

**Dear participant, in addition to our training slides on Teamwork & Motivation; kindly use content in this hand-out to supplement your knowledge acquired from the virtual training.**

### **Making effective teams in schools.**

#### **Team design**

Schools sometimes need to use what is called 'task teams' - a group of people who come together from diverse positions, and points of view to facilitate the development of ideas, create new opportunities, answer questions, or solve a problem. They are brought together for a specific task - for example, the school improvement plan or the development of a new approach to literacy - and then disbanded when the task is accomplished. Staffing of these teams may be on the basis of expertise (for example, devising the school timetable, developing a continuing professional development (CPD) strategy or reviewing facilities for staff).

#### **The importance of teams in schools**

The challenges that face schools require an investment in the capacity and sustainability of leadership in schools, since one person cannot possibly encompass all the knowledge, skills and qualities that schools need to function. While the role of the leader remains vital, it may be that it is through teams that leadership is best given expression in the school. This implies an acceptance of the concept of shared leadership, and teams as a powerful vehicle for putting this into effect.

#### **Teams as models of effective practice**

In essence, any team has to exemplify what the school aspires to be. It has to model, demonstrate and exemplify the values and vision of the school so that others can understand how a principle is translated into practice. This is a highly challenging remit; a counsel of perfection, but it is also pragmatic: if the leadership team does not convert the abstract into the concrete, who else will? If there is an effective leadership team in a school, then there is the possibility of developing high-performing teams throughout the school.

#### **Role of team leaders (school leaders) in creating effective teams**

There is a real issue, found in all organizations that use teams, that not all teams are equally effective, and that the senior leadership team may not be a model of effective practice. This can create real tensions. How far is the middle leader able to compensate, mitigate and respond to what might be a challenging environment?

#### **School Leaders should;**

- Take control of the environment within the teams. Team leaders can ensure that they lead their teams in appropriate ways that meetings are run on a business-like basis, deadlines are met, policies are observed and within the team there is a clear commitment to improvement. This is difficult but in the worst case, a laissez-faire culture does mean that best practice is as possible as poor-quality leadership and management.
- The other option is to develop supportive relationships with other teams and to mutually reinforce effective practice and create a culture that is consistent with the school's values in spite of the prevailing climate.

