Improving basic education: preconditions for successful inspection and supervision – implications for training

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Increasing and improving the quality of basic education

Presentation of the series of monographs

The renewed interest being given to basic education calls for the design and implementation of new strategies to stop the present deterioration in the expansion and quality of primary and adult education in various developing countries, especially among the most underprivileged.

In response to this concern, the IIIEP has undertaken an extensive programme of research, training and dissemination with a view to reinforcing the decision-making and planning capacities of the different countries. This series of monographs, *Increasing and improving the quality of basic education*, is part of this programme.

The aim of the series is to disseminate, as quickly as possible, relevant documentation on basic education to all planners and decision-makers.
Introduction

The paper raises issues relating to the problems surrounding the organisation and improvement of inspectorate services in Ministries of Education in developing countries. The discussion seeks to review the status of school inspection and supervision, to ask questions about the evaluation of its impact and (in the light of that) to suggest training directions.

Effective inspection and supervision is seen as one key to the complex issue of improving the quality and efficiency of basic education, the quality of educational management and the quality of educational attainment. Central governments and their service ministries of education hold the responsibility for underpinning the development of education with qualitative, independent advice on the state of the system. All constituencies within the educational system require strategies for improving the educational status quo. The twin responsibilities of quality control and quality improvement are undertaken by inspectorates and supervisory services. Some, like Her Majesty’s Inspectorate (H.M.I.) in England and Wales (see Lawton and Gordon 1987; Lawton 1988), are autonomous from a parent Ministry (in England and Wales, the Department of Education and Science). Many in developing countries are directly departments of their parent ministries.

There has been little substantive analysis of the role of inspection and supervision in developing countries and of the impact of such processes upon educational quality. Major literature on school inspection and supervision in the third world is virtually non-existent, although there are significant contributions in White’s (1988) analysis of Nigeria, Kimemia’s (1989) of Kenya and Olivera’s (1984) complex systems analysis of Costa Rica as well as other minor studies of structures and organisations by Lyons (1975) in Peru and
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The dominant issue for primary and secondary education in the third world is no longer quantitative expansion -- the main goal in the 1960s and 1970s -- but rather arresting the trend of rapid deterioration in quality. The 1990 Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, refers to the 1990s as the 'decade of educational quality improvement'. An identification of successful systems and modalities of inspection and supervision may be used as a model for directing systems and/or restructuring existing ones and/or developing appropriate models of training to support the search for qualititative improvements in education that Jomtien calls for in basic education.

This paper has as its concern primarily the inter-relationship between the nature of inspection and supervision for basic education and the qualitative outcomes of schooling at this, and other, levels. Central questions are: Precisely what preconditions are needed for successful inspection and supervision? What policies are prescribed? How do the institutional frameworks operate? What has been the impact? Have there been reforms in the processes? What is their effectiveness? There are no easy global answers to these questions but the search for them is a critical prerequisite for determining the training agendas for inspectors and supervisors.

Although there has been an obvious barrage of literature associated with the pre-service and in-service education of teachers and a lesser literature associated with the training of educational managers in developing countries (Lillis 1990; Hurst and Rodwell 1986), there has been little recent discussion of the training of inspectors and supervisors. Garvey's (1987) paper discusses the inspector in a generic discussion of administrator training as do Rodwell and Hurst (1986). Earlier milestones in the literature (e.g. Dodd 1968, Pritchard 1975, Lyons 1975, Melet 1976, Lyons and Pritchard 1976, Commonwealth Secretariat 1979, Hughes 1987) concentrated on structures, functions, modalities and practicalities, often offering tips and checklists but overlooking the critical role of training and the identification of training needs and agendas.

Nevertheless, in view of the contemporary fashionable focus on the crisis of educational quality in developing countries (cf. Lockheed and Vespoor (1989); Bude (1989);
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Ross and Mahlck (1990) and elsewhere (OECD 1989), and in view of the assumed importance of these cadres as agents of educational quality, it is pertinent to question what are the training agendas of inspectors and supervisors. All countries offer teacher education programmes in a wide variety of forms and modalities. It is equally becoming fashionable to offer training programmes (usually in-service) for a wide range of educational managers. Indeed, a number of institutions, some more successful than others, have mushroomed in developing countries specifically to cater for educational management training (with curricula that borrow heavily from other fields, including public administration and business management). My own personal experience includes work within the Kenya Education Staff Institute, Nairobi (KESI); its Tanzanian sister, MANTEP (Management Training for Educational Personnel), Bagamoyo; Sri Lanka Staff College for Educational Management, Maharagama, Colombo; and Malaysia’s Institut Aminuddin Baki, Genting Highlands, Kuala Lumpur. All these hide away within their management training programmes a number of courses for educational inspectors and school supervisors. Few specialist, tailor-made courses exist, although, for example, an annual intensive three-month course conducted within the Department of International and Comparative Education at the London Institute of Education is one exception (albeit not the only one in the United Kingdom or elsewhere). It is probable that no developing country possesses the equivalent of the recently established semi-private Centre for Adviser and Inspector Development (CAID) in Wakefield, Yorkshire, England. The London and Yorkshire courses contain a familiar range of training objectives and content (not dissimilar from those of parallel training programmes elsewhere). Observations made within this paper emerge from my experience directing the London course, from participation in the institutions mentioned above (as well as other in-service and consultancy work in this area in other developing countries) and from working experience in the Kenya Ministry of Education Inspectorate.

Of major importance, since they dictate the content and orientation of training are the questions relating to the understanding of the institutional frameworks within which inspectorates and their agents, i.e. inspectors and supervisors, actually operate. The paper considers in turn issues associated with (1) the rationales for inspection; (2) structures; (3) roles; (4) innovation; (5) impact and effectiveness. It seeks to argue that advances in inspectors’ own understanding in these conceptual areas and in their own positions within them are fundamental targets in the improvement of inspectoral/supervisory behaviours, capability and capacity.
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1.0 Understanding the function: what rationales exist to support the creation and maintenance of systems of supervision and inspection?

The issues of quality control has been mentioned en passant above, although, interestingly, for example, Taylor (1981) challenges the utility of this as a desirable concept and management approach in education. School supervision and inspection is perceived as a major tool for both quality control and for improving the quality of education (Young 1981) and has received wide support internationally, as the above country references briefly indicate. The strategy has received such support for (at least) three major reasons.

Firstly, it is assumed (even hoped) that supervisors/inspectors actually do assist improvements in the quality of performance of the pupils. By systematically monitoring the instructional processes in schools, by guiding teachers to achieve higher standards of teaching, and by evaluating 'objectively' the teaching-learning processes, inspectors/supervisors help in maintaining as well as upgrading performance standards. They impact through teachers rather than directly upon pupils. This is, of course, a major argument. Nevertheless, if this is so (and if these cadres are performing efficiently and effectively), why is there such an all pervading 'world crisis of education' (Coombs 1985) including a crisis in educational quality (Watson 1990)? Why is there such low quality delivery and output at almost every level (including basic) in almost every developing country? And this, despite the fact that systems of inspection and supervision in some countries have been in existence, as in the case of Costa Rica, for example, (Oliviera 1984) for over 150 years? (Incidentally, it may be that the Costa Rica system is the oldest in the world, pre-dating even the establishment of Her Majesty's Inspectorate (H.M.I.) in England and Wales in 1839 (Lawton and Gordon 1987)).

There are two other major arguments supporting the need for inspectorates -- over and above the highly contentious quality control and improvement arguments. The second rationale is that they constitute a conduit between the administration at the central political level entrusted with formulating educational policies and those actors at the local level charged with implementing 'official' policy decisions. The argument is that inspectors act as the 'eyes and ears' of the system and communicate from one to the other. By monitoring the perceptions of local administrators, teachers and the community at large about significant policy issues and their implementation and by feeding these perceptions back to the central administration, they serve as links between them, providing a crucial linkage in the policy
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formulation/policy implementation gap. This, though, is also a highly challengeable argument.

The third rationale is that inspectors and supervisors *undertake, as agents of educational administration, routine administrative tasks and roles*, e.g. routinely monitoring the maintenance of the supply of resources, monitoring their effective use, determining the supply and availability of teachers and determining their career growth, etc., etc. In other words, they monitor not only quality control but also the supply and utilisation of fiscal and material resources and determine the career progression of teachers.

The overall arguments are that effective supervision and inspection is one of the major keys to the complex issue of improving the quality of educational management, delivery and achievement because of the decisive control exerted by inspectors and supervisors over educational systems by dint of their crucial roles within the system. This is a statement of the ideal, but, as the following illustration from Venezuela reveals, the ideal is under challenge (as indeed it is in the United Kingdom, for example, where both major political parties threaten (or promise!) radical changes in the structure and functioning of H.M.I., and the very existence of Local Education Authorities (L.E.As.) and their advisors is also under threat).

It is not unusual to find that, on the orders of the Ministry of Education, many inspectors/supervisors do absolutely nothing; they go from one office to another with no (or very few) specific functions, doing technical/academic work. It is not uncommon to see them reading newspapers or journals, wandering through the different departments, or undertaking personal errands which have nothing to do with their work. In short, they are people with little to do and who waste government money.

(Source: *El Diario*, Venezuela, 16 December 1988)

Supervisors (quite rightly perhaps) agonise over such accusations, arguing that these are magnified distortions of reality. Nevertheless, the processes are often criticised because of the distortion and misunderstanding of the role, function, significance and, indeed, practice of supervisors and inspectors.

Although it is easy to under-estimate the total complexity of the inspection/supervision process, there are at least three major, common criticisms of
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inspectorates. Firstly, they perform as coercive police forces, forcing compliance to rules, regulations and norms. Inspection processes are authoritarian, rigid, ritualistic and legalistic ('snoopervision not supervision'). In practice, they are no more than the imposition of pre-ordained instruments and check-lists about the characteristics of schools and teachers. The attempts to enforce routines and legality according to familiar, prescribed inspectorate formats are a long way from the ideal of facilitative support and change agent behaviours that might lead to the improvement of school and teacher performance through, for example, the approaches of 'process consultancy' suggested by Schein (1969); 'intervention' suggested by Argyris (1970); 'change agentry' suggested by Havelock (1971), Havelock and Huberman (1977) and Zaltman and Duncan (1977); 'human resources supervision' suggested by Sergiovanni (1975) and Sergiovanni, Thomas and Starrat (1983); or 'clinical supervision' suggested by Cogan (1973) and Snydere (1981).

Secondly, supervisors are underprofessionalised. They often demonstrate little professional commitment. They often lack ability to guide teachers on academic issues, in part because they do not themselves possess the basic professional competence to fulfil their complex, multi-dimensional and shifting roles (Stillman and Grant 1989) (see Section 3.0 below), so they cannot assist teachers to improve their effective performance. Moreover, they are structurally constrained by lack of finances to support teachers in addition to lacking personal financial incentives to act as competent professionals. Hence, they concentrate upon administrative rather than facilitative tasks.

Thirdly, they cannot fulfil the communication role suggested above because they adopt a status consciousness which sets them apart from teachers and inhibits the flow of communication and professional development between the teachers and their supervisors. As a consequence, inspection and supervision may have become an ineffective ritual in many countries. This in itself calls for the training questions to be re-addressed in order to see how this ritualisation may be overcome.

2.0 Understanding the structure: what institutional frameworks exist?

In most countries supervision and inspection is directly the acknowledged function and responsibility of the Ministry of Education, as prominent as that of National Examinations Councils or Curriculum Development Centres. There are prescribed rules and procedures about the ways in which an inspectorate functions and these usually govern each supervisory/inspectorial visit with relative inflexibility of approach. An understanding of the
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institutional frameworks under which supervision/inspection is conducted has a number of different dimension varying from context to context.

2.1 The structures of inspectorates

There is only little written discussion of the structure of inspectorates (see White, Kimemia, Lyons, Pritchard, Lawton op. cit., as well as European Journal of Higher Education (1986) for discussions of structures in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Belgium and France. Country practices obviously vary according to culture, policy and history. Many European systems (and e.g. Hong Kong) are highly centralised. The United Kingdom has a dualistic structure with both H.M.I. operating from the centre and L.E.A. inspectorates/advisory services operating at both central and local levels. Centralised systems reveal both two-tier and multi-level organisational structures. Elsewhere, there is a variety of models in a variety of stages of evolution. A few illustrations will suffice. Sri Lanka, Jordan and Nepal possess no inspectorate per se, although separate departments/divisions within the Ministry of Education oversee the supervision of schools under a Director of Supervision. China is in the process of establishing a nation-wide inspectorate network and intends to train up to 30,000 school supervisors. Interestingly, it has links with the H.M.I. in England and Wales to undertake this. In Guyana, a recently-appointed putative Chief Inspector of Schools is responsible for designing the structure and modalities of his unit, a problem also confronted in Namibia in its post-war period of constructionism. Malaysia, like Nigeria and Pakistan, has a two-tier inspectorate -- at both Federal and State levels. Many African countries have highly centralised machines with a variety of curriculum specialist and educational level responsibilities (Botswana, Lesotho, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe), as does Brunei, for example. Kenya has a centralised headquarters structure (combining the roles of both the H.M.I. qua inspector (Lawton 1988) and the English L.E.A. adviser qua adviser (Pearce 1986; Winkley 1985). Here, too, though, the Inspectorate has wide decentralised tentacles to provincial and district levels where field supervisors are almost in toto responsible for decentralising the educational reform, '8-4-4', within the Kenyan developmental policy of the 'District Focus for Rural Development', acting almost as community animateurs (as indeed they do elsewhere (e.g. Venezuela) and are responsible for feeding back to the centre crucial decision-making information. Different models of decentralisation of the inspectorate/supervisory services also typify islands (e.g. Cayman, Jersey) and archipelagos (Maldive Islands, Solomon Islands, Bahamas) with a complex series of centre-periphery relationships (e.g. between capital and outer islands or atolls (with atoll education officers).
Not insignificantly, many approaches to inspection and supervision are characteristic of larger systems but writ small.

Within the differences of structure and practice, there are a number of commonalities, not least in the distribution and expectations of the complex, shifting and multiple individual and organisation roles to be played (discussed in Section 3.0 below). Importantly, though, it remains imperative in training to respect how much individual country practices reflect or diverge from the common ground and to recognise that the normative practices of educational behaviour is contextually and culturally defined: what is seen as a determinant of quality in one context may not hold in another. In all countries inspection/supervision networks extend throughout the educational system, but responsibilities for supervising different levels and kinds of education are vested among supervisors of different types and quality. Even the names may differ: ‘inspector’, ‘advisor’ ‘superintendent’ ‘advisory teacher’ ‘circuit education officer’, etc., etc., and nomenclature is itself an extremely important indication of both ideological approach and of ‘style’. In theory and in practice, these cadres may undertake different approaches (more fully discussed in Section 3.0 below). ‘Inspectors’ may work according to pre-established criteria and undertake a kind of ‘summative evaluation’ (Figure 1). Working according to pre-established criteria, crystallized in their familiar check-lists and reporting formats, they are often seen to evaluate school, department and teachers in a quasi-objective way before offering judgements on the phenomena they have observed and establishing summative statements about the directions for improvement.

![Figure 1. The Inspection Process](image)

‘Advisers’ may undertake on-going reviews and offer advice of a formative kind (Figure 2). The figure suggests that they undertake their reviews and frequently monitor educational phenomena (rather than judge, appraise, evaluate in the manner of inspectors)
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and seek situational analyses in order to offer advice of a facilitative nature. They are probably more akin to process facilitators, whereas inspectors are often external assessors.

Figure 2. The Advisory Process

In essence, these are ideal-typical perceptions. The work of both overlap: they both tend to be judgmental and developmental in their work, which tends to occur along a continuum of action and activity (Figure 3) with a domination of pure inspection at one end of the continuum and a domination of pure facilitation at the other.

Figure 3. The Inspection-Advisory Continuum

A full organisation profile may, of course, be obtained by undertaking the kinds of institutional analysis suggested by organisational theorists like Burrel and Morgan (1979) or Hage (1980). For the purposes of training inspectors to understand the nature of their own organisation and their role and position within it, such conceptual sophistication is probably unnecessary. Nevertheless, a minimum number of questions and issues are necessary to build up a basic profile of understanding within which they function day by day. For example:

Organisation: How is inspection/supervision structured at the central, provincial and district levels? Does it have executive or advisory powers or influence (cf. H.M.I.)? How and to
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whom is the Chief Inspector accountable? What is his position in the educational hierarchy? Does he directly have the ear of the Minister of Education? Who has the responsibility of supervision? Is it organized by levels of education (e.g. primary, secondary, vocational or non-formal) or by the subject areas (e.g. separate supervisors for mathematics and science)? If plural functions exist, who has the responsibility for quality control? With what consequences?

Needs: How are the supervisory needs determined? Are they in relation to the number of teachers in a region, to the number of schools or to geographical coverage? What criteria govern the present practice of supervision?

Quantitative Aspects: How many supervisors are functioning? What is the ratio to the number of schools? How many school visits are made per year? What formula operates to make these decisions?

Logistical issues: Who sets the budget and how is it controlled? Who determines when and how supervisors will visit schools? Do they have a monthly, bi-annual or annual work programme, etc.?

Accountability: Are supervisors held accountable for their actions and the gaps in their functions?

Financing: A major policy issue relates to the understanding of the financing mechanisms of the inspectorate. It is often difficult to penetrate the question of how the systems are financed and what slice of the education budget is diverted to inspection and supervision since the disbursements are often hidden away under ‘management and administration’. How much does supervision cost? What are the implications for financing and for conducting supervision by organized local groups and the community?

Linkages: What links do the supervisors maintain with other educationists (e.g. District Education Offices, Planners, Examination Boards, with Teacher Education, Curriculum Development Units) that collectively contribute toward quality improvement? What problems do they face in conducting these linkages? How do inspectors act as sources of information at district, regional and central levels?

Determinant group: Are the supervisors a recognized group who are consulted regularly and who contribute significantly to educational policy development? If so, how does this consultation take place?

Recruitment: Do the supervisors belong to a permanent cadre? Should they? In some countries supervisors are promoted from among the teaching cadres and upon completing a number of years they may return to teaching, sometimes at a higher level. This practice has often been cited as responsible for the hemorrhage of experience from basic to other levels of education. In some countries supervisors revert to the same levels of instruction. There
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has been very little analysis of the effectiveness, impact and quality of these practices. However, the differential nature of the practices has substantial training implications. But there are equally important prior questions of how the cadres are identified and indeed whether visible open processes of recruitment exist. In many countries inspectorates are the dumping ground of the system: poor and rejected teachers find themselves located there to the detriment of its image and effectiveness. In other countries (e.g. Venezuela), experience as a principal is a sine qua non. Whilst such experience, true, makes this a good breeding ground since principals, as chief executives of school institutions, have strong experience in institutional management, there may be other desired traits. Supervision is about more than management. Curriculum process skills are equally important and it may be that principals in some countries are distanced from curriculum and classroom methodologies. Nevertheless, most inspectors will emerge from school systems, despite the imperative to retain the better performers within schools, where there are, globally, insufficient numbers of individuals able to manage schools effectively. What critical competencies, thus, are seen as desirable for newly recruited (and established) inspectors and supervisors?

Discussions within an inspectorate training workshop in Malaysia 1990 suggested the following major clusters of attributes are those seen as desirable for the cadres to achieve the roles discussed in Section 3.0 below.

(i) Knowledge, i.e. specialist expertise within a curriculum subject area. Without it, inspectors are denuded of expertise. Whilst 'graduate' status confers the imprimatur of specialism, command of classrooms codes of professionalism is a basic requisite.

(ii) Experience in schools as a basis for transmitting advice on improved practice to others, including heads. How much is a key question? Not so much that the practitioner has become totally socialised into school practice and ossified into particular methodologies at the expense of flexibility and receptivity to new ideas, new domains and new dimensions; but not so short that teachers are sceptical about advice offered from an individual with short experience of their own educational realities.

(iii) Communication skills, i.e. the capacity to communicate the knowledge and experience suggested above across (not down!) to teachers and to facilitate and support their capacity to accept ideas and criticisms. This also includes the capacity to transmit critique with sensitivity and empathy.

(iv) Leadership skills which cuts across all other domains inspectors/supervisors work within.

(v) Innovativeness, i.e. the capacity to act as agents of change, more fully discussed below. This, though, raises the whole problem of how individuals can be selected for
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‘creativity’ in relation to the demands of new curricula, examinations, etc., for innovativeness can become rapidly stifled in the Kafkaesque decision-making structures of many Ministries of Education.

(vi) **Personal skills**, i.e. skills over and above the merely verbal, including the capacity to empathise with warmth on the realities of schools and teachers and the burdensome roles of heads.

(vii) **Resilience**, including the physical and mental stamina to sustain the toughness and loneliness of the job.

(viii) **Technical skills**. Command of report writing, observation, etc., were given only a low rating by the Malaysian group on the basis that the priority should be to seek the cadre with the appropriate range of professional attributes, who might well be trained in appropriate technical skills.

There is little other reported experience from training courses elsewhere but I believe that the Malaysian experience (see Ministry of Education, Malaysia 1990) has wide parallels elsewhere in developing countries, although neither this nor other country training reports presents adequate enough evaluative data to suggest cross-country replicability. Nevertheless, the training problem is obviously to lift the initiates to competency in this cluster of attributes within a framework of the training priorities indicated in the paper and to achieve the alchemical mix that makes ‘the good inspector/supervisor’.

3.0 Understanding the roles: what is the role and significance of supervision and inspection?

A substantial segment of research literature focuses upon school effectiveness and the determinants of school quality (Raynolds 1985; Fuller 1986; Cohn and Rossmiller 1987; Mosha 1988; Lockheed and Vespoor 1989; Bude 1990; IIEP 1990; Hawes and Stephens 1990) but little of it isolates the supervisor/inspector as a variable in the process, concentrating instead upon resources, expenditures, class size, text-books, examinations, physical infrastructures and buildings, hardware, teachers, teacher education, etc. (Fuller 1986). Hence no empirical evidence is available on which to judge the impact of inspection and supervision, although an evaluation being conducted by the Venezuela Ministry of Education of the effectiveness of school supervisors in the city of Caracas is a rare example. Substantially greater discussion relates to roles and functions of the inspectors and inspectorates in the country contexts mentioned previously in the paper. In this brief overview, it is impossible to raise all issues, since the processes encompass such a wide
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spectrum of official and functional responsibilities. Some of these are actually perceived as the central role of inspectorates; others are allocated (perhaps by law); more are informal or gradually assumed by the supervisors as they work in the field (e.g. community work) and have extended responsibilities thrust upon them. The significance of supervision therefore varies widely within and between countries. A consideration of actual roles supervisors perform may lead to suggestions over whether current expectations of inspectors/supervisors are realistic, whether modifications of these roles might bring effective changes in school quality and also enable the construction of training agendas that can help to achieve their performance.

In general, supervisors/inspectors are called upon to perform three types of complementary and overlapping functions:

(a) As academic supervisors, they are expected to carry out fully functional reviews of ongoing academic programmes, by:
   (i) Determining the quality of teaching across the curriculum and by monitoring classrooms. But how do they do this?
   (ii) Providing 'quality' in model lessons. How do they do this?
   (iii) Systematically upgrading teachers, often through bi-annual and monthly workshops.
   (iv) Identifying weaknesses of the school organisation and management.

Again, critically, how do they do this?

(b) As quality controllers they are expected to:
   (i) Adjudicate on the promotion, upgrading, and career opportunities for teachers.
   (ii) Assess the maintenance of school resources.

(c) As monitors of community awareness they are expected to:
   (i) Develop school and community relations.
   (ii) Represent the Ministry of Education to central/decentralised sub-systems, such as district developmental councils or county councils, or to other types of formal development groups (e.g. Regional Planning Commissions).
A number of interesting research vignettes on inspectors' perceptions of their own role indicate both their own self-concepts and an assessment of their training needs.

Hurst and Rodwell's (1986) research in Mauritius throws up a list of 75 different activities undertaken by inspectors there, varying from registration of schools to more school-based, pedagogical activities. These are familiar territory to those acquainted with inspectors, but, importantly, they cluster what they see as their nine front-line responsibilities in descending order (N=14):

(i) Advising Heads and teachers.
(ii) Assessing Heads and teachers.
(iii) Implementing curriculum reform.
(iv) Advising and writing new curricula.
(v) Organising meetings on teaching methods.
(vi) Investigating administrative conflicts.
(vii) Running seminars.
(viii) Vetting school broadcasts.
(ix) Inspecting school fabric.

Interestingly enough, these were also the activities on which inspectors in Mauritius spent most of their time (according to the Hurst and Rodwell research), together with implementing curriculum reforms, investigating complaints and attending committee meetings. Some roles are related to quality control, others to quality improvement and others to the routines and rituals of administration.

My own investigations in the aforementioned workshop in Malaysia in 1990 found (not surprisingly) striking parallels.

The Malaysian inspectors (N=30) see themselves as playing the following key roles, in descending order:

(i) Serving as the eyes and ears of the education authorities by providing an objective professional commentary on educational conditions for the benefit of policy makers;
(ii) Disseminating ideas and new approaches from one school to another, thus helping to generalise valuable innovations;
(iii) Monitoring adherence to the laws governing educational regulations, administrative directives, published curricula, etc.;
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(iv) Assisting and conducting local/regional/national surveys into the state of the art of particular aspects of education;
(v) Being an authority on a subject or an educational sector and making creative contributions to its development at local/regional/national levels;
(vi) Enforcing professional discipline, adherence to correct standards of professional conduct in the teaching force;
(vii) Forming part of the local/regional/national teams for educational development;
(viii) Serving as a link between schools, parents, communities and educational administrators/planners;
(ix) Assisting the set-up and overseeing the trials of new courses, text-books, teaching materials, etc.;
(x) Evaluating, approving and advising schools on text-books, teaching materials, etc.

The self-image of the Malaysian group is a long way from the ideal-typical positions suggested in Figures 1 and 2, encompassing linkage roles (acting as the Ministry’s antennae), policy brokering, data collection, extended curriculum development, disseminators of good practice, etc., etc. Interestingly, however, they en masse wanted more influence in the areas of (a) monitoring and assessing the performance of student teachers on teaching practice; (b) monitoring and assessing probationary teachers and teachers/heads seeking promotions and transfers; (c) monitoring the scholastic performance of pupils; (d) acting as advocates of Heads/teachers and communities to the Ministry.

3.1 Training needs

Hurst and Rodwell (1986) also asked inspectors in Mauritius what new training needs they perceived in the light of educational reforms proposed there in 1983. These needs in descending order of priority were:

(i) Advising and writing on new curricula.
(ii) Advising teachers and Heads.
(iii) Assessing teachers and Heads.
(iv) Writing school broadcasts.
(v) Organising meetings on teaching methods.
(vi) Advising and assessing trainee teachers.
(vii) Running seminars.
(viii) Vetting broadcasts.
(ix) Investigating administrative conflicts.

The broad barrage of issues are concordant with assessment of roles but by and large do not demand any fundamental shift in the inspectors' world views and, in my view, do not go anywhere far enough to uplift the conceptual basis upon which inspectors and supervisors can transform the quality of school systems, through an innovative stance suggested in Section 4.0 below. Of course, the Mauritius context is as unique as any other. Nevertheless, the paper suggests that there are areas of commonality, albeit not total heterogeneity, between systems of inspection and supervision and the embryonic list (with the possible exception of school broadcasting) is not vastly dissimilar from suggestions made by inspectors elsewhere on the type of training courses they would like to receive.

4.0 Understanding change agentry: can inspectorates be innovative?

Are inspectors and inspectorates systems maintainers, keeping the system in a state of homoeostasis or are they agents of change? This is a key dilemma (ATOE 1988). It was argued earlier that many systems reflect highly bureaucratised and routinised processes according to prescribed formats, reflecting the rituals of organisational control and compliance. Does this, though, preclude innovation? It would be invidious to overlook innovative elements of some inspectorates. Inspectors based in schools (IBIS) was an innovative feature of the now-disbanded Inner London Education Authority (I.L.E.A.), an innovation targeted at moving the focus and locus or responsibility for institutional improvement inside the school itself, as a natural concomitant of fashionable approaches to school-based review, school development planning and school self-evaluation. (Importantly, such school-based approaches demand substantial shifts in inspectorate power bases as teacher control asserts itself). In Bangladesh, processes of primary school inspection have been delegated to local officials in an attempt to reduce the workload of qualified personnel in a context of manpower shortages. In Pakistan, there is a partnership with teachers in the supervision of certain dimensions of schooling. In Sri Lanka (Kuranratne 1989) and Thailand (Wheeler 1989), school supervisors have supported the development of school clusters (an imitation of many Central and Latin America models of nucleos) as school-based attempts to generate patterns of school support (although the initiative appears to work in favour of the nodal school under the management of the cluster principal). In Andra Pradesh and in Cianjur (Hawes 1982, Tangyong et al 1990), a collaborative effort to improve primary school quality is undertaken within networks of teachers, supervisors,
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inspectors and teacher educators as a means of enhancing institutional and system
development. Innovations exist although many inspectorates act as static systems and their
personnel are passive observers of the educational status quo, despite the self-image of many
inspectors as agents of change, enactors and facilitators.

Malaysian inspectors, interviewed by myself, believed that they ought to be acting as
agents of change in the following ways (N=21):

(i) Visiting schools to diagnose their problems and needs and indicate solutions
and developments which they saw as necessary;

(ii) Advising schools on policy changes from the educational administration
and/or promoting the implementation of those decisions;

(iii) Advising the educational administration in policy/teaching matters in the light
of day-to-day knowledge of the school situation;

(iv) Visiting schools to discuss the problems and needs they have diagnosed and
the solutions and developments envisaged;

(v) Working together with schools to help them establish their own
problem-solving/decision-making procedures;

(vi) Providing specialist information/advice via in-service training courses with a
view to promoting change in schools;

(vii) Informing schools of research and development by other organisations (e.g.
curriculum centres, research agencies);

(viii) Disseminating the best practices from one school to another by arranging for
direct contact and visits between their staffs.

These represent the ideal change-agent roles played by inspectors. In practice,
however and by contrast, they felt they made a significant impact only in (iii), (ii), (i) and
(iv) in that order.

There are, of course, logistical and resource reasons that might in part explain why
they 'underachieve' in these areas. More particularly, it might be, as is often the case, the
lack of conceptual understanding about innovation and change agentry -- highly problematic
as this is, in any case. Establishing sound change-agent behaviour and dynamic
innovativeness and enabling inspectorates to develop as agencies of curriculum, institutional,
management and pedagogical change together with other agents and constituencies
collaborating in the partnership of change is possibly the leading training challenge. Again,
whilst there is a plethora of literature that conceptualises the nature of change (cf. Hurst
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1983, Zaltman and Duncan 1977), there is only a limited amount of material targeted at improving the capabilities of educational administrators (cf. Hurst and Rodwell 1986). Fundamental to the approach lies not simply an awareness of strategies, tactics and approaches but a fundamental shift in the overall approach adopted by inspectorates as a whole and adopting a clear conceptual framework within which to locate perceptions about the system, the nature of information and action required to remediate and improve it, to guide actions and decision and to evaluate the outcomes of these processes. In the complex process of educational innovation, inspectors holds a crucial role in consciousness raising and competency building (e.g. in curriculum analysis and evaluation, in interpersonal skills, in the identification of teacher in-service training goals). They hold crucial positions of power and authority over the directions of change and the problem is to develop the professionalism, image and competence to uplift their own educational systems.

5.0 Understanding impact and effectiveness: what policies determine inspector effectiveness?

The issues of what policies determine inspector effectiveness is a major theme. By and large, though, the determinants of inspectorate behaviours and performance are hidden from the average educationist, simply because most inspectorates act as self-protective closed systems. Whilst they have routine processes and procedures which determine their functioning in relation to their clients (schools and teachers) and to the system as a whole, they do not by and large have open agendas. The opaqueness of the H.M.I. (replicated in many developing country systems) changed only after 1981 when, in a measure to enforce their public accountability, they were forced by the D.E.S. to publish their reports on schools and curriculum practice and, thus, lay their cards and judgements clearly on the table. (One result, though, has been a series of bland, anodyne, defensive, non-strategic public statements (cf. H.M.I. 1990)). This is an important shift which does have implications in developing countries. Since the H.M.I. model has been widely transferred into developing countries (mistakenly, perhaps, since it offers judgements but never follows up the consequences of them), it may be anticipated that other inspectorates will open up their agendas to alleviate the fears that their visits induce -- especially when the agendas are little understood. The openness or otherwise with which inspection machines operate is a major issue, for, if closed, there is no means of judging whether the practices of the system are consistent with national policies, goals, norms and standards. There are, however, examples of semi-openness in developing countries. Pakistan (Sind Bureau of Curriculum 1979), Zambia (Zambia Ministry of Education and Culture 1973) and Andhra Pradesh (1987), for
example, (amongst others) have issued publicly available supervisors' handbooks to guide both supervisors and supervisees. For the most part, though, it is necessary to dig away (often fruitlessly) into Five-Year Plans, Education Acts, etc., to find explicit statements of the roles and functions of inspectorates and supervisory services.

Evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of inspectorate is among the weakest areas in school supervision (Davies and Lyons 1981). What are the performance indicators of inspectorates? Who has quality control over the quality control mechanism? Although many countries have developed extensive institutional frameworks for conducting supervision and inspection, the effectiveness of these frameworks has rarely been rigorously assessed. However, there are serious conceptual and methodological problems in evaluating the long-term impact of both poor and good supervision, and the need exists to understand how the effectiveness of inspectorates can be determined and improved. How can the performance of inspectors be monitored, bearing in mind the Venezuelan criticisms that their inspectors appear to be beyond accountability? Clearly they are accountable, for the classic bureaucracies that typify most inspectorates do have clear reporting lines. They do have clear (if unrealised) day-to-day demands. The critical issue is an understanding of what information they generate for what purposes and what use is made of such information (Ross and Mahlck 1990). Little is publicly known about how they utilise their substantial data. Hence, from the outside little is known about the qualitative and quantitative aspects of inspectorate impact and how it might be assessed. There is now widespread consciousness and acceptance of teacher (and other professionals) appraisal, but little is yet heard about inspector appraisal and it should be that the training given to inspectors in teacher observation and appraisal be adapted to their own (self-)appraisal of their own performance.

Evaluation of inspector/supervisor impact may be drawn from various sources of evidence/information, including (a) assessment of the existing mechanism for monitoring the performance of the supervisors in the field; and (b) opinions of those who come in direct contact with the supervisors.

Several types of information are important, e.g.:
(i) polling of those who are affected by supervision;
(ii) a time slice analysis of all of the functions of a selected number of supervisors conducted over a year;
(iii) assessing the performance of teachers and ascertaining any links with frequency of supervision;
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(iv) assessing the performance of pupils in national examinations and any links with the quality of supervision;
(v) obtaining comments from target groups most frequently reached by the supervisors.

Despite the obvious limitations of these sources of information, such data may provide a useful basis for drawing up a scheme for determining inspector effectiveness. At the 1990 Malaysian workshop, this area was identified as a major weakness and specific agendas were suggested for improving it. The workshop pin-pointed a heavy reliance on the submission of written reports to schools as a major shortcoming. Whilst in theory feasible, the approach has major deficiencies which impede efficient and effective professionalism (including inaccuracy, bureaucracy, lack of immediacy, etc.). One approach to downgrade the heavy reliance on post hoc written reporting, the workshop felt, was to give a bigger role to the schools themselves — (a) through consolidated rather than individual reports; (b) allowing schools to utilise inspectorate instruments; and (c) schools minute inspectorate deliberations for immediate and effective action. The approach has much in common with IBIS mentioned earlier (see Section 4.0).

In assessing performance monitoring, the Malaysian inspectors suggested, the following questions are crucial:

(i) What are the reporting needs of supervisors? Do they report regularly on their visits? If so, what sort of format is used for reporting: Structured forms? Open-ended questionnaires? Diaries?
(ii) More crucially, how are these reports acted upon and by whom? What methods are employed by the administrators and policy planners to take actions recommended by the supervisors? Are there feedback mechanisms to suggest how their views have been taken seriously into consideration by the decision-makers?
(iii) How is the performance of supervisors, both in the field and office, monitored? What criteria are used to determine the quality of performance? Number of school days visited? Number of teacher seminars? Other types of quantitative data?
(iv) Are the teachers, headmasters and other leading members of the community consulted and are their opinions taken into account while determining the quality of performance? If so, how is this done?
These range of targets might lead towards an understanding of what methods/organisation for systematically analysing the information contained in inspection reports can be envisaged and how such information can be fed-back and related to the totality of educational information available within any system to impact upon training strategies and strategies for enhancing the quality of education.

Conclusion: implications for training

Those identified as inspectors/supervisors are often taken from schools and thrust into the deep end of inspection with little or no induction or training in the key issues, processes and procedures such as those raised within this paper. Basic induction may certainly involve socialisation into existing institutional norms and values (as well as sensitisation to existing instruments and modalities) but often involves no attempt to seek new normative behaviours. Hence, the status quo is maintained. New inspectors certainly require retraining for the barrage of new roles through a variety of approaches (including induction, in-service training, shadowing of existing ‘master’ inspectors and considerable feed-back upon their own performance). It may well be that, in the absence of an extended period of training (which may not necessarily be the best approach), a combination of induction and subsequent short periods of in-service training is the optimum approach. I suspect that most supervisors/inspectors need to receive specialised professional training for their new tasks, roles and environmental realities. But how and when? The basic skills of supervision (monitoring, observation, analysis, reporting, evaluation) may well be transmitted through initial induction programmes. But the overall change of consciousness suggested above is a much more problematic curriculum. These higher conceptual areas are more difficult to attain. Experience suggests that a major part of the training problem is to sensitise initiates into new understandings and to build expertise in understanding the organisational and sociological functioning of schools and teachers. This requires in part a suspension of their own inherited experience as teachers, a re-confrontation and re-examination of questions such as what is a good teacher, how are departments to be run effectively and efficiently (Siddle 1978, Hull and Adams 1981) and ‘what is a good school’ ( OECD 1989). It also requires an awareness of the change agent strategies (Lillis 1980; Kimemia 1989) that can assist teachers to work to improve their own professional worlds (Cambridge Institute of Education 1989, Further Education Unit 1987). The fundamental training agendas have still to be applied to inspectorates and supervisory services. Simultaneously, there remains the unanswered question of who trains the trainers (IIEP 1987) to lead the pedagogical, pastoral and management changes in schools and educational
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sub-systems that can impact upon the decade of educational quality improvement that Jomtien calls for? There is, of course, no optimum, standardised training course replicable from context to context, for courses must be formulated and operationalised as a result of training needs analysis (Lillis 1990). The objectives, structures, operational procedures, methods and content will be determined by the mix of trainees and the repertoire of skills of the trainers. The former are likely to be fairly heterogeneous in capability, experience, age and qualification -- even in ethnicity or nationality. The latter may be limited in training capability and process facilitation. Having said that, I suggest there are types of training that have only limited success, in that they do not confront the range of intellectual issues indicated above but concentrate upon routine mastery of formalised inspectorate check lists. My own experience in the wide range of settings indicated earlier has lead me to believe that there is a limited essential inspectorate training curriculum that needs mastery -- whatever the cultural and organisational context of the inspectorate or advisory services.
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Monograph No. 7

This monograph raises issues relating to the problems surrounding the organisation and improvement of inspectorate services in Ministries of Education in developing countries. The discussion seeks to review the status of school inspection and supervision, to ask questions about the evaluation of its impact and (in the light of that) to suggest training directions.

There has been little substantive analysis of the role of inspection and supervision in developing countries and of the impact of such processes upon educational quality. Effective inspection and supervision is seen as a key element in the complex issue of improving the quality and efficiency of basic education, the quality of educational management and the quality of educational attainment.

This document has as its main concern the inter-relationship between the nature of inspection and supervision for basic education and the qualitative outcomes of schooling at this, and other, levels. Central questions are: Precisely what pre-conditions are needed for successful inspection and supervision? What policies are prescribed? How do the institutional frameworks operate? What has been the impact? Have there been reforms in the processes? What is their effectiveness? There are no easy global answers to these questions but the search for them is a critical prerequisite for determining the training agendas for inspectors and supervisors.

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