



A University of Sussex DPhil thesis

Available online via Sussex Research Online:

<http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/>

This thesis is protected by copyright which belongs to the author.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the Author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the Author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Please visit Sussex Research Online for more information and further details

**Policy and Practice of Community
Participation in the Governance of Basic
Education in Rural Zambia**

Taeko Okitsu

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
University of Sussex

April 2011

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part, to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature: _____

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

Taeko Okitsu, Doctor of Philosophy

**Policy and Practice of Community Participation in the Governance of Basic
Education in Rural Zambia**

Summary

Since the 1990s, the Government of Zambia has pursued the decentralisation of basic education with strong emphasis on active community participation in local education governance, the aim being to increase the accountability of local education institutions to the community. The accompanying liberalisation of the basic education sector is expected to enhance the role of parents as customers with a freedom of choice in the education market; thus, leading to the greater accountability of schools through the market mechanism.

This thesis investigates the extent to which these commitments are being practically realised in rural Zambia, which is a largely under-researched area. Specifically, it explores parental and community participation both in government basic schools and community schools, as well as at the district education authority level through the establishment of the District Education Board (DEB).

The thesis undertakes a sociological investigation in order to understand the processes involved in parental and community participation from the viewpoints and experiences of the various local actors. Accordingly, it has employed an interpretive paradigm, utilising interviews, observations and document analysis as sources for the study.

The findings of the thesis reveal a considerable gap between policy expectations and the realities at school and district levels, demonstrating that some of the underlying policy assumptions have not been met in practice.

The thesis found that parents and communities in the rural setting frequently lack ability, agency and the spirit of voluntarism, factors that conspire to form a barrier to effective participation in local education affairs. These obstacles resulted in part from low cultural and economic capital, and the perception that local education matters constituted the domain of trained professionals. Furthermore, the low quality of education on offer and lack of transparency in the management of school resources also meant that parents judged the cost of participation to exceed the benefits. Thus, the policy assumption of the homogeneous, equal, willing and capable community playing a new participatory role cannot necessarily be taken for granted.

Moreover, embedded micro-power relations between education professionals and laypeople, as well as amongst the latter, often influence the way different actors deliberate and negotiate in newly created participatory spaces. As a result, the voices and protests of the socially and economically disadvantaged are often poorly articulated, go unheard and lack influence.

Laypeople are expected to play a larger managerial role in community schools, which should increase parental power to hold teachers accountable. In reality however, their ability to realise this was seriously constrained. In a context of chronic poverty, the community was unable to remunerate teachers sufficiently, and subsequently powerless to discipline or dismiss those frequently absent from school, given that it was virtually impossible to find other teachers willing to work for little or no remuneration.

In terms of choice, parents were also compromised as customer stakeholders in both government and community schools. Many did not have the socio-economic or geographical wherewithal to exercise freedom of choice, which in any case was not adequately accompanied by either incentives or the threat of sanctions that might encourage teachers to perform better.

The thesis further shows that teachers and district officials not only lack the willingness to embrace laypeople in their new governance roles but also lack the capacity and autonomy to respond to the demands of parents and communities even when they would like to; the centre still holds controls over many areas while resources allocated to the local level are grossly inadequate.

Therefore, the thesis shows that the extent to which the policy of community participation in local education governance and school choice increases the accountability of local education institutions is open to question. Rather, it suggests that both micro and macro contexts play a vital role in shaping the way in which parents and communities participate in local education governance, in what form, and the consequent influence this has on accountability to the community. Thus, with the use of such a sociological framework, the thesis demonstrates the significance of context, power relations, and the differing social, cultural and economic capital that shape the way different actors participate or do not participate; a consideration that tends to be overlooked in the dominant discourse of decentralisation and community participation on the international education development agenda.

Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to my supervisor, Dr Albert Akyeampong for his invaluable advice, feedback and warm encouragement throughout the study process. I am deeply appreciative of the efforts of Dr Yusuf Sayed, who read my final draft, offering much critical feedback and numerous constructive suggestions. I am also heavily indebted to Dr Pauline Rose for guiding me during the design phase of this study and subsequent fieldwork in particular.

My warmest heartfelt appreciation goes to all those who participated in this study in Zambia – the education officials in Lusaka, DEBS and other officials in Masaiti District, board members, head teachers, teachers, parents, and local community members, who gave up their precious time to answer my innumerable questions and share their experiences with me to better inform the study. I am also thankful to Dr Okiroro and Ms Beatrice Oumo, for their warm friendship and the tremendous support they gave me during my stay in Zambia.

I am obliged to Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for financing my first year of study and fieldwork. I am grateful for the colleagues at the JICA Zambia for their generous support during my fieldwork. I also owe Dr John Chileshe a deep debt for his insightful suggestions. I also thank my colleagues in JICA's Human Development Department for their continuous encouragement.

My thanks go to my fellow students at the University of Sussex for sharing their thoughts and experience. I also owe thanks to Mr David Butcher for his professional editing and proofreading.

My appreciation goes to Professor Kenneth King and Ms Pravina King for their guidance and encouragement throughout the entire process.

Finally, I thank my husband, my parents in Tokyo for their unending love and support. Without their presence, I could not have completed this enjoyable but challenging task.

Table of Contents

SUMMARY	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xiv
LIST OF BOXES	xv
LIST OF PICTURES	xv
LIST OF ACRONYMS	xviii
 Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION	 1
1.1 AIM OF THE STUDY	1
1.2 RATIONALE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS	2
1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS	8
 Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW: DECENTRALISATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	 11
2.1 INTRODUCTION	11
2.2 DECENTRALISATION OF SERVICE DELIVERY IN GENERAL	11
2.2.1 Defining decentralisation	11
2.2.2 The rationale for decentralisation	13
2.2.2.1 Decentralisation driven by neo-liberal ideology	13
2.2.2.2 Decentralisation driven by democratic governance	14
2.2.3 Questions arising about the positive effects of decentralisation	14
2.3 DECENTRALISATION IN EDUCATION	16
2.3.1 Forms of decentralisation in education	16

2.3.2	Three types of education decentralisation based on differing ideologies.....	17
2.3.2.1	Education decentralisation stimulated by professional expertise.....	18
2.3.2.2	Education decentralisation based on market efficiency.....	18
2.3.2.3	Education decentralisation stimulated by political legitimacy.....	21
2.4	THE CONCEPT OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN RELATION TO EDUCATION	
	DECENTRALISATION.....	23
2.5	PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY – THEORY AND	
	PRACTICE.....	27
2.5.1	Defining and classifying participation.....	27
2.5.2	Assumptions about community participation as a collective effort in local education development.....	32
2.5.3	Who is the ‘community’?.....	34
2.5.4	What influences participation?.....	37
2.5.5	Authority, resources and capacity at the local level to respond to local demands.....	39
2.6	CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	41
2.6.1	Dimensions of decentralisation and accountability.....	42
2.6.2	Dimension of participation.....	43
2.6.3	Micro and macro context of reform.....	44
2.7	CONCLUSION.....	47
Chapter 3	DECENTRALISATION AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN	
	ZAMBIA’S EDUCATION POLICY – CONTEXTS AND PREMISES.....	49
3.1	INTRODUCTION.....	49
3.2	THE POITICAL ECONOMY OF ZAMBIA.....	49
3.3	EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN BOTH PRE AND	

POST-INDEPENDENCE ERAS	51
3.3.1 The pre-independence era	51
3.3.2 The post-independence era	52
3.3.3 Financing education from independence to the 1980s	53
3.4 EDUCATION REFORM SINCE THE 1990s: POLICY SHIFT TOWARDS THE DECENTRALISATION AND LIBERALISATION OF EDUCATION WITH EMPHASIS ON COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	54
3.5 THE DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION AT DISTRICT AND SCHOOL LEVELS ENVISAGED AT THE MACRO LEVEL: EXPECTATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS	60
3.5.1 Participation at the district level	60
3.5.1.1 The establishment of the DEB	60
3.5.1.2 The structure and composition of the DEB	61
3.5.1.3 Roles and responsibilities within the DEB of the governing body and management team respectively	64
3.5.2 Participation at school level (I) – government basic schools	67
3.5.2.1 The composition of the PTA	69
3.5.2.2 The roles of parents and the local community	70
3.5.3 Participation at school level (II) – community schools	74
3.5.3.1 The composition of the PCSC	76
3.5.3.2 The anticipated role of the PCSC	76
3.5.3.3 The role of the state in the community school	80
3.6 CONCLUSION	81
Chapter 4 CONTEXTS OF STUDY DISTRICT AND SCHOOLS	84
4.1 INTRODUCTION	84

4.2	PROFILE OF MASAITI DISTRICT	84
4.2.1	Socio-economic background	84
4.2.2	Education profile	86
4.2.3	The District Education Board	89
4.3	PROFILE OF CASE STUDY GOVERNMENT BASIC SCHOOLS	90
4.3.1	Chulu basic school	91
4.3.2	Lukasi basic school	92
4.3.3	Mutande basic school	94
4.4	PROFILE OF CASE STUDY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	94
4.4.1	Fifugo community school	95
4.4.2	Pulofa community school	97
4.4.3	Nkambe community school	100
4.5	CONCLUSION	103
Chapter 5	METHODOLOGY	104
5.1	INTRODUCTION	104
5.2	RESEARCH PARADIGMS AND STRATEGY	104
5.3	ISSUES OF RESEARCHER IDENTITY	108
5.4	RESEARCH METHOD	112
5.4.1	A case study	112
5.4.2	Phasing of field research	115
5.4.3	Sampling of research sites	117
5.4.3.1	Selection of the district	118
5.4.3.2	Selection of the schools	119
5.4.4	Issues of Language and Interpretation	121
5.4.5	Data collection	125

5.4.6 Data analysis.....	134
5.5 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY.....	140
5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	142
5.7 RESEARCH ETHICS.....	143
5.8 CONCLUSION.....	145

Chapter 6 CASE STUDY AT THE MICRO LEVEL [1] – COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

IN GOVERNMENT BASIC SCHOOLS.....	146
6.1 INTRODUCTION.....	146
6.2 CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOOL RESOURCES.....	146
6.2.1 Types of contribution.....	146
6.2.2 Attending PTA meetings.....	147
6.2.3 Decision-making on mode and scope of contribution.....	149
6.2.4 Managing community contribution.....	155
6.2.5 Factors affecting non-compliance.....	161
6.2.6 The enforcement of sanctions for non-compliance and consideration for the needs of the poor.....	166
6.3 DEVELOPMENT OF A LOCALISED CURRICULUM.....	171
6.4 PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT.....	175
6.4.1 Participation in the development of the school AWPB.....	175
6.4.2 Control and oversight of the school grant.....	179
6.4.3 Monitoring and deliberating on the quality of education.....	183
6.4.3.1 Monitoring teaching and learning.....	183
6.4.3.2 Assessing the quality of the school.....	185
6.4.3.3 Deliberation on school quality.....	186

6.5 SCHOOL CONSTRAINTS TO AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO THE DEMANDS AND CONCERNS OF PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY	190
6.5.1 Constraints in terms of resources and authority at the school level	191
6.5.2 Lack of moral and material support to children's learning by parents and the community	196
6.5.3 Vulnerable positions of teachers in the community	201
6.6 ARRANGING PRIVATE TUITION AND/OR CHOOSING AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL	202
6.6.1 Arranging paid private tuition	202
6.6.2 Choosing an alternative school	204
6.7 CONCLUSION	207

Chapter 7 CASE STUDY AT THE MICRO LEVEL [2] – COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	211
7.1 INTRODUCTION	211
7.2 CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOOL RESOURCES	212
7.2.1 Types of contribution	212
7.2.2 Attending PCSC meetings	212
7.2.3 Decision-making on the mode and scope of contribution	214
7.2.4 Managing community contribution	216
7.2.5 Factors affecting non-compliance	219
7.2.6 The enforcement of sanctions for non-compliance and consideration for the needs of the poor	226
7.3 DEVELOPMENT OF A LOCALISED CURRICULUM	228
7.4 PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT	233

7.4.1	Recruitment and remuneration of volunteer teachers	233
7.4.2	Control and oversight of the school grant and other awards provided by the government and donors.....	240
7.4.3	Monitoring and deliberating on the quality of education.....	248
7.5	SCHOOL CONSTRAINTS TO AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO THE DEMANDS AND CONCERNS OF PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.....	260
7.5.1	Constraints in terms of resources and authorities at the school level.....	261
7.5.2	Lack of Moral and Material Support of Children's Learning By Parents and the Community.....	265
7.6	ARRANGING PRIVATE TUITION AND/OR CHOOSING AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL.....	267
7.6.1	Arranging paid private tuition.....	267
7.6.2	Choosing an alternative school.....	268
7.7	CONCLUSION.....	271
 Chapter 8	 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AT THE MESO LEVEL:	
	THE DISTRICT EDUCATION BOARD	277
8.1	INTRODUCTION.....	277
8.2	SELECTION OF GOVERNANCE BODY MEMBERS AND THEIR REPRESENTATION.....	278
8.2.1	Selection of governance body members.....	278
8.2.2	Perceptions of the accountability relationship.....	283
8.2.3	Communication between governance body members, and ordinary parents and other members of the local community.....	283
8.3	FREQUENCY OF BOARD MEETINGS AND ATTENDANCE RATE.....	286

8.4	DELIBERATIONS AT BOARD MEETINGS	290
8.4.1	Local policy-making	292
8.4.2	Reviewing and approving the district AWPB	297
8.4.3	Monitoring the implementation of the AWPB and the performance of the management team	302
8.5	CONSTRAINTS FACED BY MANAGEMENT TEAM MEMBERS IN RESPONDING TO THE DEMANDS OF GOVERNANCE BODY MEMBERS	305
8.6	CONCLUSION	310
Chapter 9	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	313
9.1	INTRODUCTION	313
9.2	SUMMARY OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS	313
9.3	THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE THESIS	324
9.4	IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS FOR MACRO EDUCATION POLICY IN ZAMBIA	330
9.5	AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	337
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	339
Appendix 3-1	List of the Rules Head Teachers of Basic Schools Must Observe under Free Education Policy	353
Appendix 3-2	Composition of Governance Body of the District Education Board (DEB) (as defined in the Principles of Education Boards Governance and Management Manual	354
Appendix 3-3	Composition of the District Education Management Team (as Stipulated in Manual EBS 2005)	355

Appendix 3-4	PTA Participation in the Formulation of the AWPB Stipulated in the Guideline.....	356
Appendix 3-5	Steps in Developing A Localised Curriculum (as defined in the Guidelines for the Development of the Localised Curriculum in Zambia (CDC 2005).....	358
Appendix 4-1	Profiles of the three case study government basic schools and the three case study community schools.....	361
Appendix 5-1	List of Interviewees and their Reference Codes.....	365
Appendix 5-2	List of Observed Meetings.....	371
Appendix 5-3	Sample Interview Questions.....	372
Appendix 6-1	Community Resources Contributions at the Government Schools Under Study.....	389
Appendix 6-2	Composition of the PTA Executive in the Three Government Schools Under Study.....	390
Appendix 7-1	Community Resources Contribution at the Community Schools Under Study.....	392
Appendix 7-2	Composition of the PCSC Executive in the Three Community Schools Under Study	393

List of Tables

Table 2-1	Models of Education Accountability.....	25
Table 3-1	Net Enrolment (NER) for Grades 1–12 (2006).....	56
Table 3-2	The Number of Schools Classified as Basic by School Type (2006).....	75
Table 3-3	Enrolment in Basic Education (Grades 1–9) by Type of School (2006).....	75
Table 5-1	Summary of Profiles of Sample Schools.....	120
Table 5-2	Interview Samples.....	131
Table 5-3	Interviewee Reference Codes.....	139
Table 6-1	Receipt of the School Grant by the Three Government Schools under Study (as of March 2008).....	179
Table 6-2	PTR for Grades 1–7 at the Three Government Basic Schools under Study (2008).....	192
Table 7-1	Receipt of the School Grant by Each Community School under Study (as of March 2008)	244
Table 8-1	Profiles of Governance Body Members	282
Table 8-2	Receipt of Grants from Central Government (as of 31/12/07)	309

List of Figures

Figure 3-1	The Education Budget as a Percentage of Total Government Expenditure and GDP (1985–2004).....	55
Figure 3-2	Organisational Structure of the DEB within the MOE	68
Figure 5-1	Analytical Strategy.....	138

List of Boxes

Box 6-1	Discussion on the introduction of revised school fees for grades 8 and 9, and an increase in the PTA fund contribution for grades 1–7, at an extraordinary meeting of the PTA in Chulu on 12/10/07.....	151
Box 6-2	Debate between school management and parents on the status of the matching grant at the PTA annual general meeting in Mutande on 29/02/08.....	159
Box 6-3	Debate on the quality of education at an extraordinary meeting of the PTA in Chulu on 12/10/07.....	188
Box 7-1	The chairman's proposal to start making payments into the PCSC fund at a meeting in Pulofa on 11/02/08.....	215
Box 7-2	Excerpt from the deliberations at an extraordinary PCSC meeting concerning the attendance of a grade 5 teacher in Pulofa on 28/02/08...	256

List of Pictures

Picture 4-1	A classroom block with broken windows in Lukasi.....	93
Picture 4-2	A classroom in Lukasi without a hard floor.....	93
Picture 4-3	A classroom with broken desks and chairs in Mutande.....	95
Picture 4-4	A bamboo hut (classroom) built by the community in Fifugo.....	97
Picture 4-5	A class in operation in the classroom block under construction in Fifugo funded jointly by USAID, CARE and the MOE.....	97
Picture 4-6	A two-classroom block made of mud brick in Pulofa built by parents	

	and local community members.....	99
Picture 4-7	A two-classroom block under construction in Pulofa funded by CARE International	99
Picture 4-8	Grade 5 class in operation under a tree in Pulofa.....	100
Picture 4-9	A collapsed school building in Nkambe.....	102
Picture 4-10	A church building temporarily used as a classroom in Nkambe.....	102
Picture 4-11	Children wander around the school premises unsupervised at Nkambe...	102
Picture 6-1	Headteacher ‘sensitising’ parents at the PTA annual general meeting in Lukasi.....	155
Picture 6-2	Headteacher ‘sensitising’ parents at the PTA annual general meeting in Chulu.....	155
Picture 6-3	Teacher’s accommodation built by parents/community members in Lukasi that was left unfinished due to shortage of funds and labour.....	160
Picture 6-4	Regular reminders for payment of PTA subscription and school fees conducted by the head teacher and accountant in Lukasi.....	168
Picture 6-5	Pupils in new uniform (light blue) and old uniform (green) found in the same classroom in Chulu.....	168
Picture 6-6	Children of lower grades carrying water for brick making after their morning classes.....	170
Picture 6-7	Recently deployed female teachers squatting together in one of the classrooms due to the shortage of teacher’s accommodation in Lukasi	195
Picture 7-1	An annual general PCSC meeting under a thatched roof in Pulofa.....	216
Picture 7-2	An Extraordinary PCSC meeting concerning the attendance of a grade 5 teacher in Pulofa (28/02/08).....	256
Picture 7-3	Paid private tuition for grade 7 pupils offered by a volunteer	

	teacher in Fifugo	268
Picture 8-1	Management team members (top table) and governance body members taking notes while the minutes of the previous meetings are read out	291

List of Acronyms

AWPB	Annual Work Plan and Budget
BESSIP	Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Programme
BETUZ	Basic Education Teacher's Union of Zambia
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CHANGES	Community Health and Nutrition, Gender and Education Support Program
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DBO	District Building Officer
DDCC	District Development Cooperation Committee
DEB	District Education Board
DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
DEO	District Education Office(r)
DESO	District Education Standard Officer
DHB	District Health Board
DPO	District Planning Officer
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRCC	District Resource Centre Coordinator
EBS	Education Board Services
EDUCO	Educación con Participación de la Comunidad
EFA	Education for All
EIU	Economic Intelligent Unit

EMIS	Education Management Information System
EoF	Educating Our Future
EU	European Union
FNDP	Fifth National Development Plan
FPP	Focal Point Person
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
GNP	Gross National Product
GRZ	Government of Zambia
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HQ	Headquarters
HRO	Human Resource Officer
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
JASZ	Joint Assistance Strategy for Zambia
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LSC	Local School Council
MLGH	Ministry of Local Government and Housing
MMD	Movement for Multiparty Democracy
MOCDSW	Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOERDC	Ministry of Education, Restructuring and Decentralisation Committee
MOESP	Ministry of Education Strategic Plan
MOFNP	Ministry of Finance and National Planning
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding

MP	Member of Parliament
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PAGE	Programme for the Advancement of Girls' Education
PCSC	Parent Community School Committee
PEO	Provincial Education Office(r)
PS	Permanent Secretary
PSRP	Public Service Reform Programme
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
QUESTT	Quality Education Services Through Technology
SGB	School Governing Body
SMC	School Management Committee
SPARK	Skills, Participation, and Access to Relevant Knowledge
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TEVET	Technical Education and Vocational Training
TSC	Teacher Service Commission
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIP	United National Independence Party
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VVOB	Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance
ZCSS	Zambia Community Schools Secretariat

ZOCS	Zambia Open Community Schools
ZMK	Zambian Kwacha
ZNUT	Zambia National Union of Teachers

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIM OF THE STUDY

The primary aim of this study is to explore how parents and local communities participate in the decentralised system of basic education in a rural district of Zambia; and how the perspectives and reactions of local actors match or diverge from central policy intentions and assumptions. This central question is divided into three main sub-questions: (1) What are the policy expectations and assumptions regarding community participation in basic education¹ in Zambia? (2) What factors influence the way parents and local communities participate in the decentralised education system in practice? (3) What is the influence of such parental and community participation on the accountability of decentralised education institutions?

The investigation is facilitated by drawing on the perspectives of different stakeholders at the macro, meso and micro levels. Particular attention will be paid to understanding the 'processes' of community participation in the decentralised education system in a given context, through an exploration of the perspectives of the people under study in terms of their experiences of participation. These include local community members, that is, parents, guardians, inhabitants of surrounding villages and community representatives of the District Education Board (DEB); as well as other key local actors, namely district education officials and teachers, who are also central to decentralised education governance.

¹ The concept of 'basic education' came to the fore following the adoption of the World Declaration of Education for All (EFA) (UNESCO 1990), in which the importance of meeting 'basic learning needs' is stressed. The 'Framework of Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs' adopted by the World Conference on EFA suggests that each country should identify its own local needs and develop national plans of action needed to meet those learning needs as defined as basic (UNESCO 1990). This thesis adopts the **the** **Zambian** government's definition of basic education in the formal education sector, which refers to 9 years of formal education (MOE 1996a). The details of the basic education system in Zambia will be presented in chapter 3.

In so doing, this study seeks to understand how decentralisation and community participation policies with regard to the governance of basic education are being unfolded in practice. The findings will illuminate the complexity of community participation in education in reality, and will provide some useful insights into both theoretical debate as well as the on-going educational reform process in the country, which continuously places strong emphasis on community participation.

Concerns with the complex nature of policy and the practice of community participation in education are partly driven by my own experience of having been involved in numerous consultation meetings between donors and the Zambian Ministry of Education (MOE) between 1999 and 2002, when I lived and worked in Zambia as an advisor to the Japanese Embassy, overseeing Japanese aid to the education sector. I observed that community participation and decentralisation were generally promoted as a 'good thing' by the different policy stakeholders – multilateral and bilateral donors, MOE officials, and civil society representatives – who often disagreed over other issues. This experience prompted me to critically examine local actors' interpretations and reactions to such policy prioritisation.

1.2 RATIONALE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research Rationale

Decentralisation and community participation in education service delivery and governance have become 'fashionable' ideas. Proponents argue that decentralising certain functions and bringing them closer to the point of delivery, while promoting community participation in key

decision-making will make the resulting decentralised education institutions more responsive to the needs of parents and the community. Thus, they will become more accountable to the society they serve (for example, Ranson and Martin et al. 1999; World Bank 2003). Such policy emphasis partly derives from the view that the centralised, top-down, standardised education system is incapable of offering a service that is responsive to the diverse needs of the community.

However, the terms 'community', 'participation' and 'decentralisation' not only lack consensual definitions but are also highly contentious concepts.

'Community participation' is often talked about as an automatic product of education decentralisation. Yet, although such a process involves the transference of control, this does not necessarily lead to the participation of the community. For example, the locus of education could merely be shifted from the centre to regional/local education authorities and schools without delegating any power to parents or the wider community. In recent years, however, the monopoly of professional education policy-makers has been under attack, national and international advocacy for decentralisation reform stressing the participation of non-professionals (see chapter 2).

Among such discourses, two dominant forms of decentralisation have emerged that entail fundamentally different forms of laypeople's participation in education. The first is the neo-liberal alternative, which envisages participation as essentially the ability of individual parents to choose a school for their children as consumers in the education market. The other model regards participation as a political right, expecting parents as a group – or even as members of the wider local community – to become collectively empowered to participate in key decision-making processes concerning their education institutions.

As such, the meaning of participation is diverse and one needs to understand the type of participation that is envisaged for the policy in question. This is related to the question concerning which stakeholder(s) the locus of control in education is decentralised to (McLean and Lauglo 1985; McGinn and Welsh 1999; Suzuki 2004). As Suzuki notes, this is fundamentally a question about the role of the state and its citizens (Suzuki 2004).

At a practical level, the existing detailed studies of community participation in education in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) frequently argue that there is a significant gap between policy rhetoric and actual processes and outcomes (for example, Rose 2003; Suzuki 2002, 2004; Sayed and Soudien 2005; Sasaoka and Nishimura 2010). Moreover, the generally held image of 'community' as a homogeneous group with common interests has been widely challenged (for example, Bray 2003a; Sayed 2002; Suzuki 2002, 2004; Rose 2003; Sayed and Soudien 2005).

Furthermore, some studies question the assumption that the community is able and willing to participate effectively, particularly in the context of economically disadvantaged areas (Watt 2001; Pryor 2005; Adam 2005; Essuman 2010). In a similar vein, others argue that community participation in education at the grassroots amounts to little more than the extraction of resources. Thus, the financial burden of schooling is placed on those least able to afford it due to the constraints of a public sector that is nevertheless attempting to achieve universal education within a given time limit (Rose 2003).² However, decentralisation and

² To achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2000 has become one of the international targets proposed at the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. In 2000, ten years later, the international community met again at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, and adopted the Dakar Framework for Action which reaffirmed their commitment to achieving UPE by the year 2015. UPE has also become the second United Nations Millennium Development Goal (MDG).

community participation continue to attract national and international policy-makers' attention rather than being rejected out of hand.

Privatisation is also often described as an organisational form of decentralisation, as it too involves the redistribution of authority and responsibility from the public to the private or non-government sector (Bray 2003*b*; Rose 2005). As Rose (2005) suggests, non-government provision may embrace a variety of schools, including those that are run by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), faith-based organisations and communities. This paper focuses on schools run by communities themselves alongside government schools, the share of such community schools in the provision of basic education in Zambia having grown considerably in recent years.

Whether community schools receive state resources or not, they often expect greater participation from society in their operation than is the case with government schools, including areas in which the state has traditionally played a prominent role (Cuéllar-Marchelli 2003). For example, community-managed schools – known as EDUCO (*Educacion con Participacion de la Comunidad*) – in El Salvador are well-known for their high level of parental and community participation in school management, including the local recruitment of teachers and the introduction of locally contextualised curricula in some cases. Furthermore, in their study of the same country, Jimenez and Sawada (1999) argue that the greater delegation of power to parents over the hiring and firing of teachers increases their accountability towards parents through the close monitoring and discipline of the latter (Jimenez and Sawada 1999; Sawada 2000).

The growing interest in and the actual proliferation of community schools in SSA notwithstanding, little detailed research into community participation in such schools in the

region is available. Moreover, research there calls into question the replicability of the community school approach in different contexts and indicates that the 'communities' in community schools are equally heterogeneous and extremely hierarchical, being just as susceptible to local elite capture as government schools (Rose 2006). In addition, given that community schools in SSA are often located in the more remote and economically disadvantaged areas where there are no government schools accessible or affordable to most people, the ability of the community to mobilise enough resources to run a school may not be guaranteed in the context of the absence of adequate state support.

Therefore, whether transferring more decision-making authority and responsibility to the local community offers a higher level of participation and subsequent accountability to parents and members of the community is essentially a matter of empirical examination in the specific micro and macro contexts in which such reform has been implemented. There is thus a pressing need to enrich the knowledge base of community participation in specific political, economic, geographical and cultural contexts.

Zambia presents a particularly interesting case because active community participation in education governance is promoted both in government basic schools and community schools, as well as at the district education authority level through the work of the DEB. Accordingly, the focus of such participation is on multiple levels (district, government schools and community schools) that are complexly interrelated, which has to a certain extent been neglected in previous research. Building on recent studies of participation and accountability in government primary schools in Uganda (Suzuki 2002, 2004), this thesis illustrates how policy prescriptions and assertions have led to the actual experiences of key local actors and produced many unintended outcomes. The existing literature in general points out the power imbalance between teachers and the lay community (Suzuki 2002, 2004; Rose 2003). Thus,

while paying attention to the issue of power at the micro level, the thesis also addresses the perceptions of teachers and district education officials in terms of their ability to respond to the demands of parents and wider community members in the current reform context.

Research Questions

As discussed above, there is an urgent need for a detailed study exploring how the policy emphasis on active community participation, both in government basic schools and community schools, as well as at the district education authority level, is being practiced in Zambia. Given that a significant gap between policy rhetoric, and actual processes and effects of this reform has been reported by several researchers, it is essential to examine how the policy intention of increased accountability through such reform is being realised.

Many researchers have pointed to the need for a better understanding of community participation in education in any given local context (e.g. Chapman et al. 2002; Rose 2003; Suzuki 2004; Pryor 2005; Sayed and Soudien 2005; De Grauwe et al. 2007; UNESCO 2008). Therefore, the emphasis is placed on understanding 'processes' of community participation in the decentralised education system in a particular context through an exploration of the perspectives of those who are being studied.

Taking into consideration these points identified by the literature review, the following questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the policy expectations and assumptions regarding community participation in basic education in Zambia?
2. How do parents and the wider community participate in the affairs of government basic

schools³ in practice; and how does this influence school accountability to parents and the community?

3. How do parents and the wider community participate in the affairs of community schools in practice; and how does this influence school accountability to parents and the community?
4. How does the community participate in district education governance in practice; and how does this influence the accountability of the District Education Board (DEB) to parents and the community?
5. What are the implications of micro (school and school community) and meso (district) level findings for macro level policies?

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The thesis is organised as follows. Chapter 2 considers the concepts of decentralisation, participation and accountability in education. Utilising Suzuki's (2002, 2004) study as a starting point, a review of the existing literature reveals a diversity of meanings attached to these mutually related concepts, which ultimately rests on differing ideologies concerning the role of the state and its citizens. The chapter then goes on to discuss various factors that influence actual participation in education development in practice, drawing on the existing literature on both government and community schools. It particularly draws together controversies surrounding the concept of community, showing that it is too fluid a term to constitute a solid basis for collective action in education development. In addition, it

³ In the present Zambian education system, the term 'basic school' refers to nine years of formal schooling, incorporating what were formerly known as primary school (grades 1–7) and junior secondary school (grades 8–9). Further details of the current education system will be discussed in chapter 3.

discusses the need to address the autonomy, capacity and resources of teachers and local education officials in responding to the demands of parents and the community. Finally, the chapter elucidates the conceptual framework of this study by offering some sociological perspectives as a means of understanding the complex process of participation in education development in a given context.

Chapter 3 examines the historical context within which decentralisation and community participation policies have been developed in Zambia, and analyses the expectations and assumptions of such macro-level strategies through a reading of policy documents as well as interviews with key officials involved. First, it provides an overview of the political economy of Zambia. It then narrates the historical development of decentralisation and liberalisation policies, as well as community participation in education. Such development at the policy level is particularly closely analysed with regard to the roles of the newly established DEBs, parent teacher associations (PTAs) in government basic schools, and parent community school committees (PCSCs) in community schools. Finally, the underlying assumptions and expectations of macro-level policies for the promotion of community participation are examined.

Chapter 4 briefly describes the case study district and schools, which are important contexts in terms of the implementation of policy that shapes the way various local actors respond.

Chapter 5 discusses research methodology and methods. First, the epistemological and ontological position of the thesis is clarified and the research strategy discussed. The choice of a qualitative approach is explained in terms of a necessity to understand the subjective realities of the various local actors under study. Third, the issue of researcher identity is discussed. Fourth, the research method is selected and a multi-level case study presented.

Fourth, the issues of language and the employment of a translator are addressed; and data collection details and analysis methods are described. Fifth, objectivity, validity and reliability in qualitative research are then discussed. Finally, the relevant ethical issues and research limitations are delineated.

Chapters 6 to 8 present an analysis of the study's field data at both district and school levels. Paying particular attention to local contextual realities, these chapters specifically investigate how parents and members of the community participate in the operation of government basic schools, community schools and DEB in practice, and how this influences the accountability of these institutions. Chapter 6 analyses community participation in government basic schools. Chapter 7 analyses community participation in community schools. It reveals interesting relations between government schools and community schools that have been occasioned by decentralisation reform. Chapter 8 analyses community participation in district education governance through the work of the DEB. It also examines how community participation at the district level is related to or not related to community participation at the school level, in government schools and community schools respectively.

Chapter 9 draws some conclusions. First, the findings from the Zambian case study are summarised and their theoretical inferences discussed. The chapter then addresses the study's implications for ongoing policy reform in Zambia. Finally, areas for future research are identified.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW: DECENTRALISATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter scrutinises the three mutually related concepts of decentralisation, accountability and participation, which are crucial to the understanding of the processes involved in community participation in education. First, it examines the discourse on decentralisation in general. This is followed by a rigorous analysis of the theories of decentralisation in education and the related concept of accountability. It demonstrates that different forms of education decentralisation stimulated by different ideological motives have various implications for the types of participation and accountability relations that emerge. It then discusses the theories and practices of participation, drawing together controversies surrounding the concept of community and examining the various theoretical assumptions concerning community participation in education. The final section introduces the conceptual framework of this study, which has been utilised for the analysis of policy and the practice of community participation in education incorporating both micro and macro contexts of reform.

2.2 DECENTRALISATION OF SERVICE DELIVERY IN GENERAL

2.2.1 DEFINING DECENTRALISATION

Although the term ‘decentralisation’ has been used differently by various writers, most authors agree that decentralisation involves “a transfer of authority to perform some service to the public from an individual or an agency in central government to some other individual

or agency which is ‘closer’ to the public to be served” (Turner and Hulme 1997: 152, emphasis in original).

Nevertheless, the various forms of decentralisation have been defined accordingly. Rondinelli (1983) identifies four major types of decentralisation in terms of the degree of responsibility for and discretion in decision-making that is transferred from the central government. *Deconcentration* involves the transfer of functions within the central government hierarchy through the shifting of workload from central ministries to field offices; *delegation* involves the transfer of functions to regional authorities or parastatal organisations that often operate relatively free of central government regulations; *devolution* involves the transfer of decision-making authority to legally incorporated local governments; and, finally, *transfer to non-government institutions* involves shifting responsibilities for activities from the public sector to private or quasi-public organisations (ibid: 189).

However, Rondinelli’s categorisation of decentralisation does not refer to functionally based delegation. Litvack et al. (1998), and Litvack and Seddon (eds. 1999) offer three main types of decentralisation – administrative, political and fiscal – to underpin the above-mentioned shift in responsibility between different levels of government. *Administrative decentralisation* thus entails transferring responsibility for planning, financing, and managing public functions from central government offices to other units. *Political decentralisation* involves the establishment of local or regional units of government in order to give citizens and their elected representatives more power in public decision-making. *Fiscal decentralisation* requires the transference of authority over financial resources allocation (revenue and expenditure) to lower levels of government and/or the private sector (Litvack and Seddon, eds. op. cit.: 2–3).

However, in reality, most countries are rarely either wholly centralised or decentralised. Although decentralisation is often treated as a somewhat dichotomous phenomenon (Smoke 2003), Turner and Hulme (1997) note that the challenge is to find a harmonious balance between the two forms of government.

2.2.2 THE RATIONALE FOR DECENTRALISATION

Many diverse and frequently opposing rationales have been put forward to justify decentralisation reform. These include improved efficiency and quality of service delivery; reduction of central government expenditure; enhanced democracy and participation; and greater responsiveness and accountability of local authorities. The two most notable ideologies behind the drive for decentralisation in recent decades are neo-liberalism and participatory democracy. These two camps diverge hugely in terms of their views on the relationship between the state and the citizen, which I will discuss in the next section.

2.2.2.1 DECENTRALISATION DRIVEN BY NEO-LIBERAL IDEOLOGY

In the 1980s, there was much criticism of the interventionist state for inefficiency, and neo-liberal thinking thus came to dominate (Mohan and Stokke 2000). Such ideology advocates privatisation and decentralisation, claiming that, “the unfettered market will deliver efficient and equitable results” (ibid: 20). In line with this thinking, public choice theorists see decentralisation as an option that offers something resembling a free market – bringing together ‘buyers’ (citizens) and ‘sellers’ (decentralised authorities) in a setting in which the diverse wishes and preferences of the former can engage effectively and efficiently with the

latter (Oates 1972; Rondinelli et al. 1989; Litvack et al. 1998). In this model, people are predominantly seen as consumers whose needs are better served by private corporations and decentralised governments. The state's role is accordingly reduced to that of facilitating political, economic and community institutions conducive to the operation of free-market capitalism (Wade 1990).

2.2.2.2 DECENTRALISATION DRIVEN BY DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Decentralisation is also proposed as a means of facilitating both democratisation as an end in itself and development as a result of it. Proponents argue that since democratic decentralisation enhances mass participation at the local level, greater transparency, accountability, responsiveness and efficiency, as well as greater equity will be achieved (Crook and Manor 1998; Crook 2003).

Unlike the neo-liberal perspective, this model views the citizen as a bearer of civil, political and social rights, emphasising the social responsibilities of citizenship in striving for collective well-being rather than the individual's narrow self-interest (Canel 2001).

2.2.3 QUESTIONS ARISING ABOUT THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF DECENTRALISATION

The positive effects of decentralisation are nevertheless questioned and debated by many critics, and some studies suggest that there is no automatic linkage between decentralisation reform and improved service delivery, and the much desired goal of accountability (Conyers

2007).

The theoretical assumption that local authorities have sufficient autonomous decision-making power, and the necessary technical, financial, human and even social resources to carry out their new responsibilities have frequently been challenged (Turner and Hulme 1997; Saito 2003). Partly for this reason, it is also argued that decentralisation may lead to greater regional inequality and underdeveloped areas; and poor people may even become relatively less well off, as enormously different resource bases often exist between the richer and poorer areas of developing countries (Prud'homme 1995; Turner and Hulme 1997; Crook 2003).

Furthermore, some critics argue that civil society is not homogeneous and the degree of individual and collective power in influencing decision-making as well as choosing decentralised services at the local level is often highly unequal (Turner and Hulme 1997; Conyers 2007). After all, decentralisation is essentially about politics and “the distribution of power and resources, both among different levels and territorial areas of the state and among different interests in their relationship with ruling elites” (Crook and Sverrisson 2003: 234—235).

These critical views suggest that decentralisation is context-specific. That is to say, it is the pre-existing wider social, cultural and political contexts in which reform operates that ultimately determine accountability relationships (Smoke 2003). Thus, taking local specificities into account is crucial for effective institutional design.

2.3 DECENTRALISATION IN EDUCATION

2.3.1 FORMS OF DECENTRALISATION IN EDUCATION

As observed earlier, the extensive debate over decentralisation reform has “clear implications for decentralization in education” (Dyer and Rose 2005: 105) as an effective strategy for the improvement of education service delivery (UNESCO 2008).

Just like decentralisation in general, the several forms of education decentralisation have been ascribed various definitions by different commentators. Bray (2003*b*) distinguishes between the *functional* and *territorial* dimensions of education decentralisation, suggesting that functional decentralisation includes an education ministry divided into more specialised units, as well as the loosening of government control over schools operated by voluntary agencies. On the other hand, territorial decentralisation refers to the redistribution of control between the different geographical tiers of government, such as state, provincial, district and school (ibid). Bray further divides territorial decentralisation into three major subcategories according to the degree of transfer of authority: *deconcentration*, *delegation*, and *devolution* (ibid: 205–6). Recently, some authors have also included *privatisation* as another form of education decentralisation, as it implies the transfer of authority and power over the school from the state to private or non-governmental bodies, including the ‘community’ (op. cit.).

Education decentralisation typically involves the delegation of decision-making with regard to certain types of process only (Hurst 1985). Centralisation and decentralisation are not necessarily dichotomous concepts, but it is rather that the central authority often retains power over and responsibility for certain types of decision that are considered matters of national interest (Hurst 1985; McLean and Lauglo 1985; Davies 1990). Thus, it is vital to

ascertain which aspects of education (e.g. financing; teacher training and supply; payment of salaries; curriculum and language of instruction; textbooks; and method of instruction) are to be decentralised, and what other aspects of education decision-making authority are retained by central government, and the justification that is offered in each case (McLean and Lauglo 1985; Davies 1990; Dyer and Rose 2005).

As many commentators have noted, the different forms of education decentralisation should not only be seen in terms of administrative categories but also as systems that entail fundamentally different ideologies about where the locus of education control lies (McLean and Lauglo 1985; McGinn and Street 1986; McGinn and Welsh 1999; Lauglo 1995). Thus, different kinds of education decentralisation offer various roles to different stakeholders, for example, the Ministry of Education (MOE); Ministry of Local Government; MOE officials at the local level; local government; teachers; parents; and wider members of the community, depending on the authority that is conferred and to what degree (McLean and Lauglo 1985; McGinn and Welsh 1999; Suzuki 2002). Moreover, each form of decentralisation envisages a different sort of participation, which I will discuss in detail in the next section.

2.3.2 THREE TYPES OF EDUCATION DECENTRALISATION BASED ON DIFFERING IDEOLOGIES

In this section, I discuss three types of education decentralisation that are driven by various ideologies stressing different loci of control, which envisage different participation and accountability mechanisms accordingly. I do so with reference to a typology developed by McGinn and Welsh (1999) that incorporates education decentralisation driven by *professional expertise*, *market efficiency* and *political legitimacy*. It should be noted, however,

that these perspectives are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and policy reform in reality rarely driven by rationale alone (Lauglo 1995; Sayed 2002).

2.3.2.1 EDUCATION DECENTRALISATION STIMULATED BY PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE

The type of decentralisation stimulated by the *professional expertise* model regards regional/local education authorities and schools as those best qualified to manage education. Although international discourse on education decentralisation often assumes that it automatically leads to greater community participation, within this model, decentralisation does not necessarily involve parental or community participation. Accordingly, the accountability trajectory of decentralised education institutions adhering to this model is most commonly upwards or sideways within the public education professional hierarchy. In recent years, however, such control and professional monopolisation of education decision-making has been under attack (e.g. Gittell 1967; Guthrie 1986; King et al.1998). This has resulted in national and international advocacy for decentralisation reform based on market efficiency and/or political legitimacy.

2.3.2.2 EDUCATION DECENTRALISATION BASED ON MARKET EFFICIENCY

Education decentralisation based on market efficiency envisages that market forces will allow parents to choose the schools that satisfy their desires and different needs according to the services professionals or the central authority are unable to offer. It generally advocates the marketisation and deregulation of the education system, and encourages the creation of

a greater variety of choice between different schools through allowing both profit and non-profit making private providers to offer education services (e.g. Chubb and Moe 1988; World Bank 2003; Salisbury and Tooley (eds. 2005); Patrinos and LaRocque 2007).

Neo-liberals generally claim that the marketisation and deregulation of education will result in innovation, improvement in the quality of education, and greater efficiency in the use of resources. It is also argued that the accountability of schools and teachers to the parents of pupils will be enhanced, and bad schools will be eliminated as a competitive market allows people to 'vote with their feet' (World Bank 2003; Patrinos and LaRocque 2007). Such behaviour is termed 'exit' by Hirshman (1970), arguing that customers who are dissatisfied with the declining quality of a school will 'exit' from their relationship with that one and switch to another alternative in the marketplace.

The extent of participation envisaged in this discourse is essentially in terms of the ability of individual parents to choose a school for their child as consumers in the education market. However, as McGinn and Welsh (1999) suggest, the marketisation of education is not necessarily synonymous with privatisation. In fact, the proponents of marketisation argue that even in the public school system, choice can be created through a voucher given to parents equivalent to annual government expenditure on education per child, allowing them to choose amongst a variety of education service providers (Cohn 1997, cited in McGinn and Welsh 1999: 45; Patrinos and LaRocque 2007). Moreover, it has also been posited that funding for schools on a per capita basis requires them to attempt to maximise their enrolment, since schools that do not attract pupils are penalised in a direct fashion by the withdrawal of financial and staffing resources (Whitty et al. 1998).

It is now clear that such a proposal envisages the devolution of authority to education

institutions with the simultaneous retreat of the state, a role reversal that involves the issue of education financing. Neo-liberals maintain that education provision is largely the responsibility of the individual and family, thus making the role of the state remarkably ambiguous (ibid: 47).

Despite such rhetoric about the 'rolling back' of the state, certain aspects of its power are often maintained and indeed even strengthened under such reform policies through the development of performance indicators reinforced with external assessment and inspection. For example, the state has increased its control from a distance in Britain by means of setting up a national curriculum and associated system of testing (ibid 1998). Similarly, Lo (2010) reports that emphasis on school autonomy notwithstanding, in Hong Kong and Singapore the central state retains a strong role in steering the education sector through the establishment of quality assurance mechanisms.

The hypotheses underpinning reform are, however, largely untested (McGinn and Welsh 1999). The argument for market-oriented reform is based on the rationale that all parents are able to freely choose those schools that in their judgment are the best for their children, while the schools have the incentive to respond to market signals by making improvements in the quality of education. Yet, there is compelling evidence in the literature that variations in the geographical, socio-economic and cultural endowments of households influence the degree of parental choice of school differently, as well as access to the information on which judgement is based (e.g. Johnson 1990; Whitty et al. 1998; McGinn and Welsh 1999; Härmä 2009). Moreover, the hypothesis that market competition will eliminate bad schools is questionable, given that no direct or indirect market signals conventionally influence the operations of state schools, as they do not go bankrupt even if they fail to attract what might otherwise be regarded as sufficient pupils (Bartlett and Le Grand 1993).

2.3.2.3 EDUCATION DECENTRALISATION STIMULATED BY POLITICAL LEGITIMACY

Since the 1990s, “strong arguments in favour of education decentralisation have also emerged from a political/governance perspective” (Dyer and Rose 2005: 106–7), which regards decentralisation and local accountability not merely as a means but an end in itself. Those who advocate decentralisation from a political legitimacy perspective believe that education governance is legitimised by political right – all the participants in education institutions “should have equal right to take part in decisions affecting the work of the institution” (Lauglo 1995: 14).

Sayed (2002) suggests that political legitimacy in education can be achieved in two distinct ways. The first is through ‘representative democracy’, which involves elections where people engage through voting while those who are elected cooperate with the authorities to implement the desired policy change. The second is through ‘participatory democracy’, where people are able to make decisions about their lives at the grassroots level (ibid: 38). Decentralisation based on political legitimacy usually refers to the latter. Proponents of this type of reform argue that giving autonomy to local education institutions while encouraging parents and community members to participate in various aspects of education governance can make schools and local authorities accountable for education delivery; and, at the same time, promotes the development of the kind of education that reflects their interests and preferences (Ranson and Martin et al. 1999; Gershberg and Winkler 2004; World Bank 2003; Barrera-Osorio et al. 2009; Bruns et al. 2011).

In this model, the final decision rests with laypeople rather than education professionals. Thus, in the words of Lo (2010: 73), “the locus of control is the community rather than the school.” Furthermore, in contrast to decentralisation motivated by market efficiency, it expects parents as a group, or even as members of the wider local community, to be collectively empowered to participate in key decision-making concerning their education institutions. Employing a theory from organisational analysis, Hirschman (1970) calls this type of behaviour the ‘voice’ by which parents can politically express their dissatisfaction with the school.

In this discourse, central political authority and professional expertise are constrained by more locally focused forms of participation, including loss of power to determine the school curriculum and lay involvement in school inspections (Sayed 2002; Farrell and Jones 2000). However, Weiler (1990) argues that the central state paradoxically gains added legitimacy by appearing to be sensitive to local democracy and local needs while shifting the sources of conflict from the centre to the local level.

The emphasis on community participation in a decentralised education system was also supported by the neo-liberal camp in the 1990s, which, in its recognition of market failure, made some limited reassessment of the role of the state as a mediator of market mechanisms. It has also been claimed that community participation improves efficiency and effectiveness, as it holds the service provider – the school, local government or regional government – accountable for outcomes (World Bank 2003; Gershberg and Winkler 2004). However, much of the efficacy of this approach depends on many underlying assumptions, including the homogeneity of the ‘community’, as will be discussed in detail in section 2.5.3.

It is worth pointing out that education decentralisation reform driven by political legitimacy often co-exists with that oriented towards market efficiency. However, several commentators point out that these two types of reform are somewhat at odds with each other (Whitty et al. 1998; Farrell and Jones 2000; Rose 2002; Sayed 2002; Suzuki 2004; Sayed and Soudien 2005). For example, it has been argued that articulating decentralisation with freedom of choice favours individual rights and therefore plays down collective responsibility, and working towards shared interests and the common good (Sayed 2002; Suzuki 2004; Sayed and Soudien 2005).

2.4 THE CONCEPT OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN RELATION TO EDUCATION DECENTRALISATION

‘Accountability’ has become a buzzword in international development debate and in education governance in particular. Yet, it is a rather fluid concept, sometimes being used synonymously with the terms ‘responsibility’ and ‘public audit’.

Stewart (1984) distinguishes two senses of accountability: (i) an element of an account, and (ii) holding to account; the former merely concerned with explaining or justifying what has been done (an account of an action), while the latter incorporates the additional dimensions of evaluation and consequence that are combined with such information. Stewart (1984) notes that ‘holding to account’ means that the answer or the account is not only given but is also to be evaluated by another party after which approval or blame is assigned, which can result in reward or penalty respectively. Kogan (1986) further extends Stewart’s argument, maintaining that the notion of accountability singularly implies ‘a condition...which individual role holders are liable to review and the application of sanctions if their actions fail to satisfy

those with whom they are in an accountability relationship” (ibid: 25).

In these definitions, accountability is essentially a political process in which the capacity for the exercise of power is required. Given that if one who is expected to be accountable is not delegated the authority to take action he or she cannot be held accountable, an accountability relationship necessarily involves the delegation of power and authority to those who are expected to be accountable (Heim 1995). In addition, Dimmock (1982) points out that evaluation such as teaching performance includes complex micro-political dimensions (the issue of micro politics will be addressed in detail in section 2.5.3).

Therefore, the limited definition of accountability described above can be distinguished from responsibility, which an institution may owe or feel it owes to those it affects, but where those affected do not directly exercise authority over it (Pateman 1977: 1). In this sense, what is referred to as ‘moral accountability’ by East Sussex Accountability Project (1979), wherein teachers feel a moral obligation to pupils and parents, is not included in the limited notion of accountability because it lacks the element of the exercise of power (Suzuki 2004).

The accountability model proposed by Stewart and Kogan contains three elements of the accountability question: ‘who is responsible for what and to whom?’ The focus of accountability (‘for what?’) may be on process or outcome. The controlling party or recipient of accountability (‘to whom?’) may be internal or external to the provider (‘who is responsible?’).

Several models of accountability in education have been developed in the literature that specify who is accountable, to whom and for what. Farrell and Law (1999), drawing on Elliot et al. (1981), Kogan (1986), Ranson (1986), and Day and Klein (1987), offer four mutually

distinguishable models of accountability in education: (i) *professional*, (ii) *hierarchical*, (iii) *market* and (iv) *public*. Of these, parents are most likely to be involved in market and public forms of accountability. Since this framework seems useful to my argument in this thesis, it is presented below.

Table 2-1 Models of Education Accountability

	Professional	Hierarchical	Market	Public
Who is accountable	Professionals	Professionals and politicians	Schools/governing bodies	Professionals and politicians
To whom	Professionals	Education hierarchy	Consumer	Citizens and community
For what	Process	Process and outputs	Outputs	Process and outputs
Mechanism of evaluation	Self-evaluation and professional advisors	Contract of employment and democratic process	Examination of results and truancy rates	Learning contracts and democratic process

Source: Farrell and Law (1999).

The “professional accountability” approach emphasises accountability in the process of education rather than in the results. This is generally secured through accounting to other professionals through such mechanisms as self-evaluation and inspection. The emphasis in the professional model is on accountability 'sideways' to other professionals rather than to parents and the wider community, and provides a high level of professional autonomy (Farrell and Law 1999). In the hierarchical model, accountability is exercised through a contractual relationship with the state and, ultimately, the public through its elected representatives (Farrell and Law 1999). In this sense, this type of education system is largely synonymous with what Sayed (2002: 38) terms ‘representative democracy’ (as mentioned earlier in section 2.3.2.3).

The “market accountability” approach stresses accountability for outcomes such as examination results to consumers, normally parents who choose their product (the school) in

the marketplace (Taylor 1996; Farrell and Law 1999). This model corresponds with the type of decentralisation stimulated by market efficiency noted earlier, accountability being exercised in consumer prerogative to switch to an alternative if 'product' quality proves to be unsatisfactory (Hirshman 1970).

The final model is "public accountability". This method of accounting stresses the role of parents and the wider community in determining the purpose and processes of schooling through democratic deliberation (Ranson 1986), and corresponds with the type of decentralisation stimulated by political legitimacy mentioned in the previous section. The emphasis is on the citizenry rather than individual consumers; as well as mutual accountability and partnership between politicians, professionals, parents and the community in working towards the well-being of the whole school and all the children in it, and not just the individual welfare of one's own children (Ranson, 1986, 2003; Sallis, 1988; O'Conner 1994).

As is evident by now, the accountability relationship anticipated in each of the above models is supported by very different arguments for the justification of the use of delegated authority. In reality, a delegated authority is typically engaged in multiple accountability relationships, which may cause tension (Farrell and Law 1999). Moreover, even when one model is dominant by design through legislation, those who are involved in implementing policies may perceive their accountability relationships differently, which often leads to the unintended outcomes of policy reform (ibid). Thus, an examination of the perceptions of those involved in reform is essential in our analysis of the practice of education decentralisation and accountability realignment.

2.5 PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY – THEORY AND PRACTICE

2.5.1 DEFINING AND CLASSIFYING PARTICIPATION

The above literature review suggests that different forms of education decentralisation often envisage different participatory mechanisms (see section 2.3.2).⁴ In this section, I will attempt to unpack in more detail the meanings of and motivations for participation in education that prevail among the different commentators.

(i) Motives Behind the Promotion of Participation: Instrumental or Intrinsic?

In terms of motivation, some commentators hold an instrumental view of participation as a means of achieving efficiency (e.g. Ostrom et al. 1993; Isham et al. 1995), while others view it as both a means and an end in itself – a way of building people’s capacity, increasing their self-esteem, and allowing users direct control over decision-making rather than being obliged to simply follow externally imposed pronouncements (e.g. Chambers 1983, 1995; Paul 1987; Cornwall and Gaventa 2001).⁵ Such variation notwithstanding, participation is generally considered to be beneficial for everyone (Cooke and Kothari eds. 2001).

⁴ This point is also made by Suzuki (2004).

⁵ However, Oakley et al. (1991) note that such a distinction is much more blurred in practice as government and development agencies, whose primary objective for participation is instrumental, also frequently pay mere rhetorical attention to the empowerment objective of participation.

(ii) Typologies of Participation

Level of Participation

Hurst (1985) and Shaeffer (1994) classify participation in the field of education according to degree, as defined by a shift from the control of the authorities to the empowerment of the people, which may range from the mere use of the service, contribution of resources, receipt of information, consultation and, eventually, up to active participation in decision-making.

Actors in Participation

However, the above ladder-style typology does not answer the question of who is expected to participate. In the analysis of participation in education, it is also critical to clarify who the actors or participators are, for example, local education officers, founders of schools, head teachers, teachers, parents, communities at large, and pupils.

Role Perspectives

Several commentators further distinguish participation in terms of (1) individual parents as consumers of education services; and (2) a group of parents or wider 'communities' playing an active role in education decision-making (Whitty et al. 1998; Farrell and Jones 2000; Rose 2002; Sayed 2002; Suzuki 2004; Sayed and Soudien 2005). Although less frequently recognised, these different role perspectives incorporate two distinct attitudinal assumptions that individuals bring to a particular decision-making process.

On the one hand, people may participate in education by choosing schools for their children based on individual narrowly defined interests. On the other, they may participate in education through taking part in decision-making with concern for the broader public or community good. Often, both these roles are simultaneously expected – explicitly or implicitly

– of laypeople, which can lead to mismatched expectations, conflict over roles, and failure to achieve goals (as described in section 2.3.2.3).

Domains of Participation

Related to the question of who is expected to participate, is what they are expected to participate in. The variety of forms laypeople's participation in education can take has been identified by different commentators (e.g., Shaeffer 1992; Reimers 1997; Watt 2001). In the context of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), Watt (2001) identifies three distinctive forms of community participation:

- Support to the instructional programme
- Contributions to school resources
- School management

Watt defines support to the instructional programme as the provision of a “supportive home and community environment that reinforces the work of the school” (ibid: 28). Such support may include ensuring that children attend school regularly and arrive on time; making certain that they have breakfast before lessons begin; providing a space for them to study at home; reviewing their work and monitoring progress; helping with homework; providing educational activities pertinent to school success; regular communication with teachers; and volunteering as a teaching assistant (Watt 2001: 28). According to Watt (2001), this type of support can be conducted not just by individual parents but also in a collective manner, for example, through school committees and parent teacher associations (PTAs).

Contributing to school resources has traditionally been the most commonly practiced form of community participation in many developing countries, and in SSA in particular (Watt 2001;

Adam 2005). The objective of such participation is mostly in terms of economics in that it ameliorates the inadequacy of government provision (Shaeffer 1992; Bray 1996; Rose 2003). The variety of forms that community participation may take in mobilising resources for schools has been identified by many researchers, and includes financial support, such as fees, levies, and fundraising activities; and in kind support, for example, the provision of labour and locally available materials for school construction (Bray 1999). Moreover, either type of contribution can be official or unofficial, voluntary or compulsory (Watt 2001: ix).

In the wake of the trend for the international advocacy of free primary education as a means of helping to achieve universal primary education, there has recently been an increasing emphasis on 'community financing' as an alternative to user fees. Such an arrangement draws on the support of the wider community, not just the parents who have a direct stake in the school (Rose 2003). However, as several commentators note, the fundamental question still remains of the conflicting relationship between the declaration of free primary education and the emphasis on community participation for resource mobilisation (e.g. Bray 2003a; Rose 2003; Sasaoka and Nishimura 2010). In a sense, unless there are regulations to penalise non-compliance, securing all the expected contributions may prove to be difficult. Conversely, if non-payment is penalised, it runs against the principle of free education.

Participation in the management of local education has been gaining in popularity both in developed and developing countries (Rose 2002; Suzuki 2004). Among the main grounds for this type of participation are to create a sense of ownership of schools (Watt 2001); to make schools and local authorities accountable for education delivery (World Bank 2003, 2007) and to determine the purpose and process of schooling in order to better serve the various needs, interests and preferences of the consumers of education, through affording them the opportunity to exercise their collective voice and influence over education service providers

(Ranson and Martin et al. 1999; World Bank 2003; Gershberg and Winkler 2004).

This kind of participation corresponds with that envisaged in the type of decentralisation reform stimulated by political legitimacy described in section 2.3.2.3, and entails the public accountability mechanism discussed in section 2.4. It can be realised through the work of school governing bodies (SGBs)⁶ and school committees in domains ranging from the development of school plans; the management of school grants; the evaluation of learning; and, in some cases, control over the hiring and firing of teachers (Watt 2001).

Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder (2002) suggest that community participation as a collective effort for local education development – as observed above – may be evident in two models: (1) the creation of new, community-managed schools; and (2) the strengthening of community management in existing state schools. The authors further differentiate between newly created community schools that resemble public schools (in terms of curriculum, textbooks, schedule, exams, teachers, teaching style, supervision, etc.) and those that function as an alternative system in all or any of these areas (ibid: v).

Regardless of the type of institution, it is often assumed that the community is expected to play a larger role in the management of community schools than do their counterparts in state schools (Gershberg and Winkler 2004). One such role is to hire and fire teachers.⁷ Some commentators argue that assigning laypeople direct control over the recruitment and management of teachers would improve teacher accountability to parents and the wider local

⁶ With regard to developed countries, parental involvement in SGBs in the UK, and community involvement in local school councils (LSCs) in the USA are among the most notable examples of this model (Whitty, Power and Halpin 1998).

⁷ Gershberg and Winkler (2003) report that in SSA, in countries ranging from Burkina Faso, Senegal to Guinea, communities have started paying the salaries of teachers contracted by community school councils.

community (World Bank 2003; Gershberg and Winkler 2004).

Although not in the context of SSA, El Salvador's community-managed – *Educación con Participación de la Comunidad* (EDUCO) – schools constitute a widely recognised example of greater lay authority over the hiring and firing of teachers. Jimenez and Sawada (1999), and Sawada (2000) found that community participation in the recruitment of teachers, paying them according to performance and monitoring them through the work of community education associations, enhanced regular attendance and led to greater effort, even though they were paid less than those working in state schools. The World Bank welcomes this type of community participation in education as an effective means of increasing school accountability to the communities they serve (e.g. World Bank 2003; World Bank 2007).

Community participation in matters of pedagogy in the context of SSA is not included in the forms of participation listed by Watt (2001). Yet, the centralised curriculum is often criticised for its rigidity and irrelevance (Hoppers 1994; Watkins 2000; Taylor 2004). Consequently, the adaptation of a core curriculum and syllabus to the local context through the active participation of parents and local community members has been widely advocated (e.g. Hopper 1994; Watkins 2000; Africa Network Campaign on Education Network 2004; Taylor 2004).

2.5.2 ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AS A COLLECTIVE EFFORT IN LOCAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

The success in terms of local education development of the various types of community participation mentioned above is, however, premised upon a number of hypotheses. First, it

is assumed that the 'community' is homogeneous, harmonious and non-hierarchical. It is expected that parents – and frequently, members of the wider local community as a group with common interests – will work towards the achievement of the common goals of the school, not only the individual welfare of their own children. Such a premise is closely associated with the notion of 'social capital', particularly that posited by Putnam (1993), which is defined as having "features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (ibid: 167).

Second, a related underlying assumption is that all local education officials, teachers and school managers have strong stakes in the development of education in the area they serve, generally believe in the value of involving the local community in decision-making processes and, therefore, do not resist such involvement.

Third, proponents of community participation also generally assume that parents and community members have the abiding will and interest to participate in local education affairs, and are keen to manage their children's educational development, all of which have been illegitimately suppressed under the centralised system. It is also often taken for granted that parents have high values and an enduring demand for the formal schooling of their children, which sustain their motivation to participate.

Fourth, the claim that community participation in local education governance will improve public accountability (see sections 2.3.2.3, 2.4 and 2.5.1) generally pivots upon the assumption that teachers, school managers and local education authorities have been delegated adequate authority and resources, and are endowed with the capacity to respond to the demands expressed by parents and the community.

Yet, several previous empirical studies suggest that these prerequisites cannot always be taken for granted in reality; rather, they vary according to the contexts in which such activities actually take place (Chapman et al. 2002; Rose 2002, 2003; Suzuki 2002, 2004; Pryor 2005; Sayed and Soudien 2005; UNESCO 2008). Consequently, this highlights the need to look more closely at the extent to which these assumptions are actually borne out in practice (Cornwall 2002). Accordingly, drawing on the existing literature, the following sections scrutinise these assumptions.

2.5.3 WHO IS THE ‘COMMUNITY’?

As opposed to the largely unproblematic use of the concept of community as an analytical unit by many proponents of community participation in education, the general notion of community lacks a single agreed definition and is much more complex (Bray 2003a; Rose 2003; Carney et al. 2007). For example, ‘community’ can refer to a geographic or symbolic entity such as an ethnic or religious group, as well as that based on shared family concerns (Bray 2003a).

The notion of community as a static, homogeneous and unhierarchical group has been challenged by many researchers (e.g. Hurst 1985; Martin 1996; Rose 2002, 2003; Sayed 2002; Suzuki 2002; Bray 2003a; Pryor 2005; Sayed and Soudien 2005; Carney et al. 2007; Dunne et al. 2007). For example, several commentators point out that rivalries and conflicting interests often exist even in the rural community (Evans 1996; Robinson and White 2001).

As Cornwall (2004) suggests, the issue of representation – whom ‘civil society organisations’ represent, on whose behalf they speak, and to whom they are accountable – is essential to

any analysis of civil participation in public service governance. In this regard, it is important to investigate the extent to which group members are representative through an examination of the membership and the selection process. Nevertheless, even when entry requirements are democratic, community representatives, such as PTA executives, who often come from socially and economically advantaged groups, may manipulate the deliberations of public meetings in their own parochial interests (Bray 1997).

In fact, several empirical studies report the widespread occurrence of local elite capture, which is likely to make a newly opened participatory space one that merely exists to maximise the narrow interests of certain parents who know how to manipulate the democratic process (e.g. Bray 1997; Anderson 1998; McGinn and Welsh 1999; Rose 2002; Carney et al. 2007; Dunne et al. 2007; Sasaoka and Nishimura 2010).

At the same time, women, the poor and the disadvantaged may not be able to participate or deliberate in meetings due to restrictive social norms, such as gender segregation of public spaces (Agarwal 2001). Furthermore, the limited existing research finds that even schools that are owned and managed by the community itself can be just as heterogeneous, hierarchical and susceptible to local elite capture as state schools (Rose 2006).

In some cases, reference to the 'local community' does not imply merely a group of parents and the wider community, but also teachers and local officials. However, the literature commonly reports the not infrequent occurrence of social gaps and power imbalances between education professionals such as teachers and local education officials on the one hand, and non-professionals such as parents and wider community members on the other, which arise from differing social and educational backgrounds (e.g. Malen and Ogawa 1988; Whitty et al. 1998; Suzuki 2002, 2004; Drèze and Sen 2002; Pryor 2005; Rose 2002, 2003;

Dunne et al. 2007).

Consequently, some researchers have suggested that the participatory space may simply increase professional control, particularly that in the hands of head teachers and other local professional leaders, rather than serve as an arena that enables parents and local community members to discuss their diverse interests and concerns freely (e.g., Malen and Ogawa 1988; Whitty et al. 1998; Gershberg 1999; Rose 2003; Suzuki 2004; De Grauwe et al. 2005). In such a situation, the PTA chairperson may become no more than an agent of reinforcement for the head teacher's authority over the school, rather than exercising a representative role (De Grauwe et al. 2005). At the same time, teachers may not be in a position to challenge the administrative authority of the principal for fear of social and professional sanctions (Anderson 1998).

Several investigations in the South have found that the power and information imbalance between education professionals and parents also undermines the ability of the latter even to control the funds they have contributed to the school (Bray 1999; Rose 2003; Suzuki 2004; De Grauwe et al. 2005). Such studies thus suggest it that cannot simply be taken for granted that teachers and local education professionals are willing to involve the local community in the decision-making process in a meaningful way.

Thus, participation may contain the inherent risk of reinforcing pre-existing intra-community inequalities. Moreover, the proponents of community participation in education often underestimate the complexity of power relations at the local level, and fail to engage with social and political analysis.

2.5.4 WHAT INFLUENCES PARTICIPATION?

Advocates of community participation in education generally assume that the abiding will of parents and wider community members to take part in local education matters is a given. However, the research to date suggests that such willingness is invariably qualified by complex socio-cultural, economic, political and institutional factors.

For example, several studies suggest that the willingness of parents and the community to participate varies depending on their values in terms of formal schooling, which are often influenced by socio-economic and cultural factors (Maclure 1994; Tshireletso 1997; Bray 1999; Watt 2001; Adam 2005; Pryor 2005). Some studies also suggest that perception of the role of the citizen and the state often influences the way people participate in local education. For example, Rose (2002) and Suzuki (2004) found that parents were unwilling to participate in school affairs because they interpreted 'free' education as freeing them from all responsibility related to local education affairs.

Additionally, some studies suggest that community members who are not parents and therefore do not have a direct stake in the local school may not be willing to participate (Bray 1997, 1999; Suzuki 2004). Moreover, other studies suggest that rural people may not necessarily be willing to take part in adjusting the curriculum to the local context, but rather regard schooling chiefly as a vital means of gaining good academic qualifications (Maclure 1994; Pryor 2005).

These are the significant factors that influence the way parents and the community are motivated or not motivated to participate in education. However, they are often ignored by the advocates of community participation in education.

By definition, participation requires time, effort, resources, expertise and confidence of parents and local community members. However, it has been widely reported that communities and/or their individual members are not necessarily all equally endowed with the material and cultural resources necessary in order to take part effectively in the different aspects of the education process (Watt 2001; Chapman et al. 2002; Dunne et al. 2007).

Thus, putting the emphasis on community participation may enhance inequity between and within communities depending on resource endowment (Davies 1990; Bray 2003a, 2003b; Rose 2003; UNESCO 2008). For example, in the case of Ghana, Akyeampong (2004) found that urban communities were able to mobilise resources through their PTAs and school management committees (SMCs) more effectively than those in rural areas, which further widened the quality gap between urban and rural public schools. Yet, the proponents of community participation in education processes often strikingly neglect these realities.

Furthermore, culture, the history of collective action, and the activities of enterprising individuals in community financing are also identified as factors that influence the nature and degree of participation (Bray 1999; Chapman et al. 2002; Cuéllar-Marchelli 2003). Yet, while greater community participation in management is generally expected of community schools (see section 2.5.1), the limited empirical studies to date suggest that their ability to engage is not always guaranteed.

The establishment of community schools in the South often amounts to the de facto delegation of control over education to the community, which results in the failure of the state to provide education opportunities in remote areas (Gershberg and Winkler 2004; Rose 2007). In such cases, a community may lack the resources – time, money, effort, knowledge

– required to run its school effectively. For example, in the case of community schools in Burkina Faso, Michener (1998) found that, given the fact that there was serious widespread poverty in the locality, parents were unable to pay teachers' salaries, which resulted in the problem of attempting to sustain unremunerated volunteer teaching.

Other studies of SSA have reported success stories of active community participation in the running of schools, such as cases in Ghana (Akyeampong 2004), Malawi (Dowd 1997, cited in Rose 2006: 225) and Mali (Muskin 1999). However, these are all instances in which the community was assisted by external aid. Therefore, the question remains as to what extent such participation can be sustained after the externally funded project withdraws (Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder 2002; Akyeampong 2004; Rose 2006).

2.5.5 AUTHORITY, RESOURCES AND CAPACITY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL TO RESPOND TO LOCAL DEMANDS

As discussed in section 2.4, if community participation in education governance is to enhance public accountability for decentralised local education institutions to parents and the wider community, schools and local education authorities must have the necessary authority, capacity and resources to comply.

However, the evidence suggests that little of the decentralisation reform in SSA is accompanied by distribution of the corresponding resources necessary for schools and local education offices to deliver programmes that have been decided at the local level with the participation of parents and the wider community. Bray (2003a), citing Lynch (1997), points out that the recent trend for decentralisation and community control in education was

prompted by the desire to cut back state resources.

If decentralisation and liberalisation are merely state responses to resource constraints rather than arising from a desire to delegate greater control to the point of delivery, the question arises as to whether schools and local education authorities have adequate power, resources (e.g. high quality teaching forces, recurrent budgets, textbooks and other educational materials) or capacity to take on the responsibilities expected of them.

Formula-based capitation transfers have been introduced in many countries to compensate for lost school revenue due to a free education policy. Gershberg and Winkler (2004) argue that such schemes ensure guaranteed revenue for the schools; yet, the reliability, timing and size of such grants should be examined closely, rather than simply being taken for granted.

The issue of community schools warrants particular attention in this regard. As discussed earlier, many community schools in SSA were established by default due to the failure of the government to provide affordable education institutions in remote rural areas. As Gershberg and Winkler (*ibid*) suggest, governments are now increasingly supporting these schools either indirectly or directly with the objective of rapidly expanding coverage at relatively low cost.

However, in her study of non-state education providers, Rose (2006) found that most state support to community schools was inadequate or inappropriate. In addition, Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder (2002) conclude that community efforts in schools often merely substitute – rather than add to – that which has hitherto been provided through public funds. Thus, a deeper understanding of the extent and form of such government support is necessary in each context, as these factors greatly influence the resource base of

community schools.

Moreover, some commentators point out that in spite of the decentralisation discourse, much of the reform being implemented in the South is in practice deconcentration, with the central government maintaining a tight grip on key decision-making (Rose 2005; Carney et al. 2007). For example, in the context of developing countries, Dunne et al. (2007) argue that the rhetoric of introducing a capitation grant so that schools can manage their own affairs notwithstanding, its provision and use are often conditioned by a uniform formula set by central government, leaving little room for local decision-making on the use of the grant.

The sum of this evidence suggests that the extent to which improved public accountability of local education institutions is being realised or not as a result of community participation is also conditioned by macro policy contexts, such as the centre–region relationship, with regard to the distribution of authority and resources in practice.

2.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Utilising the existing empirical literature and theories introduced above, and the primary data obtained from my own fieldwork in its adaptation of that proposed by Suzuki (2002), the present study offers a conceptual framework that encompasses three different key dimensions related to community participation in education: (i) decentralisation, (ii) accountability and (iii) participation. Furthermore, rather than identifying community participation in education decentralisation simply as institutional reform, this framework shows how a particular innovation can be analysed by referring to the specific micro and macro contexts in which such reform takes place.

2.6.1 DIMENSIONS OF DECENTRALISATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In this framework, decentralisation is understood as the redistribution of power by the central government to various actors and institutions in education administration. Thus, the analysis of decentralisation in education requires an understanding of such changes in terms of the ways in which different actors and institutions at different levels are given various forms of authority and power. Indeed, each form of education decentralisation is determined by a diverse set of motivations based on diverse ideologies about where the locus of education control lies.

The three types of education decentralisation with different emphasis on different loci of control proposed by McGinn and Welsh (1999) constitute a useful analytical tool for this study. They are *education decentralisation stimulated by professional expertise*; *education decentralisation based on market efficiency*; and *education decentralisation driven by democratic governance* (see section 2.3.2).

As discussed in section 2.3.2, this decentralisation dimension – i.e. the levels and functions of education that control is based on – implies various potential accountability relations. Thus, this study analyses the manner in which each actor is intended to be accountable in a given reform – who is accountable, to whom and for what. These accountability relations also include the potential power to impose sanctions on those who do not fulfil the duties they are supposed to carry out, and to enforce such sanctions.

For example, under *decentralisation driven by market efficiency*, in which the ability of consumers (parents, etc) to choose between different types of education provision is stressed, the emphasis is placed upon accountability of education outcomes to education

consumers. This type of accountability is termed 'market accountability' in this thesis. On the other hand, under *decentralisation driven by democratic governance*, in which control over a given function of education is placed at the school level, and parents and the wider community are expected to participate in decision-making, the school is primarily – although not exclusively – expected to be accountable to parents and the wider community in terms of that function. In this thesis, such accountability is termed 'public accountability'.

2.6.2 DIMENSIONS OF PARTICIPATION

The question of the locus of control in any given instance of education decentralisation, and its implications with regard to accountability relationships, requires further consideration of the types of participation envisaged in each case.

First, it is necessary to analyse *what they are expected to participate in*, which ranges from pedagogic matters to resource mobilisation and management, and includes decision-making processes in terms of resource allocation and teacher management and so on.

Second, *actors in participation*, that is, the people who participate – local politicians, officials, head teachers, teachers, pupils, parents and wider community members – should be examined. This element further defines two alternative *role perspectives* that individuals can adopt in education decision-making: (1) an individual user perspective and (2) a collective public goods perspective. With regard to (1), parents play their role as users of education services, for example, through choosing a school for their children. Conversely, in the case of (2), parents and members of the wider community work towards common educational needs. These two role perspectives are supported by different attitudinal assumptions.

Third, there is a need to analyse the *level of participation* in education decision-making, or the extent to which individuals and groups are able to influence the decision-making process, which ranges from mere consultation to full control.

2.6.3 MICRO AND MACRO CONTEXTS OF REFORM

While this framework offers useful analytical tools pertaining to the different options for community participation in education in the context of decentralisation, it should be noted that actual participation and its effect on accountability is a much more dynamic and complex process that take place in a specific context. Indeed, as De Grauwe et al. (2007) point out, proponents of decentralisation and community participation in education do not sufficiently take into account a country's specific context.

Ball's (1990, 1994) and Ball and Bowe's (1992) concept of a 'continuous policy cycle' in which policy is 'recontextualised' throughout the process, from policy-making to policy implementation, seems useful in this regard. According to these authors, such recontextualisation means that policy at all levels changes when it interacts with new contexts. They maintain that the process of policy initiation and implementation does not necessarily proceed in a linear fashion as intended. They argue that it is instead much more complex, suggesting that the policy process should be analysed in the following three contexts: the context of influence (in which interest groups struggle over the construction of policy discourse); the context of text production (in which texts represent policy, although they may contain inconsistencies and contradictions); and the context(s) of practice (in which policy is subject to interpretation and recreation) (Ball and Bowe 1992).

Thus, Ball and Bowe (op. cit.) highlight struggles over influence, policy text, and practice. Since the present study is primarily concerned with policy as practice, the concept of the context of practice seems particularly useful. According to Ball (1993):

[Education] policies are textual interventions into practice...The point is that we cannot predict or assume how they will be acted on, what their immediate effect will be, what room for manoeuvre actors will find for themselves (Ball 1993: 12).

In other words, education policies are not simply implemented – they are enacted, interpreted and recreated by different actors in education practice in a specific context.

Following Ball and Bowe's (op. cit.) advice, this thesis departs from the view that policy is simply implemented as prescribed. Rather, the present study adopts an essentially sociological approach – i.e. it takes into account the point of view of the people being studied – to its enquiry into the meaning of community participation and its effects on accountability.

The sociological analysis of participation concerns the *processes* of participation, wherein social norms and beliefs; the values and attitudes accorded to schooling; the social hierarchy; social perceptions; and perceptions of the role of the state interact in a complex manner to shape the way in which different actors participate or do not participate in education affairs at the local level.

In this thesis, 'social process' is defined as the constant dynamic by which both individuals and groups of individuals perceive, behave and interact; all of which take place in a particular historical, cultural, geographic and economic context. Thus, participation is understood as being deeply embedded in social processes.

Therefore, such a sociological framework does not treat the local community as an unproblematic unit of analysis. It reveals that the community is not a homogenous entity but consists of actors with multiple and frequently hierarchical relationships divided along the lines of gender, economic endowment, profession, ethnicity, and level of education. It requires an understanding of the complex micro power relations that prevail in public meetings as well as everyday social interaction between different sections of local society and other key actors subject to a decentralised education system.

Accordingly, within this framework, 'social capital' is understood to comprise those social resources that derive from group membership, family and community connections, the amount of which a given actor can draw upon depending "on the size of the network of connections that he can effectively mobilize" (Bourdieu 1986: 249). However, social capital has been defined in various ways by various researchers, including Putnam (1995) – as discussed in section 2.5.2. Putnam adopts a more normative definition of social capital as consisting of those aspects of social organisation such as trust, norms and networks that are beneficial to the elimination of various social disorders, for example, crime. Thus, Putnam does not discuss conflicts of interest among different actors.

In contrast, Bourdieu's definition of social capital puts the emphasis on conflict and power, and the role played by different forms of capital in the reproduction of social inequalities through the unequal distribution of interconnected forms of 'capital' within a society, that is, economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. Economic capital is comprised of material and financial possessions, whereas cultural capital includes the set of social practices and skills that are slowly cultivated during an individual's development, and demonstrate his or her membership of a particular social group or class.

In so doing, this study aims to reach beyond the analysis that can be provided by an official, institutional or administrative framework of community participation in education governance, which focuses merely on the rules and regulations, official representation criteria, and selection criteria designed for the participatory space. I believe it is more important to understand how these rules are interpreted and internalised by different participants in a particular socio-economic context. In other words, I believe that the social processes that are enacted within such a framework should be explained rather than simply assumed.

The sociological analysis of the meaning of community participation from the viewpoint of the people being studied will not be discussed in isolation from the broader macro policy contexts in which policy reform is implemented. More specifically, it will take into account centre–region relationships with regard to the practical distribution of authority and resources to different levels of the decentralised hierarchy; also an important factor that influences the actual form of participation and its effect on accountability. Thus, this study will focus on the crucial role that central government should be playing as it carries out its decentralisation policies, but which all too often has been ignored.

2.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have attempted to unpack three different but mutually related concepts – community participation, decentralisation and accountability – with the aim of offering a comprehensive conceptual framework for the analysis of the complex processes of community participation in education and its influence on accountability.

The chapter has further shown that the current fashionable argument for parental and

community participation in education has limited regard for the variety of social, cultural and economic resources between and within communities. It also demonstrated that such an argument often assumes the willingness of parents and wider community members to become involved once an opportunity has been provided, while the evidence indicates that people's motivation to participate is much more complex and cannot always be taken for granted.

The chapter also discussed the fluidity of the concept of 'community' and showed that the unified treatment of the community underestimates complex micro politics at the local level. Finally, it showed that the macro context of community participation is often also largely missing from the debate, although some previous studies suggest that it is crucial to an understanding of the success or failure of such reform at the local level.

Accordingly, this chapter has suggested the need to bring both micro and macro contexts into the analysis of community participation in education and its influence on both market and public accountability. Overall, this approach has built an argument for the sociological analysis of community participation in education, which is vital if we are to establish an adequate account of why people do or do not participate for either their individual benefit or the common good. These issues are investigated empirically in chapters 6, 7 and 8.

CHAPTER 3 DECENTRALISATION AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN ZAMBIA'S EDUCATION POLICY – CONTEXTS AND PREMISES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter investigates the historical context within which decentralisation and community participation policies have been developed. It also analyses the expectations and assumptions of such macro level policy.

In the first part, I outline the political economy of Zambia. I then provide an overview of the historical development of the state's education policy with particular reference to the concepts of decentralisation, liberalisation and participation from the pre-colonial era to the present. The policy shift from the early 1990s, which prioritised decentralisation and active community participation in education, is illuminated. I then closely examine the anticipated roles of the newly established District Education Boards (DEBs), parent teacher associations (PTAs) in government basic schools, and parent community school committees (PCSCs) in community schools, as instruments for the realisation of policy vision. Finally, I examine the underlying assumptions and expectations of macro level policy.

3.2 THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ZAMBIA

Zambia is a landlocked country in Southern Africa surrounded by eight neighbouring countries. The population, which is estimated to be 12.62 million (World Bank 2008), consists of more than 70 ethnic groups. Ethnicity is of great importance to various aspects of Zambian

society, such as in the hiring of workers and their prospects for promotion (Posner 2007).

Some 15.2 per cent of the adult population is infected with HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS 2008) and life expectancy at birth has fallen to about 45 years (World Bank 2008). The country's economy has experienced strong growth in recent years, with real gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2005–08 being about six per cent per year, driven mainly by strong performance in the mining sector; moreover, per capita gross national income (GNI) rose to USD 950 in 2008⁸ (World Bank 2010).

However, income is highly skewed, with the poorest 10 per cent accounting for only 2.4 per cent of gross national product (GNP) (UNDP 2007). Poverty in Zambia is predominantly a rural phenomenon, affecting 81 per cent of the rural population but only 34 per cent of urban dwellers, a situation that is mainly attributed to the stagnancy of the agricultural sector (World Bank 2008).

British-ruled Northern Rhodesia became the independent state of Zambia in 1964. Following a brief multiparty era after independence, multiparty politics were suspended in 1972 and succeeded by nineteen years of one-party rule by President Kaunda's United National Independence Party (UNIP).

However, civil society opposition to one-party rule gradually increased, which eventually led to a constitutional amendment that made Zambia a multiparty state in 1990 (Bratton 1992; Baylies and Szeftel 1992). Subsequently, four multiparty elections were contested and went

⁸ GNI per capita is the sum of the value to the economy added by all resident producers; plus any product taxes not included in the value of output; plus net primary income receipts from abroad, divided by the total population at midyear.

ahead without any serious violent conflict.

This relative peacefulness notwithstanding, elections in Zambia have tended to be divided along tribal or language lines (Posner 2007). This goes to show that ethnicity and language are still significant determinants of the Zambian identity.

Zambia exhibits a high level of dependency on foreign aid, with net official development assistance amounting to USD 1.1 billion in 2004 (EIU 2006).

3.3 EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN BOTH PRE AND POST-INDEPENDENCE ERAS

This section outlines Zambian education development in both the pre and post-independence eras in order to establish the context of the major education reforms since the early 1990s. It specifically addresses the significance and complexities of community participation in education in terms of the policies that have been modified due to the evolving socio-economic and political situations.

3.3.1 THE PRE-INDEPENDENCE ERA

In pre-colonial times, traditional education was oral in nature and was essentially concerned with the practicalities of everyday life (Carmody 2004).

The advent of Western style formal education came to Zambia in the late 19th century along

with Christianity. The missionaries mainly aimed to provide schooling to indigenous people in order to convert them to Christianity and “rejected much of traditional way of life [and their schools were thus] often alien to the local culture” (Kelly 1999: 31). Accordingly, the involvement of the local community in the running of these schools was generally limited to facility construction (ibid).

During the pre-independence era, the expansion of local Zambian schools relied on the self-help efforts of missionaries, senior pupils and local communities (Carmody op. cit.). However, its poor financial support to the mission schools notwithstanding, the colonial government gradually developed control over the regulation of these schools (Carmody op. cit.).

3.3.2 THE POST-INDEPENDENCE ERA

After independence in 1964, the newly autonomous Zambian government acquired control of virtually all the country’s entire formal education system through the 1966 Education Act. Thus, the missions only retained partial control over grant-aided secondary schools and a few special primary schools (Kelly 1999).

The government sought to expand the education system quantitatively in order to respond to the urgent need for human resources for development (Carmody op.cit.). Partly for this reason, heavy emphasis was placed on academic schooling – so alien to local culture (Kelly op.cit; Carmody op. cit.).

3.3.3 FINANCING EDUCATION FROM INDEPENDENCE TO THE 1980s

Following independence, the immediate short-term government resources allocated to education were increased and the government declared education at all levels to be free.

By the early 1970s, however, the Zambian economy had started to decline following a fall in the price of copper. From early 1980s, the education budget – particularly that of the primary sector – was reduced to a smaller proportion each year (Kelly 1999). At this level, teachers' salaries absorbed almost all the available funds, leaving little for other necessary costs such as the purchase of teaching and learning materials, the maintenance of infrastructure, which seriously eroded the quality of teaching and learning, while gross enrolments began to decline after 1985 (ibid).

Schools continued to look to the self-help initiatives of parents and the community in order to facilitate the rapid expansion of facilities. In 1975, the government changed the traditional position of voluntary community participation through legalisation that formalised the primary school PTA, enabling the generation of special funds for supplies and projects (ibid). The introduction of PTA fees was an official shift from the previous free education policy that had been in place since independence to a cost-sharing scheme. Yet, self-help schemes resulted in some very poor and unsafe structures (ibid).

3.4 EDUCATION REFORM SINCE THE 1990s: POLICY SHIFT TOWARDS THE DECENTRALISATION AND LIBERALISATION OF EDUCATION WITH EMPHASIS ON COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The structural adjustment plan initiated in 1985 imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) culminated in riots that were incited by reductions in food subsidies. Consequently, structural adjustment was abandoned in 1987, although it was resumed two years later (Baylies and Szeftel 1992).

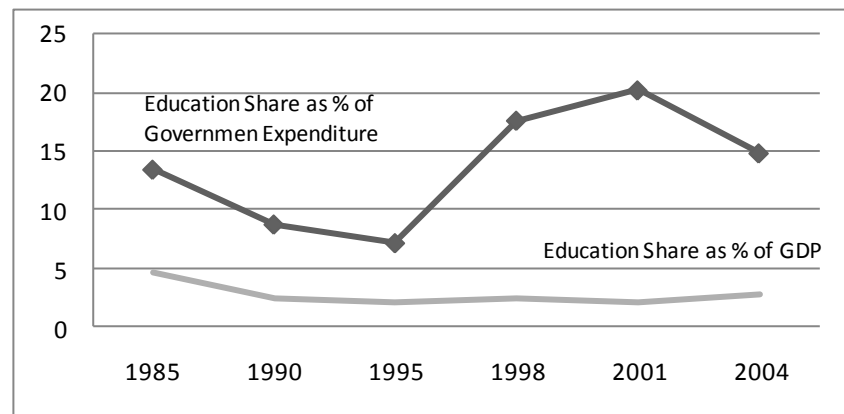
Multiparty elections were held in October 1991. Amongst the pivotal legislation introduced by the new government was far-reaching structural reform in line with the orthodoxy of structural adjustment, which included the liberalisation of the economy and a drastic cut in public spending - particularly social expenditure, including that on education.

As shown in figure 3-1, the education sector's share of total government domestic discretionary expenditure declined from 13.4 per cent in 1985 to 8.7 per cent in 1990, and dropped further still to 7.1% in 1995. This trend is also evident in the decline in the share of expenditure on the education sector as a percentage of GDP from 2.4 percent in 1990 to only 1.9 per cent in 1999.

Under these economic and political conditions, the drive for decentralisation and the liberalisation of various sectors emerged. Following the advice of the World Bank and the IMF, the Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP) was launched in November 1993, the thrust of which included the privatisation of the parastatal sector and the devolution of considerable political and administrative power to the newly created district councils (Government of

Zambia 1993).⁹ Implementation was, however, delayed for years, resulting in the Ministry of Education (MOE) having to initiate its own decentralisation reform.¹⁰ Thus, the global discourse of market-oriented principles promoted by the World Bank and the IMF – often referred to as the ‘Washington Consensus’ – which advocates the privatisation and decentralisation of various sectors (Rose 2003), played a considerable role in initiating Zambia’s policy U-turn (Situmbeko and Zulu 2004).

Figure 3-1 The Education Budget as a Percentage of Total Government Expenditure and GDP (1985–2004)



Sources: Kelly (1999) and World Bank (various years).

Therefore, the education policy document *Educating Our Future (EoF)* was developed in 1996, wherein the accent on decentralisation and the liberalisation of education is evident. At the same time, *EoF* also sets the impetus for a shift in investment from the secondary and tertiary levels to basic education, and proposes the restructuring of basic school composition

⁹ Rose (2005) argues that the trend towards privatisation and decentralisation in the education sector must be analysed in the context of such reform in the economy more generally.

¹⁰ The MOE is responsible for overseeing basic schools, high schools and teacher training colleges. The two universities are self-governing parastatal bodies in receipt of budgetary support from the government. The Ministry of Science, Technology and Vocational Training is responsible for overseeing technical education and vocational training (TEVT).

to incorporate grades 1–9 in place of the previous system in which there were 7 primary school grades and 5 secondary school grades. As a result, currently, the formal education cycle starts with 9 years of ‘basic education’, of which grades 1–7 constitute ‘lower basic’, and 8 and 9 are ‘upper basic’; followed by 3 years of high school and then by tertiary education.

Yet, limited state capacity for grade 8 enrolment means that competition remains stiff in the grade 7 national examinations (World Bank 2006). Although the net enrolment ratio (NER)¹¹ for basic education (grades 1–9) is now close to 100 per cent (table 3-1), the transition rate from grade 7 to 8 was only 57.3 per cent for females and 52.1 per cent for males (MOE 2007c).

Table 3-1 Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) for Grades 1–12 (2006)

NER (G 1–7)	97.4%
NER (G 1–9)	95.8%
NER (G 10–12)	22.2%

Source: MOE (2006a).

EoF generally attributes inefficient and unresponsive education service delivery to centralised and hierarchical decision-making procedures (MOE 1996a: 125). Thus, it promotes the transfer of power, responsibility, and discretion in planning and implementing programmes from the previous central or provincial level to the district and school levels. Simultaneously, *EoF* encourages active community participation at the local level.

It anticipates that such measures will result in “greater responsiveness to local needs” (MOE 1996a: 127) and a “greater degree of democracy in the management and administration of

¹¹ The NER is the theoretical number of pupils in the school-age group for a given level of education, expressed as a percentage of the total population of that age group.

the system” (ibid: 3).

Specifically, *EoF* proposes the creation of boards at all levels of the education sector, suggesting that the focal point of education management at basic school level should be the District Education Board (DEB), while secondary schools and teacher training colleges should each have their own boards. Substantial resources and the authority for the planning and implementation of their usage was to be delegated to these boards from the Provincial Education Office (PEO), or MOE headquarters (HQ) (MOE 1996a).

In the case of the basic education sub-sector, there was some concern among policy officials with regard to the capacity of parents and communities to engage in the management of education at the school level, which prompted them to opt for the creation of the DEB rather than a school board at the district level (interview-ME1¹²). Such concerns notwithstanding, subsequent policy documents gradually increased the responsibility of parents and local community members in school management (as will be discussed in the next section).

Thus, there is a heavy and explicit emphasis on decentralisation in *EoF*, an innovation that was stimulated by a concern for political legitimacy (see section 2.3.2.3).

As mentioned earlier, another prominent feature of *EoF* is the prioritisation of the liberalisation and privatisation of education sector:

Under the liberalised education system, the right of private organizations, individuals, religious bodies, and local communities to establish and control their own schools and other educational institutions is recognized and welcomed (MOE 1996a: 3).

¹² The list of interviewees with reference codes can be found in appendix 5-1.

EoF also emphasises “the right of parents to send their children to the education institutions of their own choice” (ibid: 3). The policy document particularly encourages the establishment of community schools “provided, run and financed by communities to meet their own needs” (ibid: 136).

The policy prioritisation of the liberalisation of education is stimulated by decentralisation based on the notion of market efficiency that emphasises greater parental choice (see section 2.3.2.2), a position that is consistent with the global privatisation and decentralisation discourse prompted by the Washington Consensus.

However, it is evident from *EoF* that cost-sharing remains one of the government’s key priorities in terms of community and parental participation, a factor driven by the state’s inability to shoulder the financial burden of education expansion in a declining economy (MOE 1996a). *EoF* explicitly notes that parents and communities are responsible for the running and developmental costs of schools rather than the government (ibid: 166).

It appears that the cost sharing approach was reversed when free education for grades 1–7 was officially announced by President Mwanawasa in 2002. Under this policy, government basic schools cannot officially charge PTA fees for pupils in grades 1–7 and the wearing of school uniform is no longer compulsory (MOE 2002). According to an MOE circular (2002) PTAs are only allowed to raise specific funds for school projects after obtaining clearance from the Provincial Education Officer (PEO) (see appendix 3-1 for a comprehensive list of the rules head teachers of basic schools must observe under free education policy).

Being cognisant of the inequity caused by the cost sharing approach, MOE Strategic Plan

(MOESP) 2003–2007, reemphasises the abolition of school fees at grades 1–7. Yet, it equally acknowledges the financial implication for the government and therefore encourages the maintenance of the strong involvement of the community in school construction, rehabilitation and maintenance (MOE 2003a: 11, 57). Thus, the introduction of free education for grades 1–7 notwithstanding, the government's implicit emphasis on cost sharing at this level appears to have been maintained. It can be argued that this shift in emphasis from direct to indirect cost-sharing mechanisms and the subsequent shift in focus from the individual to the wider community as the unit of analysis are also in line with the post-Washington Consensus discourse, which emphasises simultaneous fee abolition and formalisation of community participation in education delivery (Rose 2003). Rose goes on to argue that post-Washington Consensus, the role of the community has been formalised in terms of the financing and delivery of education, and increasing emphasis is thus placed on neo-liberal principles of individual responsibility for meeting social needs (Rose 2003).

As is evident from the above discussion, reform legislation prioritising decentralisation and liberalisation in Zambia since the 1990s has regarded parents and the wider community as vital and equal partners in education development. The rationale for such a stance is that the principal responsibility for the quality of their children's education rests with the families, the wider community and the school itself. Central government is thus viewed as the agency responsible for overseeing the implementation of policy. Paradoxically, however, the act formulated in 1966 under one party rule, which allows central government to control all aspects of education management, has not yet been revised – although discussions for its amendment commenced during the course of my fieldwork.

3.5 THE DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION AT DISTRICT AND SCHOOL LEVELS ENVISAGED AT THE MACRO LEVEL: EXPECTATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

This section chronicles policy development in the wake of *EoF*, and analyses the manner in which subsequent policies and related documents, as well as key policy officials, expect parents and the wider community to participate in education affairs at both district and school levels. Also, the underlying assumptions will also be examined through the analysis of policy documents and primary data obtained in interview with key policy-makers at the central level.

3.5.1 PARTICIPATION AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

3.5.1.1 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEB

The first DEBs were established as part of the pilot project in the Copperbelt in 1996, in accordance with Statutory Instrument No. 164 of 1995 (GRZ 1995).

However, due to slow progress in restructuring and decentralisation made, the appointment of officials to the first Copperbelt DEBs only began towards the end of 2002 (Riddle 2002; MOE 2004*b*), while the establishment of DEBs in other provinces was considerably delayed.¹³

¹³ DEBs were finally established in Western, Southern, Lusaka and Northern provinces in 2001 and in the remaining four provinces by 2002.

3.5.1.2 THE STRUCTURE AND COMPOSITION OF THE DEB

Guidelines governing the role and scope of the DEB were first developed in 1997 (Ministry of Education Restructuring and Decentralisation Committee (MOERDC) 1997), revised in 2004 (Education Board Service (EBS) 2004a) and culminated in the publication of a comprehensive manual in 2005 (EBS 2005).

According to the latest edition of the manual (ibid), the DEB comprises a *management team* and a *governance body*. It is intended that the governance body should represent various interest groups, including the local community, “so as to make decision-making widely shared” (ibid: 20). The management team is in principle composed of district education officials, who are therefore employees of the MOE.

According to the manual (ibid), the governance body should be composed of 15 members, each subject to a distinct selection or nomination process.

Composition of the Governance Body¹⁴

- (i) Five members of the local community nominated as follows:
 - (a) One local councillor and one district resident other than a district councillor selected at a full council meeting.
 - (b) Three district residents selected by the district PTA council.¹⁵

¹⁴ See appendix 3-2 for the original composition of the Governance Body listed in EBS 2005.

¹⁵ However, the guidelines developed in 1996 stipulate that the district residents are to be nominated by the district council upon the request of the DEBS, a ruling that was changed in the 2004 guidelines and the 2005 manual. A policy document indicating the reason for such a change could not be found nor could interviewed senior officials recall why it was made. This may well be an example of the extremely poor institutional

- (ii) One basic school PTA representative and one high school PTA representative to be selected at a general district PTA council meeting.
- (iii) Three representatives of the teacher's union in the district.
- (iv) One representative of the proprietors of the grant-aided schools in the district nominated by the proprietors.
- (v) One basic school head teacher elected by the Basic School Head Teacher's Association.
- (vi) One high school head teacher elected by the High School Head Teacher's Association.
- (vii) One head teacher representing schools for continuing education, in districts where they exist.

(EBS 2005: 21, summarised by the author).

The chairperson of the DEB should be elected from the governance body members and should not be an MOE official. The DEBS (District Education Board Secretary), who is the MOE employee, serves as the secretary.

As stated in (ii), one PTA spokesperson from all the government basic schools in the district should be elected to represent their interests at the DEB. One policy document (ZCSS 2005) stipulates that the PCSCs of all community schools should elect one PCSC chairperson to represent them at the DEB as a governance body member. However, the 2005 manual makes no mention of whether PCSCs in community schools are also to be represented or not. This may reflect the ambiguous status that community schools have in the public education system.

The repeated emphasis on active 'community participation' in education matters through the establishment of DEB (MOE 1996a; EBS 2004a; EBS 2005) notwithstanding, the parameters of neither 'community' nor 'local community' are clearly defined in these policy documents. Indeed, the boundaries of the 'community' to which they refer fluctuate, sometimes including teachers and education officials so long as they serve at the local level; while, in other instances, the community is limited to laypersons such as parents and other local residents. Likewise, the key MOE officials interviewed attached varying meanings to 'community.' Such convenient but ambiguous usage of the term 'community' in policy has the potential to give rise to confusion over whose prerogative it is to engage in education decision-making.

As stated in (i)-(a), a local councillor should also be represented at the DEB as a governance body member. As mentioned earlier, the government plan for devolution to the district council was delayed, which prompted the MOE to develop its own policy on decentralisation, and to the formation of the DEB at district level. However, the policy for the devolution of several social services to local councils under the auspices of the Ministry of Local Government and Housing (MLGH) continued to be implemented. This strategy culminated in the launch of the National Decentralisation Policy in August 2004, which nominated the local council as the body to which basic education was to be devolved (Cabinet Office 2004).

Yet, the devolution process remains slow, and its institutional and financial structures are unclear. Most tasks that should have been delegated to local authorities – including basic education – are still performed by the local offices of central government ministries (Interview-ME1; ME2; ML; CO). Nevertheless, the limited role of the district council notwithstanding, it has now been allocated a constituency development fund (CDF), which may be used for the implementation of various projects in the district, including the rehabilitation of school facilities (Ministry of Local Government and Housing (MLGH) 2010). A

district councillor with representation at the DEB is therefore expected to act as a vital intermediary between politics and education.

As stated above, the management team is made up of district education officials employed by the MOE, the precise composition of which is catalogued in appendix 3-3.

3.5.1.3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE DEB OF THE GOVERNING BODY AND MANAGEMENT TEAM RESPECTIVELY

The roles it sets out for the governance body are as follows:

- (i) To formulate local education policy.
- (ii) To establish long-term goals for the DEB, and develop strategic objectives and plans.
- (iii) To guide the implementation of strategic decisions.
- (iv) To review and adopt the district Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB), and monitor the DEB's performance and results on monthly basis.
- (v) To verify financial statements and communicate and disclose information to stakeholders.

(EBS 2005: 26, summarised by the author).

Additionally, although the 2005 manual does not explicitly state it, the two preceding guidelines (MOE 1997, EBS 2004a) and *EoF* (MOE 1996) suggest that one of the pivotal roles anticipated for the governance body is to supplement the resources of the DEB. Such a view was also widely shared among the key MOE officials who were interviewed at the

national level (Interview-ME1; ME2; ME3; ME4; ME5; ME6; ME7).

The major roles of the management team are set out as follows:

- (i) To implement MOE decisions and local policies made at the DEB.
- (ii) To Initiate and manage the delivery of quality education to the satisfaction of the clients.
- (iii) To prepare the district AWPB.
- (iv) To initiate and manage developmental projects, and to manage and execute work to address MOE goals and objectives in line with the district AWPB.
- (v) To manage DEB finances and initiate the development of fundraising activities.
- (vi) To report activities to board meetings, the MOE and other stakeholders.
- (vii) To keep the DEB fully informed on all work carried out.

(EBS 2005: 28, summarised by the author).

In order to play these roles effectively, it was envisaged that general board meetings with both governance body and management team in attendance would be held at least three times a year (ibid: 37).

The AWPB system was introduced in 2003 as an integral element of the bottom-up and activity-based planning approach that replaced the previous top-down centralised practice. The guideline (EBS 2004*b*) stipulates that the AWPB should contain both capital and recurrent expenditure, and also include the consolidated AWPBs of all the basic schools in the respective district (ibid). District AWPBs are then to be submitted to the PEO, MOE HQ and the donors for quarterly disbursement of resources to the DEBs, and finally to the schools.

In addition to the quarterly board meetings, the work of the governance body will be accomplished through the six subcommittees: (i) human resources; (ii) development and management; (iii) quality and standards; (iv) finance; (v) procurement; and (vi) communication (EBS 2005: 32–33). These subcommittees should meet regularly and offer guidance on policy direction in each area to the management team. Each departmental head of the management team should serve as secretary to one of the sub-committees.

Thus, the manual and guidelines generally anticipate that the creation of the DEB will improve the management team's accountability and transparency in district education operations through the work of the governance body, which is drawn from various interest groups in the district (EBS 2004a, 2005). Similarly, some MOE officials interviewed stated that they expect increased accountability and transparency of the district education administration through the work of governance body (Interview-ME1; ME2; ME3; ME4). In this way, it is believed that the management team will be accountable to the governance body, which, in turn, answers to the constituencies or communities it represents.

However, it is worth mentioning that the guidelines and manual also expect the DEB – both governance body and management team – to be accountable upwards to MOE HQ (MOERDC 1997, EBS 2004a, EBS 2005). Thus, at the policy level, dual accountability is envisaged for the DEB. It should also be noted that with regard to human resources management, the role of the governance body is limited to the disciplining of pupils and staff employed directly by the DEB such as secretaries and drivers, but not those education officials employed by the MOE (EBS 2005: 27).

A reading of the policy guidelines and manuals, and an analysis of the perceptions of key

MOE officials, reveal several key assumptions. First, it is assumed that regular board meetings offer the opportunity for effective public deliberation at the district level, in which governance body members are able to identify their local education needs; freely express their views; reach a shared vision; and design effective ways of monitoring.

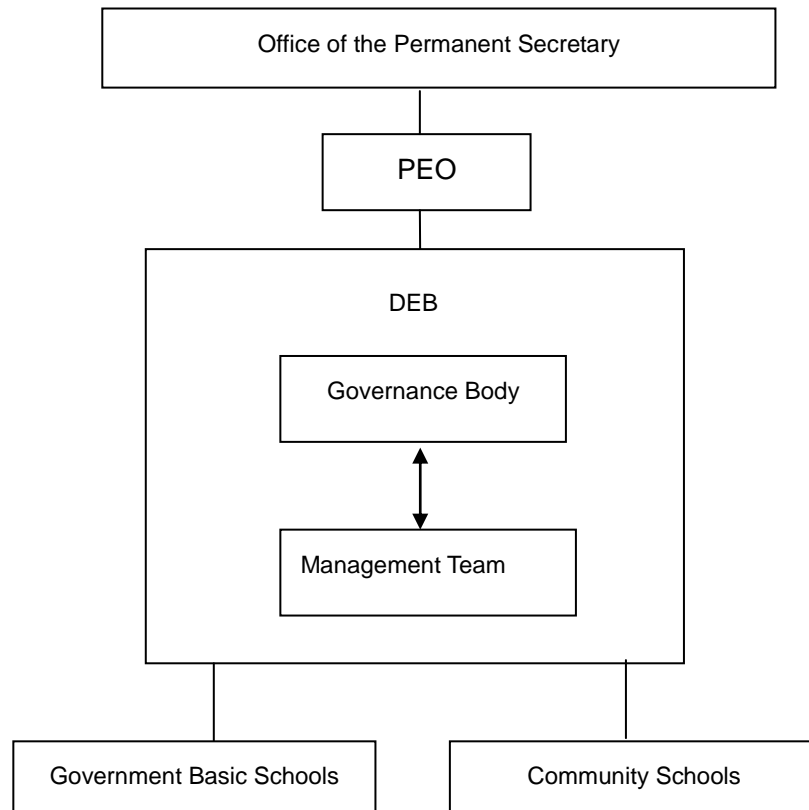
Second, it is assumed that each governance body member is willing and able to work voluntarily¹⁶ for the development of the whole community in his or her respective district, effectively representing the interests of his or her constituency.

Third, it is believed that the management team is both willing and able to effectively respond to any demand or concern raised by the governance body.

3.5.2 PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL LEVEL (I) – GOVERNMENT BASIC SCHOOLS

The establishment of the DEB at district level notwithstanding, the PTA of each government basic school continues to coexist alongside the former as a forum for parental and community participation. Moreover, the extent of community participation in such schools has gradually broadened from its traditional role in the moral and material support of pupils' learning, and resource mobilisation, often but not always through the work of the PTA.

¹⁶ There is no mention in the DEB guidelines or manuals of the payment of governance body members' allowances.

Figure 3-2 Organisational Structure of the DEB within the MOE

Source: the author based on EBS (2005) and ZCSS (2005).

The next section describes the composition of the PTA as stipulated in the statutory, followed by a consideration of the three key roles respectively assigned to parents and the local community as a group, and the one role that individual parents are expected to play alone. The three roles of parents and the local community as a group are (i) participation in school management; (ii) participation in the development and implementation of a localised curriculum; and (iii) contribution to school resources. The single role expected of individual parents is (iv) the choice of a school.

3.5.2.1 THE COMPOSITION OF THE PTA

As mentioned in section 3.3.3, the PTA was introduced in 1975 in the midst of an economic crisis, the rationale being that it would facilitate the generation of supplementary school funds. The statutory on the PTA (MOE 1976) stipulates that in principle, membership of the PTA is restricted to teachers, and parents and guardians who have children in school. Such stipulations notwithstanding, there is also provision to extend membership to “any local chief [or] any other local dignitary” (ibid: 3). Thus, in practice, membership of the PTA is not reserved for direct users only.

The statutory also stipulates the composition of the PTA executive committee in conducting the affairs of each PTA (ibid):

- (i) Not more than six members, who shall be elected by the PTA members at the annual general meeting.
- (ii) Not more than two teachers, who shall be elected by the school teaching staff.
- (iii) The head and the deputy head of the school.

(MOE 1976: 3, summarised by the author).

The head teacher is expected to be the secretary of the PTA, and the tenure of office for executive members is one year (ibid).

3.5.2.2 THE ROLES OF PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

(i) Participation in School Management

Three main roles in respect of school management are now expected of parents and local community members: (a) to develop the school AWPB; (b) to monitor the use of the school grant; and (c) to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom.

All schools are required to prepare an AWPB (see section 3.5.1.3) with the participation of the PTA, which is then submitted to the DEB to be consolidated as a district AWPB and the allocation of a grant to each school in the district facilitated (EBS 2004*b*). (See appendix 3-4 for details of the guideline on PTA participation in the formulation of an AWPB.)

Furthermore, the PTA now has the opportunity to help manage and monitor the use of the school grant, which is allocated by central government through the DEB (EBS 2004*a*). School grants have been distributed to each basic school since 2001 – shortly before the official abolition of school fees at grades 1–7 in 2002 – to compensate for the loss of revenue from PTA fees. Allocation to each school is based mainly on pupil population but also takes regional variation into consideration, which is marked by gender and equity issues as well as special education requirements (MOE 2007*a*).¹⁷ Grants cover both capital and recurrent costs, with the exception of teachers' salaries, which continue to be paid directly by central government.

¹⁷ When the school grant was first introduced, the amount allocated to each school was fixed at the equivalent of USD 600 for all schools offering grades 1–7 and about USD 650 for all schools offering grades 1–9, irrespective of pupil population (Das et al. 2004).

Furthermore, the regular monitoring by a group of parents of learning and teaching in school is now promoted in line with the 'family pack' initiative, which is included in the Programme for the Advancement of Girls' Education (PAGE). PAGE was launched as a joint pilot initiative of the Zambian government and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and is now integrated into the national education programme (Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) 2003; MOE 2004c).

Through the transference of resources and planning power to the school level, and in granting parents and the wider community the right to participate in the planning process, it is expected that local needs will be taken better care of; the school grant will be used with greater transparency; and ownership of and commitment to the resulting plans will be enhanced (EBS 2004b: 22).

The underlying policy assumption is that parents/guardians and community members are willing and able to participate in public deliberations through the PTA, express their views and monitor how their expectations are being met, for the interests of the whole school, not just in terms of the individual welfare of their own children. Moreover, it is further assumed that teachers and school management will look beyond professional boundaries and be prepared to listen to the demands of parents and the wider community.

(ii) Participation in the Development and Implementation of Localised Curriculum

The new Zambia Education Curriculum Framework was inaugurated in 2000, introducing a 'localised curriculum', under the name 'community studies', for the lower and middle basic

levels (grades 1–7) as one of the six components of the revised curriculum.¹⁸

The guideline (CDC 2005) indicates that parents, local experts in various fields in the wider community, and pupils are expected to (1) take part in the development of a local curriculum; and (2) serve as resource personnel for the school, in teaching the skills, attitudes and values relevant to the local environment (CDC 2005) (see appendix 3-5 for the stages in the development of a localised curriculum stipulated in the guideline).

Therefore, for the first time, non-professional members of the community have the 'right' to partly determine formal education content. One of the main purposes of introducing a localised curriculum is to make it more relevant to the social, cultural, economic, political and biophysical background of the inhabitants of each area (ibid).

The underlying policy premise is that community members around the school will appreciate this opportunity for their children to learn from a curriculum that has been modified according to their specific circumstances, rather than having to conform to a nationally standardised one. Furthermore, the policy assumes that community members are willing to participate in such activities voluntarily without any financial gain; and that there is resident in the community at least a minimum number of people necessary who are capable of designing a curriculum and offering instruction to pupils.

¹⁸ The other five learning areas defined in the new curriculum framework are (i) literacy and languages; (ii) integrated science; (iii) creative and technology studies; (iv) numeracy and mathematics; and (v) social and development studies. These five learning areas are to be included in the grade 7 national examinations, while the localised curriculum (community studies) will be included in the school-based system of continuous assessment (CDC 2005).

(iii) Contribution to School Resources

The broadening of the roles of parents and the local community in terms of school governance notwithstanding, one of the key areas of parental and community participation in the context of government basic schools remains resource mobilisation. As mentioned above, under the free education policy implemented in 2002, schools can no longer officially charge fees for those pupils in grades 1–7 (see section 3.4).¹⁹ However, the PTA has the discretion to raise funds for school projects on an ad hoc basis (MOE 2002).

The underlying assumption is that as a representative of the community, the PTA must be able to identify common needs, and accept and enforce basic rules for the governance of the mobilisation of resources for the school. It is thus assumed that each community is equipped with the resources and skills necessary to mobilise resources, while simultaneously utilising them transparently and effectively.

It is further assumed that the PTA will take into account the capacity of the community to contribute financially – especially with regard to those members on a low income – ensuring that its solicitations do not effectively exclude any child from the opportunity to go to school. If a PTA should lack such capacity, the policy makes provision for the school to seek approval from the PEO to raise funds unilaterally (MOE 2002). In addition, *EoF* grants the DEB the authority to positively discriminate on behalf of poor and vulnerable members of the community (MOE 1996a).

¹⁹ However, the free education policy does not extend to the upper basic level (grades 8–9).

(iv) The Choice of a School

It should be noted that the policy intention to strengthen collective community participation in the various areas of school governance is not intended to be at the expense of individual participation but in addition to it.²⁰ Similar to Suzuki's (2002, 2004) findings in her case study of Uganda, parents and guardians in Zambia are free to choose a school for their children regardless of where they live. Under the education liberalisation policy, parents now have a choice of institution to send their children to, not only from among government schools but also community and private schools.

As discussed in chapter 2, these two aspects of participation are inherently contradictory (see section 2.3.2.3). For allowing individual parental choice of school in their capacity as consumers of education services undermines the collective responsibility to develop local schools as engaged citizens. However, there is no mention of this potential contradiction in the series of policy papers.

3.5.3 PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL LEVEL (II) – COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The 'community school' is defined by the MOE as a school that is "a community based institution that meets the educational needs of children in a particular community", and its "management and organisation is in the hands of the community" (MOE 2007e:4).

²⁰ Farrell and Jones (2000) also observe in the context of the UK that community participation in school management is not promoted at the expense of individual freedom of choice in selecting a school for their children.

The number of community schools offering basic education had dramatically escalated: from 55 in 1992 to 2,708 by 2006 (MOE 2006a; MOE 2007e, table 3-2) with enrolment recorded at 495,563 in 2006 (MOE 2006a, table 3-3).

Table 3-2 The Number of Schools Classified as Basic by School Type (2006)

Government basic schools	4,547
Community schools	2,708
Grant-aided schools	371
Private schools	387

Source: MOE (2006a)

Table 3-3 Enrolment in Basic Education (Grades 1–9) by Type of School (2006)

Type of school	Enrolment	Percent Distribution
Government	2,435,662	76.9%
Grant-aided ²¹	131,393	4.1%
Community	495,563	15.7%
Private and church	103,692	3.3 %
Total	3,166,310	100 %

Source: MOE (2006a).

This rapid and massive growth in community schools has arisen from the response of ordinary Zambians to the unmet demand for schooling, as many children fail to gain access to government schools due to prohibitive distances and costs such as PTA fees and funds (DeStefano 2006; MOE 2001; MOE 2007c). Given such a background, it is understandable that the families of pupils in community schools have been found to be generally poorer than those of government school pupils, and that their educational attainment levels are also lower (Kanikya et al. 2005, cited in DeStefano 2006).

The low socio-economic background of the community school notwithstanding, parents and other citizens around these institutions are required to play a much bigger role than is

²¹ Grant-aided schools are run by churches but receive government subsidies (Carmody 2004).

expected of their counterparts in relation to government basic schools; mainly, though not exclusively, through their obligations to the PCSC²² (MOE 2001; ZCSS 2005).

3.5.3.1 THE COMPOSITION OF THE PCSC

The PCSC should be composed of elected parents and community members; the teachers serving the community school; and a representative of any NGO or community-based organisation supporting the school, if such assistance is available (MOE 2001; ZCSS 2005; MOE 2007c). However, no published guidelines or manual that I collected during my fieldwork provides any further details of the composition of the PCSC. Moreover, the length of tenure of each PCSC member is also unclear.

3.5.3.2 THE ANTICIPATED ROLE OF THE PCSC

Specific duties assigned to the PCSC, as set by a series of policy documents, include the following:

- (i) To enrol pupils of the appropriate ages.
- (ii) To provide land, materials and labour for school facilities.
- (iii) To identify volunteer teachers holding at least a secondary school leaving certificate.
- (iv) To hire, discipline and dismiss volunteer teachers as necessary.
- (v) To provide financial and moral support to volunteer teachers.
- (vi) To monitor teachers.
- (vii) To administer the school grant.²³

²² Before the late 1990s, it was generally simply known as the community school committee.

²³ According to an international consultant to community schools, 25 per cent of the grant was initially

(MOE 2001; ZCSS 2005, 2007*b*).

Thus, it is evident that a larger role in the governance of the school is expected of the PCSC of a community school than is the case with the PTA of a government school. In order to facilitate comparison between the two types of institution, the roles expected of the PCSC, and parents and local community in the management of the community school will be discussed in accordance with the four categories utilised for the analysis of community participation in the government school (see section 3.5.2.2).

(i) Participation in School Management

Unlike the government basic school, whose teachers are principally state employees under the management of the centralised Teacher Service Commission (TSC), in the case of the community school, the PCSC is expected to recruit volunteer teachers from the locality. Moreover, the PCSC is also expected to support these teachers, either financially and/or in kind; and has the authority to discipline or dismiss any teachers who do not meet the standards set by the school (MOE 2001; MOE 2007*c*).

Community schools registered with the MOE are entitled to receive a grant from the ministry just as government basic schools do.²⁴ As is the case with the latter, parents and community members are expected to monitor the use of the grant through their representatives on the PCSC, in order to enhance transparency and the judicious use of limited resources (ZCSS

earmarked for teachers' salaries, the payment of which was subsequently withdrawn (Interview-V).

²⁴ Grant allocation to the community school is based mainly on pupil population, ignoring other factors driving school overheads, such as distance from the DEB and the number of available teachers, for example (MOE 2007*c*).

2005; MOE 2007c).

Policy documents make no mention of whether the community school is also expected to develop a school AWPB, which may be a reflection of its ambiguous status in the public education system. However, interviews with key policy officials at the national level mainly suggest that the community school *is* required to develop an AWPB in a participatory manner, which is then to be submitted to the DEB (Interview-ME1; ME2; ME3; ME4).

It may be argued that the policy generally assumes that parents and other citizens around the community school are willing and able to play such a diverse managerial and planning role in a collective, democratic and transparent manner.

(ii) Participation in the Development and Implementation of a Localised Curriculum

Again, in contrast to the case with the government school, the community's role in curriculum development is not explicitly stated in the policy. Initially, many community schools followed the Skills, Participation and Access to Relevant Knowledge (SPARK) curriculum developed by UNICEF, which compresses the seven grades of the formal primary education cycle into four years and focuses on life skills development (ZCSS 2005). However, the new *Strategic Framework for Community Schools* (MOE 2007e) stipulates a shift from the SPARK curriculum to the Government of Zambia basic education curriculum. Since this framework directs the community to participate in the development and implementation of a localised curriculum (see section 3.5.2.2-(ii)), theoretically, the community around those community schools that adopt the government curriculum are required to participate in curriculum design and implementation as one of the six learning areas.

(iii) Contribution to School Resources

In terms of contribution to school resources, a wider and more intense role and area of responsibility is expected of parents and local citizens in the community school than in the government school. The guidelines stipulate that infrastructural development such as the provision of land, and the construction of classrooms, water points and teachers' accommodation are all the responsibility of the community rather than the state (MOE 2001; MOE 2007c).

Thus, the underlying policy assumption is that parents and the local community are able and willing to mobilise the resources necessary for the establishment and operation of their school; and this in spite of the fact that a whole series of policies and guidelines acknowledge the low socio-economic background of the families obliged to send their children to such schools.

(iv) The Choice of A School

In *EoF*, the policy discourse repeatedly emphasises that the liberalisation of education is aimed at enabling various non-state actors to open and operate schools, which, in turn, enhances parental rights in terms of school of choice (see section 3.4). In this regard, the advent of the community school is intended to increase parental choice, with the underlying assumption that all parents are able to exercise such choice freely.

3.5.3.3 THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

While parents and other citizens around the community school have been burdened with numerous roles and responsibilities, government expression of commitment to support such schools notwithstanding, the extent of its responsibility has been ambiguous from the outset (MOE 1996a).

The rapid mushrooming of community schools combined with the initial absence of formal government support led to the creation of the Zambia Community Schools Secretariat (ZCSS) in 1997, an umbrella organisation that coordinated community school governance with support from UNICEF, various NGOs partners – and the MOE. Government support to the community school was then formalised through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed with the ZCSS in 1998 and 2001 (Sikwibele 2002).

In the MOU, the ministry recognises the ZCSS as the umbrella organisation for the coordination of the community school, which is recognised as a complementary service to that provided by existing state and private schools. Accordingly, the MOE agreed to assist the community schools to access funds; to provide textbooks and learning materials through the ZCSS; and to finance the salaries of an agreed number of teachers. The MOE seconded so-called ‘focal point persons’ (FPPs) to the provincial level to implement ZCSS programmes (MOE 2007c). However, former FPP in the Copperbelt reported that in a context of few independent resources and the relatively low status of the FPPs,²⁵ their operations were reportedly dependent on the goodwill of the PEO, and eventually lapsed into inertia

²⁵Most FPPs were government teachers, and thus had lower educational qualifications than PEO officials, who often had university degrees (Former FPP in the Copperbelt).

(Interview-FPP).²⁶

In 2006, the ZCSS ceased to function due to various management problems, which raises the question of the sustainability of any umbrella organisation heavily reliant on external resources. Meanwhile, the dissolution the ZCCS finally prompted the government to formally announce that it would embrace the community school at all levels of government operations and develop its own operational guidelines for such institutions (MOE 2007c), spelling out the procedures and requirements that community schools should comply with in order to access government support. These new guidelines are one step forward; nevertheless, the government continues to maintain that the prime responsibility for the development of the community school rests with the community itself (MOE 2007c).

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter highlighted the significance of the socio-economic and political contexts that have influenced policy vision in terms of the changing role of the state and the community in basic education over time. Specifically, it illuminated the policy transition from state control in the immediate post-independence era to a more decentralised and liberalised system with strong emphasis on community participation, which was considerably influenced by the global education discourse at the time.

The reading of major policy documents and interviews with key MOE officials identified the

²⁶ The former FPP in the Copperbelt reported that the PEO had frequently denied him the use of the office vehicle for visiting community schools and delivering education materials, which curtailed his planned activities. According to this FPP, many officers at the PEO regarded community schools as second-class citizens, thus not meriting government support.

various roles attached to parents and the wider community, both at the district level through the establishment of the DEB and at the school level; mostly through the PTA in the case of government schools and the PCSC in community schools.

At the district level, the main roles attached to community representatives (the governance body) were established as (i) participation in the formulation of local education policy; (ii) adoption and review of a district plan (the AWPB); and (iii) the monitoring of AWPB implementation. At the school level (both government and community), the main roles of parents and local community members as a group were identified as (i) participation in school management; (ii) participation in the development and implementation of a localised curriculum; and (iii) contribution to school resources.

The chapter revealed that management roles subsequently attached to parents and other citizens around the community school are more wide ranging than those of their counterparts in respect of the government school; and include the recruitment of local volunteer teachers, responsibility for their remuneration (financial and/or in-kind), monitoring, disciplining, and dismissal as necessary.

Through these measures, policy has generally tended to increase public accountability in education, although cost sharing remains a key aspect of community participation. However, the general accent on community participation in local education governance runs parallel to an equal emphasis on parental choice. Under the current policy, parents as individuals are implicitly expected to decide where to send their children for their education with regard to both types of school.

The next chapter (chapter 4) describes the district and schools in which the study was

conducted. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 then investigate the extent to which such a policy vision has unfolded in practice at different levels.

CHAPTER 4 CONTEXTS OF STUDY DISTRICT AND SCHOOLS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the socio-economic and education characteristics of the case district, as well as those of the three case study government schools and the three case study community schools. First, I describe the socio-economic background of the case district, and locate it in a historical context. I then present an education profile of the district, particularly in terms of the different types of school; major education statistics; mechanisms for supporting community schools; and the availability of external assistance to the basic education sector. Second, the characteristics of the three case study government schools, and the socio-economic and geographical backgrounds of the surrounding communities are described. Third, the characteristics of the three case study community schools, their historical background, and the socio-economic and geographical backgrounds of the surrounding communities are presented.

4.2 PROFILE OF MASAITI DISTRICT

4.2.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Masaiti is one of ten districts in the Copperbelt and covers an area of 29,016 square kilometres. It is bordered by six other districts, namely Luansha and Ndola to the north; Mkushi to the southeast; Kapiri to the south; Mpongwe to the southwest; and Lufwanyama to the west. It also shares an international frontier with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to the east.

The primary means of livelihood in the district is subsistence farming, supplemented by seasonal small-scale cash crop production and charcoal burning for sale as fuel. Ninety per cent of those engaged in the agricultural sector are subsistence farmers, medium-scale and commercial farmers only accounting for ten per cent of the population (Government of Zambia 2006*b*). The district has no commercial industry and those engaged in formal, regularly paid work only amount to the five per cent of the population who are employed by various state departments and teachers (Government of Zambia 2006*b*).

According to the 2000 census, the district has a population of 100,252. The main ethnic group is the Lamba. There are also various minorities, including the Bemba, Tonga and Shona, who have mostly migrated to the area after retirement or redundancy from the copper mines. The Lamba, who occupied the mining centre of the Copperbelt at the turn of the century, were expelled to the periphery – away from the growing urban centre – during the first quarter of the 20th century, due partly to land appropriation (Siegel 1989). Colonisers subsequently ‘imported’ mine labours from other regions (*ibid*). The Lamba then mostly turned to subsistence farming, piecework or employment in service to Westerners (*ibid*).

Such division of labour based on ethnicity is reported to have fostered the stereotypical view of the Lamba. According to Seigel (1989), not only Europeans but also African townfolk of the Copperbelt developed a view of the Lamba as ‘lazy country bumpkins.’ Nor was the Lamba the prime target of Western missionaries in their evangelism for some time (*ibid*).

The consequences of such neglect include the general absence of Western-type formal schooling opportunities in the rural Copperbelt. As a result, the percentage of the population with such an educational experience in the district is limited compared to the country as a

whole. Thus, qualified teachers on the government payroll in Masaiti have traditionally been mostly non-Lamba from other districts, especially urban areas.

Villages tend to be small and scattered over vast areas. Social life is influenced by traditional values and institutional organisation. Witchcraft is practiced and feared considerably among the Lamba (Nettl 1956). The district is served by three chiefs, who are assisted by advisors and village headmen and women. Chiefs have the authority to allocate land and are highly respected and much feared. Disobedience is a prime offence among the Lamba (ibid 1956: 29).

4.2.2 EDUCATION PROFILE

There are three types of school offering basic education in the district – government, community and private. At the time of the fieldwork, there were 40 government basic schools. Despite the new policy of a 9-year basic education cycle, only 20 per cent of them offered the full range of classes for grades 1–9; while 80 per cent only offered classes up to grade 7, mainly due to a shortage of classrooms and teachers (Masaiti District Education Board (DEB) Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB) 2008). There were also 42 community schools that were recognised by the government through the DEB, but as many as 10 of them only offered grades 1–4. Many new community schools are established each year, while some have closed down without notification from the DEB (Interview-DM4).

In 2005, the net enrolment ratio²⁷ for grades 1–7 was 97.91 per cent, while that for grades

²⁷ Enrolment of the official age group in each grade expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population.

8–9 was 89.77 per cent (Masaiti DEB 2007). The high rate at grades 1–7 may be due to the government free education policy for these grades. However, the completion rate at grade 7 expressed as percentage of school age population for that grade was 75.75 per cent, and the completion rate at grade 9 was as low as 34.78 per cent in the same year (*ibid*), suggesting that many pupils dropped out of school before completing the 9-year basic education cycle.

There is a critical shortage of teaching staff in the district. In 2005, the pupil to teacher ratio (PTR)²⁸ was 78:1 for grades 1–4; 39.5 for grades 5–7; and 34.6 for grades 8–9 (Masaiti DEB 2006). However, unfortunately, this data has been not disaggregated according to type of school.

Some villages are at great distance from the nearest school. Given the vast area of the district, some schools are also located a long way from the DEB. Out of 40 government basic schools, as many as 6 are more than 100 kilometres away from the DEB, making two-way communication a real challenge (Interview-DEBS; DM4).

The District Education Board secretary (DEBS) claimed that all community schools in the district should be twinned with a nearby government school, known as a ‘mother school’ (Interview-DEBS). As maintained by the DEBS, at least one qualified teacher on the government payroll should be seconded to a community school from its mother school, which is also expected to provide as much moral and material support as possible. This twinning system was reported to have been initiated in the district by a DEBS in the early 1990s, and had continued thereafter (Interview-DEBS; FPP; V).²⁹ However, this system of support to the

²⁸ Average number of students per teacher.

²⁹ Irabishohoje et al. (2000) note that the system of twinning a community school with a nearby government school has been adopted in several districts of the Copperbelt; a practice often termed the ‘annex system’.

community school appears to be practiced only in the Copperbelt and has not been implemented nationwide (Interview-V1).

To complement what government support there is, a few NGOs and foreign donors provide some financial, material and capacity building support to a small number of selected community schools in the district, although they do not directly run them. Two major donors assist the community schools Masaiti – CARE International and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); the latter, through programmes called CHANGES (Community Health and Nutrition, Gender and Education Support Program) 2 and Quality Education Services Through Technology (QUESTT).

These donors provide grants for infrastructure development such as classroom construction; in-service training for volunteer teachers; and managerial training for teachers and parent community school committee (PCSC) executive members. In addition, CARE International provides school leaders and principal community members with psychosocial care to be trained as care providers, as well as bicycles for volunteer teachers. At the same time, USAID, under QUEST, provides scholarships to a total of ten volunteer teachers in the district for enrolment on a distance learning course offered by a teacher training college (this support is discussed in more detail in chapter 7.4.1).

The privatisation policy notwithstanding, there is only one private school offering basic education in the district, which is run by a South African missionary targeting the children of his/her compatriots working for the mission. However, there were now several private community schools in the adjacent urban districts (Luansha and Ndola) offering basic education, to which some families in the districts send their children. The parental choice of

these private schools will be discussed in 6.6.2.

4.2.3 THE DISTRICT EDUCATION BOARD

The DEB was established in Masaiti district in 1995, through statutory instrument No. 164 under the Education Act (Government of Zambia 1995), when it was still part of Ndola Rural District. The DEB replaced the previous District Education Office (DEO), which had only been staffed by education officials employed by the central Ministry of Education (MOE).

The newly established DEB comprises both governance body members and a management team (see chapter 3.5.1.2). The composition of the governance body is presented and its selection process discussed in detail in chapter 8. The management team of Masaiti DEB is composed of 21 officers on the MOE payroll, mostly former secondary or basic school teachers, as listed below:

- One District Education Board secretary (DEBS)
- One district education standards officer (DESO)
- Three education standards officers
- One district planning officer (DPO)
- One assistant statistics officer
- One human resources officer (HRO)
- Two assistant human resources officers
- One district building officer (DBO)
- One assistant building officer
- One district accountant officer
- One assistant accountant

- One district resource centre coordinator (DRCC)
- One assistant district resource centre coordinator
- One typist
- One officer orderly
- One driver
- One painter
- One watchman

The district is vast and education service delivery is not very easy to manage (Interview-DEBS). Furthermore, there are no telecommunications facilities either at the DEB or at any of the basic schools in the district.

The three office vehicles serve as the main means of communication. However, they are very old and unable to withstand the poor road conditions. They are also expensive to run, as they consume a lot of lubricant, are always breaking down and need constant maintenance (Interview-DEBS).

4.3 PROFILE OF CASE STUDY GOVERNMENT BASIC SCHOOLS

The following sections describe the profiles of the three case study government basic schools and their surrounding communities. Further details of each school (e.g. facilities, numbers of pupils and teachers, and examination pass rates) are provided in appendix 4-1.

4.3.1 CHULU BASIC SCHOOL

Chulu Basic School is located in the district capital and a small market area. It is the closest school to the DEB, being only a three-minute walk away. Both the PTA chairman and the head teacher of this school are members of the DEB governance body (see chapter 8.2.1 and 8.2.3 for further details).

The school catchment area is mainly composed of three different regions: 1) a government compound in which teachers, government officers and police officers reside; 2) a residential area that is mostly home to retirees, including those retrenched from the local copper mine; and 3) about fifty small villages. The majority of those living in the government compounds are non-Lamba, while those living in the villages are mostly Lamba. The officers living in the government compound tend to stay in the area for a few years, after which they are transferred to other districts. Accordingly, although they are among the few people earning a regular income in the catchment, it was found that many police officers were reluctant to contribute to school income. This point is dealt with in more detail in chapter 6.2.5 – (ii).

Villagers mostly engage in subsistence farming and the small-scale production of vegetables for sale.

The school infrastructure and furniture are most well maintained. Even so, some windows are broken and there is an acute shortage of classrooms, furniture and teacher's accommodation.

The fact that it enjoys the most economically and geographically advantageous location of all the schools under study notwithstanding, Chulu Basic School suffered poor examination

results up to 2006. The previous head teacher was ill during his tenure, which meant that he seldom attended to school business and the level of management was poor. However, the new head teacher, who was transferred from an urban secondary school 2006, is committed and has effective management skills. For example, he has a policy of stricter discipline in cases of absenteeism and lateness amongst pupils and teachers alike. Parents interviewed generally attributed the remarkable improvement in examination results in 2008 to the leadership of the new head teacher. This point will be further discussed in chapter 6.6.2.

4.3.2 LUKASI BASIC SCHOOL

Lukasi Basic School is located on the tarred road that connects it with Ndola and Lusaka. The school is some considerable distance from the DEB and therefore communication between the teachers and the office is poor.

The population mostly engages in subsistence farming, small-scale vegetable production and charcoal burning. There are a few large-scale commercial farmers, some of whom are White Zambians who send their children to private school in urban areas.

In recent years, prostitution and the illegal sale of fuel have escalated along the Lusaka–Ndola road; and many people and even children are reportedly engaged in such illegal economic activities.

Most of the population in the school catchment area is Lamba, but there are also other tribes who have mostly migrated to the area after retirement or retrenchment in urban areas.

School infrastructure is in poor condition with many broken windows (see picture 4-1). One of the classrooms is very old and does not have a hard floor (see picture 4-2). There is also an acute shortage of desks and chairs, and many pupils who arrive late have to sit on the floor.

Picture 4-1

A classroom block with broken windows in Lukasi



Picture 4-2

A classroom in Lukasi without a hard floor



4.3.3 MUTANDE BASIC SCHOOL

Mutande Basic School is located in a remote rural area over five kilometres from the tarred road. Agricultural productivity is low, mostly due to poor sandy soil combined with a lack of fertiliser.

The catchment comprises a number of scattered villages that are a long way apart. Houses are mostly made of mud brick with grass thatch roofs; a few dwellings are constructed from fired brick with iron sheet roofs.

Mutande Basic School was found to have the most dilapidated infrastructure and furniture of the three government schools under study. Very few children wore uniform or shoes, or possessed proper school satchels, most of them having to make do with old plastic bags. Many pupils did not have any exercise books or pens either.

The management capacity of the head teacher seemed to be low. When at school, he mostly stayed in his office, seldom visiting the classrooms or monitoring lessons. Information on the school grant and composition of the PTA displayed on his office wall was out of date.

4.4 PROFILE OF CASE STUDY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The following sections describe the profiles of the three case study community schools and their surrounding communities. As with the government schools, the details of each community school (e.g. facilities, numbers of pupils and teachers, and examination pass

rates) are provided in appendix 4-1.

Picture 4-3

A classroom with broken desks and chairs in Mutande



4.4.1 FIFUGO COMMUNITY SHCOOL

Fifugo Community School is located at the top of a hill about five kilometres from the tarred road. In spite of its remoteness, the school catchment area is endowed with reasonably fertile agricultural land and an area of shallow wetland. This, together with field interviews and observations, suggests that the community around Fifugo is economically better off than the other two community school catchments under study.

The school was founded by a local NGO run by a foreign Catholic mission, which mobilised the local community to build a bamboo hut for the establishment of a school to accommodate school-age children who did not otherwise have access on account of the prohibitive distance to the nearest government school (see picture 4-4). The mission found a man living locally who agreed to be the school's volunteer teacher in return for a modest allowance. However, the mission withdrew after a few years and the teacher also left the school.

In 1996, the then District Education Office (DEO) dispatched two untrained teachers on the government payroll to the school, but they also soon left when the government stopped employing untrained teachers directly. This prompted the local community to attempt to recruit a volunteer teacher itself, but it failed to find anyone willing to work without payment. Consequently, the school ceased operation from 1996 to 1999. In 1999, a farmer revived the school as its new volunteer teacher and a few others followed his example, although the turnover rate was high.

In 2006, USAID began to sponsor two volunteer teachers to take a teacher training course by distance learning.

The school also received infrastructure development grants from USAID through its Changes 2 programme; CARE International; a Chinese NGO called African brothers; and the MOE. The classroom block funded jointly by USAID, CARE International and the MOE was still under construction at the time of the fieldwork, most classes being held in half-built classrooms that did not have any walls or furniture (see picture 4-5).

In 2006, a nearby government school – known as a ‘mother school’ (see section 4.2.2) – seconded one of its teachers to Fifugo to work as its ‘teacher in charge’, supervising the volunteers while also acting as an additional teaching resource. With the prospect of infrastructure development, the DEB promised that Fifugo would be upgraded to a government basic school. However, according to the teacher in charge, the process had been delayed.

Picture 4-4

A bamboo hut (classroom) built by the community in Fifugo

**Picture 4-5**

A class in operation in the classroom block under construction in Fifugo funded jointly by USAID, CARE and the MOE



4.4.2 PULOFA COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Pulofa Community School is located in deep forest seven kilometres from the paved road.

The population is mostly Lamba but there are also a few non-Lamba, who settled in the area

after being retrenched in copper-producing towns. Villagers mostly engage in subsistence farming and charcoal burning.

Pulofa was founded as a private school by a retired teacher. However, as parents failed to pay any fees, it was unable to continue running and many school-age children were left without a school to go to because the nearest government one was too far away. The deputy head teacher from the nearest government school (mother school) then advised the community to run the school by itself by hiring local volunteer teachers.

A well-educated family who administered a Baptist church in the locality then started a school in the church. The volunteer teachers serving in the school mostly came from this same family, while its PCSC was also long dominated by the family, under which resource management lacked transparency.

In 2006, a person outside this family was elected as PCSC chairman by secret ballot. Under his leadership, the community managed to build a two-classroom block made of mud brick (see picture 4-6). The significance of the secret ballot in respect of PCSC elections is discussed further in chapter 7.4.2.

In 2007, the school secured an infrastructure grant from CARE International to build another two-classroom block (see picture 4-7). However, the new block was still under construction at the time of the fieldwork and some classes were being held under a tree and others in the nearby church (see picture 4-8).

In the same year, the nearby government school adopted the role of mother school and seconded one of its senior teachers to Pulofa as its teacher in charge. In addition, USAID

also awarded four of Pulofa's volunteer teachers distance learning teacher training scholarships.

CARE International has also provided managerial training for PCSC executive members, as well as psychosocial care training for these and other villagers so that they might become care providers. Volunteer teachers and care providers have also been given bicycles by CARE.

Picture 4-6

A two-classroom block made of mud brick in Pulofa built by parents and local community members



Picture 4-7

A two-classroom block under construction in Pulofa funded by CARE International



Picture 4-8
Grade 5 class in operation under a tree in Pulofa



4.4.3 NKAMBE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Nkambe Community School is the remotest of all the schools under study, being situated more than 20 kilometres from a paved road. Due in part to such isolation and the poor quality of even this road, officials from the DEB had never been to this school before I started my fieldwork. Teachers at the nearest government school (mother school) also rarely visit.

Most of the population is engaged in subsistence farming. However, the soil is not very fertile and agricultural productivity consequently relies heavily on the availability of fertiliser. Ethnically, the majority is Lamba, while other tribes are also found. Most houses are made of unfired bricks of clay that is dug out of the anthills.

The school was founded by a church elder in order to serve out-of-school children, as the nearest government school was too far away for many of them to get to. A village headman donated part of his land for the school. The founder asked a church member who had

completed grade 9 to be the volunteer teacher, and he has been serving at the school ever since. Nevertheless, owing to an acute shortage of teachers, the school has only been able to offer grades 1–4 to date. A qualified teacher has not been seconded from a mother school, unlike other two community schools under study.

A classroom block was once built through community contribution, but it collapsed during the rainy season in 2007 (see picture 4-9); which prompted the running of the school in the local church. During my fieldwork, I observed that there were no desks in the church. There were no proper chairs either and the children simply sat on the blocks (see picture 4-10). Since there was only one teacher covering all four grades, classes were taught on a multi-grade basis; although the teacher was frequently absent, leaving the children completely unattended for hours on end (see picture 4-11).

Unlike the other two community schools under study, the support this school has received from donors has been extremely minimal despite its highest vulnerability among all the other community schools under the study.

In 2006, a legal wrangle involving the school erupted, whereby a villager claimed that part of the school land in fact belonged to him. As a result, some people withdrew their children from the school because they thought it would be closed in the near future.

Picture 4-9
A collapsed school building in Nkambe



Picture 4-10
A church building temporarily used as a school in Nkambe



Picture 4-11
Children wander around the school premises unsupervised at Nkambe



4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter offered a brief description of the socio-economic, geographical and historical background of the case district, as well as the case government schools and community schools. It illuminated the potential challenges facing the DEB in conducting its delegated responsibilities, given the vast areas it has to cover with limited logistical means. It also highlighted the difference in ethnicity between the majority of the population of Masaiti and those teachers on the government payroll.

The socio-economic backgrounds of the different school communities were presented. The three case community schools were located in their respective remote areas and their establishment for the service of children unable to reach government schools was discussed, together with the unique history of how each school was founded and run.

The chapter briefly discussed the difficulty that each community faced in recruiting and maintaining volunteer teachers for community schools, and the ad hoc nature of the deployment of trained teachers on the government payroll to these schools.

These contextual factors are taken into consideration in the analysis of community participation in government basic schools; in community schools; and at the DEB, and their effects on accountability are examined in chapters 6, 7 and 8 respectively.

CHAPTER 5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the methodological paradigm of the study and identifies key strategies, including the techniques utilised for both data collection and analysis. The research paradigm and strategies have been designed to best answer the research questions presented in chapter 1. The first section addresses the research paradigm that underpins this study both ontologically and epistemologically. It is followed by the discussion of the strategy adopted to answer the research questions. The issues of researcher identity are clarified in the second section. The third section considers the methods of data collection and analysis employed at micro and macro levels. Finally, objectivity, reliability, validity and the ethics of the study will be discussed.

5.2 RESEARCH PARADIGMS AND STRATEGY

This section discusses the perspectives on research paradigms – i.e. ontology and epistemology – that guide my research process.

Ontology is concerned with the kind of entity we think the social world is (Dunne et al. 2005), and inevitably involves debate about the relationship between society and the individual. Although there is a wide variety of arguments on ontology, its simplified dual paradigms can be divided into objectivism and constructivism, with the former asserting that social phenomena has an existence independent of social actors; while the latter suggests that the social world is continually determined by social actors (Bryman 2004). An early extreme

objectivist view was expressed by Durkheim (1938): “the system formed by their association represents a specific reality which has its own characteristics” (ibid: 103).

I do not think individual actors – without whom the social world cannot exist – are passive agents but rather active agents who constantly influence the characteristics of the social world. Thus, I do not agree with extreme objectivism, which suggests that society exists independent of and external to individual social actors. Yet, I also tend to think that although individual actors are able to act consciously to change their social world, their actions and perceptions cannot be independent of the society in which they live, which is historically constituted, and created and recreated by individual actors. Accordingly, I believe that the individual’s ability to act on and interpret the social world is to a certain extent constrained by various social, cultural and political factors. Consequently, my ontological position is located neither at the extreme objectivism end nor at the extreme constructionist end of the debate but somewhere in the middle. This is consistent with the premise of the present study that community participation in education in practice, and its influence on market and public accountability is influenced by the unique perceptions and social experiences of the various actors involved at the local level. The study is also premised on the notion that their unique perceptions and experiences are, in turn, constructed by the specific historical, social, cultural, political and geographical realities they live in.

The way in which researchers apprehend such a social world is the next question to be answered, which concerns epistemology. There is also extensive debate concerning this perspective. In its most simplified dualistic form, on the one hand, Durkheim argued that the social scientist must study social phenomena “in the same state of mind as the physicist, chemist or physiologist” (Durkheim 1964: xiv, cited in May 2001: 10); thus, defining the level of our obtainable knowledge in the same way as that of natural science, and trying to explain

human behaviour in terms of cause and effect (May op. cit.: 10–11). On the other hand, the interpretive approach in its extreme form argues that social science should focus on the meaning people give to an environment, not the environment itself, since the only thing we can know with certainty is how people interpret the world around them. For example, Shuttz (1962) states:

The world of nature as explored by the natural scientist does not ‘mean’ anything to molecules, atoms and electrons. But the observational field of the social scientist – social reality – has a specific meaning and relevance structure for the beings living, acting, and thinking within it...The thought objects constructed by the social scientist, in order to grasp this social reality, have to be founded upon the thought objects constructed by the common-sense thinking of men, living their daily life within the social world (ibid: 59).

I agree with the interpretivist view that social science, whose subject matter is people and their institutions, is fundamentally different from natural science (Bryman 2004: 13), and, as such, it is difficult to apply the logic of the latter to the former in exactly the same way.

Furthermore, since I am part of such a social world myself, my account of the society under study is inevitably filtered by my version of reality, which is in turn influenced by my unique identity and upbringing, culture and experiences. In this way, I acknowledge that I am constantly implicated in the knowledge production process of the study. The issue of researcher identity will be discussed in the next section.

However, the unfeasibility of being value free in research should not undermine the desirability of working towards the avoidance of solipsism. I believe that researchers should strive to rigorously investigate how events actually occur in the social world in question, in its specific context, without necessarily trying to uncover a static set of law-like regulations underlying such phenomena. Accordingly, the epistemological paradigms employed in this

study are largely interpretive, although they do not necessarily abandon the aspiration of working towards rigorous social inquiry.

The above discussion on epistemology and its value in research requires the further identification of the way in which the researcher approaches the subjective realities of the researched. This concerns the issue of the 'double hermeneutic' (Giddens 1984, cited in May 2001: 38) – the question of “whether we can have a theory of social life which does not take full account of people’s experiences and understandings in everyday life” (May op. cit.).

The present study aims to grasp the meaning of community participation in basic education from the point of view of the different stakeholders under investigation, subjects that are influenced by a specific socio-economic, geographic, historical and cultural context. Moreover, the study assumes the positionality that the perceptions of the people being studied continuously and critically influence the policy processes of community participation in basic education.

Therefore, this study follows a phenomenological tradition, which suggests that just as social research should reflect the same everyday constructs that people use to interpret their social lives, social researchers should utilise the commonsensical methods that people employ in interpreting and interacting within their social environments (Schutz 1979, cited in May 2001: 41).

In order to achieve the purpose of this study, a qualitative approach has been adopted. As Cresswell (2003) notes, qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive and conducted in the natural setting, emergent rather than tightly prefigured, concerning a holistic world, iterative and simultaneous, and using multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic

(ibid: 182).

Indeed, the present study would appear to readily comply with the key characteristics of qualitative research provided by Cresswell (op. cit.). For it advocates observation of the natural setting as an important method; adopts a flexible strategy for the research process; is greatly concerned with context; and employs interactive and multiple methods in order to explore complex and dynamic policy processes in the specific context of contemporary Zambia. Finally, Cresswell encourages systematic self-reflection on the inquiry on the part of the researcher (op.cit.: 182), which also constitutes an element of the present study (the issue of reflexivity is discussed in 5.5).

5.3 ISSUES OF RESEARCHER IDENTITY

In qualitative study, the researcher is not an objective observer of social contexts and interaction but rather an inescapable part of the study throughout the process. It is thus important to come to terms with who the researcher is.

Before embarking on this study, I had the chance to live, study and work in several countries both in the North and the South. In each country – England, Cambodia and Zambia – I encountered different ways people perceive and behave, which are shaped by the different social norms, cultures, and socio-economic contexts in which they live. My job as a programme officer with UNICEF in Cambodia and that at the Embassy of Japan in Zambia as a special assistant to the Ambassador necessitated travel to different parts of each country, providing me with the opportunity to learn firsthand of variations in patterns of livelihood. These experiences have helped me to acknowledge socio-economic and cultural context as

an important influence on people's perceptions and behaviour.

My experience working for the Embassy of Japan in Zambia between 1999 and 2002 offered the opportunity to take part in numerous donor coordination meetings in the education sector; in which decentralisation and community participation in service delivery constituted one of the most highly prioritised items on the agenda for education reform, both for donor officials as well as those at the Ministry of Education (MOE). However, I had little prospect of understanding how such reform was perceived and received by actors on the ground, particularly in rural areas where the majority of the population of Zambia lives. This gap in my knowledge has principally informed my desire to embark on this study, to explore how policy intentions are being perceived, interpreted and received by various local actors.

It should be noted that when working for the Embassy of Japan in Zambia between 1999 and 2002, without knowing what was actually happening on the ground, I was already convinced of the value of community participation in education and its various positive effects. I remained mindful of this preconceived notion and its potential influence on the research design and study findings, as Lietz et al. (2006) advise. As one way of restoring a sense of balance, I kept a research journal throughout the study, recording my feelings and reflections on this issue in order to constantly remind myself of my potentially arrogant high-mindedness, and to ensure that the perspectives of the research participants were authentically recorded and represented in the findings.

My positioning in the research setting – a Japanese woman embarking on her doctoral research at a Western university with a scholarship from the Government of Japan – appears hugely different from that of the researched – not only parents and local community members, who were mostly poor subsistent Zambian farmers with limited education, but also both

qualified and unqualified teachers, and district officials, many of whom were struggling with the trials of their daily duties while living in a rural area.

In the field, although I was Asian, I was almost always regarded as a *muzungu* – a white person – in spite of my skin colour; from their point of view, I was a *muzungu* from the home of technology – Japan. It is therefore possible that some respondents would have been intimidated at being interviewed by an educated *muzungu* and wrongly felt that they were obliged to give me what they perceived to be the ‘correct answers’.

I therefore remained constantly mindful of the effect that my positioning in the research setting might have on my informants. I strived to balance the inequalities between us, primarily by creating an empathy with the experiences of the informants and immersing myself in their values, attitudes and experiences.

The strategies I adopted were the following: for the duration of the fieldwork, I tried to dress casually, and commuted to interview venues either on foot or by bicycle as much as possible, travelling up to ten kilometres a day. In each school community, I also made a point of getting out and about, to be seen as a familiar face, and actively sought opportunities to greet villagers – with the help of translators – thereby establishing a rapport with them. In return, I was sometimes invited to people’s homes and offered roasted maize, which I ate with them over informal chat, both in English as well as my basic local language with the help of my research assistants. Such encounters frequently resulted in much laughter, and I felt that these interactions helped create an important affinity between us.

When interviewing, too, I usually started with an informal chat. Exchanging personal accounts of family and married life with the researched often appeared to help narrow the

potential gap between us, and create a warm and informal atmosphere in which the following interview was more of a conversation than a question and answer session. Likewise, when interviewing teachers and district officials, we usually talked informally before the actual interview so that we could get to know each other, and establish trust and a rapport between us. In this way, I felt that the respondents grew willing to cooperate and share with me in an open manner the social world they experienced through their feelings and perceptions.

In order to further minimise the social differences between myself and the researched, I positioned myself as a foreign student who was eager to learn from the experiences of parents and local community members as much as possible. I also carefully explained not only the research aims but also the research process, and informed the participants of their role in it.

In this way, I felt that we achieved a rapport whereby the respondents sincerely wished to share their thoughts, experiences and feelings with regard to their participations of local education affairs with the *muzungu* student. Likewise, I felt that teachers and district officials were happy to tell me of their experiences in terms of participation in local education affairs and how they felt about them. One teacher actually said, “We are pleased to share with you, whatever our experiences and plight, since no one seems to listen to our voices, the Province, the [MOE] headquarters.”

These strategies for curtailing obvious and avoidable sources of misunderstanding notwithstanding, one cannot completely eliminate researcher bias in qualitative research. Yet, I believe that it is important for the researcher to be mindful throughout the research process of such bias potentially created by her positioning in the setting; that is, she must be aware of how such a positioning may influence the nature and type of data collected, and strive to the

best of her ability to minimise it.

5.4 RESEARCH METHOD

5.4.1 A CASE STUDY

The present inquiry employs the case study as a research strategy. There are numerous, frequently contentious definitions of 'case study', but the following two designations seem useful. Yin (1994) defines 'case study' in terms of the research process as "...an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (ibid: 13).

Stake (1995) defines 'case study' in terms of both research scope and process, explaining that in such a study, the researcher explores in depth a programme, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. He goes on to note that case(s) are time and activity-bound, the researcher collecting detailed information using a variety of data gathering procedures over a sustained period (ibid).

The above definitions given by these two experts seem helpful in justifying the selection of my case study, given that the present inquiry aims to:

- 1) Explore the *processes* of community participation in basic education in a single district of Zambia, based on the *lived experiences of the different actors involved*
- 2) Explore the *processes* of community participation in basic education in Zambia in *unique political, socio-economic, historical, cultural and geographical contexts*, all

of which the researcher believes are powerful determinants of phenomena and therefore worth investigating

- 3) Explore the *processes* of community participation in basic education and their influence on accountability *in depth*
- 4) Draw on *multiple data collection* procedures, including textual analysis, semi-structured interviews, and observations in order to triangulate the findings

As repeatedly noted, the aim of this study is to illuminate how policy intervention in community participation affects the real-life behaviour of different stakeholders in a specific situation. In this sense, the study is particularistic and descriptive in nature. This leads us to the issue of how particularistic insights into the local level can be projected onto macro-level policies. The findings of my case study can hardly be formally generalised, but I believe that by employing the case study format, insights from micro-level realities can contribute to the development of knowledge in the field, since the manner in which propositions unfold in practice can be directly tested.

Flyvbjerg (2006) illuminates how the case study can advance knowledge accumulation, stating that the fact that "...knowledge cannot be formally generalized does not mean that it cannot enter into the collective process of knowledge accumulation in a given field or in a society" (ibid: 424).

Similarly, Merriam (1998) explores how the case study has the potential to inform policy and improve education practice:

Educational processes, problems, and programs can be examined to bring about understanding that in turn can affect and perhaps even improve practice. Case study has proven particularly useful for studying educational innovations, for

evaluating programs, and for informing policy (ibid: 41).

In concurring with these researchers, I believe that by adopting a case study strategy and through the insights to be gained from the grassroots level, my inquiry has the potential to inform policy-makers of more locally appropriate intervention.

Having chosen a case study strategy, the researcher must of course identify his or her case, although this is not as straightforward as it may appear. Indeed, the case can be an individual, or some event or entity such as a decision, a programme, an implementation procedure, or the process of organisational change (Yin 2003: 23). Given the research questions listed in section 1.2, the 'case' in this study will be *the policy and practice of community participation in basic education in Zambia*.

Having identified our case, the units of analysis must be selected. In this study, community participation in basic education is examined at both district and school levels, which is in line with current policy. Since the DEB at the district level; the parent teacher association (PTA) in the context of government basic schools; and the parent community school committee (PCSC) in the case of community schools are regarded as pivotal in community participation under current Zambian reform policy, the central units of analysis in this study are the DEBs, PTAs and PCSCs.

Stake (1995) distinguishes three types of case study as follows:

- 1) An *intrinsic case study* aims to apprehend a particular case on account of its uniqueness.
- 2) An *instrumental case study* aims to comprehend an issue or issues.
- 3) A *collective case study* is conducted when more than one case is under investigation (ibid).

The present study complies with the instrumental case study in Stake's typology, since it aims to comprehend an issue, that is, the policy process of parental and community participation and its influence on accountability.

As discussed earlier, in this case study, analysis is conducted at various levels; that is, at the national policy level (macro), district level (meso), and school level (micro). Thus, a multi-level case study design was adopted with the aim of revealing the gap between rhetoric and practice in the policy arena. Details of the data analysis strategy and process will be given in section 5.4.6.

5.4.2 PHASING OF FIELD RESEARCH

I conducted my fieldwork in two main phases: from August to November 2007, and from the end of January to June 2008. At the beginning of the first phase, I applied for and obtained research permission from the Ministry of Education (MOE). I also conducted interviews with officials at the MOE, the Ministry of Local Government and Housing (MLGH), and the Cabinet Office in order to obtain a broad understanding of the history of and rationale for decentralisation in general, and in education in particular.

I also collected key policy and legal documents, research papers, donor reports, and education statistics. I then visited the city of Ndola – the provincial capital of the Copperbelt – to interview the provincial education officer (PEO), and learn about his experience of education decentralisation and community participation in the province.

Next, I visited three rural districts in the Copperbelt with the intention of selecting two sample

districts for my study. However, after interviewing District Education Board secretaries (DEBS) and other officials, and several board members in all three districts, I discovered that they were all very much similar in terms of socio-economic, cultural and ethnic background, although of course there were some differences. Moreover, I learnt that the three had comprised a single district until 1998.

Given such preliminary findings, I felt that it would be more beneficial to limit the number of sample districts to one and expand my focus at the school level to community schools, rather than concentrating on government schools alone. For, I had learnt that community schools had grown in number and significance. Thus, after consultation with my supervisor, I decided to proceed with my revised plan.

Following this decision, I spent the remainder of the first phase concentrating on data collection in a single district, choosing sample schools and interviewing key stakeholders, both at the district and school level (see the following section for the selection criteria). I also observed annual PTA meetings – which were mostly held in December – at sample government basic schools as much as possible.

After preliminary data analysis and some time spent reflecting on the themes that had emerged during the first phase, I went back into the field in mid-January. Initially, I stayed in the capital for a few weeks, collecting policy documents, donor reports and Zambia Community Schools Secretariat (ZCCS) reports on community schools, in order to gain insight into the development of community schools and any potential issues related to their operation. I also interviewed key MOE headquarters (HQ) officials on state policy for community schools.

Based on emerging discrepancies – both at the district and school level – between policy assumptions and the practice of community participation, which I had determined from the first phase of my study, I conducted further interviews with key MOE officials in order to verify and validate first phase findings. I also attended the annual education sector review meeting in order to gain access to further diverse views at the macro level about the government's role in community schools, and the operation of these institutions in general.

I then returned to the study district, and conducted interviews with key stakeholders and observed meetings. In addition, I decided to make several household visits and interview key informants at the community level in order to obtain their views in a more private setting, which seemed to be conducive to discussion of the more sensitive issues.

The following two sections provide further details of my data collection method.

5.4.3 SAMPLING OF RESEARCH SITES

The selection of research sites – both at district and school level – within the selected district was conducted by means of a combination of convenience and purposive sampling, with the application of additional criteria developed from the research questions. Bryman (2004) notes that convenience sampling implies a procedure that is simply available to the researcher by virtue of its accessibility. The fact that schools are widely scattered in rural Zambia necessitates the employment of convenience sampling as the prime method in order to secure sufficient time for an in-depth study. Thus, population representativeness in the sample is not the principal concern of the present study. Nevertheless, according to Merriam (1998), purposive sampling puts the emphasis on information-rich cases from which a researcher can discover, apprehend and gain greater insight into issues crucial to the

investigation. Therefore, in this study, sampling criteria were developed according to the research questions rather by random selection.

5.4.3.1 SELECTION OF THE DISTRICT

The Copperbelt was chosen, because, following the inception of the pilot decentralisation project in 1996, it had the oldest established DEB.³⁰ In addition, I thought that the Copperbelt would provide some interesting insights as it then had several years' experience of the decentralised education system, both before and after the announcement of free lower and middle basic school education (grades 1–7) in 2002.

There are ten districts (Chilabombwe, Chingola, Kalulushi, Kitwe, Luansha, Lufwanyama Masaiti, Mpongwe, Mufulira and Ndola) in the Copperbelt. Three are rural (Masaiti, Mpongwe and Lufwanyama), while the remaining seven are urban copper-producing towns. Given the urban–rural disparity, which has been documented as an important factor affecting education development in Zambia (e.g. Das et al. 2004), I decided to concentrate on a rural district.

After preliminary visits to all three rural districts, I decided to focus on just one of them for the reasons mentioned in the previous section. Accordingly, I duly chose Masaiti as my study district, partly because I had the strongest rapport with its DEBS, who had shown the greatest support and willingness to host me, and I considered that such empathy would facilitate in-depth research for a relatively long period of time. In addition, I felt that Masaiti was the best choice given that it was the only rural district in the province that had taken part in the

³⁰ Subsequently, DEBs were set up in all the districts of Western, Southern, Lusaka and Northern provinces in 2001, and were established in the remaining five provinces by 2002.

decentralisation pilot project – until it was split into three districts in 1998.

5.4.3.2 SELECTION OF THE SCHOOLS

Six schools (three government and three community) were chosen as samples from the research district (table 5-1). Selection was made on the basis of a combination of convenience and purposive sampling (as mentioned earlier). The criterion for this was the assumption that such a combination might provide interesting variations of form and degree of community participation and school accountability. Consultation and permission for the selection of these schools were also sought from the DEBS.

The criteria for the selection of sample government schools are as follows:

- (a) Location (distance from the DEB office and tarred road)
- (b) Relation to DEB (whether or not school managers or PTA executives are members of the DEB)
- (c) Grades offered
- (d) Socio-economic status of the school community

The criteria for the selection of sample community schools are as follows:

- (a) Location (distance from the DEB office and tarred road)
- (b) Grades offered
- (c) Socio-economic status of the school community
- (d) Availability of external support

Table 5-1 Summary of Profiles of Sample Schools**Sample Government Basic Schools**

Name of School	Relation to DEB	Year of establishment	Location	Distance from DEB	Grades offered	Socio-economic status of community	Tribe
Chulu	PTA chair and head teacher DEB governance body members	1957	Rural but adjacent to a tarred road	0.5 km	G 1–9	Government workers, police officers, marketers, peasant farmers	Most cosmopolitan of three sample schools, although peasant farmers predominantly Lamba
Lukasi	No one directly appointed as DEB governance body member	1967	Rural but adjacent to a tarred road	72 km	G 1–9	Mainly peasant farmers; some engaged in recently booming roadside black economy (e.g. illegal sale of fuel and prostitution)	Mainly Lamba, together with other migrant tribes
Mutande	No one directly appointed as DEB governance body member	1944	Rural and remote	15 km	G 1–8	Mainly peasant farmers, with a few affluent commercial farmers	Predominantly Lamba, with some migrant tribes

Sample Community Schools

Name of school	Year of establishment	Location	Distance from DEB	Grades offered	External assistance	Socio-economic status of community	Tribe
Fifugo	1994	Rural and remote	21 km	G 1–7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Infrastructure development grant from CARE* and USAID** - Training for care providers from CARE - Training for PCSC members from CARE - 2 teachers sponsored by USAID for distance-learning teacher training 	Mostly peasant farmers	Mainly Lamba, with some migrant tribes
Pulofa	2000	Rural and remote	15 km	G 1–7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grant for Infrastructure development from Care and USAID - Training for care providers from CARE - Bicycles for teachers and care providers from CARE - Training for PCSC members from CARE - 4 teachers sponsored by USAID for distance-learning teacher training 	Mostly peasant farmers	Mainly Lamba, with some migrant tribes
Nkambe	2000	Rural and remote	35 km	G 1–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In-service teacher training provided by USAID 	Mostly peasant farmers	Mainly Lamba, with some migrant tribes

Notes:

Names of schools have been altered for anonymity.

* CARE International: (originally Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere), an international non-governmental organisation (INGO).

** USAID: United States Agency for International Development.

5.4.4 ISSUES OF LANGUAGE AND INTERPRETATION

In this study, a number of interviews and observations of meetings were conducted with the aid of interpreters in the local languages of Lamba and Bemba. I then recorded and transcribed interview and observation data onto computer with the aid of an interpreter. The resulting text therefore represented my understanding of what the interpreter had rendered in terms of the interviewees' perceptions. Thus, language played a fundamental role in my quest to reach some grasp of the cultural idiosyncrasies that underpinned human behaviour, a process that was beset with methodological and practical challenges.

Working within the interpretive paradigm, I support the view of Edwards (1998), and Temple and Young (2004), in that the interpreter's location within the social world forms part of the process of knowledge acquisition; and thus, "their roles in the research should be made explicit and be the subject of critical reflection" (op. cit.: 197). This raises questions around how the interpreter understands, constructs and construes the social world of the researched. Accordingly, exploration of the social identity of the interpreter is very important in this thesis. This involved interviewing potential interpreters before employing them to enquire about their backgrounds and relationships with research participants, and learn what issues they regarded as important in relation to the topics being addressed in the interviews.

Since the majority of the interviewees at the community level spoke Lamba as their mother tongue, I sought interpreters who were fluent in that language and also had a good command of English. Furthermore, I strived to seek interpreters whose social positioning was close to that of the majority of parents and the local community members, given that the people with whom I needed the help of interpreters were mostly Lamba by tribe and engaged in subsistence farming.

Finding such interpreters was, however, not an easy task. As many adults in Masaiti district had undergone limited formal education (see chapter 4), those who were conversant in both Lamba and English were quite rare. Moreover, the lack of job opportunities in Masaiti district prompted the limited number of bilingual Lamba to migrate to urban areas. I could have sought someone in Lusaka, to which many Lamba speakers with a good command of English had migrated. However, I looked for interpreters from either Masaiti district or from the nearby town because I wanted them to act as 'cultural brokers' as well to guide me in matters appertaining to local tradition.

Following the selection process, I recruited three interpreters, two of whom were female. One worked for me during the first phase of my fieldwork, while the other two offered their services during the second phase. Although all Lamba by birth, they also spoke fluent Bemba, which was the most widely spoken language in the Copperbelt.

There follow brief autobiographies of the three interpreters.

The first interpreter I hired was a woman with a college degree, who had grown up in another rural district of the Copperbelt and currently lived in the nearby town of Luansha where she ran her own beauty salon. She was the daughter of a former head teacher of a government primary school and had specialised in secretarial work at college. She had a fairly good command of English and a deep knowledge of the history of the Lamba and their traditional hierarchical system.

At first, I was concerned that her exposure to urban life might intimidate the genuine rural interviewees. I therefore had several sessions with her, discussing ways in which we could minimise the potential social distance between her and the researched. Owing to these

sessions, she became well aware herself of such a potential gulf and tried to narrow it as best she could, for example, by wearing a *chitenge*³¹ to each interview, and chatting with the interviewees to put them at ease before the formal discussion began.

Her efforts seemed to work, and a friendly and relaxed atmosphere was always created during the interview. However, unfortunately, as the fieldwork progressed, she fell ill due to high blood pressure and was eventually unable to continue her assignment. Thus, I had to look for another interpreter at the end of the first phase of my fieldwork.

I worked with two interpreters during the second phase. The first was male, a retired Zambia national army librarian who held a secondary school leaving certificate and engaged in small-scale farming as a means of supplementing the meagre pension he received from the government. He lived close to my guesthouse and was well respected in the neighbourhood for his honest and calm disposition. As a father of three children who attended the local government basic school, he was able to give many useful insights into the complex issues surrounding the relationship between parents and teachers in such schools. He also briefed me on the farming patterns of the locality, the economic hardships that many villagers faced, and the sensitive and complex nature of village life.

I also hired another female interpreter during the second phase. She was a farmer and occasional businesswoman, who produced and sold knitwear while also sometimes working as an interpreter for an American missionary. She held a secondary school leaving certificate and her command of English was the best of my three interpreters. Living in a remote village with her children and extended family, she provided a lot of valuable information, readily

³¹ A garment similar to sarong that is worn wrapped around the chest or waist by women in rural Zambia, as in most such areas of SSA.

giving her views on the intricacies of village life; the politics of the extended family; and local beliefs, values and social norms. Being divorced and raising four children on her own, she also shared with me the realities of being a woman and a divorcee in the rural setting in which a significant number of the parents in my sample lived.

Before commencing a round of interviews, I carefully trained my interpreters, which involved orientation on research aims; the research process and ethical considerations; the interpreter's positioning in the research setting; and the potential impact of this on the interview process and outcome. Pilot interviews were also conducted with each interpreter in order to identify potential pitfalls, and acknowledge and minimise such effects as much as possible.

I also spent a good deal of time with my interpreters, discussing the importance of identifying possible differences of linguistic construction between Lamba/Bemba and English. For literal equivalency in wording does not guarantee that the same meaning is also conveyed, as the connotations of words are not parallel across languages and cultures. Therefore, I went over the research questions and translated them into Lamba in such a way that they would convey my meaning in the interviewees' own language, in that specific cultural setting.

This exercise appeared to work very well. For example, during the pilot interviews, the male interpreter exhibited a lack of flexibility and creativity in his interpretation, translating English words literally into the local language, thus sometimes leading to the misunderstanding of interview questions by some respondents. Yet, after the orientation and a discussion with the help of other interpreters, he quickly improved his interpreting skills, developing much more creativity in his choice of words and phrases. However, I have to acknowledge that the extent to which there was a meeting of the two different worlds of language we inhabited was

limited.

Additionally, at the end of each day, I held a session with the interpreter to discuss any issues around the interviews regarding translation and his or her interaction with the researched in a specific social setting. They often captured the subtle cultural nuances attached to an interviewee's response that I could have easily overlooked if I had been on my own. For example, there were a few instances in which research participants said "nothing" when asked what they felt about the suspected misuse of school resources by the leaders. The interpreters explained to me that such a response did not necessarily mean that they had no feelings, but rather could signify that they tried not to feel anything because there was little they could do to remedy the situation. Thus, in such instances, I might try to probe deeper by asking them why they felt nothing, which often resulted in them sharing with me interesting and complex feelings.

To summarise, in the interests of increased validity, this section has discussed in detail the use of language, interpretation, and issues involved at the translation and transcription stages. Although I cannot claim that my interpreters fully represented the world of the researched, the important consideration is that both researcher and interpreter were reflexive and aware of the potential gulf.

5.4.5 DATA COLLECTION

In this section, the different methods of data collection that I employed in my study are introduced. In addition, the issues of language and a research assistant/interpreter in respect of my *modus operandi* are discussed.

Various data collection methods were employed in this study. My adoption of multi-level analysis meant that I was constantly obliged to move back and forth between different strata. For example, in-depth interviews with district officials and board members raised questions about the implications for school level, which prompted me to conduct further investigations at that level. A contrary procedure also prevailed in that observations and interviews at the school and village levels often compelled me to go back to the district and sometimes even to the central level.

(i) Interviews

The semi-structured interview was the main interview technique used in this study. It is believed that this mode of interviewing enables the researcher to compare the perspectives of different interviewees while still allowing a great deal of leeway on the part of the interviewee in how to reply (Kvale 1996; Cohen et al. 2000.). I conducted interviews with key stakeholders at all levels, using prepared guiding questions (see appendix 5-3 for sample interview questions). They were audio-recorded when the interviewee was in agreement, and transcribed into English later with the help of a research assistant while I took notes on points that had struck me at the same time.

At the central level, MOE officials were interviewed in order to gain their perceptions of the rationale and an impression of their expectations for education decentralisation and community participation in basic education at different levels. However, poor institutional memory at MOE HQ often meant that I had to organise my interviews around a limited number of key individuals.

MLGH and Cabinet Office officials were also interviewed in order to explore the degree of coherence or divergence between education decentralisation policies and those concerning devolution (decentralisation to district councils). This was deemed necessary as the existing research suggests a tendency for sectoral decentralisation reform to outpace local government reform in developing countries, frequently giving rise to confusion about the locus of authority (Romeo 2003).

In addition, representatives of international donors, the teacher's unions and civil society, some of whom had participated in the drafting of policy on education decentralisation and community participation, were interviewed in order to explore their views about the rationale for such policy and its anticipated effect.

At the provincial level, the provincial education officer (PEO) was interviewed in order to gain an insight into his experiences of decentralisation and community participation in basic education, as well as to obtain basic information on the education system and its implementation in the research district.

At the district level, DEB governance body members – who represented different interest groups – and district education officials were interviewed.

The key issues explored in interview at district level were as follows:

- The socio-economic and educational background of each member
- The selection criteria and process for the selection of governance body members

- Perceptions about the constituencies each governance body member represented
- Understanding of the roles of governance body members and district education officials respectively
- Respondents' experiences of participation in district education governance
- Perspectives on the decision-making process at the DEB
- Understanding of the relationship between the DEB, government schools and community schools on the one hand; and the DEB and central government on the other, with particular reference to the concept of accountability

At the school level, head teachers (the teacher in charge in the case of community schools); teachers (including volunteer teachers in the case of community schools); PTA and PCSC executive members; ordinary parents; and non-parent community members were all interviewed.

The key issues explored in interview at school level were as follows:

- The socio-economic and educational background of each member
- The selection criteria and process for the election of PTA and PCSC executive members respectively
- Understanding of the roles of parents, and members of the community, the PTA and PCSC
- Respondents' experiences of participation in school affairs and school governance
- Perspectives on the decision-making process in school

Purposive sampling allows the researcher to handpick cases to be included in the sample on the basis of judgement in respect of their typicality, thus serving her specific needs (Cohen et al. 2000: 103). Accordingly, the purposive sampling method was adopted in the cases of head teachers/teachers in charge, teachers, and PTA/PCSC executive members. Teachers were selected taking different features into consideration with the expectation that variation in gender, terms of employment (on government payroll or voluntary), and rank would provide interesting comparisons in terms of their perceptions of the school decision-making process.

The selection of ordinary parents was made in consultation with head teachers, asking them as far as possible to select interviewees from varying localities, socio-economic groups, and the full range of their children's grades. The selection of those community members who did not have children in school was made by means of the snowball sampling method, that is, existing participants recommended potential interviewees for inclusion in the study, who in turn made their own recommendations, and so on. Interviews were sometimes conducted individually, and at others in groups, depending on the issues to be discussed, the availability of interviewees and time constraints.

Although most of these interviews were in fact conducted in groups on practical grounds, such an arrangement did not seem to be very effective in terms of exploring sensitive issues, particularly where intra-community micro politics prevailed. Moreover, when interviewing groups of parents and guardians, I met men and women separately after the pilot interview, which suggested that women rarely spoke freely in front of men. These factors prompted me to make individual household visits to follow up on some sensitive topics that I wanted to explore further. In addition, I conducted individual interviews with key informants who were well acquainted with the history of the school and surrounding communities.

Since most of my interviews with parents were conducted in the local language, I carried them out with the assistance of an interpreter.

Kvale (1996: 13) explains that unstructured interviews have few pre-structured procedures, and many analyses of methodological decisions thus have to be made on the spot. At the school level, I conducted unstructured interviews in addition to semi-structured ones. As I did not guide the course of the discussion in an unstructured interview, some interesting information on key topics could be collected that a semi-structured interview might not have captured. I conducted these unstructured interviews during informal meetings with the various research participants. For example, I sometimes held them when I accompanied the DEBS and his colleagues into town and had an informal chat; or when I talked with villagers through the assistance of interpreters over a meal of roasted maize, which they often kindly prepared during my visit. A summary of sampled individual interviews is provided in table 5-2.

Table 5-2 Interview Samples

Level	Number of informants	
National	MOE	8
	MLGH	1
	Cabinet Office	1
Provincial	PEO	1
	Former FPP	1
District	Management team	7
	Governance body	13
School	Government basic schools	
	Head teachers	3
	Teachers	26 (16)
	PTA executive members	15 (9)
	Parents/guardians	43 (36)
	Non-parent community members (inclusive of ward councillor)	8
	Community schools	
	Head teachers and senior teachers of the mother school	4
	Teachers in charge seconded from the mother school	2
	Volunteer teachers (inclusive of former volunteer teachers)	15 (5)
	PCSC executive members	29 (19)
	Parents/guardians	35 (28)
	Non-parent community members (inclusive of ward councillors)	14 (10)
Donors and NGOs		8
Total		215

Note: Figures in parentheses represent the number of each sample interviewed as a group and the figures not in parentheses represent the total number of each sample interviewed including both those interviewed individually and as a group.

Source: the author.

(ii) Observation

According to Cohen et al. (2000: 17), observation enables the researcher to apprehend the context of her programme and to discover things that its participants might not freely talk about in an interview situation. In this study, I made limited ethnographic observations of facilities; daily DEB office and school routines; and the means of making a living in neighbouring villages. In addition, I also observed DEB, PTA and PCSC meetings in order to grasp the relationships between different actors and learn something of the decision-making processes. I sought permission for participant observation of meetings from key informants,

that is, the DEBS in the case of district board meetings; head teachers in the case of government basic schools; and PCSC chairpersons and teachers in charge in the case of community schools.

I created a list of features that I had deemed worth observing in light of my research questions, which included individuals' manner of dress; verbal and physical behaviour; location in the meeting; interaction with other actors; and whether they spoke out and, if so, in what tone of voice. This list, which I always carried for reference purposes, was not rigid but evolved throughout the course of my fieldwork, as it was informed by findings from other data sources such as interviews.

At the beginning of each meeting, I clearly explained my identity and my research objectives. I tried to ensure that both my interpreters and I were as discreet as possible by sitting either at the back or the side of the venue, and by dressing similarly to the majority of the participants. From such a vantage point, I was able to follow the proceedings in much the same way if I had not been present at all.

During the observation, the interpreter whispered what each participant said into my ear and I wrote down as much as possible. When permission was given by key informants and the participants at large, I also recorded the meeting with a small audio recorder. After the meeting, I listened to the recording with the interpreter and transcribed what each participant had said. While observing a meeting, I also wrote down points to follow up, such as questions about participant responses that needed further investigation.

Finally, I observed several district head teacher's meetings. With the permission of the DEBS, head teacher/teacher in charge or PTA/PCSC chairperson, formal meetings were

audio-recorded, translated into English and then transcribed.

(iii) Documents

Documents were collected from all levels. Macro level (central government) documents I collected included policy papers; the Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB); annual MOE reports; legal documents such as the Education Act, the Local Government Act and associated statutes; donor's project documents; newspapers; school census reports; and education management information system (EMIS) data.

Although a document search is usually considered to be a time-saving method of data collection compared to the interview or other qualitative strategies, in reality, it was not always very straightforward. Filing systems were often effectively non-existent and the institutionalisation of information was poor. Such constraints notwithstanding, the MOE had recently made considerable effort to compile previous key policy papers, circulars and reports in CD-ROM format, which made my task considerably easier.

The macro level documents I collected helped me gain insight into official perspectives on reform, although such views were often inconsistent across policy papers or sometimes even within the same document. Macro level documents also helped in the identification of key sectoral issues that I wished to follow up in the field. Electronic EMIS data was a useful source of information on schools including number, size and type; as well as student and teacher numbers across the country and within the sample district itself. Such data facilitated the task of selecting sample schools to some extent, although this information was not always up to date.

Documents collected at the meso level (the district) included minutes of previous DEB meetings; the District AWPB; district quarterly evaluation reports; and donor-funded project reports.

At the micro level (the school), the minutes of PTA/PCSC meetings; school grant and PTA/PCSC fund financial reports where available; and school attendance records were collected. As with the macro level, my document search at the meso and micro levels was not always easy. Yet, the process itself often provided interesting insights. For example, the schools in which document management was poor also tended to suffer weak leadership from their head teachers and other administrators.

5.4.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Given that the primary purpose of this study was to explore how different actors actually perceived and responded to policy directives from their own viewpoints, I adopted an inductive method of data analysis. As explained in section 5.4.1, it was a multi-level case study, that is, it comprised investigation at the macro (national policy), meso (district) and micro (school) levels. Accordingly, I conducted my analysis in the following five stages.

Figure 5-1 illustrates the analytical scheme.³²

³² This diagram shows only the conceptual structure of the analytical scheme, and does not include all the processes and components.

First stage: macro-level analysis

First, macro-level analysis was carried out through the reading of key policy and other documents, and through interviews with key policy officials with specific reference to the concepts of decentralisation, participation and accountability in basic education administration in Zambia.

This was done primarily in order to identify their respective views and associated assumptions about proposed decentralisation/community participation reform in government/community basic schools, as well as in the context of the operations of the DEB at the district level; thus providing an answer to research question 1. The relation between participation at the school level and that at the district level was also examined in terms of its reflection in policy.

This study adopts the view of Ball (1994) in that that any given policy document is subject to multiple readings by a multiplicity of readers. Ball goes on to argue that while the policy author strives to ensure that the document is unambiguous, he or she is incapable of controlling how the reader will interpret the text (ibid: 16). The issue in contention is thus the relationship between the reader – in this case, the researcher conducting her analysis – and the document. Therefore, I analysed each policy document with the purpose of reaching my own comprehension of its meaning as a researcher.

Second stage: micro-level analysis

Second, the data from each case at the micro level was analysed in its specific context, in order to explore the reality of how parents and local community members participated in education affairs, and how this influenced school accountability towards them. This exercise was carried out to provide an answer to research questions 2 and 3.

At this level, various types of field data – interview transcripts, observation records, field notes, and primary documents (e.g. the minutes of official meetings; district and school plans, and financial reports; and statistical data spreadsheets) were the key data for analysis and triangulation. LeCompte (2000) maintains that the task of analysis requires researchers to first determine how to organise their data and use it to reconstruct an intact portrait or structure of the original phenomenon under study; and second, to inform their readers of the meaning of this portrait. Accordingly, qualitative data should piece together an explanation, which LeCompte describes as being analogous to the strategies used to assemble a jigsaw puzzle (ibid: 147).

I first organised the data collected through interviews, observations and field notes according to level of analysis (macro, meso or micro); type of data (e.g. interview, field note, observation); date; and participant (e.g. parent, teacher, PTA executive). Once collated, these data were coded and analysed. Codes were developed from the key patterns and themes that emerged during repeated readings of transcripts and field notes, as well as the principal concepts that were embedded in the research questions.

These themes include: capacity; willingness; voluntary service; perception of the role of the state; poverty; ethnicity; the opportunity cost of participation; power; and constraints faced by teachers. I initially undertook this exercise whilst still in the field and continued with greater intensity after I left it. A system of coloured ink and post-it notes was utilised to distinguish each theme. This process helped me to “interpret and theorize in relation to...[my]...data,” as recommended by Bryman (2004: 409). Once the initial themes had been identified, I organised them into groups or categories.

Then, once the analysis of each case was complete, cross-case analysis was conducted in order to “build abstractions across cases” (Merriam 1998: 195). For example, cross-case analysis at the school level addressed the data obtained from the three government basic schools on the one hand in order to answer research question 2; and the three community schools on the other in order to answer research question 3. Later, the two sets of cases were compared to explore coherence and divergence in the findings.

Third stage: meso-level analysis

Third, the data from the meso level were analysed in reference to research question 4, using the same means utilised for the analysis of data at school level, that is, organising data sets (e.g. interview data, observation data, field notes), coding them, and grouping them into categories.

This aspect of the analysis was also carried out to understand how community participation at the district level was related to that at the school level. This involved determining the district’s relations to parents and other members of the local community at the school level whom it was expected to represent.

Fourth stage: integration of micro, meso and macro levels

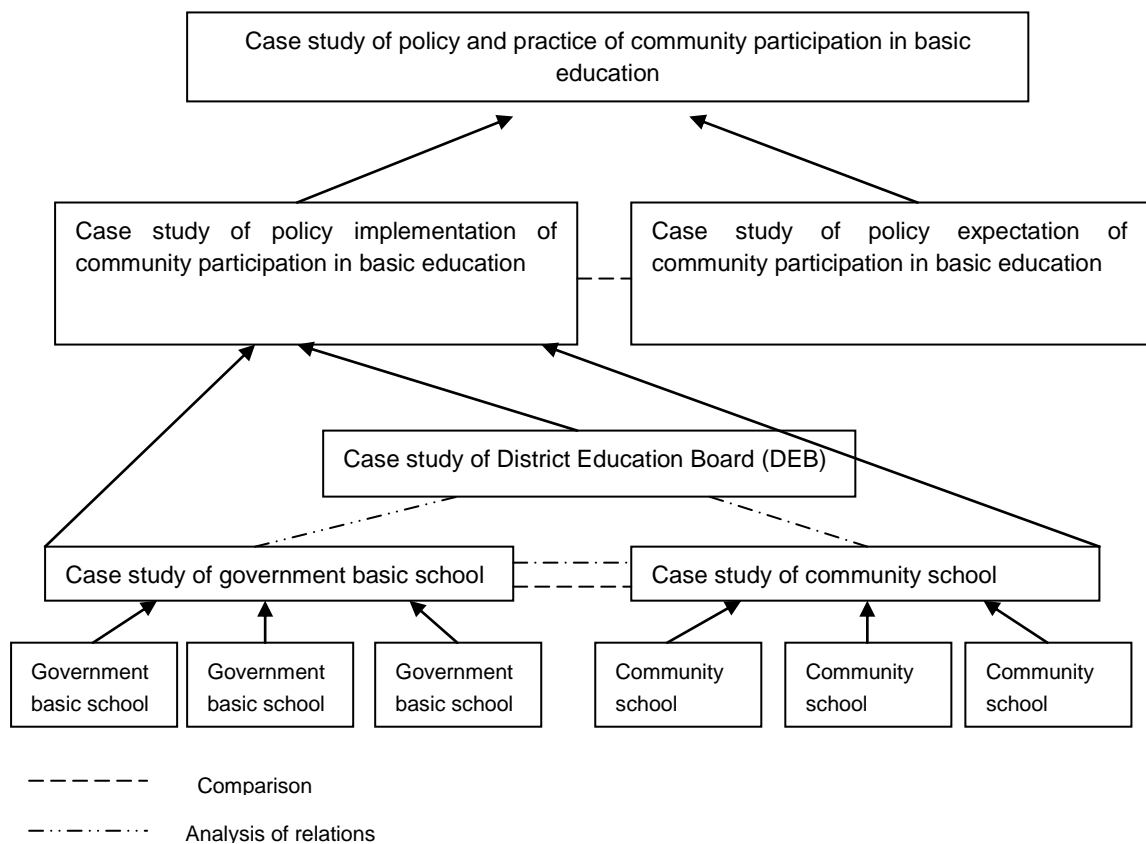
Fourth, data analysed at each level were developed into an overarching theoretical analysis. Some form of synthesis is essential to enhance the value of qualitative research, especially in terms of its practical ability to indicate the direction of future research and action. Thus, data analysis results from the different levels were integrated in readiness for further examination in order to determine typical emergent patterns, and to facilitate a fuller understanding of the phenomenon.

In particular, commonalities and difference were compared between the micro and meso level realities (the implementation level) of how parental and community participation in education was taking place on the one hand, and macro policy pronouncements of how such participation ought to be taking place on the other hand.

Fifth stage: Coding of the interviewees

Interviewees have been coded, which enables the sources of the quotations in chapters 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 to be identified. In the case of PEO, DEBS, District Education Standards Officer (DESO), and FPP, codes have not been assigned, their acronyms being used instead as they are sufficiently brief and self-evident. The interviewee reference codes used are shown in table 5-3.

Figure 5-1 Analytical Strategy



Source: the author.

Table 5-3 Interviewee Reference Codes**National level**

Agency	Code
MOE	ME
MLGH	ML
Cabinet Office	CO

Provincial level

PEO	PEO
FPP	FPP

District level

DEBS	DEBS
DESO	DESO
DPO	DM1
District human resource officer	DM2
District building officer	DM3
District accountant	DM4
DEB Governance Body	DG

School level**Government basic school**

Head teacher	H
Deputy head teacher	D
Teacher	T
PTA executive	E
Parent/guardian	P
Other community member	C
Area councillor	A

Community school

Teacher of the mother school	M
Teacher in charge	TC
Volunteer teacher	VT
PCSC executive	E
Parent/guardian	P

Other community member	C
Area councillor	A

Donors and NGOs

Senior education sector advisor to MOE	D
USAID	U
VVOB (Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance)	V
Zambia Open Community Schools	Z
CARE International	C

In principle, a number is assigned to each interviewee if there is more than one such person,

In the case of a school, a forward slash is used in each code thus: school code/status/number.

A list of interviewees with reference codes can be found in appendix 5-1.

5.5 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

There is extensive debate about the reliability and validity of qualitative research, particularly with regard to the issue of the criteria by which it should be judged (e.g. Lincoln and Guba 1985; Miles and Huberman 1994; Patton 2002). The use of reliability and validity is common in quantitative research, but such criteria must be redefined when applied to qualitative research. In quantitative research, reliability is a concept that is used to evaluate the quality of the study, as measured by the probability of its successful repetition. Conversely, in qualitative research, the researcher must aspire to achieve rigorousness in his or her study through the application of alternative criteria, such as *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability*

and *confirmability* (Lincoln and Guba 1985). On a more practical level, Patton (2002) advocates the use of triangulation, through which several kinds of data or data collection methods are reinforced.

As discussed earlier, the approach of this study is principally interpretive and qualitative; it thus does not claim to be value free. However, this does not mean that I believe the social researcher may be content to rely on solipsism. Rather, I have taken several measures to ensure the ‘trustworthiness’ (ibid) of the study. In particular, an effort was made to reinforce the reliability of evidence from different sources (Hammersley 1992), a variety of data collection methods being employed to triangulate the findings. In addition, validation from research participants was sought, especially in terms of situations in which I did not have any personal experience. I also aimed to confirm my findings and impressions by regularly seeking feedback. Moreover, I shared the findings and discussed them with key informants – including my interpreters and some INGO staff supporting one of the community schools under study – in order to minimise research and representation bias.

The researcher is inescapably part of the process of qualitative research, which is inevitably interactive. Thus, the notion of *reflexivity* is important to this type of study. Reflexivity suggests that the researcher should critically and continuously monitor her own role, reactions and biases in the research process (Cohen et al. 2000; Denzin and Lincoln 2000). Indeed, I aspire to such reflexivity in my study through the acknowledgement and disclosure of myself in the research process. Nevertheless, I recognise that there is a limit to my objectivity as a researcher, and that such objectivity cannot be completely neutral.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following three important limitations to this study should be noted.

First, the number of sample schools is limited, a factor that is due to the practical constraints of conducting an in-depth case study within a set period of time. In addition, since half of the fieldwork was conducted during the rainy season and schools were a long way from each other, it was not possible to increase the samples in the given time.

Second, another potential limitation concerns my protocol for the selection for interview of parents and other community members; who were mainly chosen by the head teacher or senior management in the case of government schools, and the PCSC chairperson in the case of community schools. Although I asked them to invite parents/guardians from various socio-economic backgrounds, it is possible that only those who were less critical of school management were selected. In order to minimise such bias, I also interviewed parents/guardians whom I met during my community visits and who were willing to discuss the various issues with me. Even so, I cannot claim that they were representatives of the whole demographic range.

Similarly, the selection of community members who did not have children in school may not have been without its bias. Participation in the study of this group was determined by means of the snowball sampling method during my village visits. Although I tried to include people from different socio-economic backgrounds as much as possible, the sample was too small in comparison with the whole population for this to be effective. In fact, given community diversity and the ambiguity of boundaries (as discussed in chapter 2.5.3), it was practically impossible to determine a representative sample of such a 'community'.

Finally, the difficulty in verifying translation to and from local languages (as discussed in detail in section 5.4.4) should be noted.

5.7 RESEARCH ETHICS

It is necessary to consider ethical issues such as consent, anonymity and confidentiality in any social study.³³

On commencing the fieldwork, I informed interview participants of my research purposes and study plan, and told them why they were being asked to contribute. I also explained my position as a researcher and guaranteed their anonymity as sources of the data I would collect. I attempted to maintain additional confidentiality by changing the names of schools and communities; and in reporting and discussing my findings, individuals were referred to by their positions or codes only. Moreover, I ensured that I did not quote a participant's comments if confidentiality was requested. Even if someone did not ask for specific comments to be off the record, I eliminated their contributions from the text whenever I felt that such comments could potentially put them in a difficult position.

The ethics of taking and using photographs in the thesis need to be discussed. While such images were employed to provide striking portrayals of individuals, groups and their contexts, I was also aware of the potential harm that could be caused. Accordingly, I always obtained consent from individual subjects of photographs by verbally asking them if they objected to

³³ The study was conducted in accordance with the Sussex School of Education and Social Work Ethics Standards and Guidelines.

having their picture taken and presented in my thesis, and explaining my purpose for taking it. However, when photographing groups of people in public spaces – mostly at meetings – it was not practical to ask all the people present; therefore, I only sought consent from key informants at each meeting.

Finally, I made it clear that no one was obliged to take part in the study.

The researcher should not assume that participants have limitless time or are always willing to participate in her studies. Instead, the former must be aware that research activities can be intrusive, particularly in poverty-stricken regions where the judicious use of time can be a matter of survival for poor families striving to eke out a living with long hours of labour. Thus, I made maximum effort to ensure that my research activities were not intrusive. For example, I made sure that my interviews with teachers did not lead to the suspension of classes. Interview venues and schedules were also carefully arranged so that they were as convenient as possible for the participants. Even so, I cannot claim that the time respondents devoted to my study did not adversely affect their economic or social activities.

Another ethnical issue I faced during my fieldwork was related to the welfare of children (and sometimes adults). For example, there were occasions on which I encountered children left unattended at home crying from hunger. In addition, there was one case in which a girl who was suspected of being HIV positive was locked in the house and prevented from going to school because her grandmother refused to take her to class or for a voluntary HIV test. In such instances, I reported the cases to a care provider if one was available.

5.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the methodological paradigm, research strategy and design of this study. The methodological paradigm is largely interpretive, striving to apprehend the social world in question from the viewpoint of the people being studied, which in turn shapes the way policy is practiced in this specific environment.

The chapter also demonstrated that the researcher herself was the primary instrument for gathering and analysing data, and the accompanying issue of researcher identity was discussed extensively. The present inquiry was shown to constitute a qualitative, multi-level case study that employed various data collection methods, including interviews, observations and document collection. The stages of data analysis were delineated. It was established that the study does not intend to provide nationwide extrapolation. Nevertheless, it aims to probe the policy–practice interface of on-going community participation in basic education in Zambia. Issues concerning the reliability and validity of the study, as well as its limitations, were also discussed. Finally, the research ethics considered in the study were established.

CHAPTER 6 CASE STUDY AT THE MICRO LEVEL [1] – COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT BASIC SCHOOLS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyses the ways in which parents and the wider community participate in the affairs of three selected government basic schools, based on the perspectives of the different actors in the study area. Specifically, form and degree of participation, the factors that promote or hinder it, and the influence this has on public and market accountability are examined (see chapter 2.4).

The forms parental and community participation take are categorised into four groups, which correspond to the key areas of parental and community participation at the macro policy level (see chapter 3.5.2.2): (1) contribution to school resources; (2) development and implementation of a localised curriculum; (3) school management; and (4) arrangement of private tuition and choice of alternative school for their own children.

6.2 CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOOL RESOURCES

6.2.1 TYPES OF CONTRIBUTION

In all three schools, community participation was often talked about almost synonymously with the contribution of resources; after all, this was a form of participation that most communities had been practicing for a long time. The purpose of such contribution was in the main to expand or renovate school infrastructure such as teacher's accommodation,

classrooms and toilet blocks. Contributions were made either monetarily or non-monetarily, and often known as the PTA fund or levy (see appendix 6-1).

However, the grant that was disbursed from the central government through the District Education Board (DEB) was in no way sufficient to cover the loss of revenue resulting from the abolition of fees at grades 1–7 (see table 6-1 in section 6.4.1). Consequently, schools continued to rely on contributions from parents/guardians and the wider community.

6.2.2 ATTENDING PTA MEETINGS

In theory, the PTA meeting should serve as a forum for the identification of common needs, and an opportunity for opinions on the mode and limitation of contributions to the school to be articulated and collectively determined. The attendance of parents/guardians and the wider community at PTA meetings is therefore a prerequisite for active participation in communal decision-making in a public space. However, many teachers and PTA executives complained about the low turnout at meetings (e.g. Interview-C/H; C/E2; C/E3; C/E5; L/H; L/T1; L/T3; L/D; L/E1; M/H; M/T1; M/T4; M/E1).

This apathy was chiefly attributed to the community's low interest in formal education. Nevertheless, some parents interviewed explained that their non-attendance was rather due to lack of publicity about a forthcoming meeting and time constraints. It was usually held either at the yearend or the beginning of the new year, which was the time of greatest stress for the community. During this period, many households were reported to be busy searching for food and weeding in their maize fields, as confirmed by the head teacher at Lukasi:

December is the busiest period for a lot of parents. Lots of parents are busy cultivating their land, so for them, attending PTA meeting might be some kind of hitch. So, sometimes, only few parents come to the meeting (Interview-L/H).

Additionally, when asked why she had not attended the last PTA meeting, a mother explained:

I have a farm to cultivate and my husband is sick; I have no time to go to the meeting (Interview-M/P13).

Thus, attending the PTA meeting often directly conflicted with the demands of subsistence farming. This point is corroborated by Adam's (2005) study of Ghana, which found that many parents and other members of the community were often faced with the dilemma of whether to attend a school meeting or go to work on the farm.

Moreover, as will be discussed in detail in the next section, some parents explained that they often chose not to go to PTA meetings because they did not think that their opinions were considered seriously by either the executive or the teachers.

With the aim of ensuring a high turnout of parents at PTA meetings, when the district education standards officer (DESO) attended a meeting in Lukasi, he declared that those parents who failed to go would incur a ZMK (Zambian kwacha) 5,000 (USD 1.22)³⁴. In this case, attendance of meetings became compulsory, which contradicted the voluntary nature of the PTA envisaged under the free education policy.

³⁴ Based on an exchange rate of USD 1 to ZMK 4,083, as at 15 August 2007.

6.2.3 DECISION-MAKING ON MODE AND SCOPE OF CONTRIBUTION

Interviews with parents and teachers as well as the observation of PTA meetings suggest that a closed-door session of those on the top table was sometimes held before the general PTA meeting in order to predetermine the extent of community contribution. A case in point is that in Chulu in which the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS), the PTA chairman, and the head teacher gathered in the latter's office to discuss the agenda while the parents had already gathered outside:

DEBS:	What do you want me to say at the meeting today?
Head teacher:	We have decided to increase the amount of PTA fund and the fees for grades 8 and 9. We would also like to introduce a new uniform.
DEBS:	OK, I'll make sure that what we say to the parents does not contradict one another.

(Extraordinary PTA meeting at Chulu, 12/10/07)

A father in Mutande also spoke of his frustration at such school management practice:

When we have the meeting, the PTA executive and teachers sit and discuss among themselves to decide instead of coming to us, while we are kept waiting for hours. They secretly make decisions without our consent (Interview-M/P3).

Thus, sometimes, decisions about PTA funds and fees were pre-determined by the school management and other powerful actors in education administration. Rose (2003) similarly reports that community contribution is typically predetermined by teachers in Malawi.

The observation of PTA meetings during the fieldwork suggest that time was often allocated for deliberation on the school development plan after a few hours of 'sensitising' speech from the people at the top table. According to some teachers and PTA executives, these lectures

aimed to 'sensitise the ignorant masses' to the plight of the school, and remind them of their obligation to contribute to it (Interview-C/H; C/E1; M/T1; M/E1; L/H). Sometimes, parents and other members of the community would leave the meeting on account of hunger during the long speeches from the people at the top table (Interview-M/T1). As a result, some people were not present for the actual deliberation.

For example, at a PTA meeting observed in Mutande (on 29/02/08), several mothers angrily left the meeting after almost two hours of speeches by the head teacher and PTA executive, shouting, "we are hungry." Although the interview data does not reveal the feelings of those who walked out of the meeting, it is reasonable to assume that they might not have left only because they were hungry but also because they felt that they would be better off going home and doing something useful rather than staying at the meeting where they would only listen to more speeches from the school leaders. This point deserves further investigation.

Not only did school leaders direct the proceedings of the meeting, but they frequently also controlled the actual decision-making process. Often, a proposal to introduce new fees and fund or increase the amount the community was expected to contribute was made abruptly by the PTA chairperson following a sensitisation session; the proposal was then adopted on the basis of a few voices of support only (see box 6-1).

As box 6-1 demonstrates, the objections of the widow and several other mothers were ignored by the PTA chairperson and the motion was carried by the DAO without a vote.

Box 6-1**Discussion on the introduction of revised school fees for grades 8 and 9, and an increase in the PTA fund contribution for grades 1–7, at an extraordinary meeting of the PTA in Chulu on 12/10/07**

PTA chairman: After analysing the needs of the school with the school management, we think there is a need to increase PTA funds and school fees; ZMK 45,000 [PTA fund for grades 1–7 per annum] is too little.

[Several mothers demonstrated their opposition to this proposal by shouting and leaving the meeting.]

Widow: It is the rainy season and we don't even have food at home. Since there is an issue of changing uniforms, I think the new school fee is too much for some of us; like widows with a lot of children to look after.

Father and village headman: In order to make progress and also ensure that our children pass with flying colours, I would suggest an amount of ZMK 25,000 per term.

District administration officer (DAO): Parents, let us agree! Let us progress! If you have a problem, you can pay in part but you will still have to pay! Cost sharing!

PTA Chairman: We have all agreed to pay ZMK 75,000 per year; I urge all of you to cooperate without fail!

In Lukasi, an increase in the PTA fund for grades 8–9 and the introduction of a grade 1 enrolment fee were determined by the teachers and PTA executive alone without consulting rank and file PTA members. The deputy head teacher justified their actions as follows:

The decision was agreed between the school management and PTA executive because if we had raised this one [proposal] at the PTA meeting, people would have given us different ideas and the proposal would have been turned down (Interview-L/D).

Thus, the decision-making process was often susceptible to manipulation by the elite. In such a situation, the 'consensus' arrived at in a PTA meeting did not necessarily reflect a genuine mandate from the whole community, the voices of the less powerful frequently being muffled by the rhetoric of 'community consensus.' It is therefore of little wonder that some people – particularly the marginalised – were reluctant to attend PTA

meetings when they had such little influence over the nature of their contribution. The following comment by one father at Chulu is illustrative:

Some parents stay away from PTA meetings because they feel it is not worth attending and they turn a deaf ear to what we say (Interview-C/P5).

The mode of contribution was rarely discussed at the PTA meeting either, but was rather determined by school management in collaboration with the PTA executive. In Chulu, the head teacher explained that the school management took the local situation into consideration and allowed those who could not afford to pay in cash to undertake work or pay in kind. Yet, in other cases – e.g. in Lukasi and Mutande – the head teachers said that they did not accept payment in kind in principle on account of the difficulty of converting such a contribution into cash, as there was no market for such a transaction readily available.

The composition of the PTA executive in the three government basic schools under study is illustrated in appendix 6-2. As the table in this appendix 2 indicates, members of the executive often had a relatively high level of education and were well off in comparison with other members of the community. Therefore, they tended to have less difficulty in bearing such costs than poorer sections of the community. In the schools that were adjacent to tarred roads in particular (Chulu and Lukasi), most male PTA executive members were retired government officers whose educational level was much higher than the rest of the community; and some possessed relatively extensive farmland that they had acquired through their pensions. Such a socio-economic gap between PTA executive and rank and file members, and the related issue of representation has been noted in a number of previous studies (e.g. Kaluba 1985; Bray 1997, 1999, 2003a; Rose 2002; Suzuki 2002, 2004; Pryor 2005; De Grauwe 2005).

It was also noticeable that many of the PTA executive members were non-Lamba, especially in locations where there were many migrants from town (see appendix 6-2). Thus, the income gap between the PTA executive and those who they represented corresponded with the ethnic disparity to a certain extent. Yet, there was no guarantee that this social elite would strongly identify with the vulnerable members of the community.

As such, the PTA may reinforce the existing power imbalance within the local community rather than act as a genuinely representative body.

Cornwall (2004) suggests that the rules of representation for the public deliberative space are often ambiguous and can be improvised to suit the circumstances, which undermines its legitimacy and potential viability. Indeed, some parents interviewed perceived the election of the PTA executive to be one of the few genuine opportunities they had to choose their leaders; however, in other cases, even this simple right could easily be violated and the rules of representation were changed by the powerful. For example, at Chulu, the DEBS unilaterally returned the incumbent PTA chairman for the following year (PTA meeting of 28/03/08). There were some parents who gathered at the meeting wishing to elect someone else as the new chairperson, as one mother reported to me before the meeting commenced:

Today, we are going to elect a new executive because they [the incumbents] have been in the position for too long and are not doing their jobs (Interview-C/P16).

However, no one dared to challenge the DEBS, who during the meeting openly and unilaterally opted to retain the incumbent PTA chairman (observation of PTA meeting on 28/03/08).

While PTA executive members were likely to be economically and socially powerful, their

willingness to take on such posts could not be simply assumed. In Mutande and Lukasi – more rural and economically disadvantaged communities than Chulu – many people who were nominated for the PTA executive declined, the most frequently cited reason being their commitment to other economic and social activities (observation of PTA meetings at Mutande, 29/02/08; at Lukasi, 09/11/07). After all, membership of the PTA executive was voluntary work, in which case people were likely to judge that the cost outweighed the benefits. A senior teacher at Mutande commented:

They fear to be PTA executives. They see it a big burden to bear for the rest of the year, attending meetings instead of going to farm (Interview-M/T1).

The incentive to join the PTA executive appeared to be further eroded under the free education policy (for grades 1–7), whereby many PTA executives faced great difficulty in mobilising community contribution to the school, while the failure to do so resulted in loss of respect from community members and teachers. In one PTA meeting in Chulu, out of frustration, the project committee chairman declared that he would resign from his position:

I quit! I have been frustrated! People don't come to contribute but accuse me of not doing my job. I will never be in the project committee [again]. I say bye-bye (Interview-C/E3).

Similarly, Rose (2002) found that women in rural Malawi refused to join the school committee on account of workload.

Picture 6-1

Headteacher 'sensitising' parents at the PTA annual general meeting in Lukasi

**Picture 6-2**

Headteacher 'sensitising' parents at the PTA annual general meeting in Chulu



6.2.4 MANAGING COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION

Contrary to policy expectation, this study also revealed that ordinary parents/guardians rarely had any say in the management of the PTA fund.

In some cases, head teachers and accountants used the PTA fund at their discretion without consulting executive members, sometimes for purposes that had not been 'agreed' at a PTA meeting. For example, in Chulu, funds that were intended to be used for building teacher's houses were used to pay off the debt incurred from the purchase of the rather grandiose looking sofa in the head teacher's office (Interview-C/H). Similarly, part of the PTA fund at Lukasi that had been collected for the construction of a new classroom had been 'borrowed' by teachers for personal expenses and never returned (Interview-L/H). One teacher even believed that the PTA fund became government money once contributions had been handed over (Interview-C/T1). Thus, the status of the PTA fund was altogether highly ambiguous.

Even in cases in which the PTA executive had some control over the fund, there were still problems. At Chulu, a project committee was established alongside the main PTA committee to manage the funds raised for two ongoing projects. The head teacher at Chulu revealed that the two groups clashed, each party claiming its right to the money raised; and complaints were made that the chairman of the project committee monopolised the money. This example suggests that community representatives were not necessarily united, but rather were susceptible to infighting and the monopolisation of the fund by a few powerful individuals.

There is some evidence that such conflict is not unique to this context, disputes between the school project committee and the PTA (Gershberg 1999), and between the school governing body (SGB) and the PTA (Suzuki 2004) having been reported in other studies.

When interviewed, many parents expressed their discontent with the inadequate explanation given by the treasurer with regard to the manner in which their contribution had been spent (Interview-C/P1; C/P2; C/P4; C/P8; C/P9; C/P10; C/P13; M/P1; M/P2; M/P5; M/P6; M/P7; M/P9; M/P12; M/P13; L/P1; L/P 4; L/P 5).

Moreover, discontent and suspicion sometimes prompted parents to interrogate school leaders over the status of their contribution, as exemplified in box 6-2.

Yet, others – particularly women of low socio-economic and educational backgrounds – were reluctant to speak out at public meetings as they felt too inferior to interrogate teachers and PTA executives. A comment from a mother in Lukasi is illustrative:

We don't know how the money is used. I wanted to tell [ask], but I fear the teachers. Some of us are not educated. So, even if we said something, they wouldn't listen. They have deaf ears (Interview-L/P10).

Given the extremely limited involvement of the rank and file members of the PTA in the management of the resources they had contributed, it is hardly surprising that the general population often became suspicious about the administration of the fund. The following comment from a parent in Chulu exemplifies this point:

We don't feel any sense of belonging, as we are not told how the money is used. They just spend the money the way they feel like. The school and PTA chew [spend] our money together (Interview-C/P4).

Their suspicions appeared to mount if they could not see the expected tangible results in a relatively short space of time. It was not uncommon that the aim of the project was either not achieved at all or else altered, a situation to which the community reacted with strong resentment and disappointment.

Some people are just fed up as you pay maize and other things but nothing happens (Interview-C/P5).

Several factors may contribute to the failure of a project, including insufficient public contribution; the misappropriation or diversion of funds; unrealistic costing; and poor planning and management. Indeed, Olembo (1985) cited in Bray (1999) argues that communities often embark on fundraising initiatives without realistic cost estimates, which often results in uncompleted projects.

Ineffective coordination with the DEB was also evident in the lack of a timely disbursement of the matching grant. At all three schools under study, community contributions such as mud bricks, sand and crushed stones were washed away in the rain as a result of the failure to disburse the anticipated matching grant in time. Non-receipt of the grant seriously demoralised the community because it was felt that already limited resources and energy were wasted, as one parent put it, “We just wasted our time and energy” (Interview-L/P14).

Nevertheless, teachers most commonly simply failed to provide a satisfactory solution and accused parents and the community of non-compliance (see box 6-2). It should be noted, however, that in many cases the teachers themselves neither knew when the matching grant was due to be disbursed from the government, nor the reason why it had failed to arrive to date. Since they languished at the bottom of the education administration hierarchy, it was extremely rare that teachers felt able to demand an explanation for the non-disbursement of the grant (see further details of the issue of central government’s unpredictable and erratic release of grants to schools in section 6.4.1).

Box 6-2**Debate between school management and parents on the status of the matching grant at the PTA annual general meeting in Mutande on 29/02/08**

[One mother asked for an update on the provision of the matching grant from central government, which was supposed to be disbursed on the completion of community work that constituted 25 per cent of the total project budget.]

Mother: I want to know about the project. The project started a long time ago. We have moulded bricks and we reached 25 per cent of the project from community participation. After we have done our work, it is like you can see that bricks are sitting in the classrooms forever. We don't know what the government is doing. There is no response from the government. Why is it so? We parents, we came here to work for years and years. We want also for government to give us on top of what we have played our part. We have heaped a lot of sand there and it was all washed by the rains. You have to tell us why we worked willingly but the government is unwilling!

[Most participants applauded in support of her comments.]

Senior Teacher: Some of the sand collected was used for toilets and some for the teacher's houses. So, not all the sand was washed away. For brick making, only few people have responded. That is why these bricks are kept in classrooms – for safety. Parents never responded; only a few have willingness to contribute to whatever. Response is very poor; they leave others to do. They hid behind their friends! Already, I can see that the majority here are women – where are men? There are those who are found in the drinking place and they waste a lot of money. You spend money for beer in the bars; and why can't you just pay ZMK 6,000?

Father: What the lady asked was we want to find out if the teachers got in touch with the government? How is the government responding to what we have done? You haven't answered that question.

PTA Chairperson: Mr Mule [a senior teacher] has already answered that question. Sometimes, you parents are difficult. As parents, you haven't worked, so you shouldn't expect the government to respond! What the DEBS is interested in is a report to show that we are working hard.

With their voices rarely heard by teachers or PTA executive, parents often grew reluctant to contribute to future school development projects, as the following comments from one mother indicate:

People have stopped contributing. We carried sand but nothing was done. When

we make some bricks, all the same, those bricks were destroyed or damaged. We have done our part but the government has stopped assisting us, so why should we assist the school? (Interview-M/P8).

This stance appears to have further undermined the viability of such initiatives, which in turn was likely to lead to the increasing non-compliance of parents and the community. Similarly, Suzuki (2002, 2004) reports that lack of transparency in the use of parental contribution to the school leaves parents less willing to contribute in rural Uganda. Watt (2001) also contends that where the community perceives that it has no control over its contribution, support for education is rapidly eroded.

Picture 6-3

Teacher's accommodation built by parents/community members in Lukasi that was left unfinished due to shortage of funds and labour



6.2.5 FACTORS AFFECTING NON-COMPLIANCE

This study has identified several factors that affect the community's non-compliance with school development projects. They include (i) lack of transparency in decision-making and the management of contributions; (ii) perceived low quality of education on offer; (iii) fluidity of the parameters of the 'community' and low community spirit; (iv) ambiguity around the terms of the free education policy and misconceptions about school income; (v) feelings of distance and jealousy towards teachers; and (vi) the low socio-economic status the community. As (i) was discussed above, the remaining factors are examined below.

(i) Perceived Low Quality of Education

There appeared to be some parents that were keen for their school to be developed but were unwilling to contribute to it because they believed that the quality of education on offer was not of a high enough standard. For example, the school in Chulu had suffered from poor results in grade 7 and 9 examinations for many years, which resulted in the reluctance of many households to contribute to the school (Interview-C/H; C/T1). It was only after the examination results had improved under a new head teacher that parental contributions to the school increased, albeit not dramatically (Interview-C/H; C/T1).

Thus, field data gathered in this study confirms Watt's (2001) contention that the community grows unwilling to contribute to its school if it perceives that the level of education on offer is so low that the cost of contributing to it outweighs the return.

(ii) Fluidity of the Parameters of the 'Community' and Low Community Spirit

This study found that the parameters of the 'community' were somewhat fluid and constantly changing. At all three schools, head teachers reported the transfer of children from one school to another amongst some families due to their relocation, often without informing the school beforehand. The reasons for such internal migration included retrenchment in urban areas; search for more fertile soil; social and family disputes; and the death of parents, and subsequent adoption of pupils by grandparents or other relatives (Interview-C/H; L/H; M/H; M/T1).

In Chulu, teachers and PTA executive members complained that police officers were the most reluctant to contribute to the school, in spite of the fact that they had a regular income; because the area around the school was not their permanent place of residence, and they might be posted to another region at any time. For example, the head teacher remarked:

The Police are the problem; they refuse to pay the school even though they send their children here. Perhaps they think it would be a waste of money to invest in this school because they could be transferred out any time (Interview-C/HT).

Thus, frequent internal migration due to various socio-economic, climatic and historical factors suggests that some households did not necessarily perceive their current residence as their permanent home, which was likely to lead to a disinclination to contribute to the local school.

It was also found to be rare that community members without children or dependents of their own were willing to make contributions to the school although there are a few individual exceptions. In Lukasi, for example, the head teacher complained:

We approached local well-to-do people. There are some commercial farmers. Some people have very good businesses in town and they have become tycoons! So, we wrote letters to these people saying, “Can you donate to our school?” But we did not get any response. So, through this experience, I think that the problem is that their children are not coming here. Their children are going to private schools in town (Interview-L/H).

Thus, contrary to the policy premise, it appears that it is quite difficult to mobilise those who do not have children in the local school as they do not have a direct stake in it.

As discussed in chapter 3.5.1.2, the district council is now allocated a constituency development fund (CDF) to be used for the infrastructural improvement of schools. Subsequently, the ward councillor has been appointed to act as a vital interface between government and education. However, some councillors were found to be frequently inactive, such as in the case of Lukasi, having little or no communication with the local schools (Interview-L/H; L/E1; L/E4).

(iii) Feelings of Distance and Jealousy Towards Teachers

Some teachers interviewed complained that some parents were reluctant to contribute to the construction of teacher’s houses because they believed that teachers received sufficient remuneration to maintain their houses themselves, as one teacher commented:

Some people are just jealous, thinking that whoever is in employment, like teachers, is well to do. So, they think there is no need to build our houses. There are those who think like that – shallow minds (Interview-M/T4).

Furthermore, some teachers reported that the community’s feelings of jealousy and hostility towards teachers were often compounded by ethnic differences between the two groups. As

discussed in chapter 5, the dominant tribe in the catchment areas of three schools under study was the Lamba while the majority of teachers were non-Lamba. Some teachers felt that there were those parents who were only willing to help teachers from their own tribe. For example, one teacher at Mutande remarked:

In the community, there are those who are tribalistic. I have heard some parents say that there are few tribe-mates in this school. Perhaps this is one reason why they refuse to contribute [to the school development project] (Interview-M/T1).

This highlights a social distance between teachers and the community that is embedded in long established norms and deep-rooted perceptions of identity. Such a phenomenon contrasts somewhat with the idealised policy premise that parents, communities and teaching forces are willing to work harmoniously towards shared goals.

On the other hand, some teachers noted that the ethnic difference between themselves and the community did not affect its willingness to contribute to the school if they made an effort to respect the community, as exemplified by the following statement:

I am Bemba but I have never encountered tribalism from the community. It depends how you handle the community; it is very sensitive. If you are harsh to them and harsh to their children, the community will turn against you. In my case, some community members even give me vegetables and charcoal personally (Interview-M/T2).

This indicates that the relationship between teachers and the community varies according to attitude of each party, which in turn may influence the willingness of the community to contribute to the school and its teachers' welfare.

(iv) The Low Socio-Economic Status of the Community

Some parents and teachers alike revealed that the former were often willing to contribute in theory, but were not able to do so in practice owing to various socio-economic constraints, as the following comment by the head teacher at Mutande illustrates:

Some are willing [to contribute] but most of the parents here are poor; they don't have any income. They depend on peasant farming and sometimes burning charcoal on a small scale, such that even collection of a PTA fund of ZMK 6,000 per term is a problem. We don't get a full collection most of the time, because of the problems that are there (Interview-M/H).

Even when the school allowed contribution in the form of labour, the time required often conflicted with the demands of survival. For example, a parent remarked:

I have no time to go to work for the school. It is the rainy season and there is no meal [maize flour] at home. We need to go to the forest to catch whatever we can eat (Interview-M/P13).

Furthermore, such a conflict of interests had a gender dimension. The interviews with parents and teachers revealed that it was predominantly women who undertook work for the school, due in part to the social norm decreeing that women were responsible for everything related to childcare. Rose (2002, 2003) also found instances of intra-household inequity in contributing to the school in Malawi, noting that 70 per cent of those involved in non-monetary assistance were women.

Varying degrees of economic ability were observed among different sections of the community. In Chulu, teachers and PTA executive members reported that government workers with a regular income had little difficulty in paying fees and PTA subscriptions on time,

while many villagers were unable to do so. Other socio-economic factors identified during the interview that may have affected the community's ability to contribute to its school include age and sickness of family members. As the head teacher in Lukasi put it:

Those [orphaned] pupils who are unable to pay are looked after by aged grandparents; they can only cultivate a little for their own food and they have no surplus to sell to support their children (Interview-L/H).

Thus, community work for the school is likely to impose different burdens on different communities owing to factors related to socio-economic status and gender.

6.2.6 THE ENFORCEMENT OF SANCTIONS FOR NON-COMPLIANCE AND CONSIDERATION FOR THE NEEDS OF THE POOR

It was found that various penalties were applied to non-compliers at all three schools under study. Pupils of grades 8 and 9, the schooling of whom was still subject to fees, were openly suspended for non-payment. In the case of pupils of grades 1–7, children whose parents had not paid into the PTA fund nor had not purchased school uniforms were often excluded from school, contrary to the principles of free education. The following comment by a grandmother whose child was expelled from school is illustrative: “My granddaughter was told not to go to school until I paid the money and she put on her uniform in the presence of everybody” (Interview-C/C3).

In other cases, pupils were not allowed to sit the grade 7 examination or else the results were withheld (Interview-M/E1; M/P3; M/P4; M/P7). Yet, contrary to the findings of the present study, the World Bank reports that pupils have not been suspended from school for

non-payment in Zambia since the introduction of free education (World Bank 2006). It is plausible that the Bank failed to identify covert practices that effectively suspend children because they only interviewed their teachers.

Even if pupils were not actually suspended, persistent reminders for payment appears to have turned many pupils away from the school on account of the disgrace (see picture 6-4).

One teacher in Mutande commented:

We don't chase them away, but they chase themselves away. The problem is that when the teacher comes into class, you just talk of the same issue [payment] then, now, that emphasis – yeah, that emphasis. The children don't feel OK so the result is they stop coming instead of teachers chasing (Interview-M/T2).³⁵

Similarly, some teachers and parents in Chulu both acknowledged that the recent change in uniform meant that many poor households were unable to buy the new one for their children, often resulting in those children who felt ashamed to go to school in the old uniform dropping out (see picture 6-5).

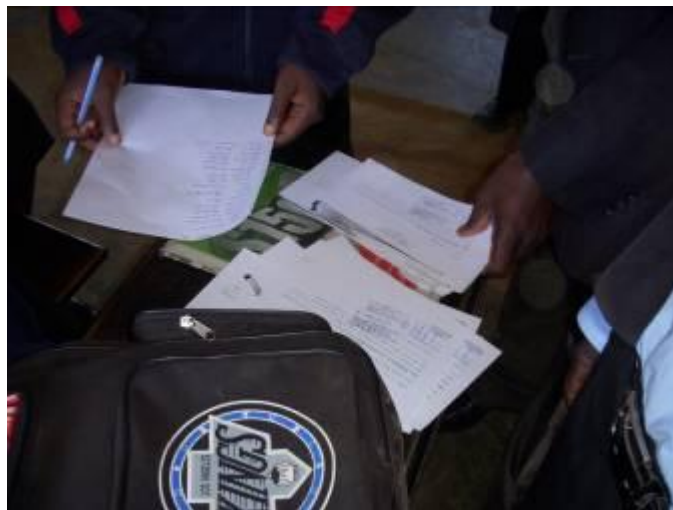
In some cases, it was not only teachers but also PTA executive members as well who imposed the penalty on non-compliers, justifying their action by claiming that it was a 'community decision'. For example, in Mutande, twice a month, teachers and PTA executive members went from class to class to identify and order the suspension of pupils whose parents/guardians had not paid a ZMK 6,000 (USD 1.47) PTA subscription (Interview-M/H; M/E1). The PTA chairwoman claimed that this rule had been decided upon by the community itself at a PTA meeting. However, it was not clear how the decision to suspend pupils for

³⁵ In Lukasi, it was observed that each week, the head teacher and the accountant went from class to class identifying those pupils who had not paid and gave them a note of reminder, which meant that many pupils withdrew from school of their own volition on account of the disgrace they felt in front of their friends (see picture 6-4).

non-payment had been sanctioned by the community. This highlights the danger that the voices of the powerful and economically more viable have the potential to undermine the voices of the poor and marginalised through the rhetoric of 'community decision.' It also blurs the boundary between public and private provision of education.

Picture 6-4

Regular reminders for payment of PTA subscription and school fees conducted by the head teacher and accountant in Lukasi



Picture 6-5

Pupils in new uniform (light blue) and old uniform (green) found in the same classroom in Chulu



As far as contribution in the form of labour was concerned, common measures taken by teachers and PTA executive members were to request traditional figures, such as the tribal chief, his advisors and village headmen to mobilise their 'subjects' to report for work, and to discipline those who failed to comply with the order. It was reported that when the school involved traditional figures, nearly all the villagers would report for work, including those who did not have children in school, because "the subjects (villagers) have to obey the royalty (traditional figures)" for failure to comply with the orders often resulted in punishment (Interview-M/H).

In such cases, the voluntary nature of the community contribution expected by the policy was questionable. Rather, contribution was demanded de facto by the school leaders through the traditional authorities.

In Mutande and Lukasi, difficulty in mobilising parents and community members for school development projects in recent years had prompted school management and the PTA executive to resort to employing pupils to work on school projects, rather than asking traditional figures to mobilise their subjects, as the deputy head teacher in Lukasi explained:

The school management and PTA [executive] agreed that we should raise the 25 percent upfront for the renovation of one classroom so that some donors or the government could assist us. But nowadays, parents are not upfront in coming in numbers to work at the school; so, we decided to use our children instead (Interview-L/D).

Thus, intra-household inequity concerning mobilisation on behalf of the school was reinforced not only along the lines of gender but also those of age (see picture 6-7). Excessive manual work assigned to children, many of whom were not well fed, might well

have also been a serious obstacle to the pursuit of their academic studies.³⁶

Thus, despite the announcement of free education for grades 1–7, great emphasis was still placed on individual responsibility for monetary or in-kind payment in practice.

Picture 6-6

Children of lower grades carrying water for brick making after their morning classes



Although some teachers reported that orphans and other vulnerable children were exempt from the payment of fees, or else they were awarded bursaries, such practices did not appear to be systemically applied with the use of objective criteria. Rather, exemption rules were often improvised on an ad hoc and arbitrary basis at the head teacher's discretion. In order to identify the beneficiaries of the bursary, there should have been a dedicated committee, which each school was supposed to have initiated, but either it did not exist at all (Mutande and Lukasi) or it only existed on paper (Chulu). Teachers and the community alike reported that the money available for bursaries was far too little for the scale of the problem.

³⁶ The 2006 *National Assessment Survey* reports that levels of learning achievement of pupils at middle basic level who did manual work at school every day was lower than that of pupils who did such work less frequently (MOE 2006b).

Furthermore, allocation criteria were reported to lack clarity, some parents complaining that the selection process was neither transparent nor objective, as one father whose child dropped out because of the lack of money to buy uniform remarked: “the bursary is too little and the selection is not transparent” (Interview-C/C2).

Thus, there was little evidence that penalties for non-compliance with contribution requirements were balanced by an effective mechanism for ensuring equity. Furthermore, the DEB and PEO rarely played the role they were mandated for – to scrutinise the level of the PTA fund in all the schools of the district (Interview-PEO; DEBS; C/H; M/H; L/H).

6.3 DEVELOPMENT OF A LOCALISED CURRICULUM

Contrary to policy expectation, little evidence was found that a localised curriculum had been implemented in any of the schools under study. Some teachers reported that a few selected community members had attended a sensitisation workshop on the localised curriculum (e.g., Interview-L/H; L/D; M/T1), but few parents/guardians or other members of the community exhibited any real knowledge about or interest in curriculum development. They typically considered that such matters were the responsibility of the ‘education experts’, who were in possession of the relevant knowledge; and perceived themselves to be ill qualified to participate. The following comment from a PTA executive member in Lukasi is illustrative:

The curriculum is an academic matter. If we tried to get involved that would become too much because we are not experts. It is a job for teachers (Interview-L/E3).

Thus, perceptions are likely to set the boundaries of the participation space, even if the opportunity is freely offered, which creates barriers to actor's agency.

An academic conception of education appeared to remain strong among parents and other community members. Some parents explicitly resisted the idea of shaping a curriculum more attuned to local life, such as the introduction of agricultural studies. For example, one father in Mutande expressed his concern about a localised curriculum thus:

We don't want that localised curriculum. We already see our children lagging behind. Sometimes, we complain when our children are requested to go to school with hoes because they are just working on the school farm instead of being in class. It will also affect the learning of our children because they will be deducting this time for learning! (Interview-M/P4)

Some parents perceived schooling predominantly as a means of getting good enough academic qualifications to earn a regular income from a job in town (this point will be discussed further in section 6.5). Accordingly, they might have been less willing to see the already limited school day divided up according to a double or triple shift system, with precious time devoted to a subject they did not consider would guarantee the opportunities they aspired to for their children. Besides, many of them believed that subjects related to local life could be dealt with out of school, as the following comment by one mother reveals:

These days, the school uses our children for cultivating the school farm too much. We don't want the school to use our children for farming activities because that is something that we parents can teach them. On top of that, I am annoyed that the children took our hoes to school so we don't have hoes to use at home (Interview-M/P8).

In recent DEB and PTA monitoring reports compiled by the MOE, the concerns of communities that are of the opinion that emphasis on a localised curriculum will not expose

their children to knowledge, skills and life beyond their own community are noted (EBS 2007a).

Yet, a few parents were in favour of the idea of a localised curriculum. For example, one mother in Mutande commented that she welcomed such an initiative since it meant that even if her children did not continue with their studies, they would still have learnt the practical skills necessary to make a living in the village (Interview-M/P6). However, when asked if she would be willing to teach some practical skills at school such as basket making, she immediately refused, replying, “No way! We can’t do that minus money! How are we going to eat?” Her comments demonstrate that it is unlikely that community members will be willing to offer their time and effort without financial recompense even if they are in favour of the idea in principle.

As far as the school was concerned, some teachers had never heard of the notion of a localised curriculum (Interview-C/T3; C/T4; L/T2; L/T3) others believed that implementation was in the pipeline (Interview-M/T4; L/H; L/T6); and still others misinterpreted the initiative as merely the introduction the vernacular for the lower grades (Interview-C/T6; M/T2). Few appeared to be very excited at the prospect of this new opportunity or prepared to take the initiative in implementing it; instead, they simply continued to wait for directions from the top. This is contrasted with the central government expectation that when offered such an opportunity, teachers would be eager to exploit its possibilities. In fact, some teachers stressed that the localised curriculum was a ‘government programme’ (Interview-M/T1; L/H), indicating that they felt that it was being imposed upon them from the top without adequate consultation, support or orientation.

The fact that the basic school teachers had little experience of independent decision-making

due to the traditionally hierarchical nature of the profession might explain their lack of initiative. The highly structured and bureaucratic nature of education administration in SSA has been noted in many previous studies (e.g. Hoppers 1994; Pryor 1998; Casely-Hayford 2000; Davies 2003). In particular, Pryor (op.cit.) suggests that teachers lack incentive to become agents of change in Ghana, as they are subject to a long-standing hierarchical and authoritarian administration system. This observation appears to apply just as readily to the case of Zambia, where blind obedience to the head teacher and those further up the chain of command might be considered to be the least risky option for most teachers.

Moreover, some teachers were not keen to involve non-professionals in curriculum design: “The community has no role in the curriculum; that is the responsibility of us teachers because we were trained and know education [matters]” (Interview-C/T4).

As corroborated by evidence from Zambia’s Eastern province in Serpell (1993), teachers may have historically been of the opinion that their professional mandate is to transform children entering the school into contemporary citizens linked to the national political agenda of modernisation.

Nevertheless, some teachers believed that a localised curriculum was a good idea in principle; yet, they felt that they neither had the technical nor the material support to implement such a curriculum. They thus felt that the cost of involving the community in curriculum development and school-based instruction outweighed the perceived benefit.

We need incentives. If you need to go on a trip to see a fisherman somewhere far away from you, you have to organise the transport and some money. If you don’t have such things, you will just have that negative attitude. Also, it may disturb normal lessons because you have to prepare (Interview-L/T3).

Therefore, the present study found that although policy favoured the introduction of a localised curriculum, teachers were resistant to such an innovation as they felt that they were unsupported in its implementation and were consequently demotivated.

6.4 PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

As observed in chapter 3.5.2.2, the role in the government basic school that is expected of parents/guardians and wider community members has now been extended to some aspects of school management. In particular, active participation is expected in three key areas: (1) development of the school Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB); (2) management and monitoring of the school grant; and (3) monitoring of teaching and learning. This section investigates the extent to which parental and community participation in these areas are being realised.

6.4.1 PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHOOL AWPB

In practice, little evidence was found that parents and the community played any part in the processes of developing the AWPB through their representatives in the PTA at any of the schools under study. No parent reported that he or she was aware of any newly assigned roles in school planning. Moreover, the guidebook that defined the new role of the PTA in school planning had not been provided to any of the schools under study, let alone to parents or the wider community. Furthermore, when a few parents mentioned that they participated in school 'planning', their involvement usually transpired to be restricted to the development of

school infrastructure (Interview-C/P10; M/P2; M/P7). Other than in this area, the general view among them appeared to be that it was the responsibility of the trained experts to plan school activities.

Some teachers also firmly believed that school planning was the domain of the professionals, while parental and community involvement in 'planning' should be limited to construction and renovation. There were also some teachers who were of the opinion that parents and other community members had limited capacity in terms of administrative skills and pedagogical knowledge, which inhibited them from participating in academic planning. For example, the head teacher at Chulu remarked:

School planning is the job of teachers, not that of the PTA. We were trained so we draw up the plan and budget according to government instructions. The community has nothing to do with the school plan because they do not know education. We know how to educate their children. The community does not know the importance of textbooks. They are only concerned with infrastructure, so the PTA and community only get involved in community interests such as school projects, changing the shape and appearance of the school (Interview-C/H).

Thus, they believed that it should be left them, as they knew best what pupils needed and how the school should be run; and both parents/the community and teachers generally believed that school planning was not the domain of the former.

In spite of the firm belief on the part of the teachers that school planning was their professional responsibility, little evidence was found that they developed the AWPB each year as policy directed. Mutande did not draw up an AWPB until 2008, while both Chulu and Lukasi stopped returning the AWPB in 2006. Interviews with head teachers revealed serious disincentives for schools to develop their AWPBs.

First, submission of the AWPB was not a prerequisite for the disbursement of the school grant, although the latter was intended to be used for the implementation of the school AWPB. Rather, the allocation of the school grant was based on the distribution of the total amount that had been budgeted for at central level, across provinces, districts and finally to the schools by enrolment, size of catchment area and gender parity criteria. Second, while the implementation of the school AWPB should have been financed by the school grant, the extent of the latter had diminished in recent years until it reached a level that was grossly insufficient to run the school. Teachers claimed that neither the amount nor the timing of the receipt of the grant could be predicted (see table 6-1). Thus, while each school was asked to return an AWPB, it was not informed about the progress of the plan after submission, how much would be received, or on which date. The head teacher in Lukasi put it thus:

All what we did is we just submitted [the AWPB]. We haven't heard from the district. That is what discouraged us [from developing the AWPB] (Interview-L/H).

At the time of the fieldwork, two different grant disbursement systems were simultaneously in operation. The grant from the government's domestic resources should have been disbursed to each school monthly, while the grant from the donors' so-called 'sector pool' was disbursed quarterly.³⁷ However, the head teachers and school accountants revealed that none of the schools under study had received the monthly state grant. At the same time, the quarterly donors' grant often did not arrive until the end of the quarter or, on occasion, much later. For example, the grant for the fourth quarter of 2007 only arrived at the end of the first quarter of 2008 at all three schools, and then the amount they received was far from adequate for efficient school management.

³⁷ The grant from the external development partners' 'sector pool' was further divided into 'grants to basic schools' and 'grants for free basic education,' with the former being paid to the school itself and the latter distributed to the DEB, which procured materials such as stationery on behalf of the schools (World Bank 2006).

In cases in which a school lacked sufficient and timely funds for administrative purposes, there was little wonder that the head teacher had limited incentive to develop and submit the school AWPB. The following comments from the head teacher in Chulu sums up the common feeling:

We received only ZMK 800,000 (USD 195.92) for the third quarter in September, and we have not heard anything from the district about the fourth quarter. But it is already the end of the year. It is a mockery when there are so many demands at school. We have failed in what we had planned completely. It is very difficult to plan. We have never been taught that this year, you can get this much at each quarter. For most schools, they spend most of the grant on just travelling to the BOMA [the district office] to collect the grant! We are relatively lucky because we are near [the district office]³⁸ (Interview-C/H).

In addition, some teachers suspected that their schools might not have received the full amount that they were entitled to³⁹ but they were afraid to challenge the district officials. The senior teacher in Mutande articulated the teachers' fears:

We know that the money they [the DEB] give us may not be the correct amount. The district must be dishonest because we just receive bones. But somehow, we are afraid to be labelled, because there are some threats against us; so, we always decide to keep silent (Interview-M/T1).

³⁸ The head teacher at Lukasi, which was the furthest from the DEB of the three schools under study, confirmed that he often spent most of the grant just travelling to the office to collect the cheque.

³⁹ The World Bank *Public Expenditure Review* (2006) also points out the high probability that schools do not receive the full amount of the grant from the DEB, or that it is misappropriated higher up the chain of command.

Table 6-1 Receipt of the School Grant by the Three Government Schools under Study (as of March 2008)

Chulu

Quarter	Date received	Amount received (ZMK)
1	06/06/07	2,066,644.61
2	10/07/07	852,668.35
3	27/08/07	3,541,321.63
4	11/03/08	1,256,788.52

Lukasi

Quarter	Date received	Amount received (ZMK)
1	11/07/07	1,957,507.20
2	01/10/07	3,994,931.00
3	03/01/08	900,000.00
4	N/a	N/a

Mutande

Quarter	Date received	Amount received (ZMK)
1	13/02/07	561,707.07
2	24/05/07	1,239,986.77
3	28/09/07	2,388,547.66
4	04/02/08	575,107.04

Source: the author (compiled from field data).

6.4.2 CONTROL AND OVERSIGHT OF THE SCHOOL GRANT

Officials at MOE headquarters (HQ) explained that selected members of the PTA were encouraged to become signatories to the account for the school grant allocated by central government through the DEB (Interview-ME1; ME2; ME6). In theory, the participation of the PTA in managing and monitoring the school grant has the potential to enhance transparency and the judicious use of scarce resources. In practice, however, none of the PTA executive members in any of the schools under study were found to be signatories.

According to teachers, the previous DEBS had instructed all schools to remove PTA members from the list of account signatories since giving them the right to sign cheques created more problems than advantages (Interview-C/H; C/T1; M/T1; L/H). There may have been some justification for such caution, since some teachers further claimed that PTA

executive members often demanded a share of the school grant for personal use; and they generally recommended that the whole grant be used for school infrastructure projects rather than other necessary items such as textbooks and chalk (Interview-C/T1; C/T4; C/T6; L/H; M/T1).

This demonstrates that the policy premise that parents and community representatives are able to manage the school grant transparently in the common interest cannot always be taken for granted. Bray (2007) also points out the difficulty of finding an optimal balance between central control of the school grant and efforts to involve the community in the affairs of the school.

In fact, multiple teachers believed that it was inappropriate for PTA members to be co-signatories to a school grant that was disbursed from the state treasury (e.g. Interview-C/H; C/T1; C/T2; C/T4; C/T6; L/H; M/T1). They argued that if a teacher misappropriated school funds, they could be recovered from his or her salary or pension; but if laypeople did so, it would not be possible to recover the money. Understandably, there are issues around who has ultimate control over the use of a grant that is allocated by central government. While the teachers' claim is understandable in this regard, it also provides a convenient pretext to completely exclude parents and community representatives from control of funds.

The grant was subject to subdivision of its expenditure along the lines of 35 per cent to be used for the procurement of textbooks; 25 per cent for rehabilitation and maintenance of school buildings; 35 per cent for other materials, such as exercise books, pens, rules and erasers; and 5 per cent to be allocated for the requirements of special needs children. While this might have been a strategy on the part of central government to ensure the balanced use

of the grant, it also contradicted the principles of bottom-up planning. Thus, the participatory planning and monitoring process was more a matter of rhetoric than substance, with little control or autonomy in expenditure decisions at the school level.

Such tight control fuelled the teachers' claim that there was no room for the PTA to have a say in how the grant should be spent, as one teacher at Chulu commented:

Because the fund has guidelines for what it should be spent on, we cannot involve the PTA in decisions. We just inform them [of what the grant was spent on] (Interview-C/T1).

There was no mention of the school grant at any of the general PTA meetings observed in this study. In fact, some teachers and PTA executive members alike believed that information about the grant should be kept from ordinary parents, claiming that they would become even more reluctant to contribute to the school if they learnt that it received funding from the government (Interview-C/H; C/T1; L/H; M/T1; M/E2).

As far as the school and PTA were concerned, the ideas of central funding under a free education policy and parental monitoring of such funding were fundamentally incompatible.

While they were excluded from monitoring the expenditure of the grant, parents generally had a keen interest in resource flow to the school and the way such resources were utilised, which naturally extended to the application of the government grant.

However, some parents felt unable to question the utilisation of the school grant, believing that they lacked expertise and knowledge about state delivery mechanisms. Some also felt that unless they had incontrovertible evidence of the misuse of funds, it was difficult and even

risky to express their suspicions openly. The comments of a mother in Mutande illustrate the point:

The school grant is kept secret from us and we don't know how they [the teachers] spend it. But I cannot go to the headmaster and say that you did wrong, alone. That is too dangerous – unless you have some evidence and you are in a group of five or ten. Teachers and the PTA are the same. They get away with anything (Interview-M/P13).

Although the purpose of the grant was primarily determined centrally, there was certain room for manoeuvre at school level. Interviews with teachers revealed that often, the head teacher and the teacher assuming the job of an accountant assumed control over decisions regarding the use of the grant without informing the rank and file, which created suspicion. One teacher at Mutande commented:

Just to be frank, we don't know anything. No information has been given to us to say this is how much we normally receive (Interview-M/T4).

After all, the school was only required to account for expenditure by simply sending receipts to the DEB, with no obligation to compile a detailed financial report.

In addition, some teachers reported that that district officials often demanded that a school should give a portion of its grant back to the DEB. Thus, the little money that was allocated to the schools was further eaten away. The teachers expressed their displeasure at such demands but usually stopped short of directly challenging the DEB, as the following comments from a teacher demonstrate:

You received a grant, and a few days later, there is a notice from the district saying they want so much from the little that we were given for purposes that are unknown. We are always giving out money because of the fear. You might want to

say no to such an arrangement but if it is your school alone that has said no, you will be labelled (Interview-M/T1).

Thus, even the little autonomy in deciding how to spend the grant there was at school level was often impeded by those wielding power in the education hierarchy, such as head teachers and district officials.

6.4.3 MONITORING AND DELIBERATING ON THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

6.4.3.1 MONITORING TEACHING AND LEARNING

As discussed in chapter 3.5.2.2, current policy encourages a group of parents to regularly monitor teaching and learning in the classroom under a programme known as the 'family pack'. In practice, such parental monitoring was rarely organised at the schools under study.

Teachers did sometimes persuade parents to go to the school and observe how their children learnt, but parents' involvement was limited to monitoring how their children behaved in class and did not extend to evaluating the teaching performance. Indeed, some teachers considered parental monitoring of their work to be illegitimate interference in their professional independence. For example, in a classroom observation, when I asked about the role of parents, one teacher commented:

They [parents] are only supposed to see how their children learn, not how teachers teach. They should have no say in how we teach because they are just community members; not professionals like us (Interview-C/T2).

A few parents said that they had gone to the school on their own initiative and had observed

lessons to see how their children were learning (Interview-L/P1; L/P3). However, in general, little enthusiasm for monitoring lessons was expressed on the part of parents and guardians. Some parents reported that they were reluctant to do so as they presumed that the teachers would not feel comfortable with their presence in class (Interview-C/P2; C/P3; L/P2; M/P2). In other cases, parents explicitly refused an invitation to go and observe lessons, accusing the teachers of neglecting their duties. The minutes of a PTA meeting in Lukasi give an indication of the complaints of angry parents:

Why did you ask us to come to monitor how the children are learning and how the teachers are teaching, when there are professionals such as teachers and the district education standards officer who are trained and paid for this job?

(Father, extract from the minutes of a PTA meeting, Lukasi, 22/08/05).

In her study in Uganda, Suzuki (2004) found that while many parents were interested in knowing what went on in school, they were intimidated when it came to monitoring the conduct of teachers in class. Her account corroborates my own findings in this regard. Yet, there is a significant difference in that, the above comment from the father suggests that parents' interest in what goes on in school cannot always be taken for granted. Rather, some parents believed that issues related to schooling – including the monitoring of lessons – were the responsibility of trained professionals.

Historically, most people in the district had been precluded from engaging in the oversight of services provided by the state. Thus, it is plausible that some parents still regarded themselves as having very limited responsibility, and even less ability or skill, in terms of participating in the learning or monitoring process in school.

Some PTA executive members said that one of their most important roles was to make sure

that the teachers were performing their duties satisfactorily (Interview-C/E2; C/E4; L/E1; L/E2; L/E4; M/E1; M/E2; M/E3; M/E4). However, there was little evidence that schools were regularly visited to monitor how effectively the teachers were operating. There was one PTA executive who stated that he went to the school individually to check on their children's progress and see if the teaching was acceptable (Interview-C/E4), but there was no systematic monitoring, instances being somewhat piecemeal.

6.4.3.2 ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF THE SCHOOL

While it was rare for parents to enter the classroom to monitor teaching and learning, interviews with them revealed that many did care about school quality and often came to their own conclusions about it by using a variety of indicators. Mostly, they judged school quality on academic output as expressed by the pass rate in national examinations at grades 7 and 9.

Only 5 pupils out of 150 make it to grade 8, do you think the quality of this school is good? It shows that teachers are doing nothing (Interview-C/P7).

Additionally, some parents also evaluated academic output on the basis of pupils' fluency in spoken and written English.

Parents generally believed that to ensure a school of good quality, sufficient educational input was fundamental. This might include a sufficient number of teachers; discipline and commitment on the part of teaching staff; adequate, clean and safe school infrastructure; and, to a lesser extent, sufficient educational materials. Among the disciplinary problems, parents cited teachers' absenteeism; irregular and untimely attendance; drinking alcohol on duty; and

moonlighting when they were supposed to be in class (Interview-C/P3; C/P5; C/P6; C/P9; C/P10; C/P12; C/P13; L/P1; L/P5; L/P10; L/C2; M/P7; M/P8; M/P10; M/P11). No parent mentioned the actual teaching process – e.g. the instructional method employed or the manner in which teachers interacted with their pupils – as an influential factor in school quality. For many parents whose education experience was limited, the instructional method might have been an area that was beyond their knowledge and experience.

While they rarely visited the school to monitor lessons, some parents used more covert methods to judge the quality of teaching. Some of those families who lived close to the school kept a look out to see if the teachers came on time, as one mother remarked:

As I live near the school, I sometimes pass through the playground when going to my field, to check if teachers are in the classroom to teach our children (Interview-M/P8).

Additionally, some parents went through their children's exercise books to check the attendance of both pupils and teachers⁴⁰:

When the children come home, we do check their exercise books. We are going to know if teachers are teaching them or not if we go through their exercise books. If it has nothing written in it by the teacher, it means that he or she was not around (Interview-M/P2).

6.4.3.3 DELIBERATION ON SCHOOL QUALITY

As discussed in chapter 3.5.2.2, the policy assumes that parents, local community members

⁴⁰ Suzuki (2004) reports similar behaviour from parents in rural Uganda.

and teachers are willing and able to make collective judgment about the quality of schooling and reach a consensus in terms of the strategy for improvement. It further expects that the deliberative process facilitated through the activities of the PTA will provide an authoritative mechanism for effective implementation of such strategies. Or, at least, decisions reached in PTA meetings will be communicated to the DEB to act upon through official channels such as the PTA district council.

In reality, interviews and observations of PTA activities revealed that the meeting was a far from ideal space in which parents and members of the community might have the opportunity to air their views on equal terms with school leaders. Some parents claimed that they hesitated to press their point of view. In the main, they felt that they did not have sufficient ability, knowledge, experience or language skills to articulate their opinions on the quality of the school in a public meeting. A father in Chulu summarises the sentiments of many parents and community members:

People feel that they cannot speak up at meetings. They say, “If I make a mistake when speaking English, people may laugh at me.” Or, if you asked a question and someone said something that you didn’t understand, you would feel that you were wasting other people’s time. You may have quite good things in your head but just because you are not well educated, you won’t be able to express yourself (Interview-C/P6).

Some parents also hesitated to express their concerns for fear of the negative consequences. For example, one mother in Lukasi reported that when she had asked a teacher why he was drinking on duty, he replied, “I communicate fluently when I’m drinking. No one should question my professionalism. You will be spelled if you take good time of someone” (Interview-L/P12). The same mother continued, “They wouldn’t listen and it hurts us”.

Moreover, the desire to speak up at a public meeting was often tempered by nervousness about appearing conspicuous in front of the community, especially in situations in which opinion about what constituted school quality varied. For example, one mother in Lukasi commented:

Because villagers do not think the same way, it is dangerous to speak. If you raise a point, everybody will point their fingers at you saying that this is the one who came up with the idea. People will be against you (Interview-L/P11).

The observation of the PTA meetings indicate that those who were confident of airing their views and concerns were usually relatively well educated and of higher social status than the majority – and more often than not men. Yet, even these voices were often dismissed as illegitimate by the teachers. It was not uncommon for them to overrule questions from parents and other members of the community rather than try to provide any kind of reasonable answer. For example, at a general PTA meeting in Chulu, a mother asked a question about the low examination pass rates of the children, which was not fully answered by the teachers (box 6-3).

Box 6-3

Debate on the quality of education at an extraordinary meeting of the PTA in Chulu on 12/10/07

Mother:	Teachers, I wanted to ask why children in other schools speak good English but those from this school have failed?
Head teacher:	You will ask this some other time. Mostly, pupils play a lot and sleep late. As a result, they don't study and parents normally don't care about it. This is contributing to poor performance. The government has introduced the system of checking children's books and signing after going through their work. But this is unsuccessful because most parents don't take it seriously. In a grade 1 class, only one parent managed; in grade 2, only five parents.

When interviewed later, this mother commented that, "They [teachers] wouldn't listen to us; it

hurts us” (Interview-C/P8).

As box 6-3 illustrates, as far as the teachers were concerned, this kind of question and answer session was usually something to be guarded against. Observation of the PTA meetings suggest that it was also more often the rule than the exception that teachers blamed bad parenting for low educational output rather than offering reasonable explanations for their own behaviour.

As such, contrary to the policy premise, the PTA meeting often reinforces the existing unequal power relationship between school and community.

As discussed earlier (section 6.4.3.1), multiple PTA executive members interviewed believed that one of their roles was to ensure that the teachers taught well. However, in terms of public meetings, some were of the opinion that they had to protect the interests of the teachers rather than those of the parents (Interview-C/E4; M/E2). They explained that this arose partly from the notion that teachers were superior to ordinary members of the community, and partly as an effort to avoid embarrassing the teachers in public, which might have made it difficult for them to persuade ordinary members of the community of the need to contribute to the school.

This highlights the delicate balance between the two simultaneous roles that the PTA executive must play: accountability to the community, and mobilising sufficient community contribution to the school. Thus, even though in theory, the PTA executive represents parents and guardians, its perceptions and actions do not necessarily represent the interests of the rank and file PTA members.

In principle, the district PTA council – of which all PTA chairpersons were members – was supposed to represent at the DEB the PTAs of all government basic schools in the district. However, the district PTA council had not been functioning at all for many years (Interview-DEBS). It was only during my stay in the district that the then current DEBS revived the district PTA council. Yet, as far as the district officials, teachers, and even PTA executive members themselves were concerned, the expected role of the district PTA council was simply to share information about the type and extent of community mobilisation infrastructure projects in each school (Interview-DEBS; DESO; D/M3; C/H; C/E1; L/H; L/E1; M/H; M/E1). After all, the district PTA council was created and maintained in the interest of district officials and school management with the aim of mobilising more resources via the community for school infrastructural development; not as a forum in which the concerns of ordinary parents could be discussed at the district level.

6.5 SCHOOL CONSTRAINTS TO AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO THE DEMANDS AND CONCERNS OF PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The above observations notwithstanding, if we only emphasise the power imbalance between teachers and PTA executive members on one side and ordinary members of the community on the other, we run the risk of losing sight of other important aspects of the promotion of community participation under current reform policy in Zambia. What may usefully be noted in the findings of the field data from this study is that reciprocally, the teachers believed that their voices were not being heard by the community – or by the district officials.

6.5.1 CONSTRAINTS IN TERMS OF RESOURCES AND AUTHORITY AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

The assumption that head teachers have the power and authority to solve all the problems raised by parents at PTA meetings is indeed unhelpful. The field data suggests that head teachers had little discretionary power or autonomy, or the resources needed to address many of the problems identified. As discussed earlier, the school grant was subject to stringent caveats and, moreover, was grossly insufficient to run the school in a fashion that would meet anyone's expectations; which, together, made it extremely difficult for the school to address many of the problems raised at PTA meetings. Take textbooks, for example – teachers reported that while procurement and distribution for grades 1–7 had improved in recent years, provision still fell far short of requirements; and the situation in terms of grades 8 and 9 was, frankly, pathetic. The following comment by one teacher is illustrative:

We have no pupils' books for English for Grade 8. The grant tells you that 30 per cent of it should be allocated to educational materials, and the grant is only ZMK 3 million. And yet, you have so many other books that are needed. What can you do in this situation? (Interview-C/H).

Several teachers and parents cited the problem of the shortage of teachers as one of the major causes of the low quality of education offered at government schools (Interview-C/H; C/T2; L/T1; L/T6; L/P5; L/P10; M/T2; M/T6; M/E1; M/P8; M/P10;), over which, however, head teachers had little control. Under the current decentralisation reform, head teachers were not granted any power over recruitment, deployment, confirmation or discipline of teachers. In spite of the increase in the number of pupils at grades 1–7 following the announcement of free education in 2002, the government imposed a freeze on the hiring of new teachers in

2003, as increases in salaries and benefits were found to be excessive in relation to the budget framework (World Bank 2006).

Consequently, teacher availability actually worsened considerably between 2002 and 2004,⁴¹ leading to problems associated with overcrowded classes, an adverse circumstance to which Masaiti district was no exception (Interview-DEBS; C/H; M/H; L/H; M/T4; M/T5). Under such conditions, all three schools under study were forced to operate a double shift system for the lower grades (1–4).

The freeze on the recruitment of new teachers slowly began to thaw from the second half of 2004 and had been lifted completely by 2005, which resulted in an improved PTR nationwide (World Bank 2006).⁴² At the three schools under study, the benefits of an improvement in the PTR after 2007 were observed, although a strong geographical disparity still prevailed in this regard (see table 6-2).⁴³

Table 6-2
PTR for Grades 1–7 at the Three Government Basic Schools under Study (2008)

Chulu (peri-urban)		Lukasi (peri-urban but some distance from the DEB)		Mutande (rural)	
Grade 1	1:40	Grade 1	1:49	Grade 1	1:58
Grade 2	1:38	Grade 2	1:51	Grade 2	1:86
Grade 3	1:38	Grade 3	1:56	Grade 3	1:73
Grade 4	1:42	Grade 4	1:57	Grade 4	1:80
Grade 5	1:40	Grade 5	1:39	Grade 5	1:34
Grade 6	1:37	Grade 6	1:47	Grade 6	1:35
Grade 7	1:52	Grade 7	1:59	Grade 7	1:28

Source: the author, compiled from field data.

Some parents welcomed this improvement in the PTR at their schools, and hoped that the

⁴¹ PTR increased from 46:1 in 2002 to 55:1 in 2005 (World Bank 2006).

⁴² About 3,400 teachers were hired in the second half of 2004, and 5,000 teachers were hired in 2005 (World Bank 2006).

⁴³ Strong urban–rural variations in terms of teacher deployment have also been found, the PTR for middle basic school (grades 1–7) skyrocketing to 87:1 in rural schools nationwide (World Bank 2006).

teachers would be better motivated to teach their children as a result, as one father in Lukasi put it:

I am happy because now we have many teachers to teach our children. Previously, we only had a few teachers and they were complaining that they had to teach many classes (Interview- L/P1).

However, head teachers, their management teams and even some parents were doubtful that the newly deployed teachers would stay, a fear arising mainly – though not exclusively – from the acute shortage of teacher's accommodation. For example, the head teacher at Lukasi remarked:

Ah, I doubt that all these new teachers will stay in this school. There is not enough teacher's accommodation in this school, and so those teachers commute from some awkward places that are very far from here (Interview-L/H).

In fact, at the most rural school (Mutande), the head teacher reported that in the previous couple of years, two teachers – one male and one female – had resigned after only staying one or two weeks, to go and work at schools in town where there was adequate accommodation.

At all three schools, it was not uncommon for two or three people to share one teacher's house, while some squatted in the tuck shop or in derelict government buildings (see picture 6-7). While the availability of housing was a critical prerequisite in the attraction and retention of teachers in rural schools, the necessary funding for the provision of teachers' houses was rarely made available by central government, meaning that the community was put in the position of de facto responsibility when it came to building teacher's houses.

With such a high PTR, it was difficult to teach large classes, which were often of mixed ability, as described by a teacher in Chulu:

You can find that a class has more than 60 pupils. Teachers cannot manage to attend to each of them individually. At private schools, if pupils do not succeed, they are expelled. That is why parents [with children] there pay a lot of attention to their education. But here [at a government school], we cannot choose our pupils (Interview-C/T6).

Thus, teachers generally felt that they were given too little resources from the government to offer quality education demanded by parents.

Teachers' sense of powerlessness was further compounded by low remuneration and harsh working conditions. It was not uncommon that arrears in the payment of various benefits such as the hardship allowance, housing allowance, double shift allowance and severance pay took several years to be settled. At the schools far from the district capital (Mutande and Lukasi), teachers felt that they had made great sacrifice in terms of their living conditions lacking access to electricity, water, a clinic and educational facilities for their own children. However, the schools had little resources to remedy such a situation on their own.

Feeling helpless and undervalued, several teachers spent hours and even days engaged in a second job, while others neglected their classes in order to study for a university degree by correspondence that they might change profession; or for a diploma in education to increase their chances of getting a transfer to a town. Some recently deployed young teachers were keen to be transferred to an urban school after two years or so. As far as they were concerned, Masaiti district was merely an entry point into teaching, as it was easier to get a post there than in town. One male teacher told of an aspiration that represented the feelings

of many of his young colleagues,

The vacancy in Masaiti district came at the right time when we needed employment. I would like to move out of this district and go to an urban area of course, as there are difficulties attached to the environment here. It is very difficult to interact with the community, as my background is quite different. Our conditions of service did not change even after the District Education Board came to our district. We have fondness [for the community] but, to be honest, life is very difficult in a rural setting (Interview-M/T3).

The above comment indicates that the prospects for teacher retention are not very promising.

Picture 6-7

Recently deployed female teachers squatting together in one of the classrooms due to the shortage of teacher's accommodation in Lukasi



6.5.2 LACK OF MORAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT TO CHILDREN'S LEARNING BY PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY

Not only did teachers complain about the lack of resources and authority they have to improve learning environment at their schools, they also complained about the lack of moral and material support rendered by parents to the learning of their children. Teachers generally felt that parents' values and attitudes did not conform to the expectations of the schools, thus hindering schools from being effective to offer quality education.

Erratic Attendance, High Dropout and Insufficient Provision of Education-Related Materials

Teachers often complained about the erratic attendance and high dropout rate of pupils, as well as insufficient household provision of food, clothing and other materials necessary for effective learning.

Some of them attributed this lukewarm parental attitude towards their children's education to a general lack of concern. For example, as one teacher at Lukasi commented:

Some days, pupils come and other days they don't. Teachers cannot be motivated in that way...so such things demoralise us. Some parents do not know the goodness of education because they were not educated themselves (Interview-L/T6).

There were other teachers who attributed girls' school dropout to the local practice of early marriage:

There are quite a number of parents who force their daughters to get married when they get to grade 5. It is their culture and [symptomatic of the] economic situation in this area (Interview-C/T2).

Some teachers further attributed such indifference to the low value the indigenous Lamba attached to education, which was derived from a traditional lifestyle that did not consider schooling to be necessary. For example, the head teacher at Lukasi contended:

The Lamba are not interested in education because they are used to getting small jobs like chefs and some piecework, not a job where you get paid at the month end. And because of that, education has not been very popular amongst them (Interview-L/H).

The Lamba's perceived low appreciation of formal education notwithstanding, parents generally commented that schooling had since increased in importance, even if this had not been the case in the past. They appeared to consider schooling to be a necessary investment and means of improving the family's economic status through employment in town, as corroborated by previous studies (e.g. Serpell 1993; Therkildsen 2000; Pryor 2005). The following comment by one parent is illustrative: "Sending a child to school is now important because the child will have better future and a better job; perhaps a white collar job" (Interview-L/P7).

Their willingness to send their children to school notwithstanding, some parents reported that the economic situation did not often allow them to do so, as exemplified by the following complaint: "It is poverty; people have no food at home – what else can they do [but force their daughters into an early marriage]?" (Interview-C/C2)

Some teachers also cited the heavy reliance on child labour for farming and charcoal burning as a reason for irregular attendance. Indeed, it was not only traditional economic activities, but also emerging short-term opportunism that often discouraged parents from sending their children to school, as the head teacher at Lukasi noted:

Some pupils at grade 5 and above have stopped coming to school. Whether they go to school or not, they can still sell fuel or turn to prostitution. And some people even prosper from such illegal activities, so they think that going to school does not matter (Interview-L/H).

Seasonal economic hardship was given as the reason why parents struggled to bear the cost of school-related materials, as an elderly woman who was bringing up her granddaughter all too clearly illustrated:

It is the rainy season and I am busy looking for food every day. It is very difficult to buy books for children; without money, there is no future (Interview-C/C3).

However, there were those teachers who suspected that some parents were economically capable of ensuring that their children had all they needed for school, but were unwilling to do so because they construed 'free education' to mean that they were to a great extent freed from the responsibility of providing school-related materials (e.g., Interview-C/H; C/D; C/T1; C/T3; C/T4; C/T6; C/T9; L/H; L/D; L/T1; M/H; M/T1). These teachers claimed that the term 'free' instantly reminded many villagers of the socialist regime when everything – education, health services, fertiliser – was provided gratis by the state.

Current policy expects not only individual parents and guardians but also the wider community to contribute to the education of school-age children through mutual sensitisation to the importance of schooling (MOE 1996a). However, there was little evidence that this kind of cooperation was collectively facilitated by the PTA in any of the school catchment areas under study. There were some PTA executives who stated that they talked individually to other community members about the value of education, but this initiative was not systemised (e.g., Interview-C/E2, C/E4; L/E4).

Indeed, some teachers were of the view that it was unrealistic to expect the PTA executive to play such role in the prevailing impoverished environment with no payment in return (e.g., Interview-L/H; L/D; M/H; M/T1). Indeed, given that the work of the PTA in general was voluntary in nature with no financial reward, many executive members may have considered that the opportunity cost in terms of time and effort outweighed the benefits.

Insufficient Provision of a Home Environment Conducive to Learning

In the study schools, teachers also often complained about inadequate parental attention to and supervision of their children's homework, partly due to their lack of interest and partly to their lack of capacity to do it. The head teacher at Lukasi put it thus:

For those who have vision for education, they go through their children's [exercise] books. But most parents – who have little education – do not help their children with their homework because they do not even know the work that is given to the pupils; you see? (Interview-L/H).

Suzuki's (2004) study of rural Uganda similarly suggests the limited capacity of parents to supervise children's homework.

Teachers further reported that some people believed that supervising their children's homework was the responsibility of trained professionals, not that of parents. For example, the head teacher at Lukasi reported:

We requested parents to go through their children's homework and sign the book but it was not successful. Some parents said, "Why do you ask us; you people are trained, aren't you?" (Interview-L/H)

Some teachers thus felt that conditions in many households were somewhat incompatible

with the expectations of the school. A comment by a teacher from Mutande is illustrative:

Parents are not playing any role. Even when you give children homework, parents do not respond. Somehow, our work becomes very difficult. It was very difficult for us to change certain habits of the pupils because of the way they were brought up. It is the norm of the culture here (Interview-M/T5).

Another teacher reported that parents often even expected them to take responsibility for the disciplining of children on the parents' behalf: "Here, parental care is somehow missing; they expect us to change their children" (Interview-M/T4).

In fact, some teachers complained that parents often believed that the behaviour and academic performance of the pupils was the sole responsibility of the teachers and the state, a notion that was further reinforced by the free education policy. For example, a senior teacher at Mutande commented:

Parents always condemn teachers for their children's performance. There has never been a time when teachers are praised for the good things they have done; so, us teachers even thought of leaving the school (Interview-M/T1).

On the other hand, as mentioned earlier (6.4.3.3), in PTA meetings, teachers often defended their own actions while, at the same time, accusing people of bad parenting. Yet, joint solution for such problems was rarely sought between parents and teachers at PTA meetings observed.

Thus, it is probable that each group felt that the other had no appreciation of its concerns and constraints, leading to a widespread feeling of apathy towards the PTA meetings.

Consequently, teachers often seem to have felt disempowered, rather than anything to the

contrary, when parents' values and attitudes did not conform to the expectations of the former and they received most of the blame for the poor performance of the pupils. Barrett (2005) also found that teachers in rural areas suffered from frustration when traditional beliefs around child raising differed from their own views on education, as was frequently the case.

6.5.3 THE VULNERABLE POSITION OF TEACHERS IN THE COMMUNITY

Some teachers felt that they were in a delicate position in the community, a situation that often demoralised them. They occasionally encountered hostility due to their ethnic background, which was frequently different to the majority of the local population, and some non-Lamba teachers felt unwelcome in the area (see section 6.2.5). For example, the deputy head in Chulu revealed that some community members occasionally shouted at teachers, urging them to, "Go back to your village" (Interview-C/D).

In his study of rural Ghana, Pryor (2005) argues that the school and community are two very different fields (utilising Bourdieu's (1977) concept of the term 'field'). Pryor maintains that teachers wield power within the domain of the school but outside it, people are indifferent to their authority (op. cit.: 199). Accordingly, in the present study, it was found that the local school enjoyed a position of dominance over parents and other community members within the professional realm of education. Nevertheless, teachers often found themselves in a vulnerable position in the community, whose ethnic background, culture, set of beliefs and attitude were all very different from their own.

Yet, contrary to Pryor's (op. cit.) claim that parents resist the will of teachers only by maintaining indifference to all that goes on in the domain of the school, evidence from Masaiti

district indicates that parents often exercised overt power over the school when its values conflicted with their traditional way of life and its preservation. For example, one teacher at Lukasi reported what had happened when they attempted to intervene in the early marriage of a young girl:

The parents wanted to marry off their daughter. The girl was only 13 years old. As a teacher you said, “No, I want this child to be in school. It is against government policy; I can even bring you to court.” Then, they said, “Are you going to marry my daughter instead; or are you going to provide everything for us to eat? OK, then you will see.” And you know, once they had said, “you will see,” it meant that they expected something bad to happen to you. That means they will curse you! So, when parents were very much in resistance, we just let them do what they wanted to do – we are afraid of parents (Interview-L/T6).

6.6 ARRANGING PRIVATE TUITION AND/OR CHOOSING AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

Parents and other community members were reluctant to participate in the deliberations of the PTA when they saw that their voices had little influence. In turn, this prompted some of them to take matters into their own hands in an attempt to assure a better quality of education for their children. Two alternatives were available: (1) to arrange for paid extra tuition, and (2) to choose another school for their children.

6.6.1 ARRANGING PAID PRIVATE TUITION

Under the terms of the free primary education policy, arranging paid private tuition was strictly prohibited (MOE circular No. 3, 2002). However, it was found that some parents arranged for

teachers to give private lessons to their children in Chulu. Such classes were normally organised for pupils of grades 7 and 9 in preparation for national examinations. Lessons were initiated either by parents who wished to improve the chances of their children passing, or by teachers who wished to earn additional money to make ends meet.

The form and price were negotiated between the participants, but on average, a fee of ZMK 5,000 (USD 1.22) per month for grade 7 and ZMK 10,000 (USD 2.44) per month for grade 9 was charged for lessons from Monday to Friday, each one lasting two to three hours (Interview-C/T5).

It should be noted that the motivation for such recourse was an attempt on the part of individual parents to improve the learning outcomes of their own children. Yet, it ran contrary to the notion of collective action by the community in the common interest and for the establishment of a consensus on the best means of education provision, as expected under the public accountability model. Suzuki (2004) also notes that the recourse to private tuition is an individual rather than collective action.

It is interesting to note that some parents interviewed were of the opinion that private tuition was the only means of improving their children's learning, as one mother in Chulu stated:

You have to pay tuition of ZMK 5,000 so that your child can be taught extra lessons. This is the only way that teachers will teach our children; those who cannot afford it, it is just unfortunate (Interview-C/P9).

According to the head and teacher who taught private lessons in Chulu, all pupils who attended such classes were children of government workers earning a regular income; no children of peasant farmers received private tuition (Interview-C/H; C/T5). In Lukasi and

Mutande, where the majority of parents were peasant farmers, head teachers reported that private tuition had not been offered in recent years due to the inability to afford it. Thus, economic status may have greatly influenced pupils' chances of passing exams.

6.6.2 CHOOSING AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

Some parents who were dissatisfied with the quality of education on offer in the government schools and were able to afford the fees opted to send their children to a private school in the adjacent urban district:

There are a quite a number of them who go to a private school in Luansha. They hire a minibus that probably accommodates 18 to 22 pupils to ferry them to Luansha. They are [children of] police officers and government workers, and some of teachers (Interview-C/H).

There are many who send their children to the Skylark School in Luansha, because teachers at the government schools were not teaching properly. It charges ZMK 300,000 per term; that is a lot of money (Interview-C/C1).

In terms of grades 8 and 9, some teachers reported that a few parents chose to send their children to secondary schools some distance away that offered grades 8 to 12, as they were thought to offer better quality education. Usually, these institutions were boarding schools that charged far higher fees than basic schools.

By losing wealthy households with the potential to contribute both in terms of resources and ideas, the availability of parental choice undermined the prospect for active community participation in the local basic school. The project committee chairman in Chulu put the blame on these parents publicly at a PTA meeting: "Those parents who send their children to

Luansha are not developing this area; they are developing Luansha” (Interview-C/E3).

While the reform undoubtedly increased parental choice for a few economically well off families, the majority of parents were unable to exercise such a choice. The fees and the transportation expense⁴⁴ of sending their children to a private, boarding or secondary school were beyond the reach of the majority of parents in the school communities under study. For example, one mother spoke of her inability to send her children to private school: “Private school is better because children acquire better education; it is only that we cannot afford it” (Interview-L/P5).

Interviews with parents and teachers revealed that parental choice among different government basic school catchment areas was also limited, mainly due to distance. It was usually those parents who were better off and had wide social networks who were able to send their children to a government school a long way from home:

There are some parents who send their children to other government schools in cities such as Ndola and Lusaka. Those parents are a bit better off. They get their relatives to look after their children. Ah, but those parents are not many around here (Interview-L/H).

In theory, schools that did not attract pupils were sanctioned through a reduction in revenue earned from school fees and PTA subscriptions; as well as the school grant, which was mainly calculated on the basis of enrolment rates (see chapter 2.3.2.2). In other words, there were mechanisms that involved Hirshman’s notion of ‘exit’ (see 2.3.2.2) as a way of ensuring

⁴⁴ It was found that parents in Chulu catchment area who sent their children to a private school in Luansha paid ZMK 120,000 per month for a minibus that was hired jointly with a mission hospital. In Chulu, most parents sent their children to a private school called Skylark in Luansha, for which they paid ZMK 300,000 per child per term in tuition fees.

the quality of services on offer.

In Chulu, where a sizable number of well-to-do parents had opted to send their children to private school, the incumbent head teacher put several measures in place to improve the quality of the school – such as tighter discipline on teachers – in order to entice parents to reenrol their children. In fact, this head teacher commented:

We wanted to prove that we were just as good as the teachers in the private schools, so I have an agreement with my teachers that we work hard (Interview-C/H).

Consequently, some parents sent their children back to school in Chulu. One mother who recently took her child out of private school explained why:

There was a change in school administration. The new head teacher is really tough; the teachers are now reporting regularly (Interview-C/P15).

This suggests that where there were considerable numbers of parents able to exercise choice, who might have had some influence over the awareness and action of the head teacher.

However, this could not always be guaranteed. Some parents and teachers reported that the previous head teacher in Chulu had done nothing to improve the school in spite of the loss of revenue as a result of parental preference for a private school (Interview-C/H; C/T2; C/P1; C/P4; C/P5; C/P9; C/P10; C/P15).

Thus, as Suzuki (2002, 2004) notes, whether a market signal is taken seriously or not appears to depend on the morale and business sense of the head teacher. After all, even if a school suffers significant loss of pupils, this does not necessarily have a direct short-term

effect on the salaries of its teachers.

6.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, parental and community participation in the selected government schools was investigated as it relates to four forms of practice emphasised by policy, that is, (i) contribution to school resources; (ii) development and implementation of a localised curriculum; (iii) school management; and (iv) school choice.

As discussed in chapter 3, current policy reform in Zambia expects active parental and community participation in the affairs of government schools in both pedagogical and managerial aspects of administration in order to ensure that 'local' requirements are taken into consideration in school plan and curriculum design. The policy also anticipates that the community's active participation in the deliberations of the PTA will guarantee that the concerns and opinions of the former are heard and acted upon by school managers; which will then lead to increased school accountability (i.e. public accountability – see chapter 2.4).

Yet, the investigation in this chapter revealed a considerable gap between such policy expectation and the reality at school level given that some of the underlying assumptions were not met.

It was found that parents and other community members in the research area failed to participate to the expected extent in the development and implementation of a localised curriculum, or in other aspects of school management such as school planning (the AWPB), and the monitoring of learning and teaching in the classroom. Such a lukewarm attitude often

resulted from their perceived limited ability and agency to take part in these aspects of schooling, which in turn arose from their own low literacy and general education level. Additionally, the interpretation of 'free' education as meaning that everything related to schooling was the responsibility of trained professionals also reinforced such a stance. This situation contrasted sharply with the policy assumption of the community's abiding ability and willingness to participate in the education of its children.

Furthermore, policy expectation of parental demand for locally adapted teaching content notwithstanding, a preference for academic subjects predominated, which contributed to an ambivalent attitude towards participation in the development of the envisaged curriculum.

The perception amongst teachers that laypeople had limited ability and even less legitimacy to participate in the pedagogical and managerial aspects of education also militated against the active participation of the community. This also contrasted with the policy assumption that teachers would welcome community participation in these areas.

However, parents were generally keen to be kept informed of the school's resource flow, including the use of the school grant and their own contribution, which they were supposed to oversee. Such a management role was expected to increase transparency in the use of school resources. Yet, in practice, the expenditure of the school grant was almost always dealt with by the head teacher with little transparency, while the funds contributed by parents were sometimes controlled by one or two powerful teachers or the PTA.

Serious concern over this lack of transparency notwithstanding, parents failed to effectively voice their concerns in public. Similarly, their apprehensions about school quality – often manifested in a poor examination pass rate or low morale amongst the teachers – were not

well articulated; and even when such concerns were raised, they were often dismissed by the teachers. This was due to a combination of lack of confidence, low literacy levels, poor ability and skill in public speaking, and fear of reprisal; an explanation noted by Suzuki (2004).

Thus, contrary to policy expectation, holding regular PTA meetings did not necessarily guarantee that the voices of laypeople would be freely expressed and heard. These findings diverge sharply from the policy assumption of an equal and homogeneous community; and, critically, ignore micro-power relations between professionals and laypeople – and even amongst laypeople themselves.

Rather, PTA meetings frequently degenerated into a space in which parents and other members of the community were merely instructed to contribute to the school; and one over which they had little or no control. Unlike the policy expectation that the PTA would take into consideration the varying capacity of the community to contribute, pupils whose parents or guardians were unable to pay into the fund were turned away from school. Thus, a situation of de facto compulsory community contribution (Watt 2001)⁴⁵ through the PTA fund prevailed in spite of the ostensible policy of 'free' education for grades 1–7.

The chapter further revealed that teachers were also constrained in their ability to respond to the demands of parents, particularly in respect of the quality of education they offered. Teachers felt that they lacked the autonomy or resources to respond to the wishes of parents and other members of the community, given that resources allocated to the school level were grossly inadequate. Moreover, teachers often felt that parental values and attitudes towards

⁴⁵ Watt (2001) distinguishes voluntary and compulsory support, in that the latter is determined by the government rather than the community when it is unable to meet the full cost of education development from its own resources.

schooling in a rural setting did not conform to the expectations of the former as reported by Barrett (2005) on rural Tanzania. Neither did they think they were given adequate support in meeting the challenges of teaching children of mixed ability and erratic attendance, critical factors in achieving a high quality of education. This finding also differs sharply from policy premise that schools are endowed with sufficient ability and authority to respond to the demands of the community.

Policy implicitly emphasised a parental role in choosing a school for one's own children, which in theory was expected to increase market accountability (i.e., market accountability – see chapter 2.4). Yet, parents with children in government basic schools fared no better in reality as customer stakeholders. Many parents failed to participate as active consumers due to socio-economic and geographical constraints. There was also variation in the manner in which head teachers responded to a reduction in enrolment rates, which depended on the value they placed on their teachers – a point corroborated by Suzuki (2004) – the school rarely being held accountable. After all, teachers were employed and remunerated by the government, and whether they responded to the voices of parents or not did not directly affect their position or salary.

CHAPTER 7 CASE STUDY AT THE MICRO LEVEL [2] – COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in chapter 3, the reform policy expects parents and other members of the community to play an even larger role in community schools than in their government counterparts, often, though not always, through the work of the parent community school committee (PCSC). Specific roles assigned to the PCSC include enrolling pupils and ensuring their regular attendance; hiring and remunerating volunteer teachers; monitoring and managing volunteer teachers; monitoring teaching and learning; and contributing to school development projects (MOE 2007c). Each registered community school is eligible for the school grant, which is also expected to be administered by the local community through the PCSC (ZCCS 2005; MOE 2007c).

Based on the perspectives of different local actors, this chapter analyses the ways in which parents and members of the wider community participate in the affairs of three selected community schools in practice. The chapter further explores how parental and community participation in the community school affects school accountability as policy reform objectives.

To facilitate comparison between community participation in government schools and that in community schools, our examination addresses the four forms of parental and community participation that were utilised in the analysis of the former in the previous chapter: (1) contribution to school resources; (2) development and implementation of a localised curriculum; (3) school management; and (4) arrangement of private tuition and choice of an

alternative school for their own children.

7.2 CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOOL RESOURCES

7.2.1 TYPES OF CONTRIBUTION

It was revealed that the purposes for and types of community contribution were more varied than was the case with government schools (see appendix 7-1). The former included providing labour and local building materials for the construction and renovation of classrooms, toilets and teacher's accommodation; recruiting volunteer teachers from the locality; providing land for the school; fundraising for the purchase of textbooks and foodstuff for pupils; providing accommodation for volunteer teachers; providing land for teachers to farm; and remunerating volunteer teachers either monetarily or non-monetarily.

The payment into the PCSC fund was obligatory at all three community schools under study. The amount that parents were required to contribute to the PCSC fund varied depending on the viability of the community; and ranged from ZMK 3,000 (USD 0.73) per child per term in Nkambe, to ZMK 6,000 (USD 1.46) in Fifugo (see appendix 7-1). As the fund was mainly used to pay the school's volunteer teachers, each community's collective subscription had a direct effect on the staffing level of its school.

7.2.2 ATTENDING PCSC MEETINGS

Contrary to the policy assumption of active parental and community participation in the PCSC,

attendance at meetings was not uniformly high but rather varied according to the perceived quality of education on offer and the transparency of school management, a situation similar to the case with the government schools (see chapter 6.2.2).

In addition, the prospects for the sustainability of the school appear to have affected the willingness of people to attend PCSC meetings. The following comment from a volunteer teacher at Nkambe is illustrative: "People stopped coming to meetings because they thought that the school would stop operating because of the wrangle over school land" (Interview-N/E1).

As Watt (2001) argues, due to its highly risk-averse nature, the poor community may withhold participation from such collective action if it is unconvinced of the positive results of engagement. Moreover, such a stance indicates the somewhat unsustainable nature of the community school compared with the government school.

Furthermore, some parents were reluctant to attend meetings if there was no material or financial enticement. The PCSC chairman in Pulofa described this dependency syndrome, which was widespread in the community:

In rural areas, when we say we will have a meeting, they expect to get something; and if they are not given anything, then, they will not come to the next meeting... People have lost voluntarism! (Interview-P/E1)

This observation indicates that the willingness of parents to attend PCSC meetings might not have always stemmed from their sense of communal responsibility, but rather from an individual interest in short-term gain.

7.2.3 DECISION-MAKING ON THE MODE AND SCOPE OF CONTRIBUTION

The atmosphere of the meeting was seemingly less authoritarian and more informal than its counterpart in the government school (see for example, picture 7-1).

Some teachers and PCSC executive members stated that the decision on the mode and scope of the contribution to the school was made by the parents themselves. For example, the PCSC chairman at Pulofa remarked, “It is the parents themselves who said that the school should start charging some PCSC fund so that we can give something to our [volunteer] teachers” (Interview-P/E1).

Nevertheless, observation of the meetings and a reading of past minutes indicate that the proceedings were sometimes dominated by the powerful, such as the PCSC chairman, teacher seconded from the mother school and district officials; an arrangement that somewhat contradicted the principles of the community-owned school.

For example, in Pulofa, a decision to start charging subscriptions to the PCSC fund was made by the committee executive, and only reported to rank and file members afterwards at a general meeting (see box 7-1).

In Fifugo, although a motion to adopt the proposal to increase subscriptions to the PCSC fund was fairly carried in a general vote (PCSC meeting, 04/04/08), interviews suggest that there was widespread discontent among parents about the high charge, and the fact that it was based on the number of children in each family attending school rather than a single payment for the household as whole, which had a detrimental effect on poor households as

they were likely to have more children. One father expressed his complex feelings:

We feel pity for the teachers. But ZMK 6,000 is too much for most of us who live on subsistence farming and charcoal burning; we do not have that kind of money (Interview-F/P2).

This suggests that the mere absence of the opposition voice at the PCSC meeting did not necessarily mean a consensus among all those present. Although women usually outnumbered men in a general PCSC meeting and were the dominant labour force when it came to school construction, they seldom spoke during the meetings; thus, decisions about the mode and scope of the contribution were often made solely by male participants. The gender division of labour and the weak power of women in decision-making in school affairs have also been noted in the context of rural Malawi (Rose 2003).

Box 7-1

The chairman's proposal to start making payments into the PCSC fund at a meeting in Pulofa on 11/02/08

PCSC chairman:	We have teachers who just give [their time] to assist children, but they don't get paid. We sat as an executive to find a means and way of assisting teachers. We need teachers who look smart and clean. Sometimes, a teacher doesn't come to work; he just tells you that he went to town to sell charcoal. We sat as an executive and decided to charge ZMK 4,500 per term – ZMK 13,500 for the whole year. Please, parents, teachers are working for us; it's very hard for them to make ends meet. We should not chase [expel] children, but if there is a parent who does not bring his or her children to school because he or she cannot pay, we will take him or her to the chief or to the police.
PCSC vice chairman:	If you don't have money, make sure you sell your maize to make some money to pay.
Mothers:	It is OK.

Picture 7-1**An annual general PCSC meeting under a thatched roof in Pulofa**

Generally, PCSC executive members were more highly educated, slightly better off and had greater experience of public deliberation than other community members (see appendix 7-2, for a list of PCSC executive members). The executive also often included traditional authorities such as village headmen and women (see appendix 7-2). Such unequal power relations in the community often meant that the voices of the poor and the marginalised were excluded in the name of ‘community consensus’ and a seemingly democratic decision-making process.

7.2.4 MANAGING COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION

As with the government schools, it was sometimes suspected that community funds had been misappropriated by school leaders or teachers in all the catchments under study. Many parents interviewed expressed their strong abhorrence of such misuse of public resources (Interview-F/P2; F/P3; F/P4; F/P7; F/P10; F/P11; P/P1; P/P5; P/P6; P/P12; N/P5; N/P6; NP10). Interestingly, however, they rarely raised the issue at PCSC meetings observed.

Without hard evidence of wrongdoing, some parents were afraid of being accused of slander, which was regarded as culturally inappropriate and a serious offence. One mother at Nkambe commented:

We paid ZMK 10,000 to the PCSC but nothing has happened since. We want to know what happened to our money, but we are voiceless because we don't know anything. I am not in a position to inquire; you cannot just ask alone when others keep quiet (Interview-N/P10).

Furthermore, those who said harsh things to other people in public also ran the risk of being accused of being a witch or abnormal in some other way, a label that could make life in the community extremely difficult and, in some cases, even lead to death. The following statement illustrates a case in point:

People whisper about it [misappropriation of the PCSC fund] but they never mention it in public. They fear witchcraft. People believe it because many bad things do happen, like falling sick at first and then dying (Interview-P/E6).

In exploring the correlation between development and culture in the Zambian context, Ngulube (1997: 122) points out that, "It is taboo to engage in a line of thought, a mannerism or conduct that is markedly different from the community-held view on the issue [in a society such as that in rural Zambia] where the maintenance of harmony with others is after all a highly cherished virtue."

After all, parents were not only consumers of education but also members of the community, where personal relations were based on an informal network of various reciprocal social obligations and the maintenance of harmony was of paramount importance. As a result, it appears that they tended to 'play safe' by avoiding unnecessary conflict with other community members, particularly those in positions of power in the locality.

Again, similar to the case with the government schools, the suspicion of community members appeared to grow when they felt that their contributions did not result in the anticipated tangible results. Furthermore, structures built through community contribution tended not to be very sturdy and were prone to serious damage from the elements, as was the case in Nkambe where the school building was completely washed away by the rain.

On the other hand, a positive outcome in a relatively short space of time tended to boost the morale of the community and enhanced its sense of ownership of the school. Especially when a permanent structure was built with the assistance of a donor, people's confidence and sense of ownership appeared to grow, which was reflected in an increase in community contribution as well as in its attempt to maintain the school structure by itself; for example, through the provision of voluntary security services, as illustrated in the case of Fifugo:

We are very happy because there is development at this school. When we are called, we get sand and make bricks. This is our school; even if the government does not provide any money, we as parents do the work – we hired a watchman (Interview-F/P3).

In this regard, the gap between those schools in areas that enjoyed donor/government support (Pulofa and Fifugo) and the one that did not (Nkambe) was considerable. Nkambe was located in the remotest and most impoverished area of all three catchments under study; a severe disadvantage to begin with, which was compounded by the lack of any kind of external support. Furthermore, after a classroom built by the community had been washed away by the rain, the volunteer teacher and several parents reported that people had stopped paying into the PCSC fund and working for the school since there was little prospect of future development:

People have stopped paying completely. They said that the school was not going anywhere. They have stopped taking an interest in the school (Interview-N/VT1).

Since some NGOs often avoided working in underprivileged communities where quick results might be harder to realise (Mansuri and Rao 2003: 34), external assistance may have run the risk of exacerbating the inequity between schools rather than redressing it, as the district planning officer explained:

There is an issue of distance. There are schools that are limping and they usually lose out when the donors come, because donors favour schools that are near the roadside (Interview-DM1).

7.2.5 FACTORS AFFECTING NON-COMPLIANCE

Several factors appear to have affected the compliance of parents and other members of the community with regard to their contribution to the school in terms of finance, materials and labour; most of which overlapped with those identified in respect of the government schools. Moreover, feelings of envy amongst community members towards other villagers were identified as a factor, although jealousy of teachers (something that was prominent with regard to the government school) was not evident. It is probable that this was due to cultural and ethnic similarities between volunteer teachers and the community, as they mostly came from the same locality (other than those teachers who were seconded by the mother school), unlike the situation with the government school. Consequently, parents in the community school catchments may not have felt so socially distanced from the volunteer teachers.

- (i) Perceived Low Quality of Education

Parents' belief that the quality of education being delivered was revealed in the pass rates of grade 7 national examinations appears to have greatly affected their willingness to contribute to the development of their school. For example, in Fifugo and Pulofa, where grade 7 examination pass rates had dramatically improved in 2006, the number of parents participating in school projects was reported to have increased:

Seventeen people sat the grade 7 exam; and out of 17, 12 passed with good marks. Now when they are called for work, they come in numbers; they have love for the school (Interview-P/E1).

In contrast, such a change in attitude was not evident in Nkambe, where parents were doubtful of the quality of education due to an extreme shortage of teachers and the fact that the school did not cater for the upper grades (5, 6 and 7). The following comment by one mother typifies the widespread doubt about the quality of the school amongst parents in Nkambe:

Some people don't come to work for the school. There is no qualified teacher at our school and it only caters up to grade 4. The school is going nowhere (Interview-N/P9).

(ii) Fluidity of the Parameters of the 'Community' and Ambivalent Community Spirit

As with the situation in respect of the government schools, interviews with teachers and parents suggest that the composition of the 'community' was subject to constant change. Both seasonal and permanent migration was not uncommon for economic and social reasons, for example, family disputes, death and sickness; as well as a result of the trend

towards the adoption of the nuclear family as opposed to the traditional extended family. A volunteer teacher at Nkambe observed that:

Here, some people do not stay for long. For example, a young couple sometimes do not even make the effort to build a permanent house. Previously, when they got married, a daughter and her husband had to stay with her parents but this is changing now. After some years of marriage, they can relocate somewhere else, like in town. So, they don't make an effort to develop the school (Interview-N/VT1).

Thus, families did not necessarily perceive their current residence to be their permanent home; an attitude that was likely to lead to refusal to contribute to the local school in exactly the same way as was observed in the case of the government schools.

Again as with the government schools, parents without children at the community school were seldom inclined to contribute other than when told to do so by the village authorities. When asked whether there were people without children at the school who still worked for it, one parent responded, "There are there but not many; they only go when the village headmen asks them" (Interview-F/P6).

Of course, there were some exceptions and several prominent local people had donated land or the use of a church at all the community schools studied. In some cases, such generosity arose out of altruism:

When the evangelist opened the school, he asked the villagers who would donate some land for it. No one raised their hands. But at last, the village headman said that he would offer his land to the school because he wanted this area to be developed (Interview-N/VT1).

Yet, in other instances, a benefactor expected something in return, such as precedence over others when a donor distributed handouts to the villagers. For example, in Fifugo, one PCSC

gave the bicycles donated by CARE International to a village headwoman who had donated land to the school, even though she was not a care provider and thus not entitled to a bicycle (Interview-F/VT1; F/C1; F/P12: F/P13).

The District Council was expected to support community schools through its constituency development fund (CDF) (see chapter 3.5.1.2), which they apply to CDF committees comprised of area Members of Parliament (MPs). Some of these councillors assumed an active role in sourcing the CDF for their local schools on account of the significant political appeal of the publicity. For example, the PCSC chairman in Pulofa said of the ward councillor:

The councillor comes around to the school often. This classroom block was completed with the help the CDF he sourced. You see, this is part of his campaign (Interview-P/E1).

Yet, the teacher and some parents at Nkambe claimed that the councillors in their area were completely inactive and were hardly ever seen in the community other than around the time of an election (Interview-N/VT1; N/E1; N/E3; N/P7).

Furthermore, in the case of Pulofa, although the ward councillor had been most active in applying for the CDF – as noted earlier – the recent proposal had never been approved by the CDF committee of area MPs, which, in the opinion of the DEBS and PCSC chairman was because the councillor was a member of the opposing party. Thus, given the highly political nature of the distribution of the CDF, it played a somewhat limited role in bridging the gap between local government and education provision.

(iii) Envy of other Villagers

In Fifugo and Pulofa, CARE International provided school leaders and care providers with bicycles for the purpose of supporting orphans in the villages, while T-shirts and other handouts were also occasionally given to school leaders or those who were identified as vulnerable households. Many villagers who had been left out when it came to such benefits and gifts often boycotted work for the school simply because they were envious of those who had received 'presents' from the foreign donors or NGOs, even if there had been good reason for the preference. The following comment from a volunteer teacher in Pulofa summarises widespread opinion of the highly delicate equilibrium the community was subject to:

Some people are boycotting work for the school because they were not given bicycles. If you are left out, then there will be a problem. Jealousy is always there. You see someone put on a nice jacket, then people think, "I wish it were me" – something like that (Interview-P/VT1).

The emotions of jealousy and envy are neither exclusive to Africa in general nor to Zambia in particular. Yet, it appears that jealousy often affects the social equilibrium in rural Zambia. Indeed, Nglube (1997) argues that the emotion of jealousy is common across the whole spectrum of Zambian society. The above case indicates that if external aid is implemented naively, it can severely disrupt this equilibrium. At the same time, such cases also shed light on the relationship between the complex nature of leadership and the polarisation of group identity.

(iv) Ambiguity around the Terms of the Free Education Policy

Ambiguity around the notion of free education and its varying interpretations often meant that parents refused to contribute to community schools too. For example, the teacher in charge in Fifugo contended that, "Some parents boycott coming to school to work because of [their perception of] free education" (Interview-F/TC).

Furthermore, school leaders claimed that some parents refused to pay into the PCSC fund because they could not comprehend the concept of paying teachers for 'voluntary' services. For example, the PCSC chairman in Pulofa stated:

Some people are difficult; they refuse to pay. They say, "Why pay the teachers when they are volunteers"? (Interview-P/E1)

This highlights the ambiguous status of the 'volunteer' teacher and the nature of his or her duties. Moreover, a gender factor around the concept of undertaking work for the school was evident. It was reported that men were more reluctant to offer their services freely as they believed that physical work should be financially rewarded:

Men don't want to do voluntary work for no financial reward; they think they need to get paid. They even want us to buy bricks rather than work to make them. But how can we find money to buy bricks? It is very tough (Interview-P/E1).

Thus, the community's conception of the nature of voluntary work may not have necessarily corresponded to the established norm that the policy-makers had taken as given.

However, this does not imply that African communities lack a voluntary service ethos if such work is in the common interest. Indeed, I observed numerous small churches in Masaiti district that had been constructed solely by means of community contribution. Nevertheless,

as Mansuri and Rao (2003: 32) argue, an indigenous system of social organisation may have different 'moral claims', depending on the foundation of public interest it is built on.

(v) The Low Socio-Economic Status of The Community

The limited ability of many households to financially contribute to the school or its teachers' upkeep owing to various socio-economic constraints was evident in respect of the community schools too. Both teachers and parents often spoke of the harsh economic circumstances of the community that undermined their ability to contribute. One teacher noted:

Out of 86 pupils, only about 10 managed to pay. People here have no other means but cutting charcoal for survival during the rainy season. Most of the children here are orphans so it is very difficult to receive a contribution from them (Interview-N/VT1).

Some parents similarly reported that they were forced to devote all their resources to sheer survival, particularly in the rainy season, making it impossible for them to pay into the PCSC fund:

We are happy to pay. The only thing is that it is difficult to find the money, especially during the rainy season; we don't even have any meal [maize flour] at home (Interview-P/P9).

Some school leaders noted that such straitened circumstances were even more acute than was the case with parents sending their children to government school in the district. Furthermore, as was also the case with the government schools, the ability to contribute to education services was reported to vary from school to school and within the individual community, depending on such variables as economic viability, gender, age, and the health

of family members.

7.2.6 THE ENFORCEMENT OF SANCTIONS FOR NON-COMPLIANCE AND CONSIDERATION FOR THE NEEDS OF THE POOR

Sustaining community input and deterring free riding were important issues with regard to the community schools too. Unlike similar cases with government schools, sanctions against those who failed to pay into the PCSC fund were not overtly imposed at the community schools under study. Some teachers and PCSC executive members shared the belief that suspending pupils from school was not commensurate with the objective of serving children from poor and vulnerable families.

For example, a volunteer teacher at Fifugo commented that he had never excluded a child from school, as he was an orphan himself and knew what it would feel like (Interview-F/VT3). The PCSC chairman in Pyutu also showed his deep understanding of the poverty in the community and expressed his commitment to ensuring the access of poor children to school:

I am a parent myself. There is no way a teacher should stand in class and say that your parents have not paid so you should go home. That is bad! It happens in government school, but we try to come up with another system because when they say education for all, chasing children and pointing at children is not good. The child will get annoyed and be stigmatised (Interview-P/E1).

Such consideration may be partly attributed to volunteer teachers' deeper understanding of the socio-economic situation, given that most of them came from the community, unlike the case with government schools, in which teachers mostly came from outside the locality, and mostly from town.

However, interviews suggest that there were also some teachers and PCSC executive members who argued that children should be suspended from school if their parents or guardians failed to pay into the PCSC fund.

One volunteer teacher commented:

If we don't chase the children who haven't paid, it becomes very tricky. I think the best way is you start chasing the children; otherwise, they won't change (Interview-P/VT1).

Thus, the school was faced with the serious dilemma of having to choose between adhering to the ideal of serving poor children and disciplining free riders so that they might sustain the level of community input necessary to run the school.

Furthermore, some pupils whose parents/guardians were unable to pay into the PCSC fund withdraw from school of their own accord in order to avoid public disgrace. In the case of Fifugo, in the absence of payment by their parents, a number of pupils in the senior grades (5, 6, and 7) were reported to have stayed away from school until they earned enough money themselves to pay their PCSC fund subscriptions. Thus, the burden of fundraising was often placed upon the children themselves – the most vulnerable of all in the community.

Moreover, there was overwhelming evidence that social sanctions were often applied by traditional figures in the community – such as the tribal chief, the chief's advisor, or village headmen and women – against those parents who did not participate in school projects. Such sanctions included an obligation to till the farms of the traditional authorities; the assignment of heavier workloads; and, as a final resort, expulsion from the village.

In Fifugo, in recognition of the effectiveness of sanctions applied by traditional figures in overcoming the problems associated with free riding, the PCSC appointed village headmen and women as honorary executive members (Interview-F/VT1; F/E1; F/E2). They were often invited to executive meetings to discuss the needs of the community contribution, after which they were expected to mobilise their 'subjects' to work for the school. This system appears to have served the purpose of disciplining free riders and sustaining community support well, as one PCSC executive member in Fifugo said:

Those who don't come to work, we inform the chief's counsellor and village headmen so that they can talk to these people – some kind of threatening of them. That's the only way there will be change (Interview-F/E2).

However, the compulsory nature of such measures still ran counter to the spirit of community voluntary participation under free education policy.

7.3 DEVELOPMENT OF A LOCALISED CURRICULUM

As discussed in chapter 3.5.3.2-(ii), policy has historically been rather vague about the role of parents and other community members in the curriculum of the community school. However, the new strategic framework for community schools stipulates that they should follow the mainstream government curriculum (MOE 2007e). The new government basic education curriculum framework directs the community to participate in the development and implementation of a local curriculum (see, 3.5.3.2-(ii)). Thus, theoretically, the community around the community school that adopts the government curriculum should also participate in the design and implementation of such a curriculum as one of the six learning areas (see

chapter 3.5.3.2).

However, similar to the situation with the government schools, the community's involvement in curriculum matters was extremely limited. There was no apparent desire on the part of parents to become involved in decision-making in this respect, as they generally believed that they were incapable of engagement; thus, constricting the parameters of their participation space even when the opportunity presented itself. The following comment from one mother summarises the perceptions of many parents: "We are not involved in the curriculum; it is the job of teachers who are trained" (Interview-F/P9).

However, when asked whether they would be willing to visit the school to teach local culture or skills, some parents expressed their willingness. One father put it thus:

Yes, that is a very good idea, so that children can make baskets and pots to survive even if they don't go to secondary school. Some of us are now growing old so we can teach our children (Interview-F/P3).

Unlike the case in the government schools, in which some parents expressed resistance to the idea of a localised curriculum on the grounds that it would eat into time allocated to academic subjects (see section 6.3), no parent interviewed with regard to community school objected to the idea of a localised curriculum for that particular reason. This may have been because they had humbler and more realistic aspirations for their children, or because they regarded the educational scope of the community school to be somewhat wider than that of the government school. This point requires further investigation.

Teachers on secondment from mother schools believed that parents were poorly qualified to engage in curriculum design, and generally considered that they had a mandate to

implement government policy faithfully, preparing rural children for life in modern society.

When asked about the idea of involving parents in modifying the school curriculum, the teacher in charge at Pulofa responded:

Parents are not allowed to get involved in pedagogy. Because of their low educational level, they are not even allowed to come into the classroom. You know, I am the eyes of the government; I should implement the policy of the government to educate them. The PCSC only makes sure of mobilising to develop school infrastructure (Interview-P/TC).

In this regard, there was little evidence that they valued the accommodation in the curriculum of parochial development priorities specific to individual community requirements.

Being mainly recruited from the same environment and conversant with indigenous social, cultural and economic realities, volunteer teachers may have been in the best position to link the curriculum with local perspectives and needs. However, some had never heard of a localised curriculum, which was quite understandable given they had little direct access to government policy documents or MOE circulars. Furthermore, some volunteer teachers claimed that they had not implemented a localised curriculum because they were not told to do so by senior members of staff or the teacher in charge. The following comment from one volunteer teacher is illustrative:

The teacher in charge must instruct me what to do; otherwise, he will think I am not following what he has said. So, this is the reason why I didn't do that (Interview-P/VT5).

Thus, similar to the situation in the government schools (see section 6.3), some teachers tended to wait for directions from above.

Nevertheless, a few volunteer teachers and community members in Pulofa had previously taken the initiative to offer pupils skills training such as clay pot making and knitting. Yet, it was revealed that these classes had been discontinued because the teachers and community members had become demotivated due to the lack of financial reward:

I used to teach pupils how to knit because I was trained as a tailor. But I quit after a few months because there was nothing coming to me. I am a single mother of two and I also adopted orphans because my sister passed away. It was too much for me for nothing (Interview-P/E6).

In fact, some teachers and PCSC executive members – and even parents themselves – doubted that the voluntary service of community members in the area of skills training without financial reward was a realistic proposition. One mother put it thus: “You see? I am always busy, so it is difficult for me to come to school to teach, which would mean that other jobs would be left undone” (Interview-F/P6).

In reality, the shortage of teachers, limited teaching and learning materials, and poor school infrastructure dictated what and how pupils were taught. Although under the new policy, registered community schools were entitled to the same education materials as government schools, they were often not provided with them. For example, Pulofa and Fifugo had to make do with outdated textbooks based on the old syllabus that had been donated by CARE International, since new ones had not been provided by the DEB. Both volunteer teachers and those seconded by the mother school were concerned that such inadequate resources would seriously damage pupils' chances of passing the national grade 7 examinations, which were based on the new syllabus. Therefore, some of them went to the mother school to ask for a copy of the new syllabus and the accompanying textbooks; but the request was denied as the teachers had little negotiating power with the principal of the government school.

One volunteer lamented the powerlessness of community school teachers when faced with the authority of those from the mother school:

I went there [to the mother school] many times but they always refused [to share teaching and learning materials]. I don't know why. Maybe they don't have sufficient books; I don't know! What I can say is that we have no power. Our teacher in charge has no power over the mother school either, because he is a junior there (Interview-F/VT3).

Teachers at the mother school found it impossible to share teaching and learning materials with community schools, given the severe shortage of materials provided by the DEB, which were barely enough to cater for their own school (Interview-F/M; N/M1). Indeed, there was great ambiguity about who was responsible for delivering teaching and learning materials to the community schools; and district officials interviewed did not necessarily perceive it as their responsibility to distribute supplies equally. I return to this point in chapter 8.

The shortage of teachers and their high absenteeism rates at all the community schools under study frequently left pupils completely unattended or, at best, compelled the school to operate a multi-grade teaching system, which was not as common in the government schools under study. In Fifugo and Pulofa, in cases of teacher absenteeism, two or three classes were often spontaneously combined; or else, one teacher took two classes in separate classrooms (or under two trees) simultaneously. In Nkambe, where there was only one volunteer teacher responsible for everything, classes for grades 1 and 2 were always combined in the morning, while grades 3 and 4 were taught together in the afternoon.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse the effectiveness of multi-grade teaching. However, interviews with teachers suggest that this method was not their preferred choice, and that they considered it to be something of a burden since they were not trained in the

technique or any strategies for optimising it (Interview-F/VT3; F/VT6; P/E1; P/VT1; N/VT1).

7.4 PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

7.4.1 RECRUITMENT AND REMUNERATION OF VOLUNTEER TEACHERS

One of the most prominent forms of participation that the policy envisaged for parents and other members of the community was the recruitment of volunteer teachers. However, evidence from the field suggests that the capacity of the community to carry out this responsibility was somewhat limited.

As mentioned in 4.2.2, the DEB in the research district had initiated a system whereby a government school acted as a 'mother school' to its nearest community counterpart, the former seconding at least one of its teachers to the latter.⁴⁶ However, the actual nature of the secondment of teachers was found to vary greatly, often depending on the 'good will' of the head teacher of the mother school, its own staffing level and the relative location of the community school. Indeed, government schools in remote areas often suffered from an acute shortage of teachers themselves, making it extremely difficult for them to release any teachers to a community school. The District Planning Officer (DPO) explained:

It is up to the mother school. If they have enough staff and the distance is not too far, they second a teacher to a community school. The mother school does not need to tell us. But in some schools, there is a critical shortage of teachers in the district, even in the government schools, so it is difficult for them (Interview-DM1).

⁴⁶ Some volunteer teachers and PCSC executive reported that the DEB used to deploy untrained teachers on the government payroll to community schools, but that it ceased the practice in about 1995 (Interview-F/VT2; F/VT3; P/E1).

At the time of the fieldwork, there was no sign that the DEB had redeployed any government school teachers, presumably on the grounds of the sheer number it would need to relocate in order to implement a system of equitable secondment to all community schools in the district.

Furthermore, some teachers reported that government teachers were generally reluctant to take a community school posting on account of the remoteness and lack of decent teacher's accommodation (Interview-F/VT2; F/VT3; N/VT1). For example, in Fifugo, two young trainee teachers were initially posted to the school in addition to the teacher in charge, but they did not stay long due to the lack of acceptable accommodation (Interview-F/VT2; F/VT3).

Indeed, while Fifugo and Pulofa enjoyed the services of teachers seconded from a mother schools since they were located relatively close to the tarred road, no government teacher had ever been posted to Nkambe, which was the remotest of all three community schools under study. In addition, some volunteer teachers suggested that mother schools were typically keen to dispatch their teachers to a community school only if it was in receipt of donor assistance, as the following statement from one teacher indicates:

Why they [the mother school] sent a teacher to our school is because our school received money from the donor. Mother schools want to be involved when money is made available (Interview-F/VT2).

One notable consequence of such selective deployment of government teachers to community schools was the heavy reliance of the latter on the services of volunteer teachers. However, as previously noted, the capacity of the community to recruit teachers was in reality severely restricted. The educational level of most villagers was limited and it was hard to find people in the locality with a secondary school leaving certificate, the minimum level of

attainment expected of volunteer teachers by the government: “Ah, there is nobody who is educated to teach our children around here” (Interview-F/P4).

Similarly: “It is very difficult to find a volunteer teacher since the majority of people around this area are ignorant!” (Interview-F/C1)

Furthermore, some PCSC executive members indicated that it was even more difficult to find anyone who was willing to teach for little or no remuneration. One volunteer teacher in Fifugo noted:

I was the only teacher for many years because people had no interest [in teaching for little or no money]. The others had left because they didn't get paid. You see? People around here are very vulnerable (Interview-F/VT2).

The economic endowment of the local community was generally lower than it was in government school catchments, meaning that community contribution to the welfare of its volunteer teachers tended to be meagre at the best of times and frequently paid on an intermittent basis depending on the season; all of which resulted in a far from adequate allowance to sustain a volunteer teacher and his or her family.

These disadvantages notwithstanding, interviews with volunteer teachers revealed a wide variety of motives for adopting such a vocation; some mentioned a strong sense of communal responsibility, while a several others cited religious conviction as a strong motivational factor. The following comment from a volunteer teacher in Fifugo exemplifies both:

I teach because of my love of the children. When I was a child, my father passed away, so I was looked after by my grandfather. He was very old, so money for me to go to school was a problem. I remember how I suffered. I thought, “Let me

assist these children in the community so that they will not suffer.” I am a priest at the church, and people said that they had no one who was educated who could read the Bible; so, this started paining me. That is when I thought, “Let me concentrate on teaching these children so I can improve their education.” That is the heart I have (Interview-F/VT3).

This point is collaborated by Chakufyali et al. (2008) who argue that most teachers adopt the vocation out of an ardent desire to help the children of their communities.

Yet, not everyone was necessarily motivated to work for the community school out of altruism. Some were rather enthused to teach out of the desire for personal economic or social gain, or the pursuit of career aspirations. The most prominent of these was the expectation of various benefits offered by donors, including college scholarships, in-service teacher training,⁴⁷ and the provision of T-shirts and bicycles:

I got interested [in becoming a volunteer teacher] when I saw other colleagues going to college and getting bicycles. So I thought, even me, I should start teaching so that maybe in the future I can also be considered [as a candidate for a scholarship] (Interview-F/VT4).

In Fifugo and Pulofa, USAID, through its programme called Quality Education Services Through Technology (QUEST), awarded scholarships to a few qualified volunteer teachers for enrolment on a distance learning course offered by a teacher training college.⁴⁸ As a result, there was an increase in the number of young people in the community willing to teach at these schools. However, the scholarships were strictly limited, which led to the swift

⁴⁷ USAID provided a 20-day in-service training course for volunteer teachers at selected community schools in collaboration with the MOE.

⁴⁸ Zambia Teacher Education Course (ZATEC), distance module. Ten volunteer teachers in Masaiti district had benefited from this scheme. However, they had been in the final cohort and no more support was anticipated (Interview-U3), which raises the question of the sustainability of such donor assistance.

disillusionment of those teachers who were not successful, and they tended to leave the school to pursue more favourable opportunities elsewhere (Interview-F/TC; F/VT2; F/VT3; F/E1). Such cases indicate that romantic notions of communal altruism cannot necessarily be taken for granted when it comes to voluntary teaching.

In fact, the low retention of volunteer teachers was a significant problem at all the schools under study. In Nkambe, with no donor support to ameliorate the situation, the school only managed to retain one volunteer teacher, the others having left owing to frustration over the lack of any monetary reward. One former volunteer teacher at Nkambe explained his position:

The community came to ask me to assist in teaching their children, and I said let's come to some arrangement. But, community participation was not fully according to our agreement. They said each child should pay ZMK 500, but unfortunately, the parents couldn't afford that. That is why I decided to stop teaching at this school and go to another community school in town supported by a foreign missionary, which pays me better and more regularly. I am a father of four children. I want to go to school to complete grade 12 so that I can go to college. Now, where can I get the money? (Interview-N/VT2)

In fact, volunteer teachers at all schools received either no remuneration at all or extremely little, or else they were paid in-kind, including the provision of labour; recompense that varied from the equivalent of ZMK 50,000 per term in Fifugo to almost nothing in Nkambe. While parents and other members of the community interviewed were often willing in principle to support their volunteer teachers, in a context of abject poverty and vulnerability, their capacity to do so in practice was extremely limited. The following comment from one mother summarises the opinions of many parents interviewed:

What we want is to give them [volunteer teachers] something; some little money because they are human beings. They can't afford to just work like that; but the

problem is that we have no money to pay them (Interview-P/P3).

Furthermore, as opposed to the general image embodied in the policy, there was no written contract or similar agreement to bind either party to the terms of service or remuneration of a volunteer teacher. As such, they were free to leave the school at their discretion, even in the middle of term.

Some parents and school leaders also revealed that the volunteer teacher recruitment process sometimes lacked transparency and was dominated by a few powerful individuals. Ordinary parents and other community members typically exhibited little knowledge about how volunteer teachers were recruited, considering themselves ill-qualified to involve themselves in the process given their own low educational attainment. For example, one mother remarked: “We don’t know how these teachers were recruited; it is the teacher in charge who knows about education and who can find our teachers” (Interview-F/P9).

In fact, in Fifugo and Pulofa, interviews with teachers suggest that at the time of the study, teachers deployed by the mother school were mainly responsible for recruiting volunteers, as it was considered that the former were best qualified to assess an individual’s academic suitability (Interview-F/TC; F/VT2; F/VT3; F/VT5; P/TC; P/VT1; P/VT3; P/VT5).

One of the conditions attached to the USAID-sponsored scholarship was that it was only open to those who had been teaching at a community school for a substantial length of time. Moreover, after obtaining their primary school teaching certificate, these teachers were expected to return to the same community school as qualified teachers on the government payroll.

However, the selection of some of the beneficiaries was not made according to the conditions set by USAID but through nepotism. Two out of the four teachers in Pulofa were relatives of district officials and also the government teacher seconded by the mother school; thus, they were not from the local community but from the adjacent urban district (Kitwe). Field interviews suggest that it was unlikely that these teachers would return to their community schools after completing the training course. The PCSC chairman in Pulofa, for example, when asked whether he thought that volunteer teachers who were being trained at college would be willing to return after obtaining their certificates responded thus: “Ah, I doubt they will come back. Some may come back but others may not: hey are too fond of town” (Interview-P/E1).

Moreover, the chairperson of Zambia Open Community Schools (ZOCS) – the largest local NGO supporting such schools, mainly in Lusaka and Central Province - claimed that those community school teachers who had completed the distance learning programme and obtained their primary school teaching certificates were often redeployed by the DEBS to government schools (Interview-Z1).

These views are corroborated by Chakufyali et al. (2008: 5), in their argument that volunteer teachers who complete distance learning teacher education programmes often do not return to their communities.

The District Education Board secretary (DEBS) was aware of such underhand practices but took no action. In his opinion, it was inevitable that some volunteer teachers would have to be recruited from urban areas, given the difficulty of finding young people in the locality who held a secondary school leaving certificate with good grades – criteria stipulated by USAID.

Other instances of nepotism were also observed, such as a case in which the friend of a PCSC vice chairman in Pulofa who had donated land to the school was recruited as a teacher, even though many of the other PCSC executive members objected to the appointment on the grounds of his cantankerous personality.

7.4.2 CONTROL AND OVERSIGHT OF THE SCHOOL GRANT AND OTHER AWARDS PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND DONORS

Registered community schools were entitled to a quarterly school grant from the MOE, the size of which was based mainly on pupil population. It was expected that the grant would not only increase the financial resources of each school, but also facilitate bottom-up and needs-based planning with the participation of the community. The policy also encouraged the PCSC to participate in monitoring the use of the grant in order to enhance transparency and the wise use of limited resources (see chapter 3.5.3.2).

The school grant was a lifeline to the community school, which was generally extremely resource-poor. Yet, it was revealed that its allocation was largely at the discretion of DEB officials. Only two schools (Fifugo and Pulofa) received the school grant in 2007, while Nkambe had not received it since 2005. Moreover, Pulofa received nothing during the two years 2004 to 2006. The DEB should have disbursed 30 per cent of the available grant funds to community schools and 70 per cent to government schools. However, very few district officials or community members were aware of such an MOE directive.⁴⁹ A similar finding is

⁴⁹ Such an allocation formula was introduced in order to secure a share of the grant for the community schools. However, this policy did not facilitate equitable distribution of resources because it failed to take into account both the number of community schools in relation to government schools in each district, and

reported by Chakufyali et al. (2008).

The involvement of parents and other community members in the management and monitoring of the school grant was extremely limited, with the exception of a few instances (e.g. Pulofa where the PCSC chairman was included on the signatory panel). The PCSC chairman claimed that he usually disclosed the details of this grant to parents:

People have to know that the money is used on this and that. The first thing we do at the meeting is to indicate transparency (Interview-P/E1).

However, parents generally had little knowledge of the amount of the school grant or what it was spent on, indicating that the accounts were not often publicised: “We just hear that the government sent the money, but we don’t know how it is been used” (Interview-P/P6).

The grant was also often administered by the mother school and/or the teachers seconded from it; meaning that PCSC members and volunteer teachers – let alone ordinary parents and community members – had virtually no information about it or say in its use. For example, one volunteer teacher at Fifugo reported:

They [the mother school] withdrew the money without asking the community. Those people at the mother school told us that they had borrowed so much money to pay for electricity at their school, and we don’t know whether they have repaid the money or not (Interview-F/VT2).

The dominance of the mother school over the administration of a grant intended for use by the community school often resulted in a discrepancy between the needs of the latter and what was actually purchased by the former. The PCSC chairman in Fifugo elaborated:

comparative enrolment figures in the respective types of school (MOE 2007 c).

We had no say in what the mother school bought. Sometimes, you applied for books, and you only received an used stamp. We were just told that this is the thing we bought out of your grant, and it just ended there (Interview-F/E1).

Being excluded from grant management, some volunteer teachers and PCSC members suspected that it was often misappropriated by the mother school. However, they typically felt unable to query this with the head teacher of the mother school due to a prevailing inferiority complex in relation to the government institution, which originated from their lower social status and educational attainment.

The following account from a volunteer teacher at Nkambe illustrates a case in point:

The head teacher at our mother school told the PCSC chairman to sign the cheque in advance and went to withdraw the money alone without the chairman. And when we took the budget to him, he just said, "We have a problem, so when we find time, we will purchase the materials for your school." And we have not yet been given anything; it is almost two years now. The children don't have anything – pencils, exercise books, nothing. When I told the head teacher that we had a problem, he said, "Just wait! I know what I am doing!" Yeah, it is some kind of way of silencing us. If we were the same, maybe he would start fearing me. But just because I am grade 9 and he has been to college; and I am just a villager, not from the government like him, there is that inferiority complex between me and him (Interview-N/VT1).

Community school leaders were also often unsure how to channel problems and queries related to the grant. They felt that neither district officials nor the police would take the community's complaints seriously because ordinary villagers were considered to be untrustworthy. For example, a volunteer teacher in Fifugo put it thus:

You know, a person like me, when I report to the police, they would say, "Who are you; are you from the community?" Ah, so you think that even if you go there it won't

help, so you leave it like that! It is only the power of God [that dispenses justice]!
(Interview-F/VT2)

As far as the mother school and teachers in charge were concerned, they justified their dominance over the use of the grant on the grounds of doubt about such trustworthiness, and of the capacity of community members – including the PCSC executive and volunteer teachers – to participate in the management of the grant transparently and effectively. As the teacher in charge at Pulofa put it:

These people cannot be trusted so much. If they ate the money, it could not be traced back to them. We [government teachers] are different because we have brains. When the grant comes, we use it specifically for the children. But when we talk of the PCSC, they have their minds only on infrastructure... Because there are some guidelines from the DEBS's office on how we should use the money, we cannot involve the community because they would say, "Let's use this money on infrastructure." This is what we are afraid of (Interview-P/TC).

As Chapman et al. (2002) argue, such doubts may be legitimate concerns in a context in which ordinary community members do not have much understanding of education administration. However, caveats that were assigned to the grant by the government for accounting purposes also provided convenient justification to the mother school for the exclusion of parents and other community members from grant management. At the same time, of course, they also provided a good excuse for the mother school not to surrender its power over the grant.

Interviews with school leaders further revealed that the disbursement of the school grant was usually too little and too late to provide a budget with which the school might operate efficiently – similar to the situation in respect of the government schools. Accordingly, those who controlled the grant saw little or no purpose in school planning, complaining that they

knew neither the amount nor the timing of its disbursement. The following comments from the Pulofa PCSC chairman illustrate the grievances of community schools well:

Once you receive ZMK 1.5 million, it doesn't mean that you will receive ZMK 2 million next term – it will go down. It [the grant] is not useful. For example, when we were given ZMK 1.5 million, they said, "You have to spend 20 per cent of what you have received on textbooks for the children." Now, how many books can you buy? Textbooks cost ZMK 40,000 each. Twenty per cent maybe only caters for three books; it is very hard (Interview-P/E1).

Similarly, Chondoka (2006) found that community schools in Central Province received the school grant erratically, with no clear directions on how much money they were entitled to.

Table 7-1
Receipt of the School Grant by Each Community School Under Study
(as of March 2008)

Fifugo

Quarter	Date received	Amount received (ZMK)
1	18/07/07	1,357,057.24
2	24/09/07	2,707,444.44
3	07/01/08	656,642.46
4	-	-

Pulofa

Quarter	Date received	Amount received (ZMK)
1	-	-
2	n/a	n/a
3	06/01/08	1,578,000.72
4	n/a	n/a

Nkambe

Quarter	Date received	Amount received (ZMK)
1	-	-
2	-	-
3	-	-
4	-	-

Source: the author (compiled from field notes).

At the same time, grants awarded by NGOs and foreign donors for the construction and maintenance of school infrastructure were also frequently controlled by teachers seconded from the mother school; a few powerful members of the PCSC; or volunteer teachers, leaving many ordinary parents suspicious of mismanagement. At the schools that received donor funding (Fifugo and Pulofa), training in financial management was provided and procurement committees were established to facilitate collective decision-making. However, some PCSS members revealed that these committees were essentially non-functional, fund management again dominated by a limited number of powerful people (e.g. seconded government teachers, the district building officer and PCSC chairperson).

Some parents interviewed also lamented the lack of transparency in the way handouts provided by CARE International were administered. For example, parents and other members of the community in Fifugo and Pulofa complained that bicycles intended for care providers were mostly given to the relatives of school leaders. They also questioned the manner in which care providers were selected, many of them being related to school leaders and from villages in which powerful PCSC executives resided, meaning that they were members of the same extended families. Yet, a sense of inferiority and a fear of being accused of defamation of character without hard evidence seem to have resulted in passivity in PCSC meetings. For example, one volunteer teacher lamented the inability of the less powerful to interrogate the misuse of the fund by the school leaders:

They receive money from the donors, but we don't know how they use that money and there is no one who is going to ask them. Who am I? They wouldn't listen. It is a problem. Even if I go to the district to report it, they wouldn't understand (Interview-F/VT2).

One PCSC executive, a primary school dropout, similarly expressed her inability to question

other members of the committee for fear of being thought badly of:

We cannot say anything. We don't want to be hated. When hated, you would have no one who would come to help you at a funeral. Also, when you needed food and money, you would have no one to help you. In the village, truth kills (Interview-P/E6).

As one of the few options open to them in mitigation of the maliciousness of school leaders, some parents and other members of the community considered a change of personnel amongst the PCSC executive: "When the PCSC is not performing well, we have to change and bring in another group" (Interview-F/P2).

However, they sometimes felt unable to demand a public election for fear of being labelled by the executive as rebellious. Some parents and teachers reported that people preferred to elect or re-elect their leaders by secret ballot in the absence of the candidate, owing to the fear of upsetting the local elite on whom many people's lives were dependent; and also on account of a desire to maintain harmony in the community.

In some cases, such 'traditional wisdom' worked well. For example, in Pulofa, the PCSC chairman was removed from office by means of secret ballot because the majority of parents wanted him out on account of their suspicion about the misuse of donor money. However, in other cases, outsiders undermined deeply embedded social norms, ruining a potential chance for the community to elect those whom it really wanted to take office. For example, in Fifugo, the election for the PCSC executive was conducted by a seconded government teacher (teacher in charge), who insisted on an open vote instead of the secret ballot favoured by the community. As a result, the villagers felt they had no option but to agree to retain the incumbent PCSC executive, although they wanted to vote it out due to allegations

of the mismanagement of donor funds, as reported by one mother:

We wanted to elect new [PCSC] members while the old ones were out [not present] but the teacher in charge went on to start the election while they were there. So, some of us had to re-elect the old ones again; some others left the room before the election started (Interview-F/P10).

Those who had donated land to the school tended to gain automatic membership of the PCSC executive (in the case of Fifugo and Pulofa); it was thus considered risky to demand the deselection of such people, even when there was just reason, for fear that land rights would be withdrawn. For example, in Pulofa, one man had been on the PCSC executive since the school had been founded in spite of the fact that he was suspected of misusing donor money. The PCSC chairman explained:

We cannot challenge him because he donated the land for the school. There is tradition to respect if one gives something. People are afraid that if we remove him, he would claim the land back (Interview-P/E1).

Therefore, even when elections were held, they were not always free of the manipulative influence of the powerful. Furthermore, since some incumbent PCSC executive members were often among the few people in the community sufficiently literate to write a funding proposal to a donor, many parents felt that there was no alternative but to retain them in spite of any misconduct. The same PCSC chairman went on:

We cannot remove him because he thinks differently to other villagers. He is literate and used to work at a bank in town; so, he could write a proposal to the donors (Interview-P/E1).

7.4.3 MONITORING AND DELIBERATING ON THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

(i) Monitoring Teaching and Learning

The PCSC chairmen in Fifugo and Pulofa said that they regularly visited their respective schools, the former twice a week, and the latter almost every day as he doubled as a volunteer teacher for the pre-school class. In addition, a few other parents who lived nearby occasionally passed by the school to verify the teachers' attendance, as was the case in respect of the government schools. In contrast, in Nkambe, some PCSC executive members had been in the habit of visiting the school regularly for monitoring purposes in the past, but they had stopped going some time ago because they had become preoccupied with their own farming and other economic activities. Thus, availability and commitment amongst PCSC members in terms of regularly monitoring the school could not always be guaranteed, and varied according to confidence, time and commitment.

Nevertheless, active monitoring on the part of the PCSC chairmen in Fifugo and Pulofa indicates an interesting divergence from the government schools under study, in which little institutionalised effort to monitor teaching and learning by the PTA was in evidence (see section 6.4.3.1). Those who regularly monitored their community schools indicated that they did so for the benefit of all pupils rather than merely in the interest of their own children. For example, the PCSC chairman at Fifugo remarked:

We are free as PCSC executives to go into to the school. Sometimes, I go in the morning to the classroom when the teachers are teaching, to ensure that they are doing their work (Interview-F/E1).

In this regard, representatives of community schools may have had a greater sense of

agency than their counterparts at the government schools under study. This point requires further investigation.

The monitoring of classroom activities by ordinary parents, however, does not seem to have occurred often, as was also the case with the government schools. The PCSC chairman in Pulofoa was of the opinion that this was partly because they were intimidated due to their own low educational level, a point that also deserves further investigation.

(ii) Assessing the Quality of the School

Although ordinary parents rarely visited the school to observe lessons, interviews with parents and other members of the community confirm that they too had their own ideas about the quality of the school.

Similar to findings in terms of the government school, some parents often assessed teaching and learning by checking their children's exercise books. One PCSC member reported:

Not all parents around here are ignorant. Some went to school so they go through their children's [exercise] books to see if they have learnt anything or not (Interview-P/E6).

Furthermore, the quality of the school was perceived to have generally risen when the academic performance of its pupils improved, which was expressed mainly through pass rates in the national grade 7 examinations: "This school is good! Many of our children passed to go to grade 8!" (Interview-F/P4)

Some parents also judged the quality of the school by the extent of its resources, which included a full complement of teachers and their regular attendance; adequate, clean and safe school infrastructure and furniture; and sufficient educational materials.⁵⁰ Conversely, a shortage of teachers or the lack of a safe and permanent structure was seen as a sign of poor quality by many parents. On the other hand, unlike the situation with the government schools, some parents sending their children to community school also judged quality in terms of teachers' qualifications. This was hardly surprising given that all government teachers held at least an official primary school teaching certificate, while volunteer community school teachers tended to have a grade 7 or 9, or, at best, a secondary school leaving certificate. For example, one mother put it thus:

The community school is not of good quality because our children have to study under a tree; they have no desks. When the rain comes, they will just be soaked... Teachers are not trained here (Interview-P/P8).

Indeed, some parents believed that the secondment of a teacher from a mother school was a sign of progress and government commitment to the community school. The following comments from a PCSC executive member express the feelings of many parents:

I am happy that we now have a teacher from a government school because it means we have at least someone who is intelligent and can supervise our [volunteer] teachers. It is one way of showing that we are improving and that this school is on the way up. The other thing is that it shows that the government is now considering our school (Interview-F/E8).

Such an overwhelming desire on the part of parents and other members of the community for the posting of trained teachers on the government payroll to their community school suggests

⁵⁰ Such school inputs were also identified as enhancing parents' notion of quality of schooling in community schools in Eastern province, Zambia (Chakufya et al. 2008: 36).

that the formal establishment of such positions is an urgent necessity. However, this has not yet been uniformly implemented, the actual deployment of teachers lacking agreed criteria and being largely subject to the good will of the head teachers of mother schools (see section 7.4.1).

There were also parents who simply assumed that it was a good school merely because their children were not suspended when they failed to pay into the PCSC fund:

This school is a very good school because our children are not chased even if they don't pay. They can also go to school freely without uniform, unlike government school (Interview-F/P10).

Thus, as was observed with the government schools, perception of school quality was not necessarily uniform across the whole community, which might have been due in part to parents' educational level and extent of aspiration for their children. Further research is clearly necessary to help identify these factors.

It is also noteworthy that the quality of a school was not generally judged in terms of teaching and learning methodology or the relevance of lessons. Although Chakufyali et al. (2008: 43) found that parents tended to consider that a school was of high quality if creative and innovative methods were employed in the classroom, the evidence of the present study does not confirm such a trend.

(iii) Deliberation on School Quality

In community schools in Zambia, PCSC meetings represent a participatory and deliberative

forum at the grassroots level, in which parents and other members of the local community can freely air their views on matters concerning the quality of their school. In particular, the performance of teachers – with the majority of them being ‘hired’ by the community – is expected to be scrutinised, while ways of improving it should be discussed and agreed upon; a process that includes the need to discipline or dismiss teachers whose performance does not meet the required standard. Meanwhile, being ‘employees’ of the community, teachers are expected to be able to justify their professional performance, while listening and responding to the demands of parents and other members of the community.

However, in practice, my observation of the PCSC meetings at all three schools suggests that the meetings did not necessarily confer such a free and participatory space. The question of quality was barely mentioned, while the issue of resource mobilisation dominated deliberations. Indeed, it is plausible that many parents did not feel able to talk about school quality in public due to a lack of confidence deriving from their limited education, as was found with the government schools.

While parents rarely discussed the topic of quality in PCSC meetings, interviews with them revealed that they had mixed feelings about the standard of teaching and learning in their schools, particularly in terms of the performance and morale of teachers.

In Fifugo and Pulofa, parents interviewed understandably expressed their satisfaction with the remarkable results achieved in the grade 7 national examination in 2006,⁵¹ which they mostly attributed to the commitment of some of the volunteer teachers.

The teachers, a few active PCSC executive members and district officials identified several

⁵¹ In Pulofa, of the 17 pupils who sat the grade 7 examinations in 2006, 12 passed.

other factors that were likely to have contributed to the commendable examination results, which included an improved pupil to teacher ratio (PTR) as a result of the recent increase in the number of volunteer teachers thanks to USAID scholarships; and the distribution of textbooks to individual pupils by CARE International, even though they were out of date.

The significance of PTR and pupil to textbook ratio is worthy of further research. Nevertheless, the evidence of the present study indicates that children attending community school – an institution that is invariably located in the economically, socially and geographically disadvantaged areas of the country – can match or even better the examination results of their counterparts at government school. At the same time, it can also be inferred from this finding that those schools with a good learning record (Fifugo and Pulofa) have a sufficient and reliable source of materials; which, in a context of scarce community resources compounded by limited government assistance, is typically met by NGOs and international donors.

However, some parents revealed that their greatest concern remained the high teacher absenteeism rate and low morale of some teachers, even at the two schools that had achieved such good examination results. The following comment by one mother is illustrative:

Ah, some teachers, they don't report to school every day. Our children have not been learning anything lately. They report that their teachers only go two days a week. This is a big problem (Interview-P/P9).

In spite of their frustration, parents rarely voiced their concerns in public at the PCSC meetings. Many of those who attended these gatherings – women, on the whole – felt it inappropriate and inconsiderate to complain about teacher absenteeism openly, given they

had made virtually no financial or in-kind contribution to the remuneration of their services.

For example, one mother in Pulofa commented:

Teachers do not report on time because they are not paid. But we do not have the power to talk about teachers because we don't pay them. What we should bear in mind is that teachers are also married and they at least need to eat (Interview-P/P7).

Thus, parents had a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards teacher absenteeism.

One PCSC executive member also commented that parents were generally reluctant to publicly criticise volunteer teachers who came from the same community and were often members of their own extended families, as such censure would have been regarded as inappropriate in a culture that valued social harmony (Interview-P/E6). Indeed, some commentators on religion and culture maintain that in the African worldview, moral processes are often primarily concerned with the maintenance of communal unity and good relationships with others, as opposed to the developed world's prioritisation of justice and individual rights (e.g. Mbiti 1969, 1975; Verhoef and Michel 1997).

Nevertheless, while it was rare that parents openly criticised teachers, PCSC chairmen, teachers and several parents revealed that some of the latter reported their dissatisfaction to the PCSC chairperson (Interview-F/E1; F/P8; P/E1; P/VT5; P/P6; P/P9).

However, these complaints did not necessarily result in stricter discipline or the dismissal of those teachers whose performance was considered to be unsatisfactory. PCSC chairpersons typically felt that it was inappropriate to 'fire' a volunteer teacher who was only offering a 'voluntary' service in return for little or no payment. They were also reluctant to dismiss or

discipline such a teacher on account of the difficulty in finding a replacement, as indicated by the teacher in charge at Fifugo:

There is nothing you can do! If you persist in asking them the reasons why they don't come to school, then they will stop [teaching completely]. Then, it is the pupils who will suffer. So, the only thing to do is to nurse them; treat them like babies (Interview-F/TC).

A meeting held in Pulofa to solve the problem of a volunteer teacher's absenteeism and low morale is a case in point (see box 7-2 and picture 7-2). Those attending the meeting included the PCSC chairman; the volunteer teacher in question; the mothers of the grade 5 pupils in the teacher's class; the teacher in charge, who was on secondment from the mother school; and another volunteer teacher. The deliberations of the meeting were manipulated by the PCSC chairman and the teacher in charge. They defended the 'accused' volunteer teacher, asking parents to try and appreciate the situation, at times for the sake of unity in the community and at others on account of the difficulty they would have in finding a replacement willing to work for no payment.

In the end, the teacher in charge decided that the 'accused' should be allowed a period of grace of one month and, if he had not mended his ways during that time, he would be dismissed. During my stay in the field, there was no sign of improvement in his attendance, but he remained in post while the parents' frustration and anger was merely exacerbated.

Furthermore, dismissing a volunteer teacher appeared to be a highly sensitive issue, as it had the potential to unbalance the much-valued unity and social equilibrium of the community, and even to incite an act of revenge from the teacher. With regard to the same teacher, the PCSC chairman at Pulofa explained that he was afraid of upsetting the former, as he was

known for his violent nature.

Picture 7-2

An extraordinary PCSC meeting concerning the attendance of a grade 5 teacher in Pulofa (28/02/08)



Box 7-2

Excerpt from the deliberations at an extraordinary PCSC meeting concerning the attendance of a grade 5 teacher in Pulofa on 28/02/08

- Mother 1: Last year, in term three, our children in fact were taught nothing! Why we parents take our children to school, it is for them to be educated. We parents, we are not educated; it is only the teachers who can educate our children. We have seen this teacher not teaching our children – he fights with our children.
- Mother 2: As parents, we want you to find another teacher to teach grade 5. The majority of our children have now stopped going to school; there is no point in them going to school because they are not taught anything. It is true that we don't give teachers food, but other teachers come to teach our children. But this grade 5 teacher spends most of his time looking for food and does not teach our children. If he is tired of teaching at this school, let him leave and we will find another teacher. If you do not want to find us another teacher, no problem; in that case, we know what to do [indicating that they will withdraw their children from the school].
- Accused teacher: You say that I don't teach these children. But have you ever gone through their exercise books and found evidence that I am not teaching them? How many days have I not reported?
- Other volunteer teacher: We have heard what the mothers have said. But as you can see, it is really difficult for someone to come to offer to start teaching without getting paid. It isn't easy! There are very few who could come voluntarily to teach without payment.

- Teacher in charge: I have something to add as well. We should solve this problem in an appropriate manner. Let us give him one month. Maybe he will change. It is very, very difficult just to find a teacher somewhere and bring him here without getting paid. He or she may have children, so you shouldn't expect this person to work without getting paid.
- PCSC Chairman: Children can sometimes tell lies.
- Mother 1: We have understood what has been discussed at the meeting. We will give him one month to see how he performs. If we see that he is not performing well, we shall conduct another meeting, and come and discuss.
- Mother 3: There is nothing we are going to get out of this meeting because everyone is afraid! Mothers are afraid to ask! Before the meeting started, we said that we wanted to chase this teacher. It seems as if everyone is now afraid.
- Mother 1: No, we are not afraid. What we have heard is that there is no other teacher who will teach without payment. Ah, it is really difficult.
- Teacher in charge: You should put any thoughts of chasing this teacher out of your minds; it is not a good idea! The teacher is just teaching voluntarily knowing that he is not going to get anything at the month end. This is what you should bear in mind. Parents, you must have a heart and know the true facts. If we chase this teacher, who is going to assist us? This thing will not help us.
- Mother 3: If someone says he is going to be a teacher, he should do it with all his heart; he should sacrifice everything else. He should not use the threat to stop teaching the children as a weapon; otherwise, there will no unity between teachers and parents!
- Accused teacher: If you want to chase me, that is OK because I would lose nothing! It is you who are going to have a problem! In fact, I would be very happy if you chased me so that I could have the entire time to work in my field. If you know how to teach, why don't you come and teach?
- Mother 2: If we were educated, we would not have had a problem; we would have come here to teach. But since we are not educated, there is nothing we can do.
- Mother 3: We have no power to chase anyone. The teacher in charge has the power to remove the teacher, but he is unwilling. I have no power [in an angry tone].
- Teacher in charge: We have come to the end of the meeting. I think it is really good that you have also agreed that chasing him is not a good idea. This is how it is supposed to be; we must have one heart. We should not differ with each other: let us unite.
- PCSC chairman: We are all Christians. Zambia is a Christian nation; we fall under one umbrella, which is Christ. This thing we have discussed today, you should not take it home. This thing should remain here. Mr Chikulo [the accused teacher] is going to continue with grade 5. Have you all understood?
- Accused teacher: But I can see that some people are not happy.

Some volunteer teachers said that since they were 'employed' by the community, they felt a moral obligation to it; that they should report for work every day, teach to the best of their ability and treat the children well. For example, when asked whom they thought they were accountable to, one teacher responded:

I think we are accountable to the parents and the PCSC because we are employed by them. In the government schools, parents fear teachers, but in the community schools, teachers fear parents (Interview-P/VT5).

Furthermore, some teachers reported that they were more highly motivated when their pupils did well because they were worried that parents would start questioning them if grade 7 pupils did not pass the national examination the following year:

This year, many grade 7 pupils passed the examination. Their parents came to thank me, which made me happy. I will have to keep working hard because if the children don't pass the exam this year, their parents will be furious (Interview-F/VT3).

This evidence indicates that some volunteer teachers at the community schools may have felt that they were more accountable to parents than did their counterparts at government school, who often believed that they were answerable only to the DEB or higher authorities in the MOE. Nevertheless, volunteer teachers' survival instinct often surpassed any sense of obligation to parents or the community: "Some days, I don't go to teach the children because I need to get something to eat for my family" (Interview-N/VT1).

In addition, there was no legal bond to which such teachers' work or behaviour was subject as they merely offered their services on a voluntary basis.

It was not only volunteer teachers but also those seconded from government schools who

neglected their duties, in spite of the fact that the latter were expected to enhance community school teaching capacity and supervise the volunteers' work. For example, the teacher on secondment in Pulofa was absent for half the week and when he did report for work, he only stayed at the school for a short time (Interview-P/E1). Many volunteer teachers and PCSC executive members protested at such behaviour, but they felt they were unable to attempt to change his attitude on account of their subordinate positions. Even the PCSC chairman, one of the most senior representatives of the community, admitted that he lacked influence with the teacher in charge.

Moreover, ordinary parents had little or no knowledge about the DEB or to whom they should complain if they had a grievance against one of its teachers. Thus, parents had little power over the discipline of either volunteer teachers or those seconded by the government when their performance was not satisfactory.

Although the guidelines stipulated that the DEB was responsible for the regular monitoring of community schools, there was little evidence of such practice. Some volunteer teachers observed that DEB officials only visited the community schools when they received donor funding (e.g., Interview-P/VT1; P/VT4). In fact, up to the time of the present study, Nkambe, which had no donor support, had ever been visited by any district official.

As Chakufyali et al. (2008: 34) observe, lack of transport⁵² and funds for fuel; the poor condition of most of the roads serving the schools; funds for per diems; and the differing commitment of various DEBS may all be obstacles to the monitoring of community schools.

⁵² The MOE provided the district with one new vehicle in 2007, although the DEBS noted that it was unlikely to meet the increased demand (Interview-DEBS).

In addition, the reluctance of the DEB to visit community schools may also be attributed to the ambivalent status of these schools, which appears to make district officials think that they are not obliged to support or monitor them. This point will further discussed in chapter 8.

The several guidelines developed stipulate that a district community schools committee is to be formed as a representative body for all the schools in each district (ZCSS 2005; MOE 2007c; MOE 2007e). However, this committee was never set up (Interview-DEBS).

According to the DEBS, the district PTA council that was formed on his initiative in 2007 served as a representative body at the DEB for both the government school PTAs and the community school PCSCs in the district. However, as discussed in chapter 6.4.3.3, the district PTA council mostly functioned as an organ for sharing information on the means of mobilising communities for infrastructure development. Little evidence was found that it represented the concerns of parents or other members of the community in DEB meetings. In fact, while the PCSC chairman in Nkambe had no knowledge of such a council at all, the PCSC chairmen in Fifugo and Pulofa complained that it was useless and only saddled them with an additional burden, as they were obliged to pay membership fees.

7.5 SCHOOL CONSTRAINTS TO AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO THE DEMANDS AND CONCERNS OF PARENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The above discussion highlights the limited power of parents to hold teachers and school leaders to account in terms of their actions and performance in the community schools under study. Yet, it should also be noted that teachers and school leaders also faced great challenges in attempting to meet the demands of the parents and the local community.

7.5.1 CONSTRAINTS IN TERMS OF RESOURCES AND AUTHORITY AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

School leaders typically found it extremely difficult to run the school properly with the limited contribution of parents and a highly inadequate and unpredictable school grant allocated by the government. As previously discussed, the teachers were particularly frustrated at inequitable treatment by the DEB with regard to the allocation of teaching and learning materials. One volunteer teacher described the community school as an 'orphan' thus:

Our mother school has to understand the problems at this school. It should assist its children, such as giving us desks, books and boreholes. But it seems that the mother school thinks that the community school is an orphan. Because this is what is called education for all, and education for all should begin with the community. But there is segregation between mother school and community school. Most things are in short supply, but it is difficult to approach our mother school directly (Interview-P/VT6).

Some PCSC executive members and teachers in Fifugo and Pulofa commented that their school would be unsustainable without the enduring support of CARE International and USAID. While some were confident that such donor assistance would continue, others were doubtful about its sustainability. For example, the PCSC chairman in Pulofa was distressed to learn that there would be no more scholarships for volunteer teachers from USAID, while teachers in Fifugo complained that there was nowhere near enough donor support to complete an infrastructure project:

The donor is the problem; they have their own agenda. They will leave after a few years. The money from CARE International to finish the classrooms is far from enough. They ask for a community contribution, but can the community provide window frames...cement? They can't! (Interview-F/TC)

Thus, the teachers and school leaders were frustrated and were obliged to run the school as best they could in extremely fragile and uncertain circumstances.

As previously mentioned, teacher shortage and absenteeism – which were regarded by parents as two of the most critical factors affecting the quality of the school – were serious problems at all three schools. Yet, each volunteer teacher interviewed had a valid point. As the following comments from one such teacher illustrate, they felt that their work was purely self-sacrifice for which they received inadequate support in return:

We get nothing from there [the school]. We are also human. I should look smart like somebody who eats and washes properly, but the community doesn't motivate us. We just teach without anything. So, if you are not in the mood for teaching, you can just sit like that on that day; why should you go to school? (Interview-P/VT4)

Volunteer teachers were generally among those of the highest educational level in the community, each representing an exception in his or her family and holding a position of responsibility therein, taking care of it or extended family members. Working voluntarily did not provide the necessary economic means to meet such demands and expectations, as one volunteer teacher reported:

I am the only educated one in the family and they depend on me. My mother always asks me what I have brought when I come back from school; it pains me (Interview-P/VT5).

Nevertheless, economic hardship was often compensated through the respect they gained from the community for their dedication, as well as their own sense of communal responsibility.

However, their own survival needs often exceeded such social recognition. Time spent on teaching – particularly during the rainy season when food at home was scarce and demand for weeding was high – was a direct sacrifice of their livelihood. The lack of reliable transport for commuting to school, most of which were located in remote areas, was also cited as a challenge to the regular attendance of teachers. Many were frustrated by parents' lack of understanding of the challenges they faced. The following complaint from a volunteer teacher in Pulofa highlights their plight:

They always want you to teach their children. Even if you are sick, they don't understand. I am teaching as a volunteer, but these people come with all sorts of complaints. It is hard working as a volunteer. Teaching is demanding but at the end of the day, you don't get anything (Interview-P/VT1).

Furthermore, some volunteer teachers reported that they were often derided by government school teachers, and sometimes even by their own peers in the community, on account of their low social status. Many claimed that the government teachers and their peers often mocked them for teaching for nothing, calling them 'vol' (short for 'volunteer', but used in a derogatory manner), which they found seriously demoralising. This finding is corroborated by Chakufyali et al. (2008). The following comments from a volunteer teacher in Pulofa summarises the feelings of many:

Teachers in the regular [government] schools think we are like animals; they even fail to communicate with us. In Zambia, if you are going to work, there must be something [financial or material compensation] and if you work there without it, you are seen as an inferior person. So, there is no such thing as working for nothing. The word 'community' implies that they think we consist of people who are not educated (Interview-P/VT4).

Thus, the community had little or no means of providing an allowance for volunteer teachers,

and the PCSC and teachers in charge felt that they had no real way of remedying the situation on their own.

Teachers also stressed the difficulty of improving the quality of learning when they were forced to teach classes of differing grades together, which was found to be normal practice in a climate of acute teacher shortage and rampant absenteeism amongst those whom the schools had managed to engage.

Meanwhile, a lack of clarity concerning the role and expectations of teachers seconded by government schools created tension between them and the volunteer teachers. As discussed earlier (see section 7.3.3), a teacher seconded from a mother school was often appointed teacher in charge, effectively adopting the role of the head of the community school and supervising its voluntary staff. In one case (Fifugo), the deployment of a government teacher in such a position demoralised the volunteer who had been the acting head teacher for many years, which led to conflict between the two. Similarly, De Stefano (2006) found that when a school had numerous seconded government teachers, the role of community volunteers could be eroded. Such cases demonstrate the need to clarify the roles of government teachers on secondment and volunteer teachers respectively.

Seconded government teachers were also often frustrated at having to run a community school in return for disproportionate remuneration. They were usually appointed teacher in charge and assumed the duties of a school administrator, but there was no direct recognition in terms of payment or promotion. For example, the teacher in charge at Pulofa explained:

I was told that I would be promoted to the salary scale of senior teacher when I was transferred to the community school but it has not happened yet. I have to cycle many miles in the bush to teach the children there every day; it is not easy.

So, I have started a distance course at the university. I think working as a teacher has no prospect; I would like to start my own business (Interview-P/TC).

This suggests that it is critical that the status of government teachers seconded to community schools is clarified, and that their status is enhanced in order to make community school placements more attractive to them.

7.5.2 LACK OF MORAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING BY PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY

The lack of support to the school from parents in respect of their children's education also contributed to the low morale of teachers in community schools.

Erratic Attendance, Dropout and Insufficient Provision of School-Related Materials

While volunteer teachers generally appeared to have had a greater understanding of the economic and cultural contexts of most households in the community than did the teachers in the government schools (see e.g. section 7.2.6), they too felt that lack of parental support – particularly in terms of the inability and often even the refusal to purchase stationery on the grounds that it was included under the terms of 'free' education – made classroom management extremely difficult.

Some volunteer teachers complained about the erratic attendance of many pupils, which was due to the heavy reliance on child labour in economic and household activities, as well as poor parental supervision of school attendance. One teacher expressed his frustration thus: "I see many children going to town carrying bags of charcoal instead of going to school; ah,

our work has become very difficult” (Interview-P/VT1).

Some teachers suggest that the local population in community school catchments was highly vulnerable to external and local economic shocks, which often affect the attendance of pupils. This was hardly surprising, given that these schools were typically located in more remote and economically disadvantaged areas than government schools. A similar attendance pattern to that of the government school – i.e. dependent on seasonality – was observed in the community schools under study, whereby pupils were often absent from school during the rainy season, which was also the weeding season and time when food at home was the scarcest.

Interviews with school leaders suggest that in each community school catchment under study, school founders, PCSC executive members, and volunteer teachers had all made home visits in order to encourage households to send their children to school at some point, although not always as a group. This kind of concerted voluntary sensitisation effort contrasted markedly to findings with regard to the government schools under study, in which such a level of community action had seemingly not been reached (see chapter 6.5.2). The founders of community schools and their volunteer teachers frequently mentioned a strong desire to develop their own communities, a conviction that may have driven voluntary sensitisation efforts.

Furthermore, at Pulofa and Fifugo, about 20 to 30 community members were trained as care providers by CARE International in order to support orphans and vulnerable children in the community. Some teachers and parents revealed that these care providers also often encouraged parents to send their children to school. Interviews with community members further suggest that such peer sensitisation by respected community leaders had some

influence on people's attitude towards the provision of school-related materials. However, it was also reported that not everyone reacted positively to such peer intervention. Thus, while sensitisation by school/community leaders appears to have some merit, it may not be sufficient to change the attitude of all parents towards schooling completely.

Insufficient Provision of a Home Environment Conducive to Learning

Some teachers also complained about inadequate levels and even the total absence of parental attention to pupils' homework (e.g., F.VT3; F/VT4; P/VT1; P.VT3). As mentioned in chapter 5, the schooling experience of adults in households in community school catchments was generally lower than was the case in terms of government schools. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that parents sending their children to community school faced an even greater challenge in helping them with their homework. This point merits further examination.

7.6 ARRANGING PRIVATE TUITION AND/OR CHOOSING AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

7.6.1 ARRANGING PAID PRIVATE TUITION

The ban on paid private tuition under the free primary education policy notwithstanding, the practice was widespread in both Pulofa and Fifugo, which were slightly economically better off than Nkambe. As was the case with the government schools, private tuition classes were normally organised for grade 7 pupils in preparation for the national examinations. Monthly tuition fees of ZMK 4,000 and ZMK 500 in Pulofa and Fifugo respectively were charged.

It is worth noting here that there was in the main a single motive for engaging the services of a teacher for private tuition: parents' expectation that the learning outcomes of their own children would be improved; which ran contrary to a policy vision of public accountability through collective participation. Furthermore, such a practice necessarily excluded the children of families too poor to take advantage of it from the opportunity to improve their education.

Picture 7-3

Paid private tuition for grade 7 pupils offered by a volunteer teacher in Fifugo



7.6.2 CHOOSING AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

The policy discourse employed for the promotion of liberalisation and the establishment of community schools is that it enhances parents' right to send their children to a school of their choice. There is little doubt that the community school provides educational opportunities for children who are otherwise denied access to school. As discussed in chapter 4.4, there are two main factors that limit access to government school: geography and economics. Accordingly, the establishment of the community school has undoubtedly contributed to an

increased choice for families living in remote and impoverished areas.

Nevertheless, parents generally indicated that their first choice would be a government school, as the following comments illustrate:

We [the community school] are disadvantaged, because we are financially handicapped compared to government schools, and because our teachers are not qualified. We have no structure [permanent classroom]. We are very poor. We can't afford to pay the fees charged by the government school (Interview-N/P8).

We want this school to be turned into a government school. We want our teachers to be paid by the government (Interview-P/P11).

Thus, community schools were in the main regarded merely as a second-best alternative, which means that 'deciding' to send a child to a community school was often not the result of real parental choice. As the above comments indicate, rather than a preference for having local idiosyncrasies reflected in their children's education, parents mostly wanted their school to be upgraded to a government school because they believed that they might therefore be freed from the responsibility of paying volunteer teachers; the school would have a more permanent structure and qualified teachers; and it would enjoy an adequate supply of mainstream teaching and learning materials. Thus, they perceived community management of schooling simply in terms of government inability to meet their needs rather than the result of their preferred choice.

The desire of many parents for their community school to be upgraded to a government school notwithstanding, the communities under study appeared to be unaware of the

processes by which the community school might become a government school;⁵³ the grades offered by existing community schools could be extended; or how the means to support additional teachers might be found.

Although a government school remained the first choice for many, the recent dramatic improvement in grade 7 examinations in Pulofa and Fifugo prompted several families in the locality who used to send their children to government school to return them to the community schools.

In theory, schools that attracted pupils were rewarded, not only in terms of self-esteem but also financially through an increase in school revenue from both PCSC funds collected by parents and the school grant, which in the main was based on pupil population. Some teachers in Pulofa and Fifugo indicated that the re-enrolment of pupils from government schools boosted their morale to some extent. Yet, it was also revealed that the inability of many households to pay into the PCSC fund meant that school income was extremely low and unpredictable. Accordingly, the impact of an increase in pupil population on school income and the salaries of volunteer teachers remained insignificant, as explained by a volunteer teacher in Fifugo:

No, it [the increase in enrolment] doesn't benefit us financially because we have no salary. It is not like you work harder then you earn more. Our 'salary' simply depends on the contribution of the parents, and not every one contributes. Up to this term, there were many pupils who had not paid, even up to now. We simply divide whatever little money is collected from the parents equally among us teachers; that is all (Interview-VT3).

⁵³ The MOE stipulates that for a community school to be upgraded to the status of government school, it must satisfy proportionate increases in the pupil population and the facilities it provides. However, the ministry admits that no formal procedures or regulations have been established to guide such a change in status (MOE 2007c).

Such a theory also implies that those community schools that did not attract pupils were penalised through a reduction in revenue and teachers' salaries. Field interviews revealed that when they were dissatisfied with the quality of education on offer at a community school, some parents chose either to withdraw their children from the school completely or transfer them to government school, which was believed to be a potential means of regulating the former type of school.

However, many parents complained in despair about the practical difficulty of transferring their children to government school on account of the cost and distance involved, as the PCSC chairman at Pulofa explained:

There are a few parents who transferred their children to Kafulafuta, the government school across the stream. But these people are the exception. Most parents cannot afford the PTA fees charged over there (Interview-P/E1).

Therefore, true choice remained available only to the few who were in an economically and geographically favourable position; thus, the disciplinary effect of the parental act of withdrawal of children from school appears to be insignificant.

7.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter examined parental and community participation in the selected community schools in light of policy expectation, as it relates to the four forms of practice investigated in the context of government schools in the previous chapter: (i) contribution to school resources; (ii) development and implementation of a localised curriculum; (iii) school

management; and (iv) choice of an alternative school for their own children.

A comparative analysis between the selected community and government schools was conducted. Particular attention was paid to the similarities and difference of the degree and form of participation that actually took place in terms of influence on school accountability towards parents and the local community.

This chapter revealed that in terms of the policy discussed in chapter 3, there was a considerable gap between expectations and implementation. Similar to the case with the government schools, community participation in the development and implementation of a localised curriculum was not much in evidence. Parents' perception that they were ill qualified for and incapable of engagement in such matters, coupled with teachers' belief that the curriculum was a professional matter, often constricted the parameters of the community participation space.

On the other hand, contrary to the findings of this study with regard to the government schools, parents' resistance to the idea of a localised curriculum was not evident, some being in favour on the basis that it would better equip their children with the practical skills that would be needed if they did not continue their education beyond basic school. Thus, the evidence suggests that parents who sent their children to community school had somewhat more realistic aspirations for them than did those whose children went to government school.

However, the perceived high cost of participation prevented community members from visiting the school to teach children local skills even when they were in favour of the idea. This indicates that policy seriously neglects the high cost of parental participation in education in a rural setting in which such engagement often directly conflicts with immediate

survival needs.

In line with policy expectation, parents who sent their children to community school played a key role in teacher management through the PCSC. Duties included recruiting volunteer teachers, remunerating them, and monitoring their performance, none of which were carried out by their counterparts in respect of the government schools.

Nevertheless, community participation was frequently constrained by several contextualised factors. The ability of the PCSC to locate sufficiently educated and qualified prospective teachers was limited, which was due in part to the general low level of education among the population of the catchment area. If the PCSC did manage to hire a suitable volunteer teacher, it often faced a huge challenge in remunerating him or her highly enough to adequately meet livelihood requirements, a challenge that was due to the low economic endowment of the community.

In such a context of inadequate compensation, teacher absenteeism was high in all schools. PCSC executives were often active in visiting the school to monitor the attendance of teachers. This was an interesting divergence from the practice at the government schools under study in which such an initiative was not evident. This suggests a somewhat greater sense of agency amongst representatives of the community school concerning the performance of teachers they hired and paid themselves than was the case at the government school, in which teachers were employed and remunerated by central government.

Yet, contrary to policy expectation, the capacity of parents and their PCSC representatives to discipline or dismiss volunteer teachers was highly constrained, due in part to their inability to

find an alternative teacher willing to work for little or no remuneration; and also because parents often hesitated in expressing doubts about a teacher's competence at PCSC meetings, which in turn was due to the fact that they did not pay them sufficiently and any conflict had the potential to unbalance the social equilibrium of the community.

Unequal power relations, and embedded social and cultural norms prevailed at PCSC meetings, which was similar to the case with PTA meetings at the government schools. Indeed, the deliberations of the former were not without manipulation by powerful members of the community and teachers seconded from mother schools, leaving the voices of the poorest less likely to be heard.

The chapter also revealed a serious mismatch of power between the community school and the mother school, which often led to the dominance of the latter over the use of the school grant that policy expected to be managed by the PCSC. A similar disparity within the community – particularly between ordinary parents and the few powerful members of the PCSC who had a slightly better educational level and higher social status than the former – often resulted in the latter's dominance over the use of the money collected by parents. Thus, the much-expected transparent use of school resources was often constrained by a multifaceted power imbalance at the school level.

Unlike the situation in the government schools, the inability to pay into the PCSC fund did not directly result in the exclusion of children from the community school. Yet, the level of contribution to the PCSC fund 'agreed' at meetings was often beyond the means of poor households, which resulted in the self-withdraw of their children in spite of the free education policy.

At the same time, the chapter demonstrated that community schools faced severe constraints in their attempts to respond to the demands of parents, as was the case in the government schools albeit in a different way. Community school leaders found it difficult to run the establishment given the serious shortage of teaching and learning materials, safe and secure infrastructure; lack of funds to pay volunteer teachers in the context of the meagre resources of parents, and the inadequate and unpredictable school grant allocated by the government. These resource constraints were often much more severe in terms of the community schools than was the case with the government schools.

Some volunteer teachers exhibited a strong sense of moral obligation to teach the children of their own villages, which resulted from the traditional notion of communal responsibility as well as the fact that they were hired by the community. This was an interesting divergence from the situation in the government schools. Yet, the lack of adequate financial reward for their services coupled with a low social status often demoralised them, causing a failure to teach to the expected level. Moreover, lack of parental interest in schooling was often the result of a skewed interpretation of the policy of 'free education', which made it extremely difficult for teachers to produce good results.

These findings contrast sharply with the policy premise of the abiding will and ability of the community to adopt various school management roles, or that of school leaders (teachers and PCSC executives) to respond to the demands of the community (see chapter 3.5.3). Rather, complex micro-power relations, social norms and values, and inadequate social endowment seriously affected the way in which the population actually participated in school affairs; together with the way in which it was able to influence school accountability to parents and the local community (public accountability).

In theory, the creation of the community school under the liberalisation policy offers a wider range of schools to parents. However, in reality, due to geographical and economic constraints, the choice of school was severely limited for the majority of parents in the communities under study. For most, the community school was merely a second best alternative to the government school. The limited range of schools available to most parents; the detrimental impact of changes in pupil enrolment on school resources in the context of inefficient collection of the PCSC fund; and insubstantial and erratic grant disbursement have all conspired to mean that market accountability is unlikely to be achieved.

The findings of this chapter's inquiry into parental and community participation in community schools, and the findings of the previous chapter in respect of parental and community participation in government schools together call for an investigation of community participation at the district level through the DEB, which is explored in chapter 8.

CHAPTER 8 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AT THE MESO LEVEL: THE DISTRICT EDUCATION BOARD

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter investigates the manner in which different actors engage at the District Education Board (DEB), which has been established as the key organ of basic education decentralisation in Zambia. As discussed in chapter 3, considerable power and its accompanying resources are supposed to have been delegated to the DEB, especially those pertaining to local education planning and its implementation, which previously fell under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Education Office (PEO) or that of the central Ministry of Education (MOE).

The DEB is staffed not only by district education officials employed by the MOE but also by representatives of the various stakeholders with a vested interest in district education governance. The latter include representatives of the 'local community', teacher's unions and the head teacher's association, which together comprise the 'governance body'; while the complement of district education officials is known as the 'management team' (see chapter 3.5.1.2). It is intended that the governance body should have decision-making authority, while the management team implements decisions and policies made by the former; the expectation being that the management team is accountable to the governance body for its actions.

This chapter investigates the identities of the various members of the governance body of the DEB; how they were selected; how they related to and communicated with the constituencies they were mandated to represent; and how they played the roles expected of them. In

particular, I examine in light of policy expectations the manner in which the members of the governance body participated in meetings; engaged in local policy-making; reviewed and adopted the district Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB); and monitored the implementation of the AWPB by the management team.

The chapter also analyses the opportunities and challenges of participation faced by the governance body, and the ways in which the management team responded to the opinions of the former.

8.2 SELECTION OF GOVERNANCE BODY MEMBERS AND THEIR REPRESENTATION

8.2.1 SELECTION OF GOVERNANCE BODY MEMBERS

The Education Board manual (EBS 2005) stipulates that four residents of the district should be selected to represent parents and the local 'community', three being nominated and selected by the district parent teacher association (PTA) council, and one at the recommendation of the district council (see chapter 3.5.1.2). In practice, however, the manual was not adhered to in this respect and so called 'local community representatives' were mostly just hand-picked by the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS), who was the most senior district official. When one villager was asked how he became a governance body member, his response echoed that of some other members:

I was just called by the DEBS; I have known him for a long time. When he [the DEBS] came, he told me that boards [the DEB] were running the affairs of the school (Interview-DG2).

Contrary to the policy assumption, the district PTA council, which was supposed to consist of the PTA chairpersons of all the government basic schools in the district, only existed on paper for many years (until it was latterly revived by the DEBS; see chapter 6.4.3.3). The governance body representative of this hypothetical body was also hand-picked by the DEBS. This was the chairperson of Chulu Basic School and former DEO (District Education Officer) of another district in the Copperbelt. According to the DEBS, he included this person as a board member representing all the PTAs in the district primarily on account of his physical accessibility, but also due to his professional background and commitment to education development.

Furthermore, although several guidelines and manuals (e.g. ZCCS 2005; MOE 2007c, 2007e) stipulate that one community school representative should also be included as a governance body member at the DEB, this was not the case. Thus, selection was made almost exclusively at the discretion of the DEBS and lacked transparency.

Consequently, some governance body members themselves were unaware of why or how they had been selected, or whom they were supposed to represent – with the exception of members of the teacher's unions and head teacher's union, whose representation was self-evident. Even the governance body member who had been selected by the DEBS to represent the district PTA council perceived himself as merely a representative of his school's PTA rather than all the PTAs in the district. The DEBS explained that this member also represented the PCSC chairpersons of all the community schools in the district. However, he did not consider himself to have such a role, and did not even know that community school affairs also fell under the governance of the DEB (Interview-DG13). Indeed, many governance body members reported that they had simply received a letter from the DEBS

inviting them to become members or else a rather unexpected visit from the DEBS himself. Surprisingly, some management team members were equally unsure about how governance body members were selected, or which constituency each of them represented.

It was revealed that governance body members selected by the DEBS as 'local community representatives' comprised a retired district education officer; retired teachers; a district community development officer employed by the Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare (MOCDSW); prominent church leaders; and a wealthy commercial farmer. Thus, such representatives included not only laypeople as the name implied, but also a few former education professionals (see table 8-1).

In chapter 3.5.1.2, I pointed out that the representation of governance body members defined as 'local community representatives' by the manual was skewed in favour of education professionals, as governance body members included the representatives of teacher's unions and the head teacher's union. Since, in reality, 'local community' representation even extended to former education professionals, the actual composition of the overall governance body was highly biased in favour of both practicing and former education professionals.

All 'community representatives' amongst the governance body members were relatively well educated with some urban exposure, and had at least one other important position in society (see table 8-1). Some of them sent their children to private primary school in the adjacent urban district, rather than to a government basic or community school in the locality. Policy emphasis on gender parity notwithstanding, the composition of the governance body was highly gender biased, with only one serving female member. Thus, in reality, governance body membership was skewed towards male education professionals or former

professionals.

It was common belief amongst both management team members and governance body members that the latter should be comprised of socially prominent individuals. They tended to think that ordinary people of a low educational level lacked the necessary expertise or ability to read and speak English, vital attributes if one was to participate in board meetings.

In this regard, the following comment from a board member is illustrative:

If you picked someone from the village, they would not understand education matters or the deliberations of the meetings. So, I am sure that the DEBS takes that into consideration when he selects board [governance body] members (Interview-DG4).

Thus, two separate community groups often appeared to exist in the minds of district officials and governance body members, with the local elite and education professionals having the right to deliberate on district education affairs, while the common people were unqualified to do so. These perceptions appear to have excluded the poor and uneducated – who were regarded as less worthy citizens – from serving as members of the governance body, which was dominated by the social elite.

Given the limited number of literate adults in the district, scepticism about the ability of the majority of the rural population to take part in deliberations on district education development might have been a legitimate concern. However, such perceptions can also undermine the policy ideal of genuine participatory deliberation.

Table 8-1 Profiles of Governance Body Members

Position and representation	Occupation	Educational level	Other positions held
Chairperson and local community representative	Church reverend	Grade 7	Personal religious advisor to the President
Local community representative	Commercial farmer	Agriculture college diploma	Community health worker, UNIP* district chairperson, former ward councillor
Local community representative	Church administrator	G12	MMD** district chairperson
Local community representative	District community development officer (MCDSW officer)	Bachelor's degree	
Local community representative	Retired MOE official	Primary school teaching certificate	Former DEBS of adjacent rural district
Local community representative	Retired head teacher	Secondary school teaching certificate	Former chairperson of district head teacher's association
Local community representative	Church pastor	Grade 10	
Local community representative	Mission Reverend	N/a	
Chairperson of district PTA council (basic schools)	Retired head teacher, PTA chairperson of Chulu Basic School	Primary school teaching certificate	Former district governor, UNIP district chairperson, church leader
Chairperson of district PTA council (high schools)	Commercial farmer	G12	
District council chairperson	District council chairperson	G7	Church leader
Teacher's union representative (1)	BETUZ*** district chairperson	Primary school teaching certificate	
Teacher's union representative (2)	ZNUT**** district chairperson	Primary school teaching certificate	
Teacher's union representative (3)	Union of High School Teachers district chairperson	Secondary school teaching certificate	
Private school representative	Private basic/high school head teacher	Secondary school teaching certificate	
Chairperson of district head teacher's association	Head teacher of Chulu Basic School	Primary school teaching certificate	

Notes:

*United Independence Party

**Movement for Multiparty Democracy

***Basic Education Teacher's Union of Zambia

****Zambia National Union of Teachers

Source: the author (compiled from field notes).

8.2.2 PERCEPTIONS OF THE ACCOUNTABILITY RELATIONSHIP

As discussed in chapter 3, policy and policy-makers generally anticipated that the formation of the DEB would improve accountability and transparency of district education administration, as management team members would be made partially accountable to governance body members, who were in turn accountable to the local community and other constituencies they represented.

However, unlike such macro level policy expectation, more than half of the management team stated that both they and governance body members were accountable upwards to the central MOE; although a few others confessed to believing that governance body members were accountable to the community or to the constituency they represented.

As far as governance body members were concerned, while some thought that they were accountable to the community or the constituency they came from, others believed that they were accountable to the management team or higher authorities in the MOE hierarchy. A long tradition of centralised, top-down education administration and the absence of any notion of the laity holding public servants accountable might have been behind such perceptions.

8.2.3 COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GOVERNANCE BODY MEMBERS, AND ORDINARY PARENTS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

In principle, the establishment of the DEB should have initiated an information flow – both downward to the community and upwards to the governance body – that enabled the former

to demand that the latter reflect their needs and opinions in district administration. To this end, ordinary citizens' knowledge of the organisation of the DEB; who its governance body members were and the nature of their roles; and the means by which to file requests or concerns to governance body members would appear to be essential.

In practice, however, hardly anyone at the school or community level interviewed had any knowledge of the existence of the governance body, its function or its selection process; or indeed, the DEB as a whole, as the following comment from one parent at Chulu Basic School illustrates:

We don't know them; we just hear about the DEBS. We don't know about the 'governance body' or what gain we get from them. They don't represent us. We don't even know whether they were elected or picked at random (Interview-C/P4).

PTA and PCSC executives interviewed at the sample government and community schools respectively also exhibited little knowledge of the existence of the DEB, let alone the identity of their representative there, who was actually the PTA chairman of Chulu Basic School (see section 8.2.1).

In fact, parents interviewed were mostly deeply frustrated by the lack of an effective channel for their voices to be heard in a context in which they were often ignored at the school level (see, chapters 6 and 7). This may have greatly undermined the accommodation of the needs and opinions of wider society – particularly those of low social status – the channelling of such concerns to the district level, and its ability respond.

Manuals and guidelines on boards are all written in English and have never been translated into local languages. Furthermore, the MOE itself acknowledges the lack of sensitisation to

the DEB below board and district staff levels (MOE 2003*b*). Under such circumstances, the extremely limited knowledge of the DEB among parents and other local community members may have been attributable in part to the lack of dissemination of information about its composition and function.

Moreover, there was little evidence that any member of the governance had ever made an effort to take note of the views and grievances of parents or other members of the communities they had been mandated to represent; or to advise them of the contents of board meetings. One important factor hindering communication between governance body members and ordinary citizens might have been related to the perceived role of the former. Governance body members commonly believed that a bottom-up approach to communication was unnecessary, and were in the main of the opinion that they already had a sufficient grasp of the needs of the wider community without consulting it further. Some members also tended to think that the opinions of ordinary citizens who mostly lacked formal schooling were not worth listening to, since they were necessarily incapable of appreciating the importance of education. For example, one community representative of the governance body, who was also a retired education official, commented:

I know what they need: we must sensitise our fellows in the community; I must educate them. For instance, some parents want their girls to be taken out of school to get married at the age of 13. In such cases, I simply say to them that I will take them to the police. In short, we [the governance body] are here to sensitise the community about the benefits of education (Interview-DG5).

Some management team members and even governance body members themselves also revealed that the main concern of some of their number was the availability of lunch and their financial allowance for attending meetings, rather than the active collection of information

about the needs and grievances of the communities they represented. The question thus arises of the legitimacy of 'representation' that contrasted so markedly with the guidelines.

8.3 FREQUENCY OF BOARD MEETINGS AND ATTENDANCE RATE

Board meetings were supposed to take place quarterly, the broad agenda being to develop district education policy; discuss and approve the district AWPB; monitor the implementation of the district AWPB; and discuss any other issues pertinent to the development of education in the district (see chapter 3.5.1.3). Meetings would be called by the chairperson – an individual elected by the governance body (EBS 2005).

Yet, contrary to such a policy premise, the question of whether to convene a board meeting or not essentially depended on the disposition of the management team, most notably that of the DEBS. According to some management team and governance body members, this was due in part to the fact that they did not have an independent operational budget or office of their own that would have allowed them to call meetings. At the same time, some management team members argued that a lack of voluntary commitment on the part of the board chairman was the reason why it was left to the DEBS to arrange meetings rather than the former. For example, one management team member expressed his opinion thus:

The chairman should at least come to the DEBS and say, "Can you please circulate a memo that we will have a meeting next month?" But this has never been done; it is as if the chairman can't be bothered. I have hardly ever seen him come to the office apart from meetings. (Interview-DESO).

With the DEBS exercising control over whether or not to call a board meeting, his or her

appreciation of their value often determined the frequency. In fact, some governance team members revealed that meetings had rarely been held at all during the previous three years under the administration of the previous DEBS, who had little regard for the input of the governance body in the operation of the DEB, as by one member explained: “When the board members wanted to organise a meeting to discuss issues, she did not respond; years went by without a meeting” (Interview-DG6).

Another member also pointed out that the previous DEBS simply did not call a meeting when the DEB was short of funds:

I remember, we stopped calling meetings because of financial problems, because board members [the governance body] request a sitting allowance. So, without money, we would have no meetings at all (Interview-DG7).

Lunch and travel allowances for attending board meetings (see section 8.2.3)⁵⁴ were in sharp contrast to the assumption of the manual (EBS 2005) that members should be willing to participate in board activities voluntarily and without any financial or material reward.

The same governance body member continued to explain that under the current DEBS – who was of the Lamba tribe and highly committed to developing education standards in the district – efforts had been made to convene a meeting of the board at least three times a year, although this was often still not realised due to lack of resources (Interview-DG7). Thus, the frequency of board meetings appears to have fluctuated depending on the degree of commitment of the DEBS and the availability of resources.

⁵⁴ Typically, a lunch allowance of ZMK 50,000 and a travel allowance ranging from ZMK 80,000 to ZMK 140,000, depending on the distance involved (Interview-DM5).

When they were held, a board meeting could be poorly attended and sometimes even called off due to low turnout on the very day it was supposed to take place, as exemplified by the cancellation of a meeting during the fieldwork on 8 February 2008. Poor means of communication undoubtedly contributed to the failure of many governance body members to attend; as the office orderly merely notified each member of a meeting by bicycle, a frequently inefficient mode of transport given the vast distances it was necessary to cover.

Moreover, interviews with governance body members suggest that some of them – especially those who resided at a considerable distance from the DEB – felt that the benefits of attending board meetings were outweighed by costs such as time and travelling expenses, and prioritised other economic activities above attendance of meetings. One governance body member remarked:

One thing is transport logistics for you to travel from that far away to here. You cannot travel on an empty stomach. Ah, this is difficult because some members are unemployed! (Interview-DG12)

In addition to quarterly meetings of the board, five standing subcommittees of the governance body – i.e. human resource management; quality and standards; finance; procurement; and communication – were stipulated to be formed and should have met regularly in order to offer policy direction to the management team in each of their respective areas (see chapter 3.5.1.3). A management committee member – usually the head of department – was supposed to act as secretary to each of these subcommittees (EBS 2005). Yet, most governance body subcommittees only existed on paper and some board members were unsure which one they were supposed to be a member of, thus revealing limited commitment and interest.

A lack of independent resources on the part of the governance body meant that the activities of its subcommittees essentially depended on whether the DEBS and his management team members were willing to provide a budget for such necessary items as travel expenses and sitting allowances.

Even when chairpersons of subcommittees urged management team members – who served as secretaries to such committees – to call meetings, these requests were often turned down by the management team. The following comment from the chairperson of the finance subcommittee illustrates well the frustration of some governance body members:

Once, I asked the secretary of the financial subcommittee [district accountant] to call for a meeting, to see whether the school grant was being distributed to each school appropriately. But he refused my request, saying that there was no money to call a meeting. Subcommittees only exist on paper; they never work. Even if I call a meeting, what issues do I have to discuss with them? No financial information has been given to us from the district officials [management team] (Interview-DG4).

On one occasion, the DEBS called a finance subcommittee meeting with the aim of discussing the allocation of district grant funds earmarked for supplementary payments to teachers and retired teachers, for example, terminal leave entitlements. Such payments had previously been dealt with by the PEO but these responsibilities were decentralised to the DEB level in 2007 (at the time of my fieldwork).⁵⁵ When controlled by the PEO, many of these payments were reported to have been several years in arrears and the process was seen as lacking in transparency by many (Interview-DM5).

⁵⁵ The actual payment of teachers' salaries and related allowances was still centralised at the time of the fieldwork, although payroll management had been decentralised to the district level at which the DEB now had the authority to effect inputs and changes.

The DEBS commented that he considered it would be beneficial to allow serving and retired teachers' representatives to take part in decision-making on the allocation of such payments; thus, the DEBS and his officials could avoid being accused of favouritism or corrupt practices. Accordingly, governance body members attending the subcommittee meeting included three teacher's union representatives and one retired teacher, all of whom greatly appreciated the opportunity to participate in decision-making in respect of the allocation of these payments on behalf of their constituencies; and, consequently, they gave much credit to the DEBS for his initiative (e.g. Interview-D/G4; DG9).

This case demonstrates that good will on the part of the DEBS could contribute positively to the proceedings of subcommittee meetings, and to participatory and transparent decision-making at the district level. However, this meeting appears to have been the exception rather than the rule, and there was little evidence of any other subcommittee meetings having been held. Nevertheless, this case also demonstrates that whether to call a subcommittee meeting or not, the contents of the agenda, and whom to invite were all considerations mostly at the discretion of the DEBS, rather than decided according to governance body members' requirements, as anticipated by the policy.

8.4 DELIBERATIONS AT BOARD MEETINGS

The policy assumes that the quarterly board meeting serves as an effective participatory space in which governance body members – as representatives of the 'local community' and other local constituencies – may actively identify their needs; make locally relevant education policy and formulate the AWPB; and monitor the implementation of the agreed AWPB that has been finalised by the management team (EBS 2005). In so doing, governance body

members are expected to hold the actions of the management team to account (see chapter 3.5.1.3).

During both the meetings observed during the fieldwork, however, most of the time was taken up reading the minutes of the previous meeting of half a year ago, and correcting minor grammatical errors found in them, as no one had read them in the meantime because their removal from the office was prohibited (see picture 8-1).

The following sections discuss the manner in which governance body members and management team members participated in board meetings in terms of three criteria anticipated in the manual (EBS 2005): (i) local policy-making; (ii) reviewing and adopting the AWPB; and (iii) monitoring the implementation of the AWPB and the financial performance of the district office.

Picture 8-1

Management team members (top table) and governance body members taking notes while the minutes of the previous meeting are read out



8.4.1 LOCAL POLICY-MAKING

The observation of board meetings (22/02/08; 06/06/08) provided little evidence of any active contribution to the formulation of local education policy on the part of governance body members. Rather, most of the time was taken up with speeches from management team members for the purposes of orientating the governance body to new policy directions or changes in education policy formulated by central government.

This was hardly surprising given that decentralisation reform notwithstanding, district administration was still very much controlled by directives set by central government via the numerous circulars disseminated by the MOE permanent secretary (PS) (Interview-DEBS; DM1). In addition, the widespread belief among governance body members that their main role was to acquaint themselves with government policy and sensitise the rural population to it (see section 8.2.3) appeared to set the parameters of their participation in local policy-making.

At the same time, some governance body members – with the exception of former education professionals and teacher’s representatives – felt that they lacked the necessary knowledge of state education administration, which undermined their self-confidence in tabling proposals or getting them approved by the management team. After all, the latter had much better access to information about the state education system. One governance body member, a local church leader, expressed his frustration as follows:

You present this thing, and you see that three quarters of those present at the board meeting are professionals. And they just say, “What is he saying? We are professionals in this field but he doesn’t know what he is talking about;” that kind of thing. So, it is not easy. The district officials [management team members] are the bosses and even if we propose something, they say it is the policy of the

government, they cannot argue with the government and they cannot do anything. This situation is frustrating! (Interview-DG2)

The limited agency and capacity of governance body members to formulate local policy notwithstanding, reports from a few long-serving members and the minutes of past meetings suggest that they had made some input into the development of local education policies during previous meetings, which included: (i) the prohibition of the suspension of children from school in cases of inability to pay school fees or contribute to the PTA fund; (ii) the monitoring and disciplining of teacher morale and absenteeism; and (iii) the recruitment of additional government teachers – from the locality as far as possible – with the aim of retaining them in the district, particularly in rural schools.

However, some management team and governance body members revealed that the capacity of the latter to ensure that these policies were implemented by the former was severely constrained. Indeed, they were only put into practice when management team members were in agreement and had sufficient resources, neither of which was always the case, as is discussed below.

For example, as observed in chapters 6, the policy on the prohibition of the suspension of children from school for non-payment in the government basic schools was seldom adhered to by the schools in the district. One governance body member and chairperson of the district head teacher's association largely attributed the failure to ensure compliance with this policy to the district office's lack of resources to monitor schools that were scattered across a wide geographical area: "The DEBS's office has problems because right now, they have no money for fuel, and so they cannot go around monitoring to ensure that what we have decided upon is being implemented" (Interview-DG7).

Furthermore, interviews with some management team members suggest that they had no other choice but to turn a blind eye to the continued school practice of suspending those pupils whose families failed to pay, since the former appreciated that schools were seriously short of money (Interview-DM1; DM2).

However, it was more surprising to learn that the management team sometimes ordered each school – mostly government basic schools – to return part of its grant to the DEB so that it might supplement the scarce resources of the office (see chapter 6.4.2). This inevitably put further strain on an already limited income, leading to a situation in which the school was obliged to fall back on the collection of fees and PTA funds from parents.

Thus, even when a local policy was formulated at a board meeting, it was often not honoured by the management team. At the same time, members often felt unable to attempt to force district officials to act in accordance with what had been agreed for fear of being dismissed from the governance body:

It is unfortunate that we don't have clear-cut guidelines on how to ensure that local policies are implemented by district officials [the management team]. Decisions to implement are up to the DEBS, so, if he doesn't want to implement it, then it just remains like that. I'll say we are toothless, if I can put it that way. It is difficult for us, for instance, to force district officials [the management team] to implement what is decided at the board meeting. You see, because if I push, maybe they will stop calling me to the meeting (Interview-DG7).

For many members, dismissal from the governance body would have been distressing, as they would have lost face, and the associated benefits such as lunch and travel allowances would have come to an end.

Similarly, the decision to closely monitor teacher morale and absenteeism was not realised, due in part to a lack of resources. The monitoring of schools by the DEB was conducted on an extremely limited scale due to the inability to ensure sufficient fuel and per diems for standards officers. In such a situation, teachers usually knew when to expect a visit, since they were aware when the DEB received its grant from central government (Interview-DG7).

Thus far, decentralisation reform had given the DEB the power to promote, suspend and transfer teachers within the district. However, it was rare that management team members suspended teachers, on account of humanitarian consideration and the fear of a backlash, unless there was incontrovertible evidence of the misuse of school resources (Interview-DEBS; DM2).

All management team members were former teachers and to some extent had a bond with serving teachers as education professionals vis-à-vis laypeople.

Such a relationship may have been mutually advantageous in terms of effective cooperation between teachers and management team members. However, when it came to disciplining teachers, the system itself seemed to militate against an efficient procedure. Even on occasions when teachers were suspended for the misuse of school resources, it was extremely rare that they were dismissed. Decentralisation reform notwithstanding, the procedure for the dismissal of teachers on the government payroll was still a centralised process, and it was found that that it usually took years for cases to be dealt with by the central Teaching Service Commission (TSC); and in the meantime, files frequently could not be accounted for, as the human resources officer (management team) explained:

The process is rather long: the files go to the PEO; they are looking after the whole province, so there are a lot of cases, and then they do their jobs in pieces. Not all the cases go to the teaching commission, which has to deal with the whole country. So, if by chance your case is picked up, it will be worked on but others take a bit long for them to clear, or else they are simply lost (Interview-DM2).

On a more positive note, the resolution to recruit more government teachers from the locality was realised to a certain extent. Following the lifting of the ban on the recruitment of new teachers by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (World Bank 2006), in terms of Masaiti district, central government recruited 47 qualified teachers for basic schools in September 2006 and an additional 73 in January 2008 (Interview-DM2). While final confirmation of postings and the payment of salaries were still controlled by the TSC, decentralisation reform had given the DEB the power to identify and recommend candidates to the former. Thus, the district HRO was able to select candidates from within the district, or at least from other rural areas, as far as possible.

This example demonstrates that local policies made at board meetings had the potential for effective implementation when the management team possessed the power, will and resources to act. However, interviews with management team members revealed that considerable numbers of newly recruited teachers in fact came from urban areas, and often had some connection to high-ranking officials and politicians at the centre. According to the district HRO, such teachers typically left the district for urban schools after two to three years, or even less, a preference over which the management team had little control (Interview-DM2).

Consequently, as observed in chapter 6, teacher retention – in remote schools in particular – remained a serious problem in the district. Thus, in spite of the rhetoric of decentralisation,

certain power was still retained at the centre; while resources delegated to the district level remained insufficient, which was a serious constraint to the full implementation of board decisions.

Neither the observation of meetings nor the minutes of previous sessions reveal much evidence of any contribution to the formulation of local policy on community schools from governance body members. As the community schools representative was not on the board – in contravention to the stipulation of the manual (see section 8.2.1) – and the person whom the DEBS had selected to represent all the PCSC chairpersons in the district in addition to PTA chairpersons did not consider himself to have such a role (see section 8.2.1), it is unlikely that any issues related to community schools were discussed at board meetings.

8.4.2 REVIEWING AND APPROVING THE DISTRICT AWPB

Contrary to the principles of the manual (EBS 2005), interviews with the governance body members revealed that they were never invited to review or contribute to the adoption of the AWPB. In fact, only few knew about the AWPB, let alone the planning or budgeting process. The board manual was not distributed to each member and many, including the chairman of the board, reported that they had not been sufficiently instructed in their duties or trained in the necessary skills to play the role expected of them (Interview-DG1; DG2; DG3; DG4; DG; DG10; DG12).

On the other hand, some management team members believed that the process of planning and budgeting was their own responsibility as trained professionals, and thus questioned the legitimacy of governance body members to have a say in these matters. Moreover, some

management team members felt that governance body members lacked the necessary knowledge and skills to review the AWPB, which they considered to be a highly technical document:

The AWPB is our [the management team's] job; we only present it to the board members. Some board members are not familiar with government policy because they were not educated as you might expect – like pastors and councillors; so, they are not able to plan. Maybe in town, where there are doctors and professors, but not here (Interview-DESO).

Finally, the deadline for submission of the AWPB was often set too strictly by central government to allow any input from governance body members (Interview-DEBS; DM1).

During the fieldwork, at one general board meeting (06/06/08), the management team showed governance body members an AWPB for the first time in the history of the operations of this particular DEB. However, the intention of the former was not to allow governance body members to review and ratify the AWPB, but rather merely to “make governance body members realise how small the resources made available to the district are, and urge them to mobilise additional resources to supplement the district budget” (Interview-DM1). Thus, the ‘rules of the game’ at board meetings were invariably determined by the management team, and governance body members had little leverage over their own role in the deliberations.

In fact, some management team members considered that governance body members were only useful for mobilising resources (Interview-DESO; DM5).

This, however, had never been done. Repeatedly urged by the management team, governance body members often talked about plans to mobilise resources at meetings. For

example, at one general board meeting (22/02/08), governance body members made a resolution to source funds to purchase a minibus for the DEB to use in monitoring schools. However, there was little evidence that they had been working towards this end.

One governance body member and chairman of a teacher's union felt that such inactivity concerning resource mobilisation was partly due to a dependency syndrome common in society as a whole, pointing out the difficulty of expecting a spirit of volunteerism amongst governance body members:

There is that mentality of just waiting for the government to give money. It seems that the bus project is static. People sit and plan, and discuss issues for hours, but lack follow-up. Nobody is pushing because it needs self-sacrifice. Whenever people are called for a meeting, they expect something like lunch instead of giving something (Interview-DG9).

In addition, some governance body members and management team members alike felt that resource mobilisation was extremely difficult, given the poor economic background of many governance body members and the limited commercial opportunities available in the district; unlike urban areas in which governance body members tended to come from more prosperous backgrounds and there were a greater number of business opportunities. In this regard, the district education standards officer (DESO) made the following comments:

In other countries, like Germany, Japan and England where the economy is very sound and people are rich, boards [of governors] can be useful because they can raise money to improve the standards of schools. But in an environment like this one where [governance body] members are poor and there is no chance of making money, I would say sorry, the board [governance body] hasn't got any value (Interview-DESO).

The board manual states that the district council representative should be a member of the governance body (EBS 2005). As discussed in chapter 3.5.1.2, district councils are now allocated a constituency development fund (CDF),⁵⁶ which can be used for development projects in the district, including school construction and rehabilitation. The district council representative in the governance body is expected to facilitate effective collaboration between the district council and the DEB through the alignment of the use of the CDF with the education infrastructure development plans of the DEB.

However, there was little evidence of active and effective collaboration between the district council and the DEB, the district council representative rarely attending board meetings. When he did put in an appearance, he rarely made a contribution, much less discussed the CDF allocation plan for the various schools. The allocation of the CDF was discussed at meetings of the District Development Cooperation Committee (DDCC), which district council representatives and all other departmental officials in the district were supposed to attend. Nevertheless, it was learnt at a DDCC meeting that representatives of the DEB were usually only permitted to comment on the technical viability of projects to be funded by the CDF, rather than discussing the relevance of such projects in light of the overall district education plan reflected in the AWPB (Interview-DESO; DM1; DM3).

After all, the final decision on the allocation of the CDF was made by the CDF committee, whose members were politically appointed by the area's Members of Parliament (MPs); but which was reported to have been non-functional for two years (Interview-DESO; DG1). Thus,

⁵⁶ The annual CDF budget allocated to Masaiti district was recently increased to ZMK 200 million from ZMK 60 million, although this was seen by district officials as being too little to make any significant impact, especially in view of the fact that the fund was so thinly distributed (Interview-DEBS; DESO; DM1; DM2).

some management team members complained that they had no control over the allocation of the CDF and reported that it was often allocated to schools whose priorities were questionable. The following comments from the DESO are illustrative:

The district council and the DEB are supposed to work together but as of now, they are autonomous. We have no control over the CDF. Even though the district planning officer and district building officer are represented at the DDCC, they have no say over the project. The district planning officer is there only to sit in, just to provide technical advice, but not about the project. You see, councillors are not educated and they are not trained like us; they don't understand the importance of education. They just want to build schools far away in order to say, "I did this for the community, so you should vote for me," at the time of an election (Interview-DESO).

As this statement of DESO indicates, management team members generally felt that district councillors had little capacity to plan or handle the affairs of education in the district because of their low educational level and professional training. Thus, the much-desired coordination of the CDF and the district AWPB had not yet been realised, and many management team members were concerned about the government's plan to devolve the administration of basic education to the district councils in future (Interview-DEBS; DESO; DM1; DM2; DM4; DM5). Furthermore, some management team members were most concerned at the prospect of the district council assuming responsibility for education when it still lacked the resources to do so; together with a poor tax base and the disbursement of the fund from the centre being too little too late (Interview-DEBS; DESO; DM2; DM3).

8.4.3 MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AWPB AND THE PERFORMANCE OF THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Contrary to the expectation of the centre, there was little evidence that governance body members played any meaningful oversight role in the implementation of the AWPB or in district finance in general. The annual financial report was presented during an observed board meeting (22/02/08). However, the report was merely a summary of the disbursement of the grant allocated from the centre to the DEB together with a record of expenditure, but with no meaningful breakdown, such as how it was spent, or how this differed with or conformed to the original plan.

Surprisingly, when presented with such a rough financial report, governance body members did not pose any questions about the appropriateness or efficacy of the expenditure. One management team member commented that they might not have considered themselves qualified to raise any objections to the presentation as they lacked the necessary knowledge and confidence:

The way they are, they are different from us because they have not been trained and do not know the Ministry's system. Some [governance body] people are afraid...like, "I will be laughed at when I say this;" that kind of [inferiority] complex, you know? (Interview-DM2)

Furthermore, some governance body members felt that they owed a debt of loyalty to the DEBS for appointing them to the board, and were thus disinclined to challenge his actions or decisions – or even those of other officials – as this would have been considered culturally inappropriate, as indicated by the following comment:

We were appointed by the DEBS, so we should be accountable to him. If I take a

complaint to the management team, they will think that I am not subordinate and have no respect for them (Interview-DG7).

Those board members who were teachers or former education professionals often had a more critical opinion of DEB financial management, considering that the distribution of the school grant in particular lacked transparency. In fact, no information at all was provided about the total school grant budget allocated to the DEB from central government, or the actual amount distributed to each school.

As discussed in chapter 6.4.1, the basic school grant released from the government's domestic resources, which was supposed to be distributed to each school on a monthly basis, had never been received by the schools. Consequently, some teacher representatives suspected that the management team might not have released all the money intended for schools but had retained some for its own use. However, they felt unable to ask for clarification about the non-distribution of the monthly school grant, as they were fearful of challenging the management team, who were their bosses after all. One governance body member and the former head teacher commented:

We don't know how they [management] distribute money to different departments and schools. They only told us that ZMK 15 million went on diesel transport! But the schools are not receiving any money. Maybe they feel that this [monitoring the budget] is not our role; maybe they think we are irrelevant (Interview-DG4).

In terms of the community school grant, as discussed in chapter 7.4.2, the distribution system was even less transparent and more erratic than was the case with government schools. Such problems notwithstanding, in the absence of community school representation in the governance body (see section 7.2), no one raised this as a concern. Some governance body members, including district PTA chairperson (DG13), interviewed even mistakenly believed that the community school was not the responsibility of the board (Interview-DG2; DG5;

DG13). In spite of the fact that the government had expressed its commitment to treat the community school as the equal of the government school (MOE 2007c, 2007e), such an attitude amongst many of the board members reflected the widespread view that the community school was a second-rate institution that was not part of the state education system.

An account of the progress of the implementation of the AWPB in the previous quarter(s) was given by the management team in the board meeting (06/06/08). They typically reported that most planned activities had not been implemented due to the lack of resources, as indicated by the following comment from the DEBS:

In a quarter, we plan so many activities but they [the government] just send money for one activity! The problem is with the people who disburse the money (Interview-DEBS).

They then often urged governance body members to mobilise resources to supplement the DEB budget base (see section 8.4.2). In the main, governance body members accepted such a line without questioning whether the non-implementation of the programme was purely due to the lack of resources, or whether it might have come about from the ineffective use of resources or by the negligence of the management team.

Observation of daily routine at the DEB revealed that some people were absent from the office at any one time; and on some days, the office was virtually empty because officials were either attending a workshop in Kitwe or Ndola, or simply accompanying other officers who had gone to town on personal business. Others went on study leave for months; one officer was invariably busy at his own garage in town and was rarely seen in the office at all.

Moreover, there was also virtually no clear-cut line between personal and official business when it came to the use of office vehicles and fuel. In spite of such concerns, governance

body members hardly ever challenged the management team at board meetings on account of their fear of upsetting them. The following comments from one governance body member and chairman of the head teacher's association is illustrative:

Even if we have anything against district officials [management team members], I can't take it to a board meeting. If, for instance, I have a complaint against district management and take it to a board meeting, then district management would think that I have no respect for them since I am subordinate to them. So, you have to be careful how you present yourself in a board meeting (Interview-DG7).

Thus, contrary to policy expectation, governance body members rarely had any control over the performance of the management team. After all, management team members' salaries were paid by central government, not by the governance body; therefore, it had no leverage over the hiring and firing of management team members.

8.5 CONSTRAINTS FACED BY MANAGEMENT TEAM MEMBERS IN RESPONDING TO THE DEMANDS OF GOVERNANCE BODY MEMBERS

While the power and information imbalance between management team members and governance body members often deterred the latter from expressing their opinions freely, the assumption that the management team had sufficient authority and resources to solve all the problems raised at meetings on their own might have also been questionable.

In a context of the absence of independent resources mobilised by governance body members, all management team members interviewed lamented the poor resource base of the DEB, which depended solely on its budget from the centre. According to the district accountant, the DEB was instructed to produce a first draft of the AWPB to submit to the

PEO; after which a budget ceiling was assigned, which was often much lower than had been planned for.

For example, in the second quarter of 2007, while the DEB planned a quarterly programme budget of ZMK 18 million, it was subsequently limited to a ceiling of just ZMK 4 million (Interview-DM5). The DEB then had to redraft the budget for each programme according to the new ceiling. In the process, inevitably, many programmes had simply to be cancelled. Again, the amount that was actually disbursed to the DEB from the centre was further reduced, particularly with regard to funds allocated from the government's domestic resources.

Moreover, the timing of the disbursement of both the monthly grant allocated from the government's domestic resources and the quarterly grant allocated from the donor's sector pool fund was highly erratic; and the DEB typically had no prior knowledge of how much it was entitled to or when it would receive the grants (see table 8-2).

Consequently, most planned activities were not implemented and the limited resources there were tended to be spent mainly on fuel, the repair of vehicles and officials' allowances. Since the DEB had often availed itself of the services of garages and petrol stations on credit, when it arrived, the grant was often simply used up in payment of accumulated debts with very little left over to finance planned activities. The district accountant explained:

We receive money anytime they [the government] feel like sending it; and you have already incurred expenditure on fuel and funeral grants, so when this money comes, it simply goes on what has already been spent. We accrue a lot of debt even before the money comes. We have planned a lot of programmes but most of them are just stagnant. Right now, standards officers can't go into the field to monitor because we have been unable to buy fuel for the past two months. So, I

have rebudgeted and withdrawn a lot of programmes (Interview-DM5).

In light of the prevailing situation, DEBS felt that the allocation criteria set by the centre, which was based mainly on pupil population, was unfair to rural areas. For, although their pupil populations were usually smaller than those in urban areas, the needs of the rural area were equal to that of the urban area, given the widely scattered schools and bad roads that led to heavy expense in terms of transport costs. The absence of any telecommunications facilities at the DEB also meant that communication between the office and the schools depended mainly on DEB vehicles, most of which were dilapidated and remained in the garage most of the time. The DEBS commented:

I don't know what they [the government] consider [when allocating money to districts]. Look at a rural district like ours; we have to cover long distances. We need to repair our vehicles, so we need to be given more money than towns. But the opposite is the case: because of the enrolment, Kitwe [an urban district] gets more money than we do. I don't know if people [at the ministry HQ] ever read what we write [in the quarterly report] (Interview-DEBS).

Under such circumstances, management team members typically felt that there was no real point in developing the AWPB, as they were assigned much less funding from the centre than was necessary for what they had planned, and the timing of the receipt of funds was so erratic and unpredictable. The DEBS remarked in dismay: "So this decentralisation and AWPB; I like the concept very much but in practice, everything should revolve around resources...availability of resources" (Interview-DEBS).

This, in turn, may not have given management team members good reason either to afford governance body members a chance to discuss the draft AWPB for approval, or to disclose any details of expenditure.

Furthermore, some management team members saw little benefit in having governance body members at the DEB in the first place, as it was considered that they made little technical contribution and no financial contribution to the office, while they expected lunch and other allowances in return for attending meetings. The district accountant asserted his opinion of the value of governance body members as follows:

I do not see the value of [governance body] members much. Between meetings, they are sleeping partners, doing nothing. They don't contribute anything. At the last meeting, people discussed a lot of things, including getting the district a minibus. If it is implemented, it is good, but it has never been implemented. They just come to meetings when called and eat something. It ends there (Interview-DM5).

Additionally, interviews with management team members revealed that the little funding allocated from the centre was often spent on unplanned activities – mostly transport and the payment of allowances for attending workshops in urban districts (Kitwe and Ndola) or in the capital, Lusaka – although such workshops were often not factored into the AWPB. Thus, DEB budget management was still tightly controlled from the centre, which contradicted the policy ideal of bottom-up planning. The district accountant commented on the situation as follows:

Even if we make a plan, the PEO has got other ideas for us that are not in harmony with our plan. The circular comes and people are called for workshops for ten days or even a month. If an officer spends the night outside the duty station, we have to pay ZMK 285,000 per night, and for a senior officer like the DESO or DEBS, ZMK 295,000. So, if 5 officers attend a workshop and stay there for 10 days, even if you receive an allocation of ZMK 49 million, it is all gone on just one activity! Decentralisation is only on paper (Interview-DM5).

Constraints faced by the management team in responding to decisions and demands made at governance body meetings were also evident in the area of human resources

management. In principle, current decentralisation reform enabled the management team to take part in the process of recruiting teachers for the district with the aim of matching recruitment to local specific demands (see section 8.4.1). Following a decision made at one governance body meeting, the HRO attempted to recruit teachers from the same district or from other rural areas, but this was only partially successful. Considerable numbers of newly recruited teachers turned out to be from urban areas with some connection to high-ranking officials or politicians at the centre, who then only stayed in the district for a short period before transferring to urban schools (Interview-DM2) (see section 8.4.1). The management team had little control over this.

Thus, despite the rhetoric of decentralisation, reform has not necessarily transferred matching resources and authority to the district level, a situation that frequently constrains the management team in responding to the demands and decisions of the governance body even when they wished to do so.

Table 8-2 Receipt of Grants from Central Government (as of 31/12/07)

Sector Fund (Donor Fund)*

Quarter	Date received	Amount received (ZMK)
4 of 2006	05/01/07	63,142,411.00
1 of 2007	01/05/07	100,235,690.00
2	20/08/07	187,637,570.00
3	21/12/07	53,930,482.07
4	N/a	N/a

Notes:

* Excluding office construction grant.

Government of Zambia Fund

No	Date received	Amount received (ZMK)
1	14/02/07	63,802,000.00
2	15/02/07	85,947,000.00
3	17/04/07	85,947,000.00
4	14/05/07	50,254,000.00
5	22/06/07	54,718,000.00
6	22/06/07	58,718,000.00
7	03/08/07	54,718,000.00
8	20/09/07	18,686,000.00
9	20/10/07	35,944,000.00
10	19/11/07	35,944,000.00
11	14/12/07	35,944,000.00
12	N/a	N/a

8.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter investigated the identity of DEB governance body members and how they were selected; how different members of the body participated in district education governance in practice; how this influenced or did not influence decisions made at the district level; and whether such resolutions were honoured and implemented by the management team, as per the policy assumption. The chapter revealed a considerable gap between policy expectation and practice with regard to the nature of representation of governance body members, and the extent and form of their participation in the affairs of district education governance.

First, the problem of the representation of members of local communities of the governance body was evident, which seriously constrained their expected roles as democratic mediators between district education officials, and ordinary parents and the local community at large. The selection of local community representatives of the governance body lacked transparency, as they were mostly hand-picked by the DEBS rather than selected according to set guidelines.

Additionally, many governance body members selected by the DEBS were former teachers, former district education officials or prominent figures in society, who saw their role chiefly as one of sensitising the rural masses to education policy, rather than actively listening to and acting on the concerns and request of parents and the local community.

This situation was further compounded by a lack of dissemination of information about the establishment and role of the governance body to ordinary community members in the district, which hindered both upward and downward communication between governance body

members and the communities they represented. The expected linkage between the DEB governance body, and PTAs and PCSCs in government basic schools and community schools respectively was very weak. Only a few PTA executives were aware of their representatives at the DEB, while representatives of community schools were not included as governance body members at all, as opposed to policy stipulation. This seriously impeded the voices of ordinary parents and members of local communities in being heard at the DEB, which was wholly contrary to policy expectation.

In the research district, the much-desired power, information, capacity, willingness, confidence and independent resources necessary to play the role expected of governance body members all appeared to be extremely constrained. Moreover, they often hesitated to challenge the management team's decisions and practices, particularly those initiated by the DEBS, as they felt that they owed a debt to him for electing them to the governance body. Consequently, they felt that they ran the risk of expulsion if they challenged the management team, thus losing the benefit of travel and other allowances. Therefore, again contrary to policy expectation, the participation of governance body members in local education decision-making and monitoring DEB activities and finances remained minimal.

Nevertheless, the analysis revealed that a few limited local education policies had been formulated through the deliberations of board meetings with the input of governance body members. However, their capacity to ensure the implementation of these local policies by the management team was constrained, and they were often only put into practice when the latter was willing, which was not always the case.

However, the superior social position of district education officials vis-à-vis governance body members was not the only reason that decisions made by the governance body were often

not implemented. Management team members' activities were solely dependent on the grant allocated by the centre, which was far too little to implement an effective programme, and the timing of its disbursement sporadic and unpredictable. In fact, such limited resource disbursement from the centre tended to be spent mostly on fuel, the repair of vehicles and per diems for officials attending the numerous unplanned workshops organised by the PEO or MOE HQ, with little left to finance the actual activities the DEB had planned.

Thus, a paradoxical situation prevailed whereby on the one hand, certain responsibilities were delegated to the district level and a new participatory space was opened up to allow community participation in decision-making on paper; but on the other, the prerequisite resources were not channelled to the district level and considerable power was still retained at the centre. Indeed, such a process of participation was more a matter of form than substance.

CHAPTER 9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

9.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis explored the policy vision and assumptions underlying the promotion of parental and community participation in basic education in Zambia, and the ways in which such policies were experienced by different local actors in practice. It did so with particular focus on the accountability of the school and the District Education Board (DEB) to parents and the wider community, drawing on the concept of 'public' and 'market' accountability (chapter 2.4). The findings suggested a considerable gap between policy expectation of parental and community participation, and the extent of engagement that actually took place.

First, a summary of my findings is reviewed, and the research questions formulated for the study are addressed directly. Second, the theoretical implications of the findings are ascertained. Third, macro policy implications and future research areas on the topic of education decentralisation and community participation in Zambia are identified.

9.2 SUMMARY OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

This section addresses the findings that relate to research questions 1–4.

Research question 1: What are the policy expectations and assumptions regarding community participation in basic education in Zambia?

Research questions 2: How do parents and the wider community participate in the affairs of government basic schools in practice; and how does this influence school accountability to parents and the community?

Research question 3: How do parents and the wider community participate in the affairs of community schools in practice; and how does this influence school accountability to parents and the community?

Research question 4: How does the community participate in district education governance in practice; and how does this influence the accountability of the DEB to parents and the community?

The findings reveal that community and parental participation in the affairs of basic education expected under the current decentralisation reform take a number of forms at both district and school levels. These include (i) development and implementation of a localised curriculum; (ii) management and governance; (iii) contribution to school and district resources; and (iv) choice of school. Roles (i), (ii) and (iii) are, in the main, expected of parents and members of the wider local community as a group; role (iv) is expected of individual parents.

However, the form and degree of participation that actually took place differed from policy assumptions. Moreover, the thesis found that community participation in school management did not necessarily lead to increased public accountability, just as parental choice of school

did not necessarily lead to increased market accountability.

(i) Participation in Management and Governance, and the Development and Implementation of a Localised Curriculum

The review of policy documents and interviews with key policy-makers reveals that an increased emphasis was placed on community participation in the area of education governance and some aspects of pedagogy through the development and implementation of a locally contextualised curriculum. It was expected that such participation would be realised through representation by parent teacher associations (PTAs) and Parents Community School Committees (PCSCs) in government basic schools and community schools respectively, and of DEB governance body at the district level. Thus, public accountability was expected to be enhanced through the participation of the community in key decision-making processes and the reflection of its interests and preferences in local education delivery.

As reviewed in chapter 3, reform generally regards parents and the wider community as important and equal partners in local education development, and considers participation in associated decision-making processes to be a political right. It is thus believed that the principal responsibility for the quality of education rests with families, the wider community and the schools themselves; rather than the central state, which is seen as the agency responsible for overseeing the implementation of decisions.

The policy largely takes for granted the abiding will and capacity of parents and the community to participate in planning and managing commonly identified education

development. The local community is also considered to be homogeneous, cohesive and non-hierarchical, and, therefore, able to demonstrate equality in terms of power and capacity in participation and decision-making. There is little evidence of any consideration of the micro politics involved in participation processes. Another underlying assumption is that district government officials (management team members) and teachers have a high stake in education development in the area they serve; generally believe in the value of involving parents and other community members in the decision-making process; and do not resist such community involvement.

However, the empirical investigations reveal that community participation in managerial and pedagogical aspects of education remained largely rhetorical, whether in government schools, community schools or at the district level. Lukewarm community participation was partly due to the high cost of participation; and lack of confidence in ability and skills with respect to participation in the academic, managerial and pedagogical aspects of education. These findings reinforce the view expressed by Parry et al. (1992), Watt (2001), Chapman et al. (2002), and Dunne et al. (2007) that one cannot take it for granted that parents and local community members were endowed with the necessary materials and cultural resources to play the roles expected of them in education governance – particularly in a rural setting.

Furthermore, the study revealed that low agency in matters concerned with schooling and the belief that anything related to teaching was the job of the trained professional – constantly reinforced by the state's proclamation of 'free education' – also limited the active participation of the community in the pedagogical and managerial aspects of education, as corroborated by the findings of Rose (2002) and Suzuki (2004) in Malawi and Uganda respectively.

In addition, respect for academic tradition remained strong among communities and, in terms of both government and community schools, many parents preferred not to meddle with the national curriculum or attempt to adapt it to a local context. Maclure (1994), Davies (2003) and Pryor (2005) also note that rural people may not necessarily be willing to take part in adjusting the curriculum to a local context, as they tend to regard schooling purely in terms of gaining good academic qualifications. Thus, community perception sets the parameters of its collaborative space, even when the opportunity for such participation arose.

At the same time, it is evident that there was frequently resistance among district officials (management team members) and teachers to the sharing of power; and their view that laypeople were ill qualified to participate in the pedagogical or managerial aspects of education contributed to the inhibition of community participation in these areas. Chimombo (1999) and Tshireletso (1997) in their studies in Malawi and Botswana respectively also suggest that teachers tend to have little regard for the input of the community in school business, considering the involvement of local populations in academic and administrative affairs to be an intrusion.

In the case of community schools, nearby government schools known as 'mother schools' and teachers seconded from them frequently controlled the community school grant, with PCSC members and volunteer teachers – much less ordinary parents or other community members – seldom given access to information about it or any say in its use.

A larger managerial role is expected of the community with regard to the community school than is the case with the government basic school, with its most prominent contribution – through the representation of the PCSC – being the hiring of local volunteer teachers of the appropriate educational level; facilitating their modest remuneration in terms of salary or

allowance; and monitoring and dismissing them when necessary. However, the thesis found that the ability of the community to fulfil these functions was somewhat limited.

Given the low socio-economic background of most communities, they often faced great difficulty in recruiting and retaining volunteer teachers of a sufficiently high educational level, who were willing to teach for little or no financial reward; although the capacity to do so varied between communities according to socio-economic endowment and the availability of external assistance. Therefore, this finding reinforces Michener's (1998) verdict that the limited ability of parents to pay volunteer teachers' salaries resulted in unsustainable and unremunerated voluntary teaching.

Two of the three community schools under study were found to have experienced regular monitoring of teachers by the PCSC; which was an interesting departure from the findings in terms of the government schools, where little institutionalised effort to monitor teaching and learning on the part of the PTA was found. This might indicate a greater sense of ownership by community leaders in respect of community schools when certain conditions such as commitment from the leadership are met.

However, the study also reveals that such monitoring does not guarantee the ability of the community to discipline or dismiss its volunteer teachers. High absenteeism rates amongst many volunteer teachers notwithstanding, taking disciplinary action was not a realistic option in most cases, given the improbability of finding suitable replacements. In reality, the de facto power vested in the community to hire and fire volunteer teachers was regarded by many parents as a tremendous burden rather than an advantage of decentralisation.

Furthermore, the study reveals that participatory spaces such as PTA, PCSC and DEB

meetings rarely serve as democratic and equal forums for ordinary members of the community to articulate their opinions and concerns freely and effectively. Rather, the thesis has demonstrated how micro-power relations divided along the lines of gender, socio-economic status and education level, and social norms and taboos deeply embedded in society influence the way different actors deliberate and negotiate in such spaces. The voices and protests of laypeople – the socially and economically disadvantaged in particular – are less likely to be heard and lack influence in the context of such ‘local elite capture’ (Bray 1997; Anderson 1998; McGinn and Welsh 1999; Rose 2002; Bray 2003a; Carney et al. 2007; Dunne et al. 2007; Sasaoka and Nishimura 2010).

Even though in theory, PTA and PCSC executives as well as the DEB governance body represent parents and the local community, their perceptions and actions do not necessarily represent the interests of rank and file members whose interests they are supposed to protect. Thus, this thesis supports the findings of several previous studies in other countries (e.g. Opolot 1994, cited in Bray 1999 [on Uganda]; Sayed 1999 [on South Africa]; Rose 2002, 2003 [on Malawi]; Bray 2003a; Suzuki 2004 [on Uganda]; Pryor 2005 [on Ghana]; De Grauwe et al. 2005 [on Benin, Guinea, Mali and Senegal]).

The imbalance of power between professionals and laypeople has been noted by many commentators (e.g. Chimombo 1999 [on Malawi]; Watt 2001; Suzuki 2002; 2004 [on Uganda]; Rose 2002, 2003 [on Malawi]; Adam 2005 [on Ghana]; Pryor 2005 [on Ghana]). However, the findings of this thesis suggest that putting all the emphasis on such a disparity paints a rather too simplistic picture. Teachers and district officials also felt that their voices were not adequately heard by parents or by the officials above them in the education hierarchy. Teachers in both government and community schools felt that parents’ values and attitudes to education did not conform to their expectations, while they also felt unsupported in meeting

the challenge of teaching pupils with erratic attendance records in large mixed ability classes. This situation is similar to that in rural Tanzania, as reported by Barrett (2005), who found that teachers were often isolated from professional administrative support while on a daily basis facing a local culture that conflicted with formal education practices. Thus, it is evident that non-linear power relations governed the practice of participation, a phenomenon that has received inadequate attention in the previous studies.

In a context of the provision of no more than scarce and unpredictable resources to schools from the centre, the study reveals the serious constraints under which teachers labour in attempting to respond to the demands of parents and other local community members, even presupposing they have the will to do so. This matter is of particular significance to community schools, which are typically located in even more remote and impoverished areas than government schools.

The new policy of supporting community schools on an equal basis notwithstanding, actual government support for these schools is inconsistent and inadequate and, at times, even inappropriate. After all, instead of providing greater autonomy and resources to schools, the reform rarely devolves such responsibility to the school or household, a situation that offers little prospect of achieving the expected public accountability. Thus, this thesis demonstrates that the mere establishment of a participatory space does not necessarily increase public accountability in education.

(ii) Participation in the Contribution to School/District Resources

The increased managerial role assigned to parents and the wider community under the

current decentralisation reform notwithstanding, one of the key areas of community and parental participation prioritised in the policy nonetheless remains resource mobilisation for school and district education operations. In spite of the abolition of fees at grades 1–7, payment into PTA and PCSC funds, and resource contribution at the district level are highly advocated. It is noteworthy that this was hitherto the role expected of individual parents and guardians, but the policy now expects not only direct users but also the wider community to actively take on this responsibility in order to increase the resource base; although the policy does not clarify its definition of the term ‘community’ (see chapter 3).

However, contrary to the policy expectation, it was found that the contributions of childless community members who had no direct vested interest in either government or community schools were limited – findings corroborated by Bray (1997, 1999) and Suzuki (2004). In such a situation, the greatest responsibility for mobilising school resources fell to the direct user – parents and guardians and, at times, the pupils themselves. Yet, such actors also often refused to play the role assigned to them on account of their interpretation of ‘free education’ as meaning that everything related to schooling should be granted by the government, as corroborated by Rose (2002) and Suzuki (*op.cit.*).

In a context of serious poverty in the research area, the emphasis on cost sharing not only resulted in the uneven distribution of resources to schools, but also led to a situation in which existing resources were generally in extremely short supply. This finding is of particular relevance to community schools, which were not only economically less well endowed than their government counterparts, but also tended to possess poorer infrastructure and fewer resources unless they enjoyed the support of external donors.

Inequality was found not only across schools but also within the same school community

(Davies 1990; Bray 2003*b*; Rose 2002, 2003; UNESCO 2008). The policy assumption that community representatives such as the DEB governance body, PTA and PCSC will ensure that community contribution requirements do not exclude any child from the opportunity to go to school unfolded in a rather mixed fashion in practice. In terms of the government schools, pupils were often suspended when their parents were unable to pay. Yet, in respect of the community schools, although pupils were not explicitly suspended for non-payment, there were some who chose to withdraw of their own accord in order to avoid public disgrace.

Finally, the study reveals the serious dilemma that PCSC executive members and volunteer teachers in community schools face concerning the equilibrium between the ideal of serving children of poor families and the requirement to discipline free riders in order to sustain the level of community contribution necessary to run the school.

(iii) School Choice

Education policy emphasis on community participation in the areas of pedagogy, management and resource mobilisation in Zambia runs in parallel to an emphasis on the freedom to choose a school – another form of parental participation. Similar to Suzuki's (2002; 2004) findings in her case study of Uganda, in principle, parents and guardians in Zambia have long been free to choose a school for their children regardless of where they live (see chapter 3).

As observed in chapter 3, parents and guardians may now select a school not only from among the government institutions of the district but also the private and community schools. In this discourse, the 'right' of parents as 'consumers' to select a school of their choice is

emphasised, while the actual ability to do so is somewhat taken for granted.

Such parental choice is expected to lead to increased 'market accountability', with schools that do not meet the satisfaction of consumers (parents) being penalised through a reduction in their pupil populations (see the literature review in chapter 2). In contemporary Zambia, a fall in enrolment rates should negatively affect the resource base of both government and community schools via a comparative reduction in the per capita grant allocated by the centre, as well as fewer contributions to PTA and PCSC funds from parents.

Yet, the study reveals that parents are just as much challenged as consumer stakeholders. The vast majority of them do not participate as active consumers – even when they are dissatisfied with the performance of the current school. This resulted in the main from socio-economic and geographical constraints, as pointed out by other commentators (e.g. Johnson 1990; Ball et al. 1995; Whitty et al. 1998; McGinn and Welsh 1999; Härmä 2009).

It is undeniable that community schools contribute markedly to the provision of educational opportunities to those children who would otherwise be denied access to school. However, it was found that for the majority of parents in the study area, community schools were merely a second-best alternative to government schools. Rather, parents typically wished that the former could be converted into government schools so that they might be freed from the responsibility of running the schools themselves.

Thus, the impact of parental choice on school accountability in most rural government and community institutions remains insignificant, since the number of individuals able to exercise parental choice is limited. Furthermore, the study reveals that parental choice in terms of both types of school is not adequately accompanied by either incentives or the threat of sanctions

that might encourage teachers to perform better.

In the context of the government basic school, teachers are still centrally managed; thus, a fall in enrolment rates does not directly affect their salaries. In respect of the community school, although in theory, a loss of pupils affects the voluntary teacher's income, as parental contribution to the PCSC fund directly influences his or her allowance, it was found that the ability of many parents to pay into the PCSC fund was extremely limited in practice. Therefore, even if the teacher managed to maximise pupil enrolment, there was little material gain in return for doing so. Moreover, with regard to both government and community schools, since the per capita school grant allocated from the centre tended to be too little too late, all teachers lacked the financial incentive to maximise pupil enrolment. Thus, this thesis suggests that the influence of parental choice on market accountability is somewhat limited.

Furthermore, the findings of the thesis support the views of Tembon (1999), Watt (2001), Rose (2002) and Suzuki (2002, 2004) in that the concept of individual choice is likely to undermine the principle of community cooperation. For if parents choose to educate their children outside the locality, the school will lose both income – in terms of any tuition fees, payments into the PTA/PCSC fund and contributions in kind – and labour provided by parents for the improvement of school infrastructure.

9.3 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE THESIS

This thesis demonstrates how state policy is unfolded in relation to participation and accountability. The sociological framework of decentralisation and participation in education adopted by the thesis allows for the unravelling of whether – and, if so, to what extent –

community participation exists in local education affairs; and also why it does or does not exist, and how this influences accountability.

First, my Zambian case study suggests that the form parental and community participation takes in decentralised education service delivery is influenced by a variety of factors that lie in the particularities of context. Socio-economic and geographical endowments; social norms and beliefs; values and attitudes accorded to education; social hierarchies, social perceptions; and point of view with regard to the role of the state all interact in a complex manner to influence the way in which parents and other local community members actually participate in education service delivery.

The sociological framework of participation therefore demonstrates the significance of the role of context in the analysis of community participation in education. The framework also shows that the local community is not a homogeneous entity but consists of actors with multiple and hierarchical relationships. The shift in focus from the administrative–institutional framework dominant in policy circles – which is invariably confined to indicators such as rules and regulations, and official representation criteria – to a sociological model allows for a deeper understanding of participation. This is achieved by bringing to light the central role of context in shaping community participation in education in practice, which tends to be overlooked in the administrative–institutional framework. The thesis also highlights the significance of power relations and the differing social, cultural and economic capital that shape the way different actors participate or do not participate, factors that are also often neglected in the continuous policy emphasis on decentralisation and community participation in international education development discourse.

Thus, the findings of this thesis are corroborated by Ball's (1990) study, which argues that the

linear model of policy process is flawed. The extent to which a policy of community participation in education under decentralisation can and does produce the intended outcomes is as much a matter of implementation as the way in which various local actors interpret such policy. The present study demonstrates the importance of understanding the underlying assumptions of education policy and the extent to which these assumptions are actually borne out in practice.

Indeed, the findings of this study challenge some of the taken-for-granted assumptions on which attempts to promote community participation by governments and donors have been based (e.g. Kane and Wolf 2000; World Bank 2003; Barrera-Osorio et al. 2009; Bruns et al. 2011). In particular, the thesis joins the earlier commentators in problematising the perception of community as a homogeneous entity, and demonstrates that the many unintended consequences of promoting community participation frequently arise from the community's social heterogeneity and internal inequalities (e.g. Hurst 1985; Martin 1996; Rose 2002, 2003; Sayed 2002; Suzuki 2002, 2004; Bray 2003a, 2003b; Pryor 2005; Sayed and Soudien 2005; Carney et al. 2007; Dunne et al. 2007).

The mere establishment of a participatory space does not automatically imply a democratic process in such participation. Rather, what is evident is that socio-political dynamics play an important role in shaping the nature of participation and its influence on the accountability of the decentralised education institution to parents and other local community members. Often, the voices of the poor and disadvantaged are not heard, while decisions made by the powerful are imposed in articulation of the rhetoric of community consensus. Therefore, a deeper understanding of the micro politics of participation is necessary, as many previous studies over the years have pointed out (e.g. Anderson 1998; Cornwall and Gaventa 2001; Cornwall 2002; Suzuki 2002, 2004; Brett 2003; Rose 2002, 2003).

Second, the case study illustrates that a policy designed for the decentralisation of education services with greater community participation at the local level does not necessarily include decentralisation of the corresponding financial and human resources when reform is conducted in the context of state response to resource constraints (Bray 2003a). The Zambian case demonstrates that when reform is lacking on the supply side of the equation – the financing and resourcing of schools and district education administration – it is unlikely that the much-advocated community participation in local education governance will result in the increased responsiveness of these institutions. Furthermore, the catch-all slogan of decentralisation notwithstanding, MOE HQ still holds a tight grip on many areas, including the conditions it attaches to the administration of the school grant – as Dunne et al. 2007 report – which adversely affects the ability of the school to respond to the needs of the community. Thus, the thesis demonstrates that the power imbalance between education professionals and lay people not only negatively influences the much-expected accountability of schools and local education administration to the community, but that the limited resources and authority granted to teachers and the local education office also often constitute a considerable barrier. However, this consideration is not paid sufficient attention in the existing literature on the relations between decentralisation, community participation and accountability in education.

Thus, the thesis suggests that the extent to which the policy of community participation in local education governance increases the accountability of local education institutions is open to question. In this regard, it is vital to apprehend not only the micro-level dynamics, but also the macro-level contexts in which such policy is implemented.

Third, the case study highlights the vital role that community schools play in contributing to

the increased access of an underserved population to formal education in remote areas of Zambia. However, as community schools operate as the result of the lack of affordable government basic schools, which may or may not be accessible, most of the former are run on a budget that is far from adequate to support their local volunteer teachers. As Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder (2002) point out, community efforts in these schools often merely substitute – rather than enhance – that which has traditionally been provided through public funding. In turn, this seriously affects the power of parents and other members of the local community to hold such teachers accountable for their actions.

This thesis therefore argues that the claim of some commentators (e.g. Jimenez and Sawada 1999; Sawada 2000; World Bank 2003; Gershberg and Winkler 2004; World Bank 2007; Bruns et al. 2011) that in granting the community direct control over the recruitment and management of teaching staff, teacher accountability will be improved, is highly contentious. Rather, the study demonstrates that, in the absence of strong state authority, the *de facto* delegation of the power to hire and fire community school teachers is unlikely to result in the increased ability of parents to hold such teachers to account. Thus, the issue of the community school is fundamentally one of the relations between the respective roles and responsibilities of the state and parents/the wider local community.

Moreover, the thesis demonstrates that the local community surrounding a community school is complex and hierarchical, and therefore just as susceptible to local elite capture as it is with regard to the government school. Furthermore, the thesis also shows that in respect of the community school, the community also often lacks the necessary social, cultural, or economic capital and agency to participate to the expected level in the pedagogical and managerial aspects of school affairs. Yet, while there is an increasing volume of literature investigating community participation in government schools, there is very limited detailed

analysis of the reality of community participation in community schools. In this regard, the deeper analysis of community participation in community schools in rural Africa conducted in this thesis can be claimed to be a significant contribution to knowledge in this field.

Nevertheless, the study acknowledges a few examples of unique local initiatives in respect of the community school. Such schemes include the establishment of a set of school rules by the community in accordance with indigenous culture and values, and regular monitoring of the attendance of volunteer teachers by the PCSC. Furthermore, in some community schools, volunteer care providers are also trained to assist vulnerable children and encourage their parents/guardians to send them to school. Yet, the study equally reveals that these kinds of initiative are not uniformly evident in all schools all of the time, but tend to be determined by the quality of school leadership, the intervention of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the specific socio-cultural dynamics of the community.

Fourth, the findings of the present study are corroborated by the conclusions of several previous investigations (Whitty et al. 1998; Tembon 1999; Farrell and Jones 2000; Watt 2001; Rose 2002; Sayed 2002, 2004; Sayed and Soudien 2005), which argue that reforms emphasising community participation and choice in education are somewhat at odds with each other. A choice of schools – a luxury that is in the main restricted to the privileged few – often divides the community and undermines the much-desired collective responsibility in working towards the development of its 'local' school. Yet, these arguments notwithstanding, current Zambian education policy promotes both community participation and parental choice without the apparent acknowledgement any potential contradiction.

Finally, my Zambian case study corroborates Rose's (2003) contention that the declaration of free education and emphasis on community participation in resource mobilisation may

contradict each other. On the one hand, parents are increasingly unwilling to contribute to the school owing to their belief that free education means that everything should be provided by the state. On the other – albeit mostly government – schools continue to impose sanctions, such as suspending pupils, on those who fail to contribute to their resource bases, which run against the principle of free education.

In such a context, this thesis argues that putting the accent on community participation runs the great risk of increasing inequity between schools and households, as determined by the varying socio-economic, geographical and cultural endowment of each community (Bray 2003*b*). Indeed, policy emphasis on community participation obscures the realities of the scarcity of local resources and the inequality of assets. The thesis therefore contends that in prioritising community participation, the state should be wary of undermining the vital role that it must itself play.

9.4 IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS FOR EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE IN ZAMBIA

This section answers the research question 5: What are the implications of micro (school and school community) and meso (district) level findings for macro-level policies?

The study illustrates the significant gap that exists between the policy and the practice of community participation in basic education in Zambia. Given the scarcity of detailed research on the processes of decentralisation and community participation in education in the country, the thesis makes a significant contribution to the closure of this gap.

Yet, the purpose of this thesis is not to dismiss the value of community participation in education governance. Rather, it suggests that support must be provided to parents and wider community members to allow them to effectively participate in education governance, and that such participation should be geared towards the aim of making the providers of education accountable to them.

At the grassroots level – both in the context of the government basic school and the community school – various measures can be taken to enhance the capacity of parents and the local community to effectively and meaningfully participate in school governance. First and foremost, the roles, rights and responsibilities of parents and other members of the local community, their representatives in PTAs/PCSCs, teachers, head teachers, and the DEB need to be clearly publicised in the local language and disseminated in an effective manner. This is imperative if all stakeholders are to appreciate their respective governance roles.

The thesis suggests that there is a very weak linkage and limited communication between parents/community at the school level through the PTA/PCSC, and community representatives at the district level, that is, the DEB governance body. As a result, there is no effective mechanism for either discussing parents' concerns at DEB meetings, or for sharing district education policy, and the AWPB with schools and communities. This highlights the need for the creation of a more effective system of two-way communication between school and district levels.

In addition, at the school level, the provision of adult literacy and numeracy classes, and capacity building in the area of effective public deliberation might help community members to monitor the quality of their schools and their own children's education, as well as facilitate informed and more confident decision-making on local education affairs. Likewise, at the

district level, governance body members could be provided with training in effective public deliberation to be employed in the analysis of education data and informed decision making when scrutinising DEB resource flow. Clear and publicly available information about school and district resources might also contribute to the increased access of parents, other members of the local community, and the DEB governance body to information that could form a basis for the examination of school/district resource flow.

However, it needs to be acknowledged that technical intervention alone may not be sufficient. Deeply embedded social norms, taboos and micro-power relations arising from the different social standings of various groups may still prevent many people – particularly those of low socio-economic status – from effectively voicing their opinions and, more importantly, having them heard.

One way of minimising local elite capture might be regular elections of PTA and PCSC executives that are ensured by the DEB. Furthermore, such elections should be conducted in a fair and transparent manner, for example, through a secret ballot, as exemplified in the cases of Fifugo and Pulofo community schools (see chapter 7.4.2). Nevertheless, it should be noted that the appropriateness and effectiveness of a secret ballot might be subject to cultural considerations, and thus cannot necessarily be assumed to be a guaranteed means of the free and fair election of community representatives in all contexts.

Therefore, the government must acknowledge this situation and, together with international donors, carefully appraise the complexities of community participation in education, as well as the realistic level of technical input beyond which the community may not wish to play an active role in local education matters. Thus, a much more contextualised understanding together with the application of the appropriate degree of external assistance is necessary in

these areas.

Above all, where community members' prime concern is daily survival, it is unlikely that they are able and willing to prioritise participation in education affairs over their survival efforts, particularly if they cannot see how schooling might improve their children or wider family's standard of living. The thesis has suggested that parents and other members of the local community tend to redouble their participation in school affairs – such as contribution to the school and attendance of PTA/PCSC meetings – when they are certain that their efforts are matched by those of the teachers in educating their children in line with their expectations.

This highlights the importance of the roles of heads, teachers and teachers in charge in planning and implementing school AWPBs; monitoring staff morale and classroom activities; valuing community input into various aspects of school life; creating open and mutually trusting community–school relations; and in making the best use of resources contributed by the community in a transparent manner. There is, therefore, a need to provide more leadership training for school authorities. Furthermore, the appointment of people with strong commitment to the strengthening of genuine community–school relations, transparency and accountability to the positions of DEBS, head teacher and teacher in charge should be considered.

However, if school leaders and district officials are to make positive changes in grassroots and district education activities, it is imperative that they are provided with the basic resources – human, financial and technical to do so. For example, the timely, regular and reliable disbursement of sufficient funds to both schools and the DEB is critical if they are to respond to the demands of the local community in the implementation of the AWPB. Otherwise, this document will remain a mere ritualised token, which in turn will discourage

school leaders and district officials from engaging in the development of the AWPB. Currently, grants allocated to both government schools and community schools are subject to stringent conditions determined by a standard formula set by MOE HQ, which disempowers schools from the use of funds according to their specific needs. Thus, reasonable flexibility should also be permitted in the use of the school grant in the interest of enabling schools to address locally identified specific needs.

Another example is the introduction of a localised curriculum. Teachers are expected to invite the local community to develop and implement a locally contextualised curriculum in part, but the government fails to provide the necessary materials, orientation and resources for teachers to do so. This is an area that the MOE should address.

Indeed, the thesis also draws renewed attention to the importance of supporting teachers and local education officials – in addition to parents and the wider community – in the process of community participation as part of decentralisation reform; if such reform is indeed to bring about the improved accountability of schools and local education institutions to parents and other members of the community. This supply side of the equation is crucial, but is often paid insufficient attention by policy-makers.

Furthermore, emphasising community participation in education governance without adequate moral, material or financial support to teachers is likely to reinforce their resistance to laypeople's participation, particularly in rural areas where there may be differences in culture and the expectations of schooling. Therefore, support and incentives should be provided to teachers so that they might interact more effectively with parents and other community members.

The importance of education supply appears to be more prominent in the case of the community school. In the current situation, it is likely that it will continue to play an important complementary role in the achievement of education for all (EFA) in Zambia, serving the educational needs of the poorest and remotest citizens. Thus, adequate and consistent support to these schools should be provided on an equal basis to that of the government school, for example, the deployment of qualified teachers on the government payroll, and the supply of up to date teaching and learning materials.

The development of formal policy guidelines setting out the government's support to the community school has been a big step forward in this regard. Nevertheless, further reform is necessary if the current inequitable two-tier schooling system is not to be reinforced, and community schools do not continue to suffer from poor education delivery, which in turn, may further discourage demand for schooling at the community level.

Moreover, the thesis also demonstrates the continuation of inconsistent and inadequate state support to community schools through the DEB or government 'mother schools', due to a lack of resources and conflicting apprehension of new policy among different stakeholders. There should be clearer guidelines defining the roles of the state, the DEB, parents, the wider community, and mother schools in running and supporting community schools. More importantly, mechanisms that enable such policy to produce the intended results more efficiently are much needed.

In particular, policy on the status of community school teachers should be clarified. As discussed in chapter 7, some volunteer teachers are morally committed to raising the education standards of their locality even though they receive little or no payment. Yet, their survival needs, and low status in education administration and society in general often

discourage them from attending school regularly, or continuing a career in teaching at all. Therefore, it is imperative that volunteer teachers are provided with social and professional recognition, the concomitant financial remuneration, and a life-long career development plan. Simultaneously, the professional development of volunteer teachers – including short-term and long-term courses leading to a formal teaching certificate – should also be considered and implemented in a systematic fashion.

Currently, USAID offers scholarships to a few volunteer teachers to study for a teaching certificate by distance learning. However, there are too few beneficiaries and long-term support is not an element of the programme. Indeed, although international donors and NGOs continue to play an important role in filling the gap in resource provision for community schools, very few of them receive this financial and material assistance compared to their total number nationwide. As Chakufyali et al. (2008) note, such a situation has the potential to widen the inequity gap between those community schools that receive external support and those that do not. In this regard, international donors and NGOs supporting community schools should also consider ways to strengthen state capacity to deliver services to this sector.

Finally, the thesis argues that the prioritisation of community participation must not undermine the vital role of the state. Such input may include funding; the provision of high quality teachers; the supply of teaching and learning materials; and a regulatory service. The state must enhance its role accordingly in order to ensure equity – of schools, across schools and within households – or, as this thesis demonstrates, the prevailing situation will be exacerbated if the emphasis continues to be placed on community participation without proper intervention or regulation.

9.5 AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study is based on an in-depth analysis of parental and community participation in a limited number of government basic and community schools in just one district. As such, the thesis does not aim to provide a nationwide extrapolation, although it hopes to offer some useful insights into the country's continuing reform process. The way in which parents and other community members participate in local education affairs in the research district may vary from other districts in which socio-economic and geographical contexts are different. Indeed, interviews with teachers from other regions such as Eastern and Southern provinces reported that there were traditions of much more active community participation in schools in these areas.

Moreover, interviews with international donors and policy-makers at the centre, as well as several reports on community schools nationwide (Chondoka 2006; MOE 2007c, Chakufyali et al. 2008), suggest that the manner in which community schools are supported by the DEB vary greatly across provinces. For example, the 'twinning' of a community school with a nearby government school that was observed in the case study district appears to be widespread in the Copperbelt, but was not such common practice in other provinces. Thus, there is a need to conduct similar studies in other districts and provinces in order to apprehend variations according to different contexts.

As indicated in the thesis, under decentralisation reform that has been promoted in Zambia since the early 1990s, education boards have not only been established at the district level (the DEB), but also at college and secondary school levels. The decentralisation policy paper explicitly states that the purpose of establishing these boards is to "provide a platform on

which communities can participate in education matters, and allow for rapid reaction [to] and action to [on] problems and opportunities that occur at the point of delivery” (EBS 2005: ii). One government study exploring the function of both the DEB and the secondary school board (EBS 2007a) provides some valuable insights. Yet, it only interviewed officials, teachers and board members, and did not explore the views of ordinary parents and other members of the community. Moreover, it did not include college boards as the focus of its investigation. Thus, there is a continuing need to investigate the extent to which these boards operate.

The liberalisation of education in Zambia has brought about an increase in the number of private schools, while grant-aided schools that are owned and managed by churches have regained a degree of independence from the state, which used to control various aspects of these institutions under the one-party system that had prevailed since independence (Carmody 1999). Further research is required to examine the roles played by parents and other members of the local community in these schools, with particular reference to the implications for accountability.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ackerman J (2004) Co-governance for Accountability: Beyond “Exit” and “Voice”. *World Development* 32(3): 447–263.
- Adam F (2005) Community participation in school development: understanding participation in basic school performance in the Nanumba District of Ghana. Unpublished MPhil thesis, University of Bergen, Bergen.
- Africa Network Campaign on Education For All (2004) *The Challenge of Achieving EFA Goals in Africa*. ANCEFA Position Paper for GCE World Assembly. Johannesburg.
- Agarwal B (2001) Participatory Exclusions, Community Forestry, and Gender: An Analysis for South Asia and a Conceptual Framework. *World Development* 29(10): 1623–1648.
- Akyeampong K (2009) Revisiting Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) in Ghana. *Comparative Education* 45(2): 175–195.
- Anderson GL (1998) Toward authentic participation: Deconstructing the discourses of participatory reforms in education. *American Educational Research Journal* 35(4)(winter): 571–603.
- Arnstein S (1969) A ladder of citizen participation. *AIP Journal* July: 216–224.
- Ball SJ (1990) *Politics and Policy Making in Education: Explorations in Policy Sociology*. London: Routledge.
- Ball S J (1993) What is policy? Texts, trajectories and toolboxes. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 13(2): 10–17.
- Ball SJ (1994) *Education reform: A critical and post-structural approach*. Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Ball SJ (1998) Big Policies/Small World: An Introduction to International Perspectives in Education Policy. *Comparative Education* 32(2): 119–130.
- Ball SJ, Bowe R and Gewirtz S (1995) Circuits of Schooling: A sociological exploration of parental choice of school in social-class contexts. *The Sociological Review* 43(1): 52–78.
- Ball SJ and Bowe R (1992) Subject Departments and the ‘Implementation’ of National Curriculum Policy: An Overview of the Issues. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 24(20): 97–115.
- Bartlett DM (2000) Civil Society and Democracy: a Zambian Case Study. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26(3): 429–446.
- Bartlett W and Le Grand J (1993) The theory of quasi-markets. In: Le Grand J and Bartlett W (ed.) *Quasi-markets and social policy*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press: 13–34.
- Barrera-Orsorio F, Fasih T, Patrinos HA and Santibáñez L (2009) *Decentralized Decision-Making in Schools – Theory and Evidence on School-Based Management*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Barrett AM (2005) Teacher accountability in context: Tanzanian primary school teachers’ perceptions of local community and education administration. *Compare* 35 (1): 43–61.
- Baylies C and Szeftel M (1992) The Fall and Rise of Multi-Party Politics in Zambia. *Review of African Political Economy* 54: 75–91.
- Belshaw D (2000) Decentralised governance and poverty reduction: relevant experience in Africa and Asia. In: Collins P (ed.) *Applying Public Administration in Development: Guideposts to the Future*. Chichester: Wiley, 93–113.
- Bourdieu P (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Bowe R, Ball SJ and Gold A (1992) *Reforming education and changing schools: case studies*

- in policy sociology*. London: Routledge.
- Bratton M (1992) Zambia Starts Over. *Journal of Democracy* 3(2): 81–94.
- Bratton M (1994) Economic Crisis and Political Realignment in Zambia. In: Widner J (ed.) *Economics of Political Liberalization in Africa*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press: 101–128.
- Bray M (1996) *Decentralization of Education: Community Financing*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Bray M (1997) Community Financing of Education: Rationales, Mechanisms, and Policy Implications in Less Developed Countries. In: Colclough C (ed.) *Marketizing Education and Health in Developing Countries: Miracle or Mirage?* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 185–204.
- Bray M (1999) Community Financing of Education: Cultural Variations and Policy Dilemmas in Less Developed Countries. In: Leach F and Little A (eds) *Education, Cultures and Economics: Dilemmas for Development*. New York: Garland, 183–202.
- Bray M (2003a) Community Initiatives in Education: Goals, Dimensions and Linkages with Governments. *Compare* 33(1): 31–45.
- Bray M (2003b) Control of Education: Issues and Tensions in Centralization and Decentralization. In: Arnove ED and Torres CA (eds) *Comparative Education: The Dialectic of the Global and the Local*. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 204–228.
- Bray M (2007) Governance and Free Education: Directions, Mechanisms and Policy Tensions. *Prospects: Quarterly Review of Comparative Education* XXXVII(1): 23–35.
- Bray M and Lillis K (eds) (1988) *Community Financing of Education: Issues and Policy Implications in Less Developed Countries*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Bray M and Mukundan MV (2003) Management and Governance for EFA: Is Decentralization Really the Answer? *Background paper prepared for Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2003/04*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Brett EA (2003) Participation and Accountability in Development Management. *The Journal of Development Studies* 40(2): 1–29.
- Bruno N (1956) Family Relationships in Lamba Tales. *Anthropological Quarterly* 29(1): 24–30.
- Bruns B, Filmer D and Patrinos HA (2011) *Making Schools Work – New Evidence on Accountability Reforms*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Bryman A (2004) *Social Research Methods* (2nd ed). Oxford: OUP.
- Burnell P (2006) Taking Stock of Democracy in Zambia. In: Haynes J (ed.) *Democracy and Political Change in the 'Third World'*. London and New York: Routledge, 135–154.
- Cabinet Office (1993) Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP). Lusaka: Cabinet Office.
- Cabinet Office (1996) *Final Report on the Restructuring of the Ministry of Education*. Lusaka: Management Development Division, Cabinet Office.
- Cabinet Office (2004) *The National Decentralisation Policy – Towards Empowering the People*. Lusaka: Office of the President, Cabinet Office.
- Caillods F and Hallak J (2004) *Education and PRSPs: a review of experiences*. Paris: IIEP/UNESCO.
- Canel E (2001) Municipal Decentralization and Participatory Democracy: Building a New Mode of Urban Politics in Montevideo City? *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 71: 25–46.
- Carmody BP (2004) *The Evolution of Education in Zambia*. Lusaka: Bookworld Publishers.
- Carney S, Bista M and Agergaard J (2007) 'Empowering' the 'local' through education? Exploring community-managed schooling in Nepal. *Oxford Review of Education*

- 33(5): 611–628.
- Casely-Hayford L (2000) Education, Culture and Development in Northern Ghana: micro realities and macro context – implications for policy and practice. Unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Sussex, Sussex.
- Cashen L et al. (2001) *Educating Children Out of The System: The Community Schools Movement in Zambia*. New York: UNICEF.
- Central Intelligence Agency (2010) *The World Factbook – Zambia*. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/za.html> (Accessed 8 July 2010).
- Central Statistics Office (2004) *Living Conditions Monitoring Survey Report 2003*. Lusaka: CSO.
- Chakufyali P et al. (2008) *USAID/Zambia Assistance to Strengthen Ministry of Education Support to Community Schools*. Lusaka: USAID.
- Chambers R (1983) *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*. Harlow: Longman.
- Chambers R (1995) Poverty and livelihoods: whose reality counts? *IDS Discussion Paper* 348.
- Chapman D et al. (2002) Do communities know best? Testing a premise of educational decentralisation: community members' perceptions of their local schools in Ghana. *International Journal of Educational Development* 22(2): 181–189.
- Chapman DW and Nkansa GA (2006) Sustaining Community Participation: What remains after the money ends? *Review of Education* 52: 509–532.
- Cheema GS and Rondinelli DA (eds) (1983) *Decentralisation and development: policy implementation in developing countries*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Chikulo BC (2000) Decentralization for Good Governance and Development – The Zambian Experience. *Regional Development Dialogue* 21(1): 26–48.
- Chimombo J (1999) Implementing educational innovations: a study of free primary education in Malawi. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sussex, Sussex.
- Chimombo J et al. (2008) The Case of Malawi. In: Nishimura M and Ogawa K (eds) *A Comparative Analysis on Universal Primary Education Policy, Finance, and Administrative Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa: Findings from the Field Work in Ghana, Kenya, Malawi and Uganda*. Kobe: Kobe University, 61–93.
- Chondoka YA and Subulwa C (2004) *Evaluation of the SPARK Curriculum in Community Schools in Zambia, 2000–2004*. Lusaka: UNICEF Zambia.
- Chondoka, YA (2006) *Situation Analysis of Community Schools in Central Province of Zambia*. Available at: http://www.glp.net/web/communityschools/resources?p_p_id=20&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=maximized&p_p_mode=view&_20_struts_action=%2Fdocument_library%2Fview&_20_folderId=28388 (Accessed 2 December 2009).
- Chubb JE and Moe RM (1988) Politics, Markets, and the Organization of Schools. *The American Political Science Review* 82(4): 1066–1087.
- Cloward RA and Jones JA (1963) Social Class: Educational Attitudes and Participation. In: Passow AH (ed.) *Education in Depressed Areas*. New York: Columbia University, 198–216.
- Codd J, Gordon L and Harker R (1997) Education and the Role of the State: Devolution and Control Post-Picot. In: Lauder H and Wylie C (eds) *Education – Culture, Economy and Society*. Oxford: OUP, 263–272.
- Cohen L, Manion L and Morrison K. (2000) *Research methods in education* (5th ed). London: Routledge.
- Colclough C et al. (2003) *Achieving Schooling for All in Africa: Costs, Commitment and Gender*. Hampshire: Ashgate.

- Conyers D (2007) Decentralisation and Service Delivery: Lessons from Sub-Saharan Africa. *IDS Bulletin* 38(1): 18–32.
- Cooke B and Kothari U (eds) (2001) *Participation: the New Tyranny?* London: Zed Books.
- Cornwall A (2002) Making Spaces, Changing Places: situating participation in development. *IDS Working Paper* 170.
- Cornwall A (2004) New Democratic Spaces? The Politics and Dynamics of Institutionalised Participation. *IDS Bulletin* 35(2): 1–10.
- Cornwall A (2008) Unpacking 'Participation': models, meanings and practices. *Community Development Journal* 43(3): 269–283.
- Cornwall A and Gaventa J (2001) From Users and Choosers to Makers and Shapers: repositioning participation in social policy. *IDS Working Paper* 127.
- Cresswell JW (2003) *Research Design – Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (2nd ed). London: Sage.
- Crook RC (2003) Decentralisation and Poverty Reduction in Africa: the politics of local – central relations. *Public Administration and Development* 23(1): 77–88.
- Crook RC and Manor J (1998) *Democracy and Decentralisation in South Asia and West Africa: participation, accountability and performance*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Crook RC and Sverrisson AS (2003) Does Decentralization Contribute to Poverty Reduction? In: Houtzager P and Moore M (eds) *Changing Paths: International Development and the New Politics of Inclusion*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 233–260.
- Crossley M and Vulliamy G (1996) Issues and Trends in Qualitative Research: Potential for Developing Countries. *International Journal of Educational Development* 16(4): 439–448.
- Cuéllar-Marchelli H (2003) Decentralization and Privatization of Education in El Salvador: assessing the experience. *International Journal of Educational Development* 23(2): 145–166.
- CDC (2000) The Basic Education Curriculum Framework. Lusaka: Ministry of Education.
- CDC (2003) *Zambia Basic Education Syllabi*. Lusaka: Ministry of Education.
- CDC (2005) *Guidelines for the Development of the Localised Curriculum in Zambia – Basic Education*. Lusaka: Ministry of Education.
- CDC (2006) *The Basic Education Curriculum Framework*. Lusaka: Ministry of Education.
- Dale R (1996) The State and the Governance of Education: an analysis of the restructuring of the state–education relationship. In: Halsey AH et al. (eds) *Education: Culture, Economy and Society*. Oxford: OUP, 273–282.
- Das J et al. (2004) Public and Private Funding Basic Education in Zambia: implications of budgetary allocations for service delivery. *Africa Region Human Development Working Paper Series* 62.
- Davies L (1990) *Equity and Efficiency? School Management in an International Context*. London: Falmer Press.
- Davies L, Harber C and Dzimadzi C (2003) Educational Decentralisation in Malawi: a study of process. *Compare* 33(2): 139–154.
- Day P and Klein R (1987) *Accountabilities: five public services*. London: Tavistock.
- De Grauwe A et al. (2005) Does decentralisation lead to school improvement? – Findings and lessons from research in West-Africa. *Journal of Education for International Development* 1(1): 1–15.
- De Kemp A (2008) Analysing the Effectiveness of Sector Support: Primary Education in Uganda and Zambia. *Network of Networks on Impact Evaluation (NONIE) Working Paper* 5. Available at: http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/nonie/docs/WP5_deKemp.pdf (Accessed 17 July 2010).

- DeStefano J (2006) *Meeting EFA: Zambia Community Schools*. EQUIP 2, USAID.
Available at:
<http://www.equip123.net/docs/e2-ZambiaCaseStudy.pdf> (Accessed 5 January 2007).
- Dimmock C (1982) The Micropolitical Dimension in School Evaluation and Accountability in England and Wales. *Compare* 12(2): 167–181.
- Drèze J and Sen AK (2002) *India: Development and Participation*. New Delhi: OUP.
- Dunne M, Akyeampong K and Humphreys S (2007) School Processes, Local Governance and Community Participation: Understanding Access, Creating Pathways to Access. *University of Sussex Centre for International Education Research Monograph 6*.
- Dunne M, Pryor J and Yates P (2005) *Becoming a Researcher*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Durkheim E (1938) *The rules of sociological method* (8th ed). Translated by Solovay S A and Muller JM and edited by Catlin GE, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Dyer C and Rose P (2005) Decentralisation for educational development? An editorial introduction. *Compare* 35(2): 105–113.
- East Sussex Accountability Project (1979) Accountability in the middle years of schooling: an analysis of policy options. *University of Sussex mimeo*: 96–107.
- EIU (2008) *Zambia Country Profile 2008*. London: EIU.
- EBS (2004a) *Institutional Roles, Functions and Relationships: Decentralisation of the Education System and Establishment of Education Boards*. Lusaka: MOE.
- EBS (2004b) *Planning, Monitoring and Reporting Guidelines: Decentralisation of Education System and Establishment of Education Boards*. Lusaka: MOE.
- EBS (2005) *Principles of Education Boards Governance and Management Manual*. Lusaka: MOE.
- EBS (2006) *Gazetted Education Boards*. Lusaka: MOE.
- EBS (2007a) *Education Boards Monitoring Report*. Lusaka: MOE.
- EBS (2007b) *Education Sector Devolution Plan* (draft). MOE.
- Edwards R (1998) A critical examination of the use of interpreters in the qualitative research process. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 24(2): 197–208.
- Elliot J et al. (1981) *School Accountability*. London: Grant McIntyre.
- Ellis F, Kutengule M and Nyasulu A (2002) Livelihoods and Rural Poverty Reduction in Malawi (draft). *LADDER Working Paper 17*.
- Esposito N (2001) From meaning to meaning: The influence of translation techniques on non-English focus group research. *Qualitative Health Research* 11(4): 568–579.
- Essuman A (2010) Perspectives on community–school relations: a study of two schools in Ghana. Unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Sussex, Sussex.
- Farrell CM and Jones J (2000) Evaluating Stakeholder Participation in Public Services – Parents and Schools. *Policy and Politics* 28(2): 251–262.
- Farrell CM and Law J (1999) Changing Forms of Accountability in Education? A case Study of LEAs in Wales. *Public Administration* 77(2): 293–310.
- Farrell JP (1999) Changing Conceptions of Equality of Education: forty years of comparative evidence. In: Arnove RF and Torres CA (eds) *Comparative Education: The Dialectic of the Global and the Local*. Lanham, MD: Rowland Littlefield.
- Flyvbjerg B (2006) Five Misunderstandings about Case-Study Research. *Qualitative Inquiry* 12(2): 219–245.
- Freire P (1996) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. London: Penguin.
- Gaventa J (2002) Exploring Citizenship, Participation and Accountability. *IDS Bulletin* 33(2): 1–11.
- Gaventa J (2006) Finding the Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis. *IDS Bulletin* 37(6): 23

— 33.

- Gershberg AI (1999a) Decentralization, Citizen Participation, and the Role of the State. *Latin American Perspectives* 26(4): 8—38.
- Gershberg AI (1999b) Decentralization, Citizen Participation, and the Role of the State: The Autonomous Schools Program in Nicaragua. *Latin American Perspectives* 26(4): 8—38.
- Gershberg AI and Winkler D (2004) Education Decentralization in Africa: A Review of Recent Policy and Practice. In: Levy B and Kpundeh S (eds) *Building State Capacity in Africa: New Approaches, Emerging Lessons*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 323—356.
- Gewirtz S, Ball S and Bowe R (1995) *Markets, Choice and Equity in Education*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Gittel M (1967) Professionalism and Public Participation in Educational Policy-Making: New York City, A Case Study. *Public Administration Review* 27: 237—251.
- Guba EG and Lincoln YS (1994) Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research. In: Denzin NK and Lincoln YS (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 105—117.
- Guthrie JW (1986) School-Based Management: The Next Needed Education Reform. *Phi Delta Kappan* 68(4): 305—309.
- Halsey AH et al. (eds) (1996) *Education: Culture, Economy, and Society*. Oxford: OUP.
- Hammersley M (1992) *What's Wrong with Ethnography*. London: Routledge.
- Härmä J (2009) Can Choice Promote Education for All? – Evidence from Growth in Private Primary Schooling in India. *Compare* 39(2): 151—165.
- Heim M (1995) *Accountability in Education: A Primer for School Leaders*. Prepared for Hawaii School Leadership Academy.
- Hirschman AO (1970) *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hoppers W (1994) Questioning the School – What Room for the Local Perspective? In: Takala T (ed.) *Quality of Education in the Context of Culture in Developing Countries*. Tampere: Tampere University, 41—66.
- Hurst P (1985) Decentralization: Panacea or Red Herring? In: McLean M and Lauglo J (eds) *The Control of Education: international perspectives on the centralization–decentralization debate*. London: Heinemann Educational Books, 79—99.
- Hutchcroft PD (2001) Centralization and Decentralization in Administration and Politics: Assessing Territorial Dimensions of Authority and Power. *Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration* 14(1): 23—53.
- Integrated Regional Information Networks (2003) Zambia: Getting Girls Back into School. *IRIN Humanitarian News and Analysis – a project of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*. Available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/PrintReport.aspx?ReportId=47637> (Accessed 8 December 2009).
- Irabishohoje A et al. (2000) *Data Collection on Community Schools in Zambia 1999: Lusaka, Copperbelt, Eastern, Southern and Central Provinces*. Lusaka: Zambia Community Schools Secretariat.
- Isham J, Narayan D and Pritchett L (1995) Does Participation Improve Performance? Establishing Causality with Subjective Data. *World Bank Economic Review* 9(2): 175—200.
- Jimenez E and Sawada Y (1999) Do Community-Managed Schools Work? An Evaluation of El Salvador's EDUCO Program. *World Bank Economic Review* 13(3): 415—441.
- Johnson D (1990) *Parental Choice in Education*. London: Unwin Hyman.

- Kaluba LH (1988) Education and Community Self-help in Zambia. In: Bray M and Lillis K (eds) *Community Financing of Education: Issues Policy Implications in Less Developed Countries*. Oxford: Pergamon, 131–138.
- Kane E and Joice W (2000) *From Information to Action: Tools for Improving Community Participation in Education*. The Office of Sustainable Development Bureau for Africa, USAID.
- Katonga M (2001) *Will the Poor Go To School? Cost Sharing in Basic Education in Zambia: A Community Analysis*. Lusaka: Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection.
- Kelly M (1991) Education in a Declining Economy – The Case of Zambia 1975–1985. *EDI Development Policy Case Series, Analytical Case Studies* 8. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Kelly M (1999) *The Origins and Development of Education in Zambia: From Pre-colonial Times to 1996*. Lusaka: Image Publishers.
- King CS, Feltey KM and Susel BO (1998) The question of participation: Toward authentic public participation in public administration. *Public Administration Review* 58(4): 317–326.
- Kogan M (1986) *Education Accountability: an analytic overview*. London: Hutchinson.
- Kvale S (1996) *InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. California and London: SAGE.
- Lauglo J (1995) Forms of Decentralisation and Their Implications for Education. *Comparative Education* 31(1): 5–29.
- LeCompte MD (2000) Analyzing Qualitative Data. *Theory into Practice* 39(3): 146–154.
- Lexow J and Smith R (2001) *Decentralisation in the Education Sector: A Study of Progress in Zambia and Tanzania – A Special Study Commissioned by NORAD* (draft). Oslo: LINS.
- Lietz CA, Langer C and Furman R (2006) Establishing trustworthiness in social work research: Implications from a study regarding spirituality. *Qualitative Social Work* 5(4): 441–458.
- Situmbeko LC and Zulu JJ (2004) *Zambia: Condemned to debt: How the IMF and World Bank have undermined development*. London: World Development Movement.
- Lincoln YS and Guba EG (1985) *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Litvack J, Ahmad J and Bird R (1998) *Rethinking Decentralisation in Developing Countries*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Litvack J and Seddon J (eds) (1999) *Decentralization Briefing Notes*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Lo WYW (2010) Educational decentralization and its implications for governance: explaining the differences in the four Asian newly industrialized economies. *Compare* 40(1): 63–78.
- Lopate C et al. (1970) Decentralization and Community Participation in Public Education. *Review of Educational Research* 40(1): 135–150.
- McGinn N and Street S (1986) Educational Decentralization: Weak State or Strong State? *Comparative Education Review* 30(4): 471–490.
- McGinn N and Welsh T (1999) *Decentralization of education: why, when, what and how?* Paris: UNESCO/IIEP.
- MacLean M and Lauglo J (1985) Rationales for Decentralization and a Perspective from Organization Theory. In: Lauglo J, McLean M and Bray M (eds) *The Control of Education*. London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1–27.
- Maclure R (1994) Misplaced Assumptions of Decentralization and Participation in Rural Communities: primary school reform in Burkina Faso. *Comparative Education* 30(3):

239–254.

- Macwan'gi M and Ngwengwe A (2004) Effectiveness of District Health Boards in Interceding for the Community. *Institute of Economic and Social Research Discussion Paper Series* 19. Available at: <http://www.equinetafrica.org/bibl/docs/DIS19gov.pdf> (Accessed 10 December 2007).
- Mahmud S (2004) Citizen Participation in the Health Sector in Rural Bangladesh: Perceptions and Reality. *IDS Bulletin* 35(2): 11–18.
- Malekela G (1994) Parents' Attitudes and Strategies towards Education in Tanzania: Are They Changing over Time? In: Takala T (ed.) *Quality of Education in the Context of Culture in Developing Countries*. Tampere: Tampere University, 113–127.
- Malen B and Ogawa R (1988) Professional–patron influence on site-based governance councils: A confounding case study. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 110(4): 251–220.
- Manor J (1999) *The Political Economy of Democratic Decentralization*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Manor J (2004) User Committees: A Potentially Damaging Second Wave of Decentralisation? *European Journal of Development Research* 16(1): 192–231.
- Mansuri G and Rao V (2003) *Evaluating Community-Based and Community-Driven Development – A Critical Review of the Evidence*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Martin J (1996) School Empowerment: Giving Parents a Voice. *Local Government Policy Making* 22(3): 18–24.
- Masaiti District Education Board (2006) *Statistical Information*. Masaiti: DEB.
- Masaiti District Education Board (2007) *DEB Statistical Information*. Masaiti: DEB.
- Masaiti District Education Board (2007) *Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB)*. Masaiti: DEB.
- May T (2001) *Social Research – Issues, methods and process* (3rd ed). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Mbiti JS (1969) *African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann.
- Mbiti JS (1975) *Introduction to African Religion*. London: Heinemann.
- Merriam SB (1988) *Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Miles MB and Huberman AM (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook* (2nd ed). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Miller-Grandvaux Y and Yoder K (2002) A Literature Review of Community Schools in Africa. *Support for Analysis and Research in Africa Project, USAID*.
- Ministry of Education (1976) Statutory Instruments 45 of 1976 and 97 of 1981: Section 29. *Education (Parent–Teacher Association) Regulations*. Lusaka: MOE.
- Ministry of Education (1996a) *Educating Our Future*. Lusaka: MOE.
- Ministry of Education (1996b) *Education Boards Phase 1 Evaluation Report*. Lusaka: MOE.
- Ministry of Education (1999) *Zambia Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Programme: Logframe, Programme Implementation Plan and Programme Costs*. Lusaka: MOE.
- Ministry of Education (2001) *Policy and Guidelines for the Development of Community Schools in Zambia: Report of the Task Force*. Lusaka: MOE.
- Ministry of Education (2002) Circular No. 3, 15 March 2002. *Introduction of Free Education: ME/71/1/126*. Lusaka: MOE.
- Ministry of Education (2003a) *Education Strategic Plan 2003–2007*. Lusaka: MOE.
- Ministry of Education (2003b) *Report on the Accelerated Decentralisation of Educational Administration in the Northern and Western Provinces of Zambia*. Lusaka: MOE.
- Ministry of Education (2004a) *Annual Report 2004*. Lusaka: MOE.

- Ministry of Education (2004b) *Zambia - Basic Education Subsector Investment Programme Completion Report: Challenges of Taking BESSIP to the Classroom – Towards Effective Partnerships in Basic Education*. Lusaka: MOE.
- Ministry of Education (2004c) *National Annual Work Plan 2004*. Lusaka: MOE.
- Ministry of Education (2005) *Technical Annual Report 2005*. Lusaka: MOE.
- Ministry of Education (2006a) *Educational Statistical Bulletin*. Lusaka: MOE.
- Ministry of Education (2006b) *Zambia's National Assessment Survey Report 2006: Learning Achievement at the Middle Basic Level*. Lusaka: MOE.
- Ministry of Education (2007a) *2008 Budget Preparation Guidelines*. Lusaka: MOE.
- Ministry of Education (2007b) *Education Sector National Implementation Framework 2008–2010*. Lusaka: MOE.
- Ministry of Education (2007c) *Operational Guidelines for Community Schools*. Lusaka: MOE.
- Ministry of Education (2007e) *The Ministry of Education Strategic Framework for Community Schools*. Lusaka: MOE.
- Ministry of Education (2007f) *Sector Plan Zambia – Independent Review 2006*. Lusaka: MOE.
- Ministry of Education Restructuring and Decentralisation Committee (1997) *Institutional Roles, Functions and Relationships: Decentralisation of the Education System and Establishment of Education Boards*. Lusaka: MOERDC.
- Ministry of Education Restructuring and Decentralisation Committee (2001) *Report on the Orientation of the Western Province Education Boards Task Force from 2nd to 5th April 2001*. Lusaka: MOERDC.
- Ministry of Local Government and Housing (2010) *Constituency Development Fund Guidelines*. Lusaka: MLGH.
- Mohan G and Stokke K (2000) Participatory Development and Empowerment: the Dangers of Localism. *Third World Quarterly* 21(2): 247–268.
- Mohan G and Hickey S (eds) (2004) *Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation? Exploring New Approaches to Participation in Development*. London: Zed Books.
- Mwansa AC et al. (2004) *Free Basic Education Policy Implementation Assessment*. Lusaka: Ministry of Education.
- Mvula KV (2007) The Effects of Education Boards on the Operation of Basic Schools in Zambia: A Case of Selected District Education Boards in the Copperbelt Province. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Zambia, Lusaka.
- Naidoo J and Kong P (2003) Improving Education Management in the Context of Decentralization in Africa. *Association for the Development of Education in Africa*. Biennial meeting background paper.
- Narayan D (1995) The Contribution of People's Participation: Evidence from 121 Rural Water Supply Projects. *ESD Occasional Paper Series* 1. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Nettl B (1956) Family Relationships in Lamba Tales. *Anthropological Quarterly* 29(1): 24–30.
- Ngulube N (1997) *Culture and Development*. Lusaka: Zambia Educational Publishing.
- Nkole JB, Sikazwe MN and Simbeya PM (2007) Teaching Community Studies. In: *Zambian Basic Education*. Lusaka: Macmillan.
- Oakley P et al. (1991) *Projects with people: the practice of participation in rural development*. Geneva: International Labour Organisation.
- Oates W (1972) *Fiscal Federalism*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- O'Connor M (1994) *Giving Parents a Voice: Parental involvement in education policy making*. London: Research and Information on State Education.
- Okafor FC (1974) *Africa at the crossroads: A philosophical approach to education*. New York: Vantage Press.

- Olowu D (2001) Decentralization Policies and Practices under Structural Adjustment and Democratization in Africa. *Democracy, Governance and Human Rights Programme Paper 4*. Nagoya, Japan: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.
- Olowu D and Smoke P (1992) Determinants of Success in African Local Governments: an Overview. *Public Administration and Development* 12(1): 1–17.
- Onwubiko OA (1991) *African Thought, Religion and Culture*. Enugu: SNAAP Press.
- Ostrom E, Schroeder L and Wynne S (1993) *Institutional Incentives and Sustainable Development: Infrastructure Policies in Perspective*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Oxford Policy Management (2002) *Unit Costs of Education in Zambia – Final Report*. Oxford: Oxford Policy Management.
- Palme M (1999) Cultural Ambiguity and the Primary School Teacher: Lessons from Rural Mozambique. In: Leach FE and Little AW (eds) *Education, Cultures and Economics: Dilemmas for Development*. London: Falmer Press, 261–282.
- Parry TR (1997) Achieving Balance in Decentralization: A Case Study of Education Decentralization in Chile. *World Development* 24(2): 211–225.
- Pateman T (1977) *Accountability, Values and Schooling*. An invited contribution to a UK Social Science Research Council seminar on accountability in education in response to then Prime Minister James Callaghan's 1976 call for a 'Great Debate' on education. Available at: www.selectedworks.co.uk/accountabilityeducationh.html (Accessed 14 February 2010).
- Patrinos HA and LaRocque N (2007) *Enhancing Accountability in Schools: What Can Choice and Contracting Contribute?* Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Patton MQ (2002) *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Paul S (1987) Community Participation in Development Projects: The World Bank Experience. *World Bank Discussion Papers*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Petrauskis C and Nkunya S (2006) How Free is Free Education? The Cost of Education in Lusaka (policy brief). Lusaka: *Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection*.
- Posner D N (2007) Regime Change and Ethnic Cleavages in Africa. *Comparative Political Studies* 40(11): 1302–1327.
- Prauda J (1993) Educational Decentralization in Latin America: Lessons Learned. *International Journal of Educational Development* 13(3): 253–264.
- Pretty J (1995) Participatory learning for sustainable agriculture. *World Development* 23(8): 1247–1263.
- Prud'homme R (1995) The Dangers of Decentralization. *The World Bank Research Observer* 10(2): 201–220.
- Pryor J (2005) Can Community Participation Mobilise Social Capital for Improvement of Rural Schooling? A Case Study from Ghana. *Compare* 35(2): 193–203.
- Pryor J and Akwesi C (1998) Assessment in Ghana and England: putting reform to the test of practice. *Compare* 28(3): 263–275.
- Putnam R (1993) *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Ranson S (1986) Towards a Political Theory of Public Accountability in Education. *Local Government Studies* 12(4): 77–98.
- Ranson S (2003) Public Accountability in the Age of Neo-liberal Governance. *Journal of Education Policy* 18(5): 459–480.
- Ranson S, Martin J et al. (1999) The New Management and Governance of Education. In: Stoker G (ed.) *The New Management of British Local Governance*. London: Macmillan, 97–112.
- Reimers D (1997) The Role of NGOs in Promoting Educational Innovation: A Case Study in

- Latin America. In: Lynch J, Modgil C and Modgil S (eds) *Non-formal and Non-governmental Approaches – Education and Development: Tradition and Innovation 4*. London: Cassell, 33–44.
- Riddell A (2002) *Sector-Wide Approaches in Education: Issues for Donor Agencies Arising from Case Studies of Zambia and Mozambique*. International Working Group on Education report. Paris: UNESCO.
- Rivarola M and Fuller B (1999) Nicaragua's Experiment to Decentralize Schools: Contrasting Views of Parents, Teachers and Directors. *Comparative Education Review* 43(4): 489–521.
- Robinson M (2007) Does Decentralisation Improve Equity and Efficiency in Public Service Delivery Provision? *IDS Bulletin* 38(1): 7–17.
- Romeo LG (2003) The Role of External Assistance in Supporting Decentralisation Reform. *Public Administration and Development* 23: 89–96.
- Rondinelli DA (1983) Implementing decentralization programs in Asia: a comparative analysis. *Public Administration and Development* 3(3): 181–207.
- Rondinelli DA, McCullough J and Johnson R (1989) Analyzing decentralization policies in developing countries: a political-economy framework. *Development and Change* 20(1): 57–87.
- Rondinelli DA and Nellis JR (1986) Assessing decentralization policies in developing countries: the case for cautious optimism. *Development Policy Review* 4(1): 3–23.
- Rose P (2002) Cost-sharing in Malawian Primary Schooling: from the Washington to the Post-Washington Consensus. Unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Sussex, Sussex.
- Rose P (2003) Community Participation in School Policy and Practice in Malawi: balancing local knowledge, national policies and international agency priorities. *Compare* 33(1): 47–64.
- Rose P (2005) Decentralisation and Privatisation in Malawi – Serving the Needs of the Poor? *Compare* 35(2): 153–165.
- Rose P (2006) Collaborating in Education for All? Experiences of Government Support for Non-State Provision of Basic Education in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. *Public Administration and Development* 26: 219–229.
- Saito F (2003) *Decentralization and Development Partnerships: Lessons from Uganda*. Tokyo: Springer.
- Salisbury D and Tooley J (eds) (2005) *What America Can Learn From School Choice in Other Countries*. Washington, DC: Cato Institute.
- Sallis J (1988) *Schools, Parents and Governors*. London: Routledge.
- Samoff J (1990) Decentralisation: the Politics of Interventionism. *Development and Change* 21: 513–530.
- Sasaoka Y and Nishimura M (2010) Does Universal Primary Education Policy Weaken Decentralisation? – Participation and Accountability Frameworks in East Africa. *Compare* 40(1): 79–95.
- Sawada Y (2000) Community Participation, Teacher Effort, and Educational Outcome: The Case of El Salvador's EDUCO Program (working paper). *William Davidson Institute* 307: 1–41.
- Sayed Y (1999) Discourses of the Policy of Educational Decentralisation in South Africa since 1994: An Examination of the South African Schools Act [1][2]. *Compare* 29(2):141–150.
- Sayed Y (2002) Democratising Education in a Decentralised System: South African Policy and Practice. *Compare* 32(1): 35–46.
- Sayed Y and Soudien C (2003) Reframing education exclusion and inclusion discourses:

- limits and possibilities. *IDS Bulletin* 34(1): 9–11.
- Sayed Y and Soudien C (2005) Decentralisation and the construction of inclusion education policy in South Africa. *Compare* 35(2): 115–125.
- Serpell R (1993) *The significance of schooling: life-journeys in an African society*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Shaeffer S (1992) Collaborating for Educational Change: The Role of Parents and the Community in School Improvement. *International Journal of Educational Development* 12(4): 277–295.
- Shaeffer S (1994) *Participation for educational change: a synthesis of experience*. Paris: UNESCO/IIEP.
- Sharon G, Ball SJ and Bowe R (1995) *Markets, choice, and equity in education*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Shizha E and Abdi AA (2006) Democratizing Education in Zambia: Sociohistorical Analyses. In: Abdi AA et al. (eds) *African Education and Globalization: Critical Perspectives*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 241–258.
- Shoraku A (2008) Educational Movement toward School-based Management in East Asia, Cambodia, Indonesia and Thailand (Background paper). *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2009*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Siegel B (1988) Bomas, Missions and Mines: The Making of Centers in the Zambian Copperbelt. *African Studies Review* 31(3): 61–84.
- Siegel B (1989) The 'Wild' and 'Lazy' Lamba: Ethnic Stereotypes in the Central African Copperbelt. In: Vail L (ed.) *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 350–371.
- Sikwibele A (2002) *Policy Framework of Zambia Community Schools Secretariat in Light of the Free Education Policy* (draft report). ZCSS.
- Simatele DM (2007) *Kwacha ngwee: a snapshot of Zambia's contemporary migration patterns*. African Migration workshop, 18–21 September 2007 Accra, Ghana. Available at: www.imi.ox.ac.uk/pdfs/D%20Simatele%20Ghana%2007.pdf (Accessed 21 March 2009).
- Smoke P (2003) Decentralisation in Africa: Goals, Dimensions, Myths and Challenges. *Public Administration and Development* 23(1): 7–16.
- Spivak G (1992) The Politics of Translation. In: Barrett M and Phillips A (eds) *Destabilizing Theory: Contemporary Feminist Debates*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 177–200.
- Stake RE (1995) *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stewart J (1984) The Role of Information in Public Accountability. In: Hopwood A and Tomkins C (eds) *Issues in Public Sector Accounting*. Oxford: Philip Allen, 13–34.
- Suzuki I (2002) Parental Participation and Accountability in Primary Schools in Uganda. *Compare* 32(2): 243–259.
- Suzuki I (2004) Parental Participation in Primary School Governance in Uganda. Unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Sussex, Sussex.
- Taylor M (1996) Between public and private: accountability in voluntary organizations. *Policy and Politics* 24(1): 57–72.
- Taylor M (2007) Community Participation in the Real World: Opportunities and Pitfalls in New Governance Spaces. *Urban Studies* 44(2): 297–317.
- Taylor P (2004) How can participatory processes of curriculum development impact on the quality of teaching and learning in developing countries? (Background paper) *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2004*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Tembon M (1999) Educational Financing Strategies in Developing Countries: The Case of Cameroon and Uganda. In: Leach FE and Little AW (eds) *Education, Cultures and Economics: Dilemmas for Development*. New York: Falmer Press, 203–224.

- Temple B (2002) Crossed wires: Interpreters, translators and bilingual workers in cross-language research. *Qualitative Health Research* 12(6): 844–854.
- Temple B and Young A (2004) Qualitative research and translation dilemmas. *Qualitative Research* 4(2): 161–178.
- Therkildsen O (1993) Successful African local government: Some methodological and conceptual issues. *Public Administration and Development* 13(5): 501–505.
- Therkildsen O (2000) Contextual issues in decentralization of primary education in Tanzania. *International Journal of Educational Development* 20(5): 407–421.
- Thompson J B (1991) (editor's introduction) In: Thompson JB (ed.) *Language and symbolic power*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1–31.
- Tshireletso L (1997) They are the Government's Children – School and Community Relations in a Remote Area Dweller (Basarwa) Settlement in Kweneng District, Botswana. *International Journal of Educational Development* 17(2): 173–188.
- Turner M and Hulme D (1997) *Governance, administration and development: making the state work*. West Harford, CT: Kumarian Press.
- Twinn S (1997) An exploratory study examining the influence of translation on the validity and reliability of qualitative data in nursing research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 26: 418–423.
- UNDP (2007) Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World. *Human Development Report 2007/08*. New York: UNDP.
- UNESCO (2006) *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007*. Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO (2008) Overcoming inequality – why governance matters. *Education for All Global Monitoring Report*. Paris: UNESCO.
- UNAIDS (2008) *Report on the global AIDS epidemic*. New York: UNAIDS.
- Verhoef H and Michael C (1997) Studying morality within the African context. *Journal of Moral Education* 26: 389–407.
- Wade R (1990) *Governing the Market: Economic Theory and the Role of Government in East Asian Industrialization*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Watt P (2001) Community Support for Basic Education in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Africa region human development working paper series*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Weiler HN (1990) Comparative Perspectives on Education Decentralization: An Exercise in Contradiction? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 12(4): 433–488.
- Whitty G et al. (eds) (1998) *Devolution and Choice in Education: The School, the State and the Market*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- World Bank (1998) Rethinking Decentralization in Developing Countries. *Sector Studies Series*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank (1999) *Education Sector Strategy*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank (2003) *The World Development Report 2004*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank (2006) *Zambia Education Sector Public Expenditure Review*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank (2007) *What is School-Based Management?* Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank (2008) *Country Assistance Strategy for The Republic Of Zambia*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank (2010) *World Development Indicators 2010*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Wright S and Nelson N (eds) (1995) *Power and Participatory Development: Theory and Practice*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.
- Yat W and Lo W (2010) Educational Decentralization and Its Implications for Governance: Explaining the Differences in the Four Asian Newly Industrialized Economies. *Compare* 40(1): 63–78.
- Yin RK (1994) *Case Study Research – Design and Methods* (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA:

Sage.

- Zafeirakou A (2007) Teacher policies for underserved populations: A synthesis of lessons learned and best practices (background paper). *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2008*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Zambia Community Schools Secretariat (2005) *Establishment and Operational Guidelines*. Zone, District and Provincial Community Schools Committee. Lusaka: ZCSS.
- Zambia Government of (1993) *The Public Sector Reform Programme (PSRP)*. Cabinet Office. Lusaka.
- Zambia Government of (1995) *Statutory Instruments 162, 163 and 164*. The Education Act (Laws, Volume V, Cap. 234). Lusaka: District Education Boards.
- Zambia Government of (1996) *The Identification Mission Group Report 20th August to 13th September 1996*. Integrated Education Sector Investment Programme. Lusaka: ESIP Secretariat.
- Zambia Government of (1999) *Strategy and Action Plan 2000–2002*. Public Service Reform Programme 2000. Lusaka.
- Zambia Government of (2002) *The National Decentralisation Policy: “Towards Empowering the People”*. Lusaka: Office of the President.
- Zambia Government of (2004) *Educational Statistical Bulletin*. Lusaka,
- Zambia Government of (2006a) *Five Year National Development Plan*. Lusaka.
- Zambia Government of (2006b) *Masaiti District Development Plan 2006–2010*. Masaiti.

APPENDIX 3-1**List of the Rules Head Teachers of Basic Schools Must Observe under Free Education Policy**

Circular No. 3, 2000 (15 March 2002)

Appendix 1 (INTRODUCTION TO FREE EDUCATION)

In order for the free education policy to work, it has become necessary for you to direct all Heads of Schools to stop charging pupils at grade 1 – 7 any kind of fees with immediate effect. Accordingly, the following must be observed by all Heads of basic schools:

- (i) Not pupils at grade 1 – 7 should be levied any user fees including PTA levies. Instead, PTAs may raise funds for specific school projects through raffles and other legitimate means after getting clearance from the Provincial Education Officer.
- (ii) No pupils should be denied enrolment or excluded from school for failure to contribute to PTA fundraising activities.
- (iii) Enrolment of pupils shall be unconditional and should not be linked to contributions of items such as cement, reams of paper, slashes etc.
- (iv) School uniform is not compulsory and no pupil should therefore be prevented from attending school on account of failure to obtain it. Schools that choose to continue with the uniform requirement should not commercialize its acquisition by turning it into a fund-raising venture. Uniform should be plain and simple and parents must be allowed to get it from the cheapest source.
- (v) Teachers should note that remedial teaching is part of their professional responsibility and should therefore not charge children for extra tuition undertaken within the schools.

Source: MOE (2002).

APPENDIX 3-2

Composition of Governance Body of the District Education Board (DEB) (as defined in the Principles of Education Boards Governance and Management Manual (EBS 2005))

- (i) The District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) will request the District/Municipal/City Council at the full council meeting to select 1 local Councillor and propose 1 resident of the district other than a councillor to represent the local community on the Board;
- (ii) The DEBS will request parents, through the Parent-Teacher Associations, to select 3 residents of the District who are not Councillors to represent the local community on the Board;
- (iii) Where there is only one (grant) aided proprietor, he/she becomes a member of the board but where there are several of them the DEBS will write to proprietors of aided schools requesting them for a nomination of one person;
- (iv) The DEBS will write to the Basic and High School Head Teachers' Associations and to School for Continuing Education Advisory Committees, where they exist, requesting each one of them to elect its own candidate to sit on the Board;
- (v) The DEBS will convene a general PTA meeting at which one PTA representative will be elected;
- (vi) The District Teachers' Union will nominate three representatives to be members of the Board.

Source: EBS (2005) p21.

APPENDIX 3-3**Composition of the District Education Management Team
(as Stipulated in Manual EBS 2005)**

- District Education Board Secretary
- District Education Standards Officer
- Three Education Standards Officers
- Accountant
- Human Resources Officer
- Planning Officer
- One representative of Head teachers

Source: EBS (2005), p23.

APPENDIX 3-4

PTA Participation in the Formulation of the AWPB Stipulated in the Guideline

Planning and Budgeting at Basic School Level

At the basic school level, the school, civil society, parents, and members of the wider community should engage in planning and budgeting for such aspects as the organisation of the teaching/learning process and community participation. Basic education is the first level of planning.

This involves individual schools, as implementing institutions, identifying activities for the following year that fall within the National Implementation Framework (NIF). It is expected that such input be made by school staff and parent teacher associations (PTAs) into the DEB AWPB.

Process

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Stage 1 (early June): | The head teacher and PTA secretariat should compile an assessment or review of the school's performance during the previous six months. This should include income and expenditure, enrolment, and progression and completion rates analysed according to gender, grade, those with special education needs, teacher movement, and examination results. |
| Stage 2 (mid-June): | The PTA should call a one-day meeting of parents and other local stakeholders to discuss the review. As well as matters that have been identified during the review, attendees should also be asked for suggestions with regard to areas for improvement. The agenda should cover all aspects of education provision, with particular focus on access, progression, infrastructure needs, and community involvement/commitment. An attempt to identify capital expenditure for the forthcoming year in terms of infrastructure development and education material provision should also be made at this stage. |
| Stage 3: | The resolutions reached at this meeting constitute major input at DEB planning level. It is suggested that in addition to the head teacher, the chairperson of the PTA should form part of the school level committee represented at the district planning meeting. |

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the head teacher of each school – in conjunction with the PTA secretariat – to draw up a draft AWPB covering relevant aspects of education provision and management.

Source: EBS (2004*b*), p24.

APPENDIX 3-5

Steps in Developing A Localised Curriculum (as defined in the Guidelines for the Development of the Localised Curriculum in Zambia (CDC 2005))

STEPS IN DEVELOPING A LOCALISED CURRICULUM

The procedure below is a recommendation, but it can be different from school to school. The important thing is that the formulation of the Localised Curriculum should be preceded by a thorough consultation between the school and the community.

1. Sensitisation

- The aim of this stage is to sensitise stakeholders on the need and importance of the Localised Curriculum for them to understand it and support it.
- Sensitisation will be conducted by the Curriculum Development Centre, Standards Officers and the Teacher Education Department (TED), in line with “Educating Our Future” policy document and the Teacher’s Curriculum Manual. (See Teachers’ Curriculum Manual Pages 25 – Steps 1, 2, 3.)

2. Needs Assessment

This is to identify types of common economic, social and cultural activities that take place in a local community in order to integrate them in the school curriculum and foster education for community development. This may be done through the following methods.

- Interviews of stakeholders, Parent Teachers Association (PTA), business people, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), teachers, pupils, and Education Board members etc.
- Group discussions
- Visits
- Observations
- Meetings

N.B. A Needs Assessment Report will be produced by teachers and parents.

3. Planning Stage

- This will involve careful selection and putting together of activities from a given component.
- Formulating specific learning outcomes for each activity.
- Arranging the activities in a logical order of learnable expected outcomes.

4. Approval

The plan will have to be approved by the stakeholders to determine whether the activities are suitable, feasible and relevant to the needs of the learners and the community.

5. Development Process

At this stage there will be need to organise resources (human, financial, time and

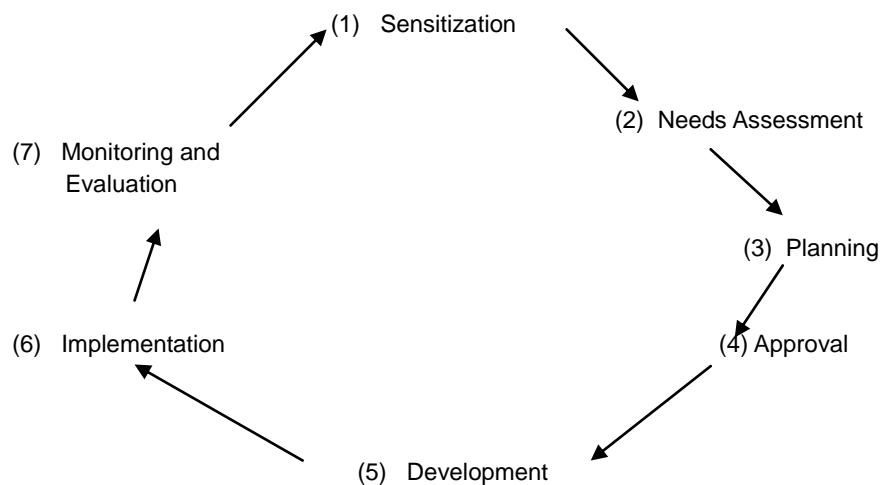
material) and integrate comments and views from stakeholders and finalise the local curriculum with copies distributed to all stakeholders for reference.

6. Implementation

The teachers should implement the localised curriculum in their work and integrate it in the school based continuous assessment.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring will be carried out by the Curriculum Development Centre and Standards Officers at both district and national levels. Monitoring and evaluation will involve observing the learning processes to see whether the planned activities are being effected. The local community, school managers and teachers will also monitor the achievement of learning outcomes by the learners in their local areas.



The curriculum can be localized in many ways, such as:

- **Making a choice of the initial language** to be used.
- **Making a choice of language for providing clarifications:** Even where the medium of instruction is English, the teacher may use a familiar language now and then in order to clarify, explain and make sure that pupils have understood and learned.
- **Integrating local cultural activities and traditions** such as traditions, initiation ceremonies and linking them to all learning areas and several cross-cutting issues.
- **Improving local methods** of building, fishing, growing food, preparing meals, moulding bricks, burning charcoal, making and using tools and linking them to all learning areas and several cross-cutting issues.
- **Conducting field visits:** visiting local companies and business houses with pupils and linking them to all learning areas and several cross-cutting issues.
- **Studying the local environment** and linking this to all learning areas.
- **Deciding on the length of a lesson:** Due to the fact that children have a limited attention span, time allocated for teaching, learning and assessment may be 30 minutes or more.
- **The school making its own selection of preferred books:** Schools may be required to select books from the list of approved and recommended books from the Ministry of Education.
- **Inviting parents and other local representatives with skills to the school** to give presentations and demonstrations on relevant topics.
- **Producing teaching and learning resources locally,** using teachers and pupils' own ideas and organising help for this from the nearest Resource Centre.

- **Organising activities on cross-curricular themes around local health problems**, focusing their causes, cures and prevention. This can be linked to all learning areas.
- **Knowing the local recipes and improve upon them** and linking them to all learning areas.
- **Explaining meaningful ideas**, where possible, through familiar examples.
- **Discussing gender issues**, linking them to the attitudes and behavioural patterns of people in the immediate environment.

Source: CDC (2005).

APPENDIX 4-1

Profiles of the Three Case Study Government Basic Schools and the Three Case Study Community Schools

Characteristics of Chulu Basic School

Year of establishment	1957	
Grades offered	1–9	
Distance from DEB	0.5 km	
Facilities	9 classrooms; 15 toilets; 1 storeroom; 8 teacher's houses; electricity: in process of being electrified by means of donor funding; 1 teacher's resource centre, school farm; 1 piggery; 1 school tuck shop; 1 borehole	
No. of pupils	Grades 1–7 2004: 659 (M 333; F 326) (Year 2005) 636 (M 332; F 304) (Year 2006) 620 (M 341; F 279) (Year 2007) 625 (M 329; F 296) (Year 2008) 584 (M 286; F 298)	Grades 8–9 (Year 2004) 231 (M 130; F 101) (Year 2005) 240 (M 131; F 109) (Year 2006) 189 (M 97; F 92) (Year 2007) 170 (M 89; F 81) (Year 2008) 197 (M 94; F 103)
Pass rate in grade 7 and grade 9 national examinations	2006: grade 7 – 36% (M 26%; F 56%); grade 9 – 52% (M 58%; F 46%) (Year 2007) grade 7: 60% (M 56%; F 64%), grade 9: 57% (M 58%; F 56%)	
No. of teachers	(Year 2004) 25 (M 12; F 13) (Year 2005) 24 (M 12; F 12) (Year 2006) 19 (M 11; F 8) (Year 2007) 20 (M 12; F 8) (Year 2008) 30 (M 14; F 16)	
Teachers' qualifications and ethnicity (2008)	Diploma: 7; primary school teaching certificate: 20; student teachers with teaching certificate: 2; volunteer teacher awaiting placement on government payroll: 1 Lamba: 5; non-Lamba: 25	

Source: the author (compiled from field data).

Characteristics of Lukasi Basic School

Year of establishment	1967	
Grades offered	1–9	
Distance from DEB	72 km	
Facilities	8 classrooms; 8 toilets; 11 teacher's houses; electricity: not supplied to classrooms; 1 teacher's resource centre; 1 borehole	
No. of pupils	Grades 1–7 (Year 2004) 695 (M 346; F 349) (Year 2005) 578 (M 297; F 281) (Year 2006) 685 (M 348; F 337) (Year 2007) 746 (M 367; F 379) (Year 2008) 680 (M 377; F 303)	Grades 8–9 (Year 2004) 134 (M 86; F 48) (Year 2005) 178 (M 84; F 94) (Year 2006) 156 (M 79; F 77) (Year 2007) 168 (M 83; F 85) (Year 2008) 221 (M 123; F 98)

Pass rate in grade 7 and grade 9 national examinations	(Year 2006) grade 7 exam: 81% (M 78%: F 84%) grade 9 exam: 58 % (M 60%: F 54%) (Year 2007) grade 7 exam: 74 % (M 76%: F 72 %) grade 9 exam: 57% (M 59%: F 55%)
No. of teachers	(Year 2004) 14 (M5: F 9) (Year 2005) 18 (M 7: F 11) (Year 2006) 15 (M 7: F 8) (Year 2007) 22 (M12: F 10) (Year 2008) 22 (M 10: F 12)
Teachers' qualifications and ethnicity (2008)	Advanced diploma: 1; diploma: 5; primary school teaching certificate: 16 Lamba: 1; non-Lamba: 21

Source: the author (compiled from field data).

Characteristics of Mutande Basic School

Year of establishment	1944	
Grades offered	1–8 (grade 8 added in 2008)	
Distance from DEB	15 km	
Facilities	6 classrooms; 13 toilets; 6 teacher's houses (1 temporary); electricity: not supplied to classrooms; 1 borehole	
No. of pupils	Grades 1–7 (Year 2004) 439 (M 228: F 211) (Year 2005) 436 (M 216: F 220) (Year 2006) 518 (M 258: F 260) (Year 2007) 517 (M 269 : F 248) (Year 2008) 495 (M 236: F 259)	Grades 8–9 (Year 2004) 0 (Year 2005) 0 (Year 2006) 0 (Year 2007) 0 (Year 2008) 35 (M 20: F 15)
Pass rate in grade 7 and grade 9 national examinations	(Year 2006) grade 7 exam: 78% (gender disaggregated data not available) (Year 2007) grade 7 exam: 60 % (gender disaggregated data not available)	
No. of teachers	(Year 2004) 9 (M 7: F 2) (Year 2005) 6 (M 6: F 0) (Year 2006) 6 (M 6: F 0) (Year 2007) 10 (M 7: F 3) (Year 2008) 12 (M 7: F 5)	
Teachers' qualifications and ethnicity (2008)	Diploma: 0; primary school teaching certificate: 12 Lamba: 2; non-Lamba: 10	

Source: the author (compiled from field data).

Characteristics of Fifugo Community School

Year of establishment	1994	
Grades offered	1–7 (up to grade 6 only until 2006)	
Distance from DEB	21 km	
Facilities	5 classrooms under construction made of fired brick and corrugated iron sheet; 1 classroom made of wood with a straw thatch roof; no teacher's houses; 12 toilets; school farm; 1 borehole; no electricity supply	
No. of pupils	Grades 1–7 (Year 2001) 111 (M 52: F 59) (Year 2002) 125 (M 58: F 67) (Year 2003) 130 (M 60: F 70) (Year 2004) 131 (M 60 : F 71) (Year 2005) 138 (M 70: F 68) (Year 2006) 122 (M 60: F 62) (Year 2007) 206 (M 90 : F 106) (Year 2008) 216 (M 101: F 115)	Grades 8–9 (Year 2004) 0 (Year 2005) 0 (Year 2006) 0 (Year 2007) 0 (Year 2008) 0
Pass rate in grade 7 and grade 9 national examinations	(Year 2006) 0% (no grade 7 pupils enrolled) (Year 2007) grade 7 exam: 85 % (M 81 %: F 100%)	
No. of teachers	(Year 2004) 4 (M 2: F 2) (Year 2005) 3 (M 2: F 1) (Year 2006) 2 (M 2: F 0) (Year 2007) 6 (M 4: F 2) (Year 2008) 7 (M 5: F 2)	
Teachers' qualifications and ethnicity (2008)	Diploma on government payroll: 1; grade 12: 4; grade 9: 2 Lamba: 2, non-Lamba: 4	

Source: the author (compiled from field data).

Characteristics of Pulofa Community School

Year of establishment	2000	
Grades offered	1–7 (up to grade 6 only until 2006)	
Distance from DEB	15 km	
Facilities	2 classrooms under construction made of fired brick and corrugated iron sheet; 2 classrooms made of unfired brick and half straw thatch, half corrugated iron roof; 1 classroom hut made of bamboo with a straw thatch roof; 2 pit latrines made of mud and grass; no teacher's houses; no borehole; no electricity supply	
No. of pupils	Grades 1–7 (Year 2001) 20 (M 9: F 11) (Year 2002) 46 (M 21: F 25) (Year 2003) 94 (M 44: F 50) (Year 2004) 117 (M 54 : F 63) (Year 2005) 145 (M 65: F 80) (Year 2006) 160 (M 80: F 80) (Year 2007) 181 (M 76 : F 105) (Year 2008) 185 (M 74: F 111)	Grades 8–9 (Year 2004) 0 (Year 2005) 0 (Year 2006) 0 (Year 2007) 0 (Year 2008) 0

Pass rate in grade 7 and grade 9 national examinations	(Year 2006) 0% (no grade 7 pupils enrolled) (Year 2007) grade 7 exam: 66 % (gender disaggregated data not available)
No. of teachers	(Year 2004) 6 (M 4: F 2) (Year 2005) 6 (M 4: F 2) (Year 2006) 7 (M 5: F 2) (Year 2007) 7 (M 6: F 1) (Year 2008) 8 (M 6: F 2)
Teachers' qualifications and ethnicity (2008)	Primary school teaching certificate on government payroll: 1; grade 12: 5; grade 11: 1; grade 9: 1 Lamba: 3; non-Lamba: 5

Source: the author (compiled from field data).

Characteristics of Nkambe Community School

Year of establishment	2000	
Grades offered	1–4 (up to grade 3 only until 2006)	
Distance from DEB	35 km	
Facilities	No classroom (the one classroom building made of unfired mud brick collapsed) – church used as a temporary classroom; no toilets; 1 teacher's house; no borehole; no electricity supply	
No. of pupils	Grades 1–7 (Year 2003 backwards data not available) (Year 2004) 68 (M 40: F 28) (Year 2005) 85 (M 50: F 35) (Year 2006) 98 (M 51: F 47) (Year 2007) 132 (M 64: F 68) (Year 2008) 95 (M 42: F 53)	Grades 8–9 (Year 2004) 0 (Year 2005) 0 (Year 2006) 0 (Year 2007) 0 (Year 2008) 0
Pass rate in grade 7 and grade 9 national examinations	0% (No grade 7 pupils enrolled)	
No. of teachers	(Year 2004) 2 (M 2: F 0) (Year 2005) 3 (M 2: F 1) (Year 2006) 3 (M 2: F 1) (Year 2007) 1 (M 1: F 0) (Year 2008) 1 (M 1: F 0)	
Teachers' qualifications and ethnicity (2008)	Grade 9: 1 Lamba: 0; non-Lamba: 1	

Source: the author (compiled from field data).

APPENDIX 5-1

List of Interviewees and their Reference Codes

MOE/MLGH HQ and the Cabinet Office

Code	Designation	Date
ME1	Senior Officer, EBS, MOE	24/09/07 05/10/07
ME2	Officer, EBS, MOE	24/01/08
ME3	Principle Planning Officer, MOE	24/01/08
ME4	Officer, Planning Department, MOE	27/01/08
ME5	Senior Buildings Officer, MOE	20/09/07
ME6	Senior Accountant, MOE	31/01/08
ME7	Assistant Director of Research, MOE	28/01/08
ME8	Officer, Curriculum Development Centre, MOE	25/01/08
ML	Officer, Decentralisation Secretariat, MLGH	27/09/07
CO	Officer, the Office of the Permanent Secretary, Cabinet Office	27/09/07

Donors and NGOs

Code	Designation	Date
D	Senior Education Sector Advisor to the MOE	03/09/07
U1	Senior Technical Advisor, USAID	25/01/08
U2	Programme Officer, USAID	10/04/08
U3	Project Officer, USAID, the Copperbelt	07/04/07
V	Education Advisor, VVOB	31/01/08
Z	Programme Coordinator, Zambia Open Community Schools	01/02/08
C1	Programme Officer, Care International, the Copperbelt	15/02/08
C2	Officer, Care International, Masaiti District	27/06/08

Provincial Education Office

Code	Designation	Date
PEO	Provincial Education Officer	15/10/07 07/04/07
FPP	Former Focal Point Person for Community Schools in the Copperbelt	09/02/08

District Education Board

Management Team Members		
Code	Designation	Date
DEBS	District Education Board Secretary	22/10/07 07/02/08 26/03/07
DESO	District Education Standards Officer	22/02/08 04/04/08
DM1	District Planning Officer	21/01/08
DM2	District Human Resources Officer	06/11/07 04/02/08
DM3	District Buildings Officer	21/01/08

DM4	District Statistics Officer	07/02/08
DM5	District Accountant	06/11/07 09/02/08
Governance Body Members		
DG1	Board Chairperson	07/11/07
DG2	Governance Body Member (Community representative)	26/10/07
DG3	Governance Body Member (Community representative)	26/10/07 22/02/08
DG4	Governance Body Member (Community representative)	26/10/07 01/06/08
DG5	Governance Body Member (Community representative)	19/10/07
DG6	Governance Body Member (Community representative)	22/02/08
DG7	Governance Body Member (District Basic School Head Teacher's Association Chairperson)	22/10/07 08/02/08
DG8	Governance Body Member (Teacher's Representative)	29/10/07
DG9	Governance Body Member (Teacher's Union Representative)	19/10/07
DG10	Governance Body Member (Teacher's Union Representative)	19/10/07
DG11	Governance Body Member (Private Schools Representative)	26/10/07
DG12	Governance Body Member (Representative of Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare)	26/10/07
DG13	Governance Body Member (PTA Representative/District PTA Council Chairperson)	23/11/07

Government Basic Schools

Chulu Basic School		
Code	Designation	Date
C/H	Head Teacher	22/10/07 29/10/07 08/02/08 04/06/08
C/D	Deputy Head Teacher	04/06/08
C/T1	Senior Teacher	22/10/07 26/06/08
C/T2	Teacher	06/11/07
C/T3	Teacher	06/11/07
C/T4	Teacher	04/06/08
C/T5	Teacher	15/02/08
C/T6	Teacher	06/11/07
C/T7	Teacher	06/11/07
C/T8	Teacher	06/11/07
C/T9	Teacher	06/11/07
C/E1	PTA Chairman	23/11/07
C/E2	PTA Vice Chairman	28/03/08
C/E3	PTA Executive Member/Project Committee Chairperson	29/10/07 23/11/07
C/E4	PTA Executive Member	23/11/07
C/E5	PTA Executive Member	22/10/07 23/11/07 05/07/08

C/E6	PTA Executive Member	23/11/07
C/P1	Parent	25/10/07
C/P2	Parent	25/10/07
C/P3	Parent	25/10/07
C/P4	Parent	25/10/07
C/P5	Parent	25/10/07
C/P6	Parent	23/06/08
C/P7	Parent	25/10/07
C/P8	Parent	25/10/07
C/P9	Parent	25/10/07
C/P10	Parent	25/10/07
C/P11	Parent	25/10/07
C/P12	Parent	25/10/07
C/P13	Parent	25/10/07
C/P14	Parent	23/06/08
C/P15	Parent	23/06/08
C/P16	Parent	28/03/ 08
C/C1	Community Member	26/02/08
C/C2	Community Member	26/02/08
C/C3	Community Member	26/02/08
C/A1	Area Councillor	26/06/08
Lukasi Basic School		
Code	Designation	Date
L/H	Head Teacher	15/10/07 09/06/08
L/D	Deputy Head Teacher	15/10/07 06/02/08
L/T1	Senior Teacher	14/11/07
L/T2	Teacher	15/11/07
L/T3	Teacher	15/11/07
L/T4	Teacher	15/11/07
L/T5	Teacher	15/11/07
L/T6	Teacher	15/11/07
L/T7	Teacher	15/11/07
L/T8	Teacher	13/11/07
L/E1	PTA Chairman	14/11/07 12/06/08
L/E2	PTA Vice Chairman	14/11/07
L/E3	PTA Executive Member	08/11/07
L/E4	PTA Executive Member	14/11/07
L/E5	PTA Executive Member	14/11/07
L/P1	Parent	21/11/07
L/P2	Parent	21/11/07
L/P3	Parent	21/11/07
L/P4	Parent	21/11/07
L/P5	Parent	21/11/07
L/P6	Parent	21/11/07
L/P7	Parent	21/11/07
L/P8	Parent	21/11/07
L/P9	Parent	21/11/07
L/P10	Parent	02/06/09
L/P11	Parent	02/06/09
L/P12	Parent	02/06/09
L/P13	Parent	02/06/09
L/P14	Parent	02/06/09

L/C1	Community Member	21/11/07
L/C2	Community Member	02/06/09
Mutande Basic School		
Code	Designation	Date
M/H	Head teacher	26/02/08 17/06/08
M/D	Deputy Head Teacher	17/06/08
M/T1	Senior Teacher/School Accountant	21/06/08
M/T2	Teacher	10/03/08
M/T3	Teacher	10/03/08
M/T4	Teacher	10/03/08
M/T5	Teacher	10/03/08
M/T6	Teacher	10/03/08
M/E1	PTA Chairwoman	25/02/08
M/E2	PTA Vice Chairman	18/06/08
M/E3	PTA Treasurer	25/02/08
M/E4	PTA Executive Member	25/02/08
M/P1	Parent	04/03/08
M/P2	Parent	04/03/08
M/P3	Parent	04/03/08
M/P4	Parent	04/03/08
M/P5	Parent	04/03/08
M/P6	Parent	04/03/08
M/P7	Parent	04/03/08
M/P8	Parent	04/03/08
M/P9	Parent	04/03/08
M/P10	Parent	04/03/08
M/P11	Parent	04/03/08
M/P12	Parent	04/03/08
M/P13	Parent	18/06/08
M/C1	Community Member	09/06/08
M/C2	Community Member	09/06/08

Community Schools

Fifugo Community School		
Code	Designation	Date
F/M	Head Teacher of Mother School	01/06/08
F/TC	Teacher in Charge (teacher on government payroll seconded by mother school)	16/02/08 08/04/08
F/VT1	Volunteer Teacher	03/03/08
F/VT2	Volunteer Teacher	18/03/08 15/06/08
F/VT3	Volunteer Teacher	24/03/08
F/VT4	Volunteer Teacher	14/03/08
F/VT5	Volunteer Teacher	14/03/08
F/E1	PCSC Chairman	06/03/08
F/E2	PCSC Executive Member	07/03/08
F/E3	PCSC Executive Member	07/03/08
F/E4	PCSC Executive Member	07/03/08
F/E5	PCSC Executive Member/Treasurer	07/03/08 14/03/08
F/E6	PCSC Executive Member	07/03/08
F/E7	PCSC Executive Member	07/03/08
F/E8	PCSC Executive Member	07/03/08

F/E9	PCSC Executive Member	07/03/08
F/E10	PCSC Executive Member	07/03/08
F/P1	Parent	07/03/08
F/P2	Parent	07/03/08
F/P3	Parent	07/03/08
F/P4	Parent	07/03/08
F/P5	Parent	07/03/08
F/P6	Parent	07/03/08
F/P7	Parent	07/03/08
F/P8	Parent	07/03/08
F/P9	Parent	07/03/08
F/P10	Parent	07/03/08
F/P11	Parent	07/03/08
F/P12	Parent	07/03/08 06/26/08
F/P13	Parent	07/03/08 06/26/08
F/C1	Community Member/Formal PCSC Chairman	13/03/08
F/C2	Community Member	14/03/08
F/C2	Community Member	14/03/08
F/A1	Area Councillor	26/06/08
Pulofa Community School		
Code	Designation	Date
P/M	Head Teacher of Mother School	01/06/08
P/TC	Teacher in Charge (teacher on government payroll seconded by mother school)	08/02/08
P /VT1	Volunteer Teacher	23/02/08
P/VT2	Volunteer Teacher	23/02/08
P/VT3	Volunteer Teacher	21/02/08 23/02/08
P/VT4	Volunteer Teacher	21/02/08 23/02/08
P/VT5	Volunteer Teacher	21/02/08
P/VT6	Volunteer Teacher	20/02/08
P/VT7	Volunteer Teacher	20/02/08
P/E1	PCSC Chairman	11/02/08 14/02/08 23/02/08 05/03/08
P/E2	PCSC Executive Member	20/02/08
P/E3	PCSC Executive Member	20/02/08
P/E4	PCSC Executive Member	20/02/08
P/E5	PCSC Executive Member	20/02/08
P/E6	PCSC Executive Member	20/02/08
P/E7	PCSC Executive Member	20/02/08
P/E8	PCSC Executive Member	20/02/08
P/E9	PCSC Executive Member	20/02/08
P/P1	Parent	18/02/08
P/P2	Parent	18/02/08
P/P3	Parent	18/02/08
P/P4	Parent	18/02/08

P/P5	Parent	18/02/08
P/P6	Parent	19/02/08
P/P7	Parent	19/02/08
P/P8	Parent	19/02/08
P/P9	Parent	19/02/08
P/P10	Parent	19/02/08
P/P11	Parent	19/02/08
P/C1	Community Member	01/04/08
P/C2	Community Member	01/04/08
P/C3	Community Member	01/04/08
P/A1	Area Councillor	10/06/08
Nkambe Community School		
Code	Designation	Date
N/M1	Head Teacher of Mother School	11/03/08 20/06/08
N/M2	Deputy Head Teacher of Mother School	11/03/08
N /VT1	Volunteer Teacher	25/03/08
N/VT2	Former Volunteer Teacher	26/03/08
N/VT3	Former Volunteer Teacher	26/03/08
N/E1	PCSC Chairman	31/03/08
N/E2	PCSC Vice Chairman	26/03/08
N/E3	PCSC Executive Member/Project Committee Member	26/03/08
N/E4	PCSC Executive Member	26/03/08
N/E5	PCSC Executive Member	31/03/08
N/E6	PCSC Executive Member	31/03/08
N/E7	PCSC Executive Member	31/03/08
N/E8	PCSC Executive Member	31/03/08
N/E9	PCSC Executive Member	31/03/08
N/E10	PCSC Executive Member	31/03/08
N/P1	Parent	25/03/08
N/P2	Parent	25/03/08
N/P3	Parent	25/03/08
N/P4	Parent	25/03/08
N/P5	Parent	26/03/08
N/P6	Parent	26/03/08
N/P7	Parent	26/03/08
N/P8	Parent	25/03/08
N/P9	Parent	25/03/08
N/P10	Parent	25/03/08
N/P11	Parent	25/03/08
N/C1	Community Member	26/03/08
N/C2	Community Member	26/03/08
N/C3	Community Member	26/02/08
N/C4	Community Member	26/02/08
N/C5	Community Member	26/02/08
N/A1	Area Councillor	03/04/08

APPENDIX 5-2**List of Observed Meetings**

Meeting	Date
District	
District Education Board	22/02/08 06/06/08
PTA/PCSC District Council	21/02/08
Government basic school	
Extraordinary PTA meeting at Chulu concerning the introduction of new fee and fund	12/10/07
PTA at Chulu	28/03/08
PTA at Lukasi	09/11/07
PTA at Mutande	29/02/08
Community school	
PCSC at Fifugo	04/04/08
PCSC at Pulofa	11/02/08
Extraordinary PCSC meeting at Pulofa concerning an absentee volunteer teacher	28/02/08
PCSC at Nkambe	03/04/08

APPENDIX 5-3

Sample Interview Questions

A. MOE HQ Officials

1. Community participation in district education affairs through the DEB

- What functions are being delegated to the DEB under the current decentralisation reform?
- What are the aims of establishing DEBs with community representation known as a governance body in all Zambian districts?
- How should DEB governance body members be selected?
- What is the role of the DEB governance body?
- What is the role of the DEB management team?
- What should be the relation between the DEB governance body and management team?
- Who is the DEB governance body expected to be answerable to?
- Who is the DEB management team expected to be answerable to?
- What is the relation between the PTA/PCSC and the DEB?

2. Community participation in government basic schools

- What is the role of parents in the affairs of the government basic school?
- What is the role of other community members in the affairs of the government basic school?
- What is the role of the PTA in the affairs of the government basic school?
- What role is the PTA expected to play with regard to school grant management?
- What role is the PTA expected to play with regard to the annual work plan and budget (AWPB)?
- What roles are parents and other local community members expected to play in curriculum matters?
- What benefits are expected through community participation in government basic schools under the current reform?

3. Community participation in community schools

- What is the role of parents in the affairs of the community school?
- What is the role of other community members in the affairs of the community school?
- What is the role of the PCSC in the affairs of the community school?
- What role is the PCSC expected to play with regard to the management of teachers?
- What role is the PCSC expected to play with regard to school grant management?
- What roles are parents and local community expected to play in curriculum matters?
- In Masaiti District, each community school is attached to a mother school (a nearby government school). Is this system practiced nationwide?
- What is the role of the mother school with regard to support to the community school?
- What is the role of the DEB with regard to support to the community school?
- What benefits are expected through community participation in community schools under the current reform?

B. MLGH Officials

1. History of decentralisation reform in Zambia

- What were the objectives of the Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP), which promoted decentralisation?
- Why was the implementation of the PSRP delayed?
- What was the relation between the PSRP and the establishment of DEBs in the education sector?

2. Current and future relation between the devolution to local (district) councils, and the

decentralisation of the education sector

- What power is currently devolved to local councils with regard to the education sector?
- What power will be devolved to local councils with regard to the basic education sub-sector under the current national plan of decentralisation?
- What is the relation between the district council and the DEB?

C. Provincial Education Officer

1. Organisation, role and function of the DEB

- What functions have been delegated to the DEB since the publication of the national policy, *Educating our Future*?
- How do you see the work of the DEBs in this province so far?
- Do you see any difference in the effectiveness of the work of DEBs across the province? If so, what do you think are the factors that promote or hinder the work of a particular DEB?
- What do you think is the role of the DEB governance body?
- What do you think is the role of the DEB management team?
- In your opinion, who is the DEB governance body answerable to?
- In your opinion, who is the DEB management team answerable to?
- How do you see the work of DEB governance bodies in this province so far?

2. The PTA in government basic schools and its relation with the DEB

- What do you think is the role of the PTA in the affairs of the government basic school?
- What is the relation between the PTA and the DEB?

3. The PCSC in community schools and its relation with the DEB

- What do you think is the role of the PCSC in the affairs of the community school?
- In Masaiti District, there is a system of attaching community schools to a government school known as a mother school. Is this system practiced across the province?
- What is the role of the mother school with regard to support to the community school?
- What is the role of the DEB with regard to support to community schools?

D. District Education Board (DEB)

D-1 The DEBS and other DEB management team members

1. Personal background

- Name, tribe, religion, place of birth, current residence
- Qualifications
- Years of service in current position
- Occupation before becoming a district education official

2. Delegation of functions

- What functions are delegated to the DEB from MOE HQ and the PEO?
- How do you see such a delegation of functions to the DEB?
- Are there challenges for the DEB in terms of practicing newly delegated functions?

3. Selection and representation of DEB governance body members

- Who are the members of the governance body?
- How were they selected and why?
- Whose interests does each member of the governance body represent?
- What is the relation between the DEB and the PTA in government schools and the PCSC in community schools respectively?

4. Roles of and relation between the governance body and the management team

- What do you think is the role of the DEB governance body?
- What do you think is the role of the DEB management team?
- In your opinion, who is the governance body answerable to?
- In your opinion, who is the management team answerable to?

5. Perception of the governance body's work

- In your opinion, what is the role of governance body members in the work of the DEB?
- How do the members of the governance body work in practice?
- What challenges do you see for the governance body in playing the role expected of them?

6. Decision-making at the DEB

- Who are the members of each sub-committee?
- What is the role of each sub-committee?
- How often do sub-committees meet and what is discussed?
- How often do general board meetings take place and what is discussed?
- What local decisions and policies have been made at board meetings so far?
- Have local decisions and policies made at board meetings been implemented? If not, why?
- Have governance body members been consulted about the district AWPB? If not, why?

7. Role of the DEB in relation to government and community schools

- What is the role of the DEB in relation to government basic schools?
- What is the role of the DEB in relation to community schools?
- Is each community school in the district attached to a mother school? If not, why?
- What is the role of the mother school in relation to the community school?
- Is each community school entitled to a qualified teacher from the mother school? If not, why?
- How can a community school be upgraded to a government basic school?
- How do you see the government's new policy guideline on community schools?

D-2 DEB Governance body members**1. Personal background**

- Name, tribe, religion, place of birth, current residence
- Educational background
- Years of service as a Masaiti DEB governance body member
- Occupation
- If you have children of basic school age, which school do they go to?

2. Selection and representation of DEB governance body members

- How did you become a governance body member?
- Which governance body sub-committee do you belong to?
- What is the role of the sub-committee you belong to?
- Who do you represent at the DEB?
- How and what do you communicate to the constituencies you are mandated to represent?
- What is the relation between the DEB and the PTA in government schools and the PCSC in community schools respectively?

3. Roles of the governance body and management team

- What do you think is the role of the DEB governance body?
- What do you think is the role of the DEB management team?
- In your opinion, who is the governance body answerable to?

- In your opinion, who is the management team answerable to?

4. Experience as a governance body member

- How often do governance body sub-committees meet and what is discussed?
- How often do general board meetings take place and what is discussed?
- How do governance body members participate in the decision-making process at general board meetings?
- What local decisions and policies have been made at board meetings so far?
- Have local decisions and policies made at board meetings been implemented by the management team?
- Has the management team consulted the governance body about the AWPB?
- What challenges do you see for the governance body in playing the role expected of them?

E. Government Basic School

E-1 Head Teacher

1. Personal background

- Name, tribe, religion, place of birth, current residence
- Qualifications
- Years of service at this school

2. Roles of parents/guardians and other community members

- What do you think is the role of parents in educating their children?
- What do you think is the role of parents in the affairs of government basic schools?
- What do you think is the roles of other community members in the affairs of government basic schools?
- Do parents come to observe lessons, for example, through the 'family pack' programme?
- How do you see parental and community participation in this school?
- Have you received any requests for school improvements from parents? What action did you take to respond to such requests?

3. Organisation and role of the PTA

- Who are the members of the PTA executive and how were they selected?
- What do you think is the role of the PTA in the affairs of government basic schools?
- How do you see the work of the PTA in this school?
- Are there any PTA sub-committees? If so, who are the members and what are their roles?
- How is the scope and mode of contribution to the PTA determined?
- Are there rules with regard to exemption of payment into the PTA fund?
- Is any action taken against pupils or parents who do not pay into the PTA fund or do not provide the required contribution to the school?
- Who manages the PTA fund and how?

4. Localised curriculum

- Does your school have a localised curriculum? If not, why?
- If you have a localised curriculum in this school, in what way is or should the community be involved?

5. School planning (AWPB) and grant management

- Has your school developed an AWPB? If not, why? If so, who participated in its development?
- Does the school use the school grant according to the AWPB? If not, why?

- Do you know the value of the grant the school is entitled to receive each term?
- Who are the signatories to the school grant and who decides how to use it?

6. School choice and extra tuition

- Does any teacher at this school provide an extra tuition class? How is it organised?
- Are there children in the locality who are sent to other government or private schools outside the catchment?
- How does the decision by some parents to send their children to other schools effect the management of this school?

7. Relation with the DEB

- What information do you provide to the DEB, in what way, and how often?
- What information do you receive from the DEB, in what way, and how often?
- Do you know anything about the DEB governance body? Who are its members and what is their role?

E-2 Teachers

1. Personal background

- Name, tribe, religion, age, place of birth, current residence
- Qualifications
- Years of service at this school

2. Roles of parents/guardians and other community members

- What do you think is the role of parents in educating their children?
- What do you think is the role of parents in the affairs of government basic schools?
- What do you think is the role of other community members in the affairs of government basic schools?
- Apart from PTA meetings, do you communicate with parents? If so, what issues do you discuss with them?
- Do parents come to observe lessons, for example, through the 'family pack' programme?
- How do you see parental and community participation in this school?
- Have you received any requests for school improvements from parents? What action did you take to respond to such requests?

3. Organisation and role of the PTA

- What do you think is the role of the PTA in the affairs of government basic schools?
- How do you see the work of the PTA in this school?
- Is any action taken against pupils or parents who do not pay into the PTA fund or provide the required contribution to the school?
- Who manages the PTA fund and how?

4. Localised curriculum

- Do you provide a localised curriculum? If not, why?
- If you have a localised curriculum in this school, in what way is or should the community be involved?

5. School planning (AWPB) and grant management

- Are you involved in the development of a school AWPB?
- Do you know the value of the grant this school has received recently?
- Do you know the value of the grant the school is entitled to receive each term?

- Are you involved in deciding how to use the grant?

6. School choice and extra tuition

- Do you or your colleagues offer private tuition to pupils? How it is organised?
- Are there children in the locality who are sent to other government or private schools outside the catchment?
- How does the decision by some parents to send their children to other schools effect the management of this school?

7. Relation with the DEB

- Do you know anything about the DEB governance body? Who are its members and what is their role?
- As a teacher, how do you communicate your grievances to the DEB? Has such an appeal been listened to and acted upon?

E-3 PTA Chairperson

1. Personal background

- Name, tribe, religion, occupation, place of birth, current residence
- Educational background
- Number of bags of fertiliser purchased last year⁵⁷
- Number of meals a day⁵⁸
- Other roles and positions held in the community
- Relation with the school
- Years of service as a PTA chairperson

2. Roles of parents/guardians and other community members

- What do you think is the role of parents in educating their children?
- What do you think is the role of parents in the affairs of government basic schools?
- What do you think is the role of other community members in the affairs of government basic schools?
- How do you see parental and community participation in this school?

3. Organisation and role of the PTA

- What do you think is the role of the PTA?
- How many PTA executive meetings are there each year? What is discussed?
- Are there any PTA sub-committees? If so, what is the role of each, who are the members and how were they selected?
- Is the PTA involved in developing the school AWPB? If not, why?
- Is the PTA involved in managing and monitoring the school grant? If not, why?
- Is the PTA involved in monitoring teachers' work?
- Is the PTA involved in sensitising parents to the importance of schooling?
- Is any action taken against pupils or parents who do not pay into the PTA fund or provide the required contribution to the school?
- Who manages the PTA fund and how?

⁵⁷ Since income could be erratic, some participants found it difficult to give an accurate annual or even monthly figure. Therefore, the number of bags of fertiliser was used in order to understand the relative wealth of each interviewee.

⁵⁸ The number of meals a day was used to understand the relative wealth of each interviewee.

4. Experience as a PTA chairperson

- What do you think is the role of a PTA chairperson? Have you experienced any difficulty in undertaking such a role?
- How often do you visit the school? What do you do when you go there?
- Apart from PTA meetings, do you communicate with parents and other community members about the school or the PTA's work?
- If you have any grievances about school management or its teachers, how do you communicate them to the district level?

5. Knowledge of the DEB, its governance body, and the district PTA council

- Do you know anything about the DEB governance body? Who are its members and what is their role?
- What is your opinion of the work of the district PTA council?

E-4 PTA Executive Member**1. Personal background**

- Name, tribe, religion, occupation, place of birth, current residence
- Educational background
- Number of bags of fertiliser purchased last year
- Number of meals a day
- Other roles and positions held in the community
- Relation with the school
- Years of service as a PTA executive member

2. Roles of parents/guardians and other community members

- What do you think is the role of parents in educating their children?
- What do you think is the role of parents in the affairs of government basic schools?
- What do you think is the role of other community members (including village headmen and area councillors) in the affairs of government basic schools?
- How do you see parental and community participation in this school?

3. Role of the PTA

- What do you think is the role of the PTA?
- How many PTA executive meetings are there each year? What is discussed?
- Are there any PTA sub-committees? If so, what is the role of each, who are the members and how were they selected?
- Is the PTA involved in developing the school AWPB? If not, why?
- Is the PTA involved in managing and monitoring the school grant? If not, why?
- Is the PTA involved in monitoring teachers' work?
- Is the PTA involved in sensitising parents to the importance of schooling?
- Is any action taken against pupils or parents who do not pay into the PTA fund or provide the required contribution to the school?
- Who manages the PTA fund and how?

4. Experience as a PTA executive member

- Have you experienced any difficulty in undertaking the role of a PTA executive member?
- Apart from PTA meetings, do you communicate with parents and other community members about the school or the PTA's work? If you do, what do you discuss with them?

5. Knowledge of the DEB, its governance body, and the district PTA council

- Do you know anything about the DEB governance body? Who are its members and what is their role?
- What is your opinion of the work of the district PTA council?

E-5 Parents/guardians

1. Personal background

- Name, tribe, religion, occupation, place of birth, current residence
- Educational background
- Number of bags of fertiliser purchased last year
- Number of meals a day
- Other roles and positions held in the community
- Number of children enrolled in this school (own or adopted?)

2. Roles of parents/guardians and other community members

- What do you think is the role of parents with regard to the education of their children?
- In your opinion, what is the role of mothers/female guardians in children's education?
- In your opinion, what is the role of fathers/male guardians in children's education?
- What do you think is the role of parents/guardians in the affairs of government basic schools?
- What do you think is the role of other community members in the affairs of government basic schools?
- How do parents and other members of the local community participate in the affairs of this school?
- How often do you visit the school? For what purpose?

3. Role of the PTA

- What do you think is the role of the PTA?
- How do you feel about the work of the current and previous PTAs?
- What kind of contribution are parents/guardians required to make to the school through the PTA?
- What is your opinion of the level of contribution required by the school or PTA?
- Apart from PTA meetings, do you communicate with PTA executive members? If you do, what do you talk about with them?

4. Localised curriculum

- Have you been requested by the school to participate in developing a localised curriculum?
- Do you like the idea of a localised curriculum?
- What do you think of the idea of parents or other community members teaching local culture and skills at the school?

5. Opinion of the school and its teachers

- Why did you decide to send your children to this school?
- What are your feelings about this school? Why do you feel that way?
- What do you think should be done to improve this school?
- To whom do you normally convey your opinions of the school and how do you do that? To what extent do you think such opinions are listened to and acted upon?
- Are there children in this school catchment area who attend other basic schools (including private and community schools)? If so, why do you think the parents chose to send their children to another school?

6. Budget and materials management

- Do you know how the PTA funds and school fees you have contributed have been used?

- If you were unable to pay into the PTA fund, what action would either the school management or the PTA executive take?
- Do you know whether the school receives a grant from the DEBS' office? If so, are you informed how much has been received and how it is used?

7. Knowledge of the DEB

- Have you heard of the DEB and its governance body? If so, what do you think their roles are? Who are the members of the governance body?
- Are you informed about decisions made at DEB meetings?
- Have you been contacted by any DEB governance body members?

E-6 Area Councillor

1. Personal background

- Name, tribe, religion, occupation, current residence, political party affiliation
- Educational background
- Number of bags of fertiliser purchased last year
- Number of meals a day
- Other roles and positions held in the community
- Years of experiences as an area councillor

2. Cooperation with the school

- Do you visit this school? If so, how often and for what purpose?
- Do you attend PTA meetings? If not, why?
- What support do you provide to the school? Do you face any challenges in supporting it?
- Have you ever applied for the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) from the district council, in order to improve the school? What is your experience of that?

3. Relation with the DEB governance body

- Have you heard of the DEB and its governance body?
- Do you know the role of the DEB governance body?
- Do you know who represents area councillors at the DEB?

E-7 Other community members

1. Personal background

- Name, tribe, religion, age, occupation, marital status, place of birth, current residence
- Educational background
- Number of bags of fertiliser purchased last year
- The number of meals a day
- Other roles and positions held in the community
- If you have children of school age, which school(s) do they currently attend and why?

2. Roles of parents/guardians and other community members

- What do you think is the role of parents/guardians in the affairs of government basic schools?
- What do you think is the role of other community members in the affairs of government basic schools?
- In what way are you involved in the affairs of this school?

3. Role of the PTA

- What do you think is the role of the PTA?

- What are your feelings about the work of current and previous PTAs?

4. Localised curriculum

- Have you been requested by the school to participate in developing a localised curriculum or in being a resource person?
- Do you like the idea of a localised curriculum?
- What do you think of the idea of parents or other community members teaching local culture and skills at the school?

5. Budget and materials management

- If you contribute to the PTA fund, do you know how it is used?
- Would there be a penalty imposed on you if you did not pay into the PTA fund? Who would impose such penalty?
- Do you know whether the school receives a grant from the DEBS' office? If so, are you informed how much has been received and how it is used?

6. Opinion of the school and its teachers

-
- What are your feelings about this school? Why do you feel that way?
- What are your feelings about the teachers at this school? Why do you feel that way?
- What do you think should be done to improve the school?
- How do you express your opinions about the school to its management and teachers? To what extent do you think your voice is listened to and acted upon?
- To whom do you normally convey your opinions about the school and how do you do that? To what extent do you think such opinions are listened to and acted upon?

F. Community Schools

F-1 Teacher in charge seconded by a mother school (Pulofa and Fifugo)

1. Personal background

- Name, tribe, religion, age, place of birth, current residence
- Qualifications
- Years of service in teaching profession
- Years of service as teacher in charge of this community school

2. Role and experience as a teacher in charge at the community school

- What do you think is the role of the teacher in charge at a community school?
- Do you teach at this school? Do you also teach at the mother school?
- How many days a week do you come to this school?
- What are your feelings about working as a teacher in charge at a community school?
- What motivates you to work hard as a teacher in charge? What discourages you from working hard?

3. Roles of parents, the community, and the PCSC

- What do you think is the role of parents in the affairs of community schools?
- What do you think is the role of other community members in the affairs of community schools?
- How often do parents come to see you on their own initiative? What are their objectives for such a meeting?
- What do you think is the role of the PCSC in the affairs of community schools?
- How do you see community participation in this school?

4. Budget and materials management

- Who manages the PCSC fund collected from parents/guardians?
- Do you know the value of the grant the school is entitled to receive from the DEBS' office each term?
- Who are the signatories to the school grant?
- Who decides how to use the grant?
- Has the school developed an AWPB? If not, why?
- How is the foreign donors' infrastructure grant managed?

5. Relations with the mother school and the DEB

- What is the relation between the community school and the mother school?
- How do you feel about such a relation and why?
- What is your relation to the mother school?
- What support is a community school entitled to receive from the DEBS' office?
- What do you know about the procedure of upgrading a community school to a government school?

F-2 Volunteer Teachers

1. Personal background

- Name, tribe, religion, age, occupation, place of birth, current residence
- Educational background (qualifications)
- Years of service as a volunteer teacher at this school

2. Recruitment

- How and why did you become a volunteer teacher at this school?
- How was the final decision made to recruit you as a volunteer teacher?
- Do you have a contract with the PCSC that includes your conditions of service?
- In your opinion, who is your employer at this school (the government, the PCSC, USAID)?

3. Experience as a volunteer teacher

- What are your feelings about working as a volunteer teacher for a community school and why?
- What are the good things/bad things about working as a volunteer teacher?
- What motivates you to work hard? What discourages you from working hard?
- Are there pupils in your class who used to attend a regular government basic school last year but started coming to this school this year? What were the reasons for such a transfer? Does the transfer of pupils from the government school to the community school motivate you to work harder?
- If you have received a scholarship from USAID to take a distance learning teacher training course, would you like to continue teaching at this community school after you obtain your primary school teacher's certificate? If so, why? And if not, why not?
- Do you provide private tuition? If so, how much do you charge?

4. Roles of parents, the community, and the PCSC

- What do you think is the role of parents in the affairs of community schools?
- What do you think is the role of other community members in the affairs of community schools?
- How often do parents come to see you on their own initiative? What are their objectives for such a meeting?
- What contribution is made by parents to the school?
- What contribution is made by parents to volunteer teachers specifically (e.g. farm work, food, soap, hospital fees, support for funerals)?

- Do you know how much money is collected from parents each term and how it is used?

5. Relation with the teacher in charge

- What do you think of the secondment of a teacher in charge from a mother school?
- What do you think is the role of a teacher in charge seconded by a mother school?
- What work does the teacher in charge do at this school?
- How often does the teacher in charge report to this school?
- Do you think this has changed the balance of power at the community school? If so, how?

6. Relations with the mother school, DEB and ZCSC

- Did the school used to receive support from the ZCSC before it went into demise? What support did it receive?
- What do you think is the role of the DEBS's office with regard to community schools?
- What support does the school receive from the DEBS's office? Has it changed over time?
- Do you know who the members of the DEB are? What are their roles?
- What is your opinion of the work of the district PCSC?
- What do you think is the role of the mother school with regard to community schools?
- What support does the school receive from the mother school? Has it changed over time?
- What do you know about the procedure of upgrading a community school to a government school?

7. Support from NGOs and foreign donors

- What support does your school receive from NGOs and/or foreign donors?
- How are grants and handouts donated by NGOs and/or foreign donors managed at this school?

8. Management of the school grant

- Do you know the value and timing of the grant your school is entitled to receive from the DEBS' office?
- Are you informed how much has been received and how it is used?
- Who decides how to use the grant?
- Do you think the way in which the grant is utilised is transparent and effective?

F-3 PCSC Chairperson

1. Personal Background

- Name, tribe, religion, age, occupation, marital status, place of birth, current residence (distance from the school)
- Educational background
- Number of bags of fertiliser purchased last year
- Number of meals a day
- Other roles and positions held in the community
- Relation with the school
- Years of service as a PCSC chairperson
- How did you become a PCSC chairperson?
- How do you find the work of the PCSC and that of its chairperson in particular?

2. Roles of parents/guardians, the community, and the PCSC

- What do you think is the role of parents in the affairs of community schools?
- What do you think is the role of other community members in the affairs of community schools?
- How are parents/guardians involved in the running of this school?

3. Role of the PCSC

- What do you think is the role of the PCSC?
- What are the duties of PCSC executive members?
- What do you think is the role of the PCSC with regard to the management of teachers?
- How often does a PCSC general meeting take place?
- How often does a PCSC executive meeting take place? What is discussed?
- Are there any PCSC sub-committees? If so, what is the role of each, who are the members and how were they selected?

4. Experience as a PCSC chairperson

- What do you think is the role of a PCSC chairperson? Have you experienced any difficulty in undertaking such a role? If so, why?
- How often do you visit the school? What do you do when you go there?
- Do you find it easy to work with the ordinary members of the PCSC?
- Have you seen any changes over time in the way parents and other community members participate in this school? How have things changed and why?
- What positive and negative aspects of community participation have you observed in this school?

5. PCSC fund

- At present, how much is charged for each pupil (or household) as a PCSC fund contribution? How was this amount decided upon?
- Does the PCSC have an income-generating project? If so, how was it started?
- What action is taken against pupils who do not pay into the PCSC fund as required?

6. Management of the school grant and donor-allocated funding

- Who are the signatories to the DEB school grant and donor-allocated funding respectively?
- Who decides how the grant and donor-allocated funds are spent respectively (the PCSC, mother school, teacher in charge)?
- Do you know the value and timing of the grant your school is entitled to receive?
- Are you informed how much has been received and how it is used?
- Who decides how to use the grant and donor-allocated funds respectively?
- Do you think the way in which the grant and donor-allocated funds are utilised is transparent and effective?

7. Relations with the mother school, the teacher in charge, and the DEB

- What do you think is the role of the DEBS's office with regard to community schools?
- What support does the school receive from the DEBS's office? Has it changed over time? What do you think about this?
- Do you know who the members of the DEB are? What are their roles?
- Do you know anything about the district PCSC? If so, what is your opinion of their work?
- What do you think is the role of the mother school with regard to the community school?
- What support has this school received from the mother school? Has it changed over time? What do you think about this?
- (In Pulofa and Fifugo) The School now has a trained teacher (teacher in charge) seconded by the mother school. What do you think about such a secondment and the work of this teacher?
- (In Pulofa and Fifugo) Has the secondment of the teacher in charge from the mother school brought any changes to this school? Are they good or bad?
- (In Nkambe) Would you like to have a trained teacher seconded from the mother school? Why do you think your school has not received such a teacher?

1. Personal background

- Name, tribe, religion, age, occupation, marital status, place of birth, current residence (distance from the school)
- Educational background
- Number of bags of fertiliser purchased last year
- Number of meals a day
- Other roles and positions held in the community
- Relation with the school
- Years of service as a PCSC executive member
- How did you become a PCSC executive member?
- How do you find the work of the PCSC?

2. Roles of parents/guardians, the community, and the PCSC

- What do you think is the role of parents in the affairs of community schools?
- What do you think is the role of other community members in the affairs of community schools?
- How are parents/guardians involved in the running of this school?

3. Role of the PCSC

- What do you think is the role of the PCSC?
- What are the duties of PCSC executive members?
- What do you think is the role of the PCSC in relation to the management of teachers?
- How often does a PCSC general meeting take place?
- How often does a PCSC executive meeting take place? What is discussed?
- Are there any PCSC sub-committees? If so, what is the role of each, who are the members and how were they selected?

4. Experience as a PCSC executive member

- What are the positive and negative aspects of being a PCSC executive member?
- Do you find it easy to work with the ordinary members of the PCSC?
- Have you seen any changes over time in the way parents and other community members participate in this school? How have things changed and why?
- What positive and negative aspects of community participation have you observed in this school?

5. PCSC fund

- At present, how much is charged for each pupil (or household) as a PCSC fund contribution? How was this amount decided upon?
- Does the PCSC have an income-generating project? How was it started?
- What action is taken against pupils who do not pay into the PCSC fund as required?

6. Management of the school grant and donor-allocated funding

- Who are the signatories to the DEB school grant and donor-allocated funding respectively?
- Do you know the value and timing of the grant your school is entitled to receive?
- Are you informed how much has been received and how it is used?
- Who decides how to use the grant and donor-allocated funds respectively?
- Who decides how the grant is spent (the PCSC, mother School, teacher in charge)?
- Do you think the way in which the grant and donor-allocated funds are utilised is transparent and effective?

7. Relations with the mother school and the DEB

- What do you think is the role of the DEBS's office with regard to community schools?
- What support does the school receive from the DEBS's office? Has it changed over time? What do you think about this?
- Do you know who the members of the DEB are? What are their roles?
- Do you know anything about the district PCSC? If so, what is your opinion of their work?
- What do you think is the role of the mother school with regard to the community school?
- What support has this school received from the mother school? Has it changed over time? What do you think about this?

F-5 Parents/Guardians

1. Personal background

- Name, tribe, religion, age, occupation, marital status, place of birth, current residence (distance from the school)
- Educational background
- Number of bags of fertiliser purchased last year
- Number of meals a day
- Other roles and positions held in the community

2. Roles of parents/guardians, other community members, and the PCSC

- What do you think is the role of parents with regard to the education of their children?
- In your opinion, what is the role of mothers/female guardians in children's education?
- In your opinion, what is the role of fathers/male guardians in children's education?
- What do you think is the role of parents/guardians in the affairs of community schools?
- What do you think is the role of other community members in the affairs of community schools?
- How are parents/guardians involved in the running of this school?

3. Opinion of the school

- Why did you decide to send your children to this community school?
- What are your feelings about this school? Why do you feel that way?
- What are the good things and bad things about community schools compared to government schools?
- How often do you go to the school? For what purpose?
- What kind of contribution to you make to the school? What are your feelings about that?

4. Role of the PCSC

- What do you think is the role of the PCSC?
- What are the duties of PCSC executive members?
- What do you think is the role of the PCSC in relation to the management of teachers?
- What are your feelings about the work of current and previous PCSCs?

5. Opinion of teachers

- What are your feelings about the volunteer teachers at this school? Why do you feel that way?
- What are your feelings about the teacher in charge seconded from the mother school? Why do you feel that way?
- What do you do if you have an issue with another teacher (e.g. consult with the teacher directly, consult with PCSC chairperson, consult with the teacher in charge)?

6. Budget and materials management

- Do you know how the PCSC funds you have contributed have been used?
- If you are unable to pay into the fund, what action will be taken by the PCSC?
- Do you know whether the school receives a grant from the DEBS' office? If so, are you informed how much has been received and how it is used (Pulofa and Fifugo)?
- (Nkambe) Do you know whether the school is entitled to receive the grant or not?

7. Relations with the mother school and the DEB

- Have you heard about the DEB and its governance body? If so, what do you think their roles are?
- What do you think is the role of the mother school with regard to community schools?
- What support does the school receive from the mother school? What do you think about that?

F-6 Area Councillor

1. Personal background

- Name, tribe, religion, occupation, current residence, political party affiliation
- Educational background
- Number of bags of fertiliser purchased last year
- Number of meals a day
- Other roles and positions held in the community
- Years of experience as an area councillor

2. Cooperation with the community school

- Do you visit the community school? If so, how often and for what purpose?
- Do you attend PCSC meetings? If not, why?
- What support do you provide to the community school? Do you face any challenges in supporting it?
- Have you ever applied for the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) from the district council, in order to improve the community school? What is your experience of that?

3. Relations with the DEB governance body

- Have you heard of the DEB and its governance body?
- Do you know the role of the DEB governance body?
- Do you know who represents area councillors at the DEB?

F-7 Community members with no children at community school

1. Personal background

- Name, tribe, religion, age, occupation, marital status, place of birth, current residence
- Educational background
- Number of bags of fertiliser purchased last year
- Number of meals a day
- Other roles and positions held in the community
- If you have children of school age, which school(s) do they currently go to and why?

2. Roles of parents/guardians and other community members

- What do you think is the role of parents/guardians in the affairs of community schools?
- What do you think is the role of other community members like yourself in the affairs of community schools?
- In what way are you involved in the affairs of this community school?

3. Opinion of the school

- What are your feelings about this school? Why do you feel that way?

- What are the good things and bad things about community schools compared to government schools?
- How often do you go to the school? For what purpose?
- What kind of contribution you make to the school? What are your feelings about that?

4. Role of the PCSC

- What do you think is the role of the PCSC?
- What are the duties of PCSC executive members?
- What do you think is the role of the PCSC in relation to the management of teachers?
- What are your feelings about the work of current and previous PCSCs?

5. Opinion of teachers

- What are your feelings about volunteer teachers at this school? Why do you feel that way?
- What are your feelings about the teacher in charge seconded from the mother school? Why do you feel that way? (Fifugo and Pulofa)

6. Budget and materials management

- If you contribute to the PCSC fund, do you know how it is used?
- Do you know whether the school receives a grant from the DEBS' office? If so, are you informed how much has been received and how it is used?
- Do you know the value and timing of the grant the school is entitled to receive from the DEBS' office?

F-8 Head Teacher of the mother school

1. Personal background

- Name, tribe, religion, place of birth, current residence
- Qualifications
- Years of service at the school

2. Relations between the mother school and community school

- How is your school involved in the affairs of this community school (e.g. secondment of teachers; monitoring; provision of teaching and learning materials; pedagogical support; moral support; management of school grant)?
- How and when did such involvement start?
- What challenges does the mother school face in providing such support to the community school?
- What support does your school receive from the DEBS' office in order to support the community school?

3. Roles of parents, the community, and the PCSC

- What do you think is the role of parents in the affairs of community schools?
- What do you think is the role of other community members in the affairs of community schools?
- What do you think are the issues with regard to community participation in this community school and why?

APPENDIX 6-1

Community Resources Contributions at the Government Schools Under Study

School	Official objective of contribution	Payment and non-monetary contributions from parents and other community members
Chulu	Construction of a classroom Construction of teachers' accommodation and toilets Electrification Allowance for a security guard	(Grade 1-7) PTA fund subscription of ZMK 5,000 per pupil per term or one bag of maize per pupil Purchase of new uniform (ZMK33,000) Grade 1 enrolment fee of ZMK 2,500 per pupil (Grade 8-9) PTA fund subscription of ZMK 5,000 per pupil per term or one bag of maize per pupil School fee of ZMK 75,000 per pupil per pupil per term
Mutande	Construction of a 1X2 classroom Construction of teachers' accommodation	(Grade 1-7) PTA fund subscription of ZMK 6,000 per pupil per term Community labour, including crashing stones and transportation of sand and water (Grade 8-9) School fees of ZMK 60,000 per pupil per year PTA fund subscription of ZMK 6,000 per pupil per term
Lukasi	Demolition of an old classroom block and building of a new one, teachers' accommodation, electrification of teachers' accommodation	(Grade 1-7) Grade 1 enrolment fee of ZMK10,000 per pupil (Grade 8-9) School fee of ZMK 60,000 per pupil per term PTA fund subscription of ZMK 20,000 per pupil per year

Source: the author (compiled from field data).

APPENDIX 6-2

Composition of the PTA Executive in The Three Government Basic Schools Under Study

Chulu Basic School

Position	Occupation	Gender	Tribe	Education level	Other positions/roles in community	Children/dependents at the school
Chair	Farmer/retired head teacher, retired district governor	M	Lamba	G12, primary school teaching certificate	Church leader, district PTA council chairperson, UNIP* district chairman	Nephews and nieces
Vice chair	Farmer/retired head teacher	M	Lamba	G12, primary school teaching certificate	Agriculture cooperative chairman, neighbourhood health committee chairman	Grandchildren
Secretary	Head teacher	M	Lunda	G12, Diploma	Pastor	
Vice secretary	Deputy head teacher	M	Lozi	G12, Primary school teaching certificate	Agriculture cooperative secretary	
Treasurer	Farmer/housewife	F	Nyanja	G9	Treasurer of women's club	Children
	Accountant/teacher	M	Bemba	G12, primary school teaching certificate		
	Farmer/housewife (official)	F	Lamba	G7		Grandchildren
	Farmer/retired agriculture extension officer	M	Tumbuka	G12	Church leader	Children
	Teacher	M	Bemba	G12, primary school teaching certificate		

Lukasi Basic School

Position	Occupation	Gender	Tribe	Education level	Other positions/roles in community	Children/dependents at the school
Chair	Farmer/retired State House official	M	Bemba	G9	Village headman, agriculture cooperative executive, neighbourhood health committee chairman	Grandchildren
Vice chair	Farmer/retired agriculture	M	Chewa		Church leader	Children

	extension officer					
Secretary	Head teacher	M	Tumbuka	G12, diploma	Church leader	
Vice secretary	Deputy head teacher	M	Tonga	G12, primary school teaching certificate		
Treasurer	Farmer	M	Chewa	G12	Church leader	Children
	Agriculture extension officer	M	Tonga	G12	Church leader	Children
	Farmer	F	Lala	G9	Church leader	Children
	Farmer	F	Bemba	G2		Children
	Farmer	F	Lamba	G9	Leader of community based-organisation (CBO)	Children

Mutande Basic School

Position	Occupation	Gender	Tribe	Education level	Other positions/roles in community	Children/dependents at the school
Chair	Farmer	F	Lamba	G7	Village headwoman, church leader, Care provider	Grandchildren
Vice chair	Farmer/retired Ministry of Works and Supply official	M	Lunda	G10	Care provider, church leader	Children
Secretary	Head teacher	M	Ngoni	G12, primary school teaching certificate		
Vice secretary	Senior teacher	M	Bemba	G12, primary school teaching certificate	MMD** publicity officer	
Treasurer	Commercial farmer/retired banker	M	Lamba	G10	Church leader, care provider	Grandchildren
	Farmer/retired mine worker	M	Chewa (from Malawi)	G5	Care provider	Grandchildren
	Farmer	F	Lamba	G4		Children

Source: the author (compiled from field data).

Notes:

*United National Independence Party.

**Movement for Multiparty Democracy (the ruling party).

APPENDIX 7-1

Community Resources Contribution at the Community Schools Under Study

School	Official objective of contribution	Payment and non-monetary contributions from parents and other community members
Fifugo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procuring land for the school - Construction of a classroom - Provision of accommodation for one teacher - Teacher's allowance and benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Donation of land, including one hectare for the school farm provided by a village headwoman - Community labour, including crushing stones, and transportation of sand and water - Donation of a house for one volunteer teacher (an orphan) by a community member - PCSC fund subscription of ZMK 6,000 per pupil per term - Cultivation of school farm and harvesting maize for volunteer teachers
Pulofa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procuring land for the school - Procuring additional classrooms - Construction of two classrooms - Teacher's allowance and benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Donation of land by the PCSC vice chairman and the founder of the school - Church established by the founder of the school offered for use as a classroom on weekdays - Community labour, including crushing stones, and transportation of sand and water - Donation of maize to volunteer teachers after harvest - Cultivation of volunteer teachers' land* - PCSC fund subscription of ZMK 4,500 per pupil per term **
Nkambe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procuring land for the school - Income generation project (acquisition of agricultural inputs from a local CBO***) - Teacher's allowance and benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Donation of land by a village headman - A one-off payment of ZMK 15,000 per household - PCSC fund subscription of ZMK 3,000 per pupil per term - Cultivation of the volunteer teacher's land

Notes:

* This contribution ceased after the community started providing labour for classroom construction.

** Only introduced from the second quarter of 2007.

*** Community-based organisation.

Source: the author (compiled from field data).

APPENDIX 7-2

Composition of the PCSC Executive in the Three Community Schools Under Study

Fifugo Community School

Position	Occupation	Gender	Tribe	Education level	Other positions/roles in community	Children/dependents at the school
Chair	Watchman at district council/farmer	M	Ngoni	G8	Son-in-law of village headwoman who donated land to school, neighbourhood health committee member, district vice-secretary of the ruling party, deacon of church, chair of agricultural cooperative	Children
Vice-chair	Farmer	M	Lamba	G5	Church leader	Children
Secretary	Senior teacher (on government payroll)	M	Bemba	Diploma		
Treasurer	Farmer	F	Bemba	G2	Village headwoman	Grandchildren
Vice-treasurer	Farmer	F	Bemba	G8	Church leader	Children
Executive member	Farmer	M	Lamba	G7	Church leader	Children
Executive member	Farmer	M	Ndebere	G7	Church leader	Children
Executive member	Farmer	F	Lamba	G7	Village headman	Grandchildren
Executive member	Farmer	F	Bemba	G2		Children
Executive member	Farmer	F	Lamba	G2	Church leader	Children
Executive member	Farmer	M	Lamba	G6	Village headman	Children

Pulofa Community School

Position	Occupation	Gender	Tribe	Education level	Other positions/roles in community	Children/dependents at the school
Chair	Farmer	M	Bemba	G9	Church leader	Children

Vice-chair	Farmer/bee-keeper	M	Lamba	G12	Village headman who donated land to school, founder of school, church leader	Children
Secretary	Senior teacher	M	Bemba	Diploma	Church leader	
Vice-secretary	Volunteer teacher	M	Lamba	G12		
Treasurer	Farmer	F	Lamba	G3	Village headwoman	Children
Executive member	Farmer	F	Lamba	G7	Church leader	Children
Executive member	Farmer	M	Lamba	G6	Church leader	Children

Nkambe Community School

Position	Occupation	Gender	Tribe	Education level	Other positions/roles in community	Children/dependents at the school
Chair	Farmer	M	Lamba	G8	Neighbourhood health committee member, local NGO coordinator	Children
Vice-chair	Farmer	F	Lamba	G5		Children
Secretary	Head teacher of mother school	M	Bemba	Primary school teaching certificate		
Vice-secretary	Volunteer teacher	M	Tumbuka	G9	Church leader	
Treasurer	Small-scale businesswoman	F	Lamba	G6		Children
Executive member	Farmer	F	Lamba	G9	Neighbourhood health committee member	Children
Executive member	Farmer	M	Lamba	G9	Nephew of village headman who donated land	Children
Executive member	Farmer	F	Lamba	G2		Children
Executive member	Farmer	F	Lamba	G3		Children
Executive member	Farmer	M	Lamba	G6	Village headman	Children

Source: the author, compiled from field data.