

## Current State of Guidance and Counseling in Secondary Schools in Zimbabwe

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**ABSTRACT** Key players in the education system such as District Education Officers, head teachers and teachers need to improve their performance in order to effectively implement the guidance and counseling curriculum in Zimbabwe. All key players should work hard in fulfilling their job descriptions. The aim of this desktop study was to review literature in order to ascertain the current state of guidance and counseling in schools. Thus the findings from the study will help in restructuring the Zimbabwe secondary schools guidance and counseling services. From the various literature reviewed, it emerged that qualifications and teaching experience had nothing to do with the implementing of Guidance and Counseling. Some of the teachers who are given the responsibility of implementing Guidance and Counseling do not have its general understanding. It is recommended that, if possible, Guidance and Counseling be made an integral part of co-curricular activities and given a place on the school timetable.

### INTRODUCTION

Before independence in 1980, Zimbabwe had no planned School Guidance Counseling services for African children in the then Rhodesia (Masvaure cited by Urombo 1999). The services were only offered in former White, Indian and Colored schools. The development of School Guidance Counseling services in Zimbabwe mirrored the same racial segregation in the whole social system of Rhodesia. The only School Guidance Counseling service for blacks, were offered by missionaries in mission schools and the 'public-spirited' members who took it upon themselves to provide informal advice to the students (Mapfumo 2001).

The substantial expansion in secondary school education soon after 1980 in Zimbabwe required the introduction of the School Guidance and Counseling services as supportive services to students. Ndanga's (1994) view that an increase in awareness in the range of individual differences in intelligence, interests, motivation and needs as a result of the development in Zimbabwean education resulted in the introduction of School Guidance. The Guidance and Coun-

seling services were introduced in Zimbabwean secondary schools in an endeavor to respond to the needs of students, which include academic, career, social and personal needs. It is reported that one Education Officer for School Guidance Counseling services was responsible for the whole country at the inauguration of the services in 1987 (Mapfumo 2001).

The number of Education Officers increased to four in 1991 (Secretary for Education and Culture 2001). In 1995, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture appointed an Education Officer for Guidance and Counseling for each educational region. The newly appointed education officers were sent to Britain for training. They acquired Masters Degrees in Guidance and Counseling. Upon their homecoming in 1996, the officers updated the School Guidance Counseling national syllabus drawn up in 1987. The syllabus now encompasses the following broad areas: personal and social guidance, educational guidance, career/vocational guidance, HIV/AIDS Education and individual counseling (Murwira 1998; Ngara 1999). It is, however, sad to note that all these Education Officers who had been trained in Guidance and Counseling in UK have since left the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture. The new officers who have substituted them have no qualifications in the area. Furthermore, the officers have been given responsibilities in other curriculum areas resulting in divided attention (Mapfumo 2001;

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Kasayira et al. 2004). This study wanted to establish how the head teachers and teachers implement Guidance and Counseling services in schools.

### **GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING**

Guidance and counseling is a professional field, which has a broad range of activities and services aimed at assisting individuals to understand themselves, their problems, their school environment and their world (Egbochuku 2008; Oniye and Alawane 2008). School guidance and counseling programs have therefore been introduced to assist students overcome the number of challenges they experience at home and at school. Guidance and Counseling plays an important role in promoting learning in schools. The school guidance and counseling services policy in Zimbabwe was not mandatory compared to the international policies. The Zimbabwean school guidance and counseling services were not always planned for at the beginning of each year, Students and parents were not frequently involved in needs assessment while the services were not frequently evaluated in comparison with those in the international arena (Chireshe 2014)

According to Pecku (1991), the Guidance and Counseling approach is not only limited to formal subjects offered in secondary school but also included in and out of school activities, work, vocation experiences, and part-time work programs. The responsibility of the teacher counselors is to unlock opportunities for the students to help nature their character and behavior so as to adjust to the society, make them able to interact with others, and be mentally and physically healthy. This is demanding and calls for commitment of all parties concerned for effective Guidance and Counseling. The teacher counselor is a link between high school and community through follow-up of studies of school graduates, to attain knowledge of the job and prepare current students for future adjustments in the society as well as, dealing with a student's personal issues and developmental needs besides vocational and educational roles.

Cochran and Peters (2002) contend that the educational role of counselors takes up most of their time thus entailing the need to reduce a teacher's workload to allow adequate time for effective counseling. Kimathi (2002) indicated

that teacher counselors feel that, since they are classroom teachers, their colleagues see them in a resentful manner. He further stated that, it is sometimes limited to educational advising with the teacher counselors acting as a resource person. Counseling on personal problems appears minimal, partly due to the students' mistrust, time pressure and a feeling of inadequacy. There is need therefore among teacher counselors to make an effort to support effective Guidance and Counseling in schools with all its functions.

### **The Implementation Process**

Fullan (2000) defines implementation as "...the process of putting into practice an idea, program or set of activities, which is new to the people attempting to bring about a change." Implementing a curriculum innovation results in growth on the part of users from their active practices to those suggested by the innovation (Mtahwai 1996). Successful implementation of innovations calls for change in resources, teaching strategies, organizational structure and assessment tools and processes. Change is achievable in schools and districts where administrators provide utmost support to the implementation process (Provincial Education Director 2005).

It is believed that a curriculum change needs the support of diverse administrators such as the District Education Officers and head teachers. Support necessary for change includes orientation, capacity building and supply of adequate resources. Implementation failure is closely attached to lack of support from administrators, which may lead to misunderstanding and underestimation (Nziramasanga Commission 1999). According to Tele (1998) a well-implemented education policy should attain the learning outcomes for which it was developed. The development of individuals and the organization is the central goal of innovations (Fullan 2001). Both implementation levels (macro and micro levels) should be aimed at achieving the learning outcomes

In Zimbabwe, the implementation of curriculum policy takes place at two levels namely macro and micro levels (Kapuya 1993). Macro-implementation process poses four loosely linked passages (the passages are not implemented in a linearly fashion but they depend on each other) and the micro-implementation process has

three phases on which the outcome of the policy depends (Chivore 1995).

### **The Macro Implementation Level**

Ndawi and Peasuh (2005) and Berman in Mtahwai (1996) gave a summary of activities for the macro-implementation process, which deduces a step-by-step or linear model of curriculum implementation at the macro level. The Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture develops education policies for all schools in the country (Nziramanga Commission 1999). The developed policies are given to the Curriculum Development Unit that designs syllabi for all schools. The Curriculum Development Unit dispenses the curriculum materials to schools through the District Education Officers for adoption (preparing for the implementation process). Schools are supposed to teach the given curriculum as per the curriculum frameworks and thereafter the government (through the Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council) sets public examinations to establish the degree of implementation in any given curriculum. Teachers are expected to effectively teach at micro-implementation the given curriculum so that their learners would pass the public examinations. Micro-implementation is discussed below.

### **The Micro-implementation Level**

Micro-implementation is the process during which local decisions are taken (Jordan in Chivore 1995). Micro-implementation takes place when various schools are involved in the implementation process. Micro-implementation has three phases, which must be attained to augment successful implementation. These phases are adoption/mobilization, teacher use/deliverer and institutionalization (Fullan 2000; Berman in Mtahwai 1996). Each of these phases has precise processes, which should influence effective implementation of a curriculum.

### **Micro-implementation Phases**

#### ***Adoption / Mobilization***

The school takes the decision to accept a curriculum during the micro-implementation process. The adoption or mobilization phase involves the underlining of what the new curricu-

lum involves and persuades schools to accept the curriculum. In the Zimbabwean context, the Curriculum Development Unit directs all schools to adopt a specific curriculum such as the Guidance and Counseling curriculum (Kapuya 1993). Although all schools are expected to adopt a curriculum from the Curriculum Development Unit, it is not always evident that the given curriculum is going to be adopted. There are many factors that can either improve or hinder the adoption of a curriculum. Adoption is not easy when the reasons for change are not clear or poorly conceptualized (Hagreaves 2000). District and school administrators must work closely together to clarify the curriculum goals to all users as early as possible. Users commit themselves to innovations with well-known advantages. The organization must develop a common image of the innovation and members are persuaded to direct their efforts towards achieving that image. Many innovations fail because they are “adopted” before they are clearly understood by users (Fullan 1991). Administrators should locate ways and systems of clarifying the innovations to users and assisting them during the implementation process.

District officials should plan ahead as far as workshop schedules, resource allocation, assessment procedures and the setting of objectives are concerned. Plans must be closely implemented and refined throughout the duration of the program (Chivore 1995). If the District Education Officers are not committed to their implementation roles, the plans will not move beyond the written pages (Christopher 1992). Administrators must encourage members within the same school to give each other support such as developing joint cultures throughout the implementation process. The relationship among all curriculum users is an important element for successful implementation. Fullan (2000) laments that although “...relationship building is central to success” administrators overlook it. District Education Officers should help schools accept and commit themselves to the innovation.

#### **Teacher Use/ Deliverer**

This is the phase when teachers are trained as far as the goals of the curriculum are concerned and they are oriented on their expected responsibilities. The implementation process includes activities, which are meant to overcome resistance to change. The degree of implemen-

tation is determined by the perceived relevance of products (Fullan in Gwengo 2003). Curriculum projects that seem to address a perceived need have a better chance of success. The degree of implementation of an innovation (a curriculum change made in the established way of doing things) is determined by the innovation's perceived need, quality and practicality (Nziramasanga Commission 1999). Practical changes are those that address important issues and are within the teachers' implementation capacity (Fullan 1991). All implementation activities by the District Education Officers should augment successful implementation of innovations in the district.

District Education Officers must encourage and motivate (head teachers and teachers) users to work in teams and they have to work in teams themselves (Kapuya 1993). Users should be given ample time to share ideas throughout the implementation process. Cooperation and constant training of users are priorities in successful implementation of innovations. According to Fullan (1991), the timing and training could vary depending on the needs of users. Therefore, there is a need for constant orientation and implementation workshops to be held throughout the program's existence.

Schools must be given the necessary support during the implementation process (Nziramasanga Commission 1999). Implementing sites must have a permanent supply of adequate and appropriate resources. Hageaves (2000) suggested that most innovations fail because they are poorly resourced or resources are withdrawn prematurely. Time is an important resource, which is not budgeted for during the implementation process, partly because of work overload for both teachers and District Education Officers and partly because District Education Officers do not rate time as a resource (Kapuya 1993). Successful implementation of innovations requires adequate time, money, human and other material resources. For any educational reform to succeed there is need for an analogous economic reform (Zivai 2002). Successful implementation of innovations results in institutionalization, which will now be discussed.

### INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Institutionalization is "...stabilizing change within an organization" (Berman in Mtahwai

1992). Institutionalization goes further than the implementation process to include the introduction of the change into the organization (Provincial Education Director 2005). Innovations that are legitimized by power holders have better opportunities of institutionalization. According to Berman and McLaughlin in Fullan (1991), lack of support from district officials will result in non-continuation. District officials should show their guarantee through actions in order to motivate the implementers' desire to institutionalize the change (Provincial Education Director 2005). A supply of sufficient resources to all schools is an important form of support from administrators.

Sufficient resources should be allocated for the program being institutionalized (Chivore 1995). Innovations should have sufficient resources that are appropriate to their goals and great care must be taken not to flood resources for innovative projects (the curriculum that is changing or bringing in new ideas). Flooding of resources may pessimistically affect institutionalization in the event of the withdrawal of the resource support (withdrawal of donor support affected curriculum project they funded, for example Aids Education, Nziramasanga Commission 1999). District staff must assign and maintain or keep change-oriented personnel (human resource support) to guide the implementation process in their district schools. The greatest risk to institutionalization is staff income (Mapfumo 1999). District Education Officers should control teacher income in order to capitalize on their skills in successful implementation of innovations.

### Key Players in the Implementation Process

The implementation process requires different key players to properly perform their roles. Key players are teachers, learners, head-teachers and District Education Officers (Nziramasanga Commission 1999). These key players need to perform their roles effectively to enhance successful implementation.

According to Miles et al. in Chivore (1995), the program's success relies on teacher mastery of the program's goals and their commitment level. Teachers must be convinced to accept and commit themselves to innovations. No matter how clear and coherent curriculum goals and objectives might be the program's success depends on the teacher (Fullan 1991). Teachers

must be comprehensible about the change requirements and their new roles in order to successfully play their roles. District Education Officers must commit themselves to widen the capacity of head teachers and teachers (capacity to effectively implement the given curriculum) throughout the implementation process. Hageaves (2000) says, "When professional communities misinterpret or challenge policy goals, the road to the classroom is difficult". For successful implementation change-oriented teachers need the support of proficient head teachers to successfully perform their roles.

The school head teacher is influential in the enhancing of innovative programs at the school level (Mapfumo 1999). It is the head teacher's responsibility to plan, supervise, assess and make essential interventions during all micro-implementation activities. Fullan (1991) argues that the school's effectiveness is the invention of the head teacher's influence. Head teachers should work directly together with other teachers in all implementation issues. Effective head teachers mobilize adequate materials and human resources for their schools (Kapuya 1993). In addition to supporting teachers, head teachers must also support learners during the implementation process.

Learners are important players during the implementation process although they are usually ignored during decision-making and vision building (Fullan in Gwengo 2003). If learners do not register for a particular subject, the change effort is fruitless. The degree of implementation success (the extent to which curriculum objectives are achieved) is established by learners' behavior change as a result of the innovation. Taylor in Chivore (1995) suggests that the compass of all learning is the teaching and learning which should occur.

### **Role of the Head Teacher**

According to Odoemalam and Uwam (2009), one of the most important roles of a head teacher is that of administration of curriculum implementation. Head teachers play a part in curriculum planning and adoption, classroom management, arrangement of instructional programs and out of school activities in any education structure. This means that the head teacher is not only responsible for articulating the school curriculum and objectives, but also delegating and

coordinating curriculum implementation as well as supervising the implementation and evaluating the curriculum.

The main task of a head teacher is to exercise leadership that results in a shared vision of the direction to be practiced by the school, and to administer change in ways that certify that the school is successful in realizing its vision. A head teacher as a leader and a manager of change must support guidance and counseling in managerial roles all of which, if done well leads to success of guidance and counseling in secondary schools and achievement of the organizational goals. Sullivan and Glanz (2000) proposed that the profession should accept school improvement as its center of gravity. This means that the head teacher, in making school-related decisions should always have school development in mind, of which guidance and counseling is a part of this development. Introducing school development at the center of the profession guarantees that the job of the head is grounded and tied directly to the core business of schooling.

Sullivan and Glanz (2000) continue to say that head teachers require concrete information of the learning process and the conditions under which students learn in the school setting in addition to understanding about the educational change and school improvement. In short, it stresses the role of the head as a manager with respect to the core business of the school, namely teaching and learning in a context of change and improvement. Hill (2006) continues to say that the key role of the head teacher is to make sure that each of the elements that contribute to improved student learning outcomes is present, working efficiently and in alignment with all other elements. This means that the head teacher is thus, as it were, the person in charge of the school, the one who has the overview of systems, processes and resources and how they combine to produce intended student learning outcomes. This implies that the head teacher is able to articulate the significance of all key elements, to justify their design and configuration, and to be in a position to make judgments regarding the operational effectiveness of each element and of the total impact of all of the elements as they function in combination with one another. When outcomes are not being realized or when evidence mounts up and those particular elements are not working effectively, the head

is responsible for ensuring that the redesign work is carried out. This could mean slight readjustments but in cases of common failure to reach required standards, is more likely to involve transforming the whole ecology of the school in order to obtain the desired result.

### COUNSELING IN THE SCHOOL

It is sensible that the counselor in the school understands the practice of counseling in schools so as to function effectively in this context. Counseling in schools varies potentially from other forms of counseling in several ways (Boret et al. 2002; Hornby 2003; Lines 2002). These include:

1. In the school, teachers employ counseling skills to provide guidance to children and young people on numerous issues such as social, emotional, academic, drug education, vocational and personal development.
2. Most forms of counseling deal with precise problems, which concern the client. In the school, teachers have to deal with several issues including career choices, family and domestic issues, disciplinary problems and others as presented by the client.
3. Whereas, in formal counseling the client in a pre-arranged session, which tries to find help often organized for the purpose, the setting in the school is slightly different. The setting may be a classroom, office, senior teacher's office, laboratory, outside informal chat or any other setting that would be sometimes suitable to the child. In addition, this is not always charitable as in practice the child may be referred by another person such as a subject or class teacher, form tutor, teacher in charge of discipline or parent before or after a disciplinary case. The individual student or teacher or any other person including a fellow student may instigate counseling. This would appear to contradict the previous definition of counseling and in addition, it may and most probably will affect the way students see counseling.
4. Counseling in schools can range from several sessions with a client to very short counseling performed impulsively to meet the needs of a person or group. For example, the counseling performed a few moments before or after a lesson for a class to a talk with students on career or subject choices followed by several sessions with individual students experiencing complexity.
5. Counseling in schools has restricted time. The teacher in Zimbabwe for instance, is also a subject teacher and has to attend to several lessons. Due to the number of students in the school, s/he is often unable to attend to all of them. In addition, the student has no commitment to come back for another session if the counseling is voluntary and the teacher therefore has to make the best of the opportunity when a student makes a visit. The teacher conducts counseling when s/he is available, for example, during break, lunchtime, after school or when s/he has no lesson or there is an urgent need.
6. Most of the teachers conducting counseling in schools are not competent counselors. Some have little or no training in counseling. Even when there is a trained counselor, most students prefer to consult the teacher of their choice whom they know well and can open up to.
7. Counseling in schools is not just a process but also, like Hornby (2003) argued, part of a 'continuum of helping strategies'. These range from information giving, advising, directing, consultation and supporting as seen earlier in the distinction between Guidance and Counseling.
8. The priorities in school might be different. For example, the need to do extremely well in academics and inspire discipline tends to overrule the priorities of Guidance and Counseling. The school administration and management would therefore be eager to deal with truants and disciplinary issues rather than refer them for counseling regardless of whether counseling can help change behavior, or to use counseling as a disciplinary tool.

Counseling in schools is therefore different in that the clients are children and young people. Thus, the counseling session may not be that formal. Some of the ways in which formal and school counseling differ will appear as subjects of concern in the findings of the study. The way counseling is carried out in the context of the school also allows the reader to under-

stand both the methodology and the school Guidance and Counseling program orientation in the context of a prismatic society and in the light of theories of change.

### Challenges Facing the Teacher

The study conducted by Chireshe (2014) revealed that the effectiveness of the Zimbabwean secondary school guidance and counseling services was negatively affected by lack of resources and training in guidance and counseling and non-counseling duties performed by school counselors. The entire profession of counseling is founded on confidentiality, which might be different from counseling in schools. One area that a teacher finds himself in argument with the administration is confidentiality. According to Corey (1996), confidentiality means the characteristic of being secretive. This implies that teachers should hold all information given by students confidentially. It is an understanding of knowledge shared by a few who do not reveal it to others. The teachers are expected to maintain confidential the materials shared in counseling with students. However, he is expected to keep the head teacher informed of the general issues in school emanating from counseling students since s/he is ultimately responsible for what happens in the school including the student's welfare. Corey (1996) asserts that the counselors have the responsibility to advise the head teacher and to guard the rest of the school if any of students being counseled threaten to harm other students or teachers or damage school property and report to the head teacher such students. This shows the predicament that teachers find themselves in as they serve as counselors and at the same time disciplining students. The idea of confidentiality sometimes has been confused with the duty to warn and protect the public.

Kimathi (2002) observed that no matter how dedicated and proficient a school head or teacher may be, he/she cannot produce a successful program without the cooperation of other people. This indicates that one of the most important elements of head teacher's support to Guidance and Counseling is heartening support from all teachers. Wanjohi (1990) noted that if the head teacher supports teachers, there is a very good reaction from the students on the services offered confirming that the head teacher's sup-

port is the most important factor in determining success of Guidance and Counseling. Williams (1993) contended with Wanjohi (1990) when he said that if the head teacher does not support the program then slight obligation and loyalty will be offered by the teachers, students and the community.

For Guidance and Counseling programs to be successful there is need to build a good rapport between the head teacher and the teachers. This is because Guidance and Counseling is centered on assisting pupils through understanding their behavior and progress. This is necessary for effective learning and better performance. The school and therefore the head teacher should make available appropriate facilities and a favorable working atmosphere where both teachers and students take part in the program. Success of the counseling program will depend on support of its activities by the head teacher.

According to the researchers, this implies that for Guidance and Counseling to be effective, head teachers should be aggressively involved in setting up objectives, planning and executing programs related to counseling. This prompted the researchers to find out how implementation of Guidance and Counseling in Chinhoyi urban secondary schools was done. Kimathi (2002), emphasized that areas of responsibilities should be clearly spelt out so as to avoid misunderstanding as the two parties are committed to the same goal. This implies that the role of teachers should be clearly spelt out, and ample time allocated for execution of the roles. All these findings put together emphasize that guidance and counseling program is dependent on team effort and no matter how committed a school head or teachers may be he/she cannot produce a successful program without the cooperation of the others.

The shortage of qualified guidance and counseling teachers was also found to be a major challenge in the implementation of this program. The results on shortage of staff also paint a gloomy picture on the quality of the career guidance services provided (Chireshe 2014). The career advisors cannot attend to all students hence some never receive the services (Chireshe 2014). Literature reviewed also indicated that guidance and counseling as a subject was considered inferior by both teachers and pupils. This argument relates to Chireshe's (2014) view that

guidance and counseling services receive low priority compared to examinable subjects in secondary schools.

### CONCLUSION

Literature highlighted that the implementation process requires different key players to properly execute their roles. The program's success depends on teacher mastery of the program's goals and their commitment level. Head teachers are influential in the enhancing of inventive programs at the school level. Fullan and Watson's model was used to establish the contribution made by head teachers and teachers in implementing Guidance and Counseling because its four strategies are attuned with the roles of head teachers and teachers. The human mind is an exploration of thoughts, feelings and fantasies, which the teacher might need to be aware of as they bring certain behaviors in young adolescents. Teachers and schools need to be very careful how they handle rape and sex matters and are expected to provide guidance on how to deal with discipline issues. The teachers can make use of the psychoanalytic approach in dealing with the HIV/AIDS menace especially with the vulnerability and susceptibility of the youth. The behaviorist approach in guidance and counseling has implications that the teacher has to see those aspects of the home, society and school that produce the children in the school. It also has implications for changing behaviors by rewarding acceptable social norms. The person centered approach may not be ideal for the school teacher as they have responsibility to the school ethos, for example, teachers might not be as non-directive as the model suggests. Head teachers and teachers need to know the approaches to use for effective implementation of Guidance and Counseling.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made, based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study for effective implementation of Guidance and Counseling programs in Chinhoyi urban Secondary Schools.

- ♦ The ministry of education should help provide facilities and resources for Guidance and Counseling in schools. Pupils in secondary schools should be sensitized to avail

themselves with the Guidance and Counseling services.

- ♦ It is also recommended that, if possible Guidance and Counseling should be made an integral part of co-curricular activities and given a place on the school timetable. Parents should motivate their children towards Guidance and Counseling by providing them with their needs, giving them words of encouragement and teaching them to see the need to pursue such courses.

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