

Helpdesk Report: Accountability in Education

Date: 22 November 2013

Query: We would like HEART to assist with the following areas:

1. Complete an annotated bibliography of 10-20 key resources. It should highlight which resources are most useful for focus areas of our emerging approach, such as working in fragile states, measuring impact etc). Evidence can be from OECD countries or developing countries as long as can be applied.
2. Develop a section (around 1 page) on measuring impact/evaluation of accountability initiatives. This section should be supplemented with evidence from RCTs etc.
3. Develop a section on school autonomy (1 page) and how appropriate levels of autonomy can enhance learning outcomes in conjunction with accountability strategies.
4. Further develop the section on fragile states, supplementing with evidence.

Enquirer: DFID Education

Content

1. Annotated bibliography
2. Impact/evaluation of accountability initiatives
3. School autonomy
4. Fragile states
5. Response from experts
6. Additional information

1. Annotated bibliography

Papers introducing the topic

Anderson, J. 2005 Accountability in Education. IIEP Education Policy Series. UNESCO: Paris.

http://mt.educarchile.cl/mt/jjbrunner/archives/Anderson_web.pdf

This paper offers a set of principles and strategies to be considered in the development and implementation of results-based accountability systems. Technical and political issues are addressed as well as the ways in which educators, policymakers, and community members can use the information from accountability systems to improve results. The ideas presented on accountability systems are likely to be generally applicable throughout the world. Even so, they should be assessed with reference to local conditions, and adapted accordingly. The

authors urge for suggestions or guidelines for practice to be subject to continuing evaluation and sensible application.

The three types of accountability system listed are: (a) compliance with regulations, (b) adherence to professional norms, and (c) results driven. Educators often find themselves responding to all three systems, attempting to balance the requirements of each.

Mourshed, Mona, Chinezi Chijioke, and Michael Barber, 2010. How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better. McKinsey & Co., London.

http://www.mckinsey.com/client_service/social_sector/latest_thinking/worlds_most_improved_schools

This document analyses the experiences of 20 school systems from all parts of the globe that have achieved significant, sustained, and widespread gains, as measured by national and international standards of assessment. It analyses systems according to starting points and progression. These performance stage continua—from poor to fair, fair to good, good to great, and great to excellence—are in turn unravelled according to intervention clusters within given contexts.

It is not suggested that school system improvement is either science or art: it is neither. It is the disciplined craft of repeated practice and learning within the context of the system: the practice and internalisation of the pedagogy. For the improving schools in this study, these visions are about continuing improvement. The school systems examined in this report show that the improvement journey can never be over. Achieving and sustaining a school system's progress is very hard work, and systems must keep expending energy in order to continue to move forward: without doing so, the system can fall back, and thereby threaten our children's well-being.

OECD (2010). PISA 2009 Results: What Makes a School Successful? – Resources, Policies and Practices (Volume IV), OECD Publishing.

<http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisaproducts/48852721.pdf>

The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) assesses the extent to which students near the end of compulsory education have acquired some of the knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in modern societies, with a focus on reading, mathematics and science. It achieves this through its triennial surveys of key competencies of 15-year-old students in OECD member countries and partner countries/economies. Together, the group of countries participating in PISA represents nearly 90% of the world economy.

PISA 2009 found that:

- In countries where schools have greater autonomy over what is taught and how students are assessed, students tend to perform better.
- Within countries where schools are held to account for their results through posting achievement data publicly, schools that enjoy greater autonomy in resource allocation tend to do better than those with less autonomy.
- However, in countries where there are no such accountability arrangements, the reverse is true.
- Countries that create a more competitive environment in which many schools compete for students do not systematically produce better results.
- Within many countries, schools that compete more for students tend to have higher performance levels, but this is often accounted for by the higher socio-economic status of students in these schools. Parents with a higher socio-economic status are more likely to take academic performance into consideration when choosing schools.
- In countries that use standards-based external examinations, students tend to do better overall, but there is no clear relationship between performance and the use of

standardised tests or the public posting of results at the school level. However, performance differences between schools with students of different social backgrounds are, on average, lower in countries where more schools use standardised tests.

World Bank. 2011. Learning for All: Investing in People's Knowledge and Skills to Promote Development. World Bank Group Education Strategy 2020. Washington DC: World Bank.

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/ESSU/Education_Strategy_4_12_2011.pdf

This strategy reflects the best insights and knowledge of what works in education, gleaned from our worldwide consultations with governments, teachers, students, parents, civil society, and development partners in over 100 countries.

The education system approach of the new strategy focuses on increasing accountability and results as a complement to providing inputs. Strengthening education systems means aligning their governance, management of schools and teachers, financing rules, and incentive mechanisms with the goal of learning for all. This entails reforming relationships of accountability among the various actors and participants in an education system so that these relationships are clear, consistent with functions, measured, monitored, and supported. It also means establishing a clear feedback cycle between financing (including international aid) and results. Because failures of governance and accountability typically have their severest effects on schools serving disadvantaged groups, this system approach promotes educational equity as well as efficiency.

Given that accountability is a major emphasis of the system approach to education, the Bank is committed to tracking the effectiveness of its own strategy. The indicators that it will use include: performance indicators for areas over which the Bank has direct control; outcome indicators for areas in which progress requires the efforts of both partner countries and the Bank; and impact indicators, which will monitor progress toward the ultimate goals of the education strategy.

Boak, E., 2009, Decentralization, Local Governance and Social Accountability in the Education Sectors in Sierra Leone, Kenya, Somaliland, Ethiopia and Andhra Pradesh (not available online)

This note seeks to analyse levels of discretion of local education authorities at sub-national and school levels, the process for the appointment of education service providers at decentralised levels and finally social accountability mechanisms and the challenges to their development at district and community levels in Sierra Leone, Kenya, Somaliland, Ethiopia and Andhra Pradesh.

It is increasingly acknowledged that downward or social accountability is at least as important as upward accountability. In 3 out of the 5 case studies there were formal structures embedded within the education decentralisation frameworks to monitor and formally involve representatives of civil society in policy and planning. A change of culture within the MOE will be required before these structures can be truly functional and effective, for example in sharing information regarding the more sensitive parts of their work related to financial flows and procurement practices.

In conclusion, it is clear that there is still progress to be made in developing accountable education systems with appropriate levels of discretion at sub-national and community levels in Sierra Leone, Kenya, Somaliland, Ethiopia and Andhra Pradesh. Nevertheless pockets of good practice related to local discretion and accountability have been identified in the case studies. This reveals that despite the fact that decentralisation reforms are between 5 and 15

years old in the countries and territories analysed here, it is a slow and complex process where there are no quick wins related to governance and social accountability.

Linn, R.L. (2000), "Assessments and Accountability", Educational Researcher, Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 4-16.

<http://edr.sagepub.com/content/29/2/4.abstract>

This paper reviews the use of tests and assessments as key elements in five waves of educational reforms during the past 50 years. These waves include the role of tests in tracking and selection emphasised in the 1950s, the use of tests for program accountability in the 1960s, minimum competency testing programs of the 1970s, school and district accountability of the 1980s, and the standards-based accountability systems of the 1990s. Questions regarding the impact, validity, and generalisability of reported gains, and the credibility of results in high-stakes accountability uses are discussed. Emphasis is given to three issues regarding currently popular accountability systems. These are (a) the role of content standards, (b) the dual goals of high performance standards and common standards for all students, and (c) the validity of accountability models. Some suggestions for dealing with the most severe limitations of accountability are provided.

It concludes that in most cases the instruments and technology have not been up to the demands that have been placed on them by high-stakes accountability. Assessment systems that are useful monitors lose much of their dependability and credibility for that purpose when high stakes are attached to them. The unintended negative effects of the high-stakes accountability uses outweigh the intended positive effects.

The following are offered as ways of enhancing the validity, credibility, and positive impact of assessment and accountability systems while minimising their negative effects:

1. Provide safeguards against selective exclusion of students from assessments. One way of doing this is to include all students in accountability calculations.
2. Make the case that high-stakes accountability requires new high-quality assessments each year that are equated to those of previous years. Getting by on the cheap will likely lead to both distorted results (e.g., inflated, non-generalisable gains) and distortions in education (e.g., the narrow teaching to the test).
3. Don't put all of the weight on a single test. Instead, seek multiple indicators. The choice of construct matters and the use of multiple indicators increases the validity of inferences based upon observed gains in achievement.
4. Place more emphasis on comparisons of performance from year to year than from school to school. This allows for differences in starting points while maintaining an expectation of improvement for all.
5. Consider both value added and status in the system. Value added provides schools that start out far from the mark a reasonable chance to show improvement while status guards against "institutionalising low expectations" for those same students and schools.
6. Recognise, evaluate, and report the degree of uncertainty in the reported results.
7. Put in place a system for evaluating both the intended positive effects and the more likely unintended negative effects of the system.

Professional accountability

Chapter 4, Making Teachers Accountable in Bruns, B, Filmer, D, Patrinos, H.A. (2011) Making Schools Work: New Evidence on Accountability Reforms, Published by the World Bank

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1298568319076/makingschoolswork.pdf>

Making schools and teachers more accountable for results, especially student learning outcomes, has become a central challenge for education policy makers in both developed and developing countries. The quantity and variety of policy innovations in this area has increased significantly over the past decade, with an especially striking increase in the developing world. This chapter reviews both the theory and the evidence base around two key types of reform focused on teacher accountability: contract tenure reforms and pay-for-performance reforms. The first section summarises the theoretical and empirical rationales for teacher accountability reforms. The second section reviews recent global experience with these reforms. The third and fourth sections put forth a typology of contract tenure and pay-for-performance approaches being adopted in developing countries and review the evaluation evidence around each type of reform. The fifth section compares the empirical evidence with the theoretical literature on performance incentives to identify key design issues. The final section draws cautious conclusions from existing evidence on how to design effective incentives for better teaching. Throughout the chapter, the developing country experience and research literature are surveyed broadly, but emphasis is placed on recent evidence from well-evaluated reforms in the developing world.

Performance accountability

Hamilton, L.S., et al. (2007), Implementing Standards-Based Accountability under No Child Left Behind Responses of Superintendents, Principals, and Teachers in Three States, Santa Monica, CA: RAND

http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2007/RAND_MG589.pdf

Since 2001–2002, the work of public school teachers and administrators in the United States in America have been shaped by the standards-based accountability (SBA) provisions of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. NCLB requires each state to develop content and achievement standards in several subjects, administer tests to measure students' progress toward these standards, develop targets for performance on these tests, and impose a series of interventions on schools and districts that do not meet the targets. Together, the standards, assessments, and consequences constitute an SBA system. Many states had such systems in place before NCLB took effect, but, since 2001–2002, every state in the United States has had to develop and implement an SBA system that met the requirements of the law, and its provisions have affected every public school and district in the nation.

In 2002, researchers at the RAND Corporation launched ISBA to gather information on how teachers, principals, and district superintendents are responding to the accountability systems that states have adopted in the wake of NCLB. The study was designed to identify factors that enhance the implementation of SBA systems, foster changes in school and classroom practice, and promote improved student achievement. This monograph provides descriptive information from the 2003–2004 and 2004–2005 academic years to shed light on how accountability policies have been translated into attitudes and actions at the district, school, and classroom levels.

One of the key challenges facing those who are responsible for designing, implementing, or responding to SBA systems is to identify ways to increase the prevalence of the desirable responses and minimise the undesirable ones. Some of the suggestions provided in this paper are intended to do that, but continued monitoring of responses at all levels of the system will be needed to evaluate the effects of NCLB on both actions and outcomes. This study should help provide the information needed by policymakers and others to inform future changes and adjustments to the law and its implementation. This monograph provides interim findings from the ISBA study.

Elmore, R. F. & Fuhman, S. H. (2001). Holding schools accountable: is it working? [Electronic version]. Phi Delta Kappan, 83(1): 67-72.

http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1007&context=gse_pubs&sei-redir=1&referer=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.co.uk%2Furl%3Fsa%3Dt%26rct%3Dj%26q%3Dholding%2520schools%2520accountable%2520is%2520it%2520working%2520%26source%3Dweb%26cd%3D1%26ved%3D0CDIQFjAA%26url%3Dhttp%253A%252F%252Frepository.upenn.edu%252Fcgi%252Fviewcontent.cgi%253Farticle%253D1007%2526context%253Dgse_pubs%26ei%3DQYXtUKGWAYX80QWT2YDABA%26usg%3DAFQjCNFkwNRu_CIDMhKePCQYkqgnA5_jcg%26bvm%3Dbv.1357316858%2Cd.d2k#search=%22holding%20schools%20accountable%20working%22

The theory that measuring performance and coupling it to rewards and sanctions will cause schools and the individuals who work in them to perform at higher levels underpins performance-based accountability systems. Such systems are now operating in most states and in thousands of districts, and they represent a significant change from traditional approaches to accountability. The new approaches focus primarily on schools, whereas in the past states held school districts primarily accountable. The new approaches focus on performance and other outputs, whereas in the past districts were held accountable for offering sufficient inputs and complying with regulations. Moreover, there are significant consequences, such as substantial bonuses or the threat of school closure, associated with the new approaches, whereas in the past the worst sanction, the withholding of school aid was only rarely applied, on the ground that students would suffer the most.

50 states were surveyed and their policies regarding assessment were profiled. The following was found:

1. Accountability systems attract the attention of teachers and administrators.
2. Teachers and schools vary in their responses to accountability systems.
3. Internal accountability precedes external accountability.
4. Accountability for performance requires changes in schools' internal capacities for instruction.
5. Capacity matters, but not much is being done about it.
6. Stakes matter, but more research is needed on how they matter.
7. The expectations underlying performance-based accountability systems are often unclear to the public, to students, to schools, and to school systems.

To conclude, these new systems do call attention to performance and cause people to focus on it, but developing internal capacities is much more difficult. Although states and districts are investing in capacity-building, many more resources and more strategic use of them appear to be needed. It may be that institutionalising this broader, more complex view of performance-based accountability will require different kinds of policies than now exist.

Ladd, H. (1996) Holding Schools Accountable. Performance-Based Reform in Education. Washington DC: The Brookings Institution. [BOOK]

Perhaps the most urgent--and complex--task facing American education today is to figure out how to hold schools accountable for improved academic achievement. In this important new work, Helen Ladd and her colleagues describe the options available to policymakers, weigh their respective strengths and pitfalls, and lay out principles for creating schools where learning is the number one objective. This book should be at the top of the reading list for anyone seriously interested in transforming the quality of American schools." Edward B. Fiske, Former Education Editor, The New York Times

Powers, S., 2012, Improving School Governance, Preparation paper for MIT primary education conference
(not available online)

Attempts to increase accountability through community monitoring have had mixed results, depending on the context and implementation. Evidence suggests that community monitoring is most effective when people are given specific tasks and training, and when they feel they have the ability and a clear avenue to effect change. A program in Uganda, which combined an information dissemination campaign with specific “action plans” to mobilise the community, significantly increased the attendance rate among health care providers. However, a program in India, simply informing communities of levels of learning and teacher absenteeism had no impact on engagement, or on students' test scores.

In addition to specific tasks and training, communities must have the power to hold teachers accountable. An intervention in Kenya gave local parent-teacher committees funds to hire extra teachers whom they had the power to replace if they performed poorly. The extra contract teachers, who were accountable to the local parent teacher association, had significantly higher attendance rates than their government counterparts.

Evidence suggests that giving the local community the power to monitor and govern the school system may be more effective than a top-down approach. In Madagascar, the government piloted and evaluated a program to improve school governance at the district, subdistrict, and school/community level. Only the bottom-up approach was effective at changing teacher behavior and school results.

Fuhrman, S.H., 1999, The New Accountability. CPRE Policy Brief.

http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED429336&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED429336

This policy brief reviews developments in standards-based reform and explores new ways for holding schools and districts accountable for discharging their missions. It draws on several Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) studies of accountability, many of which are still in progress. The report examines characteristics of new accountability systems and focuses on the following: performance, schools as the unit of improvement, continuous improvement strategies, inspections, more accountability categories, public reporting, and consequences attached to performance levels. It discusses issues in designing and implementing new accountability systems, asking such questions as "How is performance measured?" and "What is satisfactory progress?" The brief also describes ways in which to use fair measures in holding schools accountable, such as judging students' satisfactory progress rather than their absolute performance. It offers details on issues such as perverse incentives, complex indices of progress, what to do with students who fall in the middle of the distribution, states' capacity to remedy problems, stability and credibility of programs, public understanding, and student incentives. The report looks at ways in which new accountability systems work, and asserts that when such systems are well designed, they can result in improved student achievement and more highly motivated teachers.

Market accountability

Corrales, Javier, 2006. “Does Parental Participation in Schools Empower or Strain Civil Society? The Case of Community-managed Schools in Central America.” *Social Policy & Administration*, Vol. 40, No. 4, pp. 450-470.

https://www.amherst.edu/media/view/47805/original/spol_498.pdf

This article looks at some possible ways to conceptualise and assess the relationship between parental participation in self-managed schools and civil society. Among the various educational models in Latin America that seek to increase parental participation in schooling, perhaps the most far-reaching is the experiment with self-managed schools. These are publicly funded schools administered by parents. Broad public powers, such as the capacity to decide the budget and make staffing decisions, are given to parents, many of whom have had very limited prior administrative experience. This paper questions how this policy

innovation impact on civil society and whether parental participation in school administration empower participating citizens or strain civil society. The article draws from the experience of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, where these reforms have advanced significantly since the 1990s.

This article argues that the rise of Community Managed Schools (CMSs) in Central America provides a fruitful opportunity to address this question. Many scholars have attempted to address it, but not one single study has provided a definitive answer, in part because no single study looks at this question from all possible angles. The article suggests that answering it requires looking at it from at least four possible angles, or tests of civil society empowerment. It concludes the following:

1. The Nicaraguan and the Salvadorean reforms were the most disruptive of civil society. Of the two, the Salvadorean reform, through a policy of widespread dialogue, seems to have done more to 'clean up' the societal debris caused by the reform.
2. All four cases show that despite low levels of pre-existing human capital and institutional facilities, participating citizens, in most cases very simple folk, have been able to carry out their duties, in most cases quite complex ones. The fact that in all four cases the number of CMSs and enrolments increased as rapidly as they did suggests that the councils are carrying out their functions. This is more than one would have expected based on the low levels of education and local assets of participants, especially in Honduras and Guatemala.
3. The survival of the Guatemalan experiment, despite significant evidence of adverse external conditions (a hostile administration), suggests that council empowerment extends beyond the mere capacity to carry out assigned tasks: it also means that councils are capable of fighting for their interests, including mobilising other citizens and even forcing the state to change its stands.

In terms of inclusion, it is unclear whether councils are providing opportunities for non-dominant citizens to have positions of influence. In terms of bargaining with the state, it is unclear how resilient the councils will be in the event of more serious state-based challenges, such as discontinued funding. And in terms of promoting civic-mindedness, we know virtually nothing because conclusive research remains to be done. However, it is fair to conclude that the councils offer the right conditions for testing this question of empowerment because their composition does not seem to be heavily biased in the direction of a population that is ineligible for this kind of test. Rather than the already engaged, the councils attract mostly privately-minded citizens, who participate because they are interested not so much in their community as in the advancement of their children. This is the perfect population for testing whether participation at a small scale can have transformative effects at a larger scale.

Education Outcomes, School Governance and Parents' Demand for Accountability: Evidence from Albania

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1824960

The extent to which teachers and school directors are held to account may play a central role in determining education outcomes, particularly in developing and transition countries where institutional deficiencies can distort incentives. This paper investigates the relationship between an expanded set of school inputs, including proxies for the functionality of top-down and bottom-up accountability systems, and education outputs in Albanian primary schools. The authors use data generated by an original survey of 180 nationally representative schools. The analysis shows a strong negative correlation between measures of top-down accountability and students' rates of grade repetition and failure in final examinations, and a strong positive correlation between measures of top-down accountability and students' excellence in math. Bottom-up accountability measures are correlated to various education outputs, although they tend to lose statistical significance once parent characteristics, school resources and top-down accountability indicators are considered. An in-depth analysis of participatory accountability within the schools focuses on parents' willingness to hold teachers

to account. Here, the survey data are combined with data from lab-type experiments conducted with parents and teachers in the schools. In general, the survey data highlight problems of limited parental involvement and lack of information about participatory accountability structures. The experiments indicate that the lack of parental participation in the school accountability system is owing to information constraints and weak institutions that allow parent class representatives to be appointed by teachers rather than elected by parents.

Impact/evaluation

Simon, E., Gold, E. and Brown, C., 2002, Strong neighbourhoods, strong schools. A Series of Reports on the Findings of the Indicators Project on Education Organizing. Philadelphia: Research For Action.

<http://www.researchforaction.org/publication-listing/?id=102>

This report series, produced through the Education Organizing Indicators Project, presents a methodology for documenting the contribution of community organising to school reform. The Project stemmed from the perceived need to make the positive impact of community organising on public education more visible and measurable. Project authors developed an Indicators Framework for Education Organizing based on a preliminary set of telephone interviews with nineteen community organising groups across the country, followed by detailed case studies of five groups. The Indicators Framework can be a valuable tool for educators, funders, and organisers. The series includes an overview report, executive summary, a user's guide, and an appendix containing the five case studies. Each case study describes the work and accomplishments of one organisation through the analytic perspective of four out of the eight indicator areas that make up the Indicators Framework. Each case study is also available as a separate bound report.

Fragile states

Pavanello, S and Othieno, T, Improving the provision of basic services for the poor in fragile environments: Education Sector International Literature Review, Humanitarian Policy Group, Overseas Development Institute, London, Prepared for the AusAID Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE), December 2008

<http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/3601.pdf>

This literature review discusses a framework of accountability in relation to education service delivery in fragile states, points to challenges to donors' engagement in education service delivery in fragile states, and describes the scope and limits of the review.

There are two potential routes of accountability for securing adequate service delivery. One path, long route accountability (also referred to as 'voice') occurs when clients can hold policy-makers accountable (for example through democratic elections and by conveying their preferences and needs in relation to basic services), who in turn hold service providers accountable by setting education delivery standards and establishing monitoring systems and sanctions for non-compliance. In contexts where this is a viable route, donors should aim at supporting it, for example through pro-poor service delivery interventions 'that maximise the access and participation of the poor by strengthening the relationships between policy makers, providers and service users'.

However, the ability of clients to influence the contractual relationship between service providers and the government (the functioning of the long route) may be highly problematic or not feasible in fragile states and in particular areas of a country where the state is unable or unwilling to respond. In those cases, service delivery is likely to depend on the short route of accountability, which occurs when clients can make their demands directly on service

providers. Donors may therefore decide to engage in education service delivery by working directly with service providers, which may include local governments and NSPs.

EC 2009, Study on governance challenges for education in fragile situations

[http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/system/files/upload/article/2010-10-28/Education and Fragility Synthesis Report-1.pdf](http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/system/files/upload/article/2010-10-28/Education_and_Fragility_Synthesis_Report-1.pdf)

The overall purpose of the study is to better understand the key governance challenges facing education in different fragile situations and highlight the implications for supporting education sector development transition. The choice of case studies was selected to provide a range of fragility and post-fragility contexts. The methodological approach consists of:

1. Historical mapping of key security, political, economic, administrative and sector governance events
2. Analysis of the impact of these events on education sector performance trends and related sector resilience features, as defined by service delivery capacity and political will
3. Analysis and mapping of key country macro and sectoral governance features
4. Analysis of the mix of donor aid modalities and instruments and design implications for advancing country-led sector governance and accountability
5. Synthesis of lessons learned and selected examples of good practice
6. Synthesis of key conclusions and recommendations.

The Study's main recommendations are i) a smaller number of harmonised priority programmes, including tailor-made strategies for under-served areas with specified results and on-budget programme financing, ii) consider providing early support to government for teacher salaries while maintaining short term community contributions and a longer-term perspective for a state paid service, iii) early priority for a sustainable education census and information systems, including provincial/district disaggregated performance data, iv) a greater focus on priority programmes and system/career pathways for post-basic education, and v) maintaining efforts for a coordinated education in fragile states knowledge management strategy, focusing increasingly on sector resilience and governance factors and experiences from various forms of contracting out services.

Ndaruhutse, S. (Ed) (2012) Synthesis research report: state-building, peace-building and service delivery in fragile and conflict-affected states. Reading: CfBT Education Trust, Practical Action Consulting and Save the Children.

[http://www.dfid.gov.uk/r4d/pdf/outputs/misc_gov/60963-Final synthesis report service delivery and state legitimacy 26Nov2012.pdf](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/r4d/pdf/outputs/misc_gov/60963-Final_synthesis_report_service_delivery_and_state_legitimacy_26Nov2012.pdf)

This paper is based on a research question that aimed to investigate how the fulfilment of people's expectations for services relate to their perception of the legitimacy of the government

Research and analysis from fieldwork in Nepal, Rwanda and South Sudan provide the following findings:

1. The context is critical

Expectations vary across different contexts, both between countries and within a country, and as a result the relative importance that service delivery plays in contributing to citizens' perceptions of state legitimacy also varies.

2. Expectations are dynamic

There is no single set of expectations. Citizens' expectations change over time. As a result, building and maintaining legitimacy is likely to be a layered process as the state responds to these changing expectations.

3. Who should deliver services?

In situations of limited capacity to deliver, the state would do better to outsource quality service delivery than deliver poor quality services. Where the state has

capacity to provide oversight, the role the state plays in coordinating and regulating service delivery is more important for state legitimacy than who delivers the services.

4. **How should services be delivered?**

The way in which services are delivered is critical for doing no harm³ to wider state-building processes and can contribute to building state legitimacy. The research identified four important areas for focus:

- Equitable service delivery can make a positive contribution to state legitimacy. Inequitable delivery can undermine state legitimacy and therefore state-building efforts.
- Good public financial management, monitoring of government services and investments, and anti-corruption measures can build confidence in the state.
- Empowerment of citizens and their active involvement in accountability mechanisms that are not politicised can help to build social cohesion and contribute to state legitimacy.
- Whilst access is a more immediate priority than quality where citizens have no access at all to services, as soon as citizens have some access (even if it is basic), their expectations rapidly change to include quality as well as access and cost. This implies that there may be a sequencing of expectations from access to quality. This happens rapidly and in the early stages of a country's development path.

School autonomy

Arcia, G., Patrinos, H., Porta, E., & Macdonald, K. 2011. School Autonomy and Accountability in Context: Application of Benchmarking Indicators in Selected European Countries. Regulatory Institutional Framework, Benchmarking Education Systems for Results, Human Development Network. The World Bank, Washington DC.
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1290520949227/School_Autonomy_Accountability_Framework.pdf

This report aims to identify key lessons from School Based Management (SBM) that are universally applicable internationally. The international evidence on student learning outcomes indicates that several countries in Europe consistently show high scores in international standardised tests, and the analysis of these results clearly indicates that in those countries where school autonomy and accountability have flourished test scores have consistently been high. A preliminary set of SBM indicators in a few high performing countries were applied to provide information about the relationship between key SBM variables and school and student performance. A preliminary set of indicators of school autonomy, budget management, parent participation, school and student assessments, and accountability, were applied to the education systems of Finland, Poland, Hungary, Denmark, the Netherlands and Spain. This report summarises the results of the application and the lessons learned so far.

Summarising the results, the SBM indicators show that school autonomy—as a tool for increasing accountability and inducing improved learning—works well in contexts where formal educational institutions are weak and, by inference, where governments are unable to provide public goods of sufficient quality. In this context, which may include many governments in developing countries, School-Based Management activities are necessary but insufficient conditions for producing education of good quality and for improving learning. In such cases, education systems achieve closure only when good teaching complements accountability. SBM can create the conditions in which good teachers can flourish, but it cannot replace bad teachers.

Inversely, autonomy and accountability in SBM are not a necessary condition for success in education systems where formal educational institutions are strong, especially in the area of training and selecting good teachers. The strength of educational institutions also includes

teacher incentives, which may be the sum of competitive salaries, professional development, professional pride, and a collective sense of mission. In these conditions, which are found in many high performing countries in Europe, trust is the main element of accountability. Parents trust the system and support the system because the empirical evidence—shown by the results in international testing exercises such as PISA—indicates that the system is producing very good results.

What it is conceptually important is that, in order to produce and maintain a climate of trust, the school system relies on a management style that fosters personal incentives and personal accountability without much prodding from the outside. Such incentives may include school-based management practices such as: highly demanding criteria for choosing teachers, competitive salaries, opportunities for professional growth, and academic freedom. The strong formal institutions found among the success stories in Europe have taken decades to develop. For example, in Hungary, education analysts point out that education was a priority since the days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1867. The commitment to good education continued during communism, and continues to this day. During these 140 years Hungarian society has become accustomed to trust formal institutions, obviating the need for parent intervention in asking for accounts. Finland, a society that considered itself as poor until the middle of the 20th century, also made education quality a high priority; Finnish society understood early on that education was their main vehicle for social and economic mobility, and that ensuring education quality was a societal priority. Slowly, Finland developed a strong educational system where trust became the main driver for accountability.

Barrera, F., Fasih, T., & Patrinos, H. with Santibáñez, L. 2009. Decentralized Decision-Making in Schools. The theory and evidence on School-based management. Washington DC: The World Bank.

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1099079877269/547664-1099079934475/547667-1145313948551/Decentralized_decision_making_schools.pdf

In both the developed and developing worlds, government attempts to improve education have been mostly about providing more classrooms, more teachers, and more textbooks to schools. There is growing evidence, however, that more inputs are not enough to make schools work better. One important reason why education systems are failing to provide children with a solid education is the weak accountability relationships among policy makers, education providers, and the citizens and students whom they serve. It is not surprising then that the transfer of some decision-making power to schools has become a popular reform over the past decade.

School-based management (SBM) puts power in the hands of the frontline providers and parents to improve their schools. Its basic premise is that people who have the most to gain or lose—students and their parents—and those who know what actually goes on in the classroom and school—teachers and school principals—should have both greater authority and greater accountability than they do now with respect to school performance.

However, while there is evidence that SBM can improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools, our evidence base is limited. Decentralized Decision-Making in Schools adds to that knowledge base by distilling the lessons from countries with different SBM arrangements, reviews the findings from analytical studies, and presents the policy choices that emerge from those lessons and findings. During the past two decades, educational differences between richer and poorer countries, as measured by enrolment rates and average years of schooling, have narrowed—but the global gap in student achievement levels remains very wide. Where successful, SBM offers the potential to close that learning gap.

The key argument in favour of decentralisation is that it fosters demand at the local level and ensures that the kind of education that schools provide reflects local priorities and values. By

giving voice and power to local stakeholders, decentralisation can increase client satisfaction and improve educational outcomes. School autonomy and accountability may help solve some of the fundamental problems in education. If schools are given some autonomy over the use of their inputs, then they may be held accountable for using those inputs in an efficient manner. Decentralising power to the school level also may improve service delivery to the poor by giving poor families a say in how local schools operate, and by giving schools an incentive to ensure that they deliver effective services to the poor and penalising those who fail to do so.

SBM transfers authority from the central government to the school level, devolving responsibility for and decision-making authority over school operations to local agents—any combination of principals, teachers, parents, sometimes students, and other school community members. SBM-type reforms have been introduced in a range of economies, including Australia, Cambodia, Canada, El Salvador, Hong Kong, China, Israel, Kenya, Mexico, and the United States, over the last 30 years. SBM reforms in OECD countries share some common characteristics: increased school autonomy, greater responsiveness to local needs, and the overall objective of improving students' academic performance. Most countries whose students perform well in international student achievement tests give local authorities and schools substantial autonomy to decide the content of their curriculum and the allocation and management of their resources. An increasing number of developing countries are introducing SBM reforms aimed at empowering principals and teachers or at strengthening their professional motivation, thereby enhancing their sense of school ownership. Many of these reforms also have strengthened parental involvement, sometimes by means of school councils.

OECD (2011). "School autonomy and accountability: Are they related to student performance?" PISA In Focus, No. 9, OECD Publishing.

<http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/download/5k9h362kcx9w.pdf?expires=1357744830&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=5268187667D0C11AE375606110AD9DFD>

This paper states that in countries where schools account for their results by posting achievement data publicly, schools that enjoy greater autonomy in resource allocation tend to show better student performance than those with less autonomy. In countries where there are no such accountability arrangements, schools with greater autonomy in resource allocation tend to perform worse.

School autonomy in allocating resources tends to be associated with good performance in those education systems where most schools post achievement data publicly. This suggests that it is a combination of several autonomy and accountability policies, not just a single, isolated policy, which is related to better student outcomes.

Fuhrman, S.H., 1999, The New Accountability. CPRE Policy Brief.

http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED429336&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED429336

This policy brief reviews developments in standards-based reform and explores new ways for holding schools and districts accountable for discharging their missions. It draws on several Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) studies of accountability, many of which are still in progress. The report examines characteristics of new accountability systems and focuses on the following: performance, schools as the unit of improvement, continuous improvement strategies, inspections, more accountability categories, public reporting, and consequences attached to performance levels. It discusses issues in designing and implementing new accountability systems, asking such questions as "How is performance measured?" and "What is satisfactory progress?" The brief also describes ways in which to

use fair measures in holding schools accountable, such as judging students' satisfactory progress rather than their absolute performance. It offers details on issues such as perverse incentives, complex indices of progress, what to do with students who fall in the middle of the distribution, states' capacity to remedy problems, stability and credibility of programs, public understanding, and student incentives. The report looks at ways in which new accountability systems work, and asserts that when such systems are well designed, they can result in improved student achievement and more highly motivated teachers.

2. Impact/evaluation of accountability initiatives

Howard White recommends the following general papers on evaluations:

- Theory-Based Impact Evaluation: Principles and Practice
http://www.3ieimpact.org/media/filer/2012/05/07/Working_Paper_3.pdf
- Designing impact evaluations: different perspectives
http://www.3ieimpact.org/media/filer/2012/05/07/Working_Paper_4.pdf
- An introduction to the use of randomised control trials to evaluate development interventions
http://www.3ieimpact.org/media/filer/2012/05/07/Working_Paper_9.pdf
- Interventions in Developing Nations for Improving Primary and Secondary School Enrollment of Children: A Systematic Review
<http://campbellcollaboration.org/lib/download/2393/>

Resources on evaluating accountability initiatives

Duran (2005) discusses factors to consider when evaluating the validity and reliability of interpretations and uses of results used for the purpose of complying with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The NCLB is an accountability mechanism used in the US.

An evaluation of the School Accountability Framework in Australia (Shelby Consulting, 2007) notes the need to distinguish between the “programme” of school processes and outcomes, which was trying to develop students to the best of their potential, and the “programme” of the school accountability framework which was trying to achieve this by making schools more “effective”.

Simon et al. (2002) provide a methodology for understanding the contribution of community organising to education reform by presenting an indicators framework, a theory of change, and the accomplishments of five organising groups in effecting institutional changes in schools and districts. The indicator areas they identify are: leadership development, high quality curriculum and instruction, public accountability, and school/community connection.

Examples of randomised trials

Duflo et al. (2012) examined a programme that enabled Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) in Kenya to hire novice teachers on short-term contracts using randomisation. The study found that contract teachers reduced effort in response to the drop in the pupil-teacher ratio, and they influenced PTA committees to hire their relatives. Both effects reduced the educational impact of the programme. A governance programme that empowered parents within PTAs mitigated both effects.

Background data was collected on enrolment, pupil-teacher ratios, and number of grade 1 sections. Maths and literacy scores were taken before and after. Regression analysis was used to estimate the effects of each programme component on student outcomes. Unannounced school visits were made to measure teacher effort. Data was collected on the contract teachers hired through the programme, including their demographic characteristics, past experience, relationship to the school, and the hiring process.

Banerjee et al. (2010) use randomised evaluation to investigate the effectiveness of committees in: providing information, training community members in a new testing tool, and training and organising volunteers to hold remedial reading camps for illiterate children. They find that these interventions had no impact on community involvement in public schools, and no impact on teacher effort or learning outcomes in schools. These results suggest that citizens face substantial constraints in participating to improve the public education system, even when they care about education and are willing to do something to improve it.

After introducing free primary education in Kenya schools suffered a loss of local accountability as parental involvement declined with the end of local fund-raising. In a survey to address this Ng'ang'a (2010) recorded the number of times the school management committees (SMC) had met; the number of parents who had visited their child's classroom and helped with homework; and parents perception of the SMC.

Andrabi et al. (2009) examine the impact of school- and child-level report cards on learning. The provision of information improved overall learning by 0.10 standard-deviations and decreased private school fees by 18 percent.

A lab-type experiment

A World Bank paper (Serra et al., 2011) investigates the relationship between an expanded set of school inputs, including proxies for the functionality of top-down and bottom-up accountability systems, and education outputs in Albanian primary schools. Analysis shows a strong negative correlation between measures of top-down accountability and students' rates of grade repetition and failure in final examinations, and a strong positive correlation between measures of top-down accountability and students' excellence in math. Bottom-up accountability measures are correlated to various education outputs, although they tend lose statistical significance once parent characteristics, school resources and top-down accountability indicators are considered. An in-depth analysis of participatory accountability within the schools focuses on parents' willingness to hold teachers to account. Survey data are combined with data from lab-type experiments conducted with parents and teachers in the schools. In general, the survey data highlight problems of limited parental involvement and lack of information about participatory accountability structures. The experiments indicate that the lack of parental participation in the school accountability system is owing to information constraints and weak institutions that allow parent class representatives to be appointed by teachers rather than elected by parents.

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3. School autonomy

Introduction

This section discusses how appropriate levels of autonomy can enhance learning outcomes in conjunction with accountability strategies.

School Based Management (SBM) strategies aim to improve accountability relationships between policymakers, education providers and the citizens and students they serve. SBM increases autonomy and makes the school (represented by any combination of principals, teachers, parents, students, and other members of the school community) the main decision-making authority. SBM puts power in the hands of the frontline providers and parents to improve their schools. Its basic premise is that people who have the most to gain or lose—students and their parents—and those who know what actually goes on in the classroom and school—teachers and school principals—should have both greater authority and greater accountability than they do now with respect to school performance. Giving schools more autonomy fosters demand at the local level and ensures that the education the school is providing reflects local priorities and values. When a school takes responsibility for its inputs, it is more likely to use them in an efficient manner and improve service delivery. Decentralisation also gives a voice to the poor who otherwise may be marginalised with regards to the educational process (Barrera-Osorio et al. 2008).

SBM emphasises the individual school (as represented by any combination of principals, teachers, parents, students, and other members of the school community) as the primary unit for improving education. Its redistribution of decision-making authority over school operations is the primary means by which this improvement can be stimulated and sustained (Bruns et al. 2011).

Results suggest that the productivity of instructional time is higher in countries that implemented school accountability measures, and in countries that give schools autonomy in hiring and firing teachers (Lavy 2010). Merely informing parents about school conditions seems insufficient to improve teacher incentives, and evidence on merit pay is mixed, but hiring teachers locally on short-term contracts can save money and improve educational outcomes. (Kremer & Holla, 2009)

With regards to decentralisation and autonomy, Dunne, Akyeampong & Humphreys (2007) argue the literature reveals very little celebration of the positive impact in terms of shifting responsibility for critical decision-making to lower levels of government, institutions and local people. The most optimistic outcome of decentralisation policy in developing countries appears to be creation of awareness and increase in local concern and action to address problems of education at the local level. In terms of expanding opportunities for access, it may be that decentralisation under effective institutional and structural arrangements can generate the critical mass of action to tackle context-specific problems of access. But clearly for this to succeed, there must be mutual trust, commitment and a real sense of collective decision-making between schools, their local communities and local authorities. Currently, the literature surveyed does not provide sufficient evidence to suggest the efficacy of decision-making under such partnerships.

However, Chapman (2000) argues that the decentralisation of the delivery of education produces greater community pressure for transparency and accountability in school management. Decentralisation results in more demands being put on local institutions, schools and in particular head teachers. De Grauwe et al. (2005) argue that there are limits to the implementation of decentralisation in education, but that they also show that successful innovations are taking place. Principles of good decentralisation practice in education include complementarity between actors; equilibrium between their mandate and resources; reform of school supervision; and the need to counterbalance autonomy by an effective accountability framework. One principle stands central: decentralisation does not imply that the State is abandoning control, but rather a change in its role.

In the context of higher education, academic freedom and institutional autonomy is suggested to be linked with social responsibility which can be seen as a crucial pre-requisite for the emergence of a regionally-relevant, vibrant and dynamic intellectual culture. Autonomy can be applied in a twofold way, namely the principle of freedom of teaching and research (the academic freedom) and in the sense of institutional autonomy, the freedom of institutions to determine their own affairs. The meaning of autonomy varies depending on the political context in which universities operate, especially in countries where academic institutions have been faced with varying levels of direct state repression by authoritarian regimes like in Eastern European countries and several African countries. In these countries academic freedom is inseparable from broader political and economic contexts (De Weert, 2007).

Country examples

Azerbaijan

Community participatory projects in Azerbaijan were mostly unsustainable, rarely focused on community-school connections, implemented on individual project-basis and have not given valuable feedback at the policy level. Reform is needed of school governance and community involvement. (Mikayilova, 2006)

Bangladesh

Schools and teachers that lack autonomy to develop curricula, class schedule and choose textbooks may result in disengaged and unenthusiastic staff that lack motivation. This may have a negative impact on educational outputs. (Nazmul & Islam, 2005)

Burkina Faso

Research indicates the existence of an SMC increases the level of social capital. The amount of voluntary contribution to public goods increases by 16% to 27%. This suggests that the community management project will stimulate local cost recovery. (Sawada & Ishii 2012)

Cambodia

Traditional associations provide rural schools with material support but are excluded from the decision making process. The decentralisation of education polices has promoted community

participation in schools through the creation of committees and councils, but these have failed to gain the same legitimacy enjoyed by traditional associations at village and community level. Community members are reluctant to get involved in matters that are perceived to be the responsibility of teachers. It is suggested that the trauma caused by conflict and the Cambodian socio-cultural norms are factors that explain the difficulty in establishing more democratic spaces for participation. (Pellini, 2007)

El Salvador

Enhanced community and parental involvement in schools has improved students' language skills and diminished student absences, which may have long-term effects on achievement. (Jimenez & Sawada, 1999)

Ethiopia

In principle, educational provision can be improved through better management practices, transparency in the use of resources and accountability to all stakeholders (community, parents, students, teachers, etc.). The literature reveals that in practice decentralisation policy has not ensured the full participation of all stakeholders in school decision-making and school administration. The most positive outcome of decentralisation policy appears to be creation of awareness and increases in local efforts to address problems in education. Decentralisation can generate action to tackle context-specific problems in education management but in order to strengthen school-based decision-making, the relationships among education offices, local government authorities, communities and parents need to be coordinated so that stakeholders work as a team. (Abebe 2012)

India

It was found that school functioning improves significantly in places where communities have been involved actively. Women's participation and representation is found to be quite low. Where a Mother Teacher Association is actively involved in decision making, schools tend to be more gender aware and the education of girls improves. (Govinda 2010)

Research from Uttar Pradesh has shown that despite the benefits and increased autonomy that Village Education Committees provide, most parents do not know that they exist, public participation in improving education is negligible, and large numbers of children in the villages have not acquired basic competencies of reading, writing, and arithmetic. (Banerjee 2006)

Research by Pandey, Goyal & Sundaraman (2009) found that providing information to the community about its state-mandated roles and responsibilities in school management, through a structured campaign, had a positive impact. The most notable impacts occurred on teacher effort, while impacts on learning were more modest. Some improvements were recorded in the delivery of benefits entitled to students (stipend, uniform and mid-day meal) and in process variables such as community participation in each of the three states.

Indonesia

The level of parental participation in school management is extremely low with emphasis on top-down supervision and monitoring by government supervisory bodies. The accountability system has remained weak, which is reflected by inadequate information flow to parents, as well as seemingly low parental awareness of the need to hold schools accountable. Although SBM in Indonesia is currently limited, it has begun to help schools make decisions on allocation of resources and hiring additional (non-civil servant) teachers, and to create an enabling environment of learning, including increasing teacher attendance rates. These aspects are found to have significantly positive effects on student learning outcomes. (Chen 2011)

Decentralisation of education systems can, in theory, lead to increased community participation. However, parents' participation in school management have changed and decreased significantly as a result of a new Free School programme, introduced by the

government in 2009. In the context of the Indonesian education system, decentralisation has not necessarily enhanced community participation. (Fitriah 2010)

Italy

Decentralisation can lead to "good" or "bad" outcomes depending on the socio-cultural norms of the targeted communities. Research suggests that increased autonomy by local university officials resulted in a significant increase in the incidence of familism in areas characterised by low civic capital but not in areas with higher civic capital. (Durante, Labartino, & Perotti, 2011)

Kenya

Two education reforms which should increase autonomy are hiring teachers locally, on short-term contracts, rather than centrally through a civil-service system, and SBM. Results indicate that locally hired contract teachers are much more likely to be present in class and teaching than civil-service teachers, and that their students learn more. Civil-service teachers respond to the introduction of contract teacher programs by (1) reducing their own effort and (2) securing contract teacher positions for relatives. Contract teacher programs can be combined with SBM reforms to promote parental involvement and control at the local level. (Duflo, Dupas & Kremer 2012)

Mexico

The State-level variation allows analysis of the impact of institutional factors such as state accountability systems and the role of teachers' unions in student achievement. It is shown that accountability, through increased use of state assessments, will improve learning outcomes. Teachers' unions have strength through appointments to the school and relations with state governments. Research indicates the importance of good relations between States and unions. Accountability systems are cost-effective measures for improving outcomes. (Álvarez, García Moreno & Patrinos, 2007)

Nepal

Since 2003, a World Bank funded programme to extend community management to all public schools has been in place. The aim was to shift the role of the State from manager to facilitator of schooling. It is suggested the reforms limit the role of the State in the provision, but not control, of public education. Consequences include the marginalisation of the poor, a de-motivated and further politicised teaching force and continued chronic under-funding of public education. (Carney, Bista & Agergaard, 2007)

Nicaragua

Despite its growing popularity SBM and resulting autonomy is seldom evaluated systematically with respect to its impact on student performance. Results show that autonomous public schools are indeed making more decisions about pedagogical and administrative matters than do traditional public schools, but because there is a lag in transforming school decision-making after a school becomes legally autonomous, autonomy does not appear to have any impact on student test scores. Schools that exert greater autonomy with respect to teacher staffing and the monitoring and evaluation of teachers appear to be more effective in raising student performance. (King & Özler 1998)

Nigeria

School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) are mobilising community contributions to education and identifying issues that communities are not able to tackle on their own. However, government funding shortages, especially at local level, are a major limiting factor. To date, SBMCs have made significant progress. (Little & Lewis 2012)

Pinnock (2012) recorded the following as the main impacts of School-based Management Committee development by the Federation of Muslim Women (FOMWAN) working in Kwara State:

- Increase in school enrolment and retention
- Improvement in academic performances
- Improved teachers and pupils attendance in schools
- Improvement in teaching and learning through provision of teaching aids
- Greater involvement of local communities
- Provision of spur for Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs) to improve its work
- Increase in Local Government Authority (LGA) involvement in education-related work/opened their eyes to their responsibilities
- Reduction in early marriage/pregnancy
- Increase in transition to secondary school
- Proper documentation of all school properties
- Improved accountability. Schools/Communities were able to give and keep proper account of all their expenses i.e. school development plan, community/personal donations.
- Exposure of Pupils to Computer Education
- Prompt response to pupils' immediate health needs
- Reduction of the hours that pupils spent on manual labour, risk of hazards such as snake bite.
- Access to potable drinking water and sport facilities
- Availability of pupils' and teachers' furniture
- Clean and tidy school environment

Pakistan

Much activity has taken place regarding the establishment and training of School Management Committees/Parent Teacher Associations (SMCs/PTAs), even though these groups have achieved little. For progress to be made teacher attitudes towards parental input needs to change. SMCs/PTAs also need to be strengthened. It is recommended that the most effective reform is the genuine empowerment of parents who are central to realising the concept of "participation" in education. (Rafi Khan & Zafar 1999)

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4. Fragile states

Fragile states are countries with poor governance as identified by a lack of political commitment and/or weak capacity to develop and implement pro-poor policies; fragile states also often experience violent conflict (Rose and Greeley 2006). Creating better institutions which can deliver basic services in an inclusive manner to the population is an important part of post-conflict state building (House of Commons 2011). However, improving accountability in fragile contexts is more challenging than in non conflict settings, but it is critical in terms of raising social capital and enhancing government legitimacy.

Long and Short Route Accountability

A major challenge that donors face when supporting education service delivery in fragile states is 'how to achieve near-term humanitarian goals while also advancing long-term sustainability – that is, helping to deliver essential services in a way that builds accountability and keeps governments in a role of having ultimate responsibility' (OECD 2008). The use of accountability measures to enhance transparency in education has also demonstrated potential for improved governance, by building trust in the government (UNESCO/IIEP 2011).

There are two possible routes of accountability for securing adequate service delivery. (WB, 2004) One way, long route accountability (also referred to as 'voice') is achieved when clients can hold policy-makers accountable (for example through democratic elections and by conveying their preferences and needs in relation to basic services), who in turn hold service providers accountable by setting education delivery standards and establishing monitoring systems and sanctions for non-compliance. In contexts where this is a viable route, donors should aim at supporting it, for example through pro-poor service delivery interventions 'that maximise the access and participation of the poor by strengthening the relationships between policy makers, providers and service users' (Pavanello and Othieno 2008).

However, the ability of citizens to influence the contractual relationship between service providers and the government (the functioning of the long route) may be very problematic or unfeasible in fragile states and in particular areas of a country where the state is unable or unwilling to respond. In those cases, service delivery is likely to depend on the short route of accountability, which occurs when clients can make their demands directly on service providers. Donors may therefore decide to engage in education service delivery by working directly with service providers, which may include local governments and Non-State Providers (NSPs) (Pavanello and Othieno 2008).

Building the Capacity of Key Actors

It is essential to consider the aims and viewpoints of the key actors involved; policy makers, service providers and clients. Effective service delivery is highly dependent on the ability to address their competing goals and expectations in an attempt to satisfy the needs and interests of the various stakeholders involved in the process (Pavanello and Othieno 2008). The Principal-Agent model is a helpful and widely used instrument of analysis for understanding accountability relationships. If we think of citizens as the principals, and the governments as the agents, then '[a]ccountability is ensured when agents have incentives to do what the principals want them to do' (Grant and Keohane 2005 – cited in Pavanello and Othieno 2008). This can be important when considering how to give aid as budget support

ensures that developing countries themselves own their own development agendas, rather than donors.

However, corruption and attempts to use aid for political interests are also higher in fragile states, so donors may be more inclined to give through civil society rather than direct budget support, this can help to ensure that poor and marginalised communities have access to essential education services, but is also often critical for helping to build the capacity of citizens to push for accountability from their leader (Horner 2012). It is also important to understand the stage of development of civil society to ensure that levels of expectation are realistic. Emerging civil society may not have the management and communication structures to support a complex accountability initiative, which in turn, may undermine the success and credibility of the mechanism. Once a strong civil society has evolved they are more able to hold governments to account allowing for direct budget support to be successful. However, there is debate about how many strings should be attached to aid and whether governments should be in control and accountable to themselves.

The role of citizens may also need to be built up in fragile states. The separation of the state and citizen can result in low levels of expectation and tolerance to lack of governmental responsiveness or too high, wanting immediate transformations (House of Commons 2011). This demand, however, is not static, and as services resume, focus will quickly shift to the quality of the service (Ndaruhutse et al., 2012). In doing this it is important to consider balancing the level of involvement from the local and national government, NGOs and the private sector. Countries emerging from complex conflicts where services have been provided largely through non-state actors are unlikely to have empowered citizens or established mechanisms for accountability. Empowered citizens are better actors to demand accountability than the UK government, so this capacity should be built, boosting not only the supply of accountability by the state, but also demand for it (Horner 2012). The House of Commons report stresses the importance of community-led local projects which “reflect community priorities and give communities more confidence to hold their governments to account”. In contexts without this, a sequenced approach to accountability may be preferable.

Newly formed governments also often have weak capacity in collecting and disseminating data. It is therefore critical that, in the development of education data management systems, that attention is given to key information for dissemination, as this will directly influence the quality and credibility of accountability mechanisms.

Root Causes of Conflict

It is important that the ways in which assistance is delivered is carefully tailored to the local context. For developing accountability mechanisms in fragile contexts, it is necessary to understand the root causes of conflict. For example, conflict that is rooted in issues of inequality must be addressed through specific attention to ensuring that the most marginalised are able to voice their issues, and that the government are delivering equitable services. This is perceived as a key step for strengthening the long route of accountability and the social contract between state and citizens (Pavanello and Othieno 2008). Conflict analysis, political economy analysis and social analysis may be useful tools in developing effective accountability mechanisms.

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5. Response from experts

The following experts assisted by providing information upon which parts of this report were based:

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6. Additional information

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