



ESTABLISHMENT OF FEMALE PRINCIPAL SUPPORT NETWORKS



basic education

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THEME 1: INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FEMALE PRINCIPAL SUPPORT NETWORKS

1.1 Definition of a support network

A support network is group of people who provide emotional and practical help to fellow members of the network in need

There are few things as valuable in life as a solid support network. In good times or bad times, a support network gives one a feeling of stability and it provides a safety net. Setting up a support network takes time, dedication and a systematic approach should be followed to establish a sustainable network. For female principal support networks to work, they need to be established closest to the female principals (circuit level) and should have tentacles that permeate right up to national level to enable female principals to tap into this resource as and when needed.

Female Principal Support Networks will help female principals overcome isolation



1.2 The Legal Framework of Female Principal Support Programme

The Female Principal Support Programme derives its mandate from various pieces of legislation, calculated at overcoming barriers to entry by women into the world of work and progression by women into senior management positions across different career fields including education. Women empowerment initiatives in the education field have been brought to bear as an attempt to comply with the following pieces of legislation:

1.2.1 The Constitution

The South African state is founded on the values of non-racialism and non-sexism, among other Constitutional values. The Constitution guarantees equality between men and women, and equality includes full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. The Constitution further prohibits any form of discrimination and provides that the state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on any grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

The Constitution further provides that to promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures may be taken calculated at redressing the imbalances of the past and protecting or advancing persons or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination of the past. To this effect, the Employment Equity Act (EEA) as amended has been enacted to eliminate discrimination in the workplace, and the Women Empowerment & Gender Equality Bill that is meant to close the gaps that are not covered by the EEA is still at a draft stage .

1.2.2 The Employment Equity Act (EEA) of 1998 as amended

The Employment Equity Act as amended was promulgated to give effect to the Constitutional provision of non- discrimination and promotion of equality in the workplace. The purpose of the Act is to achieve equity in the workplace, by:

- (a) Promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination; and
- (b) Implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce.

Chapter 2– of the Employment Equity Act prohibits all forms of unfair discrimination, and

Section 2.2 of the EEA provides that it is not unfair discrimination to promote affirmative action or to prefer or exclude any person on the basis of an inherent job requirement. Section 15 makes provision for Affirmative Action measures aimed at ensuring that suitably qualified employees from designated groups have equal employment opportunity and are equitably represented in all occupational categories and levels of the workforce. . Such measures must include:

- o Identification and elimination of barriers with an adverse impact on designated groups;
- o Putting in place measures which promote diversity;
- o Making reasonable accommodation for people from designated groups; retention, development and training of designated groups (including skills development); and preferential treatment and numerical goals to ensure equitable representation. This excludes quotas.

It is within this context that DBE is putting in place the Female Support Network as a mechanism to promote acclimatization, provide ongoing support to female principals and as such this programme does not constitute unfair discrimination against male principals.

1.2.3 Women Empowerment & Gender Equality Draft Bill

The fact that not too much progress has been made in achieving quality between men and women in the workplace, notwithstanding the EEA has resulted in the drafting of the Women Empowerment & Gender Equality Bill

Section 9 of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Draft Bill provides that entities must put in place mechanisms calculated at achieving gender mainstreaming and all entities must put in place measures calculated at achieving 50% representation of women at all levels which should include setting of targets for such representation at all levels. Furthermore, the bill provides for :

- o Building women's capacity to participate
- o Enhancing the understanding of men and boys to accept the capability of women and girls to participate as equals and
- o Develop support mechanisms for women.

The Female Principal Support Programme can therefore be seen as a mechanism to achieve these goals.

1.3 Why are support networks for female principals necessary?

Apart from legislative compliance, it is important to answer the question of whether there are legitimate reasons why the Female Support Programme is necessary. Statistics show that despite the overwhelming majority of educators in the public education system being females, the representation of female educators at management levels in education, still remains a challenge. This is notwithstanding a number of initiatives embarked on by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and former Department of Education (DoE) since the advent of democracy. Research suggests that a number of factors militate against career progression of women in the education sector, and these include:

- o Gender roles that manifest in women principals having to balance home and work responsibilities;
- o Personal and self- management challenges emanating from the multiplicity of roles that women principals have to play;
- o Lack of formal extended induction programme aimed at easing newly appointed principals into their roles;
- o General sense of isolation that women in management and leadership positions experience due to continued existence of old boys' networks that make female principals to feel that "it is cold and lonely at the top";
- o Cultural and traditional stereotyping of women that can predispose them to being undermined by both their male, female subordinates as well as parents;
- o Ad-hoc approach that is currently adopted to building capacity of women principals, which leads to lack of continuity and sustainability of various initiatives that the Department embarks on

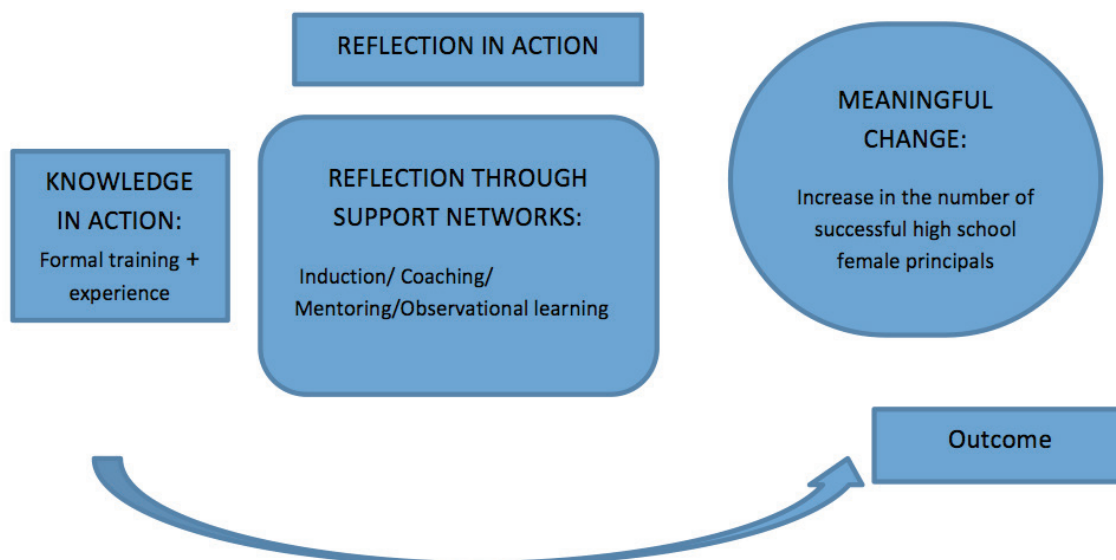
The overall effect of these factors is the creation of a stifling environment which often leads to frustration and burnout among female principals. This often prevents many female principals from realizing their potential, and those female principals who succeed do so at a huge sacrifice as they achieve success against many odds.

1.4 The Theoretical Framework for the Establishment of Female Principal Support Networks

Support networks are based on the notion that members get more if they move from operating in isolation to engaging in meaningful dialogue, shared problem-solving, and joint learning that are only possible through effective communities of practice (Wagner & Kegan, 2006). Support networks are therefore a mechanism to effect lasting change and Hall and Hord (2011, p.8) categorize change as "a process through which people and organizations move as they gradually learn, come to understand, and become skilled and competent in the use of new ways"

According to Hall & Hord, 2011 changes in day-to-day practices of female principals belonging to support networks will be gradual and will come about as a result of learning and may take three to five years to be fully realized. Female principals participating in a structured female Principals Support Programme will demonstrate meaningful change in leadership, knowledge and skills as a result of long term engagement in reflective practice and peer learning. Figure 1 graphically depicts how support networks facilitate growth through reflection.

Figure 1- The Theoretical Framework of Female Principal Support Networks of DBE



Hereunder follows a brief description of the theoretical model for the establishment of support networks for female principals:

1.4.1 Knowledge in Action

In the South African context male and female school principals have completed formal training, in the form of a former teacher college or university-based academic preparation program with little attention paid to educational leadership and management. More emphasis in the academic preparation of educators is placed on instructional methodologies and subject area pedagogy.

To enhance school management and leadership skills post democracy in South Africa, a number of principals have pursued further studies and acquired theoretical knowledge in school leadership and management through ACE-SL programmes.

In general both male and female aspiring principals undergo the same training, and this suggests that at the point of entry, there should not be any significant differences in male and female educators in terms of knowledge and skills. While pre service professional preparation assists in defining roles and gaining entry into the profession, continued professional learning once in the profession has been recognized as a critical component to the establishment of effective professional practice (Houle, 1980).

Due to historical factors and subtle marginalisation of females in the education system, aspiring female principals generally lack access to female role models, coaches and mentors. The nature of professional learning that accrues from networks is critical to the success of the female principal practitioner, and the fact that up to now, no such programme existed, may have been one of the reasons why females have progressed so slowly through the ranks, to get to management positions.

1.4.2 Reflection in Action vs. Knowing in Action

Knowing-in-action is evident when a professional practitioner uses knowledge accrued from **prior experience and applies it to a current situation** (Schön, 1987). For the majority of new principals, the knowledge discharged in knowing-in-action is often based on the theoretical knowledge that has been learned through professional socialization sources or formal pre-service training. For example, school principals typically go through a university educational leadership program to learn the theories of educational leadership and how to apply it to a practical situation. With this knowledge, there are preconceived assumptions that are made as to how to approach particular problems (Mezirow, 1997). While making decisions and solving problems using prior knowledge and theoretical frameworks may assist in the principal to perform daily routine responsibilities, seldom does this type of knowledge lead to significant transformative change in the performance of the individual or the organization (Mezirow, 1997).

Reflection-in-action, addresses learning acquired **through practical experience in the profession**. As the individual's experience is on-going for the duration of time they are in the profession, reflection-in-action also is continuous and is seen as a cornerstone to producing new knowledge that assists the practitioner in their everyday work. Schön (1987) explained:

"Reflection-in-action has a critical function, questioning the assumptional structure of knowing-in-action. We think critically about the thinking that got us into this fix or this opportunity; and we may, in the process, restructure strategies of action, understandings of phenomena, or ways of framing problems. (Schön, 1987, p. 28)"

Reflection-in-action leads to learning that addresses the contextual aspects of the work. On-going reflective practice and peer learning may or may not use prior knowledge to anchor thoughts, generate new ideas, or solve problems. It is the influence of a particular situation, organization, or culture that leads to the questioning of the assumptions that are present in broad-stroke theoretical concepts often found in knowing-in-action (Schön, 1987). Within the context of a platform provided by support networks, female principals can undertake this reflection in action and this would serve as an important avenue to overcome isolation, absence of role models, lack of access to resources that may help them bridge this gap, e.g. internet, video conferencing, emails, etc..

Professional knowledge is acquired from both **knowing-in-action** and reflection-in-action (Cervero, 1988). Having a base of theoretical knowledge allows professional practitioners to have a platform to continue to grow in their learning as well as their practice through experimenting and questioning the status quo. It could also be argued that the **contextual nature of education** and the often spontaneous and unique human interaction experienced by school principals requires **reflection-in-action** and collective inquiry plays a significant role in the continuing professional development of principals. This is essential in changing organizational culture, practice, and performance through communities of practice or professional learning communities (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2009).

1.4.3 Reflective Practice

Reflection has been defined as a thinking process that involves a deliberate pause accompanied by an open perspective that examines beliefs, goals, and practices to gain new insights and understanding (York-Barr, Sommers, Ghere, & Montie, 2001). Through **reflective practice**, school principals **develop a conceptual understanding** of what their job should be as opposed to an assumed role that is moulded by public opinion or historical perceptions. SASA requires principals to be accountable for teaching and learning in their schools, while continuing to maintain the managerial responsibilities of running a school. Highly effective principals have been found, in the Day's (2000) study to carry out five different kinds of reflection:

- o *the holistic*, where the emphasis is placed upon vision and culture building;
- o *the pedagogical*, (on and in action), in which emphasis is placed on staff acquiring new insights into teaching, applying and monitoring teaching which achieves results allied to their vision (which includes but is greater than the demands made by policy implementation imperatives);
- o *the interpersonal*, where the focus is upon knowing and nurturing staff, children, parents, and governors;
- o *the strategic*, where the focus is upon entrepreneurship, intelligence gathering and networking to secure some control of the future; and
- o *the intrapersonal*, where the focus is upon self-knowledge and self-development, self- mastery and fulfilment (Day, 2000, p. 118).

Day's five types of reflection suggest that reflection can be used for different purposes ranging from personal development to developing a school-wide vision. The role of the school principal is expanding within the South African context to include meeting the social challenges of learners, and support networks can be used as a valuable tool to help female principals share and reflect on their own practice, in a non- threatening environment.

1.4.4 Peer Learning

Peer learning, as a **bi-product of effective collegial inquiry** or "**collaborative reflective practice**" (Drago-Severson, 2009, p. 154), involves individuals "learning from and with each other in both formal and informal ways.

Peer learning can be fostered through establishing support networks that provide opportunities for female principals to interact using a variety of platforms to share experiences, exchange guidance and advice on wide ranging issues including instruction and learning, school management, leadership, personal challenges experienced by women principals, aspirations of individual members of the network, and any issue that members of the network may wish to raise. In that way the female support networks can serve as professional development and professional transformation platforms as well as provide opportunities for enhanced self-mastery and personal growth as knowledge is both acquired and created within the network.

As can be seen, establishing support networks for female principals would enable female principals who belong to the network to grow professionally as managers and leaders, as well as personally as the networks would provide a safe environment in which female principals can be assisted to meet whatever challenges they encounter.



"A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle. James Keller

THEME 2: WHAT MAKES SUPPORT NETWORKS WORK?

Establishment of effective support networks requires a deliberate, carefully planned and systematically executed activity underpinned by sound principles.

1.1 Principles underpinning successful establishment of optimally functioning support networks

Setting up a support network is an exercise that should be carefully planned and should be guided by the following underlying principles:

a. *Dedicate time to setting up an effective support network.*

A support network requires time to build and grow in a stable, organic way, thereby allowing members of the support network to build trust relationships and allow the network to gel, and allowing enough time to properly set up administrative system to deliver and monitor network activities, outputs and outcomes

b. *Make the network diverse.*

Diversity usually promotes strength in a system. Cultivate many different meaningful relationships so that different parts (DBE/ PEDs/ District and Circuit level) as well as individual mentors, coaches and beneficiaries of the support network can help one another deal with different kinds of issues, bringing together female principals from diverse social, cultural and racial backgrounds ,at various levels according to need..

c. *Stay in touch.*

The whole point of a support network is to enable members of the network to maintain regular contact. DBE and PED s should invest resources in the ICT to make the emerging support networks operate optimally via email, sms, blog, Facebook, twitter, moderated web platforms etc. and updating these as new ITC platforms become available ;-bearing in mind that the whole point of a support network is to allow real time access.

d. *Follow the Golden Rule of support networks ""Give to the networks more than you expect to get*

In support networks, members get as much out of their support network as they put into it. To build a truly strong support network, members should offer others as much as, or even more than, than they expect to get in return. As such support networks should be structured to afford its members quick access to other members, using mentees of today as mentors of tomorrow.

2.2 Composition and location

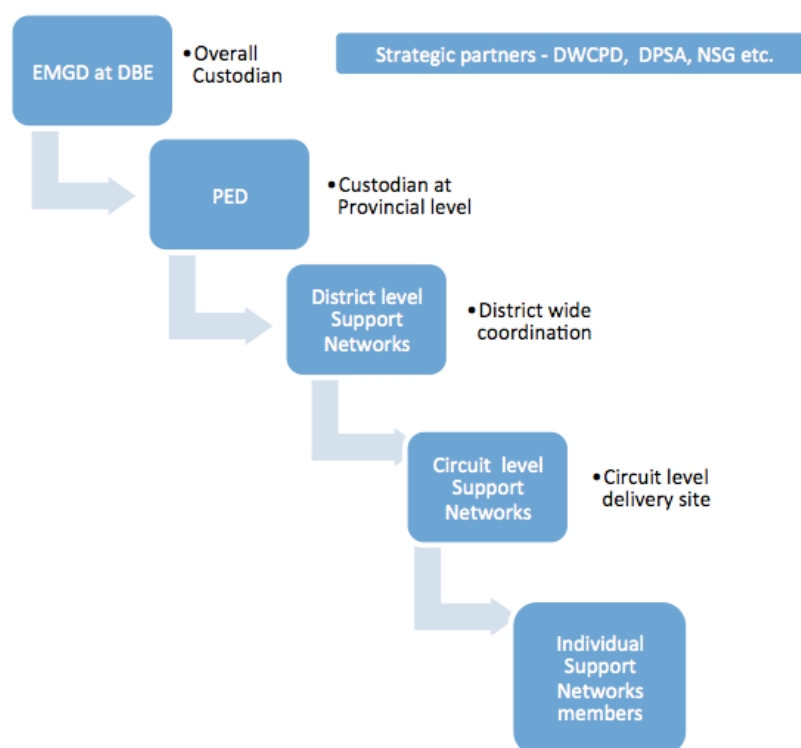
The setting up of support networks for female principals has been initiated by the DBE as an overall custodian and this is important to build a level of coherence in how it is delivered in provinces. However, to make support networks come alive, PED s as well as their District and Circuit offices should take full ownership of the programme. This is in keeping with spirit of cooperative governance and furthermore for support networks to serve the needs of female principals, they need to be operational across circuits, and districts, while affording female principals to tap into provincial and national level support through ICT and other avenues.

2.2.1 Setting up of Female Principal Support Networks at DBE level

DBE as an employer of public educators has taken the bold step of designing the Female Principal Support Network Programme as a mechanism to be used to achieve the Constitutional imperative of achieving equality in the workplace. This hopefully will be one of the first tangible sustained interventions that will be delivered on an on-going basis. The Educational Management and Governance Development (EMGD) sub directorate of the DBE is the overall custodian of the programme. However, the EMGD sub-directorate needs all the support that can be garnered both internally within DBE from PEDs; as well as from other Government Departments. For instance, depending on the issues that arise from support networks, it may become necessary for EMGD to establish partnerships to meet the needs of the members of Female Principals Support Networks that DBE may not be in a position to meet; e.g. management of stress, which would require EMGD in provinces to liaise with the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to provide this type of intervention. It may also be necessary for DBE to dovetail its interventions where feasible with other strategic interventions provided by other national departments and form partnerships e.g.:

- o Department of Women Children and People with Disabilities to highlight needs of female educators and principals with disabilities;
- o Lobby DPISA on conditions of service that may militate against progress of females to management positions in education;
- o School of Governance that is to soon replace PALAMA to provide targeted training when and as required to meet the specific professional development of women in education; and
- o Provincial Departments of Education to resource the drive and monitor the programme at Provincial level dovetailing it with other relevant provincial initiatives.

Figure 2 Key Role Players in the Female Principal Support Network Programme



2.2.2 Setting up of the Female Principal Support Network Programme at Provincial level

In each Province, the PED is the custodian of the Female Principal Support Programme with the overall responsibility for setting the programme up, coordinating the delivery of the programme as well as monitoring its delivery and communicating with stakeholders at all levels within the Province and with DBE. The responsibilities of the PED include the following:

- o Designating an official to take responsibility for the overall coordination of the Female Support Network Programme for the Province according to line function;
- o Allocating resources to run the network optimally, e.g.: financial (stipends/ honoraria for retired coaches/ mentors operating the support networks); human, ICT resources, as well as providing administrative tools to be used at District and Circuit levels;
- o Deciding on the ICT platforms to be used in the Province and resourcing them accordingly;
- o Recruiting current as well as retired or out of service female principals who meet set criteria to serve as mentors or coaches;
- o Providing training on coaching and mentoring to the provincial cohort of coaches and mentors that will deliver the programme;
- o Putting in place systems that Circuit and District offices will use to deliver and monitor the activities of the support networks;
- o Identifying and roping in strategic partners as and when required;
- o Monitoring and reporting on the delivery the principal support network programme at provincial level and reviewing the delivery of the programme in line with monitoring data.

2.2.3 The roles and responsibilities of various role players

2.2.3.1 The role of DBE (EMGD)

In the Female Principal Support Programme; EMDG is responsible for:

- o Designing the Female Principal Support Network Programme in a manner that builds on existing programmes of DBE, e.g. WIM ;
- o Getting into cooperation agreements with key strategic partners;
- o Setting up support networks at national level made up of provincial representatives and key strategic partners;
- o Roping in strategic partners as and when required;
- o Supporting Provincial launches of Female Principal Support Networks;
- o Drafting guidelines that provinces can adopt/elaborate on to implement the programme;
- o Putting in place reporting mechanisms that will enable DBE to monitor the delivery of the programme;

- o Helping provinces remove bottlenecks and liaising with strategic partners to meet identified needs;
- o Setting a baseline against which the impact of the Female Principal Support Programme will be evaluated in future
- o Providing provinces with instruments to be used to collect baseline data on the female principals at the point of entry into the programme
- o Conducting an implementation evaluation of the Principal Support Network programme; to identify and remove implementation glitches within 2 years of inception, and
- o Determining the impact of the programme in provinces, after about 5 years of implementation.

2.2.3.2 role of the PEDs

For female support networks to work optimally; the networks must be brought closer to the female principals. As a custodian at Provincial level, the PED is responsible for overall resourcing and coordination, putting in place administrative tools to monitor the delivery of the Female Principal Support Programme. To accomplish this, PED will need to:

- o Make firm decisions about the following:
 - § Whether male principals with a track record of supporting empowerment of female principals will be invited to participate as mentors or coaches
 - § Whether the Female Principal Support Network Programme will be open to Female Deputy Principals or Heads of Departments particularly at high school level
 - § Value of honoraria/ stipends to be paid to retired principals serving as mentors/ coaches in the Female Principal Support Programme
- o Solicit involvement of and inputs from District Offices on District specific nuances that will need consideration in the delivery of the Female Principal Support Programme
- o Communicate on an on-going basis about the Female Principal Support Programme by including reporting on the delivery of the Female Principal Support Programme as a standing item on the agenda of meetings with District Directors and providing a dedicated slot for the Female Principal Support Programme in the PEDs newsletter, website intranet etc.
- o Organise functions for the Provincial Female Principal Support programme including accommodating the programme in Women's Month Celebrations and other Provincial initiatives, and engage in on-going identification of opportunities to enhance the visibility of the Female Principal Support Programme
- o Put in place a monitoring mechanism to monitor and report on the delivery of the programme on an on-going basis
- o Recruit mentors/ and coaches using set criteria and create a provincial data base
- o Liaise with national DBE as and when required

2.2.3.3 The role of District Offices

District offices are an important link in the delivery of the Female Principal Support Programme, and should be entrusted with the responsibility of coordinating support network activities across various Circuits within each District by taking direct responsibility for:

- o Assisting the PED in identifying mentors and coaches within their respective Districts, from the ranks of both current and retired female principals
- o Cascading the programme to Circuit offices and monitoring programme delivery at Circuit level
- o Collecting baseline data using tools provided by National to establish where female principals are in each District at the start of the programme
- o Facilitating the merging of Circuits in instances where low numbers of female principals in particular circuits will not make the setting up of the programme at Circuit level viable.
- o Providing infrastructure and logistical requirements for the programme to be delivered at District level as and when required
- o Monitoring the overall delivery of the programme across Circuits within a District
- o Liaising with and learning from colleagues in other Districts in order remove bottlenecks
- o Liaising and reporting to the PED on various matters regarding the delivery of the Female Support Network Programme at District level
- o Monitoring improvements of the beneficiary female principals within the District using tools adopted by the Province.

2.2.3.4 The role of Circuit offices in the Female Principal Support Networks

Circuits are the closest management structures to female principals and as such, the Circuit Managers are most likely to be aware of the specific challenges that female principals experience in their respective Circuits. The Circuit Managers will therefore be expected to play a pivotal role in the Female Principal Support Programme which will include the following:

- o Identifying professional development needs to inform the areas to be covered Female Principal Support Programme year to year
- o Assisting with the identification of current and retired female principals to serve as mentors and coaches
- o Identifying newly appointed principals and encouraging them to join the support network
- o Identifying female principals who are struggling with certain aspects of their job and encouraging them to join the Female Principal Support Network Programme
- o Where the number of female principals is too low to create a vibrant network at Circuit level, liaise with District office on cooperating with neighbouring Circuits to create vibrant support networks

- o Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Female Principal Support Programme at Circuit level which may include collating and processing mentee feedback on the effectiveness of various female principal support interventions
- o Monitoring improvement of female principals participating as mentees in the programme by having District officials responsible for performance monitoring complete questionnaires
- o Providing logistical support for Female Support Network group activities to be carried out within the Circuit
- o Monitoring the activities of the coaches and mentors at Circuit level through evaluation questionnaires that will be filled by female principals serving as mentees and protégés on a quarterly basis as well as time sheets completed by coaches/ mentors
- o Making referral materials available to female principals that they may peruse to get information on how to deal with specific challenges

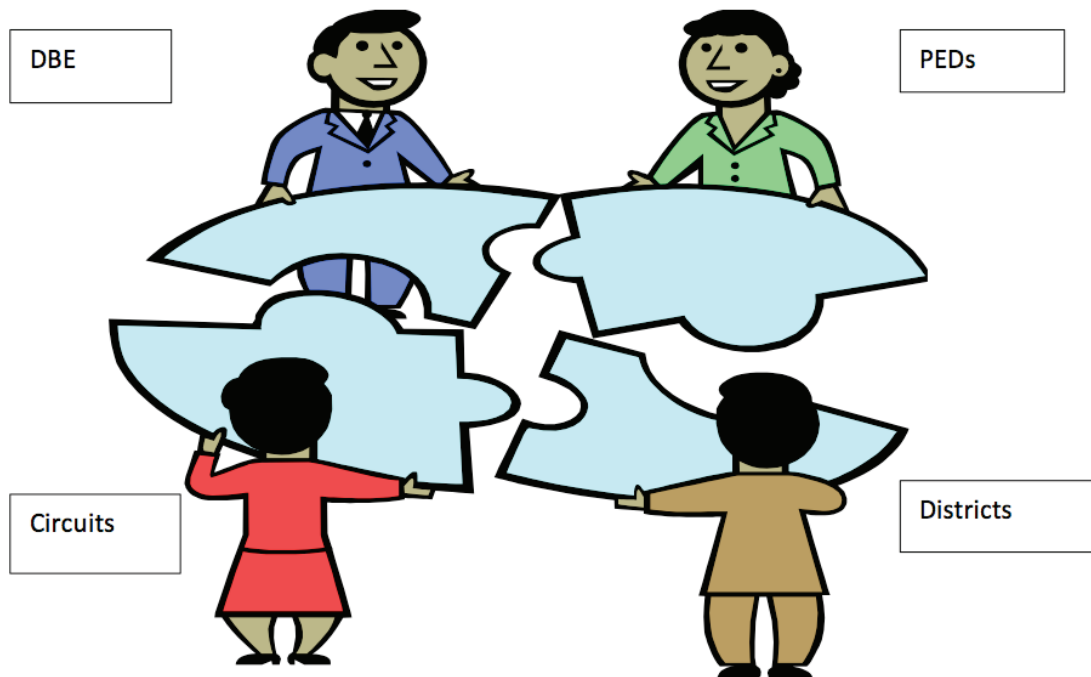
2.3 Practical considerations in setting up Female Principal Support Networks at Provincial Level

In setting up support networks for female principals at Provincial level, the PED s will need to do the following:

- o Finalise the budget and determine what will be needed to get the programme off the ground asking for support from DBE where necessary
- o Finalise criteria for recruitment of mentors/coaches which may include the following:
 - § Having run / currently running a functional school
 - § Having an impeccable record of personal and professional integrity
 - § A history of good relations with all stakeholders including the SGB
 - § Any other criteria that the Province may deem necessary
- o Recruit coaches and mentors in line with set criteria by :
- o Inviting aspiring mentors/coaches to apply
- o Screening applicants and appointing mentors and coaches for a period of 2/3 years
- o Develop a data base of Provincial coaches and mentors with links to the DBE resources highlight the following:
 - § Post held
 - § Qualifications
 - § Key achievements
 - § Areas of strength and interest

- o Decide whether mentees can identify more than one mentor as part of this programme. In general, mentors do not expect to be paid- however should retired individuals be identified as mentors it may be necessary to pay them a stipend so they will be able to cover costs they incur in executing mentorship roles. As a cost containment measure , it may be necessary to decide whether mentees can have more than one mentor, particularly retired principals

The overall success of the Female Principal Support Programme will depend on each constituency effectively playing its role.



Change isn't emotion. It is real work and organization and strategy-that's just the truth of it.

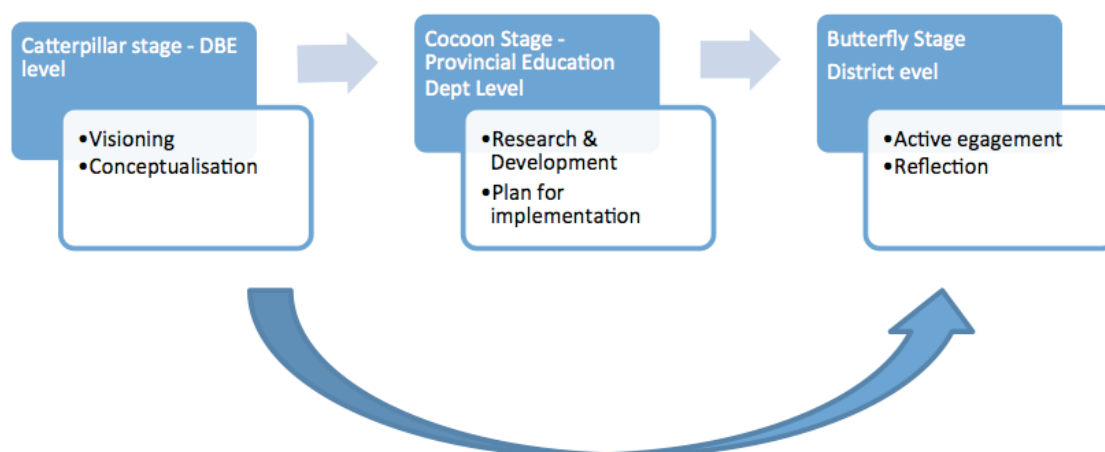
(Michelle Obama, First Lady of the United States)

THEME 3: STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUPPORT NETWORK

Support networks develop through stages and as such this is an exercise that requires careful thinking and allocation of sufficient time and resources to allow the networks to evolve organically.

3.1 Stages in the formation of support networks

Figure 3



Stages cannot be skipped; otherwise the delivery of the Principal Support Programme will not evolve in a manner that will render the programme sustainable.

3.1.1 A brief description of each stage

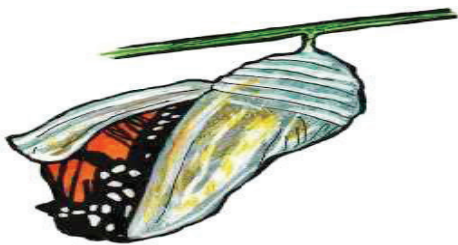
3.1.1.1 Caterpillar Stage



The Female Principal Support Programme started at the caterpillar stage i.e. it was conceptualised and designed based on the **DBE** vision. DBE, through this programme aims at improving women representation at management echelons of public education; not only in terms of increasing numbers of female principals, but also supporting them to do well. The stage is not only the natural starting point but also very important in terms of getting the basics right that will enhance the evolution of the Female Principal Support Programme into a sustainable initiative that achieves its objectives. At the caterpillar stage, DBE has gathered inputs necessary to locate responsibilities at the right level, through the launch, and consultation sessions that followed early drafts of this Booklet. From the DBE perspective, once the Female Principal Support Programme has been conceptualised and designed, strategic partners brought on board- the natural evolution moves the programme to the cocoon stage at PED s level.

Pertinent questions that DBE should answer:

- Ø Who are the strategic partners and how will DBE bring them on board?
- Ø What resources will be needed to ensure optimum coordination of this initiative at national level, i.e. human resources, financial as well as IT infrastructure?
- Ø How will the Female Principal Support Programme dovetail with other pertinent programmes?
- Ø Is there an intention to establish a national body, and if so how and by when?
- Ø If there is an intention to establish a national body, how will the national body link with female principals across the country?
- Ø How will the Female Principal Support network activities be kept on the radar?
- Ø How will the network activities be monitored at various levels?



3.1.1.2 Cocoon Stage

This is an equally important stage, at which Provinces will use the guidelines provided by DBE to customise the Female Principal Support Programme to meet Provincial needs and circumstances. At this stage, Provinces will need to decide on issues relating to how to resource the Female Principal Support Programme, how to recruit mentors and coaches, and how to make it work at provincial level. In short each province needs to develop an implementation plan that will articulate how the Principal Support Programme will be implemented giving due considering provincial nuances.

Pertinent Questions

- Ø Who will drive it at provincial level -- allocate the responsibility consistent with line function
- Ø How are various role players going to be brought on board at provincial level?
- Ø How are coaches and mentors going to be recruited?
- Ø What resources will be needed to bring on board retired principals
- Ø How best can the mentors and coaches be prepared to effectively play their role?
- Ø How will the various facets be delivered, i.e. coaching mentoring, real time trouble shooting, etc.?
- Ø What ITC infrastructure is needed to deliver the programme optimally at provincial level?
- Ø How will programme delivery be monitored and reported on from Circuits, to Districts to PED and by PED to DBE?



3.1.1.3 Butterfly stage

The buzz of the Female Principal Support as well as its visibility should be felt at Circuit and District levels as this is where, its implementation and impact will be most felt. While ideally in every Circuit, the Female Principal Support Programme should be alive, recognition is given to the fact that because female principals particularly at high school level are so few and far in between; a possibility exists that due to limited numbers, it may be necessary for neighbouring Circuits to be combined for the purpose of creating vibrant networks, and rendering delivery of the programme cost effective. Under such circumstances, Circuit Managers will need to agree on roles and responsibilities of the Circuits that will merge for the purposes of delivering a vibrant Female Principal Support Programme. All female principals should be encouraged to participate as either as mentors/ coaches or mentees recognising that the mentees of today are mentors and coaches of tomorrow.

The District offices will be responsible for coordinating the delivery of the programme across Circuits within the District, offering the necessary material and in kind support as well forging partnerships where appropriate. The success of the programme will be reflected in District level statistics in terms of not only participation rates, mentee feedback, but also increase in the number of successful female principals over time.

Pertinent questions

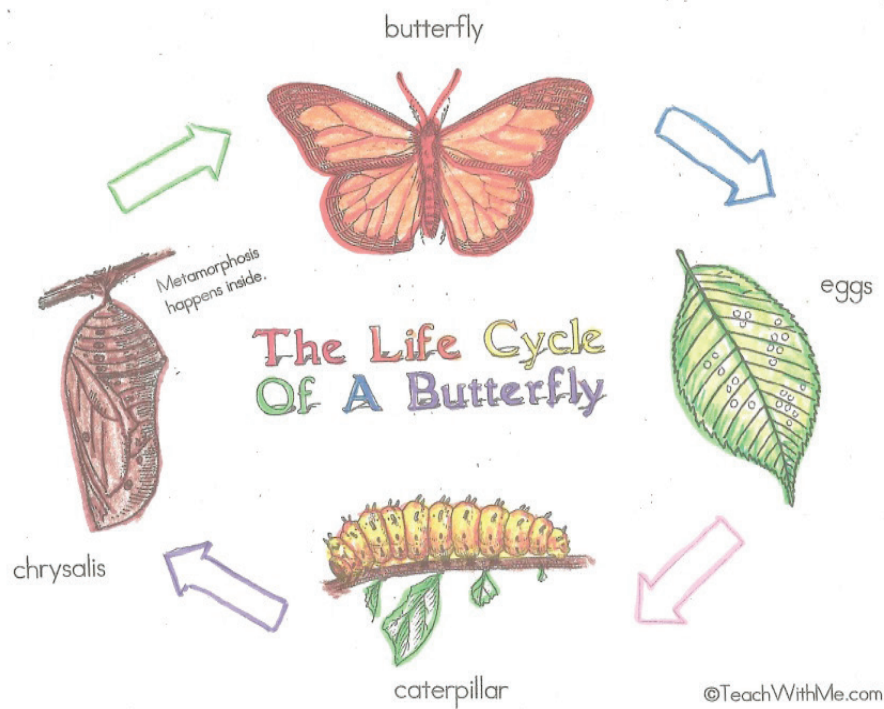
- Ø What is the extent of availability of experienced good female principals and who should be included as mentors/ coaches? In some Circuits or even Districts the experienced female principals may be so few that it may be necessary to involve as mentors male principals who are committed to the empowerment of women or merge Circuits.
- Ø How many female principals are available as beneficiaries of the programme. In some Districts newly appointed principals may be so few that it may be necessary to include as mentees/ protégés female deputy principals or even HOD s or alternatively join Districts for the purposes of establishing vibrant support networks.
- Ø Is there anything that needs to be done to enhance access through IT platforms at District level e.g. video links?
- Ø How will struggling female principals be encouraged to participate without them feeling stigmatised and targeted?
- Ø How best can this programme be structured and delivered given District specific nuances?
- Ø Are there specific mechanisms that need to be put in place to enhance the participation of female principals from rural schools?

- Ø Will protégés be allowed access to more than one mentor?
- Ø How will newly appointed principals be afforded access to relevant coaching?
- Ø How is a balance going to be struck between group activities and individual access considering that for troubleshooting purposes real time access is critical?
- Ø How will the actual delivery be monitored at District levels– time sheets?

Answering pertinent questions at various levels of delivery is important as it serves to sensitize pertinent role players of their responsibilities and it also gives an indication of how the delivery of this programme is to be planned, resourced, and implemented, and this bodes well programme success.

The Female Principal Support Programme will go through stages, and like all new programmes it can be expected that there will be some teething problems, which will be resolved through critical reflection on what is working and what needs to be changed. Throughout programme delivery; Circuits, Districts, and Provinces and individual female principals will learn from one another through critical reflection and face to face sessions that may organised at various levels, and it is envisaged that learning and reflection will also be happening among network members.

Figure 4 The Life Cycle of Female Principal Support Network using the Butterfly Analogy



The analogy that setting up a support network goes through similar stages as the butterfly life cycle suggests the following:

- o The formation of strong viable support networks requires time to evolve;
- o Responsibilities for setting up support networks must be carried out at the right level, allocating adequate resources;
- o Stages cannot be skipped as -the evolution of support networks should be organic;
- o Each stage is important in its own right and therefore enough time and resources are needed to do it right at the right level

Adapted from Madison 2012- Managing by Networking

THEME 4: RESOURCING THE FEMALE PRINCIPAL SUPPORT NETWORKS

The establishment and maintenance of support networks for female principals should be viewed as an on-going commitment by DBE and PEDs; and therefore both National and Provincial Departments require clarity about resources needed to establish and sustain the Female Principal Support Networks at various levels. This theme highlights basic resources that will be needed to get the programme off the ground and to keep it going.

4.1 Organisational resources needed at National (DBE) level

The setting up and maintenance of support networks for female principals should be considered a recurring commitment requiring allocation of resources on an on-going basis. It needs to be emphasised that resources needed will vary at different stages, and therefore due care must be given to drawing up a realistic budget that accommodate needs at different stages of the programme at both DBE and Provincial levels. Resources needed to set up the programme and sustain it include:

- o Personnel dedicating time to Female Principal Support Network activities which will be ranging from formation and maintenance of strategic partnerships, setting up systems to deliver and monitor the programme, coordination of the delivery, administration, monitoring and overall communication and reporting on the Female Principal Support Programme
- o Provision of IT platforms that will enable members of the network to interact on an on-going basis, provide communication platforms to keep the female principal support agenda alive and provide opportunities for female principals to interact and troubleshoot across provinces. Provide facilities for video links to render support network activities accessible to members of networks in other provinces through teleconferencing, as well. Consider providing moderated blog facility to provide real time access while also providing on-going communication through Facebook and Twitter handles, what's up, BBM etc.
- o Allocation of adequate budget at DBE level including budget for:
 - § Promotional materials
 - § Assisting provinces to set up these networks,
 - § Resources such as DVDs; Training manuals that will be made available at District offices
- o Supporting various activities calculated at keeping the network activities on the radar
- o Providing Principal Support Network Administrative tools
 - § DBE should provide proforma tools that PED s may use/ or adapt to deliver, monitor and report on the activities of female principal support networks by Circuits, Districts and Provinces.

4.2. Organisational resources needed at Provincial level (PED)

At Provincial level, it will be important to allocate adequate resources including:

- o Designating an official to run the programme, and formally incorporating this responsibility into job description
- o Adopting administrative tools that will allow for coordination of activities of Female Support Networks across districts/circuits and allow districts to report on networks from the same platform
- o Providing necessary IT platforms that will be used to foster interaction between mentors/ coaches and their protégé as well enable members of the network to interact with one another
- o Providing an adequate budget that will cover:
 - § Recruitment and selection of provincial mentors and coaches including those who may have retired who meet criteria set by PED s. Training of mentors and coaches
 - § Planned activities under the auspices of the Female Principal Support Programme
 - § Direct payments of stipends/ honoraria to retired principals serving as mentors and coaches
 - § Logistical cost associated with running female support networks

4.3 Organisational resources needed at District level

Each District needs to allocate the responsibility to run a support network to an official consistent with line function. Hopefully, the officials assigned this responsibility will be passionate about empowerment of female principals and will embrace responsibilities associated with this role, including:

- § Liaising with the Provincial office, strategic partners as well as Circuits on the delivery and monitoring of the Female Principal Support Programme,
- § Coordinating the activities of the support network, across different Circuits,
- § Monitoring and reporting at agreed upon intervals
- § Troubleshooting where necessary and removing whatever bottlenecks the Circuits may experience
- § Keeping the Female Principal Support Network going at District level and enhancing the visibility of the programme
- § Providing access to ITC at District level e.g. video conferencing facilities to enable female principals to participate in virtual seminars across the province
- § Providing access to facilities for use for face to face engagements
- § Collating and making available to Circuits reference materials that female principals may need e.g. WIM Manuals
- § Being a repository of reference materials that cannot be distributed at Circuit level.

4. 4. Organisational resources needed at Circuit level

At Circuit level, the following resources should be provided to get the programme off the ground and to keep the Female Principal Support Network going:

- o Designate an official who will be responsible for:
 - § Liaising with the District office on the delivery of the Female Principal Support Programme,
 - § Organising the activities of female Principal Support Network, monitor and report on these.
 - § Troubleshooting where necessary, removing whatever bottlenecks the network may experience at Circuit level
 - § Keeping the female network support going at Circuit level
 - § Coordination of the network activities where Circuits have merged for the purposes of making the delivery of the female Principal Support programme efficient; liaise on an on-going basis with colleagues, ensuring that each circuit optimally plays its role
- o Put in place mechanisms to coordinate activities of merged Circuits in instances where numbers of female principals would not make it feasible for the programme to be run at circuit level,
- o Provide resources agreed upon in partnering with other Circuits
- o Provide a collection of reference materials that female principals can access and use
- o Make the necessary logistical arrangements for organised Female Principal Support network activities at Circuit level

As can be seen, the delivery of the Female Principal Support Programme requires a high degree of coordination from National level all the way to Circuit level particularly at the beginning.

THEME 5: WHAT WILL BE COVERED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF FEMALE PRINCIPAL SUPPORT NETWORKS AND HOW ?

5.1 Underlying assumptions

The Female Principal Support Network has an overall goal of providing female principals with support they need at different stages of their career development and in different formats. Flowing out of this overarching goal, the Female Principal Support Programme is based on the following assumptions:

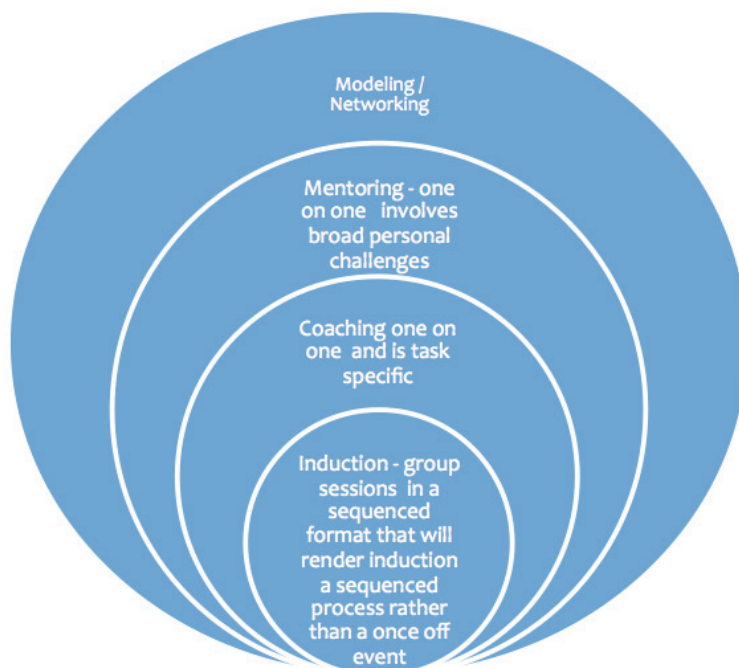
- o Newly appointed principals need to be properly inducted into their roles and responsibilities as principals, and a structured extended induction programme would help newly appointed principals adapt quicker and reduce uncertainty
- o Different individuals need support in different aspects of their principal roles. As such providing coaching to newly appointed principals on specific areas that they find problematic will enhance their ability to do well and succeed as principal
- o Providing support calculated at helping newly appointed female principals to deal with personal challenges they may be experiencing is important, and this can be located within the context of mentoring newly appointed principals
- o Providing opportunities for vicarious learning would assist novice female principals to learn from their more experienced counterparts thereby avoiding making the same mistakes; or this might help expose them to practical situations dealing with areas they find challenging.

5.2 Components of the Female Principal Support Programme

Flowing from these assumptions, a Female Support Network Programme should be designed to provide a variety of interventions, some more structured than others, including:

- **Extended induction** that complements the District Induction initiatives. This should be a structured sequenced induction programme which will be aimed at gradually introducing the newly appointed principal to the responsibilities associated with each quarter while also inducting the female principal into the Female Principal Support Network. The thrust will be on orientating newly appointed female principals to their roles and responsibilities in a staggered manner that prepares them for the responsibilities they are supposed to carry each quarter. This will enable newly appointed female principals to tap into the experience of the network on a proactive basis to anticipate the responsibilities, get assistance on how to carry these out and be better prepared to carry out their responsibilities correctly, the first time around. (group)
- **Coaching** that individual principals may need to master the skill of performing certain tasks (individually on demand)
- **Mentorship** would allow newly appointed principals to identify their own mentors, form relationships with them and seek their advice and guidance as and when needed (personal and on-going).
- **Networking** opportunities that would enable newly appointed principals to connect with other female principals at Circuit, District, Provincial and National levels through IT platforms provided or face to face through organised sessions

Figure 5 Scope of offerings of the Female Principal Support Programme



5.3 What will be covered in Female Principals Support Network?

Support networks for female principals should be structured in a way that makes such networks meet real needs of female principals. This calls for striking a balance between providing opportunities for group troubleshooting, real time individual troubleshooting, continuous personal and professional growth, and providing newly appointed principals with a sounding board that they may need as they navigate their new role. Equally important is exposing newly appointed principals to positive role models that they can emulate. As such, support networks should be structured to provide opportunities for an extended induction, coaching, mentoring, opportunities for observational learning, and general troubleshooting.

5.3.1 Extended induction



One of the challenges in the education sector is provision of induction as a once off event organised by District offices which makes all newly appointed principals to be heavily reliant on their own contacts and connections to learn the ropes. The once off approach to induction renders induction of limited value, and the timing thereof is not always ideal. This is where male principals enjoy an advantage of having an “old boys club” to fall back on. In instances where there are no female principals available that newly appointed female principals can seek guidance from, this creates a fertile ground for setting female principals up for failure.

As part of enhancing female principal success, it is important that PEDs through the Female Principal Support Programme provide female principals with structured induction programmes calculated at inducing them into their new roles and responsibilities. This will sensitize them of the responsibilities they have to carry out thereby enhancing their readiness to deliver on various milestones in a timely fashion. The induction proposed, should be an extended induction programme rather than a once off event. This will be provided at Provincial level aiming to assist female principals better acclimatise to their new roles. It is desirable that perhaps over the first year of newly appointed female principals be subjected to four induction sessions that are structured in a way that coincides with the responsibilities of principal typical of each quarter. This will enable principals to anticipate tasks that they have to undertake, get coaching on how to carry these out where needed, and know where to go should they encounter challenges. By the end of the first year in office, female principals will be fully inducted into the principal responsibilities associated with each quarter.

5.3.1 1 Guideline on how to structure an extended induction programme for newly appointed principals

Extended induction will work better if the bulk of the appointments of new principals are synchronised to enable the formation of a provincial cohort. At assumption of duty, Districts should sensitize newly appointed principals to the existence of the Female Principal Support Network, explain its purpose as well as how it is structured and delivered. Newly appointed female principals should be encouraged to participate with those who have been principals before being encouraged to participate as mentors/coaches should they have reached a level of comfort in their roles as principals.

Ideally, at assumption of duty newly appointed female principals will complete a Capacity Needs Assessment Questionnaire and will be given a schedule for the extended induction component of programme. In structuring an extended induction programme, due consideration should be given to:

- o Centralising the delivery of the extended induction since it is envisaged that the numbers of newly appointed female principals may not be large, and centralisation will also offer newly appointed principals opportunities for networking
- o Inclusion of coaches and mentors to the extended induction sessions so as to also offer newly appointed female principals exposure to the mentors and coaches available provincially
- o Giving coaches and mentors presentation slots according to their level of comfort and competence
- o Structuring extended induction sessions to be interactive so real issues pertinent to each quarter can be dealt with practically
- o Soliciting inputs from newly appointed female principals on what they would like to be covered in the next session.

The extended induction will give newly appointed principals an opportunity to be introduced to the their roles on an incremental basis and also be introduced to the Female Principals Support Programme as well as the mentors/ coaches, and other female principals in the province.

5.3.2 Coaching as a tool to be used by Female Principal Support Networks



In its rudimentary form, coaching is a method of training, guiding or instructing a person or group of people on how to perform a specific task, how to achieve a goal or how to develop certain skills. A coach seeks to impart information by any one or any combination of methods that include seminars, demonstration, workshops. Often times coaching involves helping a junior person acquire a skill needed to perform a particular task, monitoring the performance of the specific imparted skill or task and giving feedback on how to improve. This feedback cycle can be performed multiple times.

Coaching is appropriate for specific skills and short-term goal-oriented situations. Examples of instances where coaching may be used include public speaking, making a presentation, learning use a computer, chairing a meeting, facilitating decision making in meetings etc. Coaching works best one on one as the intention is to help the individual master a particular skill e.g. a newly appointed principal who has a challenge of public speaking, a newly appointed female principal who is apprehensive about playing her role within a male dominated SGB in a rural traditional setting.

The coaching relationship is usually a professional formal relationship and is often of a short duration i.e. largely relates to how specific tasks are performed and may necessitate that the coach guides the protégé in a context specific manner. This suggests that different districts can set up a pool of coaches that can be matched to protégés on a topic by topic basis. This suggests that coaches may be deployed district wide according to demand and areas of competence, e.g. Conflict management, or debunking gender stereotypes, diversity management etc.

5.3.2.1 Guideline on how support networks can use coaching to support female principals

- o The pool of coaches and mentors available at the District level will be communicated to protégés indicating their areas of interest and expertise
- o Once the Female Principal Support Programme is up and running, a Capacity Needs Assessment for incoming principals will be conducted as part of assumption of duty process. On the basis of training needs assessment process themes (topics) that the newly appointed female principals need coaching on will be identified and will be matched with areas of expertise of coaches in the data base.
- o The designated official will match the needs of the newly appointed principals with available coaches and allow them to schedule face to face sessions where necessary – otherwise coaching can happen electronically via telephone, sms, email, and social media platforms, moderated blogs, etc.
- o Since coaching sessions will be individual, and may be face to face or electronic-administrative mechanisms must be put in place to monitor delivery

5.3.3 Mentoring as a tool to be used by Female Principals Support Networks

Mentoring is a relationship built on trust, and one of its primary goals is to make persons new to a field of endeavour more confident in their abilities and talents. Traditionally mentoring involves a senior member of the same profession—a person with more experience and connections—helping a newcomer to the field. Rather than focus on a particular skill, task or goal, mentoring is a long-term, on-going process. It is usually a more personal relationship, based in shared experience. As the newcomer grows, the mentoring relationship evolves. The mentor often passes on not only tangible knowledge, but also philosophy, advice and guidance gleaned from years in the field. The mentor may provide introductions to people or organizations to which a newcomer would not normally have access. Mentors generally provide guidance, not for personal gain, but out of a desire to help another individual realize her full potential. As such the mentorship relationship is fluid, and can last far beyond any structured programme.

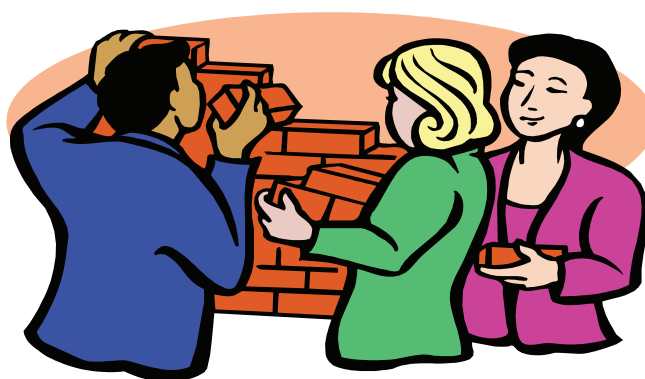
5.3.3.1 Guideline on how support networks can use mentoring to support female principals

Mentoring programmes that engage both practising and retired school principals can be mutually beneficial to both the mentor and mentee. While mentees benefit directly by being guided; for mentors involvement in a mentorship relationships provides opportunities to make a contribution thereby affirming self-worth and recognition of one's expertise and experience. This is vital, particularly for retired principals. Moreover, the diversity of the mentee's and mentor's backgrounds and approaches can enrich the process of discovery, the ways of thinking about solving problems, and the multiple modes of communicating ideas, which can lead to changes in perspective by both parties.

Mentoring is quite fluid and it works best when mentees identify people that they look up to as mentors. The guidance that mentees seek from mentors is wide ranging and can be in the realm of personal, career management, career development, decision making and can also be specific to the job. Mentors can also play an important role of being a sounding board for the mentee's ideas, giving advice, and encouragement in times of difficulty and rejoicing and congratulating the mentee for her accomplishments.

Mentorship works best when mentees are free to choose their own mentors because a personal connection is necessary for a mentorship relationship to be yield maximum benefit and be sustained. Mentors should have genuine interest in the advancement of the interest of the mentee and while mentees should have professional admiration and positive regard for the mentor's personal and professional accomplishments. A mentor is in short, someone that the mentee looks up to and whose professional judgement is trusted, while a mentee is someone that that the mentor believes has a potential that the mentor is keen to groom. In the mentorship component of the Female Principal Support Programme there is room for setting up a provincial database of mentors to give mentees a broader pool to choose from. Since mentorship is a one on one encounter that is not task specific, in many cases mentorship relationships and interactions are sustained through electronic communication. Provinces should decide if they would like to include successful male principals and former principals who are interested and have a track record of gender empowerment in their data bases. After all the female principals will be selecting their own mentors.

5.3.4 Modelling and networking as tools to support newly appointed female principals



According to the social learning theory people learn by observing others. Associated with Albert Bandura's work in the 1960s, social learning theory explains how people learn new behaviours, values, and attitudes through merely observing others in action. For example, a newly appointed female principal might learn how to handle oppositional staff members, how to run a productive meeting, how to debunk negative stereotypes about women managers in a rural setting by observing another female principal constructively dealing with such situations.

For social learning to occur - attention to the person(s) being observed is required, remembering the observed behaviour, having the intention and ability to replicate the behaviour, and having motivation to act the same way. Modelling is a form of observational learning where the behaviours to be emulated are observed, internalised and enacted later on in dealing with similar situations

Networking on the other hand is a socioeconomic business activity by which groups of like-minded business people recognize, create, or act upon business opportunities. A business network is a type of business social network whose reason for existing is business activity.

5.3.4.1 Guideline on how modelling can be used to support female principals

As part of training / capacity building needs assessment, at assumption of duty, novice newly appointed female principals will be invited to identify work related processes/ activities/ encounters /situations which they anticipate they will struggle with. At subsequent induction sessions, female principals will be invited to further identify other situations that they struggle with that they may have become aware of through real experiences.

Experienced female principals who are still in service will be provided with a list of situations that the newly appointed principals anticipate will be a challenge, and experienced principals will be invited to identify those situations in the list that they have mastered. Principals in the network who have successfully dealt with such situations can provide principals who are struggling with these issues an opportunity to come observe them in action handling such situations in their schools. Alternatively in face to face network meetings the experienced principals can conduct role-playing sessions to demonstrate how those situations are to be handled.

Overtime DBE may compile DVD s portraying situations that many newly appointed female principals struggle with and make these available as resources that newly appointed principals can access at their district offices. The DVD s will portray real situations identified as posing a challenge and may for example cover portrayal of a female principal controlling rowdy colleagues in a meeting; dealing with SGB members who undermine female principal; dealing with male learners who do not want to take instructions from female principals because of cultural beliefs.

Through various avenues that are part of the Female Principal Support Programme, women principals will be afforded opportunities to meet likeminded female principals build and strengthen their professional networks which will help foster personal as well as professional growth and development, and help them overcome various challenges they face.



The many faces of the Female Principal Support Programme

THEME 6: KEEPING COMMUNICATION WITHIN FEMALE PRINCIPAL NETWORKS GOING



6.1 Introduction

Networking is important for a variety of reasons, many of which already have been mentioned. At both the individual and collective level, networking is an empowerment strategy, through which female principals will be able to apply pressure in support of their goals. Through female principal support networks, female principals will be better able to deal with challenges they face knowing they are not alone and will also have a stronger collective voice in matters that affect them and their schools. Through networking, female principals will be more capable of influencing the future of their schools and the education system. The ability to network effectively is an important skill that female principals will hopefully acquire through this programme, which can only be put into effect only if communication tools are made available to the members of the support network. The pertinent question therefore is what sorts of communication capabilities are needed by female principals for effective networking?

Networks by definition offer opportunities for increased communication, allow for the sharing of information and knowledge which is important for female principals to be active participants in their own professional development. This would require multi-dimensional communication at various levels, and various communication channels should be provided.

6.2 The role of various players in communicating about the Female Principal Support Networks

The Department of Basic Education as the overall custodian of the Female Principals Support Programme should come up with a communication strategy and platforms that will be used to:

a. **Market the programme- i.e. share information about the need for, rationale and potential benefits of the Principal Support Programme**

DBE has marketed the Female Principal Support Programme to Provinces, and all Provinces seem to realise the importance of this initiative and to embrace it. This DBE has largely accomplished through the successful launch of the Female Principal Support Programme.

b. Consultation

Provincial Departments have been consulted fully by DBE and this has been accomplished by circulating the draft booklet to provinces for inputs, in addition to pilot testing the draft and engaging provincial representatives through various forums.

c. Selling:

The Provinces need to sell the programme to Districts soliciting District inputs on how they will make this work, factoring in district specific nuances to the decision-making process, while clarifying roles and responsibilities envisaged for the District offices. District Managers will need to convince Circuit Managers of the importance of the programme bring them up to speed on how the programme is envisaged to work and sufficiently capacitate Circuit managers to roll this out in their circuits. Circuit managers will in turn need to sell this programme to female principals, recruit female principals into the programme whether they will be coming in as mentors or mentees.

Each year, a cohort of female principals coming in as mentees should be identified, within each circuit, and they should be consulted particularly with regards to identifying their specific needs so as to be able to structure and deliver a needs driven Female Principal Support Programme.

d. Involve:

The successful implementation of this initiative requires varying degrees of involvement and co-creation which implies also providing space for strategic partners, PED s, and intended beneficiaries to make their inputs- on an on-going basis.

6.3 Modalities of communication



Formal channels of communication about anything typically fall into one of four broad categories:

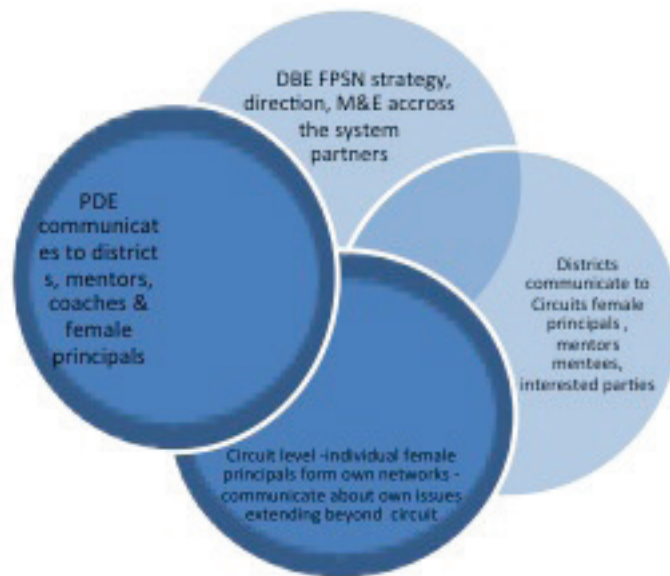
Electronic: - Communication that is delivered or accessed either by computer, telephone, television or other devices. Examples include email, intranet, video and webcasts, DVD, electronic newsletters, podcasts, blogs, voicemail, conference calls, SMS text messaging, screensaver messaging, desktop alert messages. Social networks can be as influential, if not more so, than official channels, often more likely to stimulate and create discussion and dialogue , e.g. setting up a twitter handle, facebook page etc. DBE and PED s will need to engage their respective IT Departments and IT and experts to explore IT platforms that will be feasible, aiming at providing optimal real time access.

Print: - Paper-based communications can still be used including magazines, newsletters, brochures, postcards and other 'desk drops', posters, memos, communication packs or 'toolkits' for line managers, for not just DBE but also strategic partners, notably DWCPD, Provincial Gender Desk etc. . Depending on the budget allocated by DBE as well as PED s; decisions should be made about the most viable print mediums, as well as promotional materials to be used to promote the Female Principal Support Programme.

Face-to-face: - One-to-one and one-to-many forums where people are physically present can be used for specific purposes in the delivery of the Female Principal Support interventions. This will include briefing sessions organized by DBE and PED s; task teams that may be put together to deal with specific issues, extended induction sessions, as well as coaching / mentoring sessions. DBE and PEDs may also decide on annual functions to honour mentors coaches and come up with prizes e.g. the most improved female principal, coach of the year/ mentor of the year/ principal of the most improved school etc. Activities relating to the Female Principal Support Programme can also be incorporated into Women's Month Celebrations.

Workspace: - The Female Principal Support Programme can also be made more prominent in all spheres through provision of branding materials on notice boards, plasma and LCD screens, accessories mouse pads, stationery, etc. at both National and Provincial level, depending on available budgets.

6.4 What various players communicate about Figure 6 Multi dimensional communication within Female Principal Support Networks



6.5 Responsibilities of various role players in keeping communication going

6.5.1 National Department of Basic Education (DBE)

- o Decide on the communication channels to be used
- o Engage relevant role players in providing communication – IT, Corporate Communication etc. –
- o Set up a facebook page/ twitter handle
- o Provide promotional materials
- o Provide on going communication platforms and monitor their utilisation
- o Remove bottlenecks as and when they arise
- o Organise national events
- o Communicate about how the programme is running

6.5.2 Provincial Departments of Education

- o Communicate about objectives, roles responsibilities and delivery modes
- o Sensitize role players about links to National Female Principal Support Network Programme
- o Manage perceptions and possible backlash from male principals
- o Determine modalities of communication that will be used and appropriate intervals
- o Engage provincial role players to enhance communication PEDs IT, Corporate Communication, Newsletters etc.
- o Brief MEC on an ongoing basis
- o Provide promotional materials as appropriate for a
- o Piggy back on appropriate fora to raise awareness and share necessary information about the Female Principal Support Programme
- o Communicate about programme success

6.5.3 District offices

- o Sensitize newly appointed principals about the existence of the programme and its various components
- o Communicate to newly appointed female principals about the extended induction programme
- o Recruit and encourage newly appointed principals to participate
- o Communicate about delivery modes particularly where Circuits are to merged for delivery of the programme because numbers do not make it viable to run the programme at Circuit level
- o Give all Circuits within the District feedback on programme performance
- o Communicate to PED about programme performance
- o Manage negative perceptions

6.5.4 Circuit offices

- o Sensitize newly appointed principals about the existence of the programme and relevant sources of information about the programme
- o Recruit and encourage newly appointed principals to participate
- o Write reports on the Female Principal Support network activities at circuit level
- o Piggy back on other relevant circuit/ district/ provincial activities

6.5.5 Individual female principals and mentors and fellow principals communicating with one another

- o Sensitize other newly appointed female principals about the existence of the programme
- o Keep abreast n network activities and available resource materials and share with others
- o Check the relevant links on both PDA and DBE websites and share with other
- o Sensitize the relevant Circuit officials about own needs
- o Communicate on an ongoing basis to own coach/mentor
- o When opportunities arise, network with other principals
- o In sessions, also aim to participate actively
- o Give feedback to circuit officials on what is working or what needs to be improved.



What female principals will get out of support networks is proportional to what they are willing to give into the networks

THEME 7: WHAT OTHER FEMALE PROFESSIONALS IN EDUCATION HAVE GAINED FROM THEIR SUPPORT NETWORKS

This section of the Booklet contains quotes from various female professionals in education who generously shared what they have gained from their own informal support networks. These excerpts were collated for the Launch of Support Networks for Female Principals - 23 August 2013 and indicate potential gains that can accrue from being a member of a support network. These excerpts can be used to market the Female Principal Support Programme at all levels.

Excerpt 1

Networking validates the contribution you make on all levels of society.

Share your enthusiasm; restore your vision and passion!

Some benefits of networking:

- *Establishing new business contacts:*
Establishing new business connections that could lead to clients, sales, investors, and other important contacts.
- *Educational benefits: It is all about information sharing and networking.*
- *Improving your credentials and professional appearance: You can market yourself, your product and services credibility.*
- *Boosting confidence and sense of pride: You feel more empowered and validated as a participant and entrepreneur when you participate actively in networking. Pula August/Sept 2013*

Excerpt 2

"The nature of networking: Spreading like wildfire [wa ld fa]

1. *(Chemistry / Elements & Compounds) a highly flammable material, such as Greek fire, formerly used in warfare*
- 2.a. *raging and uncontrollable fire*
- 2.b. *anything that is disseminated quickly (esp in the phrase spread like wildfire)*

As we sat around the fire with our grandmothers, stories were shared. These stories or Sa lungano-sa lungano (Tshivenda) were told to our family and friends. These, in turn, spread (like wildfire) to schools, classmates and teachers, and eventually, the entire community. The chain of laughing and learning, sharing and listening to what others have to say, was carefully crochéd." Selaelo Makatu, Chief Education Specialist: EMGD,DBE.

Excerpt 3

"Positive networking begins with the leader promoting his/her personal attributes, which inevitably promotes the attributes of his/her institution - establishing a strong alumni culture." Principal of Vaal Reefs Technical High School, North West Department of Education.

Excerpt 4

"Networking serves as an organizing vehicle to acquaint teachers/principals from different Districts, Provinces and, in some cases, countries that share a common vision of educational change. It also serves in facilitating educational change among educational professionals." Silwana A.B (Principal), Northern Cape Department of Education.

Excerpt 5

"Real networking for me is to work hard together toward the same goals with people and to have confidence in each other. Once you have established good relationships with people, your network works extremely well and you receive and give mutual support, not only officially, but also personally." Junko Funaki, Mathematics Education Advisor from JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), Curriculum Implementation and Quality Improvement (GET), Branch C, DBE.

Excerpt 6

"Build a network of partners to keep an open eye and ear for new opportunities for you, and vice versa. Networking is only effective when it is mutually beneficial. Create a diverse network of people with whom you can share ideas and gain information. Nothing is as effective as bouncing ideas back and forth with another professional whom you admire. Aim for a diverse group of people from whom you can learn. Other business people and professionals have much to teach and share when an individual is open to learning." Michelle Coetzee, Senior Secretary: Directorate: Curriculum Implementation and Quality Improvement, DBE.

Excerpt 7

"Networking is the best teacher because it creates a platform for learning, sharing best practices, mentoring and coaching." Mrs N.V Dotwana, Chief Education Specialist: Eastern Cape Department of Education.

Excerpt 8

"Networks, like root systems, can sustain an enormous tree." Morongwa Masemula, CES: Physical Sciences Curriculum Implementation & Quality Improvement (FET).

Excerpt 9

"Believe in yourself and always do what is right for the learners. Be confident in your abilities and be motivated by desire to achieve, not the desire to beat others!" Maureen Keitumetse Modiba: GET-Curriculum, DBE.

Excerpt 10

"The words of Muhammed Iqbal: "When you educate a boy you educate an individual, but when you educate a girl you educate a community," resonates with the notion that women who acquire knowledge enhance the educational levels and skills of all its community members, including the men. A woman's innate nature is to give, to share and to empower. This is acquired from an early age from the nurturing education received at her mother's lap. When given the opportunity to be further nourished, her knowledge opens the door for her to graduate into the school classroom and then into the university of life." Ms Waheeda M Carvello; Chief Education Specialist: Economic and Management Sciences; Curriculum Implementation and Quality Improvement (GET) DBE.

Excerpt 11

"At last, a platform that acknowledges us for who we are, female school managers, ably juggling a wide range of roles and sharing the expertise to make us even better managers." Sdu Ntombela: Teacher Development Co-ordinator Umgungundlovu District: KwaZulu-Natal.

Excerpt 12

"Networking means different things to different people, however, I am of the opinion that one won't get anywhere without networking." Virginia Mputla, Senior Secretary: Enhancement of Programmes and Evaluation of School Performance, DBE.

Excerpt 13

"Our male colleagues have what is called the 'OI' Boys Network" where opinions are canvassed, referrals made, connections reinforced, alma maters resurrected and deals sealed. When they meet, they discuss business and how they can synergise and enrich each other's businesses. As women, we too can do this! We too can have our 'OI' Girls Network and ensure our own professional growth. Let's Do This!" Sindi Lingela, Chief Director: PDOU, DBE.

Excerpt 14

"Women's networking is and has been a powerful tool in empowering women, especially retired and unemployed mothers within society. They have reaped and are more open to debate issues that affect them." Mmapula Mohube, Chief Education Specialist: National School Nutrition Programme, DBE.

Excerpt 15

"Women's networking is an imperative and powerful process to accelerate and sustain career success; sharing information, whether it is administrative or educational is extremely important to maintain the knowledge necessary to be successful in the profession. Women doing it together to better our country, aluta continua!" Joyce Godisamang Poti, DCES- Departmental Research Services (NWED).

Excerpt 16

"Be bold. Do not be afraid to make mistakes. Our best successes come on the heels of failures." Edith Smith, PDOU, DBE.

Excerpt 17

"This platform provides a soundboard for creative ideas and allows for sharing of lessons learnt through interaction with other women on matters affecting our well-being i.e. parenting, health, career, intimate relationships, businesses, etc. Through this forum together we can change this nation!" Ms Azwindini Tshovhote, Assistant Director: NSNP, DBE.

Excerpt 18

"Let's be blatantly honest: research shows that the needs of women in management positions differ to those of men. Networks are beginning to operate alongside the traditional corporate structure, as an interactive communication platform, to come together to exchange ideas and to contribute holistically to, and pull from, a collective to accomplish more than the sum of the parts." Yolanda Holden, Deputy Director: Communication and Research, DBE.

Excerpt 19

Networking is a valuable mechanism for professional and personal support. It is really the only way to share best practice. As principal, I was inspired to network with Communities, Government Departments and NGOs. In my career today this has not changed. Networking is needed to build a nation-Rina Stander, DCES, EMGD, DBE.

Once the programme is up and running, it may be necessary for provinces to collate quotes from the members of the network who may “graduate” from being mentees in the Female Support network Programme to assume the role of mentors, as testimony to programme effectiveness.



CONCLUSION

Support networks work only if the members are passionate about making them work. While DBE and PEDs have an important role to play in setting up the female Principal Support Networks, and resourcing them; the vibrancy of the support networks will depend on female principals using them, contributing to the networks and making sure that members who express a need for guidance are afforded this, and tapping into other sources in the event immediate members are not in a position to render the support needed.

Participating in support networks leads to cognitive, psychological as well as attitudinal shifts because network activities require from its members significant levels of effort including:

- o Cognitive engagement required for deeper levels of learning
- o Subjecting network members to all dimensions for whole person learning, including cognitive, attitudinal, psychological and emotional aspects.
- o Challenging preconceived ideas, habits by working on making conscious those elements of a practice that have become embedded or routinized and which need to be accessed to be reviewed, with a view to considering change. For example, it may be necessary to challenge assumptions that the female principal makes about self, learners, SGB, the nature of learning etc.

The support required to engage in this kind of learning includes:

- o The support of peer learners, coaches, mentors – where participants can pool valid information from experience in the same practice, and engage in shared challenging of faulty assumptions, and negative stereotypes about women managers in education.
- o The support through provision of resources, especially the time required, for undertaking this learning
- o The support in the form of occasional specific assistance from a facilitator/ coach/mentor who has particular competencies in the area of affective or emotional learning, and can serve as a catalyst to facilitate learning that is needed to properly support the mentee in their respective areas of challenge.

The change required for an individual needs to be specific to that individual, such that learning is self-directed, and is particular to what that individual female principal actually identifies as what she wants and needs to learn.

Membership of support networks never ends as today's mentees become tomorrow's mentors

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NOTES



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