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**Les enseignants et les
directeurs d'écoles au cœur des
changements au niveau de
l'école et de la classe**

Synthesis of the Questionnaires

*by some members of ICP
(International Confederation of Principals)*

**Working Document
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Synthesis of the Questionnaires produced by some members of ICP (International Confederation of Principals)

Some History

The International Confederation of Principals came into being in 1990 with 10 Founder members all representing secondary school organisations of principals. For some time membership was restricted to one organisation per country, then in 1997 it was extended to allow other organisations from existing member countries to join, which allowed the membership to incorporate the principals of primary schools. Then in 2003 it was agreed that ICP Membership would allow individual principals to join if there was no organisation or where their organisation either could not or would not wish to join ICP.

This manner of growth has produced an organisation currently with a preponderance of secondary school principals, although ICP is strongly encouraging growth from amongst the primary school principals.

Currently the membership of ICP stands at 165,000 Full members (that is, through organisations), with one Associate member, COBISEC (The Council of British Independent Schools in the European Community) that is also affiliated to British Independent Schools worldwide, and ICP also has seven Individual members.

Therefore most of the ICP membership in Africa is in secondary schools (both government and independent) and as a consequence, the experience and comments will not necessarily reflect the findings produced from the work conducted by ADEA in the AFIDES project that was largely centred on the primary school, although as you will see there are some similarities and some helpful general observations and comments.

2. ICP Respondents

Those who responded to the Report and Questionnaire were from Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, South Africa and Zambia.

(We have received messages about the difficulty of downloading the Report, the postal services not delivering it, electricity failure and only partial reception of the material. These all serve to demonstrate very clearly the major issues that remain in communication with and for Africa).

3. GHANA

The three full members of ICP (organisations) all have some measure of payment for running their schools. CHASS is the Conference of Assisted Secondary Schools, CHPSCS is the Conference of Private Second Cycle Schools and GCP is the Ghana Conference of Principals that embraces all types of private schools including primary education. None of them is run solely by the state. Ghana made the largest response to the questionnaire.

3.1 These responses are largely from an urban situation often in residential areas and most within or near the capital city. One is 8 kilometres away from the city and is located within two developing communities mainly inhabited by very poor people. It is the only school there with a very good infrastructure, a very big compound and playing ground. It is a private second cycle school.

3.2 Those who received and commented on the ADEA report thought the findings would have been different as they were in the private sector but it is not always the case. In the Report it states that Private Schools and those with a selection process were excluded from the research.

Differences would include the provision of infrastructure, equipment, staffing etc all of which would have been provided by the government.

3.3 They are all considered as successful schools by: -

- a) Academic performance at the final school certificate exams
- b) The employment of highly qualified teachers
- c) Achievement in the inter-schools sports and athletics over a given period
- d) The high level of patronage for the school
- e) By the number of admissions registered from the school to universities
- f) By holding strategic positions in the various workplaces.

3.4 Pupil drop-out rates were from 10%-20% in some schools, 2% in others largely caused by financial difficulties of the parents, or rarely and only when families re-locate. Therefore retention rates are high.

Attendance is also generally good at 90%-95% in most schools (except on rainy days!) and 80% in others.

The answer to the question regarding gender differences in attendance is variable. Some schools state that there is no disparity at all, others that the boys are better, others that girls are better!

3.5 Some schools acknowledge that under-achievement is an issue for girls because of the social hindrances attached to their role, others state that with equal opportunities girls can do even better than boys and one school states that “currently our best students are girls”

In handling the under-achievement of girls some schools address the issue by: -

1. Urging parents/ guardians at Parent Teacher Association Meetings to monitor the movements of their daughters at home and then ensure that they study every evening.
2. The use of counselling programmes to assist in changing negative attitudes of the girls who are not performing well.
3. Motivation. From time to time inviting some highly placed and educated females to speak to the girls at school, using them as role models in the hope of helping the girls to set objectives for life.
4. Using helpful interventions on a day-by-day situation, including extra classes
5. The introduction of annual bursary awards for brilliant students as an encouragement to study hard and win an award.

3.6 They are all responsible for the in-service training of their teachers

In Ghana ALL schools follow a national programme of Teaching and Learning syllabus.

3.7 Some schools have a visible school management as described in the report even though they are private schools. One school gave details: -

- a) Board of Governors
- b) Academic Board
- c) Students Representative Council
- d) Staff Welfare Committee
- e) Parent Teacher Association

3.8 “Movement of Personnel” was misunderstood by some of the respondents as being leaving the school for a short period, by others as a re-distribution of teaching when it may be done by the Academic Board in consultation with, or endorsement by the Board of Governors. Others interpreted this as a resignation and recruitment issue when they might contact those who had been short-listed on a previous occasion, or they would advertise by radio or through the newspapers, or ask existing staff for any suitable candidates they might know.

3.9 Some schools do not yet have teachers with assigned responsibilities, others have well-defined roles and responsibilities.

Teams are well-used whether they are within teaching departments, pastoral roles such as “Houses” or for specialist roles like Examinations Committees, Sports committees, or Disciplinary Committees.

4. A considerable amount of time is given to teaching management. One principal suggested it took about 60% of his time because in private schools where some of the teachers are not professionals there is a need to constantly upgrade the quality of teaching.

4.1 Significant factors in good school relations are: -

- a) Having an open door policy. “In Africa listening to someone’s problem even without providing a solution renders the problem half solved”
- b) Fostering good teamwork. It is an indicator of mutual respect and confidence shared among all levels and categories of staff
- c) The application of good human principles and good communication as much as possible.
- d) Efforts made to motivate teachers as much as possible
- e) The effective and transparent manner in which rules, regulations and disciplinary procedures are applied.
- f) The holding of periodic staff meetings and issuing memos on specific issues from time to time

4.2 Good teaching and discipline are underlined as the most important element for pupil success. Counselling, periodic chats combined with a willingness on the part of the pupils to co-operate with their experienced teachers is another strategy.

4.3 In most schools the Parent Teacher associations are both active and a necessary part of the school’s success. They are often part and parcel of the school management team. They give a lot of financial support to school development and often raise funds to pay teachers for extra lessons organised for pupils in the afternoons.

4.4 Those who received the report found it very comprehensive and useful. They thought it could go a long way to assist teachers, principals, and members of school management boards to improve upon their performance and then sharpen up their supervisory and management skills from time to time. It would also restore hope for those lacking hope as far as education is concerned.

It was suggested that the project be extended to other countries and to all phases and types of education—Primary, Middle, Secondary (and Grammar) schools and in both government and private schools.

If the opportunity to be involved in this project presented itself to the respondents, many would be interested in participating and as ICP members, they would wish to do so.

5. NIGERIA, TANZANIA, SOUTH AFRICA and ZAMBIA

These respondents were primarily from secondary schools and largely from the urban situation. Nigeria tends to look to the state capital and Kano is 560 KM from Abuja, the Tanzanian School is on the outskirts of Dar-es-Salaam, and the Zambian school is 10KM from Kampala. The South African school is situated in Grahamstown.

5.1 The Tanzanians thought the findings of the Report would have been very similar for them. Secondary schools there do not have Parent Associations. Instead they have school boards to manage them. Public Secondary schools are partly funded by the Government and partly by the parents through the payment of school fees. Pupils from poor families are financially supported by the Government for their schooling. Similarities would be: -

- a) Structured, visible, school management
- b) Transparent management
- c) Constant communication
- d) Professional support and ongoing training
- e) Management of pedagogy
- f) Monitoring and evaluation activities

5.2 The Zambian response was different as it was a girls' school but it also has disabled pupils and these can be boys as well as girls. The findings in the report for this school would have been different.

5.3 The South African school would also have been different. In that institution, teachers have more autonomy, the school management's role is to facilitate, and professionalism is assumed.

5.4 ALL these schools were considered successful. One in particular noted that as they were undergoing a significant transformation, it was likely to be even more successful in the future.

Success was measured by academic standards such as the national Examinations conducted by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and the National Examination Council (NECO), comparison with other schools, external benchmarking, Life Skill programmes and the school having "a clean bill of health"

5.5 Drop-out rates range from 0 % in South Africa, 1 % in Tanzania, 30% in Nigeria, and for children with disabilities especially girls, about 4 individuals a year. But this school has good retention rates overall for the “normal” child, as do almost all of the others. Attendance is similarly good to excellent except for the disabled.

5.6 In all schools except one there was no gender difference in attendance. Where there was a difference and the boys’ rate of attendance was better than the girls, the boys also achieved better than the girls. In the other schools there was no difference in under-achievement between the girls and the boys. With regard to the disabled children, many of them were deemed to be under-achieving.

5.7 Remedial classes are held for slow learners, but for others personal encouragement to achieve in all areas of school life is successful eg sporting, cultural as well as academic progress. For disabled pupils, a sensitive approach is needed and the training of teachers in specialist skills such as Braille and sign language to enhance the quality of education for them.

This whole issue of children with disabilities is controversial as schools have fewer places available for them. There is a lack of appropriate teaching and learning materials and a poor support structure.

5.8 Most of these school leaders are responsible for the In-service training of their teachers – some totally, others partly. In Nigeria the Government is responsible for the training of teachers, and the pedagogy is decided by the National Educational Research Development centre (NERDC)

In Tanzania, the pedagogy is decided by Curriculum developers and sometimes by the teachers themselves.

In South Africa the approach is based on the National Curriculum but there is some flexibility to explore themes etc.

In Zambia, the availability of teachers, and teaching and learning materials are the determining factors.

5.9 All had a visible school management in line with pages 11 and 12 of the Report. South Africa commented that roles and responsibilities were assigned according to the needs and strengths of the school.

6. The question about the movement of personnel was again interpreted differently. Most answered that the movement of staff was handled centrally by the Ministry of Education and Technical Training, or by a State Teachers Service Board (as in Nigeria) through the transfer of teachers. The South African school handled it themselves either via School Management or the Head Teacher. “Movement” was also interpreted as “motivating” the teachers, by such means as Awards, Educational Training etc.

6.1 All teachers are assigned special responsibilities in these schools. In Tanzania, schools have a Senior Academic Officer, every subject department has a Head, and under this Head of Department there are subject teachers.

“Teams” were interpreted as Committees such as Academic, Discipline, Social Welfare etc

6.2 Teaching management was either interpreted as being a Governmental role, or managing Teaching and Learning within the school. In Zambia very little time is given to teaching management whereas in South Africa 15% of the Head's time is spent in this area of work.

6.3 Significant factors in the good relations in school were commitment, ethos, values, transparency by the school administration, democratic decision-making, teacher-student relationships, sharing, delegation of duties, teamwork and involvement of parents.

6.4 Teachers' commitment and students' participation and readiness to learn were seen as key elements to pupils' success. A conducive learning environment, high quality teachers, adequate and appropriate teaching and learning material, supportive leadership and teacher, pupil and parental expectations were also necessary.

6.5 There are good relationships with the APEAE where they exist, but the functions vary. In Zambia the school had parental levies only for education. In South Africa they are a fund-raising committee and are an integral part of the successful running of the school. In Tanzania, they raised funds up till 2005 but with the introduction of the Secondary Education Programme (SEDP) that finances the secondary education (both public and private), parental contributions are no longer allowed.

6.6 The respondents commenting on the project report thought it was a good report, and found it gave interesting feedback, and that it looked into a lot of key issues that affect education in Africa. However, information regarding teachers such as their salaries, housing loans and general welfare were not considered in the study which would have been very helpful.

These school leaders suggest that the project be extended to other countries with perhaps an extended brief to include the points raised above and issues concerning educational provision for children with special needs. All respondents would wish to be included in such a project.

My thanks are extended to all those who contributed to these helpful comments and to the groups that participated in the discussions leading to the completed questionnaires.

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On behalf of ICP