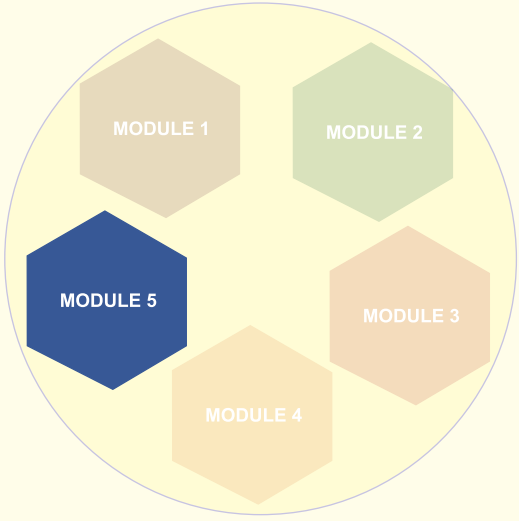
ANTRIEP

MODULE 5

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING



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United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

International Institute
for Educational Planning

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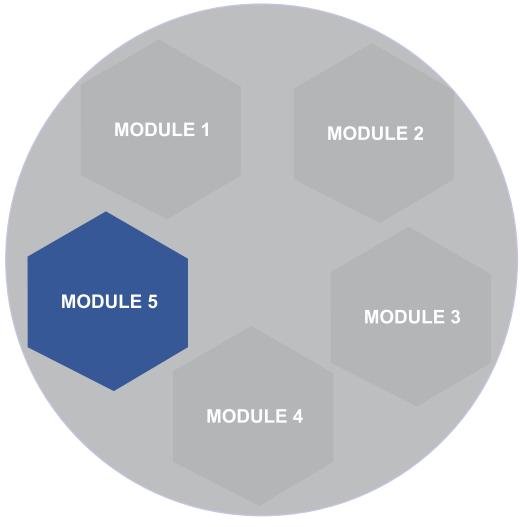

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Foreword

A comparative research study on successful schools conducted under the ANTRIEP in seven countries (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri-Lanka, Malaysia, and the Philippines) showed that heads of schools play a critical role and possess common characteristics though they adopted different strategies in managing schools. Despite significant differences in the context and conditions characterising different schools, managerial skills of school heads emerged as a significant factor contributing to effective functioning of schools. Specifically, possessing a set of core skills of planning and management by the school heads was found to form essential pre-condition for making the schools successful.

As a sequel to this collaborative research on successful schools, a set of five modules on " Making School Successful " have been prepared by a group of experts from ANTRIEP member institutions from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Malaysia and International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), Paris through workshops organised in Nepal and Sri Lanka. The five modules cover: (i) Successful Schools; (ii) Managing People at Work; (iii) Managing Student Affairs; (iv) Managing External Relations; and (v) School Development Planning.

Even though each module is an independent unit of learning with appropriate school case study analysis, they are also interrelated. The modules along with the synthesis report underscore the intricacies of school management process. An independent volume is being presented consisting of thirty successful school case studies which form the basis for the Synthesis Report as well as the Modules.

Representatives from ANTRIEP member institutions took keen interest and participated in the collaborative research study on successful schools and preparation of these modules. Dr. Anton de Grauwe from IIEP, Paris and Professor K. Sujatha from NUEPA developed the framework for the modules. Mr. Gabriel Carron provided advice and suggestions. Mr. John Retallick, Former Consultant, Institute of Education Development, Aga Khan University carried out the final editing of the modules.

National University of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, India which is the Focal Point of ANTRIEP has printed the modules, synthesis report and School Cases studies.

We hope these modules will be found useful in training heads of schools by the ANTRIEP member institutions.

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MODULE – 5
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

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MODULE 5

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Introduction

Welcome to the final module in this series on successful school management. This module is concerned with school development planning. The school development plan is a blueprint for school development and improvement. It sets out the priorities and strategies for both short term (up to six months) and longer term (up to 3-5 years) development of the school. The plan provides a sense of direction as agreed by all key stakeholders for the continuous improvement of the school into the future.

It was found in the successful schools that development planning is a process which occurs over a period of time; in most schools at least three months, and it results in a document called the school development plan. Therefore it may be seen as both process and product. The process of involving the key stakeholders in making important decisions is just as important as producing the final document which will guide the school towards sustainable development and improvement.

The aim of this module is to introduce the concept of school development planning, discuss some principles of good planning practice and then provide you with a process for actually producing a development plan for your school. We recognize that many schools already have such a plan while for others it may be a new idea. Even if you have some experience with school development planning we feel that the module will be useful for you because such planning requires continuous monitoring and review. You may find some ideas here that will help you to refine and extend your existing school development plan to make it more effective.

The module contains three units:

Unit 1: Overview of School Development Planning
Unit 2: Good Practices of Planning
Unit 3: Producing a School Development Plan

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this module, you will have strengthened your ability to:

- explain the rationale and elements of a school development plan
- describe good practices of planning
- produce a school development plan for your school.

Unit 1: Overview of School Development Planning

In this unit you will learn about the rationale and elements of a school development plan, including the roles of key stakeholders, and you will be able to prioritize the areas needing improvement in your school. In some school systems the term 'school improvement plan' or 'action plan' may be preferred or even just 'school plan'. For our purposes, these terms may be used interchangeably as they have very similar meanings.

Rationale of a School Development Plan

Let us start by considering a definition of a school development plan.

A School Development Plan is the product of an ongoing process where the principal, in consultation with key stakeholders, reviews the effectiveness of the whole range of educational experiences provided for students in the school and prepares a vision and plan for continuous improvement in the short and long term future.

The definition suggests that it is a cyclical process, through which the head, in consultation with others, reviews the current needs of the school, envisions a better future, establishes priorities for development and evaluates the implementation leading to a further review and a new set of priorities.

A school development plan is intended to be a flexible working document which is reviewed at least annually and is therefore responsive to changing circumstances. It brings together in one document the school's priorities for improvement; it identifies a limited number of whole school improvements and developments and shows how they can be successfully implemented in a specific timeframe.

The underlying rationale for school development planning is that continuous improvement is more likely to occur if it is effectively planned and resourced with the explicit agreement of the key stakeholders about the direction or vision for the improvement.

Case study examples

India

The school plan is based on achieving the objectives of the school which are as follows:

- To achieve all-round development of boys and girls (physical, mental and moral).
- To make students socially, emotionally morally and spiritually conscious.
- To develop the spirit of self learning among students.
- To provide equal educational opportunities for both boys and girls.
- To develop sisterly/brotherly feeling among all students irrespective of their social status, caste, community or creed.
- To communicate values that are in conversance with the Indian culture.
- To instill dignity of labour.
- To awaken national consciousness and the spirit of universal brotherhood.

REFLECTION

Respond to the following questions:

1. *What do you think are the key elements of a school development plan?*
2. *Thank about which elements seem to be most important and why.*
3. *What do you see to be the advantages of a school having a development plan?*

Elements of a School Development Plan

In the above reflection exercise you identified the key elements of a school development plan. We now want to sharpen your thinking by providing a list of such elements for you to consider. Which of these elements did you think of?

- the school vision and mission
- a systematic analysis of the current situation
- the major areas for school development along with goals and targets
- action plans for implementing each area of school development
- resources, financial and human, required for implementation in each area
- the timeframe for implementation
- processes to monitor and review the plan.

As every school has its own individuality, there is no one model plan that fits all schools. However, the above key elements are normally found in school development plans. It is important to mention that the success of a school improvement plan requires, among other things, the ability of the school to establish a clear vision and mission with realistic and attainable aims and objectives.

Vision and Mission

A **school vision** is a coherent and powerful statement of what your school can and should be like at some point in the future (perhaps five years from now). A school vision is a guiding force towards which a school will be aiming. Therefore a school vision gives direction towards a better future. It is important to involve all key stakeholders in deciding upon the school vision. In most schools key stakeholders are the head, teachers, support staff, students and parents (in some schools other members of the local community may be included as well)

The **mission** is a more specific action statement about how a vision can realized and it normally includes aims and/or objectives.

In emphasizing the vision , Nelson Mandela in 1999 said:

Vision without action is only a dream.
Action without vision is just passing time.
Vision with Action can change the world.

Case study examples

Pakistan

The vision of the school was found on a large chart on the wall of the Principal's office:

"This alma mater is a learning organization where every individual is furnished with highly commendable opportunities and facilities to attain the optimal standards of academic results, social skills, moral and spiritual qualities and physical well being. A unique team spirit with a slogan of 'sink or swim together' and a sense of strong collaboration among students, faculty and parents unifies this organization. Centre of excellence is its identity. Our slogan is committed to quality and merit.

Philippines

The vision of the 2003-2006 development plan is "to produce quality learners in a conducive learning environment with adequate modern teaching-learning facilities and innovative curriculum through effective and efficient teachers as well as strong partnership with parents and the community".

This vision statement is a product of consensus of the various stakeholders that participated in the planning meetings. In these meetings, the participants were accorded the opportunity to sound off their opinions, comments and suggestions and work in small groups to formulate a vision for the school. The different versions of the vision statement were distilled by a small group and translated it into a mission statement as follows: "to provide learners with the basic education in order to lay the foundation for life-long learning and services for the common good".

Sri Lanka

Vision of the school is "Fostering knowledge, building skills, and motivating attitudes." When the principal took over the school it had no vision. The principal thinks the school must be a model school and an example to other schools.

India

Let us look into the mission statement of a school in India. The mission is to make the school a center of Excellence, not only in academic field but also in cultural, literary, sports, music and other activities. The major emphasis has been on the all round development of students.

- To make the school a model school
- Character building and all round development of students
- To produce ten percent results with distinction
- To make good citizens of India
- To make every student well disciplined and well mannered
- To bring out improvement in the life of tribal people
- Developing good study habits
- To make my students authors and poets
- To develop rural talent
- To prepare students to serve the soil.

Analysis of Current Situation

Clearly, the current situation is your starting point for school development planning so it is important to have a systematic analysis of the present strengths and weaknesses of your school. One useful technique for doing that is SWOT which refers to Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

The SWOT technique is best done in a group of around 8-10 people and you focus on one of the points at a time and use brainstorming to get ideas from the participants. It normally takes a session of about 2 hours to do a SWOT analysis based on these questions:

- What are the current STRENGTHS of the school?
- What are the current WEAKNESSES of the school?
- What OPPORTUNITIES do we have for school development?
- What are the THREATS (or challenges) which might hinder our school development?

Major Areas of School Development

Some areas for potential school development which may be revealed through a SWOT analysis and subsequently included in a school development plan are as follows:

- Management and organization
- Learning and teaching
- Student support and school ethos
- Student performance.

REFLECTION

Carefully consider the performance of your school in each of the areas given below. Think about which of them might need to be improved and therefore could be included in your school's vision and mission statements.

Management and organization:
Planning and administration
Professional leadership
Staff management
Management of physical resources
School evaluation

Learning and teaching:
Curriculum
Teaching
Student learning
Assessment of learning

Student Support and School Ethos:
Support for student development
Links with parents and external organizations
School Culture

Student Performance:
Attitude and behavior
Attendance and participation
Achievement and results

Action Plans for Implementation

Development plans help a school to organize what it is already doing and what it needs to do in a more purposeful and coherent way. By co-ordinating aspects which are otherwise separate, the school acquires a shared sense of direction and is able to control and manage the tasks of development and change. Each area that is identified for improvement needs to have an action plan or strategy that indicates how the targets will be achieved.

Case study examples

Pakistan
In this school they plan strategically for three years. The process adopted is to do a need analysis through the section heads; they review and report back to the Principal their section needs such as furniture, library books, tube lights, fan repairs, white washing, cementing, painting, glass windows etc. So the budget is prepared with an estimate, concerning how much they have spent and how much they will spend this year.

Sri Lanka
In the case of Sri Lanka teachers give their ideas to prepare the School Development Plan. The principal and the management team finalize the plan for the year. Each teacher has to be in charge of at least one project. The person in charge of the project is responsible to monitor and evaluate. The principal is responsible to plan the activity calendar for the whole year. After that all the activities are delegated to his staff.

Role of Key Stakeholders in the Planning Process

School development planning can be most beneficial when governors, staff and other stakeholders are involved in a continuous cycle of planning which:

- Establishes a sense of direction for the future activities of the school as a whole
- Identifies and co-ordinates the agenda for change
- Reduces the quality gap between objective and performance by sequencing priorities for action
- Broadens the planning of improvement and development.

The successful implementation of a school improvement plan depends on a number of essential pre-conditions being met, such as development of trust, openness, mutuality and collegiality among the staff, pupils and parents. The level in which such qualities are present in any staff will depend on a number of factors but in particular, they will depend on the influence of the head teacher and the manner in which he/she succeeds in creating and maintaining an environment conducive to this approach. Therefore, the role of the head teacher is of vital importance in the development of a team spirit which produces the necessary degree of collaboration and interdependence. For instance, let us imagine if only the teachers were asked to develop a school plan what would be emphasized, or the head teacher alone or the parents? Which areas would be emphasized and could we call it a comprehensive school development plan?

REFLECTION

Who SHOULD and SHOULD NOT participate in the process of planning?

Example:
What if only the teachers were to develop the plan? (The plan may be dominated by teachers' problems and teachers' solutions to those problems e.g. job security, salary, leave etc. This plan may not talk about teachers' absenteeism, lack of commitment etc.)

Reflect on the following questions and consider the merits and demerits of each one.

What if only BOG (Board of Governors) develop the plan?
Merits *Demerits*

What if only students do planning?
Merits *Demerits*

What if all stakeholders such as BOG, head teacher, teachers, parents and students develop the plan?
Merits *Demerits*

Resources and Timeframe

Since school development is about improvement it is most likely that any plans you might come up with require some additional or new resources. Such resources as financial and human are perhaps the most obvious and need to be considered first. Some school communities are very willing to provide human resources in the form of volunteers to make improvements around the school e.g. in one school the community raised some funds to buy bricks and cement and a group of men built a boundary wall around the school. This major improvement was done at very little cost to the school.

In planning it is always wise to specify the timeframe for any major improvement as it gives a "deadline" to aim for. The timeframe could be 3 or 6 months for short term changes or 1, 2 or 3 years for longer term initiatives.

Case study examples

Philippines
This school, like other public elementary schools, prepares a three year school development plan, the most recent of which is the 2003-2006 Development Plan. The various stakeholders have been involved in crafting the development plan namely: the parents, PRCA officers, grade heads, subject coordinators, educational management information system's coordinator of the school, property custodian, guidance counselor, officers of the teacher's co operative and the student council officers.

The development planning process usually starts with a review of the school's profile—enrollment, performance indicators, staff, organizational structure , facilities and school technology , school program/ curriculum, community support, trends and opportunities, and problems and issues. From these profiles come the statement of **vision** and **mission**, which is translated into goals and objectives/targets in the areas of curriculum, staff management and development, learning environment, resource management and community building.

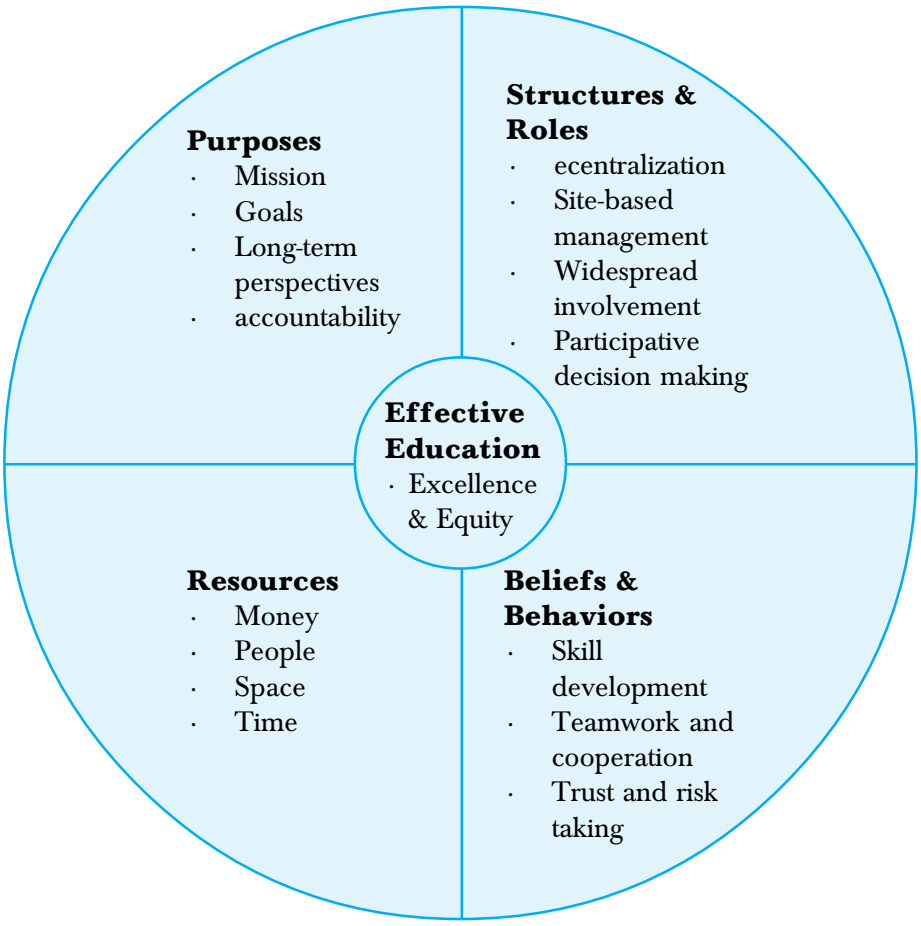
Malaysia

Sharing of Vision: The head teacher would share his ideas and vision with his assistant head teachers first to get their views and support. Next he would have a staff meeting and communicate the ideas to the teachers. "They may be my ideas but they should not become what I want alone. They should be what my senior assistants and the staff wants to do. We need to make the decision together to go on or not with the idea. I need their support to implement the idea".

Monitoring and Review

To complete the 'cycle' of school development planning it is important to consider monitoring and review of the implementation of the plan. This tells you 'how you are doing' or what progress is being made towards achieving your targets. Monitoring is an effective strategy to maintain quality. Without accountability there is often no progress.

Of course what you will want to monitor will depend on what is in your school plan. However, some general suggestions may be made about the areas for monitoring of the school for development and the diagram below gives a holistic picture of all the potential areas needing improvement.



Case study example

Pakistan

The institution has a well planned administrative set up of various committees who eventually report back to the principal. They also have a Vision and Development Committee whose prime objective is to monitor the educational performance of the institute and they report every quarter.

If an institution is monitored objectively for its performance every quarter then the demands on the institution are to aim for excellence. So it is possible this Vision and Developmental Committee is keeping the Alma mater focused on excellence and more excellence.

Unit 2: Good Practices of Planning

Before you set out to actually produce a school development plan for your school it is important to consider some good practices of planning. You will find these ideas to be very useful and they may be seen as principles to follow when engaging in the planning process. As you are studying each point think about how you could apply that principle in your school.

1. Focus on the process as well as the product

The product you will be trying to achieve is of course a written plan and it could be produced in different forms such as a booklet or a wall chart. It may be both a booklet, which is easy to print and copy, as well as a wall chart in the staff room or principal's office to highlight the major points and make it more visible. Whatever you decide in terms of the *product* the point we want to make here is that the *process* of getting there is equally important (some would argue it is more important). One reason why it is important to focus on the process is that if it is done well it creates ownership of the plan – everyone will feel a sense of commitment to making sure it works successfully. A focus on the process means that you will allow more time to develop the plan than you would if your only concern was the product. At least 2-3 months would be reasonable to work through an effective process to develop a school improvement plan.

2. Engage key stakeholders in a participatory approach

"Participation is the hallmark of successful school management" (Synthesis Report. The most effective process of planning is a participatory one with broad involvement of the key stakeholders. It is most likely that key stakeholders will include teachers, support staff, parents (and other community members), students and system administration. Some of these are probably more important than others; it is very important that all teachers have an opportunity to participate though only some parents e.g. those on the SMC, may want to be involved. You will need to consider who are the *key stakeholders* in your school and how will it be possible for them to participate in the planning process. The system administration may have some goals and targets for all schools and you will need to take these into account in the planning for your school. "Active involvement of the different stakeholders in the internal management of the schools is increasingly viewed as an effective means of promoting and improving schools" (Synthesis Report).

3. Set realistic expectations for improvement and prioritize

The idea behind this principle is "success breeds success" in the sense that you want to make sure that your goals and targets for improvement are actually achievable so that you can demonstrate successful improvements within a relatively short time, say six months to a year. To prioritize means to choose your targets carefully so that the most important or most visible targets get the first attention. In one case study the school improvement plan focused first on improving the physical environment of the school because it was very run-down and unattractive. Over a period of about six months the school was cleaned up, a boundary wall was built and grass was grown in the playground where there was previously a dust-bowl. "The teachers in successful schools were found to be ready to accept innovations and change, unlike the traditional teaching community" (Synthesis Report).

4. Build on existing school practices so that change is gradual and manageable

Another way of saying this is that incremental change is generally better than drastic upheaval which can be very difficult for people to cope with. Most people find it hard to accept radical change and it can be quite threatening, especially if they have been doing the same thing for many years and suddenly someone says that it is no longer acceptable. Since there can be no improvement without change, you are clearly a change agent when you engage in school improvement planning. Usually, the most appropriate way to begin a change process is to carefully analyze the existing situation and identify those aspects that appear to be most in need of improvement. In that way you will be building on existing practice and it will be less threatening to those involved. "Perhaps, this is one of the characteristics of successful schools to aspire to improve the situation rather than thinking that the available things are enough" (Synthesis Report).

5. Ensure sufficient resources and incentives for change are available

In school improvement planning your role is to manage the change process and two important elements in that role are providing resources and incentives. Usually the best incentive for teachers to change is to see how an improvement will produce better learning outcomes for their students – after all that is the real work of the teacher. Teachers are also motivated by recognition and rewards when they do make improvements. Sometimes monetary rewards such as increased salary through a promotion can be an incentive for improvement and there are also non-monetary rewards e.g. certificate of achievement. "A common recognition for teachers in successful schools comes in the form of their recognition by the school itself, which treats teachers as valuable assets and pillars of their success. A part of this recognition is the involvement of teachers in planning and implementation of school programmes and activities. Though this brings additional responsibilities to teachers, it certainly makes them feel as an integral part of the school. This sense of belongingness, trust, responsibility and value makes teachers confident of their own capabilities and enhances their self-esteem" (Synthesis Report).

Along with incentives you will also have to ensure that financial and human resources are sufficient for the improvement plan to be effective. "In some cases, the schools have been able to mobilize community support to improve their facilities. Some schools and their head teachers have taken vital steps in actualizing their potential by involving the community, local charity organizations and voluntary individual support"(Synthesis Report).

6. Provide for capacity-building of staff

The capacity of the staff refers to their existing levels of knowledge and skills in the areas of teaching, learning and other matters relevant to their work. For support staff it may include other expertise such as financial management or personnel management. If we want teaching and support staff to improve the school then they will have to learn new knowledge and skills in order to do things differently than in the past. This can occur in a number of ways including professional development programmes, both in school and out of school, workshops, visiting experts, occasional visits to other schools, professional reading etc. There are of course many ways to learn and you will need to consider what will work best in your school. The important point is that you must realize that people need opportunities to learn new ways of doing things if you want them to change and improve. "The in-service opportunities, convention of in-house training, head teachers' special focus on staff development programmes in some schools highlights the development of a supporting and learning culture among teachers" (Synthesis Report). "In each case, organizational culture which values both the learning of students and staff could be seen as being one of the core foundations of the successful school" (Synthesis Report). "What distinguishes the head teacher of the successful schools is their desire to help the teachers in building their capacity rather than cribbing over their inability ... They also mentor bright and capable teachers and help them in achieving more in life in terms of professional skill" (Synthesis Report).

7. Monitor and review implementation of new ideas and changes

You might be surprised to find this point mentioned as part of planning, after all doesn't monitoring occur after plans have been implemented? Yes, that is true but it is important to plan how monitoring and review will occur prior to the plans being implemented so that they are part of the overall plan and consistent with the objectives. The purpose of monitoring and review is to enable you to gather accurate information and make sound judgments about the quality of changes being made and the extent to which the school is achieving the improvement targets you have set for yourselves. One way to do this is to decide in advance upon a number of indicators which will give a clear picture of how the improvements are progressing. For example, one improvement target might be to increase enrolment and attendance in the school from the local community. Indicators could be the number of boys and girls attending school at the end of each month.

8. School improvement planning should be an integral part of the culture of the school and highly visible to all concerned

School planning should not be something done by the head alone behind closed doors but should be an open and transparent process for all to see and participate in. If it is done this way a 'culture of improvement' will develop and take hold. That is to say staff will always be looking for a new and better way of doing things rather than simply doing the same thing year after year just because it has always been done that way. A good way to encourage a culture of improvement is to encourage staff to try new approaches and sometimes take a risk and see what happens. If it turns out that a mistake has been made, then refrain from criticism and encourage the person to try something else. Once a school improvement plan has been developed then don't hide it! Make it visible. Perhaps write it up as a wall chart and put it on the staffroom wall or in the principal's office where it is highly visible. "The schools fix their mission and objective and display them on walls, notice boards to attract the attention of various role players" (Synthesis Report).

Case study examples

Pakistan

We noticed in the Principal's office a prominent display of the School Action Plan (equivalent to a School Improvement or Development Plan). We asked the Principal how the Action Plan was developed: "All the teachers and some SMC members were involved in preparing this action plan. Not all SMC members were involved because of their other commitments but later on it was shared with them so that they could give their input ... So in this sense they are involved but to develop this action plan we had sessions like twice or three times I think. We had discussion, brainstorming and group work and then finally we designed this action plan. So all the teachers were involved and where we felt that students should be involved they were also asked ... especially in the senior classes that this is our plan ... and these were shared in the assembly".

Some targets are set at federal level and each school then develops its own specific plan to meet those targets. The action plan for this year includes: teachers' recognition and encouragement, examination coaching for 9 and 10 class students during summer and winter vacations and study tours for the students and teachers to historical places such as Baltit Fort.

Sri Lanka

Mission statement: "To endow to the nation under the guidance of a dedicated staff to create intelligent and virtuous daughters able to adapt to changes in the modern world and respect the spirit of nationalism and perpetuate it".

The school develops an annual plan. Annual implementation plans are prepared at the end of the year. Before preparing the plans, one or two discussions are held with relevant teachers. Next, teachers, parents and the management committee jointly prepare and finalize the plan. The principal said: *I asked the teachers to give projects then I decide the aims of the projects, after that they write action steps. We plan about 25 projects and implement them within one year.*

Bangladesh

The school has a development plan with some specific goals and objectives. Head teacher, teachers and members of SMC jointly prepare the plan. The specific objective of the plan is to provide quality education to the learners with an achievement target of 80% success vote in the public examination. To attain the objective the school is planning to construct some classrooms for learners and separate rooms for library, laboratory, common room and auditorium. All teachers, parents and community members of SMC are involved in the process of implementing this plan so the objectives can be achieved effectively and efficiently.

Philippines

The vision for 2003-6 is: *To produce quality learners in a conducive learning environment with adequate modern teaching-learning facilities and innovative curriculum through effective and efficient teachers as well as strong partnership with parents and the community.*

The vision statement is a product of consensus of the various stakeholders that participate din the planning meetings. In these meetings, the participants were accorded the opportunity to sound off their opinions, comments and suggestions and work in small groups to formulate a vision for the school.

The school development plan was fleshed out into annual operational plans which provide the details of implementation activities and they were used as blueprints for monitoring and evaluating school performance.

Nepal

The school has developed a 5 year rolling plan. District Education Office conducts short term training on the preparation of plans to the head teachers and teachers from different schools. The teachers are oriented about the concept of planning from a team of experts. Then these teachers go to their schools and start planning. In the case of this school the SMC members sat together and discussed on the areas of necessity and the rough estimate of financial involvement. Then the teachers prepared the first draft plan and discussed in the staff meeting in the first stage. With the ideas of the staff the plan was revised and discussed in the staff meeting. After the revision it was forwarded to the SMC. The SMC with advisory and PTA members discussed and approved the plan.

The plan has specified the objectives as:

- To provide school education to all school-age children of its area
- To upgrade the achievement level of students as high as 100% and maintain it
- To make physical facilities favourable to help the teaching
- To introduce it as a model school in the district.

REFLECTION

Having studied the principles of good planning practice and the case study examples, now consider your school. Decide on one specific action you could take for each of these principles which would enable it to be put into practice in your school:

1. *Focus on the process as well as the product.*
2. *Engage key stakeholders in a participatory approach.*
3. *Set realistic expectations for improvement and prioritize.*
4. *Build on existing school practices so that change is gradual and manageable.*
5. *Ensure sufficient resources and incentives for change are available.*
6. *Provide for capacity-building of staff.*
7. *Monitor and review implementation of new ideas and changes.*
8. *School improvement planning should be an integral part of the culture of the school and highly visible to all concerned.*

Unit 3: Producing a School Development Plan

You have studied the rationale of school development planning in Unit 1 and good practices of planning in Unit 2. Now it is time to apply your knowledge to actually produce a school development plan for your school. The process of school development planning enables a school to organize what it is already doing and what it needs to do in a more purposeful and coherent way. This unit is a procedural guide for principals or head teachers and planning teams interested in improvement and change in their schools through development planning.

Preparing for School Development Planning

Before embarking on a development planning process, there are three activities you can carry out to prepare for the process:

1. Establish a school development planning team.
2. Discuss the readiness of the school for development planning.
3. Decide who will be involved and the timeframe for producing the plan.

ACTIVITY 5-1

The first step you should take is to establish a team of people who will work with you on producing the school development plan. It is important that the team is representative of the key stakeholders so you could consider inviting one or more persons from the following groups:

- Teachers
- Support staff
- Parents
- Students

You should write a brief and clear statement of the Terms of Reference (TORs) for the team so that everyone has a shared understanding of what will be involved.

A team of about 8 is appropriate so you may wish to have 2 from each stakeholder group with the principal as team leader. A good idea would be to request each group to nominate their representatives so that the spirit of democracy is planted from the beginning. Once the team is established it is time to call the first meeting.

Readiness Checklist

You can use this checklist as a tool to identify key issues that can help or impede the process. It would be advisable to ask a number of people or the whole team to complete this checklist and use it as a basis for discussion in your first team meeting.

Statements	Yes/No
The stakeholders' input will be available	
The school data will be ready to be used in decision-making processes	
The school recognizes that a change in one part of the organization usually calls for a change in another part	
The school is knowledgeable about what other schools are doing to achieve change	
The school leadership is knowledgeable about current trends in educational reform	
The school leadership is effectively managing human and fiscal resources	
The school is not passing through some critical period or activity e.g. annual audit or exam	
The commitment and permission from system authorities is available	

Case study example

Nepal

The school has developed a 5 year rolling plan. The District Education Office conducts short term training on the preparation of a plan to the head teachers and teachers of different schools. The teachers are oriented about the concept of planning from a team of experts. Then these teachers go to their schools and start planning.

In the case of this school, the SMC members, teachers and PTA members sat together and discussed on the areas of necessity and the rough estimate of financial involvement. Then the teachers prepared the first draft plan and discussed in the staff meeting in the first stage. With the ideas of the staff the plan was revised and discussed in the staff meeting. After the revision it was forwarded to the SMC. The SMC with advisory and PTA members discussed and approved the plan.

Who? and When?

The following template can be used by the team to decide **Who** will be involved in various aspects of the planning and **When** it should occur:

Planning Phase	Who will be involved?	When?
Visioning Exercise		
Situation Analysis		
Objectives formulation		
Developing an Action Plan		

ACTIVITY 5-2

A vision of a good school has always been stressed as a major element in leadership and planning. However, it is not simply the vision of a single person such as the head teacher that counts. A shared vision is necessary for ownership and proper implementation of a school development plan. You need to engage key stakeholders in the planning process right from this phase.

Case study example

Philippines

The vision of 2003-2006 development plan is "to produce quality learners in a conducive learning environment through effective and efficient teachers as well as strong partnership with parents and the community." This vision statement is a product of consensus of the various stakeholders that participated in the planning meetings. In these meetings, the participants were accorded the opportunity to sound off their opinions, comments, and suggestions and work in small groups to formulate a vision for the school. The different versions of the vision statements were distilled by a small group and translated into a mission statement as follows: "to provide learners with the basic education in order to lay the foundation for life long learning and services for the common good."

Developing a School Vision

With the help of the following steps you will be able to develop a shared vision of what the school should be like and how it should function in the future. The purpose of the activity is to develop a school vision.

Step 1:
Convene a stakeholders' visioning workshop. Ensure that all key stakeholders are appropriately represented. The workshop should include the members of your School Development Committee and some other stakeholder representatives as well.

Step 2:
Encourage participants to respond to the following question:

What should be the characteristics of a good school? (Ask participants to give e.g. 8 characteristics).

Step 3:
Stretch the participants' thinking as much as possible by asking further questions to explore important themes. Some suggested questions are:

What should a good school be doing in terms of relations with parents, co-curricular activities, staff development etc.?
What should be in the curriculum of a good school?
What should be the qualities of a graduate from a good school?

Step 4:
Collate and categorize all the responses.

Step 5:
Review the collated ideas and write a vision statement which captures the most significant ideas about what a good school should be like. Now carefully consider that statement in relation to your own school by ensuring that it makes sense for your particular school. The vision statement should be relatively short; it could be as short as one line but no more than 3 or 4 lines of writing.

Now share it with all stakeholders for their review and comments. Incorporate their feedback and distribute a modified version to stakeholders. The resulting statement will serve as the vision for your school.

Note: Vision is not a static thing .It keeps on evolving. Vision once articulated does not mean that it will stay there. In one case from India, the head teacher said that "visioning exercise was a regular feature with the staff".

ACTIVITY 5-3

This is a crucial phase in school development planning. If you are doing planning for your own school, you may feel that you have a good idea of the situation. However, we strongly recommend that you carry out a careful and systematic examination of the present situation with participation of the stakeholders. The output of this activity when compared with the school vision from the previous activity will help you to identify the gaps and goals for school improvement.

Case study example

Philippines

The school development planning process usually starts with a review of the school's profile————————— including enrollment, school program/curriculum, community support, trends and opportunities, and problems and issues.

The school has conducted three educational researches aimed at helping improve itself. They are as follows:

- "'Parents' perception on Public Elementary education and their Participation in School Activities"
- "Effectiveness of an Adapted Design in Teaching 'Measuring Air Pressure"
- "Improving the Reading Ability of Grade 1 Pupils"

Internal and External Analysis

You need to carry out an analysis of both the internal and external situation of the school. It is quite helpful to collect hard and soft data on both of these dimensions. Hard data refers to numerical data, official regulations or policy documents whereas soft data refers to people's expectations and opinions.

You may find following matrix useful when considering data sources.

	Soft Data	Hard Data
Internal	· Teachers · Committees · Students results · Minutes of meetings	· Students · Other staff · Staff reports · Committees reports · Inventories of books and resources
External	· Parents · Community members · People from placement organizations	· BOGs minutes of meetings · System policies · Government policies · International commitments e.g. MDGs, EFA, Child rights · Tracking of graduates

Carefully consider the following questions while preparing for this activity.

- What aspects of the school will you will focus on? (You may start with whole picture and then zero in on your areas of priority).
- How you will be doing the analysis? (You need to decide on sources of data and tools for collection of data).
- Who will be doing the analysis?

In Unit 1 we suggested SWOT as a useful technique for the situation analysis. We are now going to expand on that by suggesting another technique to use in conjunction with SWOT and that is the Environmental Scan technique. The following steps will guide you through this approach if you choose to use it.

Environmental Scan (PESTE) and SWOT

This technique will help you to identify trends or forces outside the school that can affect or shape the course of actions undertaken by the school. It will also help you to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

Step 1:
Identify, with the help of stakeholders, the trends that are emerging that will have more influence in the coming 3-5 years. Different political, economic, social and technological forces can have impact on schools. Identification of trends in those fields can be very helpful. In the following box, one example of a trend in education is quoted from the case studies.

The following template will be useful for recording the trends identified by the participants:

Politics	Economic	Social	Technology	Education

Step 2:
From the trends/ forces you have identified what trends are most likely to impact your school and how.

The trends likely to impact your school positively can be marked as 'opportunities' and the trends likely to have a negative affect on your school can be marked as 'threats'. You will recognize these terms from the SWOT technique outlined in Unit 1.

Trends	Opportunity/Threat

Step 3:
This step will help you to develop understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school also familiar to you from SWOT.

Strengths are the characteristics that allow the school to take advantage of opportunities or reduce the impact of barriers while weaknesses are the characteristics that could stand in the way of the school taking advantage of opportunities or reducing the impact of barriers.

Case study example

Nepal
The school identified the following as its strengths.

Team Sprit among the teachers; the teachers are dedicated and are hard working towards the development of the school. Most of them are local (9 teachers are from the same VDC and 9 from neighboring VDCs and municipality, out of 23) he feels this is an important factor for teachers dedication.

Student motivation and labour. The students have respect towards the teachers and they obey the teachers. They are also motivated by the prospect of good achievement.

SMC members and the parents attach a lot of prestige to the hard work of the school and its success: They are proud that the school has a strong reputation. All the members of the managing committee, PTA members, teachers and parents speak in one voice that there is a

teamwork, unity and involvement of all stakeholders in making important decision. And there is transparency in the financial and administrative activities.

The school has been doing better rapidly in terms of schools leaving Examination results: The pass rate of this school in SLC in 2001, 2002 and 2003 are about 30, 59 % and 67 % receptively. The national average has remained about 32 in these three years. Currently this school is in the fourth position among the public secondary schools of Bhaktapur. Extra coaching classes since 2002 have helped the school to achieve better. The school invites experts from outside to ensure that the students do better.

The school maintains a regular calendar for co-curricular and extra curricular activities: It conducts quiz, debate, spelling and oratory contests regularly from May to October 2003. The school stands first and third in oratory and folk song competition in the resource centre based primary school contest. Similarly at secondary level it stands first among 16 schools from the neighboring VDCs. This school organizes a science exhibition on the occasion of the school anniversary every year.

You can ask the following simple questions:

- What are our current strengths?
- What are our current weaknesses?

Step 4:

The out put of step 2 & 3 can be organized using the following matrix (SWOT)

Internal	Strengths	Weaknesses
External	Opportunities	Threats

Step 5:

Analyze the above matrix according to the following combinations and develop options/goals/directions for the school.

a. Strengths-opportunities: This will lead you to identify options for maximizing the strengths of school.
b. Strengths-threats: This will lead you to identify options for reducing the impact of threats.
c. Weaknesses-opportunities: This will lead you to identify options for compensating weaknesses with the help of opportunities.
d. Weaknesses-threats: This will lead you to identify areas that you must avoid.

Document analysis

Identify the documents that could provide information on the current situation and carry out an analysis of them. The issues raised in the SWOT analysis can be a useful guide in identification of documents and developing a framework of analysis. For example, if you wish to explore school-parent relationships the following documents could be a useful resource for objective analysis of the situation:

- ToRs of PTA (if it has any formal structure)
- SMC record (showing parents representation and contribution in the body)
- Record of complaints lodged by parents
- Minutes of meetings with the parents
- Applications for school leaving certificates

The following examples show how school records can be helpful in a situation analysis.

Case study examples

Bangladesh
Reviewing of the performance of the students was a common practice after the examinations. If such review showed any unsatisfactory performance necessary steps were taken. One example can be shown here. After the second term examination in 2002, the review meeting observed that 37 students of grade IV (out of 89) could not pass in mathematics. The teachers identified two reasons. Firstly, the respective teacher did not take much care of the weaker students, and secondly, the students were not very attentive and punctual in their mathematics classes. The head teacher firstly asked the respective teacher to respond. He was advised to be careful in this regard. The issue was also discussed in the SMC meeting. The respective parents were informed about the concern of the SMC. The teachers had a meeting with the respective parents and asked them to take care at home.

India
The school record has been meticulously prepared, the records of the past five years showed zero percentage dropout. The only children who left the school were transfer case who were given transfer certificate (TC) on leaving the school, as per administrative account no children had left the school for any other reason.

ACTIVITY 5-4

At this stage a careful analysis is needed to determine what the gaps are between future vision (desired state) and current reality. This may result in a long wish list of areas you would like to see improved. However, a small number of priorities must be selected as it is not possible to do every thing at once and resources are usually scarce. The advice from good practice in Unit 2 is to 'set realistic expectations for improvement' and give priority to the most important or most visible targets. After establishing priorities the feasibility of goals should be considered in terms of availability of resources, time, money and people, etc.

The following process can be used to determine goals and priorities:

Step 1:
Ask each person (who has been part of the whole process) to write 5 goals for the school that should be pursued over the next 1-3 years in order to achieve the vision.

Step 2:
Collect all those ideas and make a comprehensive list of those goals and the areas of improvement they relate to.

Step 3:
Review the goals according to the following criteria:

- Are the goals realistic and desirable?
- Do the goals reflect the issues surfaced in situation analysis? (Stakeholders' analysis, PESTE, SWOT, document analysis)
- Do the goals match with the vision and values of the school?
- Do the goals maximize strengths and minimize weaknesses and take advantage of opportunities while minimizing threats.

Step 4:
Make a list of goals in order of priority consensus.

1.
2.
3.
Etc.

Step 5:
Select the number of areas and goals you wish to work on in next six months or one year. The number of goals your school can effectively work on will depend on the complexity of the goals as well as the capacity of the school in terms of resources.

Case study examples

Nepal
The plan has clearly specified the objectives. They are:

- To provide school education to all school-age children of its area,
- To upgrade the achievement level of students as high as 100 percent and maintain it,
- To make physical facilities favorable to help the teaching,
- To introduce it as a model school in the district.

Sri Lanka
In relation to the mission they have developed the following aims for the school.

1. Teachers work according to the code of ethics.
2. To design activities within the school to improve innovative skills of children.
3. To keep high standards at public examination results and student performance.
4. To make school plant pleasant.
5. To train children for a life style which valus local heritage
6. To create a learning environment in the school to learn English language.
7. All the students in the school getting the computer training and use of computers as a learning tool.
8. To build daughters who love the school through good teacher-pupil relations.

ACTIVITY *5-5*

There are several steps in developing an action plan.

Step 1:
For each goal you have identified, assign a group to complete the following activity:

Example:

Goal 1: To develop school – parent relationships

Objective #1: To understand current level of relationships with parents
Objective #2: To constitute fully functional PTA by the end of next year
Objective #3: To involve the community about school functions

Following the example, convert the goals into objectives. Each objective should be SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound)

Step 2: Action planning
Our knowledge of best practice from the case studies reminds us to be conscious of the availability of resources and clarity of the roles i.e. who will be doing what?

Break each objective into a small number of tasks and allocate resources accordingly.

Action Steps	Who will do it?	By When?	Resources required?

Step 3: Planning for monitoring
One of the most important lessons from principles of good practice is to plan for monitoring and make it part of the action plan. What you have to do is to develop criteria (or indicators) of success for each activity. For example, if the activity is meeting with the parents, the number of parents invited and the number who actually attended can serve as indicators.

Case study example

India
The school has constituted as many as 38 committees. These are related to coordination, school calendar, admission, time-table, examination, discipline, mess, co-curricular activities, audio-visual aids, water, maintenance and repair, vehicle maintenance, electricity, library, health and hygiene, publicity, cultural programs, local purchase, assembly, career guidance, safety and security, pace-setting activities, information technology, public relations, sports, etc. Depending upon the requirement, one or more than one teacher was included in a particular committee. The principal himself was a member of seven committees. The students were represented in three committees. The mess committee consisted of all

house masters (teachers), staff nurse, school prefect (student), all house captains (students), and the mess helper. All house captains were represented in the safety and security committee, and the school prefect in the maintenance and repair committee.

Malaysia

Besides effective planning, successful leaders also need to practice successful monitoring of the school programs, teachers and students. It is observed that Ahmad has a plan and the importance of plan is also communicated frequently through planned activities. The head would also have frequent meetings with his assistant head teachers to ask about the development and progress of the various programs.

The case studies showed that a strong mechanism of monitoring exists in the successful schools. That mechanism clearly identifies 'who will monitor' (principal/section heads/committees) but more clarity can be sought by using the following template.

Action Steps	What to monitor?	How to monitor it?	Who will monitor?

Step 4: Putting the pieces together

Action Steps	Action Planning			Monitoring Plan		
	Who?	When?	Resources	What to monitor	When to monitor	Who?

This activity will bring all pieces of your school development plan together. After preparation of the plan you need to publish it in the form of a document, modify it (when needed) and use it as road map for improvement.

Step 5: Quality audit

You can use the following check list to do a quality audit of the action plan.

	Yes /No
Are objectives/actions aligned with the vision/values of the school?	
Will completing the actions produce the intended outcome?	
Does implementation of the plan require any change in the management structure?	
Are the resources required for actions in place?	
Can progress be measured?	
Is the action plan likely to improve students' learning?	
Will this plan be shared with all stakeholders?	

The case studies of successful schools show different patterns regarding the process of school development planning. However, there are some common themes:

a. Successful schools have a visible and explicit plan for improvement developed through their own processes.
b. The plan is developed by the school with the support of the system. No systematic and formal process of planning exists throughout the whole system though leadership at school level has a clear understanding of the future plans and shares those goals clearly.
c. Some systems develop the goals and the school does action planning.

The whole idea of school development planning is not simply to finish the document and say that you have 'done it'; but to implement it. The plan should not be viewed as a static thing but rather it is a living, breathing document that can be changed as needed. Be sure to make changes if goals are not relevant or no longer needed. A good way to implement a plan is to integrate it into all activities of the school or in other words make it an integral part of the culture of the school (an important lesson from good practices).

Conclusion

In this module we have given you an overview of school development planning, provided you with some good practices of planning and outlined a process for you to follow in order to produce a development plan for your school.

We hope that you have enjoyed working through the module and we trust that you will apply the ideas to achieve continuous school improvement for the benefit of your students and your school community.

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The Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning (ANTRIEP), which currently brings together 20 Asian institutions from Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia , Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Korea, Sri-Lanka and International Institute of Educational Planning/ UNESCO,Paris. The ANTRIEP offers an innovative answer to the question of how to strengthen national capacities in training and research in educational management. Without capacity-development, policies and programmes to improve the quality of education will have little chance of survival, let alone success. In its fourteen years of existence, the ANTRIEP network has grown to be a concrete and creative example of South-South co-operation.

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Making School Successful

Module 1: **Successful Schools**

Module 2: **Managing People at Work**

Module 3: **Managing Student Affairs**

Module 4: **Managing External Relations**

Module 5: **School Development Planning**