

Government empowers 225 school heads

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Bongani Ndlovu, Chronicle Reporter

A total of 225 school heads in Zimbabwe graduated in Instructional Leadership, with Government saying this will provide them with 21st century set of skills that enhance the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

This was said on Thursday by the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education, Mrs Tumisang Thabela during a school leaders' online graduation ceremony for the Instructional Leadership Programme. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, British Council and Higherlife Foundation, partnered to give skills to the school heads from the country's 10 provinces. They were mentored by three coaches — Dr Maina Gioko from Kenya, Mrs Maureen Shipota from Zambia and Mr Jonah Mungoshi from Zimbabwe.

Mrs Thabela, who was the guest of honour during the virtual graduation, said it was time to celebrate the great achievements by those who completed the course.

“It gives me great pleasure to officiate at this historic occasion. I believe that this is the first time that our Ministry has conducted an online graduation — a clear indication that we are adapting to the new normal. Today, we are celebrating a milestone achievement that should enhance our leadership,” she said.

“Instructional Leadership provides the 21st century set of skills, knowledge, tools and frameworks for school leaders to transform their mindset, attitude, values, ethos, behaviour and conduct to focus on the most critical priority which is to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in their schools.”

Mrs Thabela said the programme will help school leaders produce students who will impact Zimbabwe and the world.

“Oftentimes school leaders are seized with administrative matters that tend to monopolise their time and efforts. Instructional Leadership is the wake-up call that interrupts this diversion of attention and provides not only the knowledge but also the tools and means for school leaders to re-focus on their highest priority and most important duty — enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in their schools in order to meet learning objectives and produce students who will positively impact our country and the world,” said Mrs Thabela.

Mrs Thabela thanked the partners for their sterling work in supporting Zimbabwe’s education. “In line with the Government’s thrust, the Ministry takes great pride in forging powerful partnerships with organisations committed to supporting education in Zimbabwe.

The Instructional Leadership Programme would not have been possible without the immense support from our partners, the British Council and Higher Life Foundation. In particular, the role played by the British Council Director Zimbabwe Mr Roland Davies. This hard work culminated in the achievements of our school leaders whom we are celebrating today,” said Mrs Thabela.

She said there were some challenges encountered along the way such as internet connectivity, Covid-19 induced lockdowns.

“However, for every challenge encountered resourcefulness has been applied. You practised innovation and found ways to ensure that no school leader was left behind.

“It gives me great joy to note that in this first group graduating today we have every province represented and more importantly that we have school leaders from both urban and rural schools.” What was pleasing to note, Mrs Thabela said, was there was a balance between theory and practical.

“What is even more gratifying is that these 104 females and 121 male school leaders did not only learn the theory but also had to apply what they learnt in the form of a school-based project which they were required to plan, implement and then share their experiences with their colleagues and facilitators. Therefore, we are truly celebrating not just the acquisition of theories and concepts but also the application of transformative ideas that have already started to positively impact the quality of teaching and learning in our schools,” said Mrs Thabela.