

Comparative Study on the Role of Principal in School Management and the System of Principal Training between Japan and Burkina Faso

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Introduction

As a student, from elementary school to high school, everyone had a principal in his/her school. Seeing this principal working, we have had an image or idea of who the principal is, what s/he usually does, and when we expect to see the principal, etc. Generally speaking, we can say that a school is the top, i.e. the first authority in the school and s/he supervises all people and everything in the school. This basic and general image of the principal applies to Japan as well as Burkina Faso. With regard to the two countries mentioned above, this work will consider the field of educational management, looking close at the principal in Japan and Burkina Faso. In each school there is a principal, but what does this principal do? In other words, what is the role of the principal in the daily management or life of a Japanese school and a Burkinabe one? In order to be effective, this principal needs some skills and how are those skills acquired? What are the measures taken by each country while selecting a principal and what is done to empower people to become principals or better one?

In order to answer these questions we have gone through a literature review of the documents related to educational management in the two countries, and we have also asked some principals from the two countries to fill out a questionnaire and all the data gathers have been analyzed for the purpose of the writing of this work. These principals are five (5) from five high schools in Kyoto, Japan, and other five of them from five high schools in the Northern Region of Burkina Faso. This sample is small, but we did so because of time, distance, and linguistic constraints; the results of the analysis will be generalized and we expect the whole results of this work will contribute to an improvement of educational management in our two countries.

I -The Role of Principal in School Management in Japan and Burkina Faso

1-The role of the principal in everyday school management in Japan

a)Theory

Based on School law the School principal is the first responsible person for the day-to-day management of every aspects of the school. "The duties of the principal are to manage and control the school organization as an executive of each school" (Tsutomu Horuichi 2008, P63). The School

Education Law, 37-4 in Japan states that “The principal administers school duties and supervises the staff belonging to the school”.

As we can see from what is mentioned above, the word “duties” comes twice, which means that the “role in school management” of the principal refers in fact to the “duties” that s/he needs to carry out for the school to run effectively, for problems to be solved in case some arise, for the school as a whole to reach its objectives. Let us look at some of the duties that are administered by law by the principal in Japan.

- Shaping a vision of academic success for all the students

The principal is the “first leader” of the school, and as a leader, s/he shapes a vision for the whole school, objectives to reach and academic success for all students is an objective to reach. Of course, the objectives can be reached in including all sections of the school, like teachers, other staff, the community, the authorities, and even the students themselves. In the PISA 2009 about principals’ leadership, 75% of principals recognize that they spend some time to “use students’ performance to develop goals for their school”. On the way to reaching the objectives, as a leader, the principal leads by example, having a hand in the day to day activities of the school.

- Personnel management

Depending on the country, one of the duties of the principal is to manage the personnel of the school. As part of this duty, the principal will have sometimes to hire some teachers, be in charge of the professional development of the staff, and provide opportunities for their growth. One of the most important point of this staff management duty is supervising and evaluating the teachers. The “School Education Law, 37-4”, gives to the principal the competence to “supervise teachers and staff in the school”. Moreover, part of personnel management consists of supporting staff, influencing positively their motivation, commitment, and working conditions. (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006, P.5)

- Handling students’ discipline

One the commonly known responsibility of the principal is handling discipline matters of students. The principal makes sure the teachers and or other staff understand what is expected from students in terms of discipline, this makes the job easier. Usually, the issues the principal handles are referrals from teachers. As a principal, listening to all sides is essential, not jumping into conclusions but gathering as much evidence as you can and making a fair judgment before taking decisions. These decisions are usually to state whether the student is guilty or not of a disciplinary actions and if parents needs to be informed or not. The principal is impartial in handling all discipline issues.

- maintain of good parents and community relationships with the school

Formerly based on a “closed school system”, Japanese schools opened their doors later for the community to participate in terms of management. This has been possible through many reforms that

took a long process. Now we have a “school/community partnership”, coming from the 15th Central Committee of Education (CCE) in 1996. In 2000, a suggestion of the same CCE as enacted and a school councilor system was created, with a position of school councilor created, the latter being in charge of expressing his/her opinion to the principal in relation to school management. The school principal is in charge of keeping a good relationship between the school and the community or parents. That is part of what his/her position requires as school is also community based and needs to reflect the whole community.

Looking at what the laws and policies state about the role of the principal in the management of the principal, we may wonder how all this is applied. Let us look at what is done then.

b- Practice

Understanding of the architecture of the management and organizational system of school in Japan can help better understand and know the role of the principal in Japan. As a matter of fact, there is a vertical hierarchy in terms of organization of the educational system, in which the Board of Educational which technically belongs to public educational administration (prefectural board of education, municipal board of education) exercises its competence to the schools. This somehow means they can restrict the competence of the principal. But in any case, the principal is the “top official and representative” of the school (Tsutomu Horiuchi, 2008). Concretely speaking, the duties of a principal in Japan are as follow:

- Designing the curriculum: school autonomy in Japan is more and more popular as research showed that schools with high autonomy have high success rate. Part of the autonomy requires each school to design a curriculum reflecting the local educational needs. The school principal has the heavy role of designing this school curriculum.
- Choosing supplementary readings, learning notebooks, etc.
- Planning and implementing school duty: As the first representative of the school, the projects and programs of the school are to be planned and the execution of them too. The principal is in charge of them
- Deciding school organizational duties: the principal is helped, and s/he is the one who decides on how other people helps him/her
- Organizing school events such as school trips
- Submission of opinion about personnel management; This is at two level, meaning the principal can let the public administration know about the needs of the school in terms of staff, and s/he is in charge of the internal management of the staff . For example, directing belonging teachers, allocating them to given classes, and appointing them to middle level management positions such as head teacher etc.

- Selecting part-time teachers: this is part of the management of personnel duties of the principal
- Presentation of diploma: Many students from different countries recognize that they are sure to see the principal at graduation ceremonies, and this is also the case in Japan. The principal has the duty of presenting students their diplomas.
- Disciplinary actions towards students: in school we are all scared of being referred to the principal for discipline reasons as we know the risks. The Japanese principal also takes disciplinary actions towards students and can inform the parents if need be
- Making attendance book and check attendance.
- Entrance, transfer permission, drop-outs, permission for taking temporary leave from school, are all granted or refused by the principal
 - Suspension from school for preventing infectious disease
 - Approving teacher vacation
 - Directing teacher to a business trip

2-The Role of the Principal in everyday school management in Burkina Faso

a-Theory

By law, the school principal, called “Proviseur” for high schools and “Directeur” in Junior high schools, is the first authority of the school. S/he is “responsible for the administrative and financial management of his/her school. All the personnel are under his authority.”.

Therefore, as in Japan, school law states the role of the principal, and the word used in the French terminology is “responsible”, which refers to the “being in charge”. Then, as we read in the school law, the principal “is in charge of the administrative and financial management of his/her school”. What do they refer to? The administrative management of school refers to a certain number of duties which are decided in the “letter of mission” assigned to each principal at the beginning of the year:

- Organizing teaching activities for students of the school

The organization of the teaching is a duty of the principal, who assigns teachers to classroom, have them hold a Teaching Council (Conseils d'Enseignement) to decide on handbooks or materials to use in classes, and makes sure everything needed for teaching activities is available.

- Develop a yearly and termly activities program for the school

The school year is divided into 3 terms and each public school follows this pattern. As the manager of the school, the principal decides on which activities to be carried out and the time of the activities.

- Hold an up-to-date archive of the school

There are a lot of important administrative documents that come into the school and the

principal needs to have a good organization for those documents to be up-to-date and available whenever they are needed. There are some other like letters to and reports to external organizations and even internal departments; copies must be kept and included to the archives of the school. They all constitute the memory of the school and they are passed from principal to principal

- Manage the school staff and evaluate them based on regulations

Organizing staff based on their profile is a duty of the principal. Also, evaluation of the staff is also a requirement, and is assigned to the principal.

- Make sure all departments of the school is functioning properly

Internal administration of each school has department such as “accountancy department, Supervisor Department, and other ones depending on schools”, and making them work properly is a duty of the principal.

- Submit to the regional Direction a New School Year Report, a Termly Report of Activities, an End of Year Report

In administration, an activity is not performed, until it is put into a report and this is the duty of the principal. After each activity, and report is written and sent to the regional Direction of Secondary and Higher Education.

- Develop and maintain good relationships with administrative authorities, local ones, the educational community, and the community itself

The principal keeps good relation with all the parties concerned by the school and even those which are not directly concerned.

- Participate in the organization of National Examinations

These exams are basically the ones taken by students to graduate from junior high school to high school, and from high school to university. Principals are obliged to be part of the organization of them when they are called for it.

- Carry out daily administrative duties

This refers to the day to day duties carried out by the principal.

The financial management of school also refers to a certain number of duties which are decided in the “letter of mission” assigned to each principal at the beginning of the year:

- Drafting the Budget of the School, to be approved by the Regional Direction
- Manage all financial and material belongings of the school

As a whole, we can say that in theory, the school law states the role of the principal in the management of the schools through the Decrees signed by the Minister of Secondary and Higher Education, and also through the Letter of Mission that each principal receives at the beginning of the year. The latter contains the duties but most importantly the objectives expected from the school and

the principal in his/her position for the year concerned. However, in practice, what does the principal do as his/her role in the management of his/her school?

b)Practice

Like the case of Japan, it would be interesting to understand the hierarchy in internal school administration to better understand what the role of the principal in the management of the school.

The principal is the highest position in the school and at the same time s/he is in charge of everything. However, in the administrative system in Burkina Faso, the superior can derogate some of his/her duties to the inferior. But, the former remains the only responsible at any time. Therefore, most of the administrative tasks are derogated to the vice principal (Censeur) when there is one in the school (junior high schools do not have vice principals). There is no clear law regulating which duties are passed to the vice principal, it all depends on the discretion of each principal. Here are the common tasks carried out by the principal

- Presiding over meetings or events of school
- Developing yearly and termly school programs and activities
- Preparing school budget with the help of school accountant
- Participating in national exams
- Handling discipline matters when supervisors cannot
- Making sure the teachers come on time to school
- Drafting any reports for submission to the ministry

3-Comparison of the two systems

From our descriptive analysis of Japanese and Burkinabe systems related to the principal, we can see some similarities and also some differences.

As for the similarities, the principal is a leader, the highest position within the school in the two systems and s/he has authority over all other people of the school. S/he presides over the meetings or any other gatherings in the school. The principal carries out some common responsibilities when we look at the two countries. S/he is in charge of the administrative management of the school, the personnel management. Also, s/he has sometimes to deal with student related problems like discipline or pedagogy related questions. The parents of a students whether in Burkina Faso or Japan usually ask to meet with the principal first to speak about any situation related to their children. This also requires of the two principals from the two countries to make sure they maintain a good relationship with the parents, and the whole community the school is at. The responsibilities or duties which overlap when comparing the two countries are: planning and implementing school activities or programs, deciding on duties of personnel, organizing school events, selecting part-time teachers

(called “vaccataire” in Burkina Faso), giving transfer permission, leave ones etc, suspension from school. Moreover, the principals are helped during their mission by people of a lower hierarchy, but the principals still have a higher-ranked person who supervises their work as a principal, and they report to those people. These striking similarities do not however stop from seeking some differences between the roles in management of schools in Burkina Faso and Japan.

Speaking of differences, between the two systems, we can mention that from the 21st century, the Japanese principal has had a lot of autonomy compared to the Burkina Faso one, at some levels. As Japan advocates more and more autonomy for schools, at the same time principals are given autonomy to design the school curriculum. The principal is helped by the relevant staff of the school and this curriculum is designed to reflect the needs of the community, the aspirations of parents. The principal is then in charge of designing this curriculum. On the other hand, as Burkina Faso is a national system, principals just receive the curriculum from the ministry of education and then apply it, even if it does not go in the same line with the realities of the area. One advantage from the Japanese side is that education responds to the needs of the local community, and produces people this local community needs. But, do we need locally-minded people when today we speak more and more of globalization?

In addition, in terms of hierarchy, externally, the difference is clear between Japan and Burkina Faso. In Japan, the Board of Education is there to “control” the principal, with a person named “supervisor” who is there and has a lot of power over him/her. This board of education by law has a lot of “competence” in school management and can use it. The debate that has been going on is whether to reduce the competence of this board of education or not. The Japanese principal does not have management of the 3Ms (Man, material, and money). This may be a system that is there to avoid abuse of these resources by one single person, the principal. But the same Board of education having the same or even higher competence on management of the school lets us see the principal as a “puppet” who is just there for the sake of being where. Why a principal if this board of education has competence and is using it? In the meantime, in Burkina Faso, the direct supervisor of the principal is the Regional Director of Secondary and Higher Education. The principal reports everything to this Regional Director, who is supposed to transfer information to the minister. By law, the principal has to manage the finances and the materials of the school. Of courses, there have been cases of embezzlements in many schools and it is not sure that finances in many other schools are handled appropriately today.

Internally, the Japanese principal is helped in administration by the vice principal, and the head-teacher (not a position), the “home teacher” and a few other people. Bearing the burden of the whole administration on only one’s shoulders is hard and that is why there are many people (administrative or not) that are there to help the principal. In Burkina Faso, junior high schools do not have vice

principals, neither do some high schools. The principal is helped by a vice principal if there is one, an accountant (bursar) in terms of finances and materials, a head-supervisor with supervisors (for discipline and punctuality matters), and there are usually two representatives of the personnel who serve as a bridge between the administration and the staff of the school. Each class has a head-teacher who is a bridge between students and other teachers or staff when there are conflicts. However, in many schools, there is only the principal who is in charge of the whole administration, acting as a principal, an accountant (bursar), supervisor, and sometimes still has to teach. This is because of a lack of personnel or sometimes some people do not want to live in the countryside for such schools are usually in the countryside. In such cases, a mistake made by the principal affects the school on a large scale, so ways to solve such a problem should be looked for. Whether there is enough personnel to help the principal or not, s/he receives a yearly “letter of mission”, stating what should be done during the whole year and also the results that are expected from him/her. As the principal's job is also evaluated, these results will also be considered during the evaluation. The job of some principals sometimes look like sending a soldier to a battle field without providing weapons, but expecting a victory in any case. And of course the principal is usually blamed (mostly by the community) when the expected results are not reached. More efforts are needed to change such practices.

II - The training of Principals in Burkina Faso and Japan

Christie, Thompson, & Whitely, 2009, p.4 say “getting the right people to become school leaders is very important, but so is providing these people with the right set of skills to be effective leaders”. In other words, Japan and Burkina Faso need to get the right person at the right place to manage schools, but these countries need to train these right people appropriately. Let us see then what is being done in this sense.

1-The case of Japan

Legally speaking, to be a principal in Japan, in terms of qualifications, one must:

- Hold an advanced or first level teaching license and a career in education for more than five years
 - Have a career in education for more than ten years
 - Have an equivalent of the above two in case the person does not have a teaching license.
- (School Education laws, Article 8 and 9)

Once someone meets the requirements, the person waits to be nominated by his/her principal or a senior teacher (先輩) “senpai”, then has to go through a series of examinations. Usually the board of education conducts the examination that allows to be a vice principal or principal, and the content of this examination is related to the knowledge of educational laws and school management, an essay

on educational and managerial problems solving, and of course there is an interview at the end. In other words, the principal is assigned by the board of education but there is a selective process. Most principals are selected among vice principals. Also, considering the above requirements, some people outside the field of education have become principals, provided they are judged to have the managerial skills needed to manage a school. This is the example of a principal (for privacy reasons we do not mention the name) in Kyoto Prefecture Subaru High School who was a “sake” (Japanese liquor) company director then became a principal (Laura Wilson, 2011). However, it is worth mentioning that the systems to get a principal appointed may get some variations depending on the Prefecture and Municipality. Once selected, is there any training before and getting into the position and when in the position?

For this research, as we mentioned in the beginning of our work, we conducted a survey of five principals in Kyoto city, Kyoto Prefecture, in the western part of Kyoto. Due to certain constraints, we just worked with five principals, but we will just generalize the results of our survey. Officially speaking, there is no formal training that is meant for “student principals” in Japan. Among the five principals questioned on whether they received any pre-service training or not, all of them responded negatively. However two of them recognized having taken some school management course in a graduate school, but not directly for the purpose of becoming a principal. They “learned by themselves”, mostly as all of them were vice principals, and or have experience in administrative-related positions or duties. “Principals and head teachers almost never receive training run by their local Education Committee or Education Center before they are appointed. After their appointment they participate in a workshop for a few days, giving between 10 and 20 hours’ training, and then from their second year onwards they take short courses”. Professor Yasuhiro, Owaki in *Educating School Leaders in Japan: Framework and Achievements*. Professor Owaki hereby confirms that no pre-service training is really available for Japanese school leaders. In this case, we will hope there is in-service training that can remediate this situation.

As the above quotation mentions it, once principals are appointed, they receive only 10 to 20 hours of training and they then go for their work. Any in-service training really starts from the second year of work. These trainings consist of workshops that are offered to principals. Also, some universities offer courses that are meant for school leaders, then some of the principals take in-service training from those programs. Who supports this training? Both cases of the local administration and the principals themselves can be found. The courses are a mixture of theory and practice, including case studies, practical reports, and workshop, all with the objective of developing school leadership skills. It is possible to keep working as you study as the programs are designed in evening classes system, for people to work during daytime and study at night. As per my own experience in taking graduate courses for school leaders in Kyoto University of Education, all of them were at night.

As a whole, we can say that the way to become a principal is long, not clear, and once a principal, you are still a student, even though that pressure is on you at work.

2- The case of Burkina Faso

School law in Burkina Faso in Decree N 95-193/PRES/MESSRS/MEFP/MFPMA states that each year the Ministry of Secondary and higher education drafts a list of potential principals and to be in this list one should:

For high schools

- Be a secondary education aggregated teacher with at least three years of experience including two years of effective teaching; or
- Be a secondary education certified teacher with at least 7 years of teaching experience including five years of effective teaching, or
- Non-certified (non-licensed) high schools and junior high schools' teachers holding a graduate school degree, with at least 7 years of experience including five years of effective teaching
- Non-certified (non-licensed) high schools and junior high schools' teachers with at least 10 years of experience including seven years of effective teaching

For Junior high schools

- All of the above
- Certified Junior High School teachers with at least seven years of experience including five years of effective teaching.

It should be interesting to mention that a teacher meeting these criteria can request on his/her own to be in this list, or be recommended by his/her principal, but in this case the teacher needs to agree first. Also, being one the list does not make of you necessarily a principal. There needs to be a need, and the hierarchy in the educational administration would call you and then the process of nomination is launched.

Despite all this, the usual practice is being recommended by your principal to the Regional Director of Secondary Education, who also recommends you to the Minister, and at the end the latter decides to appoint you or not. When the process is at the level of the Ministry of Secondary Education, which is the last one, it is almost never rejected by the Minister. We can already see that from this procedure, there is not room speaking about pre-service training, even though almost all of the selected ones do not have any experience in an administrative-related duty or position, and sometimes do not even know the basics about being a principal. To speak about my personal case, I was recommended based on my performances as a teacher, the need of a principal, and then I was appointed. I did not have any previous experience that was related to administration, so I did not know what it means to be principal, except that vague idea I had related to the "things" my principal

was doing when I was a teacher. This was my guide during my first steps as a principal. After being nominated, I was driven to my school and then was told “this is your school”. Unfortunately, this is just one example among many, and this practice has been for years and does not look like it will change soon.

Once appointed, the newly-appointed principals take a training of 10 to 30 hours (duration being reduced with years due to “financial” reasons), and this is their first contact with theoretical things related to their job. As years go by, new principals learn through trial and error, by themselves, and also asking their seniors. The rest of the trainings they get as in-service ones are the very rare trainings at Regional Directions of Education when funds are received from a partner. As a whole therefore, we are tempted to say that the principal in Burkina Faso just learns with time.

3- Comparative analysis of the training of principals in Japan and Burkina Faso

It is very striking after going through this, that there is no clear pre-service training for the Japanese and the Burkinabe principal. For the appointment, the procedures are country-specific. Japan insists a lot on seniority/experience and potential managerial skills, while Burkina Faso rather considers only “experience”. The Japanese way seems to portray Japanese society as a whole, a hierarchical one, where age is more considered than performance. In Japanese companies work culture it is the same as well. No matter how hard you work or how good your performance is, you just need to wait for your “age” to get promotion. Another reason that lets us think so is that the youngest principals in Japan are in their early fifties. One advantage of this is that at least working for so many years in a school, one learns through observation. There are some middle level management duties (head teacher, home teacher...) that teachers go through as usually these duties are related to helping with administrative-related tasks, then we can believe that such people learn more about management during their work. The examination and interview held for the selection of principals are also helpful in the selection procedure, to get the best people to manage the school. Burkina Faso rather framed its way from copying the French model, as the biggest part of the educational system is a copy of the former colony France. During the training of newly appointed principals, a trainer (Secondary Education Inspector and former principal) was asked: “why is it that the ministry does not train principals before they take their position?” The answer of this trainer was “well, you will learn with time, and do not worry, we all did it without training and made it, and so you will make it, though it is not easy”. This is an answer that portrays the very conservative administration in Burkina Faso, which does not often speak of reforms even when everyone agrees it is needed; there are sometimes reforms but usually made very fast, probably because some funds are “at stake”. Of course, we can already predict the results of those reforms because they are applied, because not enough time was taken to consider many criteria before taking decisions. As for Japan,

looking at the history of education in the country, it has been under constant reforms, though slowly, but at least there are some. This, may let us think that at least some time is taken before reforms.

As a summary, we will say that one weak point related to empowering principals in Japan and Burkina Faso is the lack of a clear and formal training in the educational systems, before principals go for their position, and once in it, there may be available ones, but they are not enough. Also, we know how busy principals can be, so it is not even sure they can easily get time to take these trainings regularly.

III - Recommendations to improve school management in Japan and Burkina Faso.

In our survey to Japanese principals, one of the questions was to know whether the job is difficult or not, all principals recognized that it is a difficult and challenging job. The good news is that, they added that “it is difficult but achievable”, except one that thinks “it is an impossible mission”. What can be done?

- Formal and good pre-service training after selection

Johnson (2005) interviewed principals who voluntarily quitted their job and among the reasons was the “pre-service training that left them feeling unprepared for the challenges on the job”. This even shows that having this pre-service training is not enough, it needs to be a good one. Unfortunately, our two countries do not have this foundation, so there needs to be reforms. Recently, in Burkina Faso, principals have been asking for the position of principal to be transformed into a career in itself, with clear requirements and qualifications for the recruitment system, a good a formal training, and a related salary etc. This is a good proposition that indeed could serve as an example as well for the Japanese system. The idea is also in the mind of some in Japan, as a principal proposed I the survey to make of this position a career and this will help improve. Principals will then be more empowered and skilled to do their job, with more confidence and less mistakes. But Burkina Faso also needs to see how it can be implemented because “actions speak louder than words”.

As for the content of the pre-service training, we suggest, leadership development skills, educational laws, human resource management, financial management, public speaking, problem solving,

- The roles and responsibilities of the principals need to be better clarified. By law, there seems to be a clash of competence in Japan, clash between the competence of the Board of Education and the one of the principal. The two have at some levels the legal competence. When there is a clash of competence, no one knows what to or one expects the other to do this or that, and at the end no one does it.
- The principals in Burkina Faso and Japan need to have less work to do. Most principals (like

in our survey), believe their job is very hard because of the amount of tasks. In fact a principal is in the middle and around we have teachers, parents, administration, and students, each party putting pressure on him/her and expecting results. In Japan, we suggest to create a position like “supervisor” in the school (to the image of Burkina Faso) who will be in charge of handling discipline issues and only complicated ones are transferred to the principal.

- Teachers during the training time before and during their job need to be trained not to think there is an opposition between the administration (represented by the principal) and the staff. In Burkina Faso, in schools, we have the feeling that administration is one entity and teachers (and other staff) is another one and the relationship is an opposing one, where only “fighting/strikes” solves problems. We have seen cases in Burkina Faso where principals were confined by some teachers. But principals should also be trained not to use subjective judgment or be partial in their management. This makes staff take things personal and no solution is easily found in such cases. In Japan as well, talking to some teachers, they do not have a “friendly” view of some principals. Our educational systems could gain in copying companies, creating some time (holidays are the ideal), for community activities when all the school staff and administration gather for some activities somewhere, to reinforce the feeling of belonging to one team.
- Parents, and the community as a whole, need to feel concerned about what is happening in school and not only expect schools to educate children 100%. Education is partly at school and partly at home, and when one part is not executed, the whole may fail. In supporting, at least morally, the management of schools, it gives more energy to management staff and teaching one to better accomplish their mission. Less “monster parents”, more parents who come to schools to encourage the workers
- Something important is also the administrative authorities in ministries. Making reforms in a system needs to take time, for the experts to make studies before taking decisions. In taking decisions related to teaching, most of the time teachers are not consulted, and for managers as well principals are not consulted. The real experts in management are the principals as they live their job every day and know the challenges and have their own view of problem solving. In consulting them and making an analysis of the opinions of as many as possible, reforms with high probability of success can be made. In one word, there needs to be more objectivity before decisions are taken.

Conclusion

In Japan as Burkina Faso, becoming a principal takes time and once you get into the job, you

realize you have more challenges than you thought before the job. The few trainings that are available can help become a better principal, but you have to rely on yourself first, learning on the spot, asking seniors, and learning through trial and error. In anything that is done, the responsibilities are there, the challenges seem to be increasing with time, and the systems do not seem to make things easier.

Our systems in management have some overlap and some differences, but in reality, as we looked into them, we can get from each other, even though the countries have a big gap when economically compared. So instead of seeking some solutions far away, our responsible through exchange can find the solutions to their challenges.

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