

The Budget and a Monitoring System: Key Determinants of the Success and Sustainability of School Development Planning

Bernard Moswela

University of Botswana, Botswana

KEYWORDS School Improvement. School Funding. Supervision Mechanism

ABSTRACT This paper discusses two aspects that are critical in achieving the goals of a school development plan. These are; a specific budget and a close monitoring mechanism. The paper first makes a theoretical overview and analysis of the school development plan introduced to secondary schools in Botswana in the early 1990s as a teaching and learning improvement strategy. It then gives brief comparisons of school development planning in Botswana and selected educationally advanced educational settings elsewhere notably England and Australia. The paper proceeds to examine the monitoring system and the budget variables as critical determinants of the effective realization of the aims and objectives of school development planning. Interviews conducted on nine school heads supplement the otherwise predominantly theoretical analysis of the paper. The paper makes two important conclusions: First, that school development planning is necessary for schools to implement the curriculum objectives in a more structured and harmonious way as a team. Second, that it needs financial support and a sustained monitoring system linked to it if the aims and objectives are to be achieved. The paper not only provides new knowledge on school improvement to school leaders, it also targets personnel in Ministries of Education (particularly in developing countries such as Botswana) who have control over the distribution of funds to schools and who are responsible for the oversight of the delivery of quality education in schools.

INTRODUCTION

As is often the case, it is the less developed nations that depend on the wealthy (developed) nations of the world for almost all aspects of human resource development (although the wealthy nations need a peripheral group of poorer nations to provide cheap labour and market in order to remain wealthy). This dependency is multifaceted, involving among other things economics and education. In education the less developed countries borrow good practice of educational innovations and models from the developed nations (Livingstone and Goodall 1997: 10-11). This trend is normal as it is aimed at growth and development from a lower need base to a higher order need. There can, however, be danger by the less developed nations to adopt from the developed, educational models without due regard for the different circumstances and economic conditions that may exist between the developed and more rich nations and the less developed and less rich nations. Educational systems or innovations “. . . are like sensitive plants, which flourish in one soil, but do not

necessarily do well when moved to another” (Bottery 1993: 146). They cannot be lifted and transplanted in different social, political, or economic environments and be expected to do well (Bottery). Provision needs therefore be made so that the innovation is compatible with the environment in which it will reside. Often, innovations that have failed to achieve their goals did not take cognizance of the differences that existed between the country sponsoring the innovation and the one that is receiving.

In examining and analyzing the school development planning implementation in Botswana secondary schools, this paper adopts partly a theoretical stance and partly an empirical analysis of findings obtained through interviews with nine school heads that were purposively selected from the group of heads in the schools. The paper first introduces the operational concept of school development planning (SDP). It then proceeds to discuss school development planning practices in educationally advanced systems such as in England and Australia before an analysis of the Botswana context. The focus of the paper hinges in the main, on the financial and monitoring dimensions of the process. It argues that for an important innovation such as the SDP to make any impact on school outcomes, support measures such as a specific budget and a sustained monitoring system must be present.

Postal Address:

Bernard Moswela

Department of Educational Foundations, University of Botswana, Box 301317, Tlokweng, Botswana

Email: moswela@mopipi.ub.bw

BACKGROUND TO SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Global Perspective

The underpinning principle of school development planning according to Dimmock (1990: 201), Dalin (1993: ix), Hopkins *et al.* (1994: 2-3), Hargreaves and Hopkins (1994: 13) is to improve the standards of teaching and teacher performance and to improve the standards of learning and learner performance. This, they argue, can be achieved through improved management practices by those involved in directing and guiding the school curriculum, that is, the school management team (SMT). School development planning is also viewed as “raising students’ achievement through the staff’s gain of new skills” Rogers (1994: 12). In China, the introduction of the development plan was to among other things, “enhance student-centred-learning, learning skills and generic skills, promote staff professional development and provide support measures for teachers to prepare for the new senior secondary curriculum” (<http://www.ktgss.edu.hk/developmentplan/index.htm>). The improved managerial practices purported by Dimmock, Dalin, Hopkins *et al.* and Hargreaves and Hopkins and the staff professional growth, purported in China have implications for in-service training programmes. Training and support measures for the staff on the other hand have implications for a budget. According to the Rugby school’ development plan, the financial budget is to ensure financial stability and programme continuity so that the education aims and objectives can be pursued (<http://www.rugbyschool.net/schoolgovernance/developmentplan/>).

Further, the availability of a budget is essential for school seminars on issues identified by the school as priority areas such as school-based whole staff and/or planning sessions, cluster meetings on teaching methods, assessment of learning that includes improving teaching and learning in schools (<http://cc.msnsnscache.com/cache.aspx?q=school+development+initiatives&d>). The initiative of a school development plan in developed countries was established to “. . . stimulate and strengthen a culture of collaborative development planning in schools, with a view to promoting improvement and effectiveness. This was supported by a budget and a sustained monitoring system that ensured implementation

compliance to the official innovation (<http://cc.msnsnscache.com/cache.aspx?q=school+development+initiatives&d>). In South Africa, school development planning is similarly viewed as an integral process within the broad strategic approach to the management of schools “that mediates between long-term aims and short-term priorities. It is facilitated by the suitable deployment of human, financial and physical resources” (Thurlow *et al.* 2003 in Naidu *et al.* 2008: 65). In that country the Department of Education requires every school to submit an annual School Development Plan, setting out its short and long term goals and priority development areas . . .” (Naidu *et al.* 2008: 66).

In England school development planning formally came into force through the 1988 Education Reform Act of the Department of Education and Science. This was as a result of rhetoric, particularly from politicians, for schools to improve their performance. The politicians were particularly concerned about the macro-level economic performance of the country in relation to other economies in developed countries. They believed that the quality of the curriculum determined the quality of the economy. In a speech delivered at Ruskin College in Oxford in 1976 the then Prime Minister James Callaghan expressed: “The educational system is out of touch with the fundamental need for Britain to survive in a highly competitive world through the efficiency of its industry and commerce” (Hallewell, 1992: 358). For quality education to be achieved, the politicians advocated for increased budgets for schools that would be managed and controlled by schools themselves (Hallewell). Davies and Ellison (1992: 72) put this sense as: “Our view is that financial management responsibility should be delegated as closely as possible to the point of delivery . . . we want decisions to be taken at the rim of the wheel rather than at the hub”. They argued that if financial authority and responsibility would move from the central government to the local authority, and further to the schools, this would see improvement in school performances. Supporting the above view, Moswela (2001: 156-157) contends that school heads should be given a bigger say in the school finances so that they have the control and accountability over critical resources that are essential in improving performances.

School development plans in England were made mandatory to schools in 1992 by the Office for Standards in Education and were included in

the inspection process. That is when schools began to realize the importance of reviewing their school development plans annually and linking them to the budget. The inspection was a regulatory system introduced to ensure that there were people responsible for carrying out the action plan and that there was an evaluation of the implementation including the effective use of resources to the specified targets (Giles 1995: 46-47; Hargreaves Hopkins, 1994: 3). As put by Adams (1992: 163), "the authority that provides public funding for schools must see that the handling and accounting for these funds is efficient and without taint". In the USA, monitoring was done as "... an assurance to the public that its funds are being spent in the proper amounts and for the proper purposes" (Carl et al. 1992: 140). Clearly, the emphasis on school development planning in England and elsewhere was on the aspects of the availability of a budget and an effective and efficient monitoring system conducted through inspection exercises.

School development planning in Australia on the other hand was also introduced for similar reasons of declining standards of education. There had been heavy public criticism of the education system that failed to serve the national need in the 1970s. As put by the then Prime Minister: "The new knowledge acquired by students, their skills and attitudes, did not create the clever country" (Caldwell 1992: 14). In Australia school improvement initiatives; the school development plan in this context, were partly influenced by a report from the 1973 Interim Committee for Australian Schools Commission chaired by Karmel. Two distinct and important pairs of relationships emerged from the Karmel Report. The Report concluded that there is a relationship between improved teaching and students' performance, and between the devolution of functions (including finance) from central government to schools and school performances. The thrust of the Karmel Report lay in the declaration that: "The Commission favours less than more centralized control over the operation of schools" (Caldwell 1992). Administrative and financial responsibility, "should be devolved as far as possible upon the people involved in the actual task of schooling . . ." (Caldwell 1992: 47). In the 1990s, public schools in the State of Victoria - Australia "were given control over budgets covering 95% of operating costs" (Caldwell 1992: 45).

Botswana Context

Botswana, a developing middle income country, was a British colony between 1885 and 1965 when it attained political independence until 1966. By and large its education system is modeled to the British system of education. Until after independence, the Botswana education system was very much undeveloped because of the poor state of the country's economy. According to the Transitional Plan for Social and Economic Development of 1966, at independence Botswana's total annual budget expenditure stood at a measly R12 793 000.00 (South African Rand). When Botswana needed to improve the quality of its public education in the early 1990s it looked to the more developed education systems of the West, particularly the United Kingdom its 'mentor' for technical support. The need to improve the quality of education that would address the socio-economic needs of the country would be expressed in the 1993 National Commission on Education as: "The quality of education provided to the students would determine the quality of the economy in future" (Government Paper 1993: vi), a view that is consistent with that of Hallewell (1992) and others with respect to education and economic development.

Consultation between the British Overseas Development Agency (ODA) and the Botswana Ministry of Education (now the Ministry of Education and Skills Development) to improve the quality of education in Botswana schools had culminated into a Secondary School Management Project, the school development plan. This is a case in point of dependency on a more developed nation as purposed by Livingstone and Goodall (1970). School development planning in Botswana was established on grounds similar to those of England and Australia, that is, out of a growing public concern on the poor state of educational standards. The belief was that by improving the managerial capabilities of schools, the teaching and learning activities would also improve. School development planning gets its support from recommendation 105 of the 1993 Revised National Policy on Education which in part reads: "The Head as instructional leader, together with the deputy and senior teachers, should take major responsibility for in-service training of teachers within their schools . . .", and "... the Education Officers' visits to schools should supplement the

school based in-service training. . .” (p. 356). The project was lead by six British resident officers, one as team leader based at headquarters and the other five based at each of the five regions that serve secondary schools in the country. For each of the British Officers there were to be Botswana counterparts. The British team’s role in the SDP was to assist in the launching of the project by providing technical expertise. This involved the training of the Botswana counterparts, the school management advisors (SMAs) at the regions and the (SMT) at the school level on how to design and manage school development plans. The SMAs would take over responsibility of coordination and monitoring of the project when the Britons eventually leave (British Council 1991: 1-2). Just prior to the establishment of the SDP, Education Officers and school staff had been involved in the implementation of another performance innovation called Works Improvement Teams (WITS) adopted from Singapore which impact was never really felt. The innovation had suffered ownership by the schools because of the way it had been introduced (top-down) and a lack of clarity as to how it would benefit individual staff and schools.

The implementation process of school development planning adopted a cascading approach with school heads playing a central leadership role. Heads were the first to receive training on school development planning. They would in turn train their deputies, middle school managers and senior staff at the school level (Roberts 1994: 9). This approach saw school-based workshop activities resourced to teachers by fellow teachers who were experts in certain areas of the curriculum. Thus in a sense giving individual schools the opportunity and flexibility to construct their own meaning of school development planning, rather than it being ‘poured’ from some authority outside the school (Moswela 2001: 27). The cascading method helped to realize one of the objectives of the plan; “. . . to provide a systematic professional support and training for school heads and deputies on a regional basis (British Council 1991: 1), thus providing the needed leadership to drive school development planning internally. However, no funds were availed to schools to support and sustain the site-based school development activities. Schools depended solely on the regional offices for such support. With such an arrangement schools could not link their individual plans to a budget. Despite this, how-

ever, the project gained impetus; the teachers and the SMT were intently involved and happy as they were learning new skills and knowledge (Monyatsi 2005: 361). This was the case because the funds to run the workshops and seminars were available. There was something more challenging and focusing going on in schools that generated enthusiasm among teachers and the SMT.

The Government of Botswana through the Ministry of Education and Skills Development ensured the project was successful. Some notable successes according to Monyatsi (2005) were: knowledge sharing among staff; improved consultation between the regional offices and the schools; new managerial skills by the majority of school heads who had no training in management; school friendly inspections and audits and establishment of school development plans. Also, during the active implementation of the project, “staff development programmes and procedures were more formalized with structures and procedures than the old days of disjointed, unfocussed staff development ventures” (Monyatsi 2006: 154). As a result of the exposure to management issues some school administrators, heads mostly, proceeded to pursue higher degrees including at doctorate level in educational management out of their own initiative. This author is one such beneficiary of the school development planning in this regard.

The British team left in the late nineties leaving the local counterparts to continue the process. Gradually, support from the SMAs in the region to the schools began to die out. Workshops were no more as regular. The SMAs changed their roles as school development planning advisors to subject advisors leaving the development plans to be managed by heads at the school level but without any budget to support their efforts. This, in principle was appropriate provided there were accompanying ingredients; the finance in particular, as this located control of SDP to its rightful place and people, the school and the staff. Who is a better judge of the school’s needs than the school staff? As the pre-fix ‘school’ suggests, SDP is a school-specific innovation. School development planning as a performance improving strategy cannot be a project or an event with a lifetime. With or without funds, schools will always make efforts to improve performance through the subsequent generation of studentss. School development planning is like good school

culture which needs to be transmitted from generation to generation if its benefits are to be perpetrated. Strategies for improvement change with time and according to the circumstances of the day; that is, the type of student, the nature of the curriculum and so forth dictate appropriate strategies (Moswela 2005: 265). School improvement therefore should be a continuous process as long as schools are in existence. The initial introduction of school development planning as a project was made in context and relative to the expatriate officers who started it and not to make it an event and give it a lifetime.

PURPOSE AND METHODS

The purpose of this paper is to argue that without an effective monitoring system and a budget, the aims of a school development plan cannot be effectively realized. This purpose is to be achieved partly by a theoretical analysis of the implementation process and partly by an analysis of interview findings from nine school heads who were purposively selected basing on their experience in school development planning activities.

FINDINGS

All the interviewees were of the same opinion, without qualification, that school development planning can be a useful tool to the improvement of the teaching and learning processes. In the words of three respondents:

“It can truly be a school improvement strategy only if it can be properly implemented”.

“It was an eye opener to some of us who particularly did not have training in school management and even to those who had training in educational management”.

“The idea of setting collective aims and objectives is a progressive one as it harmonizes them together in the implementation process”.

The connection between school improvement (school development planning), and the budget is demonstrated in the following selected comments by the SMT members who were interviewed on why school development planning implementation process seems to have slowed down in schools:

“Schools have so many ideas on how they can improve teaching and learning standards. Unfortunately these cannot be effectively imple-

mented because of lack of a school development budget”.

“To organize workshops in our cluster, traveling participants will need to submit monetary claims for the use of their vehicles and meals will need to be provided. Workshops have ceased because of lack of money”.

“The school development plan does not need a huge financial budget. Seminar and workshop funds cater mainly for tea and lunch which are cheaply affordable. Also, teachers are competent enough to resource others rather than engaging a consultant who is paid. The ministry should consider at least a nominal budget specific to school development planning”.

“There are times when we need to meet as different departments over lunch time - the only time when most of the teachers are free – but we are not able to because everybody goes to their different places for lunch”.

“At our school we make efforts to continue with the SDP but not to its full extent due to limited support from the region’.

ANALYSIS

As suggested by the majority of respondents who were interviewed, it became difficult for schools to implement their plans with an externally controlled merger budget. This took off the initial enthusiasm from the staff and the SMT about the initiative. Teachers could no longer speak of the SDP the way they used to in the beginning. Everybody’s attention as further observed by the respondents, was now on a newer innovation, the Performance Management System (PMS) a strategy introduced in the late 1990s, “which is envisaged to improve management of performance and delivery by the public service.” (Botswana Government 2000: 2). Schools that are still active in SDP implementation process (if any) do so not because they have the money nor do they do so because it is an administrative requirement. Rather, they do so, in the words of one respondent, “. . . out of a need born of professionalism or professional conscience”. Even then, these schools cannot implement development plans to the extent it ought to be implemented given budget constraints and a lack of moral support from outside, observed one respondent.

Although the school development plan had generated some challenge among teachers as identified by Monyatsi (2005, 2006), to them it

was one thing to find a situation challenging but quite another to have the resources necessary to cope with it. Schools had not been empowered to be able to implement school development planning independent of support from their regions. Real empowerment, in the context of the school development plan, means having significant control over key resources that support the implementation process (Scott and Jaffe 1991: 17). These authors refer to this level of empowerment as the “new fuel for the growing workplace that cannot be separated from school improvement”. Schools authorities in England and Australia as previously noted, enjoy such empowerment. They enjoy more autonomy and flexibility in financial dispersion to the different areas of the curriculum.

There can be little argument that educational improvement is about effectiveness, efficiency, and performance excellence. The availability of funds and how they are allocated, distributed and utilized in the different areas of the school determine the achievement levels of school goals. Without funds, in-service programmes designed to improve teaching and other services that support students’ learning cannot be mounted. The findings from the interviews which presuppose a direct nexus between school improvement and a budget corroborate those from the Karmel Report (Australia); Moswela (2001); Davies and Ellison (1994); Caldwell (1992) and Hallewell (1994). This common perspective from the different experiences firmly cements the purportedly inseparability of school development planning and an accompanying budget.

Just when the teachers and the SMT were beginning to feel they were having some success (in terms of understanding the benefits the new initiative would bring to their teaching) and were starting to believe in its efficacy, the drivers of the school development planning project, in the late 1990s, began to develop cold feet. The inertia displayed by the SMAs affected implementation at school level because school’s financial and administrative support had always come from the SMA office. The waning support, particularly administrative support can be explained in terms of manpower constraints at the regions. Regional Education Officers are too thin on the ground to be able to effectively serve the more than forty secondary schools in each region (Moswela 2009). Their focus was therefore diverted and preferred on the PMS implementation over the

SDP. The implementation of PMS is mandatory to the whole civil service including schools. In PMS, employees are rewarded according to their assessed performances. Naturally, people would give more attention to a strategy that is mandatory and tied to a monetary reward system.

CONCLUSION

The paper concludes that for an innovation the magnitude and importance of the school development planning to succeed, a budget and a sustained monitoring system are imperative. Lack of a budget and an effective monitoring system has been a stumbling block to the road that was clearly curved by the initial stages of the plan in Botswana secondary schools. Schools did not have financial and a supportive monitoring system under their control that they could use to improve the teaching activities. The paper argued that the ‘first phase’ of the development planning was successful (Monyatsi 2005) because the Ministry was committed to seeing the project (which was jointly run by the British and the Botswana teams) take off the ground and therefore committed funds for its implementation. The ‘second phase’ of the project was not successful for the opposite reason. Only if the schools feel they have the capacity to implement innovations will the full benefits of the innovations become apparent. Given full financial and moral support, teachers and school managers are likely to take personal responsibility for the success or failure of the innovation. In the present scheme of things schools now have the excuse to apportion blame on inadequate resources even if they were also responsible for the failure. Perhaps the Ministry of Education and Skills Development can take cue from countries which have had success in their school development planning, particularly regarding the financial and monitoring aspects of SDP. It is essential that SDP, like other areas such as teaching and out of school activities should also be allocated a specific budget.

REFERENCES

- Bottery M 1993. *The Ethics of Educational Management*. London: Cassell. Botswana Republic of 1966. *Transitional Plan for Social and Economic Development*. Gaborone: Government Printer.
- Botswana Republic of 1993a. *Report on the National Commission on Education* Gaborone: Government Printer.

- Botswana Republic of 1993b. *Report of the National Commission on Education*. Gaborone: Government Printer.
- Botswana Republic of 2000. *Vision Statement*. Gaborone: Ministry of Education.
- British Council 1991. *Project Memorandum: Secondary School Management Project*. Gaborone: Ministry of Education.
- Caldwell BJ 1992. The Principal as Leader of the Self-Managing School in Australia. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 30(3): 6-19.
- Carl C, Walter GH, John RR 1992. *School Business Administration: A Planning Approach*. 4th Edition, Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Dalin P 1993. *Changing the School Culture*. London: Cassell.
- Davies B, Ellison L 1992. Delegated School Finance in the English Education System. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 30(1): 70-89.
- Dimmock C 1990. Managing for Quality and Accountability in Western Australian Education. *Educational Review*, 42(2): 197-206.
- Giles C 1995. Site-Based Planning and Resource Management: The Role of the School Development Plan. *Educational Change and development*, 15(2): 45-50.
- Hallewell DE 1992. Structural Changes in Education. *International Journal of Education*, 1(4): 356-365.
- Hargreaves DH, Hopkins D 1994. *Development Planning for School Improvement*. London: Cassell.
- Hopkins D, Ainscow M, West M 1994. *School Improvement in an Era of Change*. London: Capsules.
- Kwun Tong Government secondary School Development Planning From <<http://www.ktgss.edu.hk/developmentplan/index.htm>> (Retrieved April 18, 2009) .
- Livingstone I, Goodall AS 1970. *Economics and Development*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Monyatsi PP 2005. Transforming Schools into Democratic Organisations: The Case of the Secondary Schools Management Development Project in Botswana. *International Education Journal*, 6(3): 354-366.
- Monyatsi PP. 2006. An Investigation of the Effectiveness of the School-Based Workshops Approach to staff Development in Botswana. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 1(5): 150-155.
- Moswela B 2001. *A School Development Plan: The Role of the School Head in Botswana*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. University of South Africa
- Moswela B 2005. School Culture Building for School Effectiveness: Challenges to the Botswana School Head. *Journal of Sociology and Education in Africa*, 4(2): 261-275
- Moswela B. 2010. Instructional Supervision in Botswana Secondary Schools. An Investigation. Article to be published in the *Journal of Education Management Administration and Leadership* (EMAL) in 2010.
- Naidu A, Joubert R, Mestry R, Mosoge J, Ngcobo T 2008. *Education Management and Leadership: A South African Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Roberts I 1994. *A Guide to Schools: School Development Planning*. Gaborone: Government Printer.
- Rogers R 1994. *How to Write a School Development Plan*. London: Heinemann Educational.
- Scott CD, Jaffe DT 1991. *Empowerment*. London: Kogan Page.
- From <http://cc.msnsache.com/cache.aspx?q=school+development+initiatives&d> (Retrieved April 18, 2009). From <http://www.rugbyschool.net/schoolgovernance/developmentplan/> (Retrieved April 18, 2009)