
Evaluation of the British Council pilot



Leading Learning for Gender Equality (LL4GE)

programme in Zimbabwe

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1. Background

The British Council has been offering its Connecting Classrooms programme in Zimbabwe for 12 years. Recently, it has focused on instructional leadership training, with a particular focus on improving educational outcomes for girls, and on how instructional leadership could impact on these outcomes. From 2021, a new programme, Instructional Leadership for Gender Equality was launched, targeted at 1083 Zimbabwean schools identified as low-performing, many of which are in rural areas, with poor infrastructure and limited access to technology. The initial pilot (November 2021-March 2022) involved 277 school leaders in 172 primary and 65 secondary schools in three Zimbabwean districts:

- Beitbridge
- Muzarabani
- Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe (UMP)

The pilot programme had four phases:

1. Three concurrent four-day workshops, each for 100 school leaders (principals and teachers-in-charge)
Each cohort is divided into two groups, comprising about 50 leaders (see below). These were initially scheduled for January 2022 but were eventually held in mid- February.
2. February–March – school-based projects
3. Early March – webinar activity
4. Late March – reflective workshop (two days)

The programme included sessions on gender equality, with a particular focus on improving educational outcomes for girls, and on instructional leadership. The Leading Learning for Gender Equality (LL4GE) programme integrates the existing Gender Equity course with the current Instructional Leadership programme. If successful, the intention is to implement the approach across sub-Saharan Africa, to improve outcomes for girls.

2. Aims and research questions

The overall aim of the evaluation is to establish whether the LL4GE pilot is successful and has achieved its intended objectives. It also seeks to establish whether a full-scale programme can be implemented in Zimbabwe and other parts of sub-Saharan Africa. The evaluation examines four aspects of the LL4GE programme:

- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Sustainability

Relevance

Evaluation of this aspect includes the extent to which the programme achieves its overall objective, the extent to which the quality of teaching and learning improved, progress in improving learners' and teachers' skills, and whether and how teachers are able to use the knowledge and skills to improve the learning of girls. The relevance of the programme to the needs of leaders and teachers is also explored. A wider aim relates to the extent to which the intended impact, outcomes and outputs are achieved, however, it is not possible to provide confident judgements about this dimension, given the short duration of the research and delays to the planned timetable of the programme and the evaluation. Most of the data consists of self-reported perceptions. To assess changes in school and classroom practice, a small number of school-based case studies would be desirable, but it is too ambitious to expect such changes during the intervention. This would be more appropriate in a subsequent phase of the evaluation, subject to budget availability.

Effectiveness

Evaluation of this aspect relates to the effectiveness of the training, including the strategies and tools used, in responding to the needs of female learners in the classroom, and in delivering the desired results for LL4GE. Assessing how the training responds to the needs of female learners is based on indirect measures, such as leaders' perceptions and participants' projects, rather than direct evidence.

Efficiency

Evaluation of this aspect relates to how well the online platforms work and whether there are more efficient ways of delivering the desired results with the available resources, and whether a different delivery approach would have produced better results. Participant and provider data contribute to improving the learning experience of the school leaders.

Sustainability

Ensuring sustainability is a key challenge for short-term interventions of this kind. The evaluation considers the extent to which the benefits of the project are likely to be sustained after its completion, as well as discussing the main lessons to emerge from the initiative, leading to recommendations for similar programmes in the future. A related issue is the scalability of the programme, given the target number of 1,083 schools and the intention to extend the programme to other sub-Saharan African countries.

3. Methodology

The evaluation team adopted a mixed-methods approach, using the following methods:

- Desk study and review of project documentation
- Baseline survey of school leaders participating in the programme
- Non-participant observation of the initial LL4GE workshops
- Non-participant observation of webinar activity
- Interviews with programme facilitators
- Focus group discussions with programme participants
- Non-participant observation of the reflective workshops
- Impact survey of school leaders participating in the programme
- Non-participant observation of the reflective workshops
- An impact survey of school leaders participating in the programme

This final report draws on data from all eight phases of the evaluation.

4. Findings: Documentary analysis

The evaluation team scrutinised several documents:

- Gender equality and school leadership study
- Continuing professional development (CPD) framework for school leaders
- Participant handbook
- Facilitator handbooks
- Curricula for initial workshop Days 1–4 and reflective workshop Days 5–6

These documents are reviewed below.

Gender equality and school leadership study

This is a substantial report, incorporating a desk study, telephone interviews with participants in the British Council's Instructional Leadership (IL) programme and practitioners in the field of gender equality in Zimbabwe, and an online survey of school leaders enrolled on the IL programme. The study indicated a high level of awareness of, and commitment to, gender equality among participants. However, this may not be representative of the wider population of educators, as this sample mostly comprised participants in existing British Council programmes. The following challenges are perceived to inhibit the incorporation of gender equality in the school curriculum:

- Culture and tradition
- Lack of knowledge
- Inadequate resources
- Religion
- Lack of a policy framework
- Teachers' bias

The LL4GE programme (see below) addresses several, but not all, of these issues.

Continuing professional development (CPD) framework for school leaders

This framework outlines the professional practices, enabling skills, professional values and personal commitment, to be developed through the British Council's leadership CPD programmes. The professional practices include leading teaching and learning. The other points mainly concern generic competencies.

Programme-specific documents:

Participant handbook

The participant handbook is extensive and detailed, at 138 pages. It is clearly structured and uses colour-coding to distinguish between explanatory text and participant activities.

Questions relating to the handbook:

1. Are the activities appropriate to meet programme learning outcomes, or are they too generic and uncontextualised?
2. Are the readings appropriate or too generic with mostly international sources with few specific to Zimbabwe or sub-Saharan Africa?
3. The school-based project is the main feature of Day 4 (see below). Do participants address genuine school issues, or rely too much on facilitator guidance and suggestions?
4. Each day comprises four sessions of 90 minutes, with short breaks. Is this schedule too demanding for participants?

We return to these issues in the conclusion.

Facilitator handbooks

The facilitator handbook is also extensive and detailed, at 174 pages. It is clearly structured and uses colour-coding to distinguish between explanatory text, participant activities and facilitator notes. Points to consider:

1. Is the text too prescriptive about the facilitator role, or is a degree of prescription appropriate given that the workshops are offered in six groups from three districts?
2. Facilitators are asked to show awareness of context, including participants' contexts. Is this a significant feature of the enacted curriculum?
3. Are the activities appropriate to meet programme learning outcomes, or are they too generic and uncontextualised?
4. Are the readings appropriate or too generic with mostly international sources with few specific to Zimbabwe or elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa?
5. The school-based project is the main feature of Day 4. Do participants address genuine school issues, or do they rely too much on facilitator guidance and suggestions?
6. Each day comprises four sessions of 90 minutes, with short breaks. Is this schedule too demanding for participants?

A separate facilitator handbook is provided for the concluding reflective workshop (Days 5 and 6). This is clearly structured and detailed. It appears to be prescriptive about structure and content of the workshop, with little scope for facilitator initiative. This should help to ensure consistency in the enacted curriculum but has limited responsiveness to school and community contexts, except for the projects (see below).

Curricula for initial workshop Days 1–4 and reflective workshop Days 5–6

Day 1 curriculum

- The Day 1 documents outline 12 intended learning outcomes. Some of these are quite general and could apply to any leadership CPD programme.

The specific learning outcomes are:

- Promote an open and inclusive culture by creating a vision which has key stakeholders' support and reflects principles of instructional leadership and gender equality
- Facilitate a gender-sensitive culture by encouraging staff to explore and develop their own attitudes and values about gender issues and gender equality
- Develop the school's capacity to evaluate and improve the quality of teaching and learning
- Use instructional leadership techniques to evaluate and improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools, particularly in relation to gender-responsive pedagogy
- Identify excellent teacher role models and develop strategies to share their expertise to address, for example, potential discrimination, bias and stereotyping, and so raise the performance of all girls and boys
- Introduce and/or build appropriate systems to support monitoring, evaluating and improving teachers' practice and performance, particularly in relation to gender equality
- Work with leaders to evaluate performance and progress consistently and transparently, modelling the importance of effective feedback and supporting those who are underperforming
- Use models and frameworks, including the Gender-Responsive and Conducting Classrooms checklist, to develop thinking and practice to achieve gender equality
- Support and challenge other leaders and teachers to identify barriers to learning, including gender inequalities in classrooms and across the school, and use practical strategies and tools to enable teachers to remove such barriers

The main focus of Day 1 is instructional leadership. Workshop observations considered whether, and to what extent, these intended learning outcomes were addressed (see below). One issue relates to whether these learning outcomes are sufficiently sensitive to the Zimbabwe and specific school contexts.

Day 2 curriculum

The document outlines the Day 2 programme and the specific learning outcomes for this day. The programme comprises four sessions: (1) Your school vision for achieving gender equality; (2) Creating a school culture and climate focused on learning and gender equality; (3) Achieving high-quality teaching and learning for girls and boys; (4) School policies and practices to improve student outcomes and promote gender equality. The following learning outcomes link to these sessions:

- Know how to create and promote a vision for leading learning to achieve gender equality throughout the school and empower staff to engage with that vision

- Evaluate and develop your school culture and climate using criteria relating to learning and gender equality
- Review school policy and practice to support gender equality and empowerment of girls at school
- Understand evidence relating to high-quality teaching and learning that benefits all students
- Be aware of gender-responsive pedagogy and how to link characteristics of high-quality teaching to gender-responsive pedagogy

Day 2 mainly focuses on gender equality. Workshop observations considered whether, and to what extent, these intended learning outcomes were achieved (see below). This includes consideration of whether they are sufficiently sensitive to the Zimbabwe and specific school contexts.

Day 3 curriculum

The document outlines the Day 3 programme and the specific learning outcomes for this day. The programme comprises four sessions: (1) How well are girls and boys learning; (2) Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing learning; (3) Gender-sensitive and gender-responsive pedagogies; (4) Designing gender-sensitive tools to monitor and evaluate practice. The following learning outcomes link to these sessions:

- Be able to build on good teaching in school to ensure both girls and boys are achieving their potential
- Understand how to monitor and support girls' and boys' learning (including assessment for learning)
- Understand how to use instructional leadership actions to monitor, evaluate and improve teaching and learning
- Identify gender-sensitive and gender-responsive pedagogies and use strategies to promote these pedagogies in school
- Be able to design tools to use to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning to enhance gender equality and empowerment of girls

Day 3 focuses on both instructional leadership and gender equality. Workshop observations considered whether, and to what extent, these learning outcomes were achieved (see below). This includes consideration of whether these learning outcomes are sufficiently sensitive to the Zimbabwe and specific school contexts.

Day 4 curriculum

The document outlines the Day 4 programme and the specific learning outcomes for this day. The programme comprises four sessions: (1) Building staff monitoring capacity; (2) Preparing for your school-based project; (3) Planning your project; (4) Sharing ideas for projects. The following learning outcomes mostly link to these sessions but only one is project-specific:

- Have developed a strategy for engaging staff in monitoring teaching and learning
- Understand how to build trust and engage staff in instructional leadership and gender equality activities

- Have considered how to build capacity to improve quality of teaching and learning, particularly in relation to gender equality
- Have drafted plans for a school project to promote instructional leadership and address gender equality

Day 4 focuses mainly on the school-based project, but only one of the learning outcomes relates to this. Workshop observations considered whether, and to what extent, these learning outcomes were achieved (see below). This includes consideration of whether these learning outcomes are sufficiently sensitive to the Zimbabwe and specific school contexts, especially in respect of the project.

Day 5 curriculum

The Day 5 programme has three main foci: (1) Reflections on previous learning; (2) Gender-responsive pedagogy; (3) Project presentations.

Sources for the first two elements are mainly international although there is a reference to Kenyan research.

Day 6 curriculum

The main focus of Day 6 is the remaining project presentations. The other topic relates to professional development, notably that focused on gender equality.

5. Findings: Baseline survey

This section presents the main findings from the baseline survey of LL4GE participants. The full report was included as Appendix 1 of the interim report.

Abbreviations used for findings

District

B - Beitbridge

M - Muzarabani

U/UMP - Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe

Gender

M - Male

F - Female

Sector

P/Pr - Primary

S/Sec - Secondary

Participants and response rate

The baseline survey was conducted before the initial four-day workshop and the evaluation team received details of 277 participants at the time the survey was administered. Some additional participants joined the groups before the workshops were held. Table 1a shows the breakdown of the sample and respondents by district.

Table 1a: Sample size and response data

Participant group	Invitations	Returns	Response rate (%)
Beitbridge District	93	85 (59M, 26F)	(91%)
Muzarabani District	84	63 (49M, 14F)	(75%)
UMP District	100	92 (67M, 25F)	(92%)
Totals	277	240 (175M, 65F)	(87%)

In total, 240 responses were received from the sample of 277 school leaders, giving an overall completion rate of 87 per cent. However, some responses were incomplete, and this accounts for variation in the figures shown in the analysis. Given the gender equality focus of LL4GE, it is significant that almost three-quarters of respondents (73 per cent) are male, raising questions about the criteria for participation in the programme.

Leadership roles

Table 1b shows the roles held by the 240 participants. Most (75 per cent) work in primary schools.

Table 1b: Respondent designation of post

Designation	Primary	Secondary	Total
Head or substantive head	118	53	171
Acting head	18	1	19
Deputy head	1		1
Teacher in charge	44	5	49
	181	59	240

Participants' age and experience

Table 2a shows the mean age of participants, with a full range from under 30 to 60 plus. While the Beitbridge mean is higher than that of the other groups, it also has the two youngest respondents. The youngest heads are in the UMP district.

Table 2a: Respondents by age

Sub-group and number responding	Male Mean age (range)	Female Mean age (range)	All Mean age
Beitbridge (85)	53 (under 30–60+)	54 (30–60)	52
Muzarabani (60)	46 (30–55)	49 (30–60)	47
UMP (93)	42 (30–55)	44 (30–60)	42

Most respondents have substantial teaching experience. Corresponding with the average age of post-holders, Beitbridge district has the highest mean of 24 years' service, while UMP heads have a slightly lower mean (see Table 2b). The mean for female respondents is higher than that for male heads.

Table 2b: Respondents' previous experience (years teaching)

Sub-group and number responding	Male Mean age (range)	Female Mean age (range)	All respondents Mean teaching experience
Beitbridge (85)	Over 20 (5–25)	Over 20 (5–25)	24
Muzarabani (60)	15 (11–20)	17 (11–20)	17
UMP (93)	Over 20 (6–25)	Over 20 (5–25)	22
All 238	19 (5–30)	24 (5–25)	19

School contexts

Data on school contexts is available from 172 primary and 65 secondary schools. Table 3a shows these findings by gender, district and school sector. The data show that males outnumber females by 3:1 although the figure is nearer to 2:1 in Beitbridge and 5:1 in the secondary sector, with no response from secondary female heads in Muzarabani.

Table 3a: School leadership by gender, district and sector responses

Gender	Beitbridge	Muzarabani	UMP	Total
Male	59 (37 Pr, 22 Sec)	46 (43 Pr, 3 Sec)	67 (48 Pr, 19 Sec)	172 (128 Pr, 44 Sec)
Female	27 (21Pr, 6 Sec)	13 (13 Pr)	25 (22 Pr, 3 Sec)	65 (56 Pr, 9 Sec)

Table 3b shows that primary schools are overwhelmingly in rural contexts. Open comments (see below) suggest that these schools are in disadvantaged contexts, with resource scarcity, limited technological support and cultural conservatism.

Table 3b: Primary school details from 163 respondents: district, environment and mean size

Sub-group	Rural	Urban	Mixed urban/rural	Other	Total	Mean school roll
Beitbridge	55	5	2	4	66	168
Muzarabani	39	0	1	5	45	220
UMP	45	2	3	2	52	221
Total	139	7	6	11	163	203

Motivation for course participation

This section explores the motivation to participate in the LL4GE programme (see Tables 4a and 4b). Gender differences are evident in that male respondents report being concerned with knowing more about gender equality, applying instructional leadership, and securing greater gender equality in schools, while female respondents are more aware of school improvement in a less specific way. Both male and female respondents have responded to advice from government or universities.

Table 4a: Factors encouraging participation in the LL4GE programme: Male (%)

Motivators	Beitbridge % (n=59)	Muzarabani % (n=46)	UMP % (n=67)	Total % (n=172)
Personal wish to know more about GE	59.3	75.8	88.6	74.4
To apply IL principles to school leadership	72.9	73.3	89.6	80.2
To secure school improvement	47.5	69.4	78.9	47.5
To secure greater GE in the school	40.7	76.2	89.6	62.8
District or central government suggestion	11.0	6.7	7.7	27.3
Local or university advisory staff suggestion	6.8	0	7.7	7.0
Financial inducements	22.0	17.8	22.5	22.1

Table 4b: Factors encouraging participation in the LL4GE programme: Female (%)

Motivators	Beitbridge % (n=27)	Muzarabani % (n=13)	UMP % (n=25)	Male % (n= 35)	Female % (n=30)	Total % (n=65)
Personal wish to know more about GE	51.9	76.9	80.0	51.0	41.7	67.7
To apply IL principles to school leadership	59.3	92.3	76.0	71.4	75.0	72.3
To secure school improvement	59.3	69.2	64.0	57.1	50.0	63.1
To secure greater GE in the school	48.1	69.2	60.0	50.7	41.7	56.9

District or central government suggestion	22.8	38.5	44.0	14.3	8.3	33.8
Local or university advisory staff suggestion	14.8	7.7	0	7.1	8.3	7.7
Financial inducements	11.1	7.7	16.0	14.3	14.7	12.3

Professional development experience

The survey also sought respondent experience of past professional development approaches, as shown in Tables 5a and 5b. Viewpoint papers and distance learning appear to have been limited for both groups, as has coaching, while mentoring has been more widely used. The personal gain is highest for lecture approaches, and visits to other schools, while, although it is higher in all respects than personal gain, school gain is perceived to be greatest from meeting other heads.

Table 5a: Experience of professional development approaches (% responses): Male (n=172)

Development approach	Not experienced	Personal gain	School gain
Lectures	13.4	22.7	44.2
Discussion	10.0	16.3	53.5
Distance learning	20.3	19.8	34.3
Viewpoint papers	26.2	20.3	17.9
Reflection	15.7	18.6	43.0
Investigations	8.7	18.7	44.2
Visits	7.6	22.4	54.0
Meeting other heads	4.1	16.3	59.9
Mentoring	7.0	15.1	48.8
Coaching	12.8	15.1	43.0

Table 5b: Experience of professional development approaches (% responses): Female (n=65)

Development approach	Not experienced	Personal gain	School gain
Lectures	9.2	26.9	40.3
Discussion	10.8	16.4	52.2
Distance learning	26.2	20.9	29.9
Viewpoint papers	37.4	17.9	20.9
Reflection	23.0	19.4	41.8
Investigations	16.4	13.4	43.3
Visits	7.5	23.9	56.7
Meeting other heads	6.0	14.9	61.2
Mentoring	6.0	17.9	53.7
Coaching	10.4	17.9	44.8

There is very little difference between male and female views, although there were open comments suggesting that female participants should be “administrators rather than leaders”. One comment from a male secondary head shows the cultural barriers to leadership:

The course may impart knowledge on the general survival of a person as it encourages people to do either duty culturally meant for men or women. It reduces malpractices like thuggery, prostitution and others because a man can be a vendor, an occupation perceived to be that of a woman, and woman can be a builder, a task believed to be done by men.

(M, B, Sec)

Development needs

Table 6 shows that female assessment of development needs in instructional leadership and gender equality practice is consistently around 15 per cent greater than for male respondents. This is markedly so for gender-awareness aspects of leadership and culture.

Table 6: Development needs in instructional leadership and gender equality practice

Area	Topic	Total % (n=240)	Male % (n=172)	Female % (n=68)
Strategy	Developing vision and mission	41.5	39.0	47.1
	Economic, social and cultural inequalities	41.9	39.5	47.1
Culture	Understanding the meaning of culture	33.2	30.2	41.2
	Understanding gender-equality practice	37.8	33.1	48.5
	Local gender-awareness issues	35.7	33.1	41.2
	Gender-awareness planning	42.7	37.2	55.9
	Attitudinal change to gender equality	41.5	37.2	51.5
Organisation	Stressing teaching and learning	32.8	28.5	44.1
	Using goals and rewards	34.0	29.1	47.1
	Developing distributed leadership	35.3	30.8	47.1
Assessment	Collecting and using data	37.8	34.3	47.1
	Accountability issues	36.1	33.7	42.6
	Rationale and practice of monitoring	34.9	33.1	39.7
	Classroom observation	30.3	27.9	36.8
Development	Continuing professional development	35.3	30.8	45.6
	Understanding leadership styles	36.9	33.7	44.1
	Human resource approaches	37.3	30.8	47.1
Assessment	Collecting and using data	37.8	34.3	47.1
	Accountability issues	36.1	33.7	42.6
	Rationale and practice of monitoring	34.9	33.1	39.7
	Classroom observation	30.3	27.9	36.8
Development	Continuing professional development	35.3	30.8	45.6
	Understanding leadership styles	36.9	33.7	44.1
	Human resource approaches	37.3	30.8	47.1

Instructional leadership principles underpin elements of strategy, organisation, assessment and development. Although understanding of the gender equality aspects ranks lower overall, both male and female heads have a higher level of understanding of the meaning of culture as a general element of school leadership.

Policy implementation

This section reports on perceptions of the extent to which change in instructional leadership, gender equality and related issues, was underway before the programme was delivered (see Table 7). In all developmental elements, the female-led schools appear to be further along the pathway to change. The most significant difference relates to student progress monitoring, a key aspect of instructional leadership.

Table 7: Policy implementation in instructional leadership and gender equality

Area	Topic	Male % (n=172)	Female % (n=68)
Strategy	Vision	30.8	31.3
	Mission	23.8	25.4
	Planning	29.7	26.9
Culture	Addressing inequality	26.7	38.8
	Gender-awareness planning	35.5	42.8
Organisation	Curriculum change with GE focus	28.5	32.8
	Teaching and learning	30.2	37.3
	Observation of teaching and learning	25.6	31.3
	Learning improvement	30.2	42.8
Assessment	Collecting data and use	34.9	38.8
	Student progress monitoring	34.9	50.7
	Staff appraisal	34.9	44.8
Development	Revised CPD	29.6	37.3
	Consultation with community	24.4	42.8
	Consultation with students	27.3	45.1
	Staff individual needs	26.7	35.8
	Staff welfare policies	24.4	41.2
	Enhanced personal development	25.0	47.1

Anticipated gains from course involvement

Individual aspirations

The open comments, analysed by district, show a high level of response. They indicate clear expectations of leadership enhancement, skills development and organisational assistance. Most such comments seem to see gender equality as a vehicle for leadership considerations although there were also specific gender equality and instructional leadership comments. Many respondents offered comments hoping that participation could lead to career and qualification advancement (see Table 8).

Table 8: Anticipated gains from course involvement

Area comment	Beitbridge (n=89)	Muzarabani (n=63)	UMP (n=93)	Example
Leadership	42	42	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to motivate subordinates How to become a good team-builder How to enhance participation as a management tool (M, Mu, Sec)
Organisation	25	51	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training in general leadership skills of assistance in implementing gender issues at my workplace, and training in M&E system (F, U, Sec)
Competences	64	38	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial development Technology development Guidance and counselling (F, U, Pr)
Qualifications	9	14	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal development through staff workshops, monitoring and visiting other schools (M, U, Pr)
Career path	35	46	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A PhD in ECD as I already have a master's degree in ECD Courses in leadership and management

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses in Educational Psychology (F, Mu, Pr)
Curricular need	5	13	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeper understanding through group discussion in relation to varying behaviour patterns in schools • Deeper understanding through conflict resolution among staff and learners • ICT development in enhancing modern leadership expectations (M, U, Sec)
Gender focus	24	38	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To know more about gender equality • To apply GE principles in my leadership • Hold a certificate in GE so that I impart the knowledge to the school, community, and nation at large (F, B, Pr)
IL focus	3	7	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision of both learners and staff performance • Improving leadership styles • Development of learning environment (F, Mu, Pr)

Table 8 indicates that individual leadership participation is linked to school improvement, and this is shown in the anticipated school gains (see below).

Anticipated school gains for gender equality

The comments in this section have an underlying theme of achieving fairness and integrating female staff and students into complete school provision of the academic and broader curriculum. The responses suggest a high level of awareness of the cultural factors inhibiting gender equality.

Table 9: Participant percentage listing of three ways a gender equality focus could help your school

Area comment	Beitbridge (n=89)	Muzarabani (n=63)	UMP (n=93)	Example
Culture	11	16	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helping the staff to have a fair working environment Helping students to develop an understanding of the importance of GE to raise up without gender biases Helping the community to avoid cultural beliefs that affect gender equality (F, Mu, Pr)
Gains for girls	23	28	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It will assist in helping girl child retention in the institution It will curb early marriages as the local community demeans the girl child and marries her off instead of schooling It will lead to women's empowerment (F, Mu, Pr)
Staff involvement	11	25	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure correct placement of staff in areas of responsibility enhances peace and harmony among workmates assures greater cooperation and involvement of all staff in activities of school development (M, B, Sec)
Resource fairness	10	13	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of equal education opportunities, equal sporting opportunities, and being treated as equal learners at school (M, B, Pr)

Curriculum	15	23	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach community programmes • Awareness campaigns at school level • Staff development for teachers (F, B, Pr)
Behaviour	25	25	31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces antisocial behavior, reduces conflict, abuse and violence, helps learners to be motivated (F, B, Pr)
Stereotyping	27	25	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wish to clear stereotypes among learners and discrimination issues (F, B, Sec)
Community	6	25	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers to assist learners in gender issues and community is also assisted so teachers feel useful and really appreciated (F, U, Sec)

Inhibitors for gender equality

Responses from this open question are grouped as inhibitors arising from religious and cultural norms, and those arising from pressures of society, community or family. Educational changes may be slower than policy imperatives because of deeply embedded beliefs that females are inferior in professional fields (see Table 10). Such attitudes provide powerful support for the aims of the LL4GE programme.

Table 10: Participant percentage listing of inhibiting factors for gender equality in the school

Area comment	Beitbridge (n=85)	Muzarabani (n=60)	UMP (n=90)	Example
Religion	23	25	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religion and beliefs of the community lead to gender imbalance in the workforce Lack of understanding of the importance of GE from staff and community (F, Mu, Pr)
Culture	32	24	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural considerations, whereby the female student are made to do light jobs and male students to do hard jobs, e.g. females should sweep and male students should dig in the garden (F, B, Pr)
Community pressure	16	14	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rural background and different cultural activities inhibit gender equality in the school (M, Mu, Sec)
Family pressure	18	25	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners are taught from home that there are male and female roles. They also have seen such roles practised, thus see such a change as being deviant from the so-called 'norm' (F, B, Pr)

Societal norms	16	35	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a problem of stereotype tradition and culture of communities with regard to roles as being for either boys or girls, women or men (M, B, Pr)
Limited education	13	24	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of advancement in the field of self-improvement and lack of parental commitment in educating girl children (M, B, Pr)
Education system	9	14	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural practices which are proving difficult to change, this is because most people do not embrace education hence knowledge remains elusive. The absence of network connectivity further hinders government efforts to spread constitutional provisions (M, Mu, Sec)

These attitudes are exemplified in the following statements, pointing to the greater effort that must be made to reach communities, but 14 comments – 11 from females – refer to the difficulties that societal attitudes impose for female heads.

- Culture: *In our locality women who uphold leading positions in the society are usually referred to as prostitutes because it is believed that women are home stewards.*
- Religion: *In some religions women are not allowed to preach the word of God in front of men while they listen to her, it is prohibited according to their church doctrines.*
- Early/Forced marriages: *A girl child is not allowed to herd cattle in rural areas since she is vulnerable to fall into love relationships with men which will eventually result in early marriage or forced marriage ... herding cattle becomes the sole duty of a boy child.*

(M, Mu, Sec)

Open comments

The survey concluded with an opportunity for open comments about the course. Responses followed a pattern of expectations relating to school improvement hopes, organisational and certification issues, leadership aspirations and gains from working together (see Table 11).

Table 11: Participant open comment (mentions)

Area comment	Beitbridge	Muzarabani	UMP	Men	Women	Example
Expectations	6	6	7	14	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wish to develop school leadership qualities, improve education technological services and improve personal development (F, B, Sec)
School effect	6	4	7	10	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop my professional capabilities in developing my school, community, and the nation at large (F, UMP, Pr)
Certification	4	4	3	8	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I expect to be offered a certificate after ... the course (M, B, Pr)
Organisation & content	7	4	15	18	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why not select simple, cheap, accessible halls for tuition of this course and think of giving something to the poor attendant, who may even be hungry when attending the same lessons (M, Muz, Pr)
Leadership focus	7	14	17	17	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After having gone through the LL4GE I expect to have sharpened in my leadership skills and should acquire more 21st century skills in running an institution (M, Muz, Pr)

GE focus	17	15	14	32	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I hope it will give more knowledge and more ideas to apply in schools that we head and help all staff to apply GE at schools (M, UMP, Pr)
Mutuality gains	5	3	6	9	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expect to learn how other communities have broken the barrier of the cultural practices of male and female practices (F, B, Pr)

Overview of baseline survey data

There was an exceptionally high response to the survey (87 per cent), which adds considerable weight to the findings, but interpretation must be done with caution. There were twice as many male as female respondents, raising issues of gender equality in headship appointments, and some respondents were not head teachers. The expressed needs from personal development activity show a strong wish to know more about gender equality issues and leadership. Current changes underway in the schools are reflecting instructional learning practice. Anticipated school gains from course participation are the acquisition of leadership skills and greater understanding of gender equality. The inhibitors of progress are seen as local interpretations of cultural practice. Respondents were aware of the possible career enhancement opportunities from the LL4GE programme and sought certification to help with this.

Non-participant observation of initial workshops

The overall purpose of these observations was to establish whether, how, and to what extent participant learning matches the intended outcomes of the workshops and the wider programme. The three in-country researchers each observed and recorded the programme for one of the two LL4GE groups in each district. The observations were non-participant, meaning that the researchers did not take part in the workshop activities, adopting an unobtrusive position to minimise the possibility that they might affect the event. The researchers were asked to note:

- The number of participants
- Gender balance of participants
- Number and gender of facilitators
- Layout of the workshop room

The questions addressed by the researchers were:

1. What was the content of the workshops, and to what extent did this match the content prescribed in the curriculum for the workshops and for each day?
2. Was the content of the workshops relevant to the Zimbabwe context and the participants' school contexts?
3. Did all participants and facilitators arrive on time or were there latecomers?
4. Did facilitators provide an appropriate welcome and ambience for the participants?
5. What was the balance between facilitator activity (lectures, presentations, facilitation, etc.) and participant activity (questions, group work, individual activity, etc.)? Did this match the intended pattern? Were the participants organised into a single group, or were sub-groups arranged? If the latter, how many, group composition, and where located?
6. How did participants respond to the presentations and activities – engaged or disengaged, enthusiastic or bored, proactive or passive, etc.?
7. Did the facilitators demonstrate good knowledge of the content on gender equality, instructional leadership – both or neither?
8. Did the participants make links between the workshop content and their school contexts?
9. Did the programme appear rushed or leisurely?
10. Was there an appropriate balance between workshop time and breaks?

A structured observation framework was provided by the principal investigator in the form of a matrix, with time slots and issues to record: programme content, nature of activity, facilitator or participant-led, level of participant engagement, and researcher comments. The researchers used their discretion to adapt the framework as appropriate. They also offered reflections on five broad questions:

1. Was the prescribed programme followed?
2. What was the balance between facilitator-led presentations and participant activity?
3. Were the intended learning objectives achieved?
4. What was the level of participant engagement?
5. What was the balance between international and Zimbabwe-specific content and materials?

6. Findings: Beitbridge workshop observation

This workshop was held from 12–15 February at the Beitbridge Inn. There were 51 participants from two districts, Beitbridge and Gwanda. The breakdown by gender and district is shown in Table 12 below:

Table 12: Number of participants, by gender and district

District	Male	Female	Total
Beitbridge	26	8	34
Gwanda	14	3	17
Total	40	11	51

The predominance of male participants (78 per cent) in a gender equality programme raises questions about headship selection as well as the criteria to attend the LL4GE programme.

Three district officials, one from Beitbridge and two from Gwanda (all male) attended the programme. There were five facilitators, four males and one female, one from the province, three district inspectors and one school head. There was also a director of ceremonies and representatives from the British Council and its partner, the Higher Life Foundation.

The researcher's report of the workshop is provided as Appendix 2 of the interim report. Below are the key points arising from the observation.

Workshop programme

Day 1

Session 1: Instructional leadership and gender equity

The male facilitator was very audible, spoke with authority as a District School Inspector and showed good content knowledge. The delivered curriculum was sensitive to the Zimbabwean context. Female participants did not raise their hands to respond to questions or to pass comments.

Session 2: Instructional leadership practice

The female facilitator provided a highly effective session on instructional leadership but expressed concern about the limited participation of female attendees. Most participants had not read the materials shared ahead of the workshop.

Session 3: Gender equality

The male facilitator referred to both international and Zimbabwean literature. He asked probing questions, leading to extended conversations. He also showed how gender equality can be ingrained in various activities. Some male participants argued that women shun deep rural schools, inhibiting gender equality.

Session 4: Gender equality

The male facilitator referred to both international and Zimbabwean literature. The issue of gender bias kept participants engaged, and the facilitator had to restrict the time for discussion. He asked probing questions, leading to extended conversations. This was a lively session, with participants realising that some school practices are gender biased.

Day 2

Session 1: School culture and climate

The male facilitator referred to international literature, e.g. UNESCO (2019). Participants' school visions were examined for gender bias. Participants had mostly not read the pre-course material shared on WhatsApp. Technical issues included non-compatibility and lack of space, leading some participants to delete the documents.

Session 2: Climate, culture and gender equality

Discussion of inclusion focused on disability as well as gender. Participants offered examples of gender inequalities in their schools. Heads were encouraged by the facilitator to engage all stakeholders in finding solutions.

Session 3: Why is teaching important?

The male facilitator addressed the question of 'Why is teaching important?' drawing on international literature and local examples. Participants were actively involved in inter-group discussions.

Session 4: Policies and practices to improve student outcomes and promote gender equality

The female facilitator referred to international literature and local 'grey' literature, the Zimbabwe constitution, Ministry circulars and the Education Act. Participants were offered a template to guide them in designing monitoring tools and discussed how they can monitor teaching and learning in a gender-inclusive manner. Participants raised the problem of limited resources. The facilitator discouraged discussion of this issue, rather encouraging school heads to be resourceful. Participants grumbled to express discontent. The issue was sensitive, as teachers are on strike demanding better salaries and working conditions.

Day 3

Session 1: Gender equality

The male facilitator focused on plans to improve gender equality. As noted above, participants had not read pre-workshop materials due to space limitations on their phones. They were given reading time during the session and subsequently identified practical problems in their schools.

Session 2: Gender-sensitive and gender-responsive pedagogy

The male facilitator focused on how gender bias can be eliminated. Participants traced the root causes of gender bias and noted that it is rampant in their schools, citing specific examples.

Session 3: Leadership approaches to address gender equality

The male facilitator focused on leadership and policy on gender equality, drawing on the Zimbabwe constitution and the Education Act. Participants were asked to redraft their school vision to include gender-sensitive policies.

Session 4: Designing gender-sensitive tools to monitor and evaluate practice

The male facilitator encouraged the participants to design tools to evaluate teaching and learning; lesson observation, review of learners' books, and learning walks.

Day 4

Session 1: Planning school-based projects

It was agreed to begin the Day 4 programme on Day 3, as participants were worried about transport back to their schools. The female facilitator focused on how to plan school-based projects, identifying areas where there is gender bias. International literature was cited, and examples were given from the Zimbabwe context. The discussion focused on how much time is spent on instructional leadership, including monitoring and evaluation, and on the need to share and delegate leadership, including teacher induction. Female participants appeared reserved and reluctant to volunteer ideas.

Session 2: Projects to address gender inequality

The male facilitator asked participants to think of a project to eliminate gender inequality, including the barriers to be expected, and 'success stories'. Participants did 'gallery visits' to other groups, to share ideas and give feedback.

Session 3: Project planning

The male facilitator focused on project planning. Projects should be aligned to the LL4GE programme and address feasibility. The most common problem discussed relates to reading in both primary and secondary schools. The provincial education director (female) visited this session and expressed concern about female representation at the workshop.

Session 4: Project activity

The male facilitator opened the session which focused on participants working on their projects. This was mostly participant-led, utilising group work to share ideas.

Overview of the Beitbridge workshop

1. The duration of sessions was too demanding for the participants and tea breaks for Days 2, 3 and 4 were reduced to allow participants travelling time on Day 4.
2. Females did not participate voluntarily until they were asked for their views. On Days 1 and 2, there was an all-female group. On Days 3 and 4, females were spread across the groups, but their participation continued to be poor.
3. Meals were not prepared on time on Days 1 and 2.
4. Dress code: Participants dressed formally, even on Saturday and Sunday. Formal dress was emphasised, especially on Tuesday when the Provincial Education Director (PED) visited.
5. Language: Participants conversed in more than two languages: English, Shona, IsiNdebele, Sesotho and Tshivenda.
6. Age: Most participants were young.
7. The workshop was well organised; the activities were appropriate to achieve programme outcomes. They were based on genuine practical challenges in different schools.
8. There was more use of international sources as compared to local ones, but examples were also drawn from the local contexts – real practical issues in schools.
9. Since facilitators are district officials, they took advantage of their position to monitor progress of projects. Their role was influential which is good for achieving learning outcomes. They are aware of the contextual issues endured by all the participants. They did not show sympathy or empathy, rather they motivated school heads to be resourceful and support their teachers. The issue of shortage of resources came up in almost every session but facilitators didn't want to draw attention to it.
10. The activities allowed participants to reflect on their own attitudes and perceptions about gender equality. They were challenged to change for them to lead and facilitate the transformation process.
11. The learning outcomes were sufficiently addressed in the workshop.

7. Findings: Muzarabani workshop observation

This workshop was held from 13–16 February in Muzarabani. There were 58 participants from two districts, Muzarabani and Mazoe. The breakdown by gender is shown below:

Table 13: Number of participants, by gender

Male	Female	Total
47	11	58

The predominance of male participants (81 per cent) in a gender equality programme raises questions about headship selection as well as the criteria to attend the LL4GE programme. The attendance was slightly above the target number of 50 for this sub-group.

There were five facilitators, four male and one female. Table 13 presents information on the number of facilitators and participants who attended the meeting. Other attendees were one representative (female) from the British Council, one representative from the Higher Life Foundation (initially a female who was replaced by a male), two representatives from MoPSE head office (one female and one male), a local District Inspector and a School Inspector (both male).

The researcher's report of the workshop is shown below. He was unable to observe the first day of the workshop for logistical reasons.

Workshop programme

Day 2

Session 1: Culture and climate

The male facilitator discussed school vision and its links to gender equality, linked to the *Vision Statement of UNESCO* (2019). Participants were asked to share their school visions. Officials from the MoPSE head office stressed the need to align the school vision to the national vision, MoPSE's vision, and those of the Regional and District Education Offices. Although the activities were directed by the facilitator, there was a high level of participant engagement.

Session 2: School leadership and culture

A second male facilitator discussed the impact of leadership on school culture and climate, drawing on international literature. Group activity focused on aspects of school climate to promote gender equality. Participants were very engaged with the activity, also challenging the facilitator to be realistic, for example about parental attitudes.

Session 3: Impact of teaching and leadership on student outcomes

The male facilitator focused on the impact of teaching and leadership on student outcomes, drawing on international literature, and on gender-sensitive pedagogy and inclusivity. Participant engagement was very good. The researcher commented that the facilitator relied too much on sources from outside Zimbabwe, noting that there is a lot of literature on good and effective teaching by Zimbabwean authors. The group could not watch the video on gender responsive pedagogy due to lack of internet connectivity.

Session 4: Raising outcomes for girls and boys

The female participant focused on what heads can do to improve teaching and learning, including the characteristics of good teaching. Participants were asked what they planned to change when they return to their schools, with a wide variety of responses, including building teamwork. The facilitator generated enthusiasm among the participants, who were inquisitive, drawing on Zimbabwean examples to focus on issues at their schools.

Day 3

Session 1: Improving outcomes for all

The male presenter focused on learning for girls and boys, and on how to raise student learning outcomes. A specific focus was on eliminating zero pass rates, with the facilitator reporting that some Zimbabwean schools had zero pass rates at Grade 7. Another emphasis was the role of assessment in learning. Participants were asked to work in pairs to discuss how they know if children are learning. They were very active and engaged in the activity.

Session 2: Supporting student learning

The male presenter focused on leaders and teachers supporting student learning, including discussion of monitoring, evaluating and reviewing learning outcomes. He stressed that these activities should be inclusive, not just the role of the head. He also presented on focused walking, review of students' workbooks and analysis of data as monitoring techniques. He also discussed observing teaching and learning as part of evaluation and assessment, and monitoring teaching and learning for gender equality. The approach was didactic but with some participant responses, including a female head who said "I liked the idea of collective monitoring through focused walks or learning walks and I am going to implement in my school."

Session 3: Gender-sensitive pedagogies

The female facilitator focused on gender-sensitive and gender-responsive pedagogies as a means of improving outcomes for all students, including discussion of gender bias and stereotypes. There was a significant level of participation in lively group activities. The facilitator was called 'Ms Mingle' by the participants because of her focus on group work.

Session 4: Designing gender-sensitive tools

The male facilitator focused on designing gender-sensitive tools to monitor and evaluate practice. He asked participants to engage the question: What do students say about their experiences at school? He argued that, for the need to engage learners in learning, teachers should not dominate. He pointed to the need for variety in teaching. There was limited participant engagement, as the facilitator used a 'question and answer' approach.

Session 5: Planning your school-based project

The male presenter of the day covered the planned Session 1 of Day 4: Planning your school-based project. This presentation was brought forward to Day 3, after the realisation that the fourth day would be shorter as participants had to depart to their schools. Covering the first session of Day 4 enabled the facilitators to finish the programme by 1300 hours the next day. The focus was on thinking about leadership. Reflection included involving staff in instructional leadership, building capacity, and teamwork. The facilitator encouraged participants to “each day lead by example as you are modelling whether you know it or not”. The participants were ‘fairly engaged’ in the activity.

Day 4

Session 1: Building staff monitoring capacity

The first male facilitator of the day talked about “Building staff monitoring capacity” and presented three quotations on leadership from Robert Liano, Helen Keller and John Maxwell. These generated a lot of discussion. The facilitator helped the group to reflect on what they had gone through and learnt for the past three days. The presenter went on to provide guidance on the school-based project, including that it should involve the wider staff, be cooperative, address issues of gender equality, and have a focus on instructional leadership. Guidelines included the need to plan a project that can be completed in three months, with a focus on instructional leadership and gender equity skills. Participant engagement was good, as they worked in groups, and in reflecting on their workshop experience. Some participants anticipated resistance to change, while another head referred to “lack of vision, not seeing beyond the present”. A female head said that “some men may not want to support a women leader”. Another female commented “I liked that the girl child will finally have a better place in society”. Overall, there was great appreciation of the workshops.

Session 2: Preparing your school-based project

The participants were encouraged to identify topics for their school-based projects to be carried out when they return to their schools. They were encouraged to ensure that it touched on instructional leadership and gender equality. They were expected to be aware of why they wanted to concentrate on the chosen topic and what they hoped to achieve. The participation was good as the participants identified what they thought were issues requiring attention.

Session 3: Sharing ideas for projects

Workshop participants were given the opportunity to talk about their proposed school-based project topics. After sharing the topics on which they wanted to focus their projects, the participants were then informed about the oncoming webinars and the need to be fully prepared for them. Due to the erratic WiFi connection no induction was made to enable attendees to participate in webinars, especially the use of Microsoft Teams. This was a session where the facilitators did most of the talking as they explained that the participants needed to be ready for the webinars. The female facilitator then summarised the proceedings of the workshop from Day 1.

Overview of the Muzarabani workshop

1. The facilitators meticulously followed what was provided for in the facilitator handbook.
2. The facilitators created welcoming environments that enabled participants to contribute freely. The female facilitator was excellent in participant engagement and activities.
3. Participants were encouraged to reflect on the relevance of workshop activities to their schools.
4. The facilitators demonstrated an excellent grasp of content.
5. There was great appreciation of the importance of gender equality.
6. The workshop really required four days not three and a half days.

8. Findings: Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe District

The researcher attended the workshop of school leaders from Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe district, held from 22–26 February at Chibhanguza hotel in Murewa. The consultant relied on observation for data collection. Information on attendance was confirmed using daily attendance registers. Day 1–4 sessions were observed. There were 53 participants, all either substantive or acting heads. The gender balance for a workshop on gender equality is disappointing, with 75 per cent of participants being male (see below). The 13 female participants are all acting heads, indicating limited gender awareness in the district, with a risk of gender norms and stereotypes being perpetuated.

Table 14: Number of participants, by gender

Male	Female	Total
40	13	53

Also present at the workshop was the MoPSE Deputy Director, responsible for Human Resources issues. Her presence was critical as she addressed and took note of policy issues that emerged during the workshop.

There were four workshop facilitators, three of whom were male, mainly concentrating on the instructional leadership component, while the only female facilitator focused on the gender component. A gender lens needs to cut across all the sessions and all facilitators need to use gender-sensitive language.

The layout of the room was formal (an informal seating arrangement would help ensure participants felt free) but despite this arrangement, the participants were free to share their views throughout the workshop. Most of the women sat next to each other. There was a need for the facilitators to ensure that male and female participants mixed in their seating arrangement.

Workshop programme

The prescribed programme was followed. However, on two of the days, the workshop ended an hour late despite the fact that some group activities had not been covered, instead they were given as homework. These activities were based on pre-reading materials, circulated on WhatsApp, but participants had not accessed the materials due to connection challenges. Activities that required participants to have read the material before the workshop were given as overnight reading. This affected the balance between facilitator-led and participant activities. However, facilitators were creative in allowing for plenary discussions. It is recommended that material be distributed and printed for the participants prior to the workshop. They can then bring the handouts to the workshop for use during the workshop.

In addition, to allow fuller discussions, a day more could be allocated to the workshop to make them five full days.

Group and individual work

Facilitators allowed for group work, individual work, plenary sessions and homework. Experiential learning was encouraged as participants were reminded to share personal experiences from their day-to-day-work at their respective schools. Experiential learning enriched the learning experience.

On group formation, there was no attempt to ensure that women are represented in each of the groups that were created for group work as the 1-2-3-4 method was used for group formation. It would be advisable for the facilitators to change group composition rather than maintaining the same groups throughout the workshop days. On assigning roles during group work, women dominated as rapporteurs and on some activities they also presented group findings. Facilitators could also encourage switching of tasks between males and females to address the culture of unconsciously promoting traditional gender roles.

The facilitators customised the examples and case studies to the local context as they referred to their personal experiences and requested participants to do the same.

Content issues

Considering the misconceptions around gender, there is a need to spend more time explaining the concept of gender, including the constraints that come as a result of gender and highlight the role of the school in promoting gender equality through both the hidden and formal curriculum.

On Global Frameworks Supporting Gender Equality, the presentation could benefit from including regional level instruments such as the *SADC Protocol on Gender and Development*, as well as the *National Gender Policy* and as sector policies and instruments to promote gender equality, such as *Circular 35 on School re-entry* when a pupil falls pregnant. There were knowledge gaps among school leaders on both the international and national policy framework promoting gender equality. One school head reported how he dismissed from school a girl who fell pregnant, against government policy, due to ignorance. Knowledge of the policy framework would help them to seriously consider gender issues in their duties.

From the session on gender equality on Day 1, the presentation moved to Gender Analysis in Education. There was no proper transition. There was need for defining what gender analysis is before going to gender analysis in education.

British Council could consider supporting the development of Safeguarding Policies for MoPSE, as this is of key relevance to the LL4GE programme. In addition, visits to sampled districts would help to establish gaps in implementation of the programme by the school leaders.

9. Findings: Webinar on Instructional Leadership and Gender Equality

Introduction

The webinars on LL4GE were held between 4 March and 15 March 2022. A total of three webinars, on Giving Effective Feedback, Lesson Observation and Joint Practice Development, were held. Each of the webinars had clearly-defined learning outcomes and activities. The webinars were intended to receive feedback from, and as well as to guide, participating school leaders in the conduct of their school-based projects. This report addresses each of the webinars which were led by the same facilitators. The researcher was able to attend the first and the third webinars, and subsequently accessed a recording of the second webinar from the British Council. The report below outlines the main findings of this part of the evaluation.

Webinar 1: 4 March 2022 – Giving effective feedback

This first session consisted of the basics of enabling school heads to successfully participate in the webinar but it was marred by interfering noises from the participants, rendering the facilitator inaudible. Webinar protocols were explained by the female facilitator. The number of participants in webinar was given as 70, but the level of participation was low.

The facilitator outlined the intended learning outcomes for the webinar:

- Be able to use the discussion about school projects to continue making progress with their own projects
- Understand the value, significance, and purpose of feedback
- Know how to give effective feedback to teachers in relation to gender issues
- Enhance skills of improving the quality of teaching and learning as well as enhance gender equality
- Be able to build on principles of feedback to develop approaches to monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning
- To enhance skills in developing our teachers to focus on gender equality

The limited number of active participants indicated that they understood that the purpose of the webinar was to understand how to give and receive feedback.

School-based project

The second part of the first webinar focused on participants' school-based projects. Participants were asked to check that their school-based projects focused on instructional leadership and gender equality, linked to school priorities or developmental goals, involved stakeholders, including school leaders, teachers, students, parents, board of management and the community. It was clear from the noise at the different venues that participants had done some work on their projects. However, limited ICT skills and access to the internet were

making it difficult for the participants to report their progress.

Participants were then required to share their progress with the project, using breakaway rooms. The focus was on the following questions:

- How is your project work progressing?
- What is going well?
- What are the challenges that you are facing?
- What are the solutions to the challenges?

One female participant explained that her school-based project was focused on reducing absenteeism among girls and boys in Grade 6, with the intention of improving learning outcomes and creating a gender-sensitive atmosphere. This leader liaised with female and male teachers, female and male school children, church leaders, School Development Committee members and parents of Grade 6 girls and boys who absented themselves from school. She reported that some of the parents were not helpful and that some pupils are absent from school because of their parents, who don't see the importance of education. Similar project reports were made by other participants.

Nature and purpose of feedback

Participants were asked: "How would you define the term feedback?" and post their views in the chat box. Only two attendees participated as expected, and their comments appeared to misunderstand the meaning of feedback. The low response may be due to connectivity challenges. Participants were also asked to explain the purpose of feedback, through the chat box. Five participants responded and most of them saw identifying strengths and weaknesses as the main purpose of feedback, through a conversation.

Effective and ineffective feedback

Participants were also asked to distinguish between effective and ineffective feedback, through the chat box. Six participants contributed and mostly focused on whether the feedback produced positive results. They were also asked to reflect on their recent experiences with feedback. Only one example was given, that of buying stationery for the school. They were also asked to comment on why feedback is important. The participants were active in addressing this issue, and responses included its value in planning and in promoting teamwork. This was followed by a quiz about issues to consider when giving feedback. Participants were particularly active in responding to the quiz via the chat box.

The next session focused on feedback skills. The facilitator discussed the key issues, including honesty, sincerity, clarity, encouraging, and being proactive, prepared and discreet, as well as empathetic, helpful, compliant and diligent. The importance of follow-up to feedbacks and the need to identify development opportunities to achieve gender equality, was stressed. Participant engagement was poor for this issue, mainly due to network challenges.

The first day concluded with participants being asked to outline their key learning points, and to rate the extent to which their expectations were met. Only five people responded to the second point, giving ratings between 6 and 8 on a ten-point scale, suggesting broadly positive levels of satisfaction but with most participants not responding.

Overview of Webinar 1

The participants encountered a lot of challenges pertaining to the use of the ICT. The facilitator followed the first webinar manual carefully and addressed the day's intended learning outcomes. He attempted to engage the participants in a number of activities provided in the manual and to follow the video links but poor internet connectivity was a challenge. He was able to identify where the participants were falling short and to address the gaps identified. The few participants who were technically able were very active. The issues that needed to be addressed after the first webinar were to improve internet connectivity and to ensure that participants had the requisite skills to participate.

Webinar 2: 11 March 2022 – Lesson observation

The researcher missed the live event but was able to view the recorded webinar. The lead facilitator welcomed participants and other facilitators to the webinar. He then proceeded to outline the activities planned for the webinar and reminded participants of the webinar protocols. The lead facilitator outlined the intended learning outcomes for the session as:

- Be able to use the discussion about school projects to continue making progress with your own projects
- Be able to improve your approach to monitoring teaching and learning
- Understand how observing lessons can improve the quality of teaching and learning
- Know how to use lesson observation to achieve gender equality
- Empowerment in classroom practice
- Be able to use techniques of lesson observation moderation to raise standards

The facilitator then asked participants to share what they expected to gain from their participation in the webinar. Technical difficulties inhibited participant responses to this question.

School-based projects: progress update

The facilitator indicated he wanted a breakout discussion where participants would discuss:

- What is going well with your project?
- What challenges are you experiencing?
- What support or help would you like from the group?
- Discussions to focus on bullet points 2 and 3

The participants were divided into groups of five. The facilitator had difficulty creating breakaway rooms so he asked one participant to talk about his project while efforts were underway to create the breakaway rooms. Two male participants reported on starting reading projects in their schools.

The facilitator eventually managed to create the breakaway rooms and gave participants 10 minutes for discussion in the rooms. From the breakaway session back to the plenary, local facilitators/coaches were asked to talk about what they picked out from the feedback. There were several interruptions and technical difficulties that hindered communication but there

was some evidence of progress on school-based projects, including gender-focused activity. Following the breakaway session, participants were asked to raise their electronic hands if they were happy with progress on their projects. Twelve out of 40 participants did so, a fair response given the technical issues.

Observing teaching and learning

In this session, participants were asked the following questions:

- Have you been involved in observing lessons?
- Have other school leaders been doing observations at school?
- How have other teachers been involved?
- Have some observations focused on gender equality?
- What kind of observation schedule do you use?

The facilitator then shared a Teaching Learning Observation template. He emphasised the need to always be gender-sensitive, to consider how girls are catered for, and how the learners are grouped. The facilitator also discussed stages in lesson observation, the lesson observation cycle, and the importance of feedback. He asked participants to share through the chat box what has gone well in giving feedback. A discussion focused on teaching and learning and the qualities of a good teacher and not losing sight of gender equality – hence, applying a gender lens. There were four responses to this question, including one participant, who reported that she had noticed changes in the behaviour of both teachers and learners in respect of gender equality. There were interruptions for some participants as teachers and learners entered the principals' offices during the webinar. This shows the challenges of attending webinars at work, as work commitments are bound to interfere with participation in the webinars.

Observing gender equality

This session began with breakaway activity to discuss what they participants saw on the video on 'Observing gender equality'. Participants were asked to identify criteria they would use to gather information about gender equality. Ten minutes were given for the exercise. One participant responded by talking about classroom organisation to facilitate gender equality. Connectivity and interruptions to participants' engagement, from teachers and learners, were ongoing problems.

Lesson observation moderation was another issue discussed after the breakaway session. Linked issues discussed were:

- Peer observation
- Film and video techniques
- The use of lesson observation pro forma

The sharing activity switched to WhatsApp, as participants were experiencing network challenges. Participants were asked to share the pros and cons of using one of the approaches below to moderate lesson observations that focus on teachers' use of language in relation to gender equality.

- Group 1: Peer observation
- Group 2: Video techniques
- Group 3: Review of lesson pro forma
- Group 4: Triangulation

The WhatsApp approach worked well, and participants were able to share their ideas. This time the participants were really engaged given the feedback they provided on peer observation. One participant offered his views: “Moderation is whereby you go in there and then you see what you can do to enhance or to make sure that someone improves or to say that ‘no this is very good, but you could do something like that’.” Another commented that “There was a time when I was observing this outstanding teacher. Children were raising their hands and everyone was connected to one another. She was in control, so I think we can take some notes on how she does it so well.” This teacher could be used as a model during peer observation.

Facilitators also reported on responses from participants about their experience of peer observation. They noted a strong focus on pros and cons, with a greater emphasis on the former. One facilitator focused on gender equality in relation to classroom observation, stressing that groups should not be single sex, and that sharing resources should be gender-sensitive and based on gender equality.

The event was concluded by asking participants to rate the webinar on a scale of 1–10, to assess the extent to which their expectations were met. All participants responded with ten out of ten.

Overview of Webinar 2

This was a very productive session. The facilitator followed the work as planned in the Webinar 2 handbook. There were more local facilitators than in Webinar 1. The local facilitators assisted the course leader in the various breakaway rooms. There was evidence that participants believe that school-based projects were proceeding well, and there was a lot of enthusiasm from participants. The webinar can be seen to be successful as it met the intended learning outcomes as well as the participants’ expected outcomes.

Webinar 3: 14 March 2022 – Joint Practice Development

The facilitator welcomed all participants to the last webinar which was about Joint Practice Development. He explained the programme and the learning outcomes for the session. The facilitator explained that he hoped the participants explored how they could put the lessons learnt in sessions into practice in a school environment. The specific aims of the webinar were:

- To hear from participants about their progress with school projects and allowing them to share
- To discuss Joint Practice Development, to unpack the terminology and understand what it means
- To relate Joint Practice Development to Gender Equality

Participants were encouraged to participate by using their electronic hands.

School-based projects

The facilitator explained that there would be an initial focus on the school-based project, and how it can be used to facilitate or enable Gender Equality and Empowerment. He then asked participants to share in the chat, their expectation of the webinar session. The use of the chat box bought time to allow more people to join the webinar before the breakaway session. As the participants were joining the webinar, it took long to have five posts in the chat box.

Participants were asked to consider the following: What is going well with your project? and to share what they are doing in their classroom, as well as identifying any challenges and support needs. Only one participant was willing to share, and she was praised for her project, which focused on reducing absenteeism, to enhance girls' reading skills. This participant added that she would find extra motivation through certification.

Joint Practice Development

The facilitator posed the question: "What is Joint Practice Development?" and asked the participants to share in the chat or raise their electronic hands. Only two participants contributed. One female said that joint practice development is where the facilitators work as a team, to produce and to share the same goal. She added that it is best that people work towards the same vision so that they are focused on the mission.

Another female participant said that joint practice development is where we join together to do something common in an institution like we have been doing with our projects. "We join hands together, we join ideas together for the positive goals of attaining gender responsive and quality education and learning in an institution." She added:

Together, I mean we have a common goal, here at the institution, we have a common vision of which you cannot achieve that goal as an individual and then the positive aspect, we are also achieving a common positive aspect. We want the children to pass, we want to improve the quality of education and the gender responsiveness is an institution which has a positive attitude towards education.

The webinar was interrupted by participants joining late, with some unable to unmute themselves.

Pre-readings

The facilitator took the participants through two articles that had been pre-circulated: Fielding et al. (2003) and Farrar (n.d.). The facilitator read definitions from the screen, as participants could not see the facilitator's screen. Participants were expected to offer their views on the articles but they had not read them, even though they had been sent via WhatsApp, usually a platform that is easy to access.

Conditions for successful joint practice development

The facilitator outlined some conditions required to ensure that joint practice development is successful. First, a culture of inquiry involves having a culture of finding out, wanting to know more, investigating, research, action research and appreciative inquiry. The second condition

is the ability to have honest collaboration. The facilitator shared some research findings about Hong Kong where there is collaborative lesson planning. He also discussed subject-based teaching study groups, Singapore's subject-based network learning communities (Darling-Hammond, 2011) and teachers' network learning circles. The examples used were all international with no references to Zimbabwean sources.

One participant said:

There must be an issue of trust because, when you come to observe me as my leader, am trying something new ... I will make mistakes but, if there is trust, then you will allow me to fail, give me feedback and make me rise up because, if there is no trust, I would not take a risk of trying something new, so that is the first condition.

The facilitator asked participants to think about what opportunities there are, what challenges they foresee, and how they can address them. Most of those who were in the webinar were facilitators, making the use of breakaway session not viable. The three female participants who made contributions understood the need for JPD. However, one feels the element of gender equity needs further emphasis.

Joint Practice Development and Gender Equity

The facilitator introduced this topic, focusing on collaborative enquiry and action research, commenting also on gender stereotyping. This session was mostly facilitator-led, as most of the attendees were facilitators rather than participants. One female participant gave details of JPD in her infant department, where there are demonstration lessons: Other staff members observe how this person encourages pupils to come to school by giving them incentives or by giving encouraging comments, or giving stars, or giving whatever works in the infant department, while others observe how they do it because they have a high rate of absenteeism especially with girls. She felt this demonstration method could work, where teachers come in to observe and then copy what they see in their classrooms.

Another new female participant discussed a strategy she used in her primary school class to deal with girls sitting at the back of the class and boys at the front. She used double-seater desks, assigning each desk to a girl and boy sitting next to each other. At first, they did not cooperate very well but over time, they shared textbooks and ideas, raising the level of participation for both girls and boys.

Participants' reflections on the webinar

This session was participant-led, but only a few offered their reflections. One female participant said, "The lecture method is not the most effective method, rather it's good to share and learn from each other, so we work collaboratively." Another female participant said, "We can raise the girls and close the gap between men and female participants in the country, and in the whole world, by catching them young and equipping them with the right education so that boys' appreciate girls and girls appreciate boys and everybody takes up a position in society and then becomes a responsible citizen."

Researcher's reflections on the webinar

The facilitator followed the Webinar 3 manual to the letter. However, the breakaway sessions provided for in the manual were inhibited by the low number of participants. It is good that the webinar was being recorded so that those who did not have the opportunity to attend the live session could access the recorded session. It was also good that the local facilitators were available to observe and participate in the proceedings. This was essential if they were going to ensure that participants caught up during the subsequent face-to-face session. It was also clear that the same participants were making contributions. The male participants were not active. Even among the local facilitators, the female local facilitators were more active. The absence of many school leaders could be attributed to the webinar coinciding with national activities such as training for the national census and the voter registration exercise, activities in which school leaders take active roles. Future activities should be scheduled to avoid national events or developments that compete with planned programmes. Overall, the webinars were very useful and are an invaluable resource that participants can continue to access during their spare time.

Overview of the three webinars

The training was very important as it provided participants with the platform to receive feedback on their school-based projects while also gaining new insights on instructional leadership and gender equality. Female participants dominated in contributing to the webinars. Three recommendations are made to improve the webinars:

1. Participants should be thoroughly trained in the use of Microsoft Teams to enable them to receive maximum benefit from their participation.
2. An ICT technician should be available to help control interruptions from the participants and troubleshoot issues related to internet connectivity.
3. A clear strategy should be developed to ensure that all the participants are present and participating in the webinar. For example, for those areas that did not have internet connectivity, there should be a venue where affected participants could assemble and access the live webinar.

10. Findings: Interviews with programme providers

Interviews were conducted with facilitators in all three locations, to establish a provider view of the LL4GE programme. Their views are reported separately for each district.

Beitbridge

Introduction

Five facilitators who had participated in the first workshop were interviewed. All five facilitators were present during the second face-to-face workshop. Four facilitators were interviewed face to face and one by a WhatsApp call. The five interviewees have been assigned pseudonyms, BF1, BF2, BF3, BF4 and BF5, to protect their identities.

Biodata

Three of the facilitators are male and are officials at district, provincial or national levels. The other two facilitators are high school principals – one female and one male. The five facilitators are well-qualified and they all occupy leadership positions. The gender balance is skewed towards men and also three of the five facilitators have Ministry or District roles, rather than being school leaders.

Facilitator selection

All five facilitators reported that they were selected by their respective provincial offices to participate in the LL4GE programme. Selection by MoPSE, rather than the British Council, should help with Ministry ‘buy-in’, but this also means that the British Council cannot easily link selection to its own specific requirements.

The interviewees welcomed the opportunity to join the LL4GE programme, requiring them to integrate teaching and learning with instructional leadership. The wish to learn from the facilitation was a source of motivation for all five facilitators, after being selected to participate in the training for the LL4GE programme. The female interviewee explained that her experience of workshops she had attended on gender equality encouraged her to participate in the LL4GE programme. All five participants were well motivated to facilitate in the programme.

Overall views on the LL4GE programme

All five facilitators indicated that LL4GE is very important for school development and BF1 described it as “... a game changer in the education system. It will actually improve teaching and learning for the betterment of education. When we go for monitoring in schools, we can actually tell the difference between a school head who has gone through this leadership programme and the one who has not gone through it.” BF2 also commented that “the programme is a game changer, especially among the schools. I mean, the school leadership is bound to improve”. BF3 noted that the programme is “very exciting”, while BF4 said that it is “mind opening”. BF5 stated that “instructional leadership and gender equity are very important to our schools as agents of social change in society”.

All the facilitators appreciated the programme and regarded it as significant for all stakeholders, school leaders, teachers, students, the community and Zimbabwe as a nation. It has promoted an understanding of the meaning of being a school leader and as a source of influence for gender equality in schools.

LL4GE workshops

The facilitators were asked whether the workshops were too intensive, and most agreed that they were:

Well, the workshops are quite intensive ... this morning, during the reflection, some people could not even remember what we did yesterday. It's not because they did not learn something. But it is because it is quite intensive; participants are expected to learn a lot in a short space of time. But as they digest after the training, we definitely see some differences.

(BF1)

BF2 suggested that the activities required more time, a view also expressed by BF4 and BF5:

The initial training, I think was almost okay, but when we went for webinars and the one which we did in one and a half days, we were doing it hurriedly, especially the second time. Even the time we gave participants to do their projects was too short. We trained people hurriedly and then, in four to five weeks, we say come back with a school-based project. I think there is need for period like two months. This is more realistic if we expect credible results. The workshop after the webinars required two full days, not one and half in the duration between the sessions. So, in total seven to eight weeks is ok, because, if they go back, they give feedback, they plan, they implement and then they bring results.

(BF2)

I feel that all activities required more time. The time allocated for training was not enough, sometimes participants were not given enough time for breaks because we had to finish the trainings. When it comes to the school projects for instance, the participants needed more time to go back to their schools to plan and bring back complete projects. There are several challenges in schools that school heads endure. More time could have been allocated for all activities.

(BF5)

Participant balance: Gender, location and school sector

The facilitators were asked to consider whether there was an appropriate balance of participants, in terms of gender, location (urban and rural) and school sector (primary and secondary).

In respect of gender, the participants acknowledged that there is not a balance “because there are more men than women. I am sure the government is set to address that” (BF1). BF2 offered an explanation for female under-representation:

I would say for the two districts the number of males is greater than that of female. So, there isn't that sort of gender balance. However, maybe it's because there are few ladies in leadership positions as heads and deputy heads, maybe that's why there is this imbalance. For a long time, we've been talking about the same thing that we have more men than females, why is it not changing? Why are the numbers of females not increasing? They encourage women who qualify to apply, but unfortunately, few of them do. So, maybe they don't want, the issue being not wanting to move away from their families. And, at times, you will discover that most of the schools that are advertised may be out in the rural areas. And the issue of leaving maybe the kids with the father in an urban setup becomes a hindrance.

(BF2)

BF4 and BF5 make similar points about the under-representation of women participants in the LL4GE programme being linked to the ratio of male and female principals in the country.

These responses appear to underestimate the impact of structural factors, placing the responsibility on the individual leader. A system-wide programme is required to increase the number of principals, and providing LL4GE opportunities for more women is an essential starting point, especially given its focus on gender equality. Replicating the low proportion of women heads through participation in the LL4GE programme does not contribute to addressing this problem.

In terms of school location, the facilitators pointed to the connectivity challenges inhibiting participation of leaders from rural contexts, with many of them not having internet access. BF4 illustrates the problem:

I would say, in terms of rural and urban, urban is much more covered. The reason being the class, the nature of the area and they've also an advantage of network. When we conducted webinars, urban areas were covered so that almost every head was connected. They have been given the data and all those things you know, they could connect, they could just do that. But then when you come to the rural areas, connectivity is poor.

(BF4)

In respect of school sector, all the facilitators commented that most participants were from primary schools, because there are more primary than secondary schools. “In terms of primary and secondary schools, it does not balance because, in most cases, we have more primary schools than secondary schools. So, they will never be balanced in terms of numbers as regards primary and secondary” (BF4).

Overall, responses to this question were largely determined by reflections on the situation in Zimbabwe. In the districts where the programme was run, and in Zimbabwe in general, there are more male school leaders than female school leaders and that is also reflected at these workshops in terms of attendance. It is also the case that nationally, Zimbabwe has more primary than secondary schools. The programme targeted school leaders in hard-to-reach districts. This meant that these would largely be in rural areas.

Balance between instructional leadership and gender equality

Facilitators were asked to consider whether there was an appropriate balance between instructional leadership and gender equality in the LL4GE programme. Most consider that they were given equal attention but two (BF3 and BF5) argue that instructional leadership was given more time than gender equality. Significantly, however, BF2 believes that “the gender issues are well ingrained into instructional leadership”, suggesting that the distinction may be, to some extent, artificial.

Balance between international and Zimbabwean literature and examples

The facilitators unanimously agreed that there was more reference to international literature and examples than local ones:

No, there is no balance ... we do want to see more of local content and it would be nice to have a text written in our context. It would actually help for our communities around to understand the importance of gender, and then see if it is contextualised, and the good thing is that, if literature is actually contextualised ... people may understand better in any topic, when it is written in their own context about their own situation.

(BF1)

Most of the literature cited is international. We depend more on international scholars. I think we need to have a shift. If, maybe, we could have more of our own people, because I think the examples will become more relevant.

(BF2)

No, there was no balance between local and international literature. International literature was cited more than local content. The reason could be that most literature has been developed outside our African continent which lags behind in most developments. However, citing local content may be significant.

(BF5)

Overall, the facilitators agreed that there was a need to balance between international literature and examples, and local literature and examples, as this has potential to motivate participants that the LL4GE programme was based on their own context.

Best features of the LL4GE programme

The facilitators offered different views about the best features of the LL4GE programme. BF1 indicated that workshops were the best, while BF3 and BF5 also indicated the value of lectures: "It is hard to say because I found every aspect of this programme to be important. However, I would say I really liked the lectures, you know, imparting knowledge to the participants. We really need leadership revival in schools."

(BF5)

In contrast, two facilitators (BF2 and BF4) stressed the value of the school-based projects:

I did enjoy the school-based projects. Because, one, they actually revealed to us how much the participants had actually grasped of the instructional leadership and the gender equality issues. I think, to me, that was the most important aspect of this programme, actually, to put into practice what they have actually learnt.

(BF2)

I enjoy most school projects because they are derived from reality. When they bring the project, and they discuss them, you feel like you are in the school. You can imagine the challenges. You can imagine everything.

(BF4)

Overall, the facilitators had mixed views about the best parts of the programme. Lectures topped the list as the most important part of the programme. All the other elements, such as group discussions, reading materials, the webinars and school-based projects, were also regarded as important.

Structure and content of LL4GE sessions

The facilitators are generally satisfied with the structure of the LL4GE programme but there are reservations about content 'overload':

The structure actually flows ... despite the fact that there is too much information in the presentation ... The content is overloaded, overloaded as compared to time. There is nothing to be omitted, because every aspect of the programme is very important. What I can think of is probably a short extension ... if we could have two full days for reflections, we would cover almost everything.

(BF1)

The way it was structured was just excellent. It was just a question maybe of us not having enough time otherwise it's an excellent structure. Otherwise, nothing should be left out except that more time is needed.

(BF2)

BF5 also argued that more time is required while BF3 indicated that perhaps there should be more focus on the gender issue while BF4 commented that "I am really happy with the structure and the content of the programme. The two components are well linked. If possible, I would like to see a balance between male and female participants."

Best features of the LL4GE programme

Most facilitators (BF2, BF4 and BF5) stated that the lectures are the best part of the LL4GE programme. BF3 added "We would have wanted the frequency on such programmes to increase so that we have more of these workshops on school leadership and gender equality." BF1 took a different view, saying that the projects were the best feature of the programme because they provide the potential for meaningful school-based change:

As I said earlier on the school project, it is the best way because they produce tangible results on the ground. That's where we talk about the joint practice development where the heads involve each and every one in their schools. So, when you are coming up with a project, you need other people's ideas, the involvement and participation of teachers will actually help our heads produce a good project. It also helps the ... the school head to identify the real problem within the school with the help of teachers. So, I think the school project is very important.

(BF1)

Recommended changes to improve the LL4GE programme

The facilitators made several suggestions to improve the programme. First, they wanted more ‘in-person’ time with the participants. BF1, for example, argued for three days, not one and a half, for the reflective workshops, adding that “we still believe that face-to-face training produces more results than virtual, especially when we are slowly adopting the virtual method”. BF3 and BF5 also indicated that they would recommend more time to be allocated for this important programme.

BF2 made a different point, suggesting that deputies and HODs should be part of the programme “because these are the people who actually influence the teaching and learning”. He added that there should be national trainers, who move from district to district carrying out such programmes. He also wanted hard copies of the presentation.

Impact of the programme on the facilitators

The facilitators all commented on how they had developed their own understanding and skills through their work on the LL4GE programme. BF2 reported that he has “gained knowledge and information” while BF3 noted that “I have sharpened my skills as facilitator and as a leader I have gained more skills”. Similarly, BF4 commented “I have learnt a lot from how the content is structured ... I have succeeded in assisting teachers to come up with solutions and they’ve been wanting to be observed”. BF5 agreed and also added that facilitators should have been trained earlier.

BF1 made a different point, that women should be given priority for promotion:

The government should actually give the women first preference in terms of promotions, encourage women to take part in leadership positions in the school system. That’s the only way to go. Women should be encouraged to apply for these jobs.

(BF1)

Future role as facilitators

The facilitators were asked if they would like the opportunity to use training resources from the LL4GE programme in future, and they all indicated that they would like to do so:

I will definitely continue to use this material leading learning for gender equality.

(BF1)

BF3 also indicated that he would use the LL4GE material again because of its appropriateness. BF4 mentioned that he would “definitely” use the material, as it is very rich, adding that “credit goes to our coaches who trained and inspired us to be who we are today as great facilitators”.

BF5 agreed and explained: “After some inspection or some monitoring exercise, you ask the head what kind of programme they have attended, and they indicate that they have attended instructional leadership. You notice that they have sharpened their skills” (BF5).

Taking the programme to scale across Zimbabwe

The facilitators were asked their opinions about the potential impact of LL4GE if it is implemented at a wider scale across Zimbabwe, and they all pointed to the benefits of doing so:

I actually recommended that it's scaled up given the opportunity to enrich whole the country.

(BF1)

If this programme were to be implemented at a wider scale across Zimbabwe, there will be immense benefits, particularly to our leaders. I think it's an eye opener, really, particularly the issue on gender.

(BF2)

Well, teaching and learning in our school is going to improve, not only on the part of the pass rate but actually the exit skills of critical thinking, problem-solving skills among others. Our learners are going to leave schools with something to use or to start life ... if it is implemented in the whole education system, I tell you, we will reap more rewards if our girl child is actually taken on board ... in terms of education.

(BF5)

Other comments

The facilitators were asked if they had any other comments about the LL4GE programme. They all responded positively and mostly repeated their earlier comments. BF1 said that it would help “to understand the world differently”, especially in terms of gender, while BF2 suggested that it should lead to “a situation where we may have an increase in the number of girls taking the sciences”.

Three facilitators chose to focus on the programme's impact on them:

I personally am a changed person in terms of my knowledge acquisition, in terms of my confidence, in terms of, you know, standing out there and arguing from an informed point.
(BF3)

I want to thank and recommend that that it be there for everybody else. And if possible, let's have gender equity inculcated even in the teaching syllabus in colleges so that we just move out with it. Let's not meet it out there in the field.
(BF4)

This programme has really transformed me. In a very positive way, it has transformed a number of our heads in as far as instructional leadership is concerned.
(BF5)

It is clear that the facilitators felt that this programme has empowered school leaders through instructional leadership and the ability to handle gender-related issues in schools. This may lead to improved learning outcomes for both girls and boys at primary and secondary school levels.

Overview of Beitbridge programme

The facilitators feel that the LL4GE programme in Beitbridge is a significant and appropriate initiative that needs to be scaled up in order to equip school leaders and teachers with instructional leadership skills as well as gender equality awareness. Although there were challenges of connectivity in webinars and lack of resources in developing projects, all the participants were optimistic about the immense benefits if the programme were to be spread across the country. They all suggested that workshops be given more time, given its importance. There was also an emphasis on the need for reference to local literature and examples.

Muzarabani

Introduction

Three facilitators who had participated in the first workshop were interviewed. Only one of these was present during the second face-to-face workshop, and she was interviewed face to face. The other two facilitators missed the workshop because they were on national duty. They were interviewed by telephone.

Biodata

Two of the three facilitators are male (MF2 and MF3), one a district schools' inspector and one a head teacher. The other facilitator, a female (MF1), is also a district schools' inspector. The three facilitators are all well-qualified and two have master's degrees.

Facilitator selection

All three facilitators reported that they were selected by their respective provincial offices to participate in the LL4GE programme. Selection by MoPSE, a 'top-down' approach, rather than the British Council, should help with Ministry 'buy-in', but this also means that the British Council cannot easily link selection to its own specific requirements.

The interviewees welcomed the opportunity to join the LL4GE programme, requiring them to integrate teaching and learning with instructional leadership. They stressed the potential to learn from the facilitation was a source of motivation for all the facilitators. The female interviewee also explained that she wanted women to be represented in the facilitator team. The three participants were all well-motivated to facilitate in the programme.

Overall views on the LL4GE programme

All three facilitators appreciated the programme and viewed it as very important for school leaders, teachers, pupils, the community and Zimbabwe as a nation. They perceive that it has brought a wider understanding of the meaning of being a school leader as well as in engaging gender equality in schools.

It's a programme that brings about a culture of collaboration among school leaders, teachers, the community and other stakeholders.
(MF1)

It's a very important programme, not only to me, but even from what I hear from fellow heads that we trained, they witnessed that this is a very important programme. They even wish, even myself I just wish, if my own school, if my own family members, and if all the school leaders and all the teachers in Zimbabwe could be exposed to such a course, that will make us change as a nation.
(MF2)

It is very important in the sense of ... the utilisation of resources to improve the welfare of the girl child and the boy child and even the production of materials that we would need for education in our respective schools ... Even the graphic pictures [in books] themselves we would see more of males dominating the learning and teaching materials at the expense of the girl so the awareness should just be spread across so that there should be a sort of balance for both girls and boys in the system.

(MF3)

LL4GE workshops

The facilitators were asked whether the workshops were too intensive, and they all agreed that the LL4GE programme is too intensive and requires more time. They concurred that the work covered was very important and needed more time to enable participants to maximally benefit from the workshops.

The activities required more time. The initial training, I think was almost OK, but when we went for webinars and the one which we did in one and half days, no, no, no we were doing it hurriedly, especially the second time. Even the time we gave participants to do their projects, ... training people hurriedly and then in four to five weeks we say come back with a school-based project ... I think there is a need for a period like two months. This is more realistic if we expect credible results. The workshop after the webinars required two full days, not one and half in the duration between the sessions.

(MF1)

MF2 agreed that the workshop programme is “quite detailed” and that there is a need for more time, given the importance of the materials to be covered during the workshop. A similar view was expressed by MF3:

In terms of the programme we have here, ... yes it is too intense ... if the powers that be were to avail the financial resources surely this would need more time, more engagement and ... our participants would actually be more at home if the time was more realistic for them. We are trying to make up for the limited time but with a lot of content to share with the participants.

(MF3)

Participant balance: Gender, location and school sector

The facilitators were asked to consider whether there was an appropriate balance of participants, in terms of gender, location (urban and rural) and school sector (primary and secondary). Responses to this question were largely determined by reflections on the situation in Zimbabwe. In the districts where the programme was run, and Zimbabwe in general, there are more male than female school leaders and that is also reflected in participation at these

workshops. It is also the case that, nationally, Zimbabwe has more primary than secondary schools. The programme targeted school leaders in hard-to-reach districts. This meant that these would largely be in rural areas. MF3 summed up the gender situation:

There are more males than females, yes, maybe given the geographical setup of the places, and maybe some of these ladies do not feel like taking these leadership positions but all things being equal the thrust is to ensure that state of equity and state of equality and state of 50 to 50 chances for both males and females to take up the roles.

(MF3)

This comment illustrates the challenges facing LL4GE in Zimbabwe. Is it appropriate to reflect the under-representation of women in a gender equality programme, or should the British Council insist on at least gender parity amongst both participants and facilitators?

Balance between instructional leadership and gender equality

Two facilitators believe that there is an appropriate balance between instructional leadership and gender equality in the LL4GE programme:

I think there is a fair balance between the two, because I used to facilitate on instructional leadership without the aspect of gender equality ... So, for me, I think the balance was okay.

(MF2)

Yes, the balance is there. Issues to do with gender are infused through instructional leadership because, in instructional leadership, it is about enhancing quality teaching and learning. In the process of quality learning, the idea of factoring gender related issues are actually received and spread out in such a way that it is part and parcel of teaching and learning whereby the place of the girl child and the place of the boy child should be incorporated and, in terms of the provisions of the resources and in terms of the language used, in terms of how to motivate them even in a class room situation so it's part of that. So, in other words, what we are saying is gender equality permeates teaching and learning.

(MF3)

However, the female facilitator offered a different view:

Initially, there was more of instructional leadership. Then we came for the workshop in Muzarabani, there was, I would say a ratio of 60:40 in favour of instructional leadership.

(MF1)

Balance between international and Zimbabwean literature and examples

The facilitators unanimously agreed that there was more reference to international literature and examples than local ones. MF1 indicated that the scales were tilted in favour of international literature and examples. “There were more foreign examples in the literature. I would like to see reference to more local literature and examples.” Similar points were made by the other facilitators:

I think we are using more of the international literature than the Zimbabwean literature, we are full of international literature, our literature is in terms of numbers, we are outnumbered. I think we need to have more examples which are Zimbabwean based as much as possible.

(MF2)

In the literature that we use, reference is made to examples from Hong Kong, UK, USA, Singapore and China . . . we are also trying to conceptualise it ... to suit our environment [and] ... make it relevant to Zimbabwe.

(MF3)

Overall, the facilitators agree that there is a need to balance between international literature and examples, and local literature and examples, to show participants that the LL4GE programme is not bringing in foreign ideas and concepts that do not apply to local situations.

Best features of the LL4GE programme

The facilitators all regarded lectures as the most important part of the programme. They regarded all the other elements, such as group discussions, reading materials, the webinars and school-based projects, as dependent on what was presented during the lectures.

MF1 sees group and in-class discussions as the best part of the programme “because they were interactive and afforded exchange of ideas”. She ranked the school-based project second, as it gave participants time to try out what they were exposed to during the workshops.

MF2 similarly views the face-to-face element to be most important, reinforced by other parts, such as the virtual webinars and the reading materials but, “from experience, the face-to-face has more impact in my view”. Probed on what exactly he meant by face-to-face he elaborated that he meant lectures:

Because it's a live situation where you discuss, where you talk, and emotions and impressions are demonstrated and then where you listen to the participants ... and you get the real situation.

(MF2)

MF3 also gave priority to the lectures as they opened “up the leaders’ insight” into what the workshop was about. The lectures led to “change of mind set and that is where they [participants] get the zeal now to say this is the way to go.” Second, were the webinars, which reinforced what the participants learnt during the first face to face sessions. In third place was the school-based project, which benefited from the face-to-face inputs and webinar feedback.

Structure and content of LL4GE sessions

The three facilitators agreed that the sessions and the content did not require change, except for adding local resources and examples. However, one facilitator added that the programme was rushed:

Some of the sessions require more time. Some were done hurriedly when the participants were beginning to warm up to the presentation, when the participants were now in the spirit to discuss, it's like, we will be rushing to finish the day's programme. I think the content required more time. Otherwise, the sessions and content need to be maintained.

(MF1)

The sessions and the content proper ... [are] appearing to be very relevant, even for myself as a school leader I think it is quite relevant. I suggest we leave the sessions and content as they are until the evaluation of the programme which may suggest areas needing subtracting or adding.

(MF2)

He added that the school-based project is the most important feature of the programme because it represents the application of knowledge.

MF3 stated that “the content is quite informative and actually adds value to what is obtaining on the ground with regard to latest and current trends of teaching and learning.” He suggested that there was need for more time to be devoted to the programme, to cover the content. He particularly liked the examples given, especially the research in Uganda, with

the video on empowering the girl child and the place of women, that served to change “our perception of gender equality” (MF3).

Recommended changes to improve the LL4GE programme

The facilitators offered recommendations for change relating to the timing and duration of workshops as well as the composition of participants.

I would recommend that more time be allocated to the workshops. Then timing of the workshops needs to be improved so that we do not call school leaders for this training ... on the first week of opening. I think that's not good timing. Then, to say having them during school holidays, maybe two weeks or a week before opening such that, soon after training, they go and implement, or mid-term after they're settled, the school is in order, and I would not like to run the programme during exam time. So timing is important and the number of days [needs to be changed], four full days for the first workshop and two full days for the second face to face workshop.

(MF1)

I think there is need for teachers to accompany the school leaders to the workshop ... I think we need to train the teachers together with the head ... if we include teachers and heads, it makes our course comprehensive.

(MF2)

MF3 added that the programme needed to be evaluated first before he could suggest changes. For now, he was happy with the programme except for the addition of references to local literature and examples.

Impact of the programme on the facilitators

The interviewees stated that their participation in the LL4GE programme has improved their leadership skills and their attitudes and perceptions on gender equality. Their approaches are more inclusive, they tolerate diverse views from, and now collaborate with, their colleagues:

My facilitation skills are sharpened, even my leadership skills as an individual. Apart from training myself, I am also getting training from [LL4GE] colleagues ... My facilitation [has] improved significantly.

(MF1)

From the time I got trained in the programme, the aspect of collaborating has improved, even the perspective of how I do my school leadership, how I work with teachers, I used to call them subordinates but today I treat them as colleagues and how I perceive the issue of gender equality, you know I was not taking much consideration of whether gender equality was being observed or not but from this I am seeing the change I am now aware of these issues.

(MF2)

MF3 said that he could now articulate clearly issues to do with instructional leadership and gender equality. He felt better positioned to give advice to school leaders in his district on issues related to leadership and gender equality:

Within our district, and even at provincial level, I am happy that ... they always call upon me to help in facilitating in some of these related issues ... and I am proud of it and I keep on reading through the literature and it [helps] my professional growth.

(MF3)

Future role as facilitators

The facilitators were asked if they would like the opportunity to use training resources from the LL4GE programme in future, and they all indicated that they would like to do so:

Yes, I would continue using them ... because imbalances in gender equality and instructional leadership are increasing. It starts from the enrolment in schools, girls drop out of school, and they experience many disadvantages. Addressing gender inequality needs to start from the classroom, in order to empower women.

(MF1)

Definitely, I would continue to use the training resources. Do you know what we have even suggested that, when the programme was not going to cover every district, I have suggested to talk to the leader to say can you bring me the opportunity to train heads because I found the programme very very important and I am ready to showcase what I have learnt to other school leaders as long as the provincial offices allow me to do so.

(MF2)

MF3 added that he would be happy to continue with the programme to address imbalances of gender:

I would be happy to be part of the personnel who will try to bring about change [and] would like to continue being part and parcel of this programme.

(MF3)

Taking the programme to scale across Zimbabwe

The facilitators were asked their opinions about the potential impact of LL4GE if it is implemented at a wider scale across Zimbabwe, and they all pointed to the benefits of doing so:

I think what would change is the atmosphere in schools to work supervision. Second, is the relationship between teachers and school leaders and the achievement or attainment of goals.

(MF1)

MF2 expressed the belief that the learning outcomes would change for the better:

The school environment will change as a result of changed leadership styles brought about by instructional leadership and gender equality. There will be more collaboration between school heads and teachers as they now regard each other as colleagues working for the same end, improving learning outcomes for both girls and boys. For the heads they will now be able to work with the whole school in monitoring teaching and learning.

(MF2)

MF3 suggested that cascading LL4GE would result in:

- School leaders who are well-informed about instructional leadership and gender equality leading to change in school culture and climate
- Closer collaboration between school leaders, teachers, parents and pupils as well as other stake holders in the creation of conducive learning environments.
- Change in societal attitudes towards gender equality – cultural transformation
- Acceptance of the equality of girls and boys at school and in communities
- Improved learning outcomes for both girls and boys at all levels of primary and secondary education in Zimbabwe

I know for certain that, if this spread across our country, our country would be a better or well-informed country with regard to instructional leadership learning and ways to deal with gender equality and surely it will never be the same again.

(MF3)

Other comments

The facilitators were asked whether they had any other comments about the LL4GE programme. They all responded positively and offered some new comments:

Taking almost all major stakeholders on board, for example, when we went for training we need people like professors, doctors (university lecturers). It must be a holistic thing, although each one would play a different role like supervisory, research, facilitation role at the end of the day everyone would have an appreciation of what you think is okay.

(MF1)

The comment that I want to pass is, suppose we are talking of gender equality and see how important it is, but if we look at us as facilitators, we have more men than women. We need to ensure gender balance right from the facilitators to our participants. Another issue, if we could get at least a sample of public schools in each district so that those school can gain and train other schools in that district. That way, we know that every district in Zimbabwe has benefited from the programme.

(MF2)

MF3 was glad that gender equality was included in the LL4GE programme:

As we live, gender-related issues are never our strangers but gender-related issues are part and parcel of our day-to-day life so, in terms of addressing our immediate environmental challenges, this programme has come at the right time and has come to see us make a change of what surrounds us.

(MF3)

Overall, the facilitators felt that this programme has empowered school leaders in terms of school leadership and to act on gender related issues in schools, thereby creating conducive learning environments and climate. This should lead to improved learning outcomes for both girls and boys at primary and secondary school levels. MF2's comment about gender balance among participants and facilitators needs to be addressed.

Overview of Muzarabani programme

The facilitators agreed that the LL4GE programme is a worthwhile and relevant initiative that needs to be pursued to empower school leaders with skills in instructional leadership and gender equality. There was a general appreciation of the LL4GE and the facilitators consider that it would be ideal if the programme could be widened so that the benefits could be felt nationally. The facilitators also suggested that the workshops should be given more time, given the importance of these issues in Zimbabwe. The LL4GE programme has the potential to transform the way schools are run and the attainment of gender equality in Zimbabwe should improve the status of women in the country. The facilitators also emphasised the need for reference to material and examples from Zimbabwe.

Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe

Introduction

The researcher interviewed three facilitators. All three interviewees are male, and the conversations were conducted over the phone, as the facilitators missed the reflective workshop.

Facilitator selection

Facilitator UMPF1 was recruited through his provincial education director. “He called me and indicated that the Ministry was looking for ‘champion school leaders’ to be trained as facilitators. Champion school leaders were defined as those that were doing well in their schools, that had something to share with other school leaders. I was then involved in the training programme for facilitators” (UMPF1). The second facilitator (UMPF2) was also recruited through the provincial education director, but the criteria for selection were not revealed to him.

The third facilitator (UMPF3) reported that the invitation was extended to senior teachers and substantive heads. He is a district schools’ inspector and he was chosen as a facilitator, because of his prior involvement in other activities, especially those related to child friendly schools. After selection, he was invited to attend a training of trainers’ programme. There were many people at the training of trainers’ programme but quite a number dropped out of the programme because it was too demanding and required computer literacy.

Assessment of programme content

UMPF1 stated that the programme is very good but the way it is implemented needs to be examined. For example, initially the programme content was on instructional leadership, but now the gender component has been infused, which calls for the extension of the programme duration if these key issues of instructional leadership and gender are to be covered thoroughly. He recommends a minimum of eight days to complete the programme.

UMPF1 considered the content well balanced between instructional leadership and gender. However, he argued for more gender-related examples because of the negative attitudes towards gender. He also commented that there is no balance between local and international case studies, as there are more international than local case studies.

UMPF1 rated the school-based project as the worst part of the programme because of the short the duration of the project. “No meaningful person can have tangible results in 3 weeks, it is impossible” (UMPF1).

UMPF2 considered the programme very good. However, it is imperative for the programme to have local case studies. He also argues that supervisors should be trained because it creates a serious knowledge and practice gap to train school leaders, leaving out the supervisors, who are the inspectors. The interviewee also felt that the facilitators needed to be involved in curriculum design considering their knowledge of the context.

UMPF2 stated that gender was not adequately covered during facilitators’ training, so facilitators had knowledge gaps when they were training the school leaders. Training was online so that presented problems linked to connectivity. However, in terms of content, he believes that there is a balance between instructional leadership and gender.

UMPF2 added that the school-based project is a very important component of the programme and should be allocated more time. It measures the participants’ understanding of the issues while also measuring how the knowledge is being used in practice.

UMPF3 commented that the LL4GE programme is very good. He appreciated the feedback component of the programme, as it is very practical and forces one to report back. School leaders used to develop school visions on their own but the teaching in this programme is that the process should be participatory with wide stakeholder involvement, which promotes ownership.

UMPF3 added that there is balance between gender and instructional leadership, although he regrets the omission of the topic on change of mindset, that used to be part of instructional leadership and feels that it should be reinstated. Bringing gender and instructional leadership together meant that some topics had to be dropped and change of mindset is one such important topic that was dropped. UMPF3 also noted that the content has more international case studies than local ones. He adds that face-to-face meetings are more impactful than online as they gave a platform for more interaction between the facilitators and the participants, as well as among the participants themselves.

Impact of the LL4GE programme

UMPF1 identified four specific impacts of the LL4GE programme:

- Confidence among school leaders
- Effectiveness in school administration
- Inclusive school policies and practices
- Gender responsiveness in teaching and learning

UMPF2 stated that, considering the quality of school heads in the country, such training is critical, as it touches on the importance of teamwork, how to lead a school and gender equality, among other issues. The following impacts were mentioned:

- Some schools did not even have vision and mission statements but now they have them in place as a result of the project.

- There is now some semblance of gender mainstreaming in school administration.
- There is now a higher level of stakeholder involvement in school administration.

UMPF2 also applauded the involvement of representatives from the Ministry, as that gave them an opportunity to appreciate the issues covered and also to know what is happening in the districts, as school heads shared their experiences. This should ensure that policy and other issues raised by the school leaders during the sessions would be addressed.

UMPF3 felt that the programme had a positive impact on the school leaders. However, only six out of the 72 districts in the country are covered so a lot still needs to be done to ensure that all the districts are covered. He supports taking the programme to scale across Zimbabwe.

Recommendations to improve the LL4GE programme

UMPF1 offered the following recommendations:

- The duration of the programme should be extended to at least eight days.
- Timing of the training should be during the school holidays so that the programme does not interfere with the school calendar. The project should also target school inspectors as they play a role in what happens in schools. They need to be trained to appreciate issues of instructional leadership and gender equality for them to customise their supervision instruments.
- The programme is relying on an external master trainer, there is a need to have local master trainers.

The webinar component should be turned into a face-to-face workshop considering the connectivity challenges that the participants faced.

UMPF2 made similar suggestions:

- The duration of the programme should be extended.
- There should be local master trainers.
- Face-to-face meetings should be held for training facilitators and participants, not webinars.
- Facilitators should be involved in curriculum design.
- Modules on financial management and resource mobilisation should be included in the programme.
- The LL4GE programme should target teachers as well as school leaders.
- The LL4GE programme should also train school inspectors, and their supervision tools and instruments should be adjusted to cover aspects included in the training.

UMPF3 offered some similar recommendations:

- The duration of the programme should be revisited to allow more days.
- The programme should use face-to-face meetings not webinars, due to connectivity challenges.
- The programme should include modules on financial management and resource mobilisation.

- The programme should also train teachers, for continuity and sustainability of the programme benefits.

Overview of the UMP programme

The three interviews bring out several key issues. The facilitators all acknowledged the importance and relevance of the programme for school leaders in Zimbabwe. The focus of the programme on instructional leadership and gender equality, from a practical perspective, is regarded as adding value to the theoretical focus of instructional leadership and gender equality at teachers' colleges. The facilitators concurred on the areas that require attention to improve the programme, including: programme duration, addressing the challenges related to webinars, training more leaders and extending the programme beyond school leaders to teachers.

11. Findings: Focus group meetings with programme participants

Researchers conducted focus group meetings with programme participants at all three venues.

Beitbridge

Introduction

Two focus group interviews were conducted with participants who had taken part in both Workshops 1 and 2. The participants were grouped into two single-gender groups, one female and one male. Each focus group consisted of six school heads. Both focus group interviews took place at the workshop venue in Beitbridge.

Beitbridge: Female focus group

This focus group consisted of six female school heads. The selection criteria were that the women should be school heads who had participated in both workshops; one and two. More than six participants agreed to participate, and another criterion was applied – that the school heads should have attended webinars. The number was reduced to six (BFGF1, BFGF2, BFGF3, BFGF4, BFGF5 and BFGF6).

Motivation to join the LL4GE programme

All the focus group participants agreed that they were invited by their districts and were eager to join the programme. They elaborated that they wanted to learn more about leadership skills and gender equality.

Knowledge and understanding of instructional leadership

The six participants all indicated that they had enhanced their understanding of instructional leadership. BFGF1 stated “We have learnt several new concepts on instructional leadership, including lesson observation and joint practice development.” Similarly, BFGF2 explained “I have learnt in this programme how to conduct lesson observations, and giving feedback, and so many other skills. First of all, I have to be careful with the way I present myself to the staff. That’s why I would say I learnt how to influence my staff towards the desired goals.” According to BFGF3, “This programme has to a great extent improved my understanding of instructional leadership effectively because an instructional leader is the best leader. Someone who can work well with their staff. Someone who is a role model. So that is what I learnt.”

The emphasis on classroom observation was echoed by BFGF4 and BFGF6:

I learnt that, as a leader, I should see to it that there are some developments as far as teaching and learning is concerned in a school; like conducting lesson observations in the classrooms.

(BFGF4)

I have learnt to listen and to observe. I have gained new knowledge and information on how I should talk to the teachers. I have learnt that important activities like lesson observations are not meant for fault finding but are for development. The whole process from observing lessons to giving feedback should be developmental.

(BFGF6)

BFGF5 offered a different perspective:

I am a changed person in terms of what the Ministry expects me to do. As a leader, I need to be a role model. I need to be the person where the teachers need to see positive things.

(BFGF5)

Knowledge and understanding of gender equality

The focus group participants all stated that they had gained new knowledge about gender equality:

I learnt that girls should also be given equal opportunities as well as boys ... I have learnt that girls should be equipped with skills that would really enhance their self-esteem

(BFGF1)

I have always believed that one way to empower girls is to keep them in school and now this programme has made this emphasis, teaching us to create opportunities for both genders in our schools. Then the other thing that I noted is that at times we receive things like sanitary wear, and we keep it in the storerooms and say, yeah, they are going to use it. But now I know that, for these girls, we need to give them so that at least they are not neglected.

(BFGF2)

I also learnt that, as a school, we have been perpetuating gender inequality without knowing it. We actually have been normalising some cultural practices, norms and beliefs, unknowingly. To that effect, I have learnt that, as a school, we can begin to undo these practices so that girls are not disadvantaged.

(BFGF4)

Two participants stressed the importance of working with stakeholders to address gender inequality:

I have also learnt that you should focus more on equal access to opportunities. I also learnt that to achieve this, you should not work on your own, but rather with involving all stakeholders in the community.

(BFGf3)

I have also learnt that gender equality requires the involvement of all stakeholders. The school cannot do it alone.

(BFGF4)

Impact of LL4GE on leadership practice

The focus group participants indicated that they had changed their school leadership practices, as illustrated by the comments below:

This programme has changed me. I have been encouraged as a leader to seek the support of the community. Working together with stakeholders brings support that we need.

(BFGF2)

It's really changing my school leadership practice as the way I used to see things before has actually changed. I thought I was the only person who knew it all, but with this programme, I have learnt to treat everyone equal. Everyone is important within the organisation. I can benefit more from my colleagues as we learn from each other.

(BFGF4)

I learnt a lot from instructional leadership. I learnt that, as a leader, you should enjoy teaching yourself good practices so that even results improve. Since the whole thrust of this programme is to improve on instructional leadership and gender equality, the head should not just sit in the office, but should be seen teaching and teachers will copy from you and even you can invite teachers to observe good practices.

(BFGF6)

Gender equality for students and staff

The focus group participants were asked if they had changed their approach to gender equality since embarking on the LL4GE programme. Most claimed to have made such changes, as shown below:

I discovered that in our school we had given up on gender equality because of lack of knowledge and also thinking that it is the work of the NGOs. Now we are putting into practice what we have learnt, for example, we have changed our templates.

(BFGF1)

We have created leadership positions to empower girls. These changes are necessary because we all come from communities where this gender equality issue is not really important. So, the changes we are making are aimed at promoting gender equality and to sensitise the community.

(BFGF2)

I also learnt that girls are rarely given a chance of being role models. If they are given a chance of exercising leadership roles, they can use it. Also, I learnt that the interrelationships of the school and the parents would really make a difference in the handling of a girl child.

(BFGF4)

We are beginning to make changes in our school aimed at giving the girl child equal opportunities [and] ... realising that roles should not be assigned according to gender.

(BFGF6)

Balance between instructional leadership and gender equality

All the participants in the focus group agreed that there is a balance between the two components – gender equality and instructional leadership. They indicated that they obtained much-needed knowledge from both components.

Balance between international and Zimbabwean literature and examples

All the responses indicated that international literature and examples were cited more than Zimbabwean literature and examples. They all expressed the desire to see more local content:

When we were attending workshops, webinars, and all other activities, we saw literature being cited more from international sources than local sources. If given a chance, I would want to see more local content.

(BFGF1)

I cannot say there is an appropriate balance between international literature and examples and Zimbabwean material because more international literature was cited.

(BFGF2)

I wouldn't say there was balance because we watched videos and learnt about literature from outside Zimbabwe ... I think it was not balanced at all.
(BFGF6)

Quality of facilitation

All the participants were satisfied with the facilitation they received in the programme:

I'm really satisfied by the quality of facilitation in this programme. All the facilitators have been selected from around Zimbabwe. The team is good.
(BFGF1)

The fact that the facilitators have been chosen from our own country makes it a very good idea. The facilitators are good, they understood the content and answered all the questions posed.
(BFGF2)

They interpreted the content according to our own Zimbabwean context. I think they had to have that skill of linking the international literature to our own context which they did very well. Even though we had more literature from abroad, I think they simplified it to suit our own African continent, to make it applicable to our own situation.
(BFGF3)

I was very much impressed with the kind of facilitation that we have had over the past few weeks. They were excellent. They were exceptional. They knew their stuff. I really enjoyed. For my delight, they presented according to our needs and different levels.
(BFGF6)

Best parts of the LL4GE programme

The participants offered different responses to this question, with most favouring the school-based project:

My best part of this programme is the school-based project. I had identified this problem so many years ago and I was trying to tell my superiors that we are having a problem in reading, but they were failing to understand and didn't assist us. I had an opportunity to deal with that problem. I managed to identify it in monitoring, and we dealt with it perfectly. And what matters most is that I managed to implement what I learnt here.

(BFGF1)

It was the school project which was the best part in the programme. We received a lot of information from the lectures and group discussions that helped us to do the projects.

(BFGF6)

BFGF5 expressed a preference for the lectures while two participants (BFGF2 and BFGF4) mentioned both projects and lectures:

My best were the group discussions and school projects because we shared ideas, were able to discuss with different people in class.

(BFGF2)

It's hard to say because every part of it was good. But I would say my best were lectures and school-based projects.

(BFGF4)

Programme structure and content

The participants were satisfied with the structure and content of the sessions:

I'm satisfied with structure and content of the programme; I think the gender equality component is putting a lot of emphasis on girls. They have been disadvantaged.

(BFGF1)

The programme is well-structured, and the content is adequate. It is what we need, for example, I remember subjects like Physics and Mathematics used to be reserved for boys, and now we are learning that it was wrong.

(BFGF3)

I'm satisfied with the structure and content of the programme. The sessions have been great, and they were well presented.

(BFGF6)

School project focus

The main project focus was on reading, suggesting that this is a significant problem in schools.

Our focus was on improving reading in Grade 3. We have realised that our learners are underperforming, especially in tests and exams. They fail due to lack of reading skills. So, we are now embarking on those reading skills.

(BFGF2)

My project was based on the reduction of non-readers in Grade 5. The reason behind the choice of such a project was a realisation that it affected the pass rate in the school. Many learners have reading problems and it affects the pass rate. We have had bad results. English really takes the lowest. So, that's the reason why it was suggested to me to carry on that project.

(BFGF4)

Our school project was based on reading. We had a meeting and teachers indicated that the reading problem needed urgent attention. They felt that they were not given enough time to teach reading in the day ... reading problems exist both in indigenous and English languages.

(BFGF5)

Two participants focused their projects on discipline, an interesting choice of topic with few obvious links to instructional leadership or gender:

We focused our school project on indiscipline. Indiscipline has become our biggest challenge. It was worsened by Covid-19 lockdowns. Learners have become uncontrollable and, considering our proximity with the Beitbridge border post, our learners are dropping out of school at a higher rate.

(BFGF6)

Mine was on instilling discipline among our learners. We chose this area because we realised that, after the long period of time that learners have been away from school because of Covid-19, they have become disobedient. Our school is near some mining dumps and our learners have been engaging in illegal mining. So, imagine a learner who has been coming to school and then spent almost two years not coming to school, he or she becomes wild.

(BFGF3)

BFGF1 focused her project on mathematics:

Our first project was to improve the teaching of mathematics. For us, we wanted to improve the results of mathematics in middle class. Because they were not doing well. We started by investigating why our learners did not do well in the subject.

(BFGF1)

Impact of the projects on the schools

The participants' responses show that they feel that there are some positive results from their projects, despite the short time allowed for project preparation, although their comments relate more to process than outcomes:

I learnt a lot through the school-based project that I conducted. There was teamwork and a positive spirit of working together as members of staff in constructive ideas from different teachers, from different grades. And that really is done continuously. Maybe, as time goes on, we will note improvement in school results.

(BFGF3)

We have been able to set goals and research activities that we were going to do in order to improve practice in our school. I also liked the project very much because it taught us how to improve teamwork. And we are now working together as a team. We are working together as a team and each one really wants his/her learners to read.

(BFGF4)

We realised that there was a positive change. The numbers of learners coming to school and adhering to rules are increasing. Learners are now coming to school. We even visited learners where they are doing the gold panning, we have been speaking to them and the response is good.

(BFGF5)

Impact of the LL4GE programme on teachers and learners

The participants all stated that they have begun to see some benefits from the programme in their schools:

I think this programme is impacting positively on my staff and on the learners as well, because now the teachers are working as a team. I also managed to identify some weaknesses of teachers as well. I was monitoring them, conducting the reading sessions and the performance of our learners also was good. I noted that our learners improved, especially with the new approaches.

(BFGF2)

The part of teamwork has been helpful to me, you set the pace and then don't forget to engage everyone, to accept everyone's decisions ... When I'm planning, I consider my team's views.

(BFGF4)

This programme taught me that I should lead by example, demonstrate teaching and learning, promote teamwork and to participate in the discussions about all issues concerning our learners, ... and also to identify some strategies to address challenges we face.

(BFGF6)

School-based changes arising from the LL4GE programme

The participants report positive results from the programme, notably in respect of teamwork and collaboration:

I have discovered that now we are working as a team, before there was no teamwork. Everyone was doing what they wanted to do ... There is some improvement. And the teachers are now motivated. The demonstration lessons are useful; we went to other classes to observe other teach – talking about peer-to-peer observation. And the teachers were happy because they learnt a lot from other teachers, which was very good.

(BFGF1)

When we started there was resistance. There was too much resistance. Teachers were failing to cooperate. But now they are cooperative, they have learnt a lot from instructional leadership. We are maintaining teamwork and putting effort to get rid of practices that do not promote gender equality ... I think participation in classes is greatly improved since now they know that they are being treated equally.

(BFGF2)

There is a change of behaviour from both the learners and the teachers. The attitude that they have had previously was not really good. But now I can see there is this creation of friendliness for both the teachers and the learners emanating from the mixture of, I can say, the inclusion of boys and girls in a group, or in a class, and the equal opportunities that they are given. This only creates a good learning environment. And hence learning really is progressing. Children are now coming to school. Children are now participating, just because there is a mutual relationship between the two parties.

(BFGF4)

Sustainable change from the LL4GE programme

The participants appear determined to implement the knowledge gained from the programme but is perhaps too early to be confident about sustainable change:

I was one person who assigned duties according to gender, so when I came here and learnt about gender equality, I have changed everything ... I have since tried to sensitise them (teachers and learners) on the issue of gender equality, [and] their attitudes really are changing. They are now using the constructive language when they are talking to different learners, especially the girls.

(BFGF1)

We have appointed more girls into leadership positions so that they can be exemplary. We always talk to the staff about this thing of offering equal opportunities to both boys and girls, and they put that into practice. Now, boys are also coming up. They are changing. They are no longer troublesome. They are now doing the work, just as the girls are doing.

(BFGF3)

In our school, the vision and mission we have had were drafted in 2010. So, now we have rephrased them to show gender equality sensitivity. Seating arrangements in all classrooms has changed, because boys used to sit on their own and the same applies to girls. But now they are mixed. And our supervision template now includes gender sensitive language.

(BFGF4)

We have this situation of gender imbalance in our community, and it definitely influences the changes we are trying to introduce ... What we realised was that it's also a fact that some people are far away from accepting change.

(BFGF5)

Inhibitors to the implementation of LL4GE programme learning

The participants identified limited resources and teacher attitudes as inhibitors to programme implementation:

We have teachers who lack motivation, maybe because of low remuneration. So, even if we try to come up with something, they feel they are being overburdened with duties. And maybe also the lack of resources, we have a challenge of things like exercise books.

(BFGF1)

One of the main challenges that we have is the lack of resources. It hinders many things that we want to do. Our school is located in a remote rural area. So, when you say, let us go and Google, it's something that they cannot do, they don't have access to technology.

(BFGF2)

The challenge, I have noted, is poor parental involvement. There is no link between the parents in the community and our school. Even though you invite them for the consultation days, they don't come at all. I know they are busy, but they should give us support.

(BFGF4)

Resources are a serious challenge. Learners don't have those exercise books, even the pens. We call for meetings with parents appealing for their support, but we do not see any change. They do not put effort to support the school nor their own children. So, there is lack of support from the parents.

(BFGF5)

We have a serious problem of resources. Parents are not employed and it's difficult for them to pay school fees that we depend on ... So, the moment you introduce, for example a school project, everyone begins to show a negative attitude because they know very well that we do not have resources to carry out such projects.

(BFGF6)

Positive features of the LL4GE programme experience

The participants generally value the knowledge acquired from the programme:

I can say this programme has changed our school a lot. Especially I realised that tasks are much easier when everyone participates. Especially when I was conducting the lesson observation, teachers have become cooperative ... Really this programme changed me. The knowledge we have gained is tremendous.

(BFGF1)

After the first workshop, we started by changing our school vision so that it became gender inclusive ... we ... revised our vision and we are in the process of rephrasing our templates and other instruments.

(BFGF2)

With the knowledge we have gained, we started conducting staff development sessions. After that we started class visits using the knowledge we gained in this programme. There have been some changes in the handling of the issues affecting the girl child.
(BFGF4)

We are implementing what we have learnt. Every aspect of this programme is important, there is nothing to throw away. We are pairing experienced teachers with the inexperienced ones so that they can learn from one another. We have set aside reading time so as to increase reading activities, reading games and improvised picture books based on gender equality.
(BFGF6)

Possible changes to improve the LL4GE programme

The participants unanimously agreed that they did not have any recommendations to improve the LL4GE programme except that more time be allocated for the activities.

Benefits if the LL4GE programme is implemented at scale across Zimbabwe

All the participants expressed the wish to see the LL4GE programme extended to the whole country as they felt it would impact positively on the development of the education system:

I believe that this programme will improve our education system. We have a lot of inexperienced teachers who need this programme, even the experienced teachers need it too.
(BFGF1)

We are going to benefit immensely because already the sharing of ideas has started. So, for us not to break the continuous learning, everyone should come here and learn. This makes it possible that teaching and learning are constant.
(BFGF3)

The impact should be bigger if everyone is involved.
(BFGF6)

Other comments

There were only a few additional comments. Participants were largely satisfied with the programme as it is. They suggested that more time be allocated to the programme and expressed that they preferred hard copies when it comes to course materials.

Beitbridge: Male focus group

The focus group targeted six male participants. The selection criteria were that the men should be school heads who had participated in both workshops, as well as the webinars. Their quotes are presented below with the codes; BFGM1, BFGM2, BFGM3, BFGM4, BFGM5 and BFGM6.

Motivation to join the LL4GE programme

All members of the male focus group indicated that they were invited by their district offices to participate in the programme. They elaborated that they wanted to learn more about leadership and gender equality, and to be equipped with the skills to improve the teaching and learning process.

Knowledge and understanding of instructional leadership

The participants indicated that they had gained skills and knowledge about instructional leadership through the LL4GE programme, but in different ways:

We are now equipped with the proper knowledge and skills that we need to run the schools. We last learnt like this when we were in training colleges.
(BFGM2)

Besides the issue of gender equality, that has made us reflect on our own biases, the instructional leadership component has been enriching. The programme was presented in such a way that one is challenged to reflect on your own ways of doing things.
(BFGM3)

In relation to my experiences so far in this programme, it has proved to be very important to me. I have been reminded that teamwork is very important and that I do not know everything because I am a leader. We are revisiting the methods we use to teach our students.
(BFGM4)

Knowledge and understanding of gender equality

The participants all reported enhanced understanding of gender equality following the LL4GE programme:

The programme has really enhanced my understanding of gender equality. I have been given the confidence to do things differently from the way I was doing before. I have been the knowledge to infuse gender equality in our programmes and everything we do. It has been difficult to tackle gender issues because they are a part of our lives especially in our communities.

(BFGM1)

The programme is rich with knowledge, and we have learnt so much about gender equality. The process is not something that you can achieve over a short period of time, we shall continue to implement what we have learnt. We are changing our attitude because attitude is one of the most important things. So, we believe that with this positive attitude, we are going to see more results.

(BFGM3)

I see the programme as a very effective way of transforming society, it is a good way of enforcing policies. I love the way we are guided to promote gender equality in the school's everyday activities.

(BFGM4)

Impact of LL4GE on leadership practice

All participants report that the programme has impacted their leadership practice:

This programme has opened our minds on how to manage the schooling in a better and modern way. Suddenly my practice as a leader has changed. I have managed to spread through to other members of staff. Teamwork has lifted some burdens from my shoulders to hand it over to other staff members.

(BFGM1)

I have started involving our team so as to transform our school. We are embarking on activities that will gradually change our old ways. This programme is transformative, and I have gained ways to do things through systematic planning and solve problems through the strategies that I have gained from this programme.

(BFGM3)

It has actually improved the way we handle this issue of gender. It was just the opposite. We were just taking it lightly and not seriously. But after this programme, I think we have a different perspective, a different look altogether. I think that we should really consider it seriously because, if we ignore it, it will continue to affect us as a society.

(BFGM5)

Gender equality for staff and students

All the participants reported that they are addressing gender equality issues in their schools:

I personally think that this programme ... is geared to change our minds about the gender issues. We have simply been ignoring some of these gender issues in our learning outcomes, especially when we are looking into how boys and girls are learning, we are now so much concerned about striking a balance that is fair for both boys and girls.

(BFGM1)

In terms of gender issues, we have been biased and we have unknowingly promoted the inequalities between the two genders. Yet this programme has proved to us that it is possible to change our ways. Yes, we may face difficulties but the impact in terms of the learning of our boys and girls is great.

(BFGM2)

I think this is the best programme for implementing these gender issues and trying to actually gain everyone's support. We no longer tolerate those gender stereotypes. We seek ways that can empower and emancipate women.

(BFGM5)

Balance between instructional leadership and gender equality

The participants all indicated that there is an appropriate balance between instructional leadership and gender equality:

I don't think there is a better way of including the two aspects in a single programme. I feel that the two are well balanced in this programme. We have benefited from this programme in a very big way.
(BFGM1)

I think there is a balance between instructional leadership and gender equality in the sense that it is structured in such a way that, as leaders, we should try to overcome all the barriers that may impede good leadership skills and effective leadership. I think the issue of gender is one issue that has to be addressed in terms of achieving good leadership.
(BFGM2)

Balance between international and Zimbabwean literature and examples

The participants all comment that there is not a balance between international and local content, adding that they want to see more local literature and examples in the programme:

I don't think there is a balance, because what I am realising is that we have got more citations from international researchers than our own local researchers. Maybe it's an indication that we are still lagging behind in terms of balancing the issues of research in gender and instructional leadership.
(BFGM1)

The programme makes reference to international literature and examples more than the local content ... We have literature and examples from our own local environment that can be cited.
(BFGM2)

Basically, there is no balance between the two, my dream would be to see a balance or a situation where we see content reflecting on our schools and our communities.
(BFGM3)

No, there is no balance at all. The programme cites more international content than local. I personally would want to see more local content cited, especially examples so that it relates better to our own environment.

(BFGM5)

Quality of facilitation

The participants expressed appreciation for the good work of the facilitators, but one also commented on the gender imbalance:

I like the way facilitators did their work. They demonstrated that they were so ... and they have good skills to impart the knowledge.

(BFGM3)

Most of the facilitators have been teachers before. They are very good. So, as they facilitate, they were able to impart the information on us. Whoever selected them, selected the best. You know, facilitators did very well to do their job. Their methods of delivery were splendid.

(BFGM5)

They presented so well, but there is no gender balance amongst the facilitators, there are more males than females.

(BFGM6)

Best parts of the LL4GE programme

The participants liked most of the programme activities, with several favouring the lectures and webinars. School-based projects were also identified by two participants:

This is a difficult question to answer because all the activities were good. The lectures and school projects top the list.

(BFGM1)

I liked group discussions and course materials, as well as the webinars that we attended online.
(BFGM3)

I liked the lectures and group discussions because we have been given opportunities to network with other participants.
(BFGM4)

I liked the school-based project. Although it was challenging because of time and resources, it was my best.
(BFGM5)

Project structure and content

The participants are satisfied with the current structure and content of the programme:

I am satisfied with the structure and content of sessions so much such that I don't feel anything should be taken out.
(BFGM1)

The structure and content are good. From the face-to-face activities to the online webinars, I do not think additions or subtractions are necessary.
(BFGM3)

I do not wish to see anything left out, the way it is in terms of structure and content is good. I do not think changes are necessary.
(BFGM6)

Focus of the school-based projects

The participants offered different responses to this question. Two focused on student absenteeism, while one addressed student discipline. Three of them chose to focus their projects on reading:

We noted that our learners are having problems with comprehension, so we chose to focus our project on reading.
(BFGM5)

Impact of the projects on schools

All the participants reported that the school-based projects are yielding results.

We believe that our reading project is going to improve the way students read, it may improve results. It may not be easy because of lack of resources but we are trying our best. Learners should understand the need for improving themselves in life.
(BFGM4)

I have started seeing some change because, in our project, we involved all the stakeholders. Even the gifted learners were deteriorating because of the Covid-19 lockdowns. Learners have been drinking alcohol and this project needs to be continued.
(BFGM5)

The benefit of this project is definitely going to be improvement of results. Learners are failing to comprehend, learners cannot read.
(BFGM6)

Impact of the LL4GE programme on teachers and learners

The participants reported positive impacts of the programme on teachers and learners:

This has come as a source of motivation for teachers who have been discouraged by the state of the economy in our country. Teachers have been feeling different, they are broken. Especially the school project has been able to rejuvenate them.
(BFGM1)

Female teachers and learners have been given crucial roles in the school. Relations have changed and definitely it is going to influence how girls are viewed. I believe they have been encouraged to participate in their own emancipation.

(BFGM2)

I guess the impact ... this programme has brought is collaborative problem-solving skills where everyone feels that practical problems are approached. Teachers are involved, the parents are involved, and the learners themselves are involved in problem-solving.

(BFGM3)

School-based changes arising from the LL4GE programme

The participants reported that some changes have been made in schools through their programme learning:

We have changed our vision and mission in line with the gender equity requirements.

(BFGM1)

We have changed many things from appointing girls in key leadership positions and making them more visible.

(BFGM2)

In BFGM5's school, there are new leadership positions for schools while, at BFGM6's school, women have been appointed to the school leadership team.

Sustainable change from the LL4GE programme

The participants' responses indicate their confidence about gains in their schools:

Indeed, the changes are sustainable since we have managed to change the school vision and mission.

(BFGM2)

We have now changed the school vision and mission to suit the new system. Gender and sports events in our school, and also the seating arrangements in our classrooms. We want to change the traditional norms.

(BFGM4)

Amongst some of the changes we have made is to ask teachers to incorporate issues of gender sensitivity when they prepare for their lessons ... LL4GE has taught us to address the gender equality issues in the school.

(BFGM6)

Inhibitors to the implementation of the LL4GE programme in schools

The participants related several factors inhibiting the implementation of the programme, notably resources and parental attitudes:

The lack of resources is the inhibiting factor, as it is our biggest challenge. Of course, there are challenges in as far as the attendance of parents in meetings is problematic. We need their support as the school does not have enough resources. Resistance from teachers has been a challenge, some are not willing to listen and learn new things. But they were resisting from the start. Right. And then there is resistance from parents. I noted that teamwork is affected and the goals we have set cannot be achieved.

(BGGM2)

Some of the things we really want to do in order to improve our teaching and learning outcomes are not possible. We don't have money to do that.

(BFGM3)

One of the challenges that I have is the network connectivity ... Now, if there could be network connectivity, I should think leaders would really improve their leadership skills. It will be very, very easy for us to share ideas.

(BFGM4)

We have the biggest challenge of resources, then teacher attitudes, parent attitudes ... some teachers just look at you and not want to make contributions.
(BGMF5)

One of the challenges I met is lack of parental support. Parents do not support school activities anymore. And when we tried to talk to parents, some of them cited that they don't see any value in education because they can see their children who are not educated being able to survive more than the educated ones.
(BFGM6)

Positive features of the LL4GE experience

The participants were very positive about the LL4GE programme, but they found it difficult to identify specific features because they valued the whole programme package:

All the activities were very good. However, the school project was the end result that evaluated our understanding of what we learnt. Teachers in their classrooms are doing something about transforming our school, so, it means everyone is now results oriented. So, I was happy about the project and the lectures.
(BFGM2)

The LL4GE programme has helped us to create a conducive school culture and climate focused on learning and gender equality in order to improve performance and behaviour. The school project is helping us to reduce the attitudes of our teachers. Somehow, I want to believe that results are going to improve because they are participating in that.
(BFGM4)

All the knowledge and skills we got from this programme have been very useful. At my school, we now have included peer observation and it is being conducted very well ... I am sure learners will perform better by the end of the year, especially that this monitoring and supervision is taking place.
(BFGM6)

Possible changes to improve the LL4GE programme

The participants unanimously agreed that there were no specific recommendations for changes to the programme. Their biggest worry was time available for the activities as they felt that more time could have been allocated.

Benefits if the LL4GE programme is implemented at scale across Zimbabwe

All participants wanted to see the programme extended to the whole country, offering different reasons to support their argument:

If the programme is extended across Zimbabwe, there are likely to be benefits much as we have started to see some changes. It is good that we speak with one voice for gender equality across the country.

(BFGM1)

Well, this programme should be extended to the whole country because, for instance, if I transfer to another school today, while we started implementing the projects, it becomes an inconvenience. We would have to go and start the implementation again. Or teachers or heads who have not been trained find themselves in schools where projects have started already. So, I think we need a holistic approach.

(BFGM4)

I think it is necessary for this project to cover the whole country because we have different experiences. As you can see, I am from the south of our province. We can share the best practices with other provinces. So, I think if we cover the whole country that will give us room to view things differently. Zimbabwe is a diverse country with diverse cultures and so forth.

(BFGM6)

Other comments

There were only a few additional comments, as participants are generally happy with the programme. They mostly suggested expanding the programme, but this has obvious resource implications:

I wish to see teachers included so that they have access to the knowledge that is so rich. I think we can as well include the parent representatives, if we could maybe have at least three members of school development committees.

(BFGM1)

Muzarabani

Introduction

This section of the report presents responses from the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with male and female participants who took part in the two LL4GE workshops held in the Muzarabani District. The participants were chosen on the basis that they had participated in the first face-to-face workshop and that they volunteered.

For the first face-to-face workshop, there were 47 male participants. 28 of these attended the second face-to-face workshop, and it was from these that the FGD male participants volunteered to participate in the FGDs. Eight participants volunteered to take part in the FGDs. Each participant was given an alphabetic letter as an identifier to ensure anonymity (B, C, D, J, K, N, S and T). While the intention of the researcher was to have an FGD with at least six or seven female participants, this was not possible. This was mainly because, out of the 14 female participants at the two-day workshop, only three had attended the first four-day face-to-face workshop. The three female participants were labelled E, M and C for the purposes of the discussion.

Motivation to join the LL4GE programme

The FGD participants indicated that they were alerted to the opportunity of the training by the MoPSE officials. The opportunity was appealing to them for personal and professional reasons. Mr J indicated that he decided to join the LL4GE programme because he wanted to be an informed school leader as in the following excerpt:

I have decided to join this programme because I wanted to be an informed leader. I wanted to be effective in assisting girl children to become just like their male counterparts. They should be able to participate in their learning and also be leaders just like their male counterparts.
(Mr J)

All three female participants were instructed to attend:

I was informed by the District Office.
(Ms E)

I was informed by the District Office to come and represent my [School] Head, not knowing about the workshop.
(Ms M)

The [school] head instructed me to come here and attend the workshop in her absence.
(Ms C)

On the other hand, two male participants reported that attending the workshop was their own decision:

I decided to join because I wanted to know matters of gender so that I can be a better educationist.
(Mr N)

Mr C had not been exposed to workshops on school leadership and gender issues during his training as a teacher. When asked to elaborate, he said:

I was interested in this programme because, at college, we did not do much on leadership and I became much more interested when I heard about gender equality and how to integrate this gender aspect into everyday tasks, so I became very much interested.
(Mr C)

Knowledge and understanding of instructional leadership

The consensus was that the LL4GE programme enhanced their knowledge and understanding of instructional leadership:

To a greater extent we have learnt a lot on how to lead. This includes lesson observation, we learnt a lot.
(Ms C)

I learnt a lot from this programme. I am going to lead by example as well as sharing with my colleagues and delegate duties to everyone at my school and, also, I am going to consider the girl child as well ... equally with the boy child.
(Ms E)

Mr K explained that the LL4GE programme enhanced his knowledge and understanding of instructional leadership. Mr S responded:

In instructional leadership there is a lot we have learnt. We have diverted from our old ways to new norms, especially when you think of examples from partners to colleagues, there is the great diversion to something which is better welcoming. Before the LL4GE programme, we had the belief that we were the bosses. Now we know we are in the team, moving as colleagues at par [the] only difference [being] in office but doing the same thing for the benefit of our learners.

(Mr S)

Overall, the participants in the FGDs appreciated that the programme has led to greater knowledge and understanding of instructional leadership. They believed that they were now better school leaders because of the knowledge and understanding of instructional leadership gained through the LL4GE programme.

Knowledge and understanding of gender equality

The participants reported that the LL4GE programme increased their knowledge and understanding of gender equality:

The LL4GE programme has assisted participants in knowing what goes through in girls and boys when they are given the assignments and tasks at school. The school leaders should not go back to their old ways where girls were given second class position in society. Now girls and boys should be accorded equal opportunities.

(Mr B)

Yes, it has improved my knowledge of gender equality because, Initially, we did not care. If, during school fees payment, the parents came and said they would want to pay for the boy child because they did not have enough money to pay for both the girl child and the boy child, we would say that was okay. It was their business. Now with the training we have been exposed to during these workshops, I am going to change the system and educate the parent to divide the money they have equally between the girl child and the boy child and tell them that girls and boys are equally important as children who deserve to be treated equally.

(Ms E)

I have learnt a lot, especially on practical subjects. We thought Food and Nutrition is only for girls because girls have the responsibility of cooking at home but through this course everyone has the right to do anything. A girl can cook, a boy can cook. On sewing, on building, girls can also build houses.

(Ms C)

While agreeing that the LL4GE programme enhanced his knowledge and understanding of gender equality, Mr J added, “I wanted to say it’s a process. It’s [gender equality] not achieved over night because it has taken too long in the systems. We are trying our level best to get into a situation where we are saying they [girls and boys] are at par.”

All the participants believed that the LL4GE programme had enhanced their knowledge and understanding of gender equality. This is evidenced in their appreciation of the challenges arising from achieving gender equality, and in their awareness of gender.

Impact of the LL4GE programme on school leadership practice

The participants mostly reported that the programme has revitalised their leadership styles and perceptions of gender. They mentioned that there had been notable changes, for example, in employing new mechanisms for running their schools, such as collaborative leadership:

Yes, it changed because, before this workshop, the [school] head was supervising teachers alone but right now we are using JDP, peer observation, after that we get together, meet, hit on strengths, weaknesses and suggestions.

(Ms M)

Yes, as a leader I lacked trust. I didn’t trust my teachers. From now onwards I am going to delegate and trust my teachers that they are going to deliver or to teach lessons as I have instructed them.

(Ms C)

Mr T indicated that he had changed his expectations towards gender and has assigning ladies the “same certain duties that I used to reserve for males”. Mr C said he had ensured that the school now had a vision which it did not have before the LL4GE programme. He added that the programme had enabled him to focus “on strategies to improve the pass rate considering that our school has got a record of a pass rate of 0%”. Mr S indicated that the school had reached an agreement “to set aside an hour for reading, we are trying to establish a school library that can be used for reading”.

Gender equality for staff and students

The participants all claim to have embraced gender equality, but the focus is generally more on the girl child and less on female members of staff. There is now an emphasis on non-discrimination between female and male participants as a result of the LL4GE programme:

The sports organiser [position] was reserved for males but now ladies can join in [be sports organisers], again in the food and nutrition department it used to be a female dominated department but now I am getting some males to be involved in that department.

(Mr J)

Now that we have learnt about gender equality, we are delegating some duties to lady teachers which we thought must be done by only male teachers. At the same time, the girls are given tasks to do the same as boys at school, like feeding the chicken and the pigs.

(Ms E)

At the level of teachers, the head of our school is a lady. Most of the time she assigns duties to ladies and the school is female dominated but, from the course that we have done, we are now balancing. We are using males and females for doing the duties at the school (Ms C).

Confirming that the LL4GE programme changed his approach to gender equality for students and/or staff, Mr K said “One aspect we have changed at our school, previously, you know boys were normally given tasks of raising the flag at assembly, and also ringing the bell, but now it is done by girls and there are doing it so well.”

Balance between instructional leadership and gender quality

All participants believe that there is an appropriate balance between instructional leadership and gender equality in the LL4GE programme. Mr T said that they do two sessions per day for gender equality and two for instructional leadership during the workshops. Ms M said “I think there is a balance because, in instructional leadership you cannot do without gender equality, ... that’s what I understand”.

Balance between international and Zimbabwean literature and examples

There was a widespread belief that there was no balance between international literature and examples, and local (Zimbabwean) material:

For me there is no appropriate balance, there is a bias towards international literature and examples. We heard about Hong Kong ... nothing on Zimbabwe. Maybe in Zimbabwe we have not written enough on gender equality and instructional leadership to be recognised.

(Ms C)

There were more foreign examples in the literature. I would like to see more of local [examples].

(Ms M)

There is more from the international partners just because Zimbabwe is still lagging behind in the aspects of gender equality. Zimbabwe is still trying to learn and develop its own Zimbabwean perspective on gender issues and copying from the international world, that is why international literature dominates.

(Mr K)

Most participants were of the view that there was more reference to international literature than local literature. They said greater use of local materials would enhance understanding of gender sensitivity in schools.

Quality of facilitation

The participants were generally happy with the quality of facilitation, but they also observed that the first face-to-face session was livelier than the second session. This could be attributed to the large number of new participants who were trying to understand the focus of the workshop, so they were not at the same level. They stated that the facilitators managed to ensure that all the participants reached the same level of knowledge and understanding, indicating that the facilitators were knowledgeable, clear and fluent in their presentations. Ms E said the facilitators' skills were improving by the day as they became more knowledgeable and more confident.

Our facilitators were really good in their presentations. They managed to help us see where we lagged behind, as in attitudes, values and beliefs.

(Mr T)

Mr J also agreed that the facilitators provided quality facilitation, and added:

However, the quality of the presentation was in some instances compromised by poor network. Where the facilitators wanted us to view videos on YouTube, we could not do that and they were forced to continue to the next session. I think our facilitators were let down by the network. There was a need for efficient and strong WiFi.
(Mr J)

Best parts of the LL4GE programme

Most participants regard the school-based project as the best part of the LL4GE programme. They viewed this as the pillar of the workshop as it provided them with the opportunity to practise what they had learnt.

Mr N stated that “the project is the best part [of the LL4GE programme]”. Mr J agreed, adding that it was initially difficult to make members of staff participate in the project. However, once they began to appreciate what it entailed, the staff members who used to be very passive and lagged behind became more active and were now participating willingly.

The best part is the school-based project because we learnt, and then implemented what we learnt. Our project is about teaching ECD B [English Reading to Early Childhood Development class B] learners.
(Ms M)

I enjoyed the school-based project where I engaged teachers and learners and other stakeholders. We managed to craft a new school vision. The one we did previously was not including gender aspects. Now we managed to craft [one] with gender sensitivity.
(Mr C)

Group work was the second most popular part of the programme:

What I liked most was group discussions, learning ideas from others during discussions, it was really helpful, and I was able to take some of the aspects [I learnt from my colleagues] and practise them at my school.
(Mr S)

The best part of the LL4GE programme for me was group work. Group work helped us as we were able to hear different views from other leaders and some of these different views from other leaders on what they were accomplishing in their schools which we could also emulate.

(Ms C)

Structure and content of the sessions

All the participants agreed that the sessions were relevant but that more time should be allocated to the sessions so they could be covered properly. They further suggested the addition of materials on Zimbabwe:

I think the content was very good ... but maybe the structure, I think most sessions were hurried, we needed some more time. Most of the sessions were packed in one day, no time to breathe, that was tiresome for some of us.

(Mr T)

All three female participants were happy with the structure and content of the session. What they suggested was the addition of more content on Zimbabwe which they felt would enhance the relevance to their contexts:

Apart from adding the local content, the structure and content of the sessions were good and I don't think there is anything else to add or subtract.

(Ms E)

Focus of school-based projects

The most popular areas of focus were reading and improving school attendance and punctuality. These were perceived as ingredients to improve the pass rate among girls and boys, but most projects were not gender-focused.

At our school, we decided to improve the level of English reading from the foundation, ECD-B Level. After analysing Grade 7 results, we found out that English affected our pass rate. So we decided to start on English reading from ECD-B level going up so that we can improve our pass rate.

(Ms M)

On my school-based project I focused on teaching of reading at Grades 2 and 3 for both girls and boys. I chose this topic because our learners are failing to make it at Grade 7 examination.

(Ms E)

Supervision of the teaching of reading in English as a way of improving reading skills in the school.

(Mr G)

At our school, we focused on the teaching of reading at infant school. This was triggered by the statistics evident from the Grade 7 results over past the years, where we realised that, of the total number of students who passed all subjects, 75 per cent were girls and only 25 per cent were boys ... So, we are focusing on the teaching of reading at foundation level to improve pass rates of boys.

(Mr K)

We saw that there was a high rate of absenteeism and bunking of lessons. We are trying to eradicate absenteeism and bunking of lessons by trying to monitor punctuality of learners.

(Mr A)

We are focusing on punctuality from all Grade 6 because there was a high number of late comers in Grade 6 classes.
(Mr N)

Impact of projects in the schools

All the participants asserted that their projects are aimed at impacting teachers' classroom practice, and to improving learning outcomes for both girls and boys:

Our project is on improving reading skills. I think we are going to have a high number of learners who will be able to read. We are going to have a change, if learners are not able to read, they won't be able to read the instructions, so there are high chances of failing. So, the impact is improved reading skills leading to better learning outcomes for girls and boys.
(Mr N)

Our project is on punctuality. We see that as a way of improving lesson attendance by our learners that it would improve school attendance by both girls and boys and result in a better pass rate.
(Mr A)

I think there will be a big improvement on performance of learners, especially the girls ... for different teaching methods we have group work, we have role play ... especially the group work method assists the girl child because ... there will be a mixture of girls and boys as they engage in group work.
(Ms C)

The impact of my project at my school is that there will be better fluency in reading by both girls and boys. This would result in improved learning outcomes reflected through higher pass rate at Grade 7.
(Ms E)

We are monitoring punctuality and the attendance by learners, we hope this will bring a positive impact on lesson attendance, it anticipated that discipline will also improve.
(Mr A)

Mr K, Mr S and Mr J are all focusing on reading with the objective of increasing learners' reading competence so that there would be no non-readers in the school, and to improve pass rates at Grade 7. Mr T stated that their project was on lesson observation. The impact was on preparedness of teachers for lessons, to improve learning outcomes.

School-based changes linked to the LL4GE programme

The participants reported remarkable improvements at their schools, which could be linked to the LL4GE programme. These relate to gender sensitivity and instructional leadership, both intended to improve the learning outcomes of both girls and boys.

We have changed staff and learners' attitudes towards gender equality. We used to see that boys are more serious than girls. But now it is no longer the case. Even among staff, male members of staff are now also taking up some duties that were previously reserved for [women].
(Mr J)

We have introduced the reading programmes, starting with the infant department, with Grade 2 coming back after lunch to read and then, every Wednesday from 2–3 o'clock, teachers are having in-service training on the teaching of reading. Teachers in the Infant department conduct a reading programme from 3 to 4 o'clock for other classes. These changes are intended to improve the learning outcomes for both girls and boys.
(Mr K)

Under the LL4GE programme, some of the changes we did at our school right now, we managed to change our school mission, code of conduct, school values and right now they are in place.
(Ms M)

We also managed to change the vision which is now gender-based, we now have a gender-based vision. All along we had a general vision, but now our core values are gender sensitive. In relation to teaching, teachers are now involving both learners [girls and boys] in their activities.

(Ms C)

These claims indicate a very positive impact of the LL4GE programme on school development, but this data should be interpreted with caution as it is self-reported.

Sustainability of the changes arising from the LL4GE programme

The sustainability of learning gains from professional development interventions is often difficult as other events and policy changes occur that may lessen their impact over time. However, the LL4GE participants state that they will continue to use their learning from the programme. They intend to continue practising instructional leadership and to ensure that gender equality is achieved. They are also prepared to share the skills obtained from the programme with their colleagues, a form of cascading that may help sustainability:

Yes, I would continue using [the LL4GE idea] ... because imbalances at the moment, in school leadership, is very apparent and it starts from the enrolment in schools. Girls drop out of school as they are disadvantaged in many ways. It requires starting from a very early age, from the classroom up to the employment level ... to empower women.

(Ms M)

If the programme is not going to cover every head in the district, I have suggested to talk to the leader to allow me the opportunity to train other school heads because I found the programme very important. I am ready to showcase what I have learnt to other school leaders using the same materials ... because the LL4GE programme is very important. There is no way the school heads can operate effectively without going through such a programme.

(Ms C)

The LL4GE materials are going to be a permanent thing as the participants and stakeholders [are going] to benefit from what I have learnt from the programme.

(Mr J)

We have agreed to incorporate the contents of the LL4GE programme into our school culture so that we continue to enjoy the benefits that I have accrued from the programme.
(Mr K)

Inhibitors to the implementation of the LL4GE programme

The factors inhibiting the implementation of LL4GE programme learning mentioned by the participants include societal cultural attitudes, financial challenges, time constraints, resource availability and other commitments, especially for teaching school leaders:

Time is limited, for example the ECD-B cannot stay at school up to four o'clock. They break at twelve o'clock and we just manage to squeeze in working with them between eleven and twelve on Wednesdays and Fridays... that time is not enough. If we give them homework, some of the parents in the communities are illiterate, they cannot read or write, so we have a disadvantage there. They cannot assist their children with homework.
(Ms M)

Resources [are] one of the most limiting factors. Teachers do not have resources to use because pupils are not paying school fees here in the rural areas ... So the school is incapacitated to provide adequate resources to teachers. Then motivation, the teachers are not motivated at all, they need motivation at school level.
(Ms C)

Teaching and learning resources, as well as infrastructure, are the main factors inhibiting the implementation of the LL4GE programme learning at my school.
(Ms E)

The other challenge is on finance. Financial support is very low as parents need some awareness on the need for financial support like paying school fees in time.
(Mr T)

The culture is an obstacle in the implementation of the LL4GE programme learning. The perception in the community is that, if you allow girls to lead in activities, they become deviant. So, even if I teach the girls issues relating to gender equality, and the need to change attitudes, girls would be reminded that they don't lead because of the culture.
(Mr S)

Mr L and Mr J both pointed to leaders' teaching responsibilities as inhibiting the implementation of their LL4GE programme learning. "For me it's other responsibilities, like we also do lessons. You also want to monitor the project, so you cannot be at both places at the same time" (Mr L).

Positive features of the LL4GE experience

The participants emphasised several positive aspects of their LL4GE experience, including collaboration, promoting gender sensitivity, course content, webinars, working on school visions as teams, and respect for one another. Three participants focused on gender equality:

The content on gender equality has made me appreciate gender equality issues and that it is a human rights issue and that I can be a champion in promoting especially gender equality.
(Mr S)

Basically, it is evident that there is an improvement in the teaching and learning for gender equality in our school.
(Mr K)

We are focusing on issues of gender inclusivity. I think it really empowered us. In our school, colleagues now share the same vision with the administration, that is, the school head, the deputy school head, teachers, pupils and parents. Without any difficulties we are all moving towards the same goal.
(Mr T)

Two participants emphasised instructional leadership:

I found a lot of value, I can point out teamwork issues of seeing each other as colleagues very important, the idea of coming up with a vision which we pursue together.
(Mr N)

Instructional leadership ... teachers and learners have started enjoying the day-to-day services at the school. After the first workshop, we gave feedback to the teachers. The teachers started to change the way they conducted their lessons and the learners started to enjoy their lessons.
(Ms C)

Another participant stressed the importance of community involvement:

The community embraced this project through our SDC. We did not manage to gather parents because of their work in the fields but we talked to SDC and they embraced it. They also told us they were going to buy some ECD-B textbooks for our ECD-B learners, for them to read.
(Ms M)

Ms E mentioned that the LL4GE programme helped educators to build teamwork, to share responsibilities at work, to respect each other's opinion and to share ideas, while Ms M stressed the value of the school-based project:

The positive features of the LL4GE programme include the school- based project. I gained quite a lot and appreciate what I have learnt. Often, we attend workshops and training, but we don't get the opportunity to try to apply the skills that we would have acquired. Now we have a situation of trying to apply what we have learnt practically.
(Ms M)

Recommended changes to improve the LL4GE programme

The changes suggested by the participants mostly focused on practical issues, such as connectivity, provision of handouts, transport to the venue, quality of venues, greater use of local examples, and the time allocated for the workshops:

There is a need to give out handouts, hard copies, so that when facilitators are presenting, participants are following up and are not busy making notes.
(Mr N)

I think we need to have some handbooks that we can use as we follow the presentations by the facilitators. We failed to get through those webinars due to network problems.
(Ms C)

That is what I wanted to say again that webinars, as I said before, were an advantage because we will be asking and learning online, but there was a challenge of the network. We also need the booklets.
(Ms M)

One thing I think they must add are more local examples, such that when we are giving feedback to the school stakeholders, we can refer to local examples that they can relate to rather than those examples that are difficult to relate to, for example, when you say in Hong Kong they do this or that, some of people have never heard a country called Hong Kong so they can not relate what you are saying.
(Mr S)

[For] today's venue ... the room is not good enough even when the rain comes [corrugated iron makes a lot of noise, and we could not hear what the facilitators were saying].
(Mr N)

Mr C mentioned that Muzarabani had poor internet connectivity so he thought facilitators should have considered that in planning because participants felt like resources were wasted. For example, while the participants were given many gigabytes of data, they could not connect.

Benefits if the LL4GE programme is implemented at scale across Zimbabwe

The general perception of the participants was that implementing the LL4GE programme across Zimbabwe would impact positively on the nation as there would be improved pass rates among both girls and boys. Changes would be noticed in the way schools are run and there would be increased gender sensitivity among the citizens:

The education system will be at an advanced level if the LL4GE programme is being implemented at a wider scale across Zimbabwe.

(Ms E)

The zero percent pass rates will disappear if the LL4GE programme is cascaded to include the whole country.

(Mr C)

Other comments

The participants were very complimentary about the LL4GE programme:

No comments, everything done was good and we learnt a lot.

(Ms C)

It was a good programme, and it should be cascaded to all school leaders in Zimbabwe.

(Mr J)

I just want to say thank you to the organisers of the workshops. We learnt a lot, so we are expecting more programmes of this kind.

(Mr T)

Thank you for the programme, it was an eye opener, it was a good programme to us.

(Mr S)

Some participants made suggestions to do with practical aspects of the workshops:

It is good for the facilitators to find out if they have a nice structure that can comfortably accommodate us, with nice ablution facilities, with readily available WiFi connectivity.
(Ms M)

Another participant emphasised that the lack of resources should not be underrated as they do not have resources, while another argued that the programme needs to be evaluated, to see its impact on schools and leadership.

Overview of Muzarabani workshops

The programme on instructional leadership and gender equality was an eye opener to most participants despite the challenges experienced by some of them. Participants appreciated the need for instructional leadership, while there was clear shift away from traditional beliefs about leadership and gender. The general feeling was that such programmes needed more frequency and expansion, and that Zimbabwe would benefit from scaling up the LL4GE programme.

A few specific recommendations arise from the Muzarabani focus group data. First, the duration of the workshops should be reviewed, as they were perceived to be rushed. Second, it would be valuable to conduct pre- and post-programme visits to schools to assess the impact of the programme.

This would help to triangulate participants' comments. Third, the in-country researchers can help identifying local sources to address the criticism that the programme is over-reliant on international literature and examples. Fourth, the webinars were compromised by challenges ranging from internet connectivity to commitments at work. It might be useful to have participants go to venues where they will be assured of connectivity and that no pupils or parents or staff would come into their offices disturbing their participation in the webinar. Thorough training in the use of ICT if participants are to benefit from webinar session.

Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe: Female focus group

Introduction

This focus group comprised seven female school heads, who attended all LL4GE programme activities.

Motivation to join the LL4GE programme

Participants reported that the opportunity was extended to all substantive and acting school heads in the district, both male and female, from both registered and unregistered schools, including public and private schools.

Benefits of the LL4GE programme: Instructional leadership

The programme was regarded as having enhanced knowledge and understanding of instructional leadership through capacity building in instructional leadership and gender equality. For instructional leadership, participants mentioned the following areas of capacity building:

- How to lead through teamwork
- Lesson observation
- Giving feedback
- Focused walks
- Stakeholder involvement

Practice in these areas was reported to have changed in response to programme learning:

My approach to instructional leadership has changed, I now consider teamwork and stakeholder engagement as some of the values that I uphold; as a result, my community has changed, we had a stakeholder meeting to craft a school vision and values, which is something that I learnt from the programme. I invited key stakeholders that include members of the school development committee, the police, school leaders from neighbouring schools, traditional leaders, representatives of learners and the business community. They all appreciated the involvement and contributed to the process. This promoted ownership of the school among the stakeholders.

(UMPFGDF1)

The way I conduct lesson observation has changed. I used to just go without first sitting down with the teacher on what I would be observing and the purpose of the observation, without even any instrument to use for lesson observation. I would then just sit in the classroom during the lesson and leave at the end of the lesson. I did not have any urgency to give feedback to the teacher. But now, I am doing things differently. I now have a lesson observation instrument for use, I sit down with the teacher before going for lesson observation and spell out the expectations. I ask permission from the teacher to record the lesson for use in the feedback meeting. I then sit down with the teacher within 48 hours of the lesson observation for feedback. In my feedback I do not just mention areas for improvement, but I also mention the teacher's strengths.

(UMPFGDF2)

I have attended four induction workshops but this one is unique. it has changed my leadership approach in many areas that include organising feedback, I now have an open-door policy, I used to think gender issues among teachers only, not pupils. But now I look at pupils with a gender lens too.

(UMPFGDF3)

Benefits of the LL4GE programme: Gender equality

Participants reported several aspects of gender equality learning arising from the LL4GE programme:

- Gender-responsive pedagogy
- Considering the unique experiences of boys and girls in class
- Challenging traditional gender norms in the way we handle students and teachers
- Dealing with stereotypes
- Dealing with unconscious biases
- Dealing with teacher and students' attitudes towards gender equality

Practice was reported to have developed in several ways following the LL4GE programme:

- Provision of sanitary wear at school to deal with absenteeism of female pupils during their menstruation period
- Encouraging male pupils to take subjects that are traditionally considered to be female ones, such as home economics, and fashion and fabrics
- Encouraging female pupils to take up subjects that are traditionally regarded as male ones, such as building, welding and agriculture
- Encouraging nomination of girls as school captains
- Using language that is gender-sensitive during lessons

- Allowing female teachers to take Grade 6 and 7 classes, which were previously only allocated to male teachers because of stereotyping of female teachers as not capable of handling these classes
- Adding the gender component to the classroom supervision template
- Introduction of remedial classes for girls who were struggling with technical subjects

Quality of facilitation

Generally, the facilitation was regarded as good but there were two reservations. First, some facilitators were perceived to spend too much time sharing examples of their own practice, instead of asking the participants to share their own experiences and to learn from each other. Second, some facilitators were perceived not to show ownership of the slides, suggesting that they had not internalised the material.

Balance between instructional leadership and gender equality

The female participants felt that there was an appropriate balance between instructional leadership and gender equality and did not suggest any additional topics. However, they were concerned that the gender equality component required more depth and discussion considering the attitudes and biases among school leaders.

Balance between international and Zimbabwean literature and examples

There was a concern that most of the examples or literature cited were international, at the expense of local examples and literature. However, there was an appreciation that some of the examples were from Africa, hence they could identify with some of the experiences.

Best parts of the LL4GE programme

The participants ranked different parts of the programme parts in order of preference:

1. **Course material** was rated highly because participants felt they have been empowered to have reference material for future use. Participants appreciated the support with data bundles because it enabled them to access course material shared on the WhatsApp platform.
2. **Lectures** helped to clarify course materials.
3. **Networking** with other participants was seen as one key benefit of the project as school leaders felt they had limited networking opportunities in the district.
4. **School-based project** was rated low because of the limited timeframe for completion. These female school leaders felt that the school-based project is an important component of the programme because through it the success of the programme can be measured, but they were given only two weeks to implement it. They felt that more time needed to be allocated for them to be able to measure the impact of the programme on learning outcomes for female learners. They proposed that the project be allocated an equivalent of a term – three months – for implementation, to allow monitoring of progress and impact. They also felt that the school-based project needed supervision and guidance from the facilitators, which was not available to the school leaders.
5. **Feedback** on the school-based projects was only given at the reflective workshop and participants felt this was too late because mistakes had already been made.

It was suggested that participants get feedback at every stage of the school-based project (UMPF4GDF4).

6. **Group discussions** were not seen as fruitful because of time constraints. Not much time was allocated to group work. In some cases, it was five minutes, and no meaningful discussions took place. An example given was that, when assigned group work, due to time constraints, the participants would just request a volunteer who would present what they think, without having discussed the topic as a group.
7. **Webinars** were given the lowest ranking due to the network and connectivity challenges faced by the participants. All the participants reported challenges to connect, hence they missed the presentations. However, one reported that she later managed to access the webinar recording.

Overall, the participants felt that the programme needed more time, a week for the first workshop and two to three days for the reflective workshop. They felt that everyone needed to present their school-based project at the reflective workshop, to obtain feedback that would improve the project but, due to time constraints, only a few projects were presented.

Focus of the school-based projects

The seven female participants each identified the focus of their projects. Four projects addressed gender equality issues while the other foci were the school development plan, learner absenteeism, and building teamwork (see table).

Table 15: Impact of LL4GE on teachers and learners

Name of school ¹	School-based project title	Rationale	Anticipated project impact
Chimuti Secondary	Geography remedial lessons for girls	Girls failing geography and therefore there was reduced interest among girls	Rejuvenated interest in geography among girls and higher pass rates
Nyarutenga Secondary	School Development Plan	Did not have a school development plan	School development based on agreed plan
Brave Secondary	Absenteeism of learners	High levels of learner absenteeism	Improved attendance rates
Excel Secondary	Promoting girl child education through accelerated learning	Low pass rates among girls	Higher performance among girls

¹The names are pseudonyms, not the schools' actual names

Focus Primary	Building teamwork	Limited teamwork and the need to improve results for male and female staff	Teamwork that produces good results in the school
Sterling Primary	Empowering girl child education through accelerated learning	Low pass rates among girls	High performance among girls
Race Secondary	Promoting girl child education through accelerated learning	Poor performance among girls	High performance among girls

Participants mentioned the following school-based impacts from the LL4GE programme:

- Greater motivation among teachers due to their involvement in school activities
- Improved participation of female learners in school governance and in technical subjects
- Enhanced teaching and learning due to the feedback from lesson observations

Sustainability of the changes arising from the LL4GE programme

The participants believe that programme gains are sustainable for several reasons:

- Teamwork within schools
- Networking with other school heads in the district
- Continuing with the school-based project
- Availability of course materials for future reference

Inhibitors to the implementation of LL4GE programme learning

Several factors were identified as inhibiting the implementation of LL4GE programme learning:

- More resources were required to implement some aspects of the school-based projects, but funding is not available.
- Some LL4GE-trained leaders are transferred to other schools, hence the need to train teachers as well.
- Teacher, parent and learner attitudes are problematic, particularly in relation to the gender-related components of the programme. An example given was that, when girls were encouraged to enrol in technical subjects, their parents discouraged them, explaining that they had not seen any women doing those subjects. Teachers also resisted, believing girls do not perform well in those subjects, and the girls themselves resisted, as they do not think they will be able to perform well in the subjects. Fees and other requirements for the technical subjects were also too much and their parents could not afford to pay these extra fees.

Recommended changes to improve the LL4GE programme

These female participants made the following recommendations to improve the programme:

- Replace webinars with face-to-face workshops for effective results.
- Use more local case studies and literature.
- Extend the duration of the workshops and the school-based project.
- Train district inspectors as well because they are responsible for supervision of school leaders. This would ensure that they adjust their supervision instruments to include some of the areas on which school leaders were trained, including gender equality.
- Train teachers as well because of the high mobility of school leaders.
- The programme should have a gender awareness component for surrounding communities.
- Refresher courses should be made available.
- Exchange visits to promote learning and sharing of good practices.

Benefits of implementing the LL4GE programme at a wider scale across Zimbabwe

The participants mentioned several benefits from implementing the LL4GE programme on a wider scale across Zimbabwe:

- Improved school governance and leadership by the school leaders
- Improved performance of girls in schools
- Greater gender equality in both schools and communities

Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe: Male focus group

Introduction

The group comprised eight male school heads, who attended all LL4GE programme activities.

Motivation to join the LL4GE programme

Participants reported that the opportunity was extended to all substantive and acting school heads in the district, both male and female, from both registered and unregistered schools, including public and private schools. Hence, it was mandatory for every school head in UMP to be part of the programme. However, the challenge was on continuity as participants who attended some sessions and missed others due to government related commitments and demands, such as the population census.

Benefits of the LL4GE programme: Instructional leadership

Participants hailed the programme for enhancing their knowledge of instructional leadership. The benefits include improved leadership skills:

The programme taught me the importance of teamwork and building trust. I now engage and consult regularly with teachers in my school. Teamwork has significantly improved. We now operate as a family.
(UMPF GDM2)

We now conduct lesson observation as a team comprising the school head, the deputy head and the senior teacher. This allows for triangulation which results in effective feedback to the teacher.
(UMPF GDM6)

I went back to my school and designed an instrument for use during focused walks. We are already using this instrument.
(UMPF GDM7)

Benefits of the LL4GE programme: Gender equality

Participants also appreciated the knowledge gained on gender equality, revealing that they had theoretical appreciation of gender issues from college, but the training equipped them with practical knowledge and skills on mainstreaming gender in the school environment, in classrooms during lessons, and in monitoring and evaluation. The programme was also applauded for changing the attitudes of the participants towards gender equality. The following are examples of the changes observed by the participants:

I did not wear a gender lens in my work as a school head. Technical subjects in my school are male dominated but I never bothered to find out why girls shunned these subjects. After the LL4GE programme, I decided to establish why girls shun technical subjects and I was told a number of reasons that include costs of technical subjects, stereotyping of girls who take male subjects and lack of suitable attire for use during practical sessions, lack of tools and inability to use the tools as some may be heavy. I then talked to teachers about ensuring that we have gender sensitive technical subjects in the school. We motivated both parents and pupils and the response was positive. Now we have 10 girls in building, and we also have some boys who joined sewing.
(UMPF GDM1)

We used to have male captains in our school but after this programme I encouraged the school to select a female captain, so we have a female captain; the vice-captain is a boy.
(UMPFGDM3)

After the training, I went back and sat down with stakeholders to have a look at our vision and mission statement which were crafted over 15 years ago. We managed to revise both to reflect issues of inclusivity.
(UMPFGDM4)

We established a gender equality committee at our school responsible for overseeing mainstreaming of gender in the school.
(UMPFGDM5)

Quality of facilitation

Generally, the facilitation was regarded as good. However, there were concerns that facilitators for such heavily packed programmes should be motivational speakers and innovative to keep the participants active and alert. Participants were not happy with some facilitators who spent much of the time sharing personal testimonies instead of allowing the participants to share experiences and learn from each other. In addition, it was reported that some of the facilitators did not show ownership of the slides they were presenting; they had not internalised the material on the slides.

Balance between instructional leadership and gender equality

The male participants felt that there was an appropriate balance between instructional leadership and gender equality and did not suggest any additional topics. However, they were concerned that justice was not done to the gender equality component which they felt needed more depth and discussion, considering the attitudes and biases among school leaders, especially male school leaders.

Balance between international and Zimbabwean literature and examples

There was a concern that most of the examples or literature cited were international at the expense of local ones. There was, however, an appreciation that some of the examples were from Africa, specifically Uganda and Kenya, hence they could identify with some of the experiences.

Best parts of the LL4GE programme

The male participants ranking different parts of the programme parts in order of preference:

- 1. Course material:** Participants felt they were empowered with reference material for personal use and for localised training at their schools. However, they requested instruments for focused walks as well as lesson observations. Participants appreciated the support with data bundles which helped them to access course material shared on the WhatsApp platform.
- 2. Networking with other participants** was considered one key benefit of the programme because it allowed sharing of lessons and best practices among school leaders, which was not common in the district. They also felt that the programme promoted team building by bringing together school heads. The WhatsApp group was seen as a platform to continue facilitating sharing of lessons and good practices.
- 3. Lectures** helped to clarify some aspects of LL4GE learning. As one participant remarked, “lectures are helpful because they bring all the people together, they are motivational”.
- 4. School-based project** was rated low because of the timeframe within which it was supposed to be completed. Participants felt that the school-based project is an important component of the programme because it enabled the success of the programme to be measured but they were only given two weeks to implement it. They felt that more time needed to be allocated to it for them to be able to measure the impact of the programme on learning outcomes for female learners. They proposed the project be allocated at least two months citing that, as school leaders, they have teaching loads that also demand their time, so the project needed more time. Participants also felt that the school-based project needed supervision and guidance from the facilitators, and the exchange of ideas, even in the WhatsApp group. They also recommended exchange visits to be part of the school-based project to learn from each other’s project.
- 5. Group discussions:** Participants felt that the group discussions could be more fruitful if sufficient time was allocated to them, but due to time constraints, they did not benefit much from them.
- 6. Webinars** were given the lowest ranking due to the network and connectivity challenges that the participants faced. All the participants reported that they had challenges to connect, hence they missed the presentations. An additional challenge was lack of knowledge on using such platforms; most of the participants reported that it was their first time to attend a webinar. They also felt that the webinars were too abstract; a simulation of the actual classroom at webinars would help to guide the participants better.

Generally, the male participants felt that the programme needed more time – a week for the first workshop and two to three days for the reflective workshop. They felt that everyone needed to present their school-based project at the reflective workshop to obtain feedback that would improve the project but, due to time constraints, only a few projects were presented.

Impact of LL4GE on teachers and learners

The male participants mentioned the following impacts in their schools following the LL4GE programme:

- Greater teamwork arising from the involvement of teachers and stakeholders in running the school
- Improved uptake of technical subjects by female learners
- Enhanced teaching and learning due to the feedback from lesson observations
- More visibility of female teachers as they now actively participate in school activities
- More efficient running of schools

Sustainability of the changes arising from the LL4GE programme

The male participants felt that the sustainability of programme gains was informed by several factors, including:

- Attitudes towards gender equality
- Refresher training
- Teamwork within schools
- Networking with other school heads in the district
- Continuing with the school-based project
- Availability of course material for future reference

Inhibitors to the implementation of LL4GE programme learning

Several factors were mentioned as inhibiting the implementation of LL4GE programme learning:

- Lack of resources to implement the components of the school-based projects that require funding
- High mobility of school leaders
- Transfer of school leaders that were trained, hence the need to train teachers as well

Recommended changes to improve the LL4GE programme

The following recommendations were offered by the male participants:

- Have a handbook of instruments for monitoring and evaluation, such as for lesson observation and focused walks.
- Replace webinars with face-to-face workshops for effective results.
- Provide WiFi for internet connection.
- Have more local case studies and literature.
- Provide hard copies of the programme material.
- Identification of motivational speakers to become facilitators.
- Extend the duration of the workshops as well as the school-based project.

- Train district inspectors as well because they are responsible for supervision of school leaders. Their training will ensure that they adjust the supervision instruments to include areas on which school leaders were trained, including gender equality.
- Train teachers as well, because of the high mobility of school leaders.
- The programme should have a gender awareness component for surrounding communities because the gains at school can be inhibited by negative attitudes and stereotyping in communities.
- Refresher courses, considering the dynamic nature of gender issues.
- Exchange visits in the district, as well as with other districts that participated in the programme, to promote learning and sharing of good practices.

Benefits of implementing the LL4GE programme at a wider scale across Zimbabwe

The male participants gave the following benefits of implementing the programme at a wider scale across Zimbabwe:

- Improved school governance and leadership by the school leaders
- Teamwork
- Improved performance of girls in schools
- Greater gender equality in schools and communities

12. Findings: Non-participant observation of the reflective workshops

The LL4GE programme learning concluded with reflective workshops for all three groups, Beitbridge, Muzarabani and Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe. The researchers observed each of these workshops.

Beitbridge

The Beitbridge workshop included participants from two districts, Beitbridge and Gwanda. A total of 51 school leaders attended the workshop, 34 from Beitbridge (eight women and 26 men), and 17 from Gwanda (three women and 14 men). The workshop was also attended by three district officials, one from Beitbridge and two from Gwanda. There were five facilitators, one from the province, three district inspectors, and one school head. Four are male, while one of the district schools' inspectors is female. The workshop also hosted a director of ceremonies, and representatives from the British Council and the Higher Life Foundation. The workshop was arranged in eight groups of seven people.

Day 1

The workshop began with introductions and all participants arrived on time.

Session 1: Feedback

The male facilitator led a discussion about the nature of feedback, following up from the webinar, and why this should be gender-sensitive. Participants offered examples of unconscious gender imbalance. Several participants mentioned that they missed webinars because of poor connectivity.

Session 2: Lesson observation and moderation

The female facilitator led a discussion about lesson observation and moderation, linked to gender balance in pedagogy. In group work, participants gave examples from their own contexts. Several challenges were reported by participants, including limited resources, time constraints, and negative teacher attitudes. Some textbooks were reported to perpetuate gender inequality.

Session 3: Joint practice development

The male facilitator led a discussion about joint practice development, compared to CPD. International and local literature are mentioned, and the facilitator stressed that teaching and learning should be gender sensitive. Participants again stressed the problem of limited resources.

Session 4: School-based projects

Participants were given five minutes each to present their projects, most of which focused on reading, absenteeism or discipline. Other participants asked questions. Gendered roles at home were mentioned as affecting girls, as well as lack of support and negative attitudes from parents and communities.

Day 2

Session 1: School-based projects

More participants were given five minutes to present their projects, with clear guidance from the male facilitator that they should implement what they have learned through their projects and focus on gender inclusive projects. Other participants asked questions, leading to discussion. The participants stressed that the time for the project was too short to see meaningful changes.

Muzarabani

The Muzarabani workshop included 57 participants – 14 women and 43 men. Almost half the participants were new to the programme, and only 31 (three women and 28 men) attended both workshops. This has implications for continuity of LL4GE learning. There were four facilitators, two women and two men. Three of the four facilitators (two women and one man) did not attend the initial workshop. The MoPSE head office was represented by two people and there were also two people from the Muzarabani district, as well as a British Council representative.

Day 1

Session 1: Introductions and workshop programme

The male facilitator started with introductions and then outlined the workshop programme. It was clear that the new participants were learning for the first time, rather than building on their previous knowledge. The ‘missing’ participants were contributing to the national census.

Session 2: Giving effective feedback

The female facilitator started by explaining that they would be covering the effective feedback material from the webinar. Participants were asked to write down what they expected from the workshop, and these ideas were shared with the whole group. This was largely a ‘catch-up’ session for people who missed the first workshop. The participants were allocated activities to prepare in groups. These focused on project monitoring, and how to improve gender equality.

The participants engaged the following questions, in groups of three: What is feedback? How would you define the term feedback? What is the purpose of feedback? What makes feedback effective? The purpose of feedback was discussed with participants understanding that it was intended to help teachers understand their strengths and weaknesses. The participants were lively and engaged when completing a quiz on feedback although their comments were drowned out by heavy rain falling on the corrugated roofs. They were also engaged when discussing the skills required for effective feedback.

Session 3: School-based project

Participants were given ten minutes to present their projects in groups. Most participants reported that their projects were progressing very well. One participant, whose project was on reading, said that “there is an improvement in pronouncing words and sentence construction”. On challenges they were facing, one male participant said:

Shortage of resources: Some children are socialised to certain roles and it is difficult to change their attitudes. Some female learners were taught that they did not have to be educated since they were going to be married. I engaged parents to reorient them. I showed them that females can excel and be important people in life, pointing to one who was a Provincial Education Director.

The facilitators were rushing through the material, as this was intended to be revision, but many participants were new and unfamiliar with these ideas.

Session 4: Lesson observation

A male facilitator led a session on lesson observation, linked to Webinar 2. Participants worked in groups to address the challenges of lesson observation. Understaffing and limited resources were identified as the main challenges. The facilitator was stimulating and participants appeared to enjoy the session. The session continued with discussion of planning for classroom observation, including an observation template. There was also discussion of peer observation, and of awareness of gender variables during observations.

Session 5: Joint practice development

The male facilitator led a discussion of Joint Practice Development (JPD), linked to webinar three. The participants engaged the meaning of JPD and were asked to define it. The facilitator added two diagrams explaining JPD. It requires two or more people, and is an activity focused on teachers’ practice. It appears that most participants had not read the articles by Maggie Farrar and David Hargreaves. The characteristics of JPD were unpacked by participants. Examples were discussed from international contexts, China, Hong Kong, Ontario and Singapore. Use of Zimbabwean examples would have helped participant engagement.

Following a lunch-break, the session continued with a discussion about the differences between JPD and CPD. Discussion continued about the meaning of focused learning walks. The session was packed and included material that should have appeared in webinar three.

Session 6: Report back

Participants were very active during this session, as they reported on the progress of their projects, focused on improved learning outcomes for girls and boys. Strategies to record and improve attendance and punctuality were presented by some participants, as were plans to improve interactions between learners and teachers.

Day 2

Session 1: learning recapitulation

The male facilitator asked participants what they had learnt from the webinars and the day one workshop. The participants were very active. One participant said, “Lesson observation, we learnt that it needs to be done properly and to agree on when it is to be done.”

Another said, “Lesson observation helps the teacher to reinforce what they had learnt.”

Another participant said, “Lesson observation is not fault finding but to improve teaching and learning”. A female participant said, “In lesson observation we consider the three components, teacher, pupil and content.” Another female participant said, “We learnt about JPD.”

Session 2: school-based projects

The participants presented their school-based projects, leading to discussion and a review of learning from the projects. A male participant, on behalf of his group, reported that, on the Impact of JPD, it made them realise it yields “positive, collaborative shared responsibility to improve teaching and learning, ... enhances self-awareness and leads to positive social change”. A female participant, on behalf of her group, said that feedback improves professional development. In lesson observation, the focus should be on gender equality – participation of girls and boys. “Distribution of textbooks should be the same between girls and boys ... Awards for both girls and boys must be equal.” Another female participant said they had improved lesson observation skills, communication skills, planning strategies, teamwork, gender sensitivity and lesson observation skills”. Another group mentioned improved communication, teamwork, coherence and logic.

Session 3: School-based projects

This session featured presentations and discussion about school-based projects, including consideration of the impact of teacher professional development on the quality of teaching. The participants were encouraged to share their projects with school stakeholders.

Overview of Muzarabani workshop

The facilitators closely followed the handbooks, to ensure that participant learning matched intended outcomes of the workshops and the wider programme. The participants took the workshop, what they learnt, the activities and the projects, very seriously. They appreciated the value they were getting from the workshop and the facilitators. They testified that they were transformed school administrators who benefited from the LL4GE training. They were now aware of their biases and the need to run schools differently. Given the importance of this training, the researcher is of the view that the workshop was rushed and should have been given more days to receive feedback and more guidance, especially in a programme that emphasised the importance of feedback. Secondly, though it was emphasized during the first workshop that the same participants should attend the second face-to-face workshop, there were many new school leaders attending the workshop for the first time.

This led to subdued participation during the workshop in many sessions. This was worsened by the fact that only one of the facilitators who facilitated during the first workshop was present. Those who did not attend were on national duty to facilitate the census. However, the workshop was still a success as the new participants appeared to have been well briefed by their heads.

Recommendations

The LL4GE programme proved to be very useful to the participants, who attested to the transformation it was bringing to school leaders. It is important that the programme be scaled to more school leaders and teachers in the country. As the LL4GE programme is scaled, there is a need for researchers to sample schools of the targeted school leaders and establish

progress. This will enable them to judge the impact or changes wrought by the training.

The sampled schools should be visited to establish the veracity of the impact claimed by the school leader.

Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe

The UMP workshop included 51 participants, 16 women and 35 men. Almost half the participants (25) were new to the programme, representing their heads who were unable to attend. Some of these new participants were unable to present their school's projects because they were not familiar with them. In contrast, some participants who had not attended previous sessions were able to present their school-based projects well, because the trained school leaders were involving other teachers in the project. Other major challenges, that affected the sustainability of the project results, were that of the 37 school leaders in the district, only one was substantive, and the high mobility of teachers. For example, it was reported that, of the trained school leaders, two had already transferred to other districts before they completed the programme. The facilitators of the initial workshops were also not present at this reflective workshop, and they were replaced by two new male facilitators. The workshop was also attended by six representatives from the district and provincial offices.

Day 1

The day began with introductions as many participants were new to the workshop, followed by a review of the programme for the day:

Session 1: Introduction and review of learning

Arrangements for project presentations

Observing lessons: review principles and practice

Session 2: Gender-sensitive and responsive pedagogy: observation and feedback

Session 3: School-based projects: presentation and discussion

Session 4: School-based projects: presentation and discussion

Participants were divided into groups for presentations of school-based projects later in the day. The discussion then shifted to a reflection on key learning from the webinars and the impact on school leaders' practice:

- Giving effective feedback
- Lesson observation moderation
- Joint Practice Development
- Gender-sensitive and responsive pedagogy: Participants reported on the impact of the webinars, including: Involvement of stakeholders, including the teachers in the feedback process, which led to buy in and ownership of the recommendations.
- Teamwork
- Gender mainstreaming, resulting in inclusive processes
- Improvement in the quality of teaching

The session was held in groups to save time, considering the number of presentations required.

Session 3: School-based projects

This session focused on presentation of the projects. Participants indicated that they needed guidance on the focus of school-based projects. The following issues were raised by participants: What really is a school-based project? What should it look like? What format should it follow? What is the duration?

The following format was then agreed on and shared for future use:

- Title of the school-based project: indicating what problem the project intends to address
- Problem: briefly describing the problem to be addressed
- Objectives of the project: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound
- Process: a step-by-step account of what was done or what is to be done
- Concept: What LL4GE concepts did you learn that you are applying to the school-based project?
- Results: What results have you seen from the school-based project?
- What challenges did you encounter and how did you work around them?
- Conclusion and way forward

With this guidance, participants reflected on their school-based projects and reported that they needed this guidance before embarking on the projects. They expressed concern about the limited timeframe within which the projects were to be implemented, as the short timeframe meant that stakeholder engagement could not take place. Some participants had not progressed far with the project – they were still at the consultation stage, depending on the nature of the project.

Only two school-based projects were presented on Day 1, because of time constraints.

Day 2

Day 2 started with participants seeking clarification on the difference between Continuous Practice Development (CPD) and Joint Practice Development (JPD), characteristics of a highly effective CPD, and how to implement CPD, before moving on to presentations of school-based projects. Seven projects were presented on Day 2, as half a day was devoted to the workshop. The rest of the projects could not be presented due to time constraints. Each presentation was followed by a discussion.

Day 2 finished with closing remarks from district and provincial level representatives, and the British Council.

Recommendations

- The duration of school-based projects should be extended.
- A template for projects should be shared with participants.
- Facilitators should provide guidance throughout project implementation.
- Participants with similar projects should share their ideas.

- The facilitators should be the same for both workshops, to provide continuity.
- There should be more female facilitators.
- The same participants should attend both workshops, to provide continuity.

13. Findings: Impact survey

This impact survey builds on the baseline work to provide a longitudinal approach. The survey was developed with three main objectives:

- To ascertain participant understanding of the philosophy, underlying theory, and consequent practices of instructional leadership and gender equality to be developed in schools in Zimbabwe
- To gauge opinion about the content, delivery, and support arising from facilitator involvement in the course
- To consider the possible application of instructional leadership and gender equality principles to policy and practice in Zimbabwean schools

The impact survey questionnaire was completed fully by 164 respondents, and there were a further 28 incomplete submissions, hence the variations in comparing the content of the tables below. Some of the Muzarabani responses, marked *, have been limited because of a problem with circulating one block of questions. In the tables which follow, abbreviations may be used to identify gender, location, and educational sector: **Male/Female**: **Beitbridge**, **Muzarabani**, **UMP**: **Primary/Secondary**.

Respondents

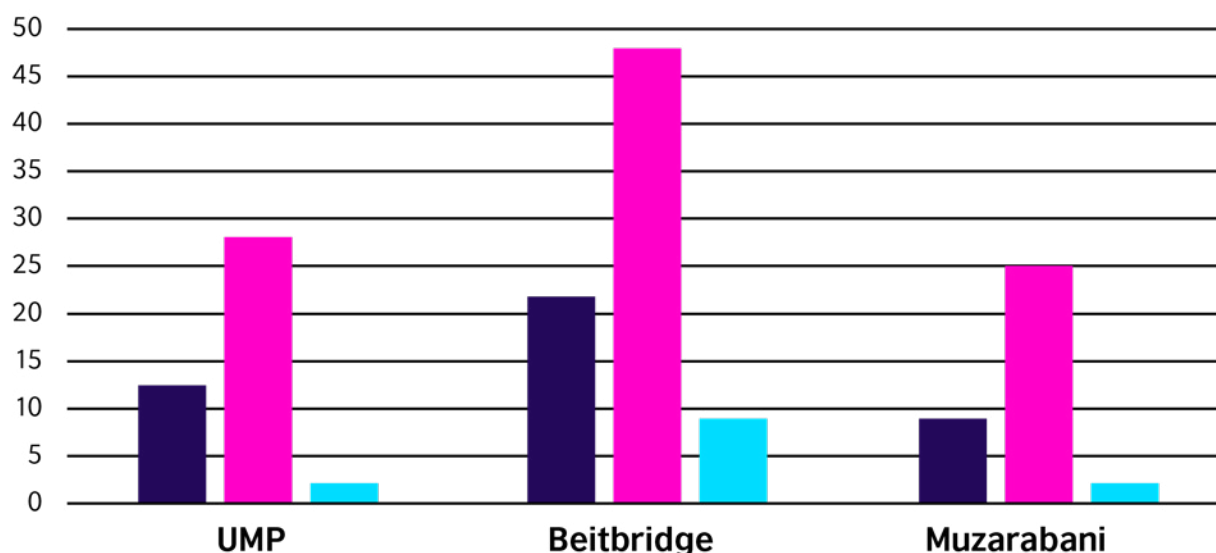
For the respondents who provided full answers, the district, sector and gender are shown in Table 16. While the largest groups were both males and females from Beitbridge (n=55 and n=20), the overall ratio in the primary sector is 3:1 for males to females (n=127 and n=36), falling to 5:1 in Muzarabani (n=38 and n=8) and 4:1 in UMP.

Table 16: Percentage and number of respondents by district, sector and gender

District	Male	Female	Primary (male)	Primary (female)	Secondary (male)	Secondary (female)
Beitbridge 46% (n=75)	55	20	46	18	9	2
Muzarabani 28% (n=46)	38	8	27	6	11	2
UMP 26% (n=42)	34	8	23	7	11	1
Total 100% (n=163)	127 (77%)	36 (23%)	96 (58%)	31 (19%)	31 (19%)	5 (4%)

While many of the respondents were following the programme throughout, as shown in Figure 1, partial attendance may have affected views expressed later in this report. About one quarter of the respondents only attended the introductory session in the three districts, while a few ‘new’ participants attended only the final reflective workshop; one person in UMP and Muzarabani, and eight in Beitbridge. Open comments suggest that some of these may have been district officials.

Figure 1: Workshop attendance: Respondents



It is not possible to determine whether these single-session leaders have completed the survey with an overall view or for the sessions they attended only. Compared with the almost complete return for the baseline survey, impact views are given by only two-thirds of the number; 297 (baseline) and 197 (impact), complete and partial submissions, and this may affect the findings, if those who have not responded may have been carrying negative views but declined to share them for confidentiality reasons. The in-country researchers report that some principals were required to remain at their schools, or to undertake government duties, and sent deputies or other staff for the final reflective workshop. Analysis by district, gender and sector, shown in Table 17, details a remarkable consistency of attendance for both sessions, or the first session only, despite the variation in respondent numbers.

Table 17: Number and percentage attending workshops, by district, gender and sector

Group	Both workshops	Initial workshop only	Final workshop only
Beitbridge	50 (62%)	23 (28 %)	8 (10%)
Muzarabani	19 (68%)	8 (28%)	1 (3%)
UMP	27 (66%)	1 (3%)	1 (2%)
Male	65 (66%)	32 (32%)	2 (3%)

Female	31 (68%)	12 (24%)	7 (14%)
Primary	60% (70)	37 (32%)	9 (8%)
Secondary	77% (27)	7 (20%)	1 (3%)

Analysis of the size of schools and gender shows that males dominate participation in the LL4GE programme by a 2:1 ratio, with a similar distribution evident across primary and secondary, and with all sizes of school. The data submitted by the respondents, however, show that only a minority of women have attained the highest leadership positions. Table 18 shows that most primary schools are within the 250–1000 size and, while secondary schools include a range of sizes, there are no very small schools. The largest schools, with more than 1000 students, are represented in the survey by six female and 10 male leaders – the proportion of women is greater at this level than in smaller sizes. This may be related to the balance of sector at this level with only one secondary and 15 primary schools of this size. There are similar numbers of large schools in the three districts, but there are proportionately fewer in Beitbridge (1:7), compared with 1:3 in the other, more rural, districts.

Table 18: Number of responding schools in each size group

District	<10 P	<100 S	101- 250 P	101- 250 P 101- 250 S	251- 500 P	251- 500 S	501- 1000 P	501- 1000 S	>1000 P	>1000 S
Beitbridge (76)	2	0	7	2	28	5	22	5	5	0
Muzaraba- ni (46)	1	0	4	5	19	5	8	2	1	1
UMP (42)	0	4	4	3	7	3	15	2	4	0
Total (164)	3	4	15	10	54	13	45	9	10	1

Table 19 identifies the positions held by respondents. If the overall 2:1 male/female ratio is applied, there are fewer experienced female leaders in UMP district. There is no evidence from our data of a possible change from recent appointments because there are no novice female heads, with under three years' service, in two districts. The number of teachers in charge has a similar male bias, offering further evidence of a more demanding route to headship for female participants.

Table 19: Designation of role by district and gender: number of respondents

District	Senior Leader –deputy or similar staff		Teacher in charge		Novice head < 3 yrs		Experienced head > 3 yrs	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Beitbridge (76) (1 official)	14	2	8	1	5	2	28	15
Muzarabani (46) (1 official)	1	1	9	1	13	0	16	6
UMP (42)	7	1	2	2	2	0	23	5
Total 164	22	4	19	4	20	2	67	26

Meeting expectations

One objective of this survey was to ascertain how far the course programme met the anticipated needs of respondents. Table 20 shows this by gender, sector and district groupings.

Table 20: Extent to which expectations were ‘fully met’ by course participants (percentages)

Motivating factor	Male	Female	Primary	Secondary	Beitbridge	Muzarabani	UMP
Number of responses	111	45	123	35	70	47	38
Understanding instructional leadership	52.5	44.4	48.7	52.9	50.0	55.6	43.5
Understanding gender equality	54.0	59.5	54.6	57.1	54.5	44.6	65.7
Supporting school improvement	45.2	56.1	47.3	50.0	47.5	40.3	60.5
To meet National Policy	52.8	52.6	52.3	51.6	48.2	58.7	46.8

To meet local policy	45.4	52.5	49.0	40.0	44.8	46.8	54.5
To secure community links	47.8	51.2	46.6	54.8	50.0	44.6	51.5
To equip for promotion	53.0	62.5	54.2	59.3	61.4	53.1	43.7

Table 20 shows that most factors were ranked as being fully met by half of the respondents – but there were significant differences between male and female understanding of instructional leadership and male understanding of gender equality. Differing contexts may have affected the extent to which school improvement needs had been met and resource issues identified in open comments may explain the low rating for Muzarabani and the higher rating for UMP leaders. Although both male and female leaders think they are being helped to meet national policy, secondary heads feel that local policy issues have not been as well considered – an issue identified as requiring more time in open comments. The personal objective of preparation for promotion was highly rated and evidenced in several post-survey enquiries about certification procedures. Female leaders appear to be more conscious of this, while primary and Muzarabani respondents were more likely to feel that the objective was only partially met.

Figures 2a, 2b and 2c show the full response levels from the district perspective. In Figure 2a the average of 20 per cent who have not answered this element of the survey could indicate dissatisfaction but might also reflect a ‘too early’ view of potential school change. Muzarabani respondents (Figure 2b) show a similar level of satisfaction but with a considerably enhanced application of course learning in their schools. This may be related to the greater number of smaller rural schools in which change is more readily achieved. Figure 2c shows the highest levels of satisfaction that the objectives of instructional leadership, gender equality and school improvement have been met but there are a higher number of ‘no answer’ responses and an indication that policy, whether national or local, is less of a driver for participation and change. Overall, half the respondents consider that the course has fully met instructional leadership and gender equality objectives and fewer than 10 per cent overall feel that these objectives have not been met.

Figure 2a: Meeting objectives: 76 respondents from Beitbridge as percentages

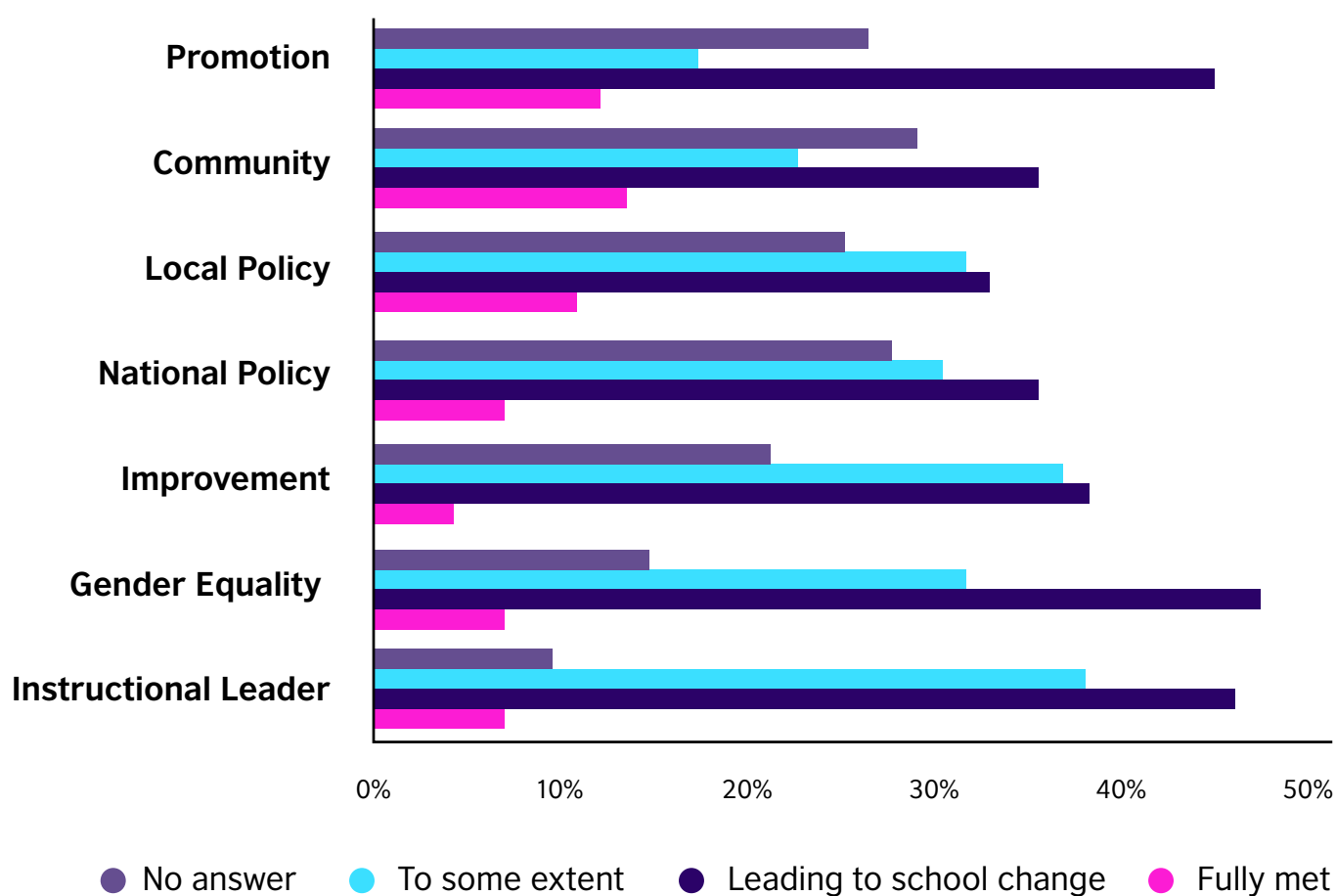


Figure 2b: Meeting objectives: 47 respondents from Muzarabani as percentages

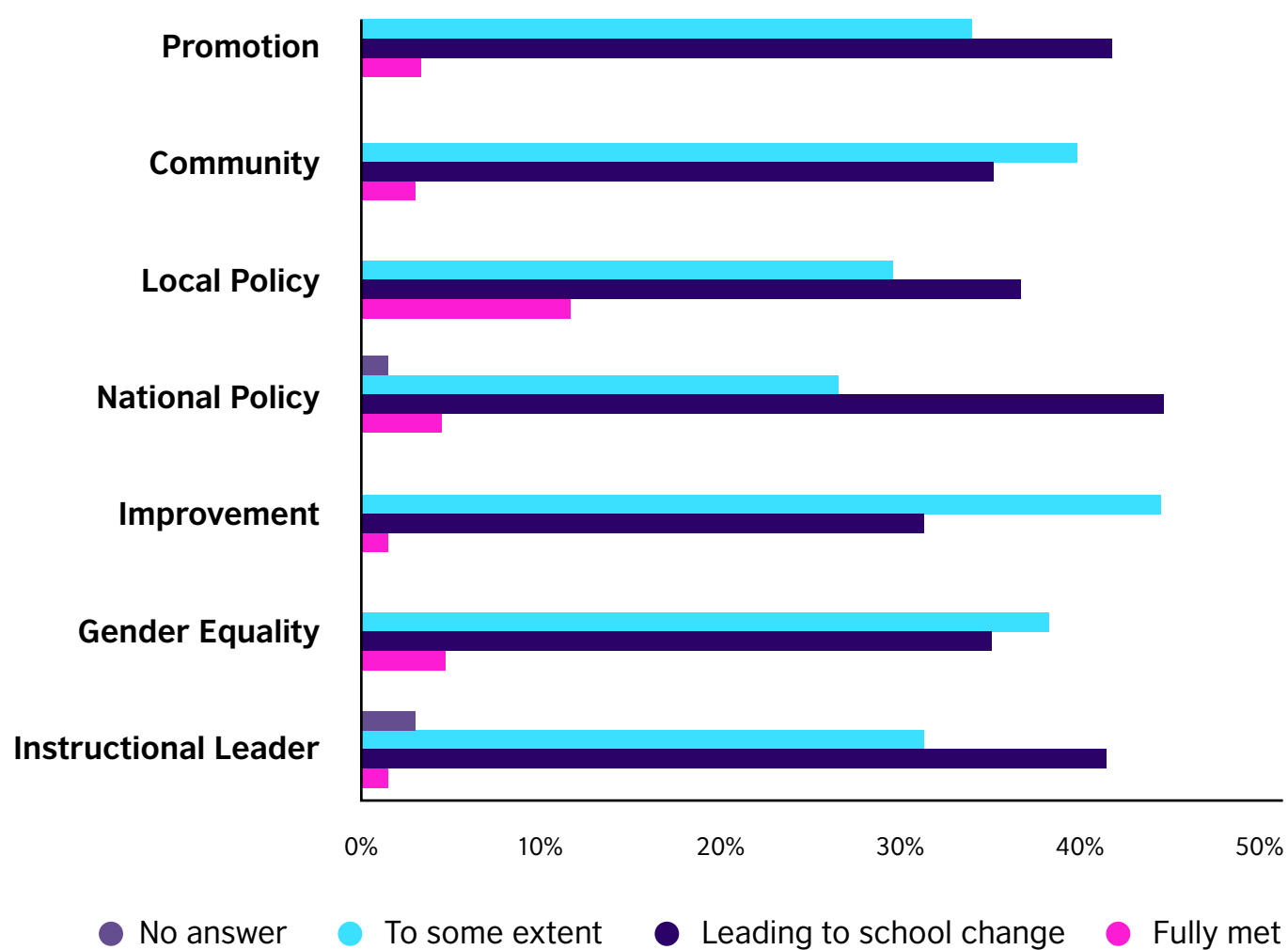
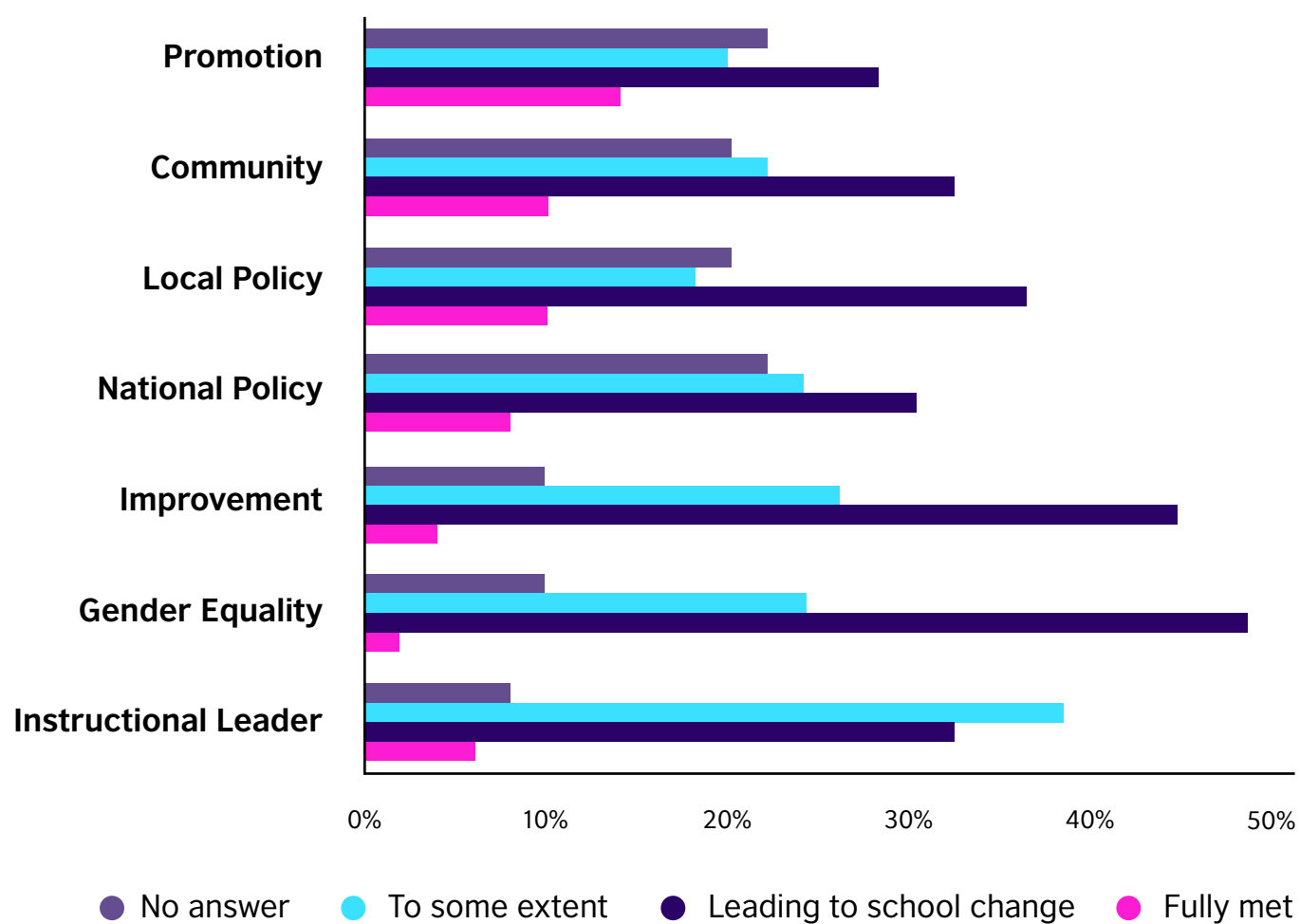


Figure 2c: Meeting objectives: 42 respondents from UMP as percentages



Course provision

Participants were asked about the ways in which the courses were delivered and rated the elements from 'limited value' to 'very helpful'. Table 21 shows considerable support for reflective activity from respondents, showing as the highest figure for female leaders, and for secondary leaders, but not in Muzarabani. Domestic arrangements were not seen as helpful by males, secondary leaders, and those from Muzarabani. Although webinars were highly scored by Muzarabani respondents, open comments from elsewhere show frustration with connectivity problems. The very low rating for project work may relate to connectivity issues or the limited time between the opening and closing workshops but, overall, half the respondents were satisfied with the delivery approaches.

Table 21: Extent to which delivery approaches were 'very helpful' by course participants (percentages)

Course delivery approaches	Male	Female	Primary	Secondary	Beitbridge	Muzarabani	UMP
Respondents (numbers)	149	41	117	34	68	47	35
Topic based discussion	55.0	53.6	54.7	52.9	58.2	50.0	54.2
Materials used	56.0	53.8	51.7	69.7	50.0	50.0	63.8
Distance learning	51.4	48.7	48.1	57.5	49.1	48.8	57.1
Webinar	51.6	47.3	47.9	58.0	36.6	60.0	45.7
Project work	33.0	28.2	31.8	30.3	36.6	34.7	20.0
Reflective activity	60.9	67.7	60.2	70.9	67.2	46.3	68.5
Domestic arrangements	46.0	57.5	50.9	45.4	53.3	43.4	54.2
Social interaction	51.4	55.0	50.0	58.2	50.0	52.1	52.7

Table 22 shows the responses to a question whether course elements were 'good' or 'inspiring'. Facilitators were very highly regarded for both the content and delivery of the course, while the workshops attracted more negative open comment related to time

pressures. The figures for project impact are not as highly rated as those for design and support, again indicating that this is work in progress, and perhaps reflecting the shorter than planned gap between the introductory and reflective workshops. Overall, the twin objectives of instructional leadership and gender equality have been met for most survey respondents although females appear more critical of the coverage of instructional leadership and secondary leaders are less inclined to value project work.

Table 22: Extent to which course elements were rated 'good' or 'inspiring' by course participants (percentage responses)

Course elements	Male	Female	Primary	Secondary	Beitbridge	Muzarabani	UMP
Number of respondents	109	45	115	37	59	83	35
Facilitator knowledge	13/80	31/68	19/78	16/75	18/79	19/76	15/78
Facilitator delivery	29/56	50/47	35/54	31/54	45/49	27/59	31/60
Workshop structure	55/32	57/37	55/35	54/27	58/35	54/32	60/25
Workshop content	41/51	54/34	47/46	38/50	50/41	42/51	57/42
Course materials	51/35	60/33	49/40	65/22	62/31	48/37	54/33
Project design	45/37	51/42	47/41	44/33	59/35	39/41	38/44
Project implementation	41/38	52/32	41/42	51/21	65/29	29/44	37/37
Project impact	31/54	58/33	35/52	44/41	45/49	34/49	48/42
Instructional Leadership focus	30/60	51/32	34/57	33/52	37/56	32/57	36/58
Gender Equality focus	32/56	42/50	31/58	43/45	42/52	30/57	37/54
Gender Equality applications	40/50	42/44	40/53	45/37	43/54	40/44	52/36

The value of school projects was further investigated with an open question (see Table 5c). Selection of topics, and the nature of project support, are fundamental to this work. The reduced overall response from cohorts indicates some hesitancy about making immediate judgements. Gains to leadership and gender sensitivity indicate application of concepts explored in the course materials, but the comments also suggest enhanced whole-school teamwork and re-thought missions. Only three-quarters of the cohort have responded in each district.

Table 23: Effect of the school project on school development (number responding)

Areas	Beitbridge (54)	Muzarabani (33)	UMP (27)	Total	Examples
Improved mission	4	4	3	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I intend to create a clearly designed mission statement which should clearly dispel distortions about gender imbalances and avail equal opportunities as per individual difference (B, M, Pr)
Leadership skills	9	7	5	21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An improved leadership which values gender-based education (M, Muz, Pr)
Improved results	4	3	2	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transforming mindset into one that is willing to work with whoever can assist to help achieve better goals especially for the girl learner (M, B, Pr)
Observation and feedback	6	1	0	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We give feedback orally to members and we reinforce on merits and suggest possible solutions to improve weaker areas (M, Muz, Pr)
Improved relationships	9	3	3	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building of trust with the staff working as a team and shared responsibility (M, B, Sec)

Communication enhanced	4	3	2	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project led to the improvement of students results and also an improvement in the social relations which is gender sensitive and gender responsive (M, B, Sec)
Teamwork developed	6	4	2	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project based method helps me to become a good leader who can create a conducive environment for joint practice development (F, U, Pr)
Enhanced values	3	5	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After this course I should become a 21st century leader capable of meeting institutional challenges (M, B, Pr)
Gender sensitivity	5	2	5	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working as team towards the improved learning so as to attain high pass rate for boys and girls (F, Muz, Pr)
Problem solving	0	1	1	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved management functions such as coordination, controlling, planning and leading (U, F, Pr)

Knowledge in action

Respondents were asked to give their replies to a set of questions related to the topics and issues considered in the programme. The small Muzarabani cohort for this section was due to a technical issue in circulating the hard copy of the survey, but the numbers for Beitbridge and UMP also show a low level of response, with over 25 per cent choosing to omit replies. The responses have been classified according to the structure of materials and workshop content for each topic and may provide facilitators with an indication of knowledge assimilation and application.

Table 24a: Priorities for 'high performing' principals as considered in course discussions

Area of comment	Beitbridge (n=47)	Muzarabani (n=16*)	UMP (n=33)	Total	Examples
Staff development on gender	9	4	8	21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff development on gender equality promoting teamwork in order to improve the pass rate (M, U, Pr)
Team development	9	2	8	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teamwork towards the child learning. (M, Muz, Pr)
Personal change	8	3	8	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I must include all staff members in the running of the school (F, B, Pr)
Organisational change	10	5	2	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advance academically by increasing instructional leadership (F, B, Sec)
Staff supervision	9	2	3	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varying types of supervision of involvement of all staff members and community in school programmes raising issues about gender equality (M, Muz, Pr)
Establishing new priorities	2	0	3	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for a new vision of the way we do things (M, U, Pr)

Table 24b : Priorities for developing an effective school focus

Area of comment	Beitbridge (n=61)	Muzarabani (n=30*)	UMP (n=29)	Total	Examples
Gender equality	20	3	5	28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully equipping lady teacher and girls on issues of gender equality (M, U, Pr)
Staff development	6	11	8	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous professional development of teachers, monitoring and evaluation of the learning process and total empowerment of both girls and boys for production of good performance results (M, Muz, Pr)
Team development	13	7	3	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowering my subordinates with sound and effective leadership skills and gender sensitive skills (M, U, Sec)
Vision growth	8	4	7	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrity, teamwork, punctuality and innovation (F, U, Pr)
Supervision	6	3	4	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attending to gaps within our teaching and learning (F, B, Pr)
Development workshops	4	2	1	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing mindsets for both the teachers and learners (M, B, Pr)
Resource use	4	0	1	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective supervision & report back, considering gender equality, availability of teaching & learning resources (M, Muz, Pr)

Table 25: Priorities for developing a gender focus within schools

Area of comment	Beitbridge (n=54)	Muzarabani (n=25*)	UMP (n=23)	Total	Examples
Equality focus	12	6	5	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender inclusivity in all spheres during the teaching and learning situation (M, B, Pr)
Policy in practice	13	6	3	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of school policies that promote gender parity (M, B, Pr)
Policy development	12	3	4	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving from gender bias to gender equity (M, U, Pr)
Link to learning	4	4	3	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on how teachers conduct lessons and how learners behave when they are doing work (F, U, Pr)
PDC focus	6	1	2	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carrying out gender sensitivity workshops (M, Muz., Pr)
Vision and mission	4	2	2	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realised through creation of gender responsive learning environment which is accessible by all (F, B, Pr)
Language use	3	1	3	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitising teachers, and learners and parents on gender issues and eliminating barriers to acceptance of change in this area (M, B, Sec)

Table 26: How can schools overcome unconscious bias?

Area of comment	Beitbridge (n=39)	Muzarabani (n=21*)	UMP (n=23)	Total	Examples
Gender sensitivity	9	5	7	21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be gender sensitive when appointing personnel for various positions (M, Muz, Pr)
Sensitisation	9	4	4	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitising teachers, learners and parents on gender issues and eliminating barriers to acceptance of change in this area (M, B, Pr)
Training of staff	9	3	2	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To remove all stereotypes and cultural barriers that discriminate between girls and boys (M, Muz, Sec)
Equality policy in action	5	4	4	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looks at all activities, e.g. sports, prefect selection, class allocation (M, U, Pr)
Involvement of community	5	4	4	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conscientise the community & teaching staff on the importance of gender equality and discuss unconscious gender bias in our everyday work (M, Muz, Pr)
Aspirational comment	2	1	2	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an environment where gender stereotyping by both learners and facilitators is eradicated (M, U, Pr)

Table 27: Stakeholder involvement in developing gender policies: multiple responses

Area of comment	Beitbridge (n=51)	Muzarabani (n=21*)	UMP (n=27)	Total	Comment (where made)
School Development Committee	16	5	12	33	
Parents	17	9	6	32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusivity • Collaboration • Hands-on approach (F, B, Pr)
Community health	12	2	7	21	
Wider community	6	5	9	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child case care workers (all surrounding villages represented), DREAMZ club coordinator (it's a club that uplifts the standard of girls), local leadership (councillor and village heads) (M, U, Sec)
NGOs	6	7	4	17	
Religious groups	6	5	3	14	
Girl affirmative groups	4	2	4	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal education between men and women (M, U, Sec)

Impact of course participation

Participants were asked to outline the changes in their schools because of the programme (see Table 28). The responses show that there has been consideration of both instructional leadership and gender equality in the programme and the open comments reflect responses to individual school needs. The coherence and coverage of the programme are shown by the similar proportion of comments under each heading.

Table 28: Changes proposed in schools because of participating in LL4GE (possible multiple answers), by district

Area of comment	Beitbridge (n=69)	Muzarabani (n=47)	UMP (n=37)	Total	Examples
Staff development	14	4	3	21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop learner involvement in decision-making (F, Muz, Pr)
Teaching and learning	9	7	4	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving ways of giving feedback, improving lesson delivery and recrafting of the mission statement, involving all stakeholders (M, B, Pr)
Vision and mission	9	4	6	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designing a school vision, including gender issues in the school curriculum, involving girls in leadership skills in stem subjects (M, B, Pr)
Gender equality practices	9	5	5	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instead of only teaching infant and lower grades, as is the case at the moment, female teachers will take higher grades that were previously reserved for male teachers (F, U, Pr)
Personal skills	6	5	6	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender-sensitive, delegation of teachers on school-based projects, appreciating efforts by teachers, having an open door policy and walking the school (M, B, Pr)
Curriculum	5	7	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical subjects to be learnt by both boys and girls (M, U, Sec)

Stakeholder involvement	6	6	3	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make equal learning opportunities for sexes, involving parents on activities that encourage gender equality, developing staff members on gender equality issues (F, B, Pr)
Culture change	4	6	4	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision is going to be reflective and collaborative, inclusive and gender-sensitive (F, U, Pr)
Observation, monitoring	7	3	2	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision is going to be reflective and collaborative, inclusive and gender sensitive (M, Muz, Pr)

The following response (M, B, Pr) sums up the breadth of proposed action and the message of further inclusivity:

Eliminate all forms of gender discrimination with regard to responsibilities at school. Reach out to the community on issues of inclusivity in education so that if there are any children not at school on account of disability, they be brought to school. Teachers to expect and encourage both boys and girls to achieve equally.
(M, B, Pr)

Participants were asked to further consider the positive features of programme participation and the strongest gains by far were in leadership capacity. While the comments of both male and female participants were proportional to the 2:1 gender balance, it is noticeable that females tend to specify gender-related comments first while their male counterparts most frequently begin with organisational matters. Of the 42 sets of secondary-based responses, only eight fail to recognise gender issues as a priority but the remaining 34 include gender equality, gender sensitivity or gender awareness, linked to leadership change of vision, organisation or development.

District responses are analysed in Table 29. Again, about 25 have not responded but the other responses mentioned changed leadership and team attitudes, and a concern for facing gender issues.

Table 29: Positive features of programme participation, by district

Area of comment	Beitbridge (55)	Muzarabani (35)	UMP (37)	Total	Examples
Leadership gains	12	14	11	37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changed mind set, improved working relationship and improved gender equality (U, M, Pr)
Gender issues faced	9	7	9	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognition of the girl child as an equal partner (M, Muz, Pr)
Workshops, projects	8	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transformative, empowering, eye-opening (M, Muz, Pr)
Teamwork	9	2	4	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender equality appreciation in the school, working as a team and adopting projects approach (M, B, Pr)
New approaches	8	2	3	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new approach to leadership which is positive (M, B, Pr)
Discussion	3	4	3	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accorded the opportunity to interact and share experiences with others ... managed to appreciate areas where for years have been doing what was supposedly correct yet not, e.g. no feedback to members (F, Muz, Sec)
Relationship gains	6	2		8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning schools programmes ahead, learning walks now implemented at the school and it has assisted me in gaining confidence (F, B, Pr)

There was a marked decrease in responses when participants were asked to consider the inhibiting factors to development, as shown in Table 30. Analysis by district allows for responses from differing contexts but all offer similar difficulties. The predominance of the rural environment is a factor for comments on community and religious pressures, especially from small primary schools, while the comments on staff attitudes come predominantly from schools led by a female. A comment from a female head in UMP district sums up a widespread problem:

Lack of willingness to change by the staff. Scarcity of resources to motivate the staff. Incompetence of some teachers.
(F, U, Pr)

Table 30: Inhibiting factors in securing change, by district

Area of comment	Beitbridge (48)	Muzarabani (32)	UMP (31)	Total	Examples
Resource scarcity	17	14	13	44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resistance, inadequate information and lack of resources (M, Muz, Pr)
Staff Attitudes	9	4	9	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some teachers still do not believe in gender equity due to their backgrounds (F, U, Pr)
Family poverty	10	4	4	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial constraints with lack of parental involvement and limited resources to attend (F, B, Pr)
Cultural norms	5	5	4	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mistrust, fear of the unknown by staff and sabotaging members on tribal grounds (M, B, Pr)
Community attitudes	4	3	3	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resistance to change by stakeholders. Lack of cooperation from the teachers (F, U, Pr)
Religious pressures	3	2	2	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negativity among community (from religious/cultural pressures)

Scarcity of resources is mentioned in three-quarters of the responses. Some comments indicate that this may refer to staffing to allow for curriculum development – there is mention of craft courses for girls in one secondary school – but two comments indicate that more staffing is needed to give girls equal opportunities in smaller classes because boys dominate in large groups. Two comments suggest that resources refer particularly to teaching and learning resources, irrespective of gender.

Reflection

Survey respondents were invited to suggest possible improvements to the course.

Table 31 summarises the range and extent of comments. Overall, two-thirds of participants made suggestions relating to three themes:

- a. Content: to consider the broader issues of gender equality to include males and those with disability
- b. Further development of webinars and project use, but also to compensate for poor access to technology, greater hard copy availability
- c. Secure a link between the course and the schools to increase the ease of change

Table 31: Changes that might improve the course for future participants

Area of comment	Beitbridge (56)	Muzarabani (39)	UMP (37)	Total	Examples
Course delivery	11	7	7	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maybe provide more hard copies with literature delivered by facilitators • More time on group work • More time on question and answer at the end of each session (F, B, Pr)
Materials availability	8	6	5	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course outline should be given to participants in advance as sensitisation so that they read widely in advance (M, Muz, Sec)

Specific elements	6	7	4	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touring other schools within or outside the district so that we adapt or adopt the good things they are doing (F, B, Pr) • Project assignments needed more time, particularly those involving community participation (M, Muz, Pr)
Course content	4	6	6	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender issues are directed mainly on unfairness for girls neglecting boys (F, B, Pr)
Technology issues	8	4	2	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to connectivity challenges, face to face lessons are more effective (M, Muz, Pr)
Personal growth	4	2	3	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to separate the topics: instructional leadership and gender equality and do them separately (for differing needs) (M, U, Sec)
School gains	5	2	3	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate staff and learners up to school level Provide material e.g. booklets. • Do this training time and again (M, U, Pr)
Timing		2	1	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of content best be done during school vacation time (M, Muz, Pr)

The following detailed response from a female primary head summed up other repeated comments related to timing and time allocations:

Hard copies to be produced to assist those with insufficient budgets to allow for easy accessibility of materials. Activities to be reduced to achieve a balance of time at most two major activities per presentation. Giving each and every participant chance to take part, and each group making presentations; enough time for projects to have good results that are valid and reliable, and then more time should be given for reflections, say 2 to 3 days per group in order not to rush things.
(F, B, Pr)

Consideration of the male–female, primary–secondary and district results reveal little difference between the constituent elements although there is a greater concentration on resource issues in the male, secondary sector, and a proportionally higher request for hard copy materials for primary schools in Muzarabani. Reflection probed in the open comments is summarised in Table 32. A minority of comments were ‘negative’ but most were supportive of the experience.

Table 32: Open comment on the course content, delivery and impact

Area of comment	Beitbridge (56)	Muzarabani (31)	UMP (37)	Total (127)	Examples
Course was inspiring etc.	22 positive	14 positive 1 negative	13 positive	49 positive 1 negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was highly inspiring as it managed to open horizons especially on the importance of the girl child (M, Muz, Pr)
Course was effective	17 positive 1 negative	9 positive	7 positive	33 positive 1 negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I learnt a lot on instructional leadership. I need to be a role model (F, B, Pr)
Course culture	5 positive	3 positive	7 positive	15 positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culture of openness with commitment to the school vision was created (M, U, Pr)
Course needs professional development	4 positive	7 positive	2 positive	13 positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This should be done once after 2 years to help heads to focus on professionalism (F, B, Pr)

Materials	2 positive	5 positive 3 negative	3 positive	10 positive 3 negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All materials should be availed to the participants, more time should be availed to school-based projects (M, Muz, Pr)
Facilitator quality	3 positive	1 positive	4 positive	8 positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was a fruitful workshop, and it was well organised (M, U, Pr)
Technology	1 negative		1 negative	2 negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The only challenge was on webinars because of a poor network (M, U, Pr)
Organisational issues	1 negative	1 negative		2 negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flooding of course with senior education officials has a tendency of getting it hijacked. It looks more of a Ministry function than an NGO one (M, B, Pr)
Timing		1 negative	1 negative	2 negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More time needs to be allocated to the course (M, Muz, Pr)

Three comments related to the wider availability of the programme as part of professional development plans for senior staff:

The course should be made open to include deputy heads of schools, other teachers and community leaders.
(M, B, Sec)

The balance of comments is very positive in all three districts: Beitbridge: 53 positive, 3 negative; Muzarabani: 39 positive, 6 negative; UMP: 36 positive, 2 negative.

Overall, these comments reflect the very positive attitude of participants, and the frequent use of 'good' and 'inspiring' reflects overall satisfaction with the course.

Overview of impact survey findings

The results of this survey give the views of two-thirds of the participants who completed the baseline survey and a quarter of these did not attend the whole course programme. The great variation in response levels for the different questions suggests that some were missed either through lack of experience or to avoid a negative view:

- Female leaders give responses that show a longer journey to headship, and some refer to problems with staffing and resourcing, which may be caused by the gender equality issues, noted elsewhere. Their responses to the open questions appear to be longer and with greater attention to the details of securing change than those of their male counterparts.
- There is little difference in the levels of response from those in the primary and secondary sectors. Of the 37 secondary schools, only 6 are larger than 500 pupil size, while there are 67 comparably sized primary schools. The comments indicate that size, rather than sector, influences some of the leadership challenges. The present position of respondents either as a senior leader or a teacher in charge (30 per cent of both primary and secondary course members overall) did not result in different responses from those of established leaders.
- While there were twice as many responses from Beitbridge course members compared to Muzarabani and UMP, the responses to the survey questions showed consistency across the three districts. This reflects organisational coherence, but some open comments suggest that there is a need for more local discussion and, where possible, local materials.
 - Of the 78 respondents in Beitbridge, one-third were senior leaders or teachers in charge. Of the total, 22 per cent attended the first session only, and 10 per cent only the final session. Their highest ranking of 78 per cent was for inspiring facilitator support, and their lowest for course materials at 31 per cent.
 - The Muzarabani cohort of 47 respondents had a lower senior leader/teacher-in-charge group, at 20 per cent of the total. The 28 per cent attending the first session was larger, but only 8 per cent attended the final session only. Again, facilitator support was ranked at a high 71 per cent, with a lower ranking of 39 per cent for project support.
 - There were 43 responses from UMP, reflecting a similar 27 per cent of senior staff participants. There were fewer partial attenders, with 13 per cent at the first session only, and only one who attended the final session only. Inspiring facilitator support was noted by 79 per cent, while the programme structure was only rated at 9 per cent at this level.

Overall, the course is highly regarded by these participants, and it appears to have achieved both of its objectives of developing understanding of instructional leadership and gender equality, with a level of intended school improvement. Some open comments, however, suggest that course learning may not be easily applied.

14. Conclusion

This final report includes findings from all 16 data sets:

- Documentary analysis of course materials
- Baseline survey of participants
- Non-participant observation of the initial workshop for the Beitbridge group
- Non-participant observation of the initial workshop for the Muzarabani group
- Non-participant observation of the initial workshop for the Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe group
- Analysis of the three webinars
- Non-participant observation of the reflective workshop for the Beitbridge group
- Non-participant observation of the reflective workshop for the Muzarabani group
- Non-participant observation of the reflective workshop for the Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe group
- Interviews with facilitators of the Beitbridge group
- Interviews with facilitators of the Muzarabani group
- Interviews with facilitators of the Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe group
- Focus groups with participants in the Beitbridge group
- Focus groups with participants in the Muzarabani group
- Focus groups with participants in the Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe group
- Impact survey of participants

All these findings, presented above, combine to provide a fully triangulated analysis of the British Council's important Leading Learning for Gender Equality programme. In this conclusion, we draw out the main points from the 16 data sets and provide an overview of the programme.

Programme content

In our interim report, we identified four questions about the programme. Answers to these questions, based on all data sets, are given below.

1. Are the activities appropriate to meet programme learning outcomes, or are they too generic and uncontextualised?

The programme is clearly structured, with a fair balance between instructional leadership and gender equality, and participants and facilitators are mostly satisfied that the balance is appropriate. The two constructs are mostly treated separately but there was evidence of a more integrated approach in the reflective workshops. The curriculum relies heavily on international constructs and materials, but some facilitators helped to contextualise learning through local examples.

2. Are the readings appropriate or too generic with mostly international sources and few specific to Zimbabwe or sub-Saharan Africa?

As noted above, the intended curriculum relies heavily on international literature. This is mostly appropriate in identifying current ideas on instructional leadership and gender equality from a global perspective. However, almost all participants and facilitators, and the research team, feel that greater use is required of Zimbabwean and/or sub-Saharan African sources. This would help to contextualise learning and to enhance the vicarious experience of participants.

3. The school-based project is a significant aspect of the LL4GE experience, and an important feature of the workshops, especially the end-of-programme reflective workshop. Do participants address genuine school issues, or do they rely too much on facilitator guidance?

The workshop observations indicate that participants are identifying project titles relevant to their school contexts. The most common foci are reading, attendance and discipline, with a common rationale being the need to improve all these areas. Links to instructional leadership and/or gender equality are not always explicit in the titles or foci of the projects. Limited time in the reflective workshops meant that some projects were not presented, but our recommendation is that facilitators should stress the need to link projects directly to instructional leadership or gender equality.

4. Each day comprises four sessions of 90 minutes, with short breaks. Is this schedule too demanding for participants?

The planned programme is quite demanding, but probably manageable. In practice, however, breaks were shortened to allow for completion of the programme. Day 3 was extended to allow participants to return to their schools early on Day 4. Similarly, the two-day reflective workshop was curtailed to one and half days. A careful review of curriculum delivery is required, and our recommendation is that the two workshops should run for the full planned time – four complete days for the initial workshop and two complete days for the reflective workshop. Implementing these suggestions will require consideration of the logistics, including participant transport.

Participants and facilitators

Both the surveys and the workshop observation reports show that most (75–80 per cent) of participants are male. This is surprising for a course focused on gender equality. While this may represent the current gender balance among school leaders, the British Council should not replicate this disparity in its selection criteria and processes. The current position tends to reinforce a view that school leadership is predominantly a male role, which is inconsistent with the values of a gender equality programme. Similarly, the facilitators are mostly (c.80 per cent) male.

A linked issue relates to the selection of participants and facilitators. Participants overwhelmingly report that they were selected to take part by district officials, and that attendance was ‘expected’, or mandatory. However, they also report that they welcomed this opportunity for professional development. Similarly, the facilitators report that they were invited by MoPSE. Two issues arise from this. First, the British Council does not ‘own’ decisions about participation in its own programme but has chosen to defer to Ministry nominations of participants and facilitators. Second, the unequal gender balance, for both participants

and facilitators, reflects badly on both the British Council and the Ministry, reinforcing the stereotype that leadership is predominantly a male characteristic, which directly contradicts the ethos of the LL4GE programme. We recommend that the gender composition of participants and facilitators be reviewed for subsequent iterations of the programme, with a view to achieving a gender balance.

Another consideration relates to changes in participants between the two workshops. A significant number of the initial workshop participants did not attend the reflective workshop, often because they were mandated to undertake other tasks, for example in connection with the national census. This had two significant implications for the reflective workshop. First, facilitators had to spend time repeating what had been covered in the first workshop, rather than extending previous learning. Second, some participants could not present projects because they were often 'owned' by the missing participant, with new attendees knowing little about them. We recommend that the need to attend all parts of the LL4GE programme be stressed to participants and the Ministry. There were also changes in facilitator attendance at the workshops, leading to a lack of continuity and coherence in programme presentations and delivery. Programme planning should stress the holistic nature of professional learning and the need for facilitators to be involved in all phases of the LL4GE experience.

Gains from the LL4GE programme

The baseline survey shows a wide range of individual aspirations regarding programme participation. Participants have clear expectations of leadership enhancement, skills development and organisational assistance. Most participants see gender equality as a vehicle for leadership opportunities, although there were also specific gender equality and instructional leadership comments. Many respondents offered comments hoping that participation could lead to career and qualification advancement.

Anticipated school gains have an underlying theme of achieving fairness and integrating female staff and students into complete school provision of the academic and broader curriculum. The responses suggest a high level of awareness of the cultural factors inhibiting gender equality. The participants identified inhibitors arising from religious and cultural norms, and from pressures of society, community or family. Achieving gender equality in schools may be slower than required because of deeply embedded beliefs that females are unsuited to professional leadership roles. Such attitudes provide powerful support for the aims of the LL4GE programme.

The impact survey shows significant participant reports of gains with regard to leadership and gender sensitivity, suggesting school-based application of concepts explored in the course materials, notably through the projects, for example enhanced school teamwork and re-thought missions. This evidence indicates that the programme is highly regarded, while recognising that course learning will not be easily applied. Similarly, the focus groups show that participants were very happy with much of the programme, for example, described as a 'noble and relevant' initiative and an 'eye-opener' in Muzarabani, while recognising the need for changes, notably to workshop length and internet connectivity.

Workshop experience

The researchers addressed five main aspects of the initial and reflective workshops.

1. Was the prescribed programme followed?

The workshop observation reports show that the prescribed programme was followed closely, with only minor changes to suit local circumstances. The main changes relate to practical considerations affecting the participants at both workshops. Day 3 of the initial workshop was extended to enable participants to return to their schools early on Day 4. Similarly, the second day of the reflective workshop was shortened to allow participants to return to school early. In both cases, curriculum context was rushed, with reduced opportunities for participants to engage in group work. In the reflective workshops, there was too little time available for project presentations and only a few were presented at each venue.

A wider consideration relates to the merits of following the prescribed programme closely. While it has the advantage that participants all follow the same curriculum, it also reinforces a provider-led approach, rather than co-constructed learning, as often advocated for teacher and leader CPD. Given the extensive use of international literature and examples, local contextualisation is essential to allow greater scope for local variations to the prescribed curriculum.

2. What was the balance between facilitator-led presentations and participant activity?

In the initial workshop, the balance was largely as anticipated in the participant and facilitator handbooks, and the suggested pedagogy was generally followed across all sessions. The reflective workshop offers a more mixed picture, with a greater emphasis on facilitator-led activity, partly to help 'new' participants to catch up, and partly because learning time on Day 2 was reduced.

3. Were the intended learning objectives achieved?

While the specified curriculum was largely delivered, albeit with reduced learning time, it is too soon to assess whether the learning objectives have been achieved. The projects provide the best guide to programme learning, but only a few were presented at the reflective workshops. Those that were presented indicate that most project choices are tangential to the instructional leadership and gender equality foci of the LL4GE programme, rather than being directly linked to them. In addition, presentation time was short (typically five minutes) and claims about school-level change are self-reported. School-based case studies by the research team, for example, would enable a more reliable judgement about whether the intended learning objectives have been achieved.

The impact survey shows that participants' expectations of the programme were ranked as being 'fully met' by half the respondents – but there were significant differences between males' and females' understanding of instructional leadership and gender equality. The personal motivation of participation in the programme being seen as preparation for promotion was evident from participant responses, and female leaders appear to be more conscious of this.

4. What was the level of participant engagement?

Participant engagement varied across workshops and sessions. Enthusiasm for the activities was reported to be high for many sessions. However, female participants were generally more reluctant to initiate activity and questions, tending to be in 'response' mode and then only when asked direct questions. In the reflective workshop, limited time curtailed opportunities for participant engagement, and, as noted above, some participants were not able to present their projects.

5. What was the balance between international and Zimbabwe-specific content and materials?

As noted earlier, the content was largely based on international constructs and literature. This was balanced to some extent by facilitators' use of Zimbabwean examples and 'grey' literature, but this is an area of development for the programme team to consider. Using Zimbabwean and/or sub-Saharan African sources would provide better vicarious experience for participants. We recommend a systematic review of the literature on instructional leadership and gender equality in Zimbabwe, and in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

15. Recommendations

This final report provides substantial triangulated data about the nature and delivery of the pilot LL4GE programme in three Zimbabwe districts, based on participant and facilitator perspectives and extensive researcher observations of workshops and webinars. The clear evidence from all these data sets is that the LL4GE programme is proving to be very successful as a mode of development for heads and other school leaders, with clear gains in participant understanding of instructional leadership and gender equality and reported changes in school-based practice. Below, we offer evidence-based recommendations for the development of the programme.

1. The programme should be extended to other parts of Zimbabwe and to other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, as resources allow.
2. Recruitment of participants should ensure gender equity.
3. Similarly, recruitment of facilitators should ensure gender equity.
4. Participants and facilitators should be expected to take part in all phases of the programme: initial workshop, project preparation, webinars and reflective workshop, rather than these being represented by other colleagues, to promote learning continuity.
5. The LL4GE curriculum should be reviewed to include more materials and resources based on the Zimbabwe context, or on research from other parts of sub-Saharan Africa.
6. Linked to the above, a systematic review of the literature is recommended to establish available sources on instructional leadership and gender equality in these contexts.
7. The initial workshop should run for the full four days, to avoid rushing through the content, and to promote more participant engagement in their learning.
8. Similarly, the reflective workshop should run for the full two days, to allow more participants to present their projects.
9. Participant involvement in webinars should take poor internet connectivity into account and offer a space free from interruptions.
10. The programme should ensure at least three months between initial and reflective workshops, to allow more time for project planning and implementation.
11. Facilitators should stress the need for projects to have an explicit focus on instructional leadership and/or gender equality.
12. The impact of the programme on instructional leadership and gender equality practice should be assessed through selective school-based case-studies by the research team.

