

## Original Article

### Leading Change through School Improvement Program for School Effectiveness in Addis Ababa City administration

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#### Abstract

The purpose of the article was to find out the practices and challenges of the school improvement program in Addis Ababa's city administration. The qualitative approach was used for data analysis. Using purposive sampling, data were collected from the of Ministry of Education, Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau, three sub-cities of Addis Ababa City administration, three districts, and three schools. Data was gathered through interviews. The findings reveal that there were many achievements in the school improvement programs such as teaching-learning, school feeding programs, community participation, and leadership in schools. Despite significant changes, there are still some obstacles concerning the effective implementation of, like a lack of resources like science kits, computers, pedagogical centres, laboratories, and internet access.

**Key words:** Leading change, school improvement, school effectiveness, city administration

#### 1. Introduction

Schools, mainly, are impacted by ongoing pressure from their internal and external contexts. Several factors, including globalization, changing employment patterns, technology advancements, and social and demographic trends shifts, are causing schools to conduct change interventions. Schools must flourish and adapt if they are to remain institutions and effect meaningful social change (Gayef, 2015). Change initiatives, whatever the labels attached to them (reform, innovation, planned change, improvement, etc.), are "more than a simple gain in a school's test scores," according to Beycioglu & Kondakci (2021). Depending on The situation, a variety of strategies for organizational change in general and educational reform in particular may be required. Differences in the nuances of culture and uncertainties in the meanings associated with the term may result from the dynamics of the changing implementation environment. As part of this endeavour, examine the variables driving change and provide examples of the solutions other educational systems have used to address the need for change.

In Ethiopia education at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels is all provided for free. Primary education is compulsory for children aged seven to twelve years old and lasts eight years. Secondary school is compulsory for four years, and the new curriculum is now being

implemented in all schools. Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, is in the capital of the country and has a population of 4.8 million in the urban areas and 2.7 million in the city proper. The East African Rift, which splits the nation in two, is located just a few kilometres to the west of the city.

The African Union's headquarters and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa are both located in Addis Ababa, which is regarded as the continent's political capital. As a result, the city has grown in importance on the continent in terms of politics and diplomacy.

According to the Addis Ababa city administration's education abstract 2019/20, the city has 221 public and private secondary schools, 789 primary schools, 79 O-class institutions, and 1,121 kindergartens. There were 222,515 pre-primary, 607,636 primary, and 181,068 secondary students enrolled in the city administration during the aforementioned year.

Change typically occurs when people are unhappy with the way things are. The same is true of changes in education. In other words, when there is a sense of dissatisfaction with how schools are now operating, there will be a consistent effort on the side of schools to modify the environment for teaching and learning. These reforms are intended to achieve new educational objectives (Postlethwaite, 1993). Recent years have seen a constant and significant change in the majority of educational systems and among educationalists worldwide, particularly in schools (Telford, 2003). More than ever, the dynamic change that the educational systems experience necessitates schools to consider new approaches to solving educational difficulties that can make needed improvements.

In addition, the globalization era has never before seen the world as interwoven and dependent as it is now. As a result, intense competition exists in various environments. As a result, schools are under far greater pressure to increase the standards and improve their outcomes (Harris et al, 2008). Therefore, the issue of school effectiveness has drawn attention from all countries in recent times as educational systems everywhere are subject to extensive reform projects (Zealand, 2013). To reach this goal, stakeholders and schools work together to improve the work of teachers, build the capacity of the school community to achieve change, and ultimately improve student achievement.

The study that supports the foundation for this paper is based on the theory of change model. The school community must actively participate in any process of change or reform aimed at improving the school. The culture of the school must be transformed, and the community

must be convinced to take the initiative to make improvements. Students, educators, parents, office workers, and other school personnel have responsibility in the school community (Edamo & Netshitangani, 2018). The school community must take ownership of the change process while also acknowledging that they are responsible for the outcomes. The theory of change model demonstrates how the school community may manage school improvement initiatives that will increase school effectiveness by behaving responsibly and accountable.

The researchers claim that this model can account for the variables "school community," "educational results," "school progress," and "school effectiveness." The approach suggests that the capacity of the school community and academic development are directly related.

It is necessary to alter the current culture to effectively engage the school community in the execution of school improvement. It is mostly known that a school's culture and power structure are one reason for its resistance to change. It will be challenging to achieve the desired goals of the change process unless the culture of the institution is improved. In order to change the current culture and awareness, people involved in the change process need to attend seminars and training sessions, according to several research findings. It makes obvious that if people who manage the change obtain the right training and take part in the change process, student achievement will be maximised.

Edamo & Netshitangani (2018) emphasizes the importance of parents supporting their children to create a strong school community. Maximizing student result, that is supposed to be feasible by school change activity, will be challenging unless parents collaborate with the school community and monitor students teaching learning process. The theory of change model also considers the need for public accountability when the members of the school community carry out their tasks. Edamo & Netshitangani (2018) emphasizes that accountability makes the schools responsible for achieving the social, economic, and moral goals that the country needs. When playing their duties, school communities should be guided by this idea. It requires the community's entire cooperation in establishing a learning and teaching-friendly environment at the school. The completion of these interconnected duties will help the school become better and more efficient. These attitudes helped as the basis for an investigation of how the school community saw the SIP's impact on school effectiveness and improvement.

The term "school improvement" is typically used in one of two ways. Its common-sense interpretation relates to efforts made generally to improve learning environments in schools

for learners and students. A second or more technical use of the phrase that "school improvement is about enhancing student accomplishment through focusing on the teaching-learning process and the environments which enable it," The process of improving a school involves careful planning and management over several years.

School improvement was seen by Fabiana Meijon Fadul (2019) as a distinctive approach to bringing about educational reform that would improve student outcomes as well as boost the school's capacity to manage improvement projects. According to Fullan (1989) School improvement is a systematic and on-going effort that focuses on changing learning circumstances and other relevant variables inside the school with the ultimate goal of more effectively achieving educational goals. It focuses on both student success and the school's ability to manage change (Creemers & Civic, 2014). Others have described school improvement as a methodical, on-going effort that focuses on altering the learning environment for students and other related factors inside a school or schools with the ultimate goal of successfully attaining educational goals. These definitions highlight school improvement as a dynamic and ongoing process that balances building a school's capacity for change with the deliberate implementation of targeted actions, all aimed at fostering a culture focused on raising student achievement and strengthening overall school performance. Continuous school improvement is achieved through a systematic cycle that begins with gathering and analysing data to identify needs, followed by setting clear improvement priorities, determining the most effective changes to enhance performance, implementing those changes in practice, and continuously monitoring and evaluating results to ensure meaningful gains in student outcomes.

The school improvement program is one of the most important of Ethiopia's six General education quality improvement packages (GEQIP). The programs' four major domains are teaching-learning, leadership, a positive school environment, and community involvement, all of which are aimed at assisting students in learning and achieving their learning objectives. The School Improvement Program is divided into four domains, 12 elements, 29 standards, 150 indicators, and 516 descriptors. The lack of access to education for citizens and the low quality of education, as shown by the education and training policy and its implementation document, was one of the initiatives used to establish the new education and training policy (MoE, 2002). There has been some improvement in educational quality following the adoption of the program, according to several papers, but there has also been little progress at

various levels. The Ethiopian government started the first education sector development programme (ESDP-I) in 1997 as part of the 1994 education and training policy.

The ESDP's basic goal is to increase educational quality, relevance, efficiency, equity, and access for girls as a first step toward universal primary education by 2015, with a focus on basic education in rural and underserved communities and the promotion of education for everyone. (Ministry of Education, 2005) According to several assessments of the ESDP's execution, Ethiopia made substantial educational advancements as a result of ESDP I, II and III (Ministry of Education, 2005). The report also notes that there was a great growth in the number of teachers, schools, and institutions, which coincided with a quick rise in access at all levels of the educational system. Additionally, there were significant increases in the availability of qualified teachers and other resources that are essential for a high-caliber educational system. However, obstacles still stand in the way of realizing quality and internal efficiency. It was required to focus on quality issues more generally, as well as those inputs and procedures that more directly contribute to increased student learning and turn the school into a genuine learning environment in particular.

The general education quality improvement package was established by the MoE in 2007 to address the issue of quality (MoE, 2010). The document includes four major programmes: teachers development programme, curriculum improvement programme, education leadership and organisation improvement programme, and school improvement programme. Ethiopia is implementing a school development programme that was imported from Australia to raise educational standards. There are four domains and twelve elements in it (MoE, 2010). The Ministry of education created the programme with several guiding manuals that were distributed to the regions, and different levels of educational leaders, experts, and teachers received training.

The primary goals of the school improvement programme are to increase school and community involvement in resource utilisation decisions and resource generation, increase school and community capacity to prioritise needs and develop school improvement plans, increase the government's ability to deliver specified amounts of school grants at the district level, and improve learning environments by giving schools basic operational resources.

Based on worldwide research and best practices from Ethiopia, the ministry of education has redesigned and refined the SIP Framework to help schools achieve demonstrable gains in student performance. The SIP Framework was created expressly to enhance student

achievements, so it is crucial for all Committee members to comprehend it. The SIP Framework consists of 4 Domains and 12 Elements, according to the guidelines. There are 24 Standards under the 12 Elements(MoE, 2010).

Teaching-learning, evaluation, and curriculum are the three components that frame this area. Learning and evaluation are additional factors in this area to take into account. The overall objective of the School Improvement Program is measured by this criterion, making it one of the most crucial ones. What children of all ages know, comprehend, and can do in the curriculum-aligned areas is referred to as their "student results." Teachers and learning specialists agree that a variety of assessment techniques should be employed to completely comprehend what pupils are learning in the classroom. Group assignments, individual projects, tests, and quizzes are a few examples of assessment techniques. The curriculum is the other important criterion in this domain. The study of the curriculum and the creation of supplemental resources for use in the classroom are two of the main duties of teachers. Schools should give teachers the time and resources they need to create these extracurricular materials.

Three components; Student Empowerment, Student Support, and Student Facilities, as well as four criteria, make up this area. There should be considerations in this domain. The first thing regarding pupils is empowerment. The habit of accepting responsibility and living a disciplined life must be developed in students. To motivate students and actively participate in learning, they need help. Students won't learn if they aren't inspired to do so. The majority of recent studies on the impact of family participation on academic success conclude that there is a positive relationship. (Barnard, 2004) conducted research on the relationship between parental involvement in elementary school and high school student accomplishment and concluded that early parental involvement in a child's education increases positive long-term outcomes. Parents can be involved in their children's education in four ways under the law: 1) assisting them in their home learning, 2) participating in their school education, 3) collaborating with schools to make decisions and serve as advisors, and 4) participating in home and school programs that support structured learning(Wirt et al. 2004).

In Ethiopia, where a decentralized education system is being adopted to involve the community in school-level decision-making, special consideration should be given to the role of the larger community in school growth. If schools want to ensure that parents are aware of

and interested in their children's education, they must develop their relationships with parents. Parental engagement in the change process is an effective method.

Two conceptual traits support school leadership (Gaertner, 2014). The first is concerned with a person's characteristics, abilities, and style, while the second is concerned with how leadership relates to various organisational structures and, to a lesser extent, individual practises. The roles and responsibilities of school management teams have traditionally been associated with school leadership (Preparing Teachers and Developing School Leaders for the 21st Century, 2012). However, scholars and studies of international organisations have emphasised over the last ten years that effective leadership necessitates a shared culture of expectations in which everyone is accountable for their specific contributions to the end result (Louis, 2015).

Priorities for leaders and managers include establishing efficient management structures and articulating a clear vision for a school. Creating guidelines and directing the school community in accordance with its practises and goals. These domains describe how leaders work together to use the school vision, which was designed to be practical and demanding in order to more effectively manage people to achieve change

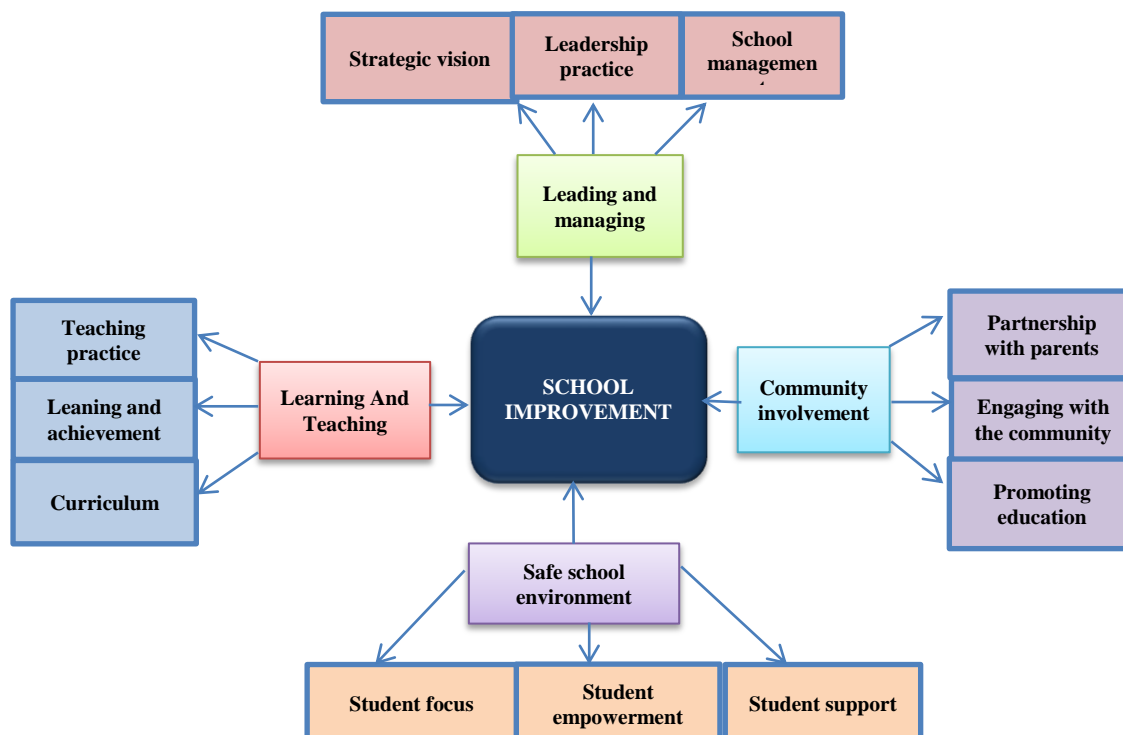


Figure 1: *School Improvement Frame Work*

Source: [https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/ethiopia\\_moe\\_-\\_school\\_improvement\\_progam\\_guidelines.pdf](https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/ethiopia_moe_-_school_improvement_progam_guidelines.pdf)

*Note: the above figure shows that the school improvement program consists of 4 domains, 12 elements all focused on helping students learn and achieve their learning objectives.*

To address the issue of driving change through school improvement programs for educational effectiveness in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, this study examined key guiding questions related to the implementation of School Improvement Programs (SIP). Specifically, it investigated the extent to which SIPs are currently implemented across all levels of education and explored the major challenges affecting their effective implementation within the educational system.

The main objective of this study was to examine the practice of leading change through School Improvement Programs (SIPs) to enhance school effectiveness in Addis Ababa. The study is significant in the field of education as it helps educational leaders at all levels to understand the central focus of SIPs in promoting overall school improvement. In addition, the findings provide insights into major challenges affecting school quality improvement, particularly the need to change societal attitudes toward educational reform. Furthermore, the study offers policymakers, researchers, and education experts a clearer understanding of the key domains and practices of SIPs, as well as the challenges encountered in their implementation within the Addis Ababa City Administration.

## **2. Research Methodology**

The study employed a qualitative research approach. The descriptive survey of the existing situation concerning the implementation of the SIP in Addis Ababa city administration was used for the study, and the study also described the school improvements programme's successes and challenges. To demonstrate that reported perceptions are linked to real changes benefiting students in a school improvement program, the researcher collected and analyzed qualitative data from stakeholders, such as ministry of education SIP experts, Education Bureaus SIP experts, sub city education office experts, district education office experts and Principals using interview method.

Original, first-hand information gathered by researchers directly to meet certain research goals is known as a primary data source. To carry out the study, primary data was gathered through interviews with school improvement program directorate experts from the ministry of education and the Addis Ababa Education Bureau, as well as experts from selected sub-city and district-level education offices and school principals. Secondary sources of data is



information that has previously been gathered and published by others is referred to as secondary data in research, which makes it an economical and time-saving resource. It may originate from published and unpublished sources like, the School Improvement Program Blueprint, Implementation Manual, and the Education Sector Development Program, as well as research articles and other written materials about the school improvement program were reviewed to acquire secondary data. Five SIP experts from the ministry of education, 5 education experts from the education bureau, 6 experts from different sub-city education offices, 8 district-level education experts, and 3 principals. A total of 27 experts from different levels of education leaders were interviewed. For this study, the interview was prepared for the respondents on the assumption that it helps to get in-depth information and is easy to conduct.

Semi-structured interviews prepared in English were employed and changed to Amharic to clarify the questions and collect the data from all levels of education sectors. An English language expert again translated the data gathered into Amharic. The research has no potential for physical or psychological harm or stress to any individuals. All data used in this research were obtained from publicly accessible sources, ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of any parties, and also did not involve the collection, storage, or analysis of private or sensitive information that could potentially violate privacy rights or result in harm to individuals. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather information from MOE, Education bureau of Addis Ababa city administration, sub-city and district level education officials, and school principals. Their position and duties within the educational institution were the basis for the interview questions. Additionally, their background and time spent working for their respected Bureaus and offices were taken into account. Finally, data collected through interviews was organized and narratives presented.

Table 1: Sampling Size and Population of the Study

S.N	Target group	Population	Sampling	Sampling Techniques
1	Ministry of education SIP experts	12	5	Availability
2	Education Bureaus SIP exerts	9	5	Availability
3	Sub city education office experts	12	6	Purposive
4	District education office experts	14	8	Availability
5	Principals	15	3	Availability

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Total	62	27
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*Note:* This table demonstrates the sampling size population of the study which is 5 SIP experts from the ministry of education, 5 SIP from the regional education bureau, 6 experts from sub city, 8 experts from the district education office and 3 principals participated as respondents in the research.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

#### ***The Practice of School Improvement Programs***

SIP is put into practise with an emphasis on four areas: leadership and management, the school environment, the process of teaching and learning and community involvement, as we saw in the introduction. The researcher highlights some significant SIP-related issues from the central level, and in-depth analyses up to the level of the city administration, sub-city, district, and school are presented in the following sections. This helps to explain the findings about each area and all levels of the educational system.

#### ***School Improvement Program at the Ministry Level***

##### ***Domain 1 Teaching and Learning***

This domain is known as the heart of School Improvement programs, in which the other domains function as a system to advance the process of teaching learning to greatly increase student accomplishment. This domain contains key concerns regarding the process of teaching learning, such as teachers' professional competence, participation in on-going professional development (CPD), learning new information to apply in the classroom, using active learning techniques to achieve improved learning results, achieving quantifiable improvements in student performance, assessment techniques used in each grade to assess student learning, and providing examples in the classroom to improve student learning based on the results.

Teachers are the primary implementers of educational policies and initiatives that are frequently implemented in schools after being developed at the national level. Teachers must be highly professional and dedicated because they are the primary influencers of instructional practice and student learning outcomes (Preparing Teachers and Developing School Leaders for the 21st Century, 2012). The importance of "securing the proper type of teachers with the correct type of knowledge, abilities, and attitude" is critical. However, some primary and secondary schools in the country have a shortage of well-qualified, competent, experienced,

dedicated, and well-trained teachers. Moreover, the quality of the teaching-learning process is also the most important.

The evaluation of teaching effectiveness has been mostly based on research into successful classroom strategies and "what works" in the classroom (Hill et al. 2012). The research that have been carried out to determine successful teaching techniques include (Scheer et al., 2019). A wide range of teacher behaviours that support student learning have been identified by these investigations. They are divided into three categories that are important to education (Day et al. 2008).

The first crucial factor is creating a welcoming, positive, and inclusive classroom environment and encouraging strong teacher-student connections through praise and feedback, according to (den Brok et al., 2002). The ability of a teacher to handle the classroom well is the next crucial factor (Van De Grift, 2007). Effective classroom management includes establishing clear rules and procedures, preventing disruptive conduct, and having courses that are scheduled and ordered (Day et al. 2008). The third important aspect is that the educational approach used by the teacher matters. This entails making connections between the lesson and prior knowledge, making the content more understandable, involving the students in tasks and activities, and giving feedback (Scheer et al., 2019).

The ministry of education has also started giving out school grants to promote school improvement initiatives and provide high-quality education. The MOE published a manual in 2017 to implement the school grant that was originally outlined in the blueprint. Government partners (donors) created the school grant program, which General Education Quality Improvement Packages will oversee (GEQIP). The main objective of the GEQIP was to improve the quality of Alternative basic education, primary and secondary education in public schools (MOE, 2017). Therefore, this budget should be allocated to items that enhance educational quality.

An Interview with a district level expert in the area revealed that

*The teaching-learning environment in schools has improved. The practice of co-curricular activities, the creation and use of supplemental materials in the classroom, the use of tutorials for female and slow learners, an increase in student participation, a student-centered teaching approach, and continuous assessment are all ways to enhance student learning. The answer further emphasized the shortcomings of teaching and learning about SIP implementation. These include a lack of resources like science*

*kits, computers, pedagogical centres, laboratories, and internet access; mastery of the subject matter and contents; gaps in the process of continuous assessment in the classroom; a lack of a culture where students are encouraged to participate in the teaching and learning process; and a lack of to be a role model for students.*

## **Domain 2 Safe School Environment**

Safe school environments are one of the fundamental areas of the SIP that the Ministry of Education (MoE) has been working on since 1999. The advancement of encouraging, respectful relationships which are stable, welcoming, and inclusive interactions are referred to as the safe school environment domain. Students willingly contribute to a wide variety of learning opportunities in safe and effective learning environments. They participate in decision-making about their teaching-learning process, and those decisions are valued. For example, schools build chances for students to become self-regulated learners both inside and outside of the class, they value involvement, and they assist pupils in expressing their newly acquired knowledge and understanding. International research reveals that providing schools with vital services and interventions such as a school meal program, proper sanitary facilities, safe hygiene practices, and a clean water supply is necessary for a healthy life. This is because inadequate water, excreta disposal, and hygiene services put students and staff in high-risk conditions and worsen children's already predisposed susceptibility to environmental health risks. Inadequate sanitation and hygiene services can have an impact on children's learning in several ways, such as by fostering the growth of dangerous germs, viruses, and insects.

Students learn adaptability skills and positive WASH behaviors at schools, where they receive the first life skills-based education that enables them to successfully handle the demands and obstacles of daily living. Children's enrolment in schools has increased more and more over the past 20 years, in the same way, the number of schools built has risen. According to the latest figures, there were 33,373 elementary schools in 2018 compared to 30,495 in 2013 (a 9.4% growth in three years). In contrast to such advancements, schools have not yet been uniformly and adequately equipped with WASH facilities. According to a recent statistic from the Ministry of Education (School WASH mapping analysis report, MoE, 2017), just 38% of schools have either improved toilets or water supply facilities. About 62% of the primary schools do not have improved toilets and about 79% do not have hand washing facilities with water and soap.

Numerous studies have shown that diarrhea causes children to miss 272 million school days annually and that one in three school-aged children in underdeveloped countries has intestinal

worms. According to the ESAA 2020/21, 40% of primary schools in the country have access to a supply of water, with 76% of those access being functional. Gambella, Addis Abeba, and Dire Dawa have the most water access, with 97, 96, and 77 respectively. Somalia has the most limited access (21.5%). Furthermore, 93% of the schools that responded to the inquiry had functioning toilets. However, the most common toilet types is "Traditional," which includes 56.5% of the total toilet types. Furthermore, 67% of the responding schools have functioning teachers' restrooms.

However, many schools lack facilities that effectively separate boys and girls, as well as provisions for children with special needs and younger age groups. Only around half of all schools are thought to be free from open defecation as a result of insufficient sanitation provisions. For the school community, hand washing is equally important to ensure a healthy school environment. Only a small proportion of primary schools have soap and hand washing facilities. A safe and healthy school environment with adequate infrastructure and educational facilities, such as educational facilities, reference materials, libraries, sports equipment, plasma televisions, and ICT centres, can help students learn and is classified as a safe school environment. FDRE and the MoE (2007).

According to the Education Statistics Annual Abstract, only 30.4% of primary and middle schools in the country have access to electricity, only 30.4% of primary and middle schools in the country have access to electricity, according to the Education Statistics Annual Abstract; nevertheless, there are substantial regional variations. Hydropower is used by 68% of schools with electricity, while 22% do not respond to the source of electricity. Another measure of facility availability is the presence of a library, laboratory, or pedagogical centre. In terms of library availability, 55.7% of schools that responded have a functioning library. Similarly, 46.7% of schools reported having functional laboratories, while 49.6% stated they had a functional pedagogical centre.

Seven male and one female total of eight senior experts from the ministry of an education school improvement program department requested to give responses to each interview question posed regarding the learning environment gave the following responses:

One expert responded that

*Even if the great achievement in some important issues, like enrolment of students, delivering school grants for every pre and primary school, monitoring the standard of all public and private schools to improve low-level schools, improving school feeding programs in all regions, and also improving curricular activities in the schools there is*

*a challenge concerning leading implementation school improvement program as per the policy and strategy, selection and placement of school leaders, the absence of accountability in all level, Lack of improved monitoring and evaluation activities in all levels and lack of training for educational experts.*

In addition to the above, school feeding is the most important issue in Ethiopia. Almost all of the regions have started school feeding programs in pre and primary schools. For instance, the regional governments are undertaking both regular and emergency school feeding programs at different scales by allocating about 62 million USD\$ to reach a total of 830,000 students for the academic year (2019/20), including Addis Ababa city administration. SNNPR is a champion and is considered the center of excellence for the program. The Addis Ababa City Administration has institutionalized the program by establishing an independent agency and making the program universal. This is a significant achievement or a change in the country's management.

One of the school improvement program experts from Addis Ababa education bureau said that

*Addis Ababa's school feeding program ranked top in the sustainable diet and nutrition category to win the 2022 Milan pact award, beating 133 cities in the world. The meal program was officially launched in October 2021 as part of an effort to stop students from dropping out of education. The program currently provides free meals and school materials for all preschool children and primary education students. This is one of the change management activities in the city administration. Because of this great change in management, the city administration allocated many million Ethiopian Birr for the procurement of teaching materials and school feeding programs yearly.*

### **Domain3. Community Involvement**

According to the guidelines for school improvement programs, there are three key important issues in the community involvement domain. Like; teachers meet with parents of students when it is needed, and at least twice per semester, providing quality reports and discussing their student' learning achievement; participating in the community to contribute resources to assist the SIP Plan's execution; and actively discussing and promoting the significance of education. Parents' participation in the school process of making a decision and their involvement in the SIP development, managing the activity of the schools, monitoring, and evaluation was good in some schools, but there is a gap in many schools regarding planned improvements. The school community should participate in the improvement and management of the SIP system that delivers their students with quality education management and monitoring activities on the school improvement program.

All government policy documents demonstrate the reality that the country's enormous educational expenditures cannot be supported by the government alone. The support of local communities for the educational system and their local schools is expected. In addition to the capacity-building plan and programs, The Education and Training Policy (MoE, 1994a) and Sector Strategy of Education (MoE, 1994b) promote the idea that community involvement should play an important role in funding and supporting education.

According to this policy (MoE, 1994a), general education (Grades 1-10) is free of compulsory fees, though school communities are encouraged to support schools willingly through financial, material, and labour contributions. Furthermore, as indicated by school-level actors, even though the government is the primary source of the school budget, shortages and irregularities in educational finance have forced schools to seek alternative sources of assistance from the PTA, parents, and the broader community.

PTAs have mobilized money to support schools by purchasing certain equipment and materials, repairing classrooms and toilets, and doing other tasks. These contributions, according to all principals and district-level specialists, are based on voluntary decisions made by parents with the help of principals and PTAs.

#### **Domain 4 School Leadership**

There are systems and procedures in place to facilitate shared leadership, where everyone shares responsibility for the student teaching-learning process. Policies of schools, rules, and procedures are effectively communicated and followed. Effective making-decisions and administrative processes are used at the school (including data collecting, analysis, and communication with parents). Effective administration is regarded as a requirement for the successful completion of any program, whether it be in a school or other institution. So, school leaders' practices are related to SIP success. To encourage and sustain a sense of change in classrooms, school administrators are crucial. School administrators and administration will likely bring about sustained progress in schools, according to MOE (2011). This implies that school leaders are responsible for the issues and unsuccessful SIP implementation, and it is required of them to give solutions for the issues that have been identified as well as to adopt best practices for the success of the area that is being investigated. More collegial relationships and more satisfaction result from enhanced stakeholder participation in decision-making.

Despite the gaps identified in this domain some years, there are great achievements like leaders of schools nowadays are selected based on standard criteria, not based on their participation in their party, because the imposition of politics in educational institutions has a negative impact, so school leaders have educational leadership and management degree or masters on educational leadership and management. In addition to the above issues, most of the regional education bureaus have been designing and giving training for school principals who have low results in school inspection evaluation.

One of the district level education experts said that:

*Even if there is good achievement regarding the selection and placement of principals, there are some gaps that are not yet solved as per the education policy and strategy, such as lack of giving continuous training for the school community, sustainable strong internal supervision, improving internal income, changing the training in to practice, using school scarce resources properly, strengthening community participation are some of the problems which are not solved yet in some schools.*

### **Major problems in the implementation of the SIP program**

Besides the challenges previously discussed in each domain, the study has identified the following as major challenges.

- Lack of trained teachers for special needs education
- Large and overcrowded class- size
- Difficulty in understanding SIP guide line
- Lack of motivation for those who deserve it
- Shortage of manpower
- Insufficient budget
- Lack of school facilities

### **Limitations**

Even though the findings from the study school improvement program will improve the teaching and learning process in the schools, the study has some limitations. One of the limitations of this study is that the study is limited to one region; even if there are about 11 regions in the country when the researcher conducted the research. Accordingly, the study uses a qualitative research approach, which may need to collect quantitative data also. Another limitation of this study is that the data was collected from all levels of educational leaders, because educational leaders are the great agents for the school improvement program, and they also drive the culture and focus of schools and can be instrumental in promoting school equality and equity.



## Conclusions

The study's findings show that the school improvement program had many successes, including improved teaching-learning in the classrooms, specific support for female and slow learners, increased student involvement, a student-centered teaching approach that followed continuous assessment, the use of extracurricular activities and the creation and use of supplemental teaching aids in the classroom to improve student learning, enrolment of students, and the delivery of school grants. For every primary and secondary school, keeping an eye on the quality of all public schools to improve low-performing institutions, enhance the school nutrition programme across the board, and also enhance the curriculum. Despite significant changes, there are still some obstacles regarding the effective operation of school improvement programmes, such as a lack of resources like science kits, computers, pedagogical centres, laboratories, and internet access, gaps in the classroom's continuous assessment process, a lack of a culture that encourages students to participate in productive teaching and learning, and a lack of role models for students. Inadequate monitoring and evaluation procedures at all levels and lack of training for educational experts are some of the gaps which have not been solved yet properly. Thus, Schools and educational leaders should pay notice to the monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the successful operation of SIP.

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