trained more on Adult Education methodology than on the subject matter in the modules. For the managerial skills modules, the trainers studied on their own and in groups. We also learnt that in Manicaland, a number of people who had not been trained as trainers ended up training, either because they were known by the programme manager or District Education Officers to be able trainers or to be enrolled on the Bachelor of Education, Educational Administration degree programme.

3.3.2 Programme coverage

At the time of the evaluation, the programme had been completed in only one of the three provinces - Mashonaland Central, with Manicaland and Matabeleland South at varying phases of completion. The inadequacy of financial resources and size of the province were blamed for the failure by Manicaland to complete the managerial skills training programme, while the programme manager for Matabeleland South blamed the situation on the delay in disbursement of funds as a result of the change from direct payment to the province by UNICEF to the indirect Head Office payment method.

3.3.3 Method of financial disbursement

Programme managers and trainers in all the regions decried the change of funding method from direct payment to the regions to the indirect approach where UNICEF released the funds to the MOESC Head Office, which in turn released the funds to the regions. This change resulted in long delays in training. The consultants were, for example, told that training which had been scheduled for completion by December 1999 in Matabeleland South and Manicaland had not been completed when we visited the regions in July, 2000.

There was also concern over the failure by UNICEF to initially recognize the size of the regions in its determination of funding levels. We were told that all regions were supported to the same amount of money, even though provinces like Manicaland are more than twice

the size of Mashonaland Central. This was said to have affected the extent to which large provinces could reach all primary school heads as well as the extent to which training could be provided in all modules in the managerial skills training programme. Although this was rectified, it had already derailed the progress of the programme in big regions.

3.3.4 Programme resources

Educational resources for the programme were considered to have been adequate. UNICEF had provided adequate stationery, flip charts, learning materials such as modules and handouts. Problems were encountered though in relation to transport and equipment. There was a shortage of transport in the regions resulting in programme managers and trainers using their own vehicles to travel to and from training venues. Each region had been supplied with an overhead projector, television monitor and video cassette recorder as well as a photocopier. However there was a breakdown in communication with regard to what the equipment was for, particularly because there was more than one programme running in the provinces at that time. The equipment was felt to be inadequate for the training in all districts of each region.

The non-payment of even a responsibility allowance for programme managers and trainers was considered an issue. Programme managers and trainers felt that running the programme was an honourous responsibility involving being responsible for millions of dollars and often being on duty twenty-four hours a day. There were no financial resources provided for incidental expenses, and programme managers and trainers often had to use their own money for such work-related expenses as telephone calls.

Lack of recognition for the extra work done by the programme managers, trainers and participants was also cause for concern. There was a general feeling that recognition in the form of certificates would have enhanced enthusiasm and commitment.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the modules

Programme managers and trainers felt that the modules were relevant and, in the main, were of challenging depth. They were said to have been written in understandable language, had applicable illustrations and covered the basics that the school heads needed to effectively run their schools. The budgeting and budget control module was singled out as the one that, although very useful and dealing with issues relevant to proper financial accounting, was rather difficult to understand and apply to both the rural and urban school situations. In some cases, facilitators ended up bringing in staff from the accounts/financial side of the organisation to facilitate that part of the set of modules. The module on Performance Appraisal was considered rather shallow and sending conflicting messages to those sent by Public Service training of school heads on Performance Management. There was need to reconcile the two training approaches.

3.3.6 Implementers' overall evaluation of the managerial skills training programme

It is the view of the programme managers and trainers that the managerial skills training programme was a great success. As they went around carrying out their normal duties as EOs, the programme managers and trainers all said that they had seen marked change in the management practices of primary school heads. School heads were reported to be now using planning tools such as Gantt charts, developing school mission statements and generating development action programmes, and treating teachers in their schools in much more collegial manner than they did before. School heads were also reported to be managing school funds much better than they did previously. There had even been a decrease in the number of reported cases of financial irregularity in the primary schools. It was the view of the programme managers and trainers that the managerial skills training programme had been so successful that secondary school heads were asking for the same training.

3.3.7 Implementers' suggestions on programme improvements

Programme managers and trainers were asked to suggest improvements if the programme were run again. Managers were unanimous that serious consideration should be given to extending the programme to secondary school heads. Other suggestions were:

- Improve the content of the modules to make it more challenging.
- Using trainers with at least a Bachelor of Education degree, and standardizing their training.
- Use trainers in districts other than their districts of origin so as to enhance trainer credibility.
- Establish programme continuity and not the once-off experience that it has been.
- Consider providing the same training to deputy school heads and senior teachers.
- Consider making the programme part of the regular menu of a government training institute such as Management Training Bearau in Masasa, Harare.
- Consider using education-related financial people such as MOESC finance officers and school bursars to run the budgeting and budget control module.
- Improve the time of the programme. Taking head teachers for a whole week out of their school during term time is undesirable, although a week's training is also inadequate.
- Dovetail the managerial skills programme with the Better Schools Programme of Zimbabwe. Although the BSPZ covers issues of educational management at a lower level, the clusters that have been successfully used by BSPZ can also be used by the school head teachers to discuss the content and application of the managerial skills programme.
- Offer the same programme to secondary school heads as well.

On the whole programme managers and trainers felt that the programme had been a great success. It had improved head teachers confidence in their work, their relationship with their communities, and with their teachers and pupils.

3.4 School heads' evaluation of their own management values and practices

3.4.1 Demographic information on the primary school heads

School heads participating in the study were drawn from the three provinces of Mashonaland Central, Manicaland and Matabeleland South. The largest number of participating school heads (35) was drawn from Matabeleland South followed by Manicaland which had twenty-eight participants while Mashonaland Central had seven. Forty-seven of the school heads were male and twenty-five were female. The majority of these school heads (42) were drawn from rural schools. Most of the school heads were forty years or older in age, with only one being thirty years or under. In terms of education, most of them had either a certificate in education (32) or a Bachelor of Education degree (18) (Table 1). The Diploma in education qualification is the replacement to the certificate in education qualification. When seen as one therefore, more than half of the participating school heads (39) had the basic qualification for a primary school teacher.

The school heads' experience as school head varied from less than one year (1) to having over twenty years experience (16) with the majority of them (43) having been school heads for between six and twenty years.

Table 1: Distribution of the school heads' highest professional qualification

Value Label	Value	Valid Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent	Percent
MEd in Ed Admin	1	1	1.4	1.4	1.4
MEd	2	1	1.4	1.4	2.8
BEd	3	18	25.0	25.0	27.8
Dip Ed	4	7	9.7	9.7	37.5
CE	5	32	44.4	44.4	81.9
Other	6	13	18.1	18.1	100.0
Total		72	100.0	100.0	

Although most heads had been school heads for more than six years, 44.4% of them had a length of service in their school of five years or less (Table 2). This suggests that there was a high mobility of school heads in the studied provinces.

The school heads were also asked to indicate whether they were members of the Better Schools Programme of Zimbabwe (BSPZ) or not and most of them (47) said that they were, with only twenty-three saying that they were not. Membership of BSPZ could enhance the school heads' sharing of experiences in school management, hence our desire to find out how many of the school heads participated in BSPZ activities.

Table 2: Distribution of school heads' length of service in the school

Value Label	Value	Valid		Cum	
		Frequency	Percent	Percent	Percent
Less than 1yr	1	2	2.8	2.8	2.8
1-5yr	2	30	41.7	41.7	44.4
6-10yr	3	20	27.8	27.8	72.2
11-15yr	4	7	9.7	9.7	81.9
16-20yr	5	6	8.3	8.3	90.3
Over 20yr	6	7	9.7	9.7	100.0
Total		72	100.0	100.0	

3.4.2 School heads' evaluation of their own management practices

The school heads were asked to evaluate their management practices by indicating how often they performed a number of management functions. Nearly eighty-five percent of the school heads said that they always encouraged teamwork among their teachers, while almost all the rest said that they frequently encouraged teamwork among the teachers (Table 3). Ninety-seven per cent of the school heads said that they either always or frequently delegated responsibility to teachers who performed well in the school.

Table 3: Frequency of the extent to which school heads encourage team effort among teachers.

Value Label	Valid		Cum	
	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Percent
Seldom	2	2.8	2.8	2.8
Always	59	81.9	81.9	84.7
Frequently	11	15.3	15.3	100.0
Total	72	100.0	100.0	

On how accessible the school heads felt they were, only three of the respondents said that they were seldom accessible, while the rest either said that they always or were frequently accessible to teachers. Ninety-seven per cent of the school heads said that they were either always or frequently accessible to pupils while ninety-six per cent of the school heads felt that they were either always or frequently accessible to the parents.

Heads were asked to indicate the extent to which they encouraged teachers to express their feelings about professional matters. Sixty-four per cent of the respondents considered that they always or frequently encouraged staff to share their professional views. School heads

were additionally asked a number of questions on how well they provided professional guidance to their teachers. Ninety-five percent of them said that they either always or frequently encouraged teachers to bring forth their professional problems for discussion (Table 4), ninety-five percent said that they either always or frequently encouraged teachers to develop and use strategies to implement school objectives, and ninety-six percent said that they either always or frequently used teachers' ideas and suggestions in planning school programmes.

Table 4: Frequency of the extent to which school heads encouraged teachers to bring up their professional problems for discussion

Value Label	Valid Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent	Percent
Always	48	66.7	66.7	66.7
Frequently	20	27.8	27.8	94.5
Seldom	4	5.5	5.5	100.0
Total	72	100.0	100.0	

The pattern of response was the same when school heads were asked to indicate the extent to which they worked with parents in managing the school, allocated resources based on identified needs, used classroom visits and supervision as a teacher development opportunity, used proper books of accounts in managing school finance, and kept teachers informed on school budgets, among other questions.

3.4.3 School heads' espoused school management values

School heads were asked to indicate how important they thought it was for them to hold certain school management values and practice certain management practices. Virtually all school heads said that it was very important for a school headmaster to have clearly defined goals, sixty-eight said that it was either very important or important for a headmaster to regularly meet with school parents to discuss the children's progress (Table 5), seventy thought that it was either very important or important to hold regular meetings with parents to discuss school development and sixty-eight of the seventy-two school heads said that it was either very important or important for school heads to involve parents in school decision-making. This pattern of response was clear throughout all questions on the school heads'

Table 5: Frequency of the extent to which school heads thought that meeting parents regularly to discuss their children’s progress was important

Value Label	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
None response	1	1.4	1.4	1.4
very important	42	58.3	58.3	59.7
important	26	36.1	36.1	95.8
somewhat important	3	4.2	4.2	100.0
Total	72	100.0	100.0	

espoused school management values. Some of the questions were on; involving teachers in making crucial decisions in the school, the need for school to have stated goals and objectives, the need to provide teachers with performance feedback, and the involvement of teachers and parents in the school budgeting process.

3.4.4 Frequency of school heads’ selected school management practices

The primary school heads were asked several questions to ascertain how frequently they performed certain management actions. Thirty-six school heads said that they, on average, informally met once a month with their teachers to discuss the teachers’ aspirations and problems, while twenty-one said that they did that once a term. Only one respondent said that they met their teachers only once in a year. On supervision of student teachers, forty-six of the seventy-two school heads said that they saw the student teachers once a month while another thirteen said they supervised student teachers one or twice per term. Regarding supervision of qualified teachers, the frequency of supervision varied from once a month (22) to once a term (20), with the largest number of them (28) saying that they supervised their teachers twice a term. When it came to staff development sessions with teachers, most school heads (54) said that they held these sessions every month (Table 6).

Only six of the school heads said that they held staff development sessions only once in a term. Parent-teacher meetings to discuss the academic progress of pupils were held once per term by forty-four of the seventy-two school heads.

Table 6: Frequency at which school heads held staff development sessions with teachers

Value Label	Frequency		Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
none response	1		1.4	1.4	1.4
once a month	54	75.0		75.0	76.4
once a term	6	8.3		8.3	84.7
twice a term	11		15.3	15.3	100.0
Total	72		100.0	100.0	

School heads appeared to be keeping a consistent monitoring of the management of school funds. Sixty-five percent of them said that they checked on the financial statements of the school once every month (Table 7), with the same number saying that they checked the school's receipt book every month (Table 8). High frequencies were also registered regarding the frequency of staff meetings, and supervision of weak teachers.

Table 7: Frequency at which school heads checked the financial statement of the school

Value Label	Frequency		Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
none response	1		1.4	1.4	1.4
once a month	65	90.3		90.3	91.7
once a term	4	5.6		5.6	97.2
twice a term	2		2.8	2.8	100.0
Total	72		100.0	100.0	

Table 8: Frequency at which school heads checked the school's receipt book

Value Label	Frequency		Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
none response	1		1.4	1.4	1.4
once a month	65	90.3		90.3	91.7
once a term	6	8.3		8.3	100.0
Total	72		100.0	100.0	

3.4.5 Frequency of school heads' review of school management systems

Twenty-eight school heads said that they reviewed the mission of the school at the start of the year (Table 9), with another twenty-five saying that they reviewed twice per year - at the beginning and at the end of the year.

Table 9: Timing and frequency of review of school mission statement

Value Label	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
none response	1	1.4	1.4	1.4
start of yr	28	38.9	38.9	40.3
end of yr	7	9.7	9.7	50.0
start and end of yr	25	34.7	34.7	84.7
when need arises	11	15.3	15.3	100.0
Total	72	100.0	100.0	

Twenty-nine school heads said that they reviewed the goals and objectives of the school at the start and end of a school year, with a further twenty-two saying that they reviewed the goals and objectives at the start of the year. As for policies twenty-six school heads said they reviewed theses at the start of the school year, nineteen said at the start and end of the year, while a further sixteen said they did it whenever they felt it was necessary. Thirty-three percent of the school heads said they reviewed school regulations and rules at the start of the year, twenty-six percent said they did that at both the start and end of the year, with a further twenty-five percent saying that they reviewed the regulations and rules when necessary. School heads were also asked to indicate how often they reviewed the strategies through which they implemented their school management and development plans. Forty-one percent said they reviewed at the start of the year, and thirty-one percent reviewed at both the beginning and end of the year.

3.4.6 Heads' perception of the relevance of the managerial skills training

School heads were asked to evaluate the relevance to their work of the training they had received in the areas of principles of management, motivation, recruitment and training, performance appraisal, leadership, planning and control and, budgeting and budget control.

Table 10: Perceived relevance of principles of management training to school heads' work.

Value Label	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
none response	2	2.8	2.8	2.8
relevant	8	11.1	11.1	13.9
very relevant	62	86.1	86.1	100.0
Total	72	100.0	100.0	

Virtually all the school heads (97%) said that the training in principles of management was either relevant or very relevant (Table 10), ninety-nine percent said motivation training was either relevant or very relevant (Table 11), and .

Table 11: Perceived relevance of motivation training to school heads' work.

Value Label	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
none response	1	1.4	1.4	1.4
relevant	17	23.6	23.6	25.0
very relevant	54	75.0	75.0	100.0
Total	72	100.0	100.0	

When it came to performance appraisal training, fewer school heads felt that the training had been useful to their work. Seventy-five percent felt that the training had either been relevant or very relevant while twenty-one percent felt the training had been either irrelevant or totally irrelevant (Table 35). Leadership training was considered relevant to very relevant by ninety-seven percent of the school heads while ninety-nine percent of them felt that planning and control training had been relevant to very relevant.

Table 12: Perceived relevance of performance appraisal training to school heads' work.

Value Label	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
none response	3	4.2	4.2	4.2
very irrelevant	3	4.2	4.2	8.3
irrelevant	12	16.7	16.7	25.0
relevant	24	33.3	33.3	58.3
very relevant	30	41.7	41.7	100.0
Total	72	100.0	100.0	

3.4.7 School heads' evaluation of the managerial skills training modules

Among other things, school heads were asked to evaluate the managerial skills training modules in terms of the relevance of their content to the school heads' work, depth of the subject matter, readability, clarity of terms used in the modules and applicability of the activities in the modules. All modules were considered by most school heads to have been either appropriate or most appropriate for the training in all the above areas.

School heads particularly felt that the modules on leadership, motivation, recruitment and training and, budgeting and budget control had provided them with vital knowledge in the management of schools. They however felt that, while the module on budgeting and budget control had been useful, they found it the most difficult to understand. Additionally, quite a few heads (16) felt that the content of the performance appraisal module lacked sufficient depth and a further sixteen felt that the activities used to illustrate the content in the module were not quite applicable to their work situations.

School heads were asked to indicate the aspects of their work for which the managerial skills course had least prepared them. While there were many responses here, the most common was on recruitment. Respondents felt that not enough personnel had been involved in the training, the course had not been handled well, and that it was difficult for the school heads to do anything about the other members of the interview panel such as parents' representatives and teachers who had not been to the same course. Respondents in urban areas felt that it had not been necessary for them to train in this module since they are not responsible for recruitment in their schools.

Other heads said that the budgeting and budget control module had been the least helpful to them because their schools employed bursars who were far better qualified to handle school finances than themselves.

3.4.8 Constraints in applying learnt knowledge

School heads indicated a number of constraints in applying what the managerial skills programme had taught them. These included resistance by school communities and teachers

to change, limited financial resources, being transferred from their school before they implemented their new knowledge, and bureaucracy in the ministry system that required school heads to report and get approval on intended changes before doing anything. The school heads also indicated that more time was needed before some of the ideas implemented could produce discernible results.

3.4.9 School heads' suggestions on how to improve implementation of managerial skills training

School heads made a number of suggestions for the improvement of the programme, if this programme were run again in the future. The duration of training for each module was considered inadequate. Training in each module had lasted for one week, and the school heads suggested extending the time to two weeks. School heads also felt that there was need to hold a number of workshops and refresher courses. School Development Committees needed to be exposed through workshops on their new more collaborative role in the management of schools. The school heads themselves felt that refresher courses would act as opportunities for review of knowledge, as well as provide opportunities for sharing experiences among themselves.

The Better Schools Programme (BSP) clusters were considered a useful forum for the improvement of the implementation of managerial skills. School heads suggested using these clusters to refresh on the managerial skills course, review implementation, and to educate deputy school heads and teachers on the managerial skills. Another suggestion given was to incorporate the managerial skills programme into the regular teacher training programme. That way, the knowledge and skills would not be lost to the education system through attrition among current school heads. Other ideas shared included de-emphasising the performance appraisal-rewards relationship during performance appraisal training, and the use of adequately qualified trainers. It was felt that in some cases, the trainers were of the same level of education and training as the course participants themselves thus there was no evidence of the trainers being able to help participants beyond what they already knew. There was need for trainers with the ability to go beyond and help participants find solutions to problems.

3.4.10 School heads' evaluation of the course facilitators

School heads thought well of their trainers. Seventy-one felt that their trainers had been competent in their areas of subject matter expertise (71), that the trainers knew how to work with mature, adult participants, and that the trainers were quite committed to their work (Table 13).

Table 13: Evaluation of the facilitators' competence

Criteria	Comments and their frequency (N)
competence	Trainers were competent in their area (71) Better qualified trainers were needed (1) Some facilitators lacked knowledge (6)
Ability to work with adult	Trainers demonstrated an ability to work with adults (40)
Commitment to their work	Trainers were committed and punctual (72)

3.4.11 Complementarity between managerial skills training and other programmes

School heads were asked what other training programmes they had attended had helped them improve their managerial skills. The other education improvement programmes such as BSP, gender training, AIDS education and performance appraisal training were said to have improved the school heads' management skills and understanding of issues underlying or related to management of schools. In addition, those school heads enrolled on further education programmes like the bachelor and master of education degrees reported that these programmes had improved their managerial competence.

3.4.12 Perceived impediments to implementation of managerial skills training

Heads were asked to name the impediments they faced in the implementation of managerial skills training. The major impediments reported were the lack of autonomy in schools where heads still needed the authorisation of their supervisors to make major curriculum and administrative changes, the lack of financial resources to provide for the educational needs of the children, and resistance to change by teachers and supervisors.

3.4.13 School heads' overall evaluation of the managerial skills training programme

The school heads' overall evaluation was that the managerial skills training programme had been a great success. The programme dealt with relevant subject matter, the manuals used were well-written, and the new knowledge and skills had gone a long way in improving the quality of the school heads' work. Many school heads saw the programme as an eye-opener that had immensely improved the tone of many schools. The school heads were more confident in managing schools.

The programme was not without its weaknesses though. School heads felt that the programme had been too short, that there was need to use trainers with university education

to avoid the situation where a trainer held lower qualifications than delegates to the course, inadequate breadth in the illustrations in the modules to cater for the different school types, and lack of a serious post-training follow-up by the ministry. In regions where school heads had only two modules, this was deemed as a great weakness.

3.5 Teachers' evaluation of school heads' management practices

3.5.1 Demographics on teachers

Three hundred and ninety-eight teachers, 192 of whom were female and 191 indicating that they were male participated in the study. Fifteen of the teachers did not indicate their gender. The majority of the teachers were classroom teachers, more than thirty years old and had stayed in their schools for more than five years.

3.5.2 Teachers' evaluation of the extent to which managerial practices are evident in the school head's work

Teachers were asked, using the same items that had been used with the school heads, to indicate the extent to which they could see evidence of desirable management behaviours in their school heads. Most of the teachers said that it was either occasionally obvious or always obvious that the school head had a vision for the school (Table 14), and that the school head's vision was always evident to the teachers (Figure 1).

Table 14: Teachers' perception of the extent to which the school head had a vision for the school

Value Label	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
none response	3	.8	.8	.8
always obvious	281	70.6	70.6	71.4
occasionally obvious	74	18.6	18.6	89.9
rarely	20	5.0	5.0	95.0
not obvious	20	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	398	100.0	100.0	

Equally high numbers of teachers also believed that there was high evidence of effective communication of school vision to the community and school children, judicious allocation of school resources, delegation of responsibility, and encouragement of high standards of performance among both the teachers and school children. Indeed, teachers rated their school heads very highly in all aspects. The consultants then decided to test whether this consistently high rating of the school heads' performance was different from region to region. Ninety-four percent of teachers in Mashonaland Central, ninety-three percent in Manicaland and eighty-seven percent of the teachers in Matabeleland South considered that their headmaster's vision

for the school was either occasionally obvious or always obvious (Table 15). On the extent to which that vision was understood by the teachers, eighty-five percent of the teachers in Mashonaland Central, eighty-eight percent in Manicaland, and eighty-one percent in Matabeleland South thought that the vision was either understood or very well understood by the teachers (Table 16). Teachers were asked to say to what extent they thought the school vision was also understood by parents. Eighty-eight percent in Mashonaland Central, eighty-seven percent in Manicaland and seventy-eight percent in Matabeleland South thought the vision was either understood or very well understood by the parents (Table 17).

Figure 1: The extent to which teachers believe the school vision is understood by teachers

Table 15: Extent to which school head is perceived to have a clear vision for the school by province.

PROVINCE	COUNT				Row Total
	always obvious	occasionally obv.	rarely obvious	not obvious	
Mash Central	27 (79.4)	5 (14.7)	1	1	34 (8.5%)
Manicaland	101 (82.8)	13 (10.7)	2	6	122 (30.7%)
Mat South	144 (62.9)	55 (24.0)	17	13	229 (57.5%)
No region name	10 282 (70.9%)	1 74 (18.6%)	0 20 (5.0%)	0 20 (5.0%)	11 (2.8%) 398 (100%)

Other provincial analyses done included school heads' awareness of teachers needs, the extent to which school heads practiced firm and consistent management of the school, school heads' delegation of responsibilities, and school heads' encouragement of high standards of work among teachers. The results of the analyses showed that the teachers found the behaviours quite evident in the management practices of their school heads, and that there were no discernible regional differences in these perceptions.

In addition to the questionnaires, the consultants also conducted focus group discussions with teachers in at least half of the schools from which data were collected.

Table 16: Extent to which school head is perceived to have a vision for the school understood by teachers by province.

PROVINCE	COUNT				Row Total
	always obvious	occasionally obv.	rarely obvious	not obvious	
Mash Central	18 (52.9)	11 (32.4)	3	2	34 (8.5%)
Manicaland	71 (58.2)	37 (30.3)	10	4	122 (30.7%)
Mat South	109 (47.6)	77 (33.6)	24	19	229 (57.5%)
No region name	9	3	0	0	11 (2.8%)
	282 (70.9%)	74 (18.6%)	20 (5.0%)	20 (5.0%)	398 (100%)

Table 17: Extent to which school head is perceived to have a clear vision for the school understood by parents by province.

PROVINCE	COUNT				Row Total
	always obvious	occasionally obv.	rarely obvious	not obvious	
Mash Central	14 (41.2)	16 (47.1)	3	1	34 (8.5%)
Manicaland	60 (49.2)	46 (37.7)	13	3	122 (30.7%)
Mat South	84 (36.7)	94 (41.0)	33	18	229 (57.5%)
No region name	6	5	0	0	11 (2.8%)
	282 (70.9%)	74 (18.6%)	20 (5.0%)	20 (5.0%)	398 (100%)

Results of the focus group discussions confirmed that school heads were seen as having a vision for the school and these visions were understood by the teachers. The school heads were seen to be including teachers in decision-making particularly in staff meetings. However this involvement varied from school to school and district to district.

All teachers agreed that their schools had mission statements drawn up jointly by teachers and school heads. However, although the majority of school heads had said they reviewed mission statements once every year, the majority of the teachers said that they did not review the mission statement annually. In the majority of the schools mission statements had been drawn up three or more years before. In addition, although teachers professed to have jointly drawn up the mission statement with the school heads, the teachers could not remember the mission statement. The teachers knew that these were hung in the school head's office. Only in a few schools did teachers remember the mission statement. However, in all schools teachers did not know how to translate the mission statement into activities that would enhance the accomplishment of the mission. Regarding motivation of teachers, in all schools teachers agreed that the school heads used various methods to motivate them to work harder.

3.6 School Development Committee members perception of the management practices of school heads

A number of interviews were held with either chairpersons, secretaries or treasurers of school development committees. The respondents were asked a number of questions on the extent to which there was cooperation between the school community and the headmaster in the running of the school, and the extent to which they observed positive behaviour change in their headmaster.

All respondents reported that they were informed of developments in the school. The school heads wrote letters to parents and to the chairpersons of the SDC whenever there was pertinent information to communicate to them. SDCs felt that they were partners with the heads and teachers in the provision of education in their schools. In particular, the interviewed SDC committee members agreed that there was joint planning of development projects for the school between the school personnel and SDC committees. The heads were reported to be members of school finance committees through which they participated in the management of school funds, and offered financial management advice to the SDC. Parents felt that they were meaningfully involved in the management of the school. They respected the division of the school administration into the professional and developmental arms, and did not involve themselves in the professional side of the school, unless invited by the heads to help the school with the discipline of the school children.

Heads were reported to have instilled in the communities a sense of ownership in the education of their children, and thus willing participation in the raising of funds to meet school needs. Relations between the schools and the communities were, in the main, reported to be good. The consultants were told in one school that the community was even providing resource people for the teaching of traditional music and dance in the school. The emerging picture is that SDC members felt that their relations with school heads were very warm, and that they were being given a role to play in the management of the schools.

3.7 Summary of results

Data were collected from seventy-two heads and three hundred, ninety-eight primary school teachers, MOESC and UNICEF representatives, regional programme managers, trainers and SDC members. The overwhelming response from heads and teachers was that desirable school management practices were clearly evident in the heads' work, that the MOESC, programme managers and SDC members all felt that the MSTP had been a great success that transformed the quality of primary school education in Zimbabwe. Shortcomings found had mainly been logistical (delays in release of funds, Uneven implementation rates, timing of the training, and selection of trainers). Other problems related to the the non-availability of one crucial module on Communication, the absence of an external programme monitoring system, and the lack of resources and autonomy by heads to implement their newly acquired knowledge and skills in the management of education. Based on these findings some conclusions and recommendations are made below.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary and conclusions drawn from the data presented in the preceding chapters. It also discusses the findings in light of the conclusions of the Baseline Study..

4.1 Summary and conclusions on the MSTP

The utility of conclusions drawn from a study depends largely on the integrity of the data on which the conclusions are based. The measures taken to ensure the reliability and validity of the data presented in this report are standard practice. Over and above that, the cross-tabulation of data on regional basis was done to check for evidence of any contamination of data through variation in field practices by the researchers. No such evidence of contamination was found. The results of the study must therefore be taken as an accurate reflection of the respondents' views on the quality of management evident in the heads' performance of their managerial tasks.

The summary and conclusions of the evaluation will be discussed under sub-headings related to the findings of the Baseline Survey reported in Chapter One and the objectives of the evaluation as outlined in the Terms of Reference.

4.2 Perceptions of school heads as managers

The school heads who participated in the Programme pointed out that they had benefited tremendously from the Programme. They had learnt how to work with teachers and parents in a transparent manner. The school heads admitted that they were implementing what they had learnt in the Programme and they were experiencing more gains than problems in the management of schools. All the school heads interviewed said they were working together with the SDA/SDC. Observations of the school heads during evaluation also revealed that the school heads appeared more confident in the manner in which they communicated with the teachers and the consultants.

School heads, however, decried limited financial resources in their schools, transfer from one school to another soon after completion of the training programme and bureaucracy in the Ministry of Education as the major obstacles to the implementation of the skills that they had learnt.

4.3 Stakeholders' perceptions of school heads' management of schools

Project co-ordinators, SDA/SDC members, Ministry Officials and teachers admitted that the school heads had obviously changed their perceptions of themselves as school managers in a positive manner. There was a general agreement that the school heads seemed to have a clearer understanding of their role as school heads and the functions they had to perform in the management of schools. The Project co-ordinators and the DEOs also felt that the Programme had built confidence in the school heads, had given them direction and dispelled fears in them on how to manage schools. The Programme had also given school heads the feeling that they are part of the education system and given them the incentive to work to bring changes in the system. The Programme had also exposed to the school heads their role in improving the quality of education.

The majority of the teachers in the focus group discussions indicated that they had observed an improvement in the manner in which school heads were managing schools. Focus group discussions also revealed that school heads were making an effort to include the teachers and parents in decision making and problem solving in schools. Teachers also pointed out that school heads were delegating tasks and responsibilities to the teachers in the various activities undertaken in the schools such as staff development committees, project committees etc. The SDA/SDC committee members interviewed agreed that the school heads' management of schools had improved as evidenced by the improved communication and collaboration with the SDA/SDC members and parents. School heads were also said to be involving the SDA/SDC committee members in administrative decision making particularly in issues that involved financing of school projects.

The majority of the school heads were also said to have improved in their motivation skills. The majority of the teachers in the focus group discussions admitted that school heads were using various methods to motivate the teachers. The most common method that they cited was praising of teachers when they did well in public fora such as staff meetings and open days.

However, there were certain weaknesses that had been alluded to by the respondents. DEOs and Project co-ordinators pointed out that those school heads who had low qualifications tended to consider what they had learnt and what was in the Modules as a “gospel truth” and could not go beyond what they gained in the Programme.

Another area of concern observed was in the implementation of the mission of the school. It was observed that in the majority of the schools visited, school heads had mission statements displayed in their offices. Focus group discussions with the teachers revealed that teachers had drawn up the mission statements of their schools with the school heads. However, focus group discussions also revealed that the teachers, despite having drawn up the mission statements with the school heads could not remember the text of the mission statements. It was also observed that all the teachers in the focus group discussions did not know how the mission statements could be translated into objectives and related activities. Teachers did not appear to understand their role in accomplishing the missions of their schools. This seems to suggest that school heads did not translate the mission statements into activities. This seems to suggest that school heads need more training in the conceptual skills of translating mission statements into objectives and activities.

The majority of the teachers also revealed that the majority of the school heads had no systematic method to identify the needs of teachers and pupils. In the light of current trends of improving the quality of education, this becomes a vital skill for the school heads to develop in order to be competitive and improve the quality of education in their schools.

4.4 Effectiveness of the Programme

4.4.1 Relevance and adequacy of the Programme

The Project co-ordinators and Ministry of Education officials deemed the objectives of the Programme as relevant to the managerial needs of the school heads. The Project co-ordinators, Ministry officials, school heads said the Programme was a resounding success. The majority of the school heads felt that the Programme had improved their management skills to a great extent. The school heads also pointed out that the Programme had formed a base of knowledge and skills for the newly appointed school heads and the experienced school heads especially those that had not had any training in management of schools. The majority of the school heads who had furthered their education through other staff development programmes such as the B. Ed degree programme in Educational Administration Planning and Policy Studies also said that they had benefited from the Programme as it had afforded them an avenue to analyse and interpret the practical aspects of the theories that they had learnt. They said that the Programme complemented the B Ed Programme and enhanced their understanding of the theories and concepts that they had learnt at undergraduate level.

4.4.2 Approaches used in implementing the Programme

The Programme utilised the participatory approach. This approach was deemed to be very appropriate by the school heads, the facilitators, the Project Co-ordinators and Ministry Officials. The maximum size of each group of participants for each training session which had been stipulated as 20 was adhered to in all the Regions that were sampled. Responses showed that, in general the size of the groups was considered to be appropriate by the school heads, the facilitators, the Project Co-ordinators and Ministry Officials. Respondents pointed out the major attribute of this approach was its ability to provide a fertile ground for the participants to exchange ideas and learn from each others experiences. School heads also pointed out that the use of case studies enabled them to analyse issues, problems and solutions. The facilitators and participants claimed that the case studies approach made them realise that the problems that they were facing in the schools were not unique and that there were solutions to the problems.

It was noted in all the Regions sampled that the Project Co-ordinators monitored and evaluated the activities during and at the end of the training sessions. In two of the Regions (Manicaland, Mashonaland Central) evaluation of the daily activities was carried out at the end of each day. This was more prevalent at the beginning of the Programme. This approach was deemed to have been very useful by both the Project Co-ordinators and facilitators. Of note was the merit that it enabled the Project Co-ordinators to alter aspects of the approaches they were using where it was deemed necessary. It also gave the Project Co-ordinators and facilitators a chance to help one another improve their presentations. This was deemed to have worked well particularly for those facilitators who appeared to be having problems.

4.4.3 Resources used in implementing the Programme

Material resources such as modules and handouts were provided by UNICEF and these were deemed to be adequate and appropriate by the Project Co-ordinators and facilitators. The use of modules and handouts also provided the participants with some much needed reading materials, especially in the face of escalating costs of Management textbooks. For many school heads, particularly those in rural areas, the modules comprised the major, if not the only source of reference materials for school management. School heads also pointed out that they had benefited from the exposure to financial accounting issues in the Programme. It was observed that in all the schools visited the modules were always very apparent and school heads admitted to referring to them constantly in their management activities. However, the majority of the school heads, Project Co-ordinators and Ministry Officials pointed out that the content in the modules was generally shallow and in some cases it needed to be revised to make it more relevant to the educational scene and to beef it up. In particular, respondents pointed out that this problem was more prevalent in modules on Budgeting & Budgeting Control; Fundamental Principles of Management; and Recruitment & Selection.

The Project Co-ordinators, facilitators and Ministry Officials admitted that UNICEF had provided equipment such as an overhead projector, flip chart, TV monitor and video cassette recorder for the implementation of the Programme in each Region. However, the major complaint was that the equipment was inadequate for use in implementing the Programme in all the districts of the Regions.

Project Co-ordinators and Ministry Officials alluded to the use of two different approaches in the disbursement and allocation of funds for implementing the Programme by UNICEF. UNICEF disbursed funds to Regions at first and later on changed to disbursing the funds to the Ministry of Education which then disbursed the funds to the Regions.

The allocation of funds on an equal basis rather than an equitable basis and the disbursement of funds to the Ministry of Education and not the Regions had negative effects on the implementation of the Programme in some Regions, particularly, the big Regions. These problems resulted in big Regions such as Manicaland failing to keep to the set time frame and to complete the training of all the school heads in the Regions. It also negatively affected the coverage of the Modules. In Manicaland, all the school heads went through Phase I which comprised of the Fundamental Principles of Management and Planning Modules. Only one third of the school heads went through Phase II comprising of Motivation, Recruitment & Selection and Budgeting and Budgetary Control Modules. It was also observed that the majority of the school heads trained in Phase II in Manicaland were in urban areas. None of the school heads in Manicaland went through Phase III of the Programme. This was found to be a major concern for those school heads who had not gone through Phase II and for those who had not gone through Phase III. All these school heads said they were anxiously awaiting the implementation of Phases II and III.

However, the situation appeared to be different in smaller Regions with Mashonaland Central having completed the three Phases of the Programme. All the facilitators and participants who had gone through all the three Phases of the Programme agreed that the Budget and Budgetary Control Module was not covered adequately. The module needed more time and more knowledgeable Resource Persons preferably practitioners who could relate the knowledge to educational institutions. Respondents were concerned that this is a new and vital area for the school heads given their new responsibilities in financial management in schools. Respondents also pointed out that the module should also have included the aspect of Auditing.

Project Co-ordinators also cited problems in the purchasing of resources such as food items from proprietors that would not accept requisitions from the Ministry of Education. UNICEF facilitated by negotiating for payment directly to the proprietors. UNICEF as the Donor of the Programme should be commended for the its flexibility and willingness to remove hurdles within its control and enhance the implementation of the Programme.

4.4.4 Calibre of facilitators

There was no standard criteria for the choice of facilitators in the Regions. Although experience was a criterion used in all sampled regions, university education was not. Consequently, although the majority of the facilitators were either studying for the B Ed degree in Educational Administration, Planning and Policy Studies or they were graduates of the degree programme, there still were some facilitators with the basic “O” level academic qualification.

The facilitators agreed that the training they had undergone and the duration of the training programme were rather inadequate. The majority of the school heads who participated in the

training programme however agreed that the facilitators were well trained and they utilised the participatory approach effectively. The school heads also pointed out that the fact that the facilitators were colleagues facilitated the much needed exchange of ideas and discussion of school management problems. In Manicaland, facilitators who were not trained were utilised. This was mainly because some of the trained facilitators would not be available during the training periods. This did not seem to have a negative effect on the implementation of the Programme.

However, some school heads and Project co-ordinators pointed out that the use of other school heads as facilitators had its own demerits. In some cases the facilitators were unable to solve problems of school management peculiar to their own schools. It was argued that there was need to involve facilitators who had a better understanding of the relevant policy issues and knowledge and understanding of how to solve the problems identified.

4.5 General logistics of the Programme

Programme Co-ordinators, facilitators and school heads pointed out that venues for conducting the training posed some problems particularly in big Regions such as Manicaland. Venues that are central were more preferable but it was noted that venues that were suitable in terms of adequate accommodation and appropriate facilities were not always available in the remote areas.

Lack of some monetary reward for the Programme co-ordinators and facilitators were a cause for concern. Both Project Co-ordinators and facilitators felt that they could have been awarded some monetary allowance for the organisation and facilitation as a token of appreciation. This concern was also expressed by the Ministry officials. Project co-ordinators, facilitators, Ministry Officials and school heads were also concerned that no recognition in the form of a certificate was accorded to a Programme of this magnitude and value. It was generally agreed that a certificate should have been awarded on completion of each training session.

Communication with participants was also cited as a problematic area by the Programme Co-ordinators. Some participants resided in remote areas and communication with them was not always easy and regular. This resulted in Programme Co-ordinators incurring extra expenses which they had to bear.

In some Regions, the Programme ran ends on with related Programmes on Early Childhood Education and Gender. It was observed that this was a cost effective approach. However, some Programme Co-ordinators and facilitators pointed out that this approach needed careful planning, organisation and co-ordination to ensure that the implementation of these Programmes brought out the relatedness of the Programmes so that participants do not view this approach as just a convenient approach to training.

4.6 Relationship of Programme with other relevant programmes

It was noted that there are a variety of Programmes that are available for the development of educational managers. The most prominent ones are the Better Schools Programme and the B Ed and M Ed Programmes in Educational Administration, Planning and Policy Studies. Data revealed that the majority of the school heads surveyed were members of the Better Schools Programme Co-ordinating Team. Data also revealed that some school heads were either graduates of or were enrolled on the B Ed degree Programme or the M Ed degree programme in Educational Administration, Planning and Policy Studies. Interviews also revealed that these Programmes have a lot in common but are however, fragmented. There appears to be prudence and great need for careful planning and co-ordination of the implementation of the Programmes. One suggestion given by Programme Co-ordinators, facilitators and school heads is to use the Resource Centres created by the Better Schools Programme to implement the Managerial Skills Training Programme. This would cut down on costs and encourage regular attendance. The school heads, as members of the BSP and participants in the Managerial Skills Training Programme could be allowed to use the libraries of the Higher Education Institutions that offer the B Ed and M Ed Programmes to enhance their knowledge and further develop themselves. The lecturers in these Institutions could be involved as resource persons at the Resource Centres.

However, given the plethora of developmental Programmes that school heads appear to have undergone or are undergoing, the improvement in the school heads management of schools in some aspects cannot be wholly attributed to the Managerial Skills Training Programme and yet there is no doubt that the Programme has contributed tremendously to the improvement in the management of primary schools.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This final chapter presents the recommendations for future action that derive from this study.

5.1 Recommendations

Based on the results presented above, and looked at against the findings of the baseline study, the following recommendations are made:

In order to create uniform educational administration standards in primary schools in the country, the MSTP must be completed in all regions.

Given the success that the managerial skills training programme has had, there is need to examine ways of ensuring the sustainability of the programme beyond UNICEF funding. Such ways could include examining the possibility of working with the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology to revise the regular teacher training curriculum so that it incorporates education management.

The MOESC should consider offering the same training to secondary school heads and their deputies. It would be an anachronism to have such a significant part of the educational leadership in the Zimbabwean schools system without the benefit of training that appears to have so much transformed the quality of education management in the primary schools.

Besides considering incorporating managerial skills training into the regular teacher training programme, there is need to explore ways of institutionalising the training as a vacation programme for school heads, deputy school heads and senior teachers.

The managerial skills training programme shares similar objectives with the Better Schools Programme currently running in the schools - which is the improvement of the quality of education in Zimbabwe. Consideration should therefore be given to using the structures and systems of the Better Schools Programme for reviewing and improving the adoption of managerial skills training by the school heads. A further consideration is using the BSPZ structures for cascading managerial skills training to deputy school heads and senior teachers.

It appears that some of the reasons behind the success of the managerial skills training programme are that the programme was based on an extensive baseline study which identified the needs of the primary school heads, and the close cooperation that existed between the development partner, UNICEF, and the MOESC. Needs-based development initiatives that have the support and participation of key stakeholders are known to achieve better commitment by the beneficiaries, and to have better chances of success and

sustainability beyond the financial support of a development partner. We thus recommend the adoption of this approach in all future development assistance programmes undertaken in the MOESC.

There is need to revise the modules to increase the depth of subject matter, and use more education-related illustrations, in particular in the budget and budget control module.

The MSTP did not provide training in a very important skill in management - communication. Most of the management tasks identified through the baseline study as foundational to good management practice, are founded on one's ability to communicate. It is therefore important that efforts be made to provide training in this outstanding module. Perhaps UNICEF can be approached to provide additional resources for the writing of and provision of training in communication.

Although it was not within the purview of the current assignment, we noted the existence of a plethora of development programmes, many of them running at the same time with little or no coordination between the programmes. This fragmentation of development efforts cannot be efficient. Invariably the same officers of the MOESC ran or facilitated training in at least two of these programmes yet could not run the programmes together. This is surely a duplication of scarce resources that no country, more so a developing country like Zimbabwe can afford. We therefore recommend the creation of a development coordination desk in the MOESC which shall be responsible for the coordination of the various development programmes running at a time, and identifying how synergy can be realised.

The baseline study noted that to effect meaningful and lasting change in an education system, it is necessary to transform the whole education system and that as long as decision-making remains centralised in the MOESC, change in educational management practices at the school level is unlikely to take root. We concur with this observation, and recommend the adoption of a much more macro-level initiative to decentralise decision-making in the education system in Zimbabwe. Such an initiative should also provide, perhaps at a higher level, managerial skills training to the hierarchy in the MOESC. The situation where school heads may be more knowledgeable about effective management of schools than their supervisors is undesirable, and will lead to the under-optimisation of the benefits of the MSTP.

5.2 Closing Remarks

Notwithstanding the problems presented in this report, the MSTP has been judged as an unmitigated success, yet there is no provision for its continued availability to current and future heads. The momentum for change that the programme created should not be allowed to die. Clear lessons need to be learnt quickly and mechanisms be established to make this training, in one form or another, a permanent feature of future training of school heads.

APPENDICES:

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS