LEADING A LEARNING-FOCUSED SCHOOL: SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP

Resource for Basic School Leaders in Ghana

Greatness, Charisma, and Leadership

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January 2023

Foreword

Welcome to the Leadership Programme Resource Handbook for School Leaders in Ghana. School leaders have both a professional responsibility and a moral obligation to ensure that all learners achieve their full potential . Whilst the quality of teaching and learning is considered a major contributory factor to positive learning outcomes, there is growing evidence on the positive relationship between effective leadership, continuing professional development and continuous school improvements.

Ghana Education Service in collaboration with the National Teaching Council with technical support from Transforming Teaching, Education & Learning (T-TEL) through its Communities of Excellence Programme (CEP) funded by the Jacobs Foundation, is ensuring that the capacity of Basic Schools leaders is enhanced to create a positive environment for inclusive and effective learning. Gender equity approaches and social inclusion practices have been integrated into the module to ensure an inclusive programme delivery in schools considering the diverse needs of teachers and students. The Ghana Education Service will ensure that all Ghanaian children of school-going age, irrespective of tribe, geographic location, gender, disability, religious and political affiliations, are provided with an inclusive and equitable quality learning experience.

The handbook provides practical leadership guide for improving management and leadership of schools so that the schools are transformed into centres of learning: a learning-focused enterprise (education institutions). The Ghana Education Service (GES) is ensuring that the capacity of all Basic school heads, their leadership teams and school boards are developed through structured cluster-based workshops and coaching support informed by this practical leadership guide.

I am optimistic that together we can make our schools more learning-focused by making the schools teacher-centered and classrooms more learner-centered.

Dr Eric Nkansah

Director General, Ghana Education Service

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Leading a Learning Focused School: Systems Leadership

1.0 Introduction

This module – divided into five sections – is intended to support school leaders to adopt practical strategies to transform their schools into centres of learning by ensuring continuous improvement in the performance of all students. As a school leader you are required to work with your teams to create a shared vision for your school. This vision should be informed by the school's motto and the broad vision and mission of the Ghana Education Service (GES). The linkages to the motto, vision and mission statements of the GES Service should assist schools to come out with their own vision and mission that will underpin the ethos of the school and drive students' performance so that all learners achieve their full potential.

In the performance of your roles as a school leader, you are expected to work with your teams to put in place relevant guidelines to implement national level policies and programmes such as teaching and learning, assessment, and safe schools considering the expectations and demands of the school curriculum.

School leaders are expected to become systems leaders by taking the responsibility for creating a school culture and enabling environment which enhances learning and teaching. As a systems leader, you are a leader of learning with the skills and competencies to lead others to learn within a shared-value, culture, and belief system in the school.

In this context, school leaders are required to take deliberate steps to build a shared vision and establish effective management systems to track the progress of every learner and implement an individual learning support plan including institutionalisation of gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) practices and leading school improvement planning.

The aim is to ensure that schools become centres of learning with a clear focus on the achievement of all learners. This means that through effective systems, leadership practices, and procedures, your schools must be strengthened, and your school must work for the benefit of all learners. In this way, your school becomes a centre of learning characterised by continuous improvement in the performance of all learners. This module therefore explores how you as a school leader, can lead your teams to:

- build a shared vision,
- ensure that leadership focuses on learning,
- make your school a gender equality and social inclusive one,
- make quality assurance including whole school self-evaluation and school improvement planning a culture in your school; and
- work collaboratively with the school so that school governance is aimed at achievement for all learners.

The diagram below shows the five elements of systems leadership in this context.

Diagram 1: Elements of Systems Leadership

1.1 Purpose

This handbook aims to equip you, the school leader, to better appreciate your roles and responsibilities and equip you with the essential skills in using basic tools needed to make your school a centre of learning. You will become familiar with some of the practices required to sustain and improve the performance of your school and learners. The purpose of the Handbook is therefore to enable you and your school management committee to:

- reach an agreement on what it means to be a school leader;
- lead learning in your school;
- lead in crafting and communicating vision and mission statements for your school;
- adopt gender equality and social inclusion responsive leadership and management practices;
- lead the development of strategies to improve the achievement of all learners;
- embed quality assurance into your school improvement processes; and
- develop action plans to enable leaders to perform their roles more effectively.

1.2 Learning Focused Leadership

The core role of the school leader is to ensure that all learners are receiving quality education. Leadership and management that focus on learning provide the tools to achieve the provision of quality education through five key principles.

The five principles see leadership as an activity that anyone can undertake, regardless of status, just as learning also applies to everyone. The five principles of a learning focused leadership are presented in the diagram below:

Diagram 2: Principles of a Learning Focused School

As a school leader you are expected to:

- lead all stakeholders of the school to focus on learning,
- create a conducive learning environment for all,
- engage all stakeholders in dialogues around learning,
- share leadership; and
- share accountability.

1.2.1 Principle 1: A Focus on Learning

Leadership for learning practice involves maintaining a focus on learning as an activity in which:

- everyone is a learner,
- learning relies on the effective interplay of social, emotional, and cognitive processes,
- different ways of learning by individuals and the context are explored and used,
- the capacity for leadership arises out of powerful learning experiences; and
- opportunities for leadership in the classroom, school and community are provided to enhance learning.

1.2.2 Principle 2: Conducive Learning Environment

Leadership for Learning practice involves creating conditions for learning in which:

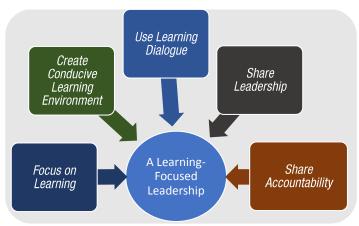- a culture of learning is nurtured in everyone has an opportunity to reflect on the nature, skills, and processes of learning,
- physical and social spaces stimulate and celebrate learning,
- safe and secure environments enable everyone to take risks, cope with failure and respond positively to challenges; and
- tools and strategies are used to enhance thinking about learning and the practice of teaching.

1.2.3 Principle 3: Learning Dialogue

Leadership for learning practice involves a dialogue about learning in which:

- practice is made explicit, discussable, and transferable,
- active, collegial inquiry focuses on the link between learning and leadership,
- there is coherence through the sharing of values, understandings, and practices, factors that inhibit and promote learning are examined and addressed,
- the link between leadership and learning is a concern for everyone; and
- different perspectives are explored through networking with researchers and practitioners.

1.2.4 Principle 4: Shared Leadership

Leadership for learning practice involves the sharing of leadership in which:

- structures support participation in developing learning communities,
- shared leadership is symbolised in the day-to-day flow of activities,
- everyone's experience and expertise are valued and drawn upon as a resource,
- collaborative activity across boundaries of subject, role and status are valued and promoted.

1.2.5 Principle 5: Shared Accountability

Leadership for learning practice involves mutual accountability, which means a:

- systematic approach to self-evaluation embedded at every level,
- focus on evidence and its congruence with core values,
- shared approach to internal accountability is a pre-condition of external accountability,

- recasting of national policies in accordance with a school's core values,
- choice of how to tell one's own story while taking account of political realities; and
- continuing focus on sustainability, succession and leaving a legacy.

Activity 1.1

Reflections:

- Take some time to reflect on the five principles of leadership for learning presented above and how the principles reflect in the activities of your school?
- Evaluate your current practices using the leadership for learning principles having an overview of strengths and weaknesses and use it to complete the table that follows.
- Make a list of all the things you are already doing, what you are needed to do (from the reflections so far) and the interesting points related to each key principle from your own context.

Principle	What are you already doing well?	What do you need to do more of?	How do you intend to make the principles part of the school culture?
Focus on learning			
Conditions for learning			
Learning dialogue			
Shared leadership			
Mutual accountability			

In summarising your reflections on the case study and the principles of leadership for learning discussed above, what does it mean to be a school leader who is focused on learning?

Activity 1.2 – Being a School Leader
- In groups, discuss who a school a leader is
- Reflect on what you are expected to do to lead learning in your school
- Write your views in the space below
- Reflect on the systems school leaders must institutionalize

1.3 Being a School Leader

A leader in a learning-focused school is expected to play the following key roles:

- create and communicate a shared vision for learning,
- lead learning,
- lead gender equality and social inclusion for learning; and
- lead school improvement planning for learning.

A school leader can refer to any individual or group of people who have the legitimate responsibility to lead or guide other members of the school system, teams, or the entire school to achieve the school's vision and mission.

To be a school leader does not mean that one must be in a key position in the school. Leadership is about making the school function effectively and is a process of influencing people to accomplish the vision and mission, inspiring their commitment for improving the school, regardless of your formal position.

In simple terms, being an effective school leader means having the ability to influence and helping to ensure that the culture of the school is focused on learning and improvement.

1.4 Managing Devolved Leadership Responsibilities

Effective, learning focused schools must have the appropriate '**culture**' and '**skills**'.

Culture refers to the values, expectations and practices that guide and inform the actions of all members of the school.

Skills refers to the capabilities, knowledge and understanding of the individual participants within each school as to whether they are able to deliver the tasks expected of them. For most staff in basic schools this means understanding the curriculum and pedagogies required for effective learning, aligned with the National Teachers' Standards (NTS).

It is important to devolve responsibility to those who have been empowered to take that responsibility. It would, for instance, be inappropriate to devolve financial management responsibilities to the Class 3 Teacher. This is because the Class 3 Teacher may lack the skills and knowledge to manage school finances. However, it might   be very appropriate to have the Class 3 Teacher taking a leadership role in relation to managing and preparing students for a quiz competition in an area where they have competence or in being expected to facilitate a weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) session.

Devolving responsibility to the wrong person or level puts those given the leadership responsibilities under undue stress and may lead to inappropriate decisions, ultimately disempowering staff and undermining the smooth running of the school. Distribution of leadership roles within an institution when done appropriately can assist in the effective management of the school.

It is therefore important that:

- leadership is devolved to an appropriate level and to appropriate office holders; and
- systems are put in place to allow an element of autonomy and risk taking at the various decision-making or leadership levels, with constant communication.

Jointly, the school leadership groups and individuals have specific responsibilities in driving excellence within their schools including quality assurance. Schools must endeavor to prioritise quality assurance in the following areas as part of effective leadership:

- Leadership & Management
- Teaching and Learning
- Assessment
- Curriculum Planning & Implementation
- Partnership & Cooperation
- Environment &Infrastructure
- Support Services

The activity below is to identify leadership qualities that may promote or impede a school leader's effectiveness.

Please tick (√) in the cells to indicate your belief of a quality which is considered as more effective or less effective.

Activity 1.3: Assessment of School Leadership Qualities
- The activity below is to identify leadership qualities that may promote or impede a school leader's effectiveness.
- Reflect and identify two of your personal attributes and classify them as 'less effective' or "more effective" and think about what you can do to improve or change the attributes.
- Reflect and tick (√) in the cells to indicate your belief of a quality being considered as more effective or less effective.
- Share your decisions with your pair's partner.

In plenary allow a few volunteers to share their 'less effective' attributes and what they intend to do to reverse these.

Leadership Quality	Generally, Makes School Leader	
	More effective	Less effective
Persistent: continuing firmly; trying to do something even though it is difficult		
Eloquent; good speaking ability		
Perfectionist: usual attitude of regarding anything short of perfection as unacceptable.		
Impulsive: interrupts others when they are talking; always react defensively		
Sociable: willing to talk and be friendly with other people		
Argumentative: begins an argument and always trying to prove a point.		
Conceited: full of oneself; egotistic.		
Cooperative: ability to receive critical feedback in good faith and with minimal reactivity or defensiveness.		
Adaptable: creates an environment that embraces the diversity of views and takes advantage of such collective knowledge to benefit the school.		
Patient: steadfast despite opposition.		
Self-confident: accepting compliments graciously; being confident in one's beliefs despite possible negativity from others		
Task oriented: the ability to focus on tasks that need to be performed and completing them within a specified period; and initiate step-by-step planning and reward or punishment systems		
Dedicated to duty: always punctual for meetings, work, and functions.		
Self-control: the ability to exercise restraint.		
Empathetic: able to understand what other people are feeling and share their feelings.		
Indecisive: uncertain, wavering, doubtful, hesitating: react out of proportion to situations.		

1.5 Qualities of a School Leader

It is said that everything rises and falls on leadership; as the Head of the school, you must:

1.5.1   ensure that your school is effective,

1.5.2   cultivate some qualities that promote and enhance the effectiveness of school leadership teams and practices,

1.5.3   implement practices and policies.

Activity 1.4: Accountability Issues

1. In your mixed school groups reflect and discuss the following:
   - With your understanding of accountability, would you say that it is important for the leadership teams to be accountable?
   - Who should X be accountable to?
   - What should X be accountable for?
2. Give reasons for your answers.

NB: X could be any member of the management team of the school.

1.6 Professional and Personal Accountability of a School Leader

Accountability means being answerable for your actions and inactions. In this section, we examine your professional and personal accountability in your school.

1.6.1 Professional Accountability of a School Leader

Professional accountability is about the commitment that leaders bring to their workers and institutions. Professional accountability depends on a moral commitment to serve the interest of clients in the school. It is obligatory for you to self-monitor and to periodically review the effectiveness of your own practice.

To ensure professional accountability as a school head, you are expected to:

- Respect your staff and the institution.
- Make decisions and act in a way that best serves the interests of the school and all who work and study in the school.
- Be accountable to GES for the decisions and actions of your school.
- Behave in acceptable ways as prescribed by your code of professional conduct to promote learning and teaching in your school.

1.6.2   Personal Accountability of a School Leader

- The school leader has a moral duty to be committed to the running of the school in various capacities.
- A school leader must answer for their actions and inactions.
- A school leader must consider personal accountability important and must not be told to do the right things.
- A school leader must first be accountable to themselves before authority demands it.

Building a Shared Vision

2.0 Introduction

The development of a shared vision is an essential school strengthening practice. As the school leader (head of school), you are expected to work with the School Management Committee (SMC), the staff, students, and other key stakeholders, such as parents through the Parent Association (PA) and Change leaders to set a clear direction for your school. This starts with developing a shared vision.

There may be some very great things that you may be doing in your school. It is therefore necessary that you regularly reflect on your leadership practices, identify what is working that needs consolidating, and the areas of growth that need new and innovative interventions.

Some of us inherited our schools' current visions and missions whilst others were part of the development or were the originators. No matter where we stand, as the world changes, it may be expedient for us to review our mission and vision statements to align with the demands of the current education situation in Ghana, to ensure that our mission and vision are fit for purpose.

2.1 Building the Shared Vision

Now, think of building a shared vision for your schools in terms of embarking on a journey to a 'New World' – a Learning Focused School. What reflections would go into your actions (for example, how to get there, who to include, beliefs to uphold, directions to take and indicators of success)?

In the following sections, we shall explore the meanings of vision, mission, and core values with the intention of helping you the school leader to revisit your school's vision, mission, and value statements, to reflect your schools' focus on effective learning.

> **Activity 2.1 – Understanding your School's Vision and Mission**
> - In groups, refer to your school's Vision and Mission.
> - Identify the differences and similarities and note them down.
> - In plenary, share and discuss the identified differences and similarities.
> - Agree on the differences and share with the larger group

2.2 Understanding Vision, Mission, and Values

In this section, we will explore the meaning of vision and mission statements and core values and how these can be developed.

2.2.1 What is a Vision Statement?

The term vision and mission can sometimes be confusing. Vision is a long-term view, expressing what you hope your school will become to attain its mandate as a learning focused enterprise.

A vision statement therefore describes what the school wants to be in the future and what one will see when the school reaches its future destination. The vision statement provides the direction and identifies what you want your school to be known for and/or what distinguishes your school from others.

In other words, a school's vision statement is the mental image of the future we seek to create for the school. It reflects the goal and preferred destination for the school in the future and how the school will

be seen by the public. A very good example of a mental image of a preferred future is seen in the 'I have a dream' speech by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. A part of this speech is quoted below:

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colours of their skin but by the content of their character".

A vision statement from the Luther King's vision could read "A nation of equals" or "A nation without discrimination."

From the above quote, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. expresses the future he sought and which he was working assiduously towards. Thus, seen in this context, and in summary, a vision:

- is a specific future destination.
- expresses the preferred future.
- addresses what one wishes to accomplish.
- provides parameters for long-term action.

2.2.2 Attributes of Vision Statement of a School

The vision statement of a school should have the following attributes. It should be:

- **Realistic** – It must be practical and achievable. It must not be too abstract.
- **Credible** – It must be convincing. Stakeholders must trust it to be the way to go.
- **Attractive** – It must be eye-catching and convincing to attract stakeholder buy-in.
- **Inspiring** – It must motivate action and create a sense of hope in all stakeholders.
- **Clear and concise** – It must be short and easily understood. The language must be clear and to the point for stakeholders to understand.
- **Unambiguous** – The statement must not be open to multiple interpretations; everyone must be able to understand the key message.
- **Futuristic** – Indicates how the future is an improvement over present condition.

In addition, a vision comprises both stability and change.

- **Stability** is created by the core ideology, which never changes and creates the purpose of the school's existence. The values the school holds most dear are at the centre of this solidity and stability. They provide the foundation for the movement towards the vision.
- **Change** is generated by the passion to constantly improve. This involves taking risks, learning, challenging accepted beliefs and experimenting.

Some examples of school vision statements include the following:

- A fast-moving centre for learning, fully focused on high expectations and challenge.
- Delivering high quality learning results and excellent outcomes for all learners.
- A positive learning environment where every learner has the right to achieve their potential.

2.2.3 Why is a Vision Statement Important?

Below are some of the reasons why vision statements are particularly important to schools.

- The vision helps simplify the decision-making process as schools make a great number of decisions each day to stay afloat in the ever-changing educational and world environments.
- A school's vision provides the school with a framework of what they want to become and how they would like to be viewed, as they actualize their mission at a point in the future.
- A well-articulated vision of the school provides a common direction for growth, which inspires commitment to a cause by all stakeholders.
- A school's vision thus provides a destination for the school. A common understanding of the destination allows all stakeholders to align their school improvement efforts for optimum results.
- The school's vision will be the desired picture of the school once the mission has been implemented through programmes and activities. It shows what the stakeholders of the school perceive to be possible and what can be done.

- A vision can propel individual stakeholders and inspire those around them to reach their own dreams and support the attainment of the school vision.

Nanus (1995) maintains that the 'right vision':

- attracts commitment and energizes people,
- creates meaning in workers' lives,
- establishes a standard of excellence,
- bridges the present to the future; and
- transcends the status quo.

2.3 Mission Statement

A mission statement, on the other hand, describes how the school will achieve the vision. The mission reflects the reason for establishing the school and describes what the school does towards attaining the vision. This is seen in the French translation of Mission – *raison dêtre*, which means '*reason for being*'. It is therefore dominated by verbs denoting action. The mission statement describes the niche of the school.

Thus, whereas vision is future oriented, the mission describes what is done now towards the attainment of the vision. The mission must therefore support the vision and allow the vision to be realised. As such, when you have a well stated mission statement; it must be easy to deduce a vision from it. For example, could you deduce a vision that aligns with a mission that includes the statement 'we provide educational technical assistance for improved learning outcomes and greater productivity'. This mission statement is derived from the mission of T-TEL, and their vision is 'Transformed Education for Development'. Can you see the alignment?

It is clear from the above that the vision and mission statements of any institution of learning are invaluable to the institution's development and growth. For this reason, these statements should be short and memorable so that students and staff are able to remember and understand what they mean. Long or complex statements are not or should not be encouraged in writing up these statements, as they fail to drive the institution in the desired direction.

When setting or reviewing the mission statement we can be guided by answers to the following questions:

- What is the main purpose of the school?
- What do you want the school to be known for?
- What sort of students do you want the school to nurture?
- What are the school's values?
- Who are the school's main clients (stakeholders)?
- What are the main benefits the school provides to its stakeholders?
- What are the school's responsibilities to these clients?
- How is the school serving its clients?
- What is the school doing now to achieve its vision?

2.4 Core Values

For stability, the school must be fully aware of its core values. The core values should be embodied in a values statement. Values are beliefs that the school cherishes and upholds. We associate some rightness or wrongness with values as beliefs. For example, 'I believe that I will be paid my salary at the end of the month', is simply a belief. There is no rightness or wrongness about it, but a statement like 'I believe in honesty' is a value since we can associate some rightness or wrongness with it.

Thus, core values are the beliefs that an institution considers important in carrying out its purpose. They constitute the driving force behind what a school does. A school's core values are the foundation on which the school conducts its activities. The core values constitute a set of beliefs about the key success factors in the school. Hence the core values, if expressed succinctly should describe beliefs about:

- Students
- Teachers

- School leaders
- Parents
- General or school public
- Curriculum
- Facilities
- Environment

Examples of core values include:

- Commitment to quality,
- Respect for learners,
- Commitment to gender equality and social inclusion,
- Honesty and integrity; and
- Commitment to safety and security.

We often overlook these values since we assume that we all know them. However, some of our core values must be written and displayed together with our vision and mission statements.

Activity 2.2 – Revisiting the school's Vision and Mission Statements
Now with the understanding of Leadership for Learning, and the aspiration to make basic schools (your school) learning focused, critique your own vision and mission statements, highlighting the areas of strength and the areas that need change

2.5 Developing a Vision Statement for your School

It is worth noting that developing a vision statement requires, setting in motion the process of visioning. School leaders must reflect on their current realities to help their schools to achieve the future desired state. Visioning, therefore, entails collectively exploring the:

a. needs of the school,
b. problems and challenges of the school, and
c. capabilities and opportunities in the school.

This invariably means, the development of a school vision must be a shared responsibility, which requires the involvement of various stakeholders.

In formulating the vision statement for your school, it is crucial to involve all major stakeholders. The development of a shared vision involves the following:

- Initiating the process for developing a shared vision,
- Working collaboratively with stakeholders:
  - encouraging dialogue among stakeholders
  - discussing and listing core values of the school
  - discussing what is important and unique to the school
- Guiding the process of reaching consensus to determine the salient elements of the vision and mission:
  - sharing the vision and mission statements to ensure clarity and accuracy
- Addressing the all-important question: does the statement paint a clear picture of where the school wants to be in the future?

The process outlined above can be attained by adopting the six-step guide indicated here:

1. Gather input from all the stakeholders.
2. Conduct a series of meetings and processes to hear everyone's voice, so there will be unconditional support for the vision.

a. Lead with essential questions. For example: Does it reflect the school's conception of a successful learner?
b. Does it make clear the school's direction and purpose?
c. Does it present a clear picture of an attainable bright future?
d. Are there images and words that will inspire commitment, loyalty, and excitement in all school stakeholders?
e. Does it contain memorable and engaging statements?
f. Does it align with the school's values and culture?
g. Does it refer to the unique strengths, culture, values, beliefs, and direction of the school?
h. Will it instill the belief in employees that they are part of something bigger than themselves and their daily work?
i. Does it challenge people to excel in reaching out for a great and worthwhile future?
3. Brainstorm all the possible answers to the questions.
4. Develop focus areas that are more specific to the future.
5. Narrow the answers down into a statement.

2.6 Communicating your School's Vision, Mission, and Values

When the vision and mission statements are complete, they must be communicated to all stakeholders to inform them and to enlist their support towards the attainment of the school's goals and vision. They must not be posted in the headteacher's office alone, but at all vantage points so that they are be accessible to all stakeholders.

The following are some of the ways in which vision and mission statements of institutions are communicated:

- post the vision and mission statement at vantage points in the school, including in the classrooms.
- include both statements on all the school's official correspondence.
- put the school's vision and mission in the students' handbook, notebook and exercise books.
- if the school has a website, load the vision and mission statements in a prominent place on your home page or landing page.

Also, every member of staff and students should know the vision and mission statements by heart and be able to relate to them and how the work they do or the roles they play feed into that vision. This means doing much more than ensuring it is on key documents.

2.7 How is a Vision Statement Implemented – From Vision to Action?

Having a mental image of where the school will be in the future is certainly a good beginning. However, the school must walk a designated path guided by the mission statement to attain the future which has been identified in the vision statement. The school will have to act consistently and be driven by the set of core values which have been identified. The school's stakeholders should know what they want and remain unwavering as they put in place structures to get to where they want the school to be.

Two key questions must be addressed as the school works towards the attainment of its vision through its mission statement. These key questions are:

- What kind of school do we hope/want to   be?
- What do we need to do differently to achieve this vision?

The core values become the anchor that holds the school as it addresses these questions, sets its direction, and plans, and executes these plans. Thus, from vision to action, there is a need for improvement plans that require setting goals (signposts towards the attainment of vision) and developing strategies for improvement. In this context, it is important to revisit your School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) to see if it aligns with your vision and mission statements.

The School Performance Improvement Plan needs to be implemented to make your vision a reality. Therefore, conscious efforts must be made to implement the plans, with a clearly outlined monitoring

and evaluation framework to help ensure effective implementation. In Module 2, you will have more opportunities to explore the process of undertaking a whole school self-evaluation and how you can use the outcome from the evaluation to develop a School Performance Improvement Plan.

Activity 2.3 Case Study

Two school heads are posted to two different schools on the same day. Upon arrival in the school Mr. A called a staff meeting and shared his vision for the school with them. He then encouraged everyone to support him to achieve his vision.

On the part of Mrs. B, she called a staff meeting to review the state of the school and tasked a committee to, based on the review findings, develop a vision for the school to be discussed and adopted at another meeting

Questions for discussion
- What are the merits and demerits of each approach?
- Which approach do you think would yield better results and why?

Managing Learning-Focused Basic Schools

3.0 Introduction

The focus of this section of the module is school management. Members of your School Management Committee (SMC) must have a common understanding of what your functions are in ensuring that your schools are centres of learning and that every learner receives quality education. It is also important to be equipped with the skills needed to make your committee effective. The section below provides an overview of what school management is all about.

3.1 What is a School Management Committee?

The School Management Committee (SMC) is a school-community-based institution aimed at strengthening community participation and mobilization for education delivery. Each SMC operates under the District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC) and in collaboration with the District/Municipal/Metropolitan Education Directorates and the schools which they represent.

The SMC is a governing body for each basic school. It is made up of people whose aim is to promote the best interests of the school and to ensure that learners receive the best education possible. Members of the SMC represent the school as well as the community. The main role of the SMC is to help the headteacher of a school to organise and manage the school's activities in an effective and efficient manner. In other words, the SMC must assist the headteacher to govern the school better.

3.2 Nature of School Management

Management of Basic schools is structured and guided to ensure that it is delivered effectively. This section explains the structure and importance of school management.

3.2.1 Membership of School Management Committees

In 1995, the Ministry of Education wanted to ensure that parents' voices are heard in matters related to their children's education. Through a Regulation under the Ghana Education Service Act (Act 506) of 1995, the School Management Committee (SMC) was introduced.

The SMC is a representation of the entire school community of a particular school or cluster of schools. The school community therefore becomes its constituency. The membership of the SMC shall include:

- District Director of Education or representative as an ex-officio member.
- Headteacher.
- District Assembly representative (usually the Assemblyman).
- Unit Committee representative.
- Representative appointed by the Chief of the town/village.
- Representative from the Educational Unit (if the school is a unit school).
- Two members of the teaching staff (JHS and primary, one each).
- Past Pupils' Association Representative (if any).
- Representative from the PTA.
- Co-opted members to perform specific functions (optional).

Membership does not depend on having a ward at the school.

According to the relevant Act, a person shall not qualify to be a member of the SMC if:

- he/she has, less than ten years prior to the date of appointment, been sentenced to death or imprisonment a period exceeding twelve months, or been convicted of any offence involving fraud, dishonesty or moral turpitude and has not been granted a free pardon.
- He/she is a person adjudged or otherwise declared insolvent or bankrupt and has not been discharged.
- He/she is a person adjudged to be of unsound mind or detained as a criminally insane person, and or by any law for the time being in force.
- He/she is under sentence of death or sentence of imprisonment imposed by any court.
- He/she is disqualified by any law for the time being enforced in Ghana to hold any public office.

3.2.2 Tenure of Office of SMC Members and Executives

SMC members serve a term of three years and are eligible to be reappointed for one additional term of three years with the exception of the District Director of Education (or their representative) and Headteacher of the school. The chairperson is elected for a three-year term only. Failure of a member to attend ordinary and executive meetings on three consecutive occasions disqualifies him/her from the SMC. In such circumstances, he/she should be replaced by an appropriate authority or group representative.

It is important to have tenure of office for SMC members because it:

- helps members to initiate plans and implement decisions or programmes within a timeframe
- allows other people to get the chance to serve on the SMC
- makes members accountable
- gives a chance for fresh ideas
- replaces those who do not have the community's interest at heart
- prevents dictatorship and autocracy
- prevents inaction

It should be noted that due to the voluntary nature of the work, one can become ineffective when he/she stays in an office for too long. Members can also become inefficient and attempt to manipulate the system for their own benefit when they overstay their term.

3.2.3 Functions of the SMC

In partnership with the school's headteacher and teaching staff, the School Management Committee should:

- Participate in establishing priorities and setting goals and developing strategies for school improvement
- Regularly encourage parents and other community members to participate in the school's improvement planning and implementation process
- Review the school's progress in implementing the School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) with the head teacher.
- Support the development of team and leadership skills for both teachers and learners in the school
- Implement mechanisms to hold headteacher and staff accountable for progress towards the goals set out in the School Performance Improvement Plan
- Contribute to the development of the School Performance Improvement Plan
- The SMC, in consultation with the headteacher, can plan a suggested timetable to suit the local condition subject to the approval of the Metropolitan/Municipal/District Director of Education (MMDDE).
- The SMC must also ensure that the school is run in the best interest of all stakeholders. Members must always put the best interest of the school first before any other personal interest.
- The SMC should note that the day-to-day administration of the school is the responsibility of the headteacher. The SMC's responsibility is to support the headteacher and the school at large in deciding on all or some of the following policy implementation guidelines:

- School norms: school hours, religious policy, dress code, learners' code of conduct and school goal, etc.
- School development programmes: school development plans, such as, the school performance improvement plan (SPIP), partnering with the community on school projects, etc.
- School administration: maintaining school infrastructure, grounds and other property of the school, deciding on when others may use the property, recruitment of volunteer teacher assistants, organising annual general meetings of parents and reporting to the school community at School Performance Appraisal Meeting
- School finance: raising funds for school activities, opening a bank account where necessary, and overseeing the school's income and expenditure

In addition to the above, the SMC shall:

- Hold ordinary meetings, at least two times in a term, one at the beginning and the other at the end of the term.
- Hold emergency meetings as and when necessary.
- Develop a yearly education plan for the improvement of teaching and learning in the school.
- Ensure that headteachers present annual plan of action for review and approval at its first meeting in the year.
- Collect termly reports from the headteacher and advice on emerging pertinent issues.
- Make proposals for the review of the SPIP and the implementation strategies.
- Vet and approve all expenditure and projects for the school.
- In collaboration with PTAs and Unit Committees, mobilise community efforts and resources to promote quality teaching and learning in the school.
- Submit termly reports to the District Director of Education and the Metropolitan / Municipal / District Education Oversight Committee (MMDEOC).
- Ensure that the school under their care complies with policies of the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service.
- Ensure that premises of the school are kept in a sanitary and structurally safe condition.
- Assist headteacher in solving conflicts among teachers and pupils and report to MMDEOC.
- Refer serious disciplinary cases to the Metropolitan / Municipal / District Director of Education for action.
- Negotiate for land for school project.
- Institute "A DAY WITH THE SCHOOL" where members can interact with staff and pupils of the school as a means of gathering information for good governance.

3.2.4 Responsibilities of the SMC Chairperson

The Chairperson of the SMC holds a very key responsible position for the effective functioning of the committee. The SMC Chairperson must:

- not only be, but also be seen, to be the representative of the group and within the group, the Chairperson has to provide leadership.
- have the skills to represent the group in discussions with other organisations
- preside over group meetings and is responsible for ensuring that meetings are conducted in an orderly and purposeful manner
- authorise committee meetings to be held
- call meeting to order during meetings and lead it
- follow the agenda of meetings
- ensure that decisions are reached and recorded
- facilitate meetings and control who speaks
- inform the body of any urgent action taken since the previous meeting

- ensures that information for meetings are available to members
- confirm minutes of previous meeting
- represent the SMC at school functions and others

3.2.5 Standing Orders for School Management Committees

General meetings are held at least two times in a term, one at the beginning and other at the end of the term. Emergency meetings are held as and when necessary. 50% of members form a quorum at a general meeting and voting is by majority decision.

The SMC does not levy members for their activities and relies on the following sources of funding to support their activities:

- PTA funds raised through contributions by parents
- Donations from NGOs, Corporate Bodies and Individuals
- Grants or Gifts

As SMC members you need to be familiar with the financial provisions in the school and you are to ensure that all monies of the school are used for the purpose for which they were raised or provided.

The finances of the school include:

- Money appropriated by government, such as the Capitation Grant, for the purpose of implementing School Performance Improvement Plans.
- All monies paid to the school by way of grants, rents, interests, or earnings.
- All monies received from sale of property held by, or on behalf of the school.
- All income derived from any property of the school or money held by or on behalf of the school.

Annual Budget

The SMC shall ensure that a budget for the ensuing year is prepared and submitted to the Director-General through the MMDDE and the Regional Director of Education using a form approval by the Ghana Education Service (GES).

Grants

- The Government grants to the school shall be paid in accordance with such a system of grants as may be determined by the Government from time to time.
- Any money received for, or on behalf of the school by the head, a teacher or an employee of the school shall as soon as practicable, offer receipt thereof, be paid into such bank accounts as the MMDDE may direct.

The SMC shall ensure that all funds of the school are properly administered by the head of the school in accordance with the requirements and accounting instructions of the Ghana Education Service.

Accepting of Gifts and Endowment Grants

- The Committee may accept, on behalf of the school, any grants, gifts, or donations towards equipment or construction of buildings, the provision of playing fields or other things connected with the school. However, if the acceptance of gifts, grants, donations, or endowments would entail the expenditure of public funds, the committee shall first obtain approval of the MMDDE.
- The Committee shall not be obliged to accept a gift, grant, donation, or endowment for a particular purpose unless it approves the terms and conditions attached to the gift, grant, donation or endowment.

Accounts and Audit

- The school shall keep proper books of accounts and proper records in such a form as the GES may approve.
- The books and accounts of the school shall be audited at intervals of not more than twelve calendar months or as required.
- All audited reports must be submitted to the SMC for study and SMC should:

Analyse the performance of the school and offer strategic directions for improvement.

Always defend and promote the success of the school.

Ensure that all learners, teachers, and staff are treated fairly.

Conflict of Interest: Conflict of Interest is when a person uses their official position for personal benefit. This occurs when an individual's interests, including family, friends, and financial or social factors compromise or influence their judgement, decisions, or actions in the workplace.

According to Article 284 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana, *"A public officer shall not put himself in a position where his personal interest conflicts or is likely to conflict with the performance of the functions of his office".*

Therefore, SMC members must maintain a high level of integrity, selflessness, transparency, and accountability. This means that SMC members must avoid all forms of engagements resulting in a conflict-of-interest situation. To avoid such conflict-of-interest situations, SMC members will be expected to practice the following:

- Demonstrate transparency in all dealings for and on behalf of the school
- Declare any relationships with persons involved in contractual matters or disciplinary issues
- Promote collective decision making in the interest of the School or the Committee

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Responsive Basic Schools

4.0 Introduction

The constitution of Ghana guarantees quality education for all citizens without discrimination in any form. The reality of basic schools is that there are observed groups and individuals who are genuinely disadvantaged in the learning process and other aspects of school life due to gender inequality and exclusion practices in the Ghanaian society (think of examples of disadvantaged groups or individuals in the basic schools). This demands school level efforts to empower the disadvantaged to promote their learning for further education. The effort to promote the full participation of all learners in the learning process leads to gender equality and social inclusion (GESI).

In this module, the term disadvantaged is used to capture all groups and individuals who are under-represented and marginalised based on gender, health, varied abilities, low socio-economic background, or belonging to ethnic or linguistic, religious, or cultural minority groups.

This section focuses on basic school leaders' awareness of and commitment to providing intentional leadership that promotes learning for the disadvantaged to enhance their opportunities for further education. It seeks to build the capacity of basic school leadership to lead GESI responsive basic schools in the country.

Section Learning Outcomes

At the end of this section, you should be able to:

1. demonstrate an appreciation of the need for GESI responsive school leadership and management
2. demonstrate understanding of GESI related concepts relevant for improved learning outcomes
3. develop and apply   GESI   leadership skills for effective management strategies to promote quality learning outcomes for all particularly, the disadvantaged; and
4. conduct institutional GESI audit using GESI scorecard.

Section Outline:

- Why we should focus on GESI
- GESI responsive leadership for promoting learning in basic schools
- GESI responsive management for promoting learning in basic schools
- Creating a GESI responsive basic school for promoting learning
- Conducting GESI audit in your school

> **Activity 4.1: Brainstorming**
> - Reflect, identify, and list learner groups and individuals who in your view are disadvantaged or could be disadvantaged in a school.
> - Reflect, identify, and list staff groups and individuals who in your view are disadvantaged in your school
> - How have they been disadvantaged?
> - Why have they been disadvantaged?
> - How can your school support them?
>
> In view of this activity, do you think the school and society have roles in assisting disadvantaged learners to improve upon learning activities?

Introduction to activity: You are required to share your ideas or experiences of disadvantaged groups or individuals in your school community and how they can be supported.

4.1. Why should we focus on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion?

There is a need to focus on GESI because there are unfair or unequal treatment of females, males, and minority groups or individuals in the basic education system. These unfair or unequal treatments of victims are based on false assumptions about their intelligence, ability, sex, socio-economic status, ethnicity, linguistic, race, culture, or religion, thus, increasing their vulnerability in the education system. Rather, there is the need to ensure their inclusion in the school community. This will promote their learning and progression.

> **Activity 4.2: Experience sharing**
> Think about a time you or someone have been treated unfairly or unequally in life. Fill out the table below in your group and discuss it with the group
>
> **Reflection**
> From the experiences shared, what impact(s) do you think unfair treatment have on the victim. Some effects of unfair or unequal treatment
> - It limits learners and staff aspirations
> - It affects individual achievements
> - It limits the whole school's achievements and representations

4.2. Understanding GESI and Related Concepts

To be able to provide GESI responsive leadership in your school, you need to understand certain concepts related to GESI. The concepts *vulnerable, disadvantaged, empowerment and inclusion* are explained below:

Vulnerable refers to your staff and learners who experience a higher risk of social exclusion than the general population. Examples are ethnic minorities, migrants, person with disabilities, the homeless, those struggling with substance abuse, pregnant girls and those facing difficulties that can lead to further exclusion, such as gifted and talented children.

Disadvantaged are those whose identities cause harassment and are underserved and are often excluded from certain school practices through policies, procedures, and practices. They are often systematically denied equitable access to the same resources, opportunities, and benefits theoretically available to all learners resulting in their inability to succeed in academic and social activities. Disadvantaged learners may include those from linguistic, ethnic, gender, geographic or religious minority, from economically impoverished background as well as children with special educational needs including those with varied abilities and health issues.

Empowerment: is the process through which the disadvantaged learners and staff such as those from linguistic, ethnic, gender, geographic or religious minorities, from economically impoverished backgrounds including those with varied abilities and health issues and females who become aware of their subordination and acquire the skills and knowledge they need to analyse and overcome their disadvantage.

Inclusion: refers to the process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of ALL learners and staff through increasing participation in learning, school cultures and communities, and reducing or eliminating exclusion within and from education. This involves modifications in content, instructional approaches, and decision-making structures to ensure that all learners achieve quality learning outcomes which is the responsibility of your school.

Activity 4.3: GESI Terminologies

Work in groups to explain the following terminologies related to GESI:

- Sex
- Gender
- GESI Bias
- GESI blindness
- GESI awareness
- GESI Analysis/Audit

- GESI Sensitive
- GESI Equity
- GESI Equality
- GESI Mainstreaming
- GESI Responsive

Share your understanding of the terminologies with the entire group

---

Sex refers to biologically determined reproductive anatomy that defines who is a female or male. It is an aspect of one's biological makeup that depends on whether one is born with distinct male or female genitals and a genetic programme that releases either male or female hormones to stimulate the development of one's reproductive system. It is universal and unchanging.

Gender refers to socially constructed differentiated roles assigned to both sexes whereby both females and males are expected to conform to and perpetuate the roles and behaviours assigned to them. These roles differ between and within cultures and are learned through socialisation via family, community, schools, culture, religion, government, and media. It is about the differences in roles, responsibilities, opportunities, needs and constraints of men and women.

GESI Bias is when your school shows preference or prejudice towards one gender or majority group, resulting in unequal expectations, attitudes, language use and treatment that disadvantage the others. Biases may be conscious or unconscious and may manifest in both subtle and obvious forms.

GESI Blindness refers to the failure of your school management, staff, learners, and other stakeholders to recognise the differences among males, females, and disadvantaged groups; and the impact these may have on learning outcomes for girls, boys, and learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN) resulting in failure to provide for the differences.

GESI Awareness occurs when members of your school community can identify problems arising from inequality and discrimination based on gender, varied ability, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds even if these are not apparent on the surface. It is about knowing that there are issues, differences and inequalities between females and males including persons from disadvantaged groups.

GESI Analysis/Audit: the process by which your school examines how access to and control over resources, decision making power, and developmental benefits are different among females, males, and other disadvantaged groups of the school community for the purpose of decision making and quality learning.

GESI Sensitive: the ability of your school board, management, staff, and learners to acknowledge that the differences and inequalities among females, males and disadvantaged groups' needs, roles, identities, and achievements require attention.

GESI Equity refers to the initiatives and processes your school adopts to enable all learners and staff to access resources and opportunities according to their respective needs. The concept recognises that females, males, and disadvantaged groups have different needs and power in society which should be

recognised and addressed to rectify the imbalances among them. This may include giving equal or different treatment that enables everyone to equally exercise rights, obligations, enjoy benefits, and opportunities.

GESI Equality occurs when your school eliminates all forms of discriminatory acts and attitudes based on gender, culture, socio-economic status, or disability so that females, males, and the disadvantaged have equal opportunities to access, participate and achieve equal outcomes in all aspects of their school life.

GESI Mainstreaming occurs when your school consistently integrates gender and inclusion concerns into the development and implementation of policies, plans including budgets, programs and projects at the classroom, school, community, and national levels.

GESI Responsiveness is when your school management, staff, and learners take actions to address the different needs, aspirations, capacities and achievements of males and females and persons who are disadvantaged through policies and initiatives to ensure that no one is disadvantaged. GESI responsiveness also means your school has the capacity to analyse a specific context from a GESI perspective, to develop GESI responsive course outline, lesson plans, teaching and learning materials and pedagogy, and to allocate budgets in a GESI responsive way.

Sexual Harassment is any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature. Behaviours such as sexual jokes, requests for sexual favours, threats to withhold opportunities if sexual favours are declined, stroking and caressing a person's body, remarks about a person's sexual life or body, calling students "sweetie", "my dear", "my wife", "my boyfriend" etc., are all considered sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is pervasive in schools including basic schools. It affect the teaching and learning environment and must be prevented by school leaders.

4.3 Promoting GESI Responsiveness in Learning Focused Schools

Your school must be GESI responsive to promote learning for learners and staff who may disadvantaged

Activity 4.4: Case Study

Form at least three groups. Give the case study to each group and require them to discuss and respond to the questions below. (This activity should be done within 15 minutes)

Sexual Harassment Case Study 3

Mr. Amu (a mathematics teacher) sometimes make comments to his JHS 2, 14-year-old student Obaa Yaa, that she is attractive and developing very well. She knew she did not like his line of conversation but did not know what to do. Due to ill health, Obaa Yaa missed a math test and went to Mr Amu if she could sit the test separately. He hinted that if she was ready to "cooperate" with him and have fun, math scores won't be a problem for her. Obaa Yaa mustered the courage and told him that she did not want to have any such relationship with him. Mr. Amu said he understood. However, he declined her request to take the test. He became unfriendly and hostile to her. He failed her in subsequent tests and told her the worst was yet to come. She shared her ordeal with her friend who later hinted their Science teacher Ms Ankuyi. The science teacher tried to engage her, but she was afraid to open up. Ms Ankuyi therefore informed the headteacher about the situation.

   a) Is this sexual harassment?
   b) If it is not sexual harassment what kind of offence is this?
   c) Are there channels to address such cases in your school?
   d) What GES policy would guide your response?
   e) What measures can be put in place by school leaders to protect learners?

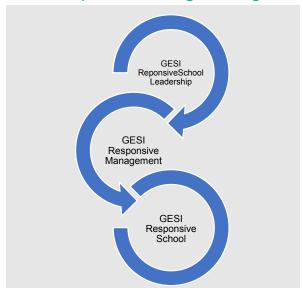## 4.3.1 GESI Responsive Leadership for Promoting Learning

Diagram 3: GESI Responsive Leadership

GESI responsive school leadership influences and directs behaviours, attitudes, beliefs, and values to ensure improved learning outcomes.

GESI Responsive School Leadership:

- Are equipped with GESI responsive skills that enable them to conduct their job with a GESI lens.
- Acknowledge that the differences and inequalities among females, males and disadvantaged groups need attention.
- Make a conscious effort to address inequalities through formulation of policies and guidelines from a GESI perspective so that the needs, capacities and aspirations of females, males and disadvantaged groups are considered with the purpose of creating enabling environments for all to achieve quality outcomes.
- Disseminate GESI related school-based policies and guidelines for promoting learning among all learners and staff.
- Support school management to mobilise resources to provide GESI responsive infrastructure for the school.
- Monitor the implementation of GESI school policies and programmes with a GESI lens.

Activity 4.5: Pair Work

Why is it important to have a GESI Responsive School Leadership?

Participants discuss in pairs.

Leadership is about influencing and directing people towards accomplishing tasks or to achieve a desired goal. It is a facilitative process that involves the shaping of the behaviour, attitude, beliefs, and values of people to help the leader carry out tasks. Females, males and the marginalised can and must be appointed to leadership positions. However, inequalities have contributed to the disproportionate representation of females and disadvantaged groups and individuals in our senior high education. Therefore, a GESI responsive school leadership is urgently needed to promote effective learning for both females and disadvantaged groups and individuals.

An effective GESI responsive school leadership has the following responsibilities:

- Guides the school to develop a vision and set objectives and tasks that addresses inequalities and ensure equal learning outcomes of all learners.

- Guides the school to develop a clear mission that addresses gender imbalances and issues of exclusion.
- Develop policies or guidelines that ensure equal opportunities for both females and males including the disadvantaged to participate in leadership and achieve at various levels of the school system.
- Plan programmes, activities and budgets that meet the needs of all females, males and the marginalised equally.

4.3.2 GESI Responsive School Management

GESI responsive school management refers to implementing and supervising programmes and activities in a manner that creates a congenial environment to foster quality learning outcomes.

An effective GESI responsive school management brush up on what is great to know, good to know, and must know about GESI issues in the classroom and the entire school life. They ensure the implementation of all GESI related school policies and programmes and ensure that school practices recognise and addresses the needs of the disadvantaged. Thus, they should focus on:

- Developing GESI responsive management skills and endeavour to foster GESI responsive attitudes among stakeholders and school community members.
- Ensuring that procedures and policies in the school are implemented to address concerns of inequality and exclusion of females, males, and the disadvantaged persons in the school.
- Creating a GESI responsive school environment that reflects understanding of the realities of females, males, and the disadvantaged by consciously removing all forms of discriminatory practices against both genders and the disadvantaged.
- Ensuring adequate and accessible infrastructure for females and learners with disabilities, such as separate and accessible toilets for females, males, and wheelchair ramps.
- Establishing safe space that guarantee student safety and protection against sexual harassment and other abusive practices in the school.
- Preparing and implementing GESI responsive work plans and budgets.
- Ensuring that teachers are properly trained and equipped to create GESI responsive classroom environments that foster equal participation and high-quality learning outcomes for all girls, boys, and learners with special education needs and disability.
- Providing professional development opportunities for non-teaching staff on GESI-responsive practices.

Activity 4.6: Think-Pair-Share
In your opinion why do you think GESI responsive school management is important?

GESI responsiveness in school management is vital because:

- Male domination over knowledge creation has contributed to disadvantaged females' knowledge, experience, competence, and aspirations.
- There is a disparity between male and female retention, completion rates and achievement at various levels of education including basic schools.
- Female learners have fewer role models than they should have, and this may affect their level of aspiration.
- Schools may overlook unequal treatment of females and the disadvantaged.

An effective GESI responsive school management implements and supervises targeted programmes and activities that promote effective learning and progression for all learners, particularly the disadvantaged learners .

4.3.3 GESI Responsive School

A GESI responsive school is one in which the academic, social, and physical environment considers the specific needs of females, males and persons who are marginalised based on disability, health, poverty, and culture. This implies that all stakeholders understand the educational principles and practices that promote gender equality and social inclusion. Teachers understand and protect the human rights of all learners and can provide learner-friendly and age appropriate sexual and reproductive health information that addresses issues of sexual violence. For example, the teaching methodologies, language use, educational materials, classroom set-up, interactions, and physical environment and indeed the entire life of the school should respond to the needs of both genders and persons with special educational needs.

> **Activity 4.7: Plenary Discussion – Think pair share**
> What in your opinion should constitute a GESI responsive school?
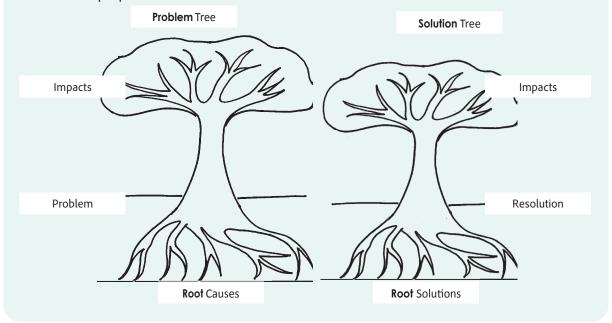
A GESI responsive school must fulfil the following.

- All members of the school have received GESI training
- Classroom practices are GESI responsive – effectively applying GESI-responsive pedagogy
- Teachers challenge traditional gender roles during lessons
- School practices and activities are GESI responsive
- School infrastructure is GESI responsive
- School strictly adheres to the GES safe school policies in addressing sexual harassment
- School's procedures and practices are GESI responsive
- Strategies to include and empower marginalised groups within the school are in place
- Staff recruitment (to the extent that the school can hire) is done in a GESI responsive manner.
- School data is collected and analysed in a GESI responsive way
- School planning is GESI responsive
- School budgeting is GESI responsive

Activity 4.8: Case Study – Problem/Solution Tree

In Hebam Basic School, enrolment of female students is estimated at 57.5% in year one. By the end of year three, the completion rate is 32.2% with less than 10% making it to the next level. An estimated 0.3% of students with Special Education Needs (SEN) are enrolled in the school. And yet none can qualify for progression to the next stage. Results from the school shows that the majority who perform poorly are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Kuukuwa skips the Integrated Science class because of what happened the last time. Her school has no Guidance and Counselling Coordinator to provide a safe space for reporting and seeking redress. Similarly, Kojo who uses a wheelchair is unable to access the school library and the closest toilet to his classroom block. The only female dormitory is 400 metres away from the main classroom block which has only one open urinal. Identify the key GESI issues in Hebam Basic School

1. Develop a problem and solutions trees for the issues identified

Problem Tree   **Solution** Tree

Impacts   Impacts

Problem   Resolution

Root Causes   **Root** Solutions

4.4. Creating a GESI Responsive School to Promote Learning

Basic school leaders should ensure that their School Performance Improvement Plans are GESI responsive. Meaning the plans consciously address and promote GESI. One of the ways to have a GESI responsive SPIP is by conducting a GESI Audit and integrating the findings in the school's plan. GESI Planning and GESI Mainstreaming are also strategies to promote GESI. Subsequent modules will address with GESI Planning and GESI Mainstreaming respectively. However, this section will focus on GESI Audit.
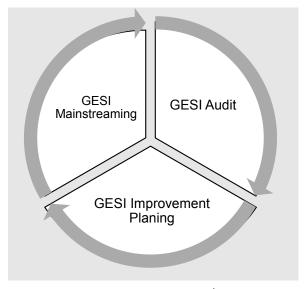
Diagram 4: GESI Responsive Planning

4.4.1 GESI Audit

To create a GESI responsive school, you must undertake a whole school GESI audit. This includes:

- assessing whether your school has good gender and social inclusion balance,
- accessing whether your school follows government rules, policies and actions formulated for supporting the marginalised; and
- assessing the impact of the school's current and proposed policies and practices on the marginalised.

4.4.2 Why GESI Audit?

The GESI audit aims to ensure that your school leadership identifies gaps in the school's responsiveness practices and policies that needs to be addressed to promote quality educational experience for all learners

4.4.3 The GESI Audit Process

In undertaking a GESI audit, the school management should constitute a committee/ team or appoint a coordinator and provide clear terms of reference for the audit exercise. The audit process involves:

1. Determining what to be audited (whole school for the first time
2. Constituting a GESI audit team
3. Giving orientation to the team
4. Identifying an appropriate scorecard to use (provided)
5. Administering the scorecard
6. Writing report

The GESI Audit is undertaken using a scorecard which is discussed in the next section.

4.4.4 GESI Responsive scorecard

A GESI responsive scorecard for basic schools is a standardised assessment of gender and social inclusion mainstreaming policies and practices, designed to ensure adherence to minimum standards for gender equality and social inclusion across basic schools. It serves as an accountability framework for assessing the effectiveness of GESI mainstreaming. The scorecard is a tool for undertaking the GESI audit to inform improvement planning. The GESI responsive scorecard focuses on the following competencies:

- All members of the school have received GESI training
- Classroom practice is GESI responsive
- Teachers challenge traditional gender roles during lessons

- School practices and activities are GESI responsive
- School infrastructure is GESI responsive
- The school adheres to the GES Safe School Policy, including addressing sexual harassment
- Inclusion and empowering marginalised groups within basic education
- Staff (where the school recruits) recruitment is GESI responsive
- Staff protocols and procedures are GESI responsive
- School data is collected and analysed in a GESI responsive way
- School planning is GESI responsive
- School budgeting is GESI responsive

4.5 Conclusion

A GESI responsive leadership creates a GESI responsive school and GESI responsive school promotes learning for the disadvantaged. This helps every learner to maximise their learning potential for improved learning outcomes essential for basic education graduates to progress to further studies.

School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP)

5.0 Introduction

With the introduction of the Capitation Grant in basic schools since 2005, all basic schools are expected to develop and implement a SPIP. The SPIP is a school's road map that sets out the changes a school needs to make to improve the school's performance, especially the level of pupils' achievement. SPIP is the vision set by the school and it is aimed at enhancing performance of the school. It also shows when and how these changes will be made. This means that, SPIP is for improvement and the SMC should be mindful of the target for change required for improvement, especially, in the performance of pupils' learning outputs.

The SPIP outlines priority activities that the headteacher, teachers, and SMC should focus on. The SPIP encourages staff and parents, and all those who care to know about the changes for improvement in the school, to monitor the process of improvement in the school.

The plan is prepared by the headteacher, staff and SMC members. The SMC Chairperson has to sign the proposed plan for submission to the District Director of Education for approval in the use of the Capitation Grant. It is then forwarded to the Metro/Municipal/District Director for review and final approval. The review ensures that the activities to be undertaken are in line with the Education Strategic Plan and other priority areas of education set by the district. The plan is to cover the entire academic year but broken down into three terms.

It is the responsibility of the SMC to oversee the development and implementation of a realistic SPIP that is based on evidence. The SPIP therefore hinges on change for improvement. Some of the useful sources of data to help the headteacher and SMC to identify areas of improvement include results from BECE and the National Standardised Test (NST), and mobile School Report Card (mSRC).

5.1 Why is the School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) important?

SPIP is very important because it helps to:

- set a vision for the school
- define systematic solution for schooling problems
- determine a specific time-frame (start-finish) for school projects
- provide a relevant framework to follow
- assign responsibilities to various stakeholders
- guide work/activities needed in the implementing targets/objectives.
- review the progress of work and performance against indicators.
- identify resources that the community can provide to support the implementation of the SPIP.

5.2 The SPIP is structured under the following headings[1]:

- Component/Targets
- Expected Outputs
- Expense from previous year
- Budget
- Source of funding
- Who is responsible and for what action

1   See annex two for a copy of a SPIP template.

The process of developing a SPIP will require that Headteachers, teachers and the SMCs get to know and understand the following:

- format and structure of a SPIP.
- specific components of the structure of SPIP i.e. how to identify objective, targets, tasks, activities time-frame, responsibilities, and indicators of success.
- people responsible for facilitating the implementation of the plan.
- Names of people who can be assigned responsibility for tasks and activities.
- Materials and resources that are needed.
- How to set a realistic time-frame – including start and finish dates.
- How to identify indicators that are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound).
- Where SPIP will be displayed and how progress reports will be provided.

5.3 How to develop the SPIP

The Head teacher and the SMC Chairman will need to consult with school-community stakeholders to determine the appropriate date for preparing the SPIP and organise a consultative meeting of stakeholders or conduct a School Performance Appraisal Meeting (SPAM) to identify the issues from the various data sources including from the results of the NST and/or BECE.

SPAM is a meeting of the major stakeholders in education to discuss the performance of a school. At this meeting decisions are taken as to how the performance could be improved bringing together all the efforts from the various stakeholders – pupils, teachers, headteachers, SMC, PAs, Community leaders, circuit supervisors, and all other major stakeholders and to develop strategies to improve performance.

SPAM is therefore designed to keep all stakeholders in education particularly local communities, well-informed about the extent of teaching and learning going on in their school and also, give all members of the community, the opportunity to participate meaningfully in deciding on how to improve the outcomes in their schools.

During the conduct of SPAM, the school and the community meet to:

- Discuss the performance of their school, as reflected in the NST and/or BECE
- Identify and discuss problems that affect the children performance
- Set range of achievable targets for the various performance areas, and
- Develop strategies to achieve these set targets.

It is these strategies and targets that are used amongst other factors to develop the SPIP. Headteachers and SMCs could request for support from the DEO or an NGO within the community to facilitate the stakeholder engagement on developing a SPIP.

To monitor the implementation of the SPIPs, Headteachers and SMC Chair will need to:

- Identify sub-committees to be responsible for actions
- Set feedback dates
- Report feedback at SMC meetings
- Verify achievements against indicators

5.4 Examples of some activities to be undertaken in the SPIP:

- Activities related to leadership and managment of the school i.,e ensuring Headteachers actively observe lessons and provide support to teachers.
- Activities related to SISOs and other schedule officers regular visit to schools support teachers to deliver effective lessons.
- Activites that promotes Headteachers and teachers regular use of different levels of assessment to improve learning within schools.

- Initiatives aimed at improving community and school collaboration to support improvement in Education delivery
- Undertaking minor repairs and maintenance to improve existing school facilities.

Annex 1

Characteristics/ features of a learning focused school

- School leadership team placed priority on knowing the students as individuals—as both learners and members of a cultural community— a recipe that creates an environment that assures every student can learn, could learn, and is supported to do so.
- An existence of a school-wide learning improvement "agenda"—that defines a set of improvement goals generated and communicated by a leadership team, led by the principal, including assistant principals and several teacher leaders— heads of departments, Guidance and Counselling
- An institutionalised regular and functional instructional support for all teachers (professional learning communities), especially newly appointed, those serving on national service programme including student on practice offered by administrative leaders and several others in the school who had assumed newly reconfigured roles that offer instructional leadership.
- School-based (self-developed) or own system for tracking students' progress and for making regular adjustments in their learning experiences, informed by measures of their progress. This allows them to compare performance with schools and students in the same category and region (ensure a link with regional and national monitoring support for schools) tracking measures and other data the school found useful.
- School staff shared responsibility for student progress, reflected in a set of agreements as well as unspoken norms among school staff, to assume such responsibility and to accept that all will be answerable for their efforts to accomplish this goal.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SPIP)

DISTRICT:

NAME OF SCHOOL:

SCHOOL YEAR:

Components/Target	Expected Output(S)	Last Year Expense	Budget (Ghs)				Sources of Funding	Who Is Responsible
			Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Total		

SIGNED:

HEADTEACHER   SMC CHAIRMAN   SISO

NAME: NAME: NAME:

SIGNATURE: SIGNATURE: SIGNATURE:

Acknowledgements

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This handbook was adapted from the version written for Senior High Schools (SHS) and Senior High Technical Schools (SHTS) which was supported by MasterCard Foundation. The Communities of Excellence Programme Team members, Jonathan Fletcher, Dinah Adiko,Patty Assan and Robin Todd contributed to the review and adapting the handbook for basic schools. Printing of this version was with support from Jacobs Foundation. The SHS and SHTS Leadership Handbook Module one was produced by Samuel Awuku, Richard Adjei, Richard Ayittey, Benedicta Awusi Atiku, Rev. Sister Elizabeth Amoako – Arhin, Juliana Dinko, Francis Ansah, Hilda Eghan, Alfred kwaku Ampah-Mensah, Bright Dey, ably supported by Marjorie Tackie and Ernest Wesley-Otoo.

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