

PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS PRINCIPALS IN KENYA

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Abstract

Within the complex operation of schools in the 21st century, the principal plays a very vital role in bringing about school improvement and effectiveness. Increased interest leadership preparation and development is based on the fact that school leaders can make a difference in both the effectiveness and efficiency of schooling (Hallinger & Snidvongs, 2008). Consequently, there is need therefore, to ensure that the principal plays this role effectively through providing them with knowledge, skills and attributes to enable them run schools effectively and efficiently. This can be achieved mainly if such principals are specifically prepared for school leadership before appointment and then developed continuously to enhance their performance of duties as school leaders after appointment. Preparation and development of principals will provide a framework within which they will operate to achieve not only the school but also the national objectives of education. In this chapter, I will discuss findings on the experiences of public secondary schools principals in Kenya on how they are prepared and developed for school leadership and factors which facilitate and hinder their preparation and development. The findings from this qualitative study that employed interviews and document analysis indicate that despite lack of specific preparation and development of principals, there are other ways in which principals are prepared and developed for school leadership. These include in-service courses, principals' conferences and personal initiatives. While former principals support, availability of in-service courses and finances facilitate preparation and development, irregularity of in service courses and lack of money hinders the same. It is recommended that the government should make preparation and development of principals formal and support other agencies whether private or non governmental in provision of services in preparation and development of principals.

Keywords: leadership, leadership preparation, leadership development, principals and school leadership.

Introduction

Though leadership preparation and development is a recent phenomenon (Coles & Southworth, 2005), studies (Bush & Jackson, 2002; Commonwealth Secretariat, 1996; Fink, 2005; Huber, 2004; Huber & West, 2002; Kitavi & Van Der Westhuizen, 1997, West & Jackson, 2002) indicate that preparation and development of school principals can lead to school effectiveness and improvement. As result, many countries especially in the developed world have come up with institutions and programmes for preparation and development of school principals. Conversely, not so much in terms of principal preparation and development in the developing world has been brought to the fore though this should not be mistaken for complete lack of principal preparation and development in the developed world. Most studies carried out on principals in Africa (Harbey & Dadey, 1993; Oduro & MacBeath, 2003; Kitavi and Van Der Westhuizen, 1997; Njeri, 1996) focus mainly on problems facing principals in various contexts.

In these studies, preparation and development of those principals is recommended as one of the ways of solving those problems. This will enable them to get the skills, knowledge and attributes (Bush & Oduro, 2006; Walter & Dimmock, 2006) to run schools in a professional and effective manner to ensure good teaching and learning practices. Subsequently, it can lead to achievement of the goals and objectives of education which includes improved learning outcomes (Master Plan on Education and Training, 1997-2010, 1997). The Kamunge (1988) and Koech (1999) Reports emphasize that; training of principals will bring about quality and raise standards of education in Kenya. The Commonwealth Secretariat (1996) cited in Bush and Jackson (2002) refers to the connection between quality leadership and school effectiveness stating that, "the head ... plays the most crucial role in ensuring school effectiveness" (p.417). One of the ways of ensuring that such a role is effectively carried out is through preparing and continuously developing those principals. There is need for preparation and development of principals for school leadership.

First, on appointment, principals are given a lot of responsibilities as school leaders (Teachers' Service Commission (TSC). TSC, a body charged with employment of teachers in Kenya, outline some of the responsibilities of a principal as being the accounting officer of the school, interpreting and implementing policy decisions pertaining to training, overall organization, coordination and supervision of activities in the institution as well as maintaining high training and learning standards. These responsibilities can be carried out more effectively with preparation and development for school leadership if mechanisms for the same are in place.

Secondly, education stakeholders in Kenya have very high expectations of public secondary school principals because they believe that the success of a school is measured in terms of good performance in national examinations and the person responsible for this is the principal. Thody, Papanoun, Johansson, and Pashiardis (2007) state that, "school leadership has become more complex as curricular demands have grown, parental, government expectations and demand for greater school effectiveness have been raised" (p. 41). West and Jackson (2002) citing Elmore (2001) agree that "... increasing public expectations of schools and their leaders ... and the accountability demands, also makes it inevitable that principals and aspiring principals should feel that they have an entitlement to appropriate training and support...." (p. 3). Meeting such expectations cannot be achieved unless principals are prepared and developed for school leadership.

Thirdly, the work of the public secondary school principal is very challenging (Davies, 2002), especially dealing with students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds who are at the peak of their adolescence stage. Gage and Berliner (1998) assert that adolescent students undergo identity and confusion crisis and as a teacher, "you need all the sensitivity you can muster to work with students experiencing the turbulence of adolescence" (p. 129). Principals further deal with dynamic educational policies, and curricula, and emerging issues like HIV/AIDS which impact on schools. According to Harris (2003), school leaders are viewed as people who can solve problems schools face. Principals in Kenya are not well prepared to deal with challenges and issues arising from Kenya's ethnic diversity (Makori, 2004, in Rarieya 2007). Knowledge and problem solving skills are not innate, but rather learnt through preparation and development. Bush and Jackson (2002) accentuate the importance of preparation and development saying that

"... in dealing with a wide range of issues, and managing relationships with many different groups within and outside the school, principals need to be able to call on a subsequent reservoir of expertise and experience, to identify solutions to what are often complex problems" (p. 424).

Most research and literature on leadership preparation and development is mostly based on the developed world. Harber and Davey (1993) argue that, theories of educational training transferred from America and adopted in African research and training institutions may not work because of the national and cultural differences between these two contexts which are very unique in themselves. Bush and Jackson (2002) elaborate that; this is due to different political, social, and professional contexts and concludes that as a result "what works well in one country may not succeed elsewhere" (p. 427).

Methodology

The research upon which this chapter is based took the form of a qualitative study and involved four principals from public secondary schools in a division in Nyanza province in Kenya. The study mainly aimed at exploring the experiences of principals on how they are prepared and developed for school leadership, and factors which facilitate or hinder their preparation and development. Ethical considerations for the conduct of the study were adhered to. The research method employed semi structured interviews, and document analysis as a primary means of data collection but also relied on field notes from interviews as well as informal conversations and observations. Each participant principal was interviewed twice on preparation and development respectively for the purpose of getting in depth information on their preparation and development for school leadership. All the interviews were taped and transcribed for a cross case analysis of the research participants. The interviews were conducted with the same protocol for the purpose of maintaining consistency across the participant principals. Relevant documents were sought for, mainly for the purpose of verifying the information gotten from the interviews. Responses from the research participants were categorized into codes and categories guided by the research questions, and it is from this that themes for analysis emerged. Trustworthiness of the data and analysis were maintained through the use of the tape recorder, sharing findings with the participants and maintaining an audit trail.

Overview of Preparation and Development of Principals for School Leadership

In most developed world countries like America, England, Sweden and Australia, preparation and development of principals is formally institutionalized with colleges offering training for principals before and after appointment to school leadership.

Preparation and development of principals is also well structured and systematic in the sense that aspiring principals are prepared for school leadership before appointment and then continuously developed after appointment to enhance performance of their duties. Preparation and development of principals in these contexts is mandatory and a requirement for anybody wishing to be a principal. The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) in England is an example of such institutions where aspiring principals are prepared through the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) Programme (Fink, 2005) and are inducted through Early Headship Programme (EHP) on ascension to principal ship and those in service are continuously developed through Head for the Future (HfF) programme (Brundrett & de Cuevas, 2007). In Asia, Hong Kong and Singapore have been in the forefront of developing institutions and programmes for preparation and development of principals. Most of their programmes are based on institutions and programmes in the developed world countries. For example, in Hong Kong the conceptual foundations for leadership education for principals were established by Hong Kong Education Department in 1999 after study visits to similar programs in England, Scotland, Austria and Singapore (Wong & Chung-Chi, 2004). Newly appointed school leaders undergo a nine day mandatory induction course offered by the Education Department.

This course provides them with basic knowledge of school management theory and practice. Other forms of development of school leaders include use of workshops and overseas study trips (Huber & West, 2002; Huber & Yu, 2004). Certification for Principal ship (CFP) was introduced in 2002 for aspiring principals as a quality assurance mechanism to ensure that future principals will have met certain leadership requirements in preparing themselves for principal ship (Wong, 2004). In the developing world especially Africa, preparation and development of principals is not as pronounced and systematic as it is in the developed world. In fact in most cases it is either lacking or not formal (Bush and Oduro, 2006). Though most studies on principals in Africa concentrate on the problems facing principals in the performance of their duties (Harbey & Dadey, 1993; Oduro & MacBeath, 2003; Kitavi and Van Der Westhuizen, 1997; Njeri, 1996), there are efforts being made by some countries in coming up with programmes for preparation and development of principals. In South Africa, for example Moloi and Bush (2006), argue that apartheid affected both education and social infrastructure. These effects included ineffective leadership and management practices of public schools. New professional development initiatives for principals and aspiring principals are now covered in the Policy Framework for Leadership Education and Management Development in South Africa.

As a result, the Department of Education has developed Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in collaboration with 14 universities, unions, and the Professional Association of Principals to train aspirant school principals and develop those in service already. The aim is to create a pool of trained school managers, so that by 2011, this course can be made a requirement for one being short listed for the post of the principal. In Seychelles, the University of Lincoln (UK) in partnership with Ministry of Education provides training at Master's level to principals and senior managers while Tanzania's Agency for the Development of Educational Management (ADEM) offers training for educational managers and administrators as well as serving principals in primary and secondary schools. In Kenya, the need for preparation and development of not only principals but also other professionals in the civil and teaching service can be traced back to The Training Review Committee (Wamalwa Report, 1971) of 1971-72 which discovered that there was no regular systematic programme to train administrators and managers and therefore, saw the need to train such professional officers in administrative and managerial aspects of their work. It recommended that courses to meet these need be run at Kenya Institute of Administration (KIA).

This was followed by The Report of the Committee of Review into Kenya Institute of Administration (KIA) (Muigai Report of 1978) which was established to report on feasibility of establishing KESI. The committee noted that educational administrators were originally trained for teaching and not necessarily for administration. It reported a serious deficiency of administrative training among educational administrators and the necessity of establishing KESI. According to the School Management Guide (1999), KESI was inaugurated in 1981 but given legal status in 1988 through legal Notice 565/1988 to among other functions identifying staff educational development needs and providing in-service training to meet those needs; and organizing conducting training for personnel involved in the administration and management of education as well as conduct research on staff training and development programmes in the field of education. Currently, KESI offers in service training to principals, deputy principals and heads of departments in school management but does not prepare teachers aspiring to be principals. These courses are offered mostly during April or August holidays for two weeks (Olemba, Wanga & Karagu, 1992). Njeri (1996) argue that this duration is so short to satisfy the requirements for the complex functions of school headship. School leadership vested in the hands of the principals is so demanding in so many areas such that if principals have to be in-serviced properly, then it should be done over some considerable period of time.

This will enable them to understand the complexity of issues they are supposed to deal with and how to go about them. Muthini's study (2004) on principals' perception of KESI programmes in Nairobi Province, Kenya found out that principals appreciated relevance of KESI programmes but felt that the programmes should be regular and they should be consulted on courses they wish to be covered. I concur with him because being on the ground puts principals in a better position to identify areas they need to be updated on during their in-service training for school leadership. This also shows the importance of context in preparation and development of principals because if they were to be trained on issues not prevalent in their contexts then it will become very difficult for them to use that knowledge to bring about improvement of their schools.

Studies in the developed world have also shown that a part from formal preparation for school leadership, principals professes that most of their preparation and development mainly occurs when they are in the field or while on the job. For example Restine's (1997) study on experiences of principals in their preparation for school leadership in America found that a part from formal preparation for school leadership, principals admitted that classroom experiences, principals' support, being principals in multi-settings and prior experiences in making difficult solutions prepared and developed them for school leadership. Similarly, a study by Thody et al, (2007) on selection and training of principals in five European countries reveal that though principals are formally prepared and developed for school leadership, the same also happens informally through apprenticeship, unionism, research and personal initiatives.

School Leadership in Kenya

Appointment to school leadership in Kenya has undergone several phases. Initially principals were appointed on recommendation by the stakeholders. Later their appointment was based on seniority and currently it is based on merit where they have to be interviewed before appointment. After graduation from colleges with Diplomas or Degrees in Education, teachers are posted to various public secondary schools in the country by the TSC. Their promotion to leadership depends on their seniority and performance. According to the National Policy on Appointment, Deployment and Training of School Administrators and Managers (1999), up to 1987 TSC used to appoint principals who were identified as suitable by the principal, politician, school sponsor or TSC field agents. Additionally, the teacher had to be excellent in teaching with a minimum of three years experience as well as good moral behavior and integrity.

However, such arrangement could be abused by principals, politicians or sponsors picking on a person of their choice who may be lacking the qualities cited. Studies have also shown that being a good classroom teacher does not automatically mean one can make an effective school leader (Bush & Oduro, 2006; Harber & Davies 1997; Njeri, 1994). Nonetheless, in 1988 after the implementation of the schemes of service for graduate and graduate approved teachers, principals' positions became deployable after promotion to job groups L to R where a teacher becomes a head of department, deputy principal, principal, senior principal and chief principal (ibid). Currently, headship positions are advertised and teachers subjected to rigorous interviews before they are appointed by the TSC (Rarieya, 2007). The National Policy on Appointment, Deployment and Training of School Administrators and Managers (1999) says that principals have to be trained before and after appointment to school leadership. They can only become principals if they have a Certificate in Education Management KESI respectively (ibid).

Findings and Discussions

The Nature of Preparation and Development of Principals

Several themes on the preparation and development of principals came up. These included preparation through leadership backgrounds, leadership roles, in service courses and principals support while development could be experienced through challenges faced in schools, in service courses, principals conferences and personal initiatives. These findings are supported by Cunningham and Cordeiro (2006) in reference to Hoy and Miskel (2005) who states that useful methods to improve school leadership include selecting and educating leaders, assuming leadership positions and engineering the situation. It is worth noting that this may differ from the developed world where there are formal structures for preparation and development of principals for school leadership. This could be due to contextual differences in terms of cultural, national and social contexts underpinning education in any country (Oplatka, 2004). This is true because countries have different educational policies and objectives based on which principals are prepared and developed for school leadership. The study also revealed that there was no specific preparation for headteachers and that most of them learned while on job. This is supported by Restine's (1997) findings in a similar study where principals claimed that they learned by doing. One of the research participants even claimed that after taking leadership courses, she learnt to be a principal through being a principal. Principals in the study also claimed that the pre service education they received at university did not prepare them for school leadership rather for classroom teaching. Kitavi and Van Der Westhuizen (1997) recommend that educational institutions offering in service courses should offer courses in education management.

Nonetheless, this does not denote lack of preparation and development of principals for school leadership. The study revealed that principals preparation and development is mainly school based mixed with some in service courses like seminars and workshops. School based learning helps the principals to understand their specific contexts and application of what is learned may not be faced with a lot of problems. This is agreed by Briggs et al (2003) as cited in Paterson and West-Burnham (2005) that such an approach anchored in participants' schools may be more effective in promoting leadership learning.

Leadership Formation

A participant claimed that there were things (sic) which she could not cite that training could not offer and insisted that leaders are born not necessarily made. Participants in studies carried out by Rarieya (2007) on women principals in Mombasa, Kenya and Thody (2007) on principal preparation and development in four countries in Europe claimed the same. In the later study, the participant said, "We all appear to agree that there is something in leadership that can't be put in by training" (p.43). Okumbe (1998) says that trait theories traced back to ancient Greeks and Romans claims that leaders are made but interjects by saying that researchers have realized that traits are not completely inborn but can be acquired through learning and experience. This gives credence to the need for preparation and development of school leaders through learning and experience. Most importantly, lessons learnt should be put into practice. Rallis and Goldrings (2000) argue that, learning from experiences should be complemented with a preparation program that "capitalizes on your rich experiences and fill in areas of knowledge and skill you do not have" (p.108).

This means that such a program will make preparation very comprehensive and help the recipient to tackle education issues that are very dynamic in nature. Being born a leader therefore is a paradigm that can not work in the 21st century given the dynamics of education (Bush & Oduro, 2006; Crippen, 2004; Hillman, 2002 in Wong, 2004; Kelly & Peterson, 2007). In fact, Blaise and Kirby (2002) as cited in Harris, Ballenger and Leonard (2004) clearly put it that the role of the principal has become more complex and effective principals "must be skilled instructional leaders, change initiators, managers, personnel directors, problem solvers and visionaries" (p.156). These are not skills one can claim to be innate rather they can mainly be obtained through preparation and development of school leaders. It emerged from the study that principals' backgrounds and being school prefects made them to develop interest in leadership, acquire leadership, interpersonal and organizational skills as well as built their personality and boosted their confidence.

Leadership Roles in Schools

Participants claimed those leadership roles they held in schools before they were appointed principals played a very big role in preparing them for school leadership, a view that is shared by Hoy and Miskel (2005) in Cunningham and Cordeiro (2006). These responsibilities included being heads of departments, senior masters and deputy principals. Some worked under principals helping them to mature and learnt what to expect from future leadership positions. Other attributes learnt included supervisory skills, importance of understanding people when dealing with them, problem solving skills and public relations which came in handy when they become principals. More experience of running schools was gained through delegation in which their principals could leave them to be in charge of the schools in their absence. This is an indication of how the participants were involved in the running of their schools which according to Mbiti (2007) is very important because it provides practical lessons from which they can learn and be prepared for school leadership. While playing these roles, some participants were mentored by their principals who became their role models which Kennedy (2005) says is key to the notion that learning can take place within the school context and be enhanced by sharing dialogues between colleagues. Van Der Westhuizen (2007) emphasizes that mentoring at all times should be based on the principle of practice oriented learning experiences.

In service Courses

All participants agreed that in service courses from which they gained knowledge, skills and attitudes prepared and developed them for school leadership. Some attended KESI organized courses before they became principals. According to the Master Plan of Education and Training 1999-2010 (1997), for one to become a headteacher, they must have attended at least one of the KESI organized in service courses. This shows the importance of these courses in preparing one for school leadership. Though principals claimed the course duration was too short with so much to be covered, they felt that the courses introduced them to some of the school management issues that could come in handy in dispensing their duties as principals. There were Kenya National Union of Teachers organized courses which educated participants about the rights of employees and the role of a principal in case of a strike by teachers. Other topics included leadership qualities and styles, and professional ethics. Thody et al.(2007), also found out that some principals were prepared and developed for school leadership through union and unionism. The private sector (The Steadman Group) and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) like Community Based Development Services (COBADES)

conducted seminars from which participants learnt topics like project management, school vision and mission which they claimed prepared them for school leadership. However, the only hitch is that most NGOs are short lived and therefore can not be depended on to offer training to school leaders for long since they normally wind up due to financial constraints or after their lifetime.

Principals Support

Principals' support to the potential school leaders played a very big role in preparing them for school leadership. This support came through teachers being given an enabling environment, delegation of duties, internal appointments, being released for seminars and advice given by principals. This kind of support is also cited in Restine's (1997) study in which a participant felt that such support in dealing with difficult tasks prepared her for school leadership.

Other Roles and Responsibilities

Some principals felt that the responsibilities they had externally also prepared them for school leadership. One was categorical that by being the district coordinator for Guidance and Counseling as well as a chief examiner in her subject at district level armed her with organizational skills, importance of team work that helped her when she became a principal.

Observation

Participants were emphatic that observation of how their principals were running their schools prepared them for school leadership. This is what they had to say:

... several years of experience observing other principals run their schools, so you look at them, you see their strength, and you look at their weaknesses and even the method of handling issues. You see, you learn something from it
I was prepared through learning and by doing the way you see others do.

Challenges and Problems

The day-to-day challenges and problems principals faced in schools and their attempts to solve them provided them with lessons from which they could learn and develop. Problems included conflicts and indiscipline with teachers and students as well as financial management. These challenges made some of the principals to be resilient and prepared them on how to solve future problems of the same nature. According to Cunningham and Cordeiro (2006), it is from such challenges that leaders gain knowledge, growth, order and renewal. This gives them the strength and confidence to undertake their duties stronger and rejuvenated.

Headteachers' Annual Conferences

The Kenya Secondary Schools Headteachers Association (KSSHA) is a national body to which Principals of public secondary schools belong and amongst other activities, it organizes annual conferences at district, provincial and national levels in which they discuss educational issues affecting their schools and ways in which such issues can be addressed. Issues addressed include Financial Management, Guidance and Counseling, Discipline, Parenting, School Management, Policy issues amongst others. This forum plays a very big role in the development of principals in that it enables them to socialize and share and exchange ideas on their experiences on how they run their schools, challenges they face and their efforts in unraveling them. They also learn from case studies presented by their colleagues about their successes from which they can borrow a leaf and apply in their schools to bring about improvement. Some principals built networks with their contemporaries through which they continue sharing, advising and supporting each other after the conferences. Locks-Horsley, Harding, Murray, Dubea, Williams (1987) avers that networks build the capacities of members to identify, solve their problems, share their experiences, exchange information and provide moral and professional support. This will continuously develop and enhance principals' performance. Kitavi and Van Dan Westhuizen (1997) assert that networking brings about collegiality which is a desired goal for growth and development.

Principals prefer district conferences because they deal with issues specific to their context. This implies the importance of context in that principals are likely not to have many problems when applying what they have learnt from the conferences because the lessons are embedded within their context. Eraut (1994) as cited in Kennedy (2005) say that it is not the type of professional knowledge being acquired but the context through which it is acquired and subsequently used that actually helps people to understand that knowledge. This is strongly supported by Goldring and Vye (2004) when they reiterate that, "learning new knowledge from the perspective of how to put it into practice will enable teachers to develop a connected knowledge base that is adaptive for solving their schools' problems" (p.210). It is very evident that these principals learn a lot from these conferences that can help them bring about school improvement.

Consultation

To enhance the performance of their duties, some principals felt that they could learn from their experienced and successful counterparts through consultation. Subsequently in case of any concern or predicament, they consulted their counterparts for advice or support. Matters that were mostly consulted on included finances, discipline, decision making and academics. This could also be enhanced through the networks established amongst principals during their annual conferences or any other fora.

Factors facilitating Preparation and Development of Principals

Principals' Support

Some of them got a lot of support from their principals. Their principals were ready to sponsor and release them for in-service courses, seminars and workshops. Some of the principals also advised them on issues concerning school management and delegated some responsibilities to them by giving them a chance to run their schools when they were away hence preparing them for school leadership. Some of the principals were mentored by their former principals, who gave them advice on matters of school finances and ways of dealing with indiscipline cases.

Availability of In-service Courses

The availability of in-service courses especially the one provided by KESI that participants attended before appointment to headship prepared them for school leadership. This was by helping them to learn issues about school management that they were to meet once appointed principals. Other seminars and workshops organized by NGOs and other organizations in the private sector principals attended also enabled them to learn and understand school management issues.

Resources/Finances

Availability of resources also came in handy in their preparation. Many of the principals said that money to finance them to attend the in-service courses, seminars and workshops was always available.

Personal Initiatives

Some took personal initiative of inquiring how things were being done in some offices like finances while others read literature on leadership so as to understand what it entailed. This prepared them in the sense that when they became principals they could apply the knowledge they had gained through those initiatives

Stakeholders Support

Some principals felt that their recognition of stakeholders and the support they got from them really helped them to grow. This in turn made them to run their school effectively and efficiently. Some of the principals had problems on appointment to headship, but got a lot of support from the stakeholders like parents, the board and even teachers. This could have been the first step to their growth because these stakeholders helped them to settle down and establish themselves as principals despite the turbulence.

Other Leadership Roles

Some principals hold leadership positions outside their school but related to their work as principals. Lessons they learn from these positions also come in handy in the management of their schools and therefore help them to grow as principals.

Daily Challenges and Problems

The challenges and problems the principals experienced helped them to grow as school leaders. Solving and overcoming these problems and challenges respectively teaches them some problem solving skills which come in handy whenever they are faced with problems and challenges of the same nature in future.

Factors hindering Preparation and Development of Principals

Lack of enough experience

Some principal felt that they had not been deputy principals for long enough to enable them gain enough experience that could have properly prepared them for school leadership. Some of them become principals barely a year after appointment to deputy principal ship.

Limited In-service Courses

There were very few leadership seminars and workshops. Most of the seminars and workshops which were available were subject based ones. In such seminars, they only learnt about the subject content and delivery methods, and there was nothing about leadership that could prepare them for school leadership. As a result there was no platform for them to share their experiences they were having as principals.

Lack of Resources/Finances

Lack of resources is a problem to some principals who are in schools where finances for attending some courses or seminars hardly come by especially KESI courses which cost around 15,000 Kenya shillings for two weeks.

Some schools may not afford to sponsor a principal for such a course due to lack of money occasioned by poor fee payment.

Decision Making Powers

Though some had responsibilities delegated to them, they felt shortchanged when their principals did not give them decision making powers such that when some became principals, they had problems with making decisions.

Opposition

One of the participants claimed that her morale and interest in leadership waned when she was appointed a deputy principal. Some teachers complained bitterly that it was based on tribalism because the principal was from her tribe, so she favored her. This discouraged her and could be a hindrance to her preparation as a principal.

Lack of Recognition

Some principals complained that, some of the principals they worked under did not recognize them and even give them internal appointments from which could have prepared them for school leadership. This hampered their preparation because they were not given a chance to exercise their authority before they became principals.

Family Matters

Family issues could be a hindrance in the sense some principals did not attend some seminars and workshops because they coincided with pressing family issues which needed their personal attention.

Lack of Time

Lack of time is hindering development of some of them who are so much engulfed in school matters that getting to even attend some seminars or registering for post graduate studies is not possible. When KESI courses are on, mainly during school holidays, most of the principals are normally busy supervising projects in their schools.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study illustrates that the nature of preparation and development of principals for school leadership occurs in different forms. This includes experiences got in leadership roles in school, attendance of in-service courses, principals' conferences as well as personal initiatives of individual principals. It can also be concluded that, teachers are not specifically prepared for school leadership during their pre-service training. Universities only prepare teachers for classroom teaching. What they learn from the administration course unit taught at university does not cover principals' roles and responsibilities. The school is the main preparation and development ground for teachers and principals respectively. Consequently, principals' support is crucial in preparation and development of aspiring principals.

Lack of resources particularly finances is a hindrance to preparation and development of principals for school leadership.

The in-service courses offered by KESI and other in-service providers are few and irregular so they can not be fully depended on for preparation and development of secondary school principals. Most of the seminars and workshops available are subject based and therefore not suitable for school leaders.

The study also demonstrates that it is not only the government that is involved in efforts to prepare and develop principals for school leadership in this context, rather the private sector and non governmental organizations too. This shows the importance attached to the role of a principal in bringing about school improvement and the interest shown by the private sector as well as the non governmental organizations in fostering their preparation and development for school leadership.

Finally, lack of formal programs for preparation of principals for school leadership in this context has not hindered principals from being prepared for school leadership however informal it has been. The experiences at their work place, seminars and workshops they have attended as well as personal initiatives have prepared and developed principals for school leadership. And most of this has been done practically within their working contexts (schools).

Recommendations

Preparation and development of school leaders should be systematic from the Heads of Departments to Deputy Principals and eventually to Principals. For example courses for heads of departments should induct them into how to run a department and at the same time be geared towards preparing them for deputy headship, while courses for deputy headship should induct them into deputy ship while preparing them for headship. Subsequently, principals should be continuously and systematically prepared and developed through induction immediately after appointment and continuously developed afterwards.

KESI programmes should be decentralized to district level and if possible mechanism should be put in place to decentralize it further to the school level as was recommended by the sessional paper number 5 of 2005 (GoK, 2004). Schools can be used as leadership preparation grounds where principals should be able to prepare teachers for school leadership. This will enable training to reach as many potential principals as possible. This is because most of the preparation and development of principals is mainly within their school as established by this study.

KESI programmes should take longer than two weeks rather than the current exhaustive training which is seen as crush programmes by participants. As a result, not much learning and understanding takes place to enable principals apply lessons learnt in their schools because so much is covered within a very short period.

Making KESI Certificate in Educational Management a mandatory requirement for appointment and deployment as a principal (GoK, 1997) is not enough. KESI courses themselves should be made mandatory for principals by the government to enable as many principals as possible to be prepared and developed for school leadership.

The government needs to look into ways of subsidizing the training fee KESI charges school principals because some schools are unable to raise the fee which shut out some principals who would have liked to attend those courses. Alternatively, schools should have a vote head for preparation and development of principals to ensure that finances for courses are always available whenever need arises.

The government should also find ways of formally incorporating more of the private sector and non governmental organizations to help in preparation and development of principals for school leadership by allowing them to offer in-service courses for potential principals and serving principals.

A link should be established between the ministry of education and other institutions like public universities which should be encouraged to come up with courses in leadership preparation and development for principals in the country. For example universities could develop and offer a post graduate diploma in school leadership to be undertaken during school holidays.

Principals should be encouraged to take personal responsibility and initiative in preparing and developing themselves for school leadership through self study, reading literature, attending seminars and workshops out of their own personal volition.

Newly appointed principals can be attached to experienced and successful principals in their neighborhood for induction and mentoring.

The KSSHA should liaise with the government and make the conferences mandatory for principals because they provides a good forum in which principals can be developed for school leadership. KSSHA should make their induction programmes for newly appointed principals compulsory and regular. It should also find ways of having sessions for deputy principals in a bid to help prepare them for school leadership.

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NOTE

It is worth to note that since this research was done IN 2008, there has been tremendous improvement in the activities of Kenya Education Staff Institute (KESI). Currently its Continuous Professional Development courses for school leaders right from Heads of Departments, Deputy Headteachers and Headteachers is now very regular and there are even plans to start post graduate studies in Educational Administration which will go along way to benefit school leaders.

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