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**Reinforcing Capacity Building
of Schools and Communities
in view of Improving Student
Performance**

**Lessons of the Experience with Direct Support
to Schools Mechanism: A Synthesis**

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ADEA	-	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
DSS	-	Direct Support to Schools
EFA	-	Education For All
FPE	-	Free Primary Education
MDG	-	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	-	Ministry Of Education
SMC	-	School Management Committee
SSA	-	Sub-Saharan Africa
UPE	-	Universal Primary Education

1.ABSTRACT

1. The paper presents a synthesis of the findings and lessons of the experience with the DSS based on block grant mechanism. The findings and lessons were drawn from a study commissioned by the ADEA to serve as a basis for discussions at its 2006 Biennial. At the Biennial, ADEA intends to explore further the way the process of change and reform play at the school level, especially with respect to the way education is financed and managed. The study covered the countries of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Mozambique, where the mechanism had been operational since early 2003.
2. The study was comprehensive, reviewing the experience and drawing lessons with experience of the essential elements of the mechanism including its design (underlying general philosophy, objectives and structure); implementation strategy (the processes used at school level to determine the allocation of the resources, the accountability mechanisms that have been put in place to ensure public transparency of resource allocation, the main obstacles encountered during the implementation of the program) and impact on access to education (enrolment) and on teaching and learning environment(i.e. quality of education).
3. The core methodology used in the study entailed conduct of case studies in the above four countries, using content analysis, a desk review of any relevant materials published in profession journals, books, agency publications and websites. This was complemented by in-depth personal interviews with purposive sample of key education sector stakeholders including MOE staff, parents, teachers and development partners. Due to time and resource constraints, the geographical scope of the interviews was limited to within and around the capital cities.
4. The study findings show that the DSS mechanism, designed to facilitate provision of UPE, had been generally well received and had achieved positive outcomes. The general philosophy (hinging on partnership of stakeholders in the education sector), political, economic, financial, and social underpinnings of the mechanism were also found to be both sound and realistic. It has improved access to primary education with enrolment rates increasing rapidly. Consequently, disparities in enrolment rates between rural and urban areas, between rich and poor and between girls and boys have been narrowing. However, the quality of teaching and learning seems to have worsened during implementation of the mechanism.
5. From the findings, the study draws the lesson that for effective implementation of the mechanism early and good planning should never be traded -off for political expediency. The sudden implementation of the UPE without carrying out due situation analysis, seem to have been dictated by political considerations of meeting an election pledge of the regimes. The trade-off meant failure to capture critical issues in the implantation process including training of school heads, their deputies and SMCs on the management of funds; sensitization of parents and communities of their role; requirements for additional teachers and classrooms.
6. Based on the findings and international experience, the study identified key elements of

successful implementation of the DSS mechanism including: (i) involvement of multiple stakeholders including business, cultural institutions, students and marginalized groups. In addition, it concluded that effective literacy programs may have to accompany capacity building for local communities. This was relevant because, lack of technical skills by community leaders has led to incomplete participation; (ii) clarification of roles of all stakeholders also seems to be important for the success of the program; (iii) regional and district education must be equipped to: facilitate communication, better utilize supervision and supervisors, and provide feedback for the schools in terms of resources management.

7. Finally, the study identified many obstacles in the implementation of the mechanism and made recommendations for redressing them: i) political interference; ii) weak organization and control; iii) mismanagement (embezzlement) of funds; iv) weak involvement of the community in decision-making; v) weak supervision and monitoring by the MOE; vi) general lack of management skills by many principals and their staff, especially in expenditure and revenue control, budget formulation; viii) duplication in the use of funds; ix) delays in acquisition of inputs; x) shortage and poor quality of education infrastructure including classrooms; xi) shortage of trained teachers. In addition, economic conditions, and especially poverty, had worked against the mechanism. This is because poor parents could still not afford to send their children to school due to the lack of other resources such as food and uniforms.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

8. The issues of school quality, policies for equity, supporting frameworks for decision-making and monitoring, funding of quality and essential inputs, adjustment of curricula and the use of African languages, decentralisation and education provision were recently highlighted at the 2003 ADEA Biennial as playing an important role in improving the performance of the educational sector in developing countries, and in Africa, in particular. At its 2006 Biennial, ADEA wants to explore further the way the process of change and reform play at the school level, especially with respect to the way education is financed and managed. To this end, ADEA commissioned a study to review and document the experience and draw lessons of the experience with the DSS based on the block grant mechanism to serve as a basis for discussions at the Biennial. The study covered the countries of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Mozambique, where the mechanism had been operational since early 2003.
9. The paper provides a synthesis of the findings and lessons of the experience with the block grant mechanism drawn from the four country level case studies. The case studies cover Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Mozambique, where the mechanism had been operational for several years. The study was comprehensive, reviewing the experience and drawing lessons with experience of the essential elements of the mechanism including its design (underlying general philosophy, objectives and structure); implementation strategy (the processes used at school level to determine the allocation of the resources, the accountability mechanisms that have been put in place to ensure public transparency of resource allocation, the main obstacles encountered during the implementation of the program) and impact on teaching and learning environment(i.e. quality of education).of the mechanism.

10. The core methodology used in the study entailed conduct of case studies in the above four countries, using content analysis, a desk review of any relevant materials published in profession journals, books, agency publications and websites. This was complemented by in-depth personal interviews with purposive sample of key education sector stakeholders including MOE staff, parents, teachers and development partners. Due to time and resource constraints, the geographical scope of the interviews was limited to within and around the capital cities.
11. The main objective of the DSS mechanism was to improve the quality of basic education by reducing drop- out rates, repetition rates, and schooling failure. By targeting better maintenance of schools, introduction of the mechanism was expected to improve education quality through better performance of both teachers and learners. The introduction of the mechanism was largely underpinned by growing empirical evidence showing positive impact of public education expenditure on economic growth and social development. The political grounds of the mechanism are consistent with Governments' broader development strategy for reduction of poverty and income inequality. The mechanism was also grounded on ongoing public sector reforms, which addresses the themes of decentralization, improved management and administrative structures, and the strengthening of capacity of all levels.
12. The DSS mechanism was designed and managed by various organs of the MOE. It was aimed to ensure basic schooling conditions as maintenance of schools in order to improve both quantity and quality of education. A key element of the mechanism was the allocation of block grants to all public schools using a funding formula that was based on the number of enrolment and classes per school. Once the MOE had computed the funding requirement for each school, it remitted the funds by direct wire transfer to DEO or school bank accounts at the district. When remitting the funds, the MOE also issued guidelines on its disbursement procedures including allocation between instructional materials) and general purposes.
13. Within the framework of *decentralization* of the education system to the school level and implementation guidelines of the mechanism, the process used at the school level to procure qualified inputs, decide on school priorities, tendering, disbursement, management and control was generally participatory, indicating close coordination between the SMC (comprising the head teacher, chairperson of the PTA, two non PTA members selected by parents, deputy head teacher, and one teacher from every class) and the local community committee. Involvement of the community in decision-making was expected to generate a sense of ownership, enhance accountability, and ensure that content, scheduling, and educational requirements are accurately identified and adapted to local conditions. The limited involvement of the community in management, planning, and learning in some instances was attributed to lack of requisite skills and ignorance
14. The study findings show that implementation of the mechanism was partially successful in meeting its objectives. It had improved access to primary education with enrolment rates increasing rapidly. Consequently, disparities in enrolment rates between rural and urban areas, between rich and poor and between girls and boys have been narrowing. However, the quality of teaching and learning seems to have worsened during implementation of the mechanism. The outcome was attributed to several intervening factors including: i) growing proportion of unqualified teachers in schools, suggesting

drop in quality of primary education, ii) excessively low teachers' salaries, resulting in absenteeism and low morale by teachers while pursuing alternative jobs, which, in turn, may lead to declining performance, iii) threat of HIV/AIDS pandemic, leading to increased absenteeism indexes and, hence drop in both instructional time in the classroom and time on task, sharp increase in pupil – teacher ratio due to enrolment growing faster than recruitment of teachers.

15. Implementation of the mechanism encountered many obstacles including: i) political interference; ii) weak organization and control; iii) mismanagement (embezzlement) of funds; iv) weak involvement of the community in decision-making; v) weak supervision and monitoring by the MOE; vi) general lack of management skills by many principals and their staff, especially in expenditure and revenue control, budget formulation; viii) duplication in the use of funds; ix) delays in acquisition of inputs; x) shortage and poor quality of education infrastructure including classrooms; xi) shortage of trained teachers. In addition, economic conditions, and especially poverty, has worked against the mechanism. This is because poor parents can still not afford to send their children to school due to the lack of other resources such as food and uniforms.
16. The MOE have undertaken actions to redress these obstacles including: sensitization activities aimed to raise awareness with the local communities to raise awareness about the importance of local participation in the program; ii) improvement of supervision and monitoring to ensure public transparency in the application of resources; iii) public diffusion of the program; iv) concession of incentives to school principals, teachers, and staff, in order to pursue further training. The impact of these initiatives is not apparent yet.
17. From the findings, the study draws the lesson that for effective implementation of the mechanism early and good planning was an imperative that was traded -off for political expediency. The sudden implementation of the UPE in the middle of a financial year without carrying out due situation analysis, seem to have been dictated by political considerations of meeting an election pledge of the regimes. The trade-off meant failure to capture critical issues in the implantation process including training of school heads, their deputies and SMCs on the management of funds; sensitization of parents and communities of their role; requirements for additional teachers and classrooms.
18. Based on the findings and international experience, the study identified key elements of successful implementation of the DSS mechanism including: (i) involvement of multiple stakeholders including business, cultural institutions, students and marginalized groups. In addition, it concluded that effective literacy programs may have to accompany capacity building for local communities. This was relevant because, lack of technical skills by community leaders had led to incomplete participation; (ii) clarification of roles of all stakeholders also seems to be important for the success of the program; (iii) regional and district education must be equipped to: facilitate communication, better utilize supervision and supervisors, and provide feedback for the schools in terms of resources management.

3. INTRODUCTION

19. The theme of quality improvement in education in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) was developed at the 2003 ADEA Biennial to address crucial issues: concepts of quality, policies for equity, supporting frameworks for decision-making and monitoring, funding of quality and essential inputs, adjusting of curricula and the use of African languages, strategies for competent teachers and effective schools, the decentralization and diversification of the education provision, health/AIDS and quality. The development of the theme at the Biennial was underpinned by the need to support the efforts of SSA countries that are trying to meet the challenge of achieving the targets of basic education for all (EFA) set at the World Forum in Dakar in 2000.
20. Beyond achieving the standard objectives of reinforcement of shared understanding and mutual learning, the Biennial highlighted the major goals and challenges of its thematic focus on quality improvements in education. As set out in the Basic Biennial document, , *“The Challenge of Learning: Improving the Quality of Basic Education in Sub Saharan Africa”*, these goals and challenges include: i) to foster a culture of quality among the main actors and partners involved in the development of education in Africa, ii) to provide them with a framework including concepts, policies, strategies, methodologies and effective and operational tools for implementation, iii) to facilitate ways in which the lessons learned at the international and/or regional level can be applied to national contexts, where action actually takes place.
21. For the next Biennial scheduled for March 2006, ADEA wants to explore further the way the process of change and reform play at the school level. An important element is the changes that are taking place in SSA in respect of the way education is financed and managed. Increasingly, schools in SSA are being encouraged to take responsibility for improvements in teaching and learning, while responsibility for the management of all of the non-salary resources is delegated to the school level. Countries such as Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Mozambique are providing block grants to schools based on a funding formula that is largely based on students’ enrolment. School level administrators , usually together with School Management Committee (SMC) members decide on the allocation of these resources to different input in the education process within guidelines developed by the Ministry of Education (MOE). These processes are typically accompanied by mechanism to ensure public accountability and transparency for the use of the resources. To serve as a basis for discussions at the Biennial, ADEA commissioned a study to review and document the lessons of the experience with use of block grant mechanism reform in these countries.
22. The core methodology used in the study entailed conduct of case studies in the above four countries, using content analysis, a desk review of any relevant materials published in profession journals, books, agency publications and websites. This was complemented by in-depth personal interviews with purposive sample of key education sector stakeholders including MOE staff, parents, teachers and development partners. Due to time and resource constraints, the geographical scope of the interviews was limited to within and around the capital
23. The purpose of this paper was to provide a synthesis of the findings and lessons of the experience with the block grant mechanism drawn from the four country level case

studies. As with the case studies, the synthesis will be comprehensive, covering the essential elements of the design (general philosophy underpinning the block grant mechanism), implementation (the processes used at school level to determine the allocation of the resources, the accountability mechanisms that have been put in place to ensure public transparency of resource allocation, the main obstacles encountered during the implementation of the program) and impact of the mechanism. After this introductory part, the remainder of the paper is organized in four parts. The second part offers synthesis of findings and lessons of experience with the design of the mechanism. Synthesis of the findings and lessons of experience with implementation/management of the mechanism is presented in part three. The fourth part offers synthesis of findings and lessons of experience with impact of the mechanism on: i) the teaching and learning environment and ii) internal efficiency. Part five will present summary of key conclusions of the study.

3. FINDINGS OF REVIEW OF EXPERIENCE WITH DSS MECHANISM

4.1 Philosophy of the Mechanism

24. To meet the challenge of achieving the basic targets of education for all (EFA) set at the World Forum in Dakar in 2000, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and national development goals of economic recovery and poverty eradication, many countries in SSA have been reforming their education systems. The block grant mechanism in DSS was an integral component of the reforms in the education systems of the participating countries, aimed to attain universal primary education (UPE). UPE is internationally defined as a provision of *free and compulsory* basic education to all children of school going age in a given country by the government. Hence, with introduction of the FPE (an election campaign promise in Kenya), primary school fees and levies were abolished (as these had been identified as major determinants of high school drop-out rates), significantly reducing the burden of household in financing primary education. Under the FPE, it was anticipated that all legible children for primary schooling will enrol and remain in school, to learn and acquire quality basic education and skills training. To meet the challenge of mobilizing the vast amount of resources required to actualize the FPE, the governments promoted and strengthened partnerships with all stakeholders in the education sector (i.e. parents, local communities, private sector, multilateral and bilateral agencies). Both the government and the parents have financial obligations to meet. While the government is charged with the mobilisation of resources, paying tuition fees, provision of infrastructure and instructional materials, recruitment and training of teachers and development of the curriculum, the parents provide scholastic materials, school uniforms and basic requirements for survival.

4.2 Characteristics of Direct to School Mechanism

25. Under the participatory (cost-sharing) education development philosophy, the governments contribution to meet the revenue shortfalls occasioned by introduction of the FPE was based block grants to all public (government-maintained) schools to fund teaching, instructional materials and co-curriculum activities. The grant is, principally, based on school enrolment statistics that are compiled and collated by DEOs using monthly school returns. Other criteria occasionally used in the grant allocation process include: basic conditions in the school, degree of degradation of school infrastructures. Under the mechanism, each pupil is allocated the same amount of funds per year (Kshs 1,020 or US\$ 13.60 for Kenya, Ushs

5,000 for Uganda). Once the MOE has computed the funding requirement for each school, it remits the funds by direct wire transfer to DEOs or school bank accounts at the district. When remitting the funds, the MOE also issues guidelines on its disbursement procedures including allocation between instructional materials (i.e. textbooks, exercise books, pens, charts and wall maps, registers) and general purposes (i.e. support staff wages, repairs and maintenance, electricity and water bills, communications).

4.3 Process of Allocation of Resources at School Level

26. Within the framework of *decentralization* of the education system to the school level and implementation guidelines of the mechanism, the process used at the school level to procure qualified inputs, decide on school priorities, tendering, disbursement, management and control was generally participatory, indicating close coordination between the SMC (comprising the head teacher, chairperson of the PTA, two non PTA members selected by parents, deputy head teacher, and one teacher from every class) and the local community committee. Involvement of the community in decision-making was expected to generate a sense of ownership, enhance accountability, and ensure that content, scheduling, and educational requirements are accurately identified and adapted to local conditions (Naidoo, 2003:9). The limited involvement of the community in management, planning, and learning in some of the instances was attributed to lack of requisite skills and ignorance. The significant form of community participation in the mechanism was limited to the rather familiar one of school maintenance.

4.4 Accountability Mechanisms And Public Transparency

27. The MOE developed guidelines giving accountability and transparency procedures in the use of the grant funds. The DEOs through the Area Education Officers (AEOs) had the ultimate responsibility to regularly monitor and evaluate (M&E) compliance with these guidelines to minimize any opportunistic behaviours. The MOE headquarter staff also from time to time monitored and evaluated compliance with the guidelines in the application of the resources in a sample of primary schools countrywide. The M&E activities included: (i) verification of the internal control system used for allocation of the resources; ii) verification of submitted of implementation progress reports; and iii) examination of the reliability of the information made available through the progress reports.). In addition, the MOE provided for both internal and external auditing of the schools' annual accounts, recommending appropriate sanctions for non-compliance with the guidelines. From the study, it was found that head teachers had generally complied with the laid down guidelines, but in some cases they interfered with different votes especially when the disbursement was done late.

28. However, limited participation of communities in implementation of the mechanism, weak monitoring activities by the MOE, lack of disaggregated education performance indicators for rural and urban areas, seemed to undermine the transparency and accountabilityb of the mechanism. The monitoring and evaluation systems for the mechanism are expected to benefit from recent and planned national household surveys. The data from these surveys is expected to facilitate development of disaggregated education indicators to be monitored and evaluated.

4.5 Obstacles In Implementation Of The Mechanism

29. Many obstacles were encountered during implementation of the mechanism. The main implementation obstacles encountered include:

- Monitoring of the implementation of the mechanism was generally ineffective, encouraging overstatement of enrolment figures, embezzlement of funds, misallocation of funds and weaknesses in tendering process for inputs. Some Area Education Officers (AEOs), inspectors and auditors who are supposed to visit schools regularly within their jurisdiction lacks assistants and also means of transport. This reduces their efficiency, which in turn affects the effective implementation of mechanism.
- Weak involvement of the community. In many districts, local community representatives did not participate in the decision-making process.
- Delays in the acquisition of inputs (e.g.: even after the resources being made available, some schools would still take two or three months to execute their expenditures, rather than four weeks, as prescribed by the MOE guidelines).
- The HIV/AIDS pandemic had an increasingly negative impact on education, as HIV-infected teachers became ill (increasing absenteeism and impairing their effectiveness) and died (reducing teacher supply), and through the rapid increase in orphans. Apart from the human suffering, this will substantially increase the costs associated with FPE. The problem is compounded by a failure to integrate effectively HIV/AIDS prevention measures in the education curriculum.
- Increased student numbers, leading to shortage of teachers. Teacher shortage has dogged the education sector (and especially the primary schools) since mid 1990, when the government froze new recruitments under the World Bank-inspired Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). In the last five years, the government has only been replacing those who die, retire or resign from the government service. The ability of the government to maintain the positive trends in education is held back in particular by severe budgetary constraints, weak capacity, and There is also a lack of clear guidelines on admissions, lack of consultation with head teachers and parents, delay in remittance of funds and expanded roles for head teachers, without corresponding increase in compensation.
- Severe shortage of classrooms, teachers and facilities, due to an unexpected 1 million additional pupils who were previously out-of-school, and who turned up to attend classes in response to the government's call. In many schools, the classroom sizes, especially in the lower classes, have risen from an average of 40 pupils per class to 120 pupils per class.
- Financial management at the schools was generally weak. There was notable lack of management skills among head teachers and School Management Committees (SMCs). When a teacher is promoted to be a school head teacher, in most cases such a teacher does not undergo any additional training to prepare him for the management role. He thus learns on the job (more like trial and error). The same case applies to members of the SMCs (especially in the rural areas), who in most cases are illiterate villagers.
- Political interference is another thorny issue in schools as some politicians sometimes

demand that head teachers in schools within their localities be of their choice (and preferably from their community). Such politicians hope to gain support from the influence of the head teachers. Thus when a head teacher from another locality or community is posted to a school, he may not be as effective as he would have wished due to constant interference by the local politicians (including inciting the parents or the community against such a head teacher).

- When the mechanism program was introduced, the increase in pupil numbers led to congested classes in most schools. This in turn reduced the efficiency of learning as the teachers would no longer have the same level of personal interaction with the pupils. The teacher:pupil ratio in some schools, especially in urban areas went as high as 1:120, much above the recommended ratio of 1:40 by the MOE.
- Delays in the disbursement of the funds was also cited as another challenge, which affects the implementation of mechanism. This has been attributed to the slow pace of fund disbursement by the Ministry of Finance, as well as to logistical issues, such as directing the funds to wrong account numbers. Schools and schools at times have to run for a whole term without any funds. This constrains schools in undertaking critical activities on the school calendar.

4.6 Impact of Mechanism on Teaching and Learning Environment

30. During implementation of the DSS mechanism the quality of teaching and learning generally worsened. The outcome was attributed to several intervening factors including: i) growing proportion of unqualified teachers in schools, suggesting drop in quality of primary education, ii) excessively low teachers' salaries, resulting in absenteeism and low morale by teachers while pursuing alternative jobs, which, in turn, may lead to declining performance, iii) threat of HIV/AIDS pandemic, leading increased absenteeism indexes and, hence drop in both instructional time in the classroom and time on task leading to decline in quality of teaching.
31. Neither did the study find any gains in terms of quality of learning as the number of pupils in primary school has persistently increased rapidly over time, outpacing the number of teachers. . The outcome implies sharp increase in the pupil-teacher ratio has increased sharply. This could have contributed to the deterioration of the learning environment¹ in primary schools. Impact of Mechanism on Internal Efficiency, Student Learning and Equity.
32. Despite the relative deterioration of the teaching and learning environment, however, internal efficiency, measured by drop out rates, repetition, and completion rates registered a slight improvement since the implementation of the DSS mechanism. These results suggest that, currently pupils tend to progress more rapidly through the system, than in the last decade.

¹ Note that small class sizes minimize disruption and allow teachers to give more individual attention to students, and thereby increasing the time of instruction. However, excessively large classes (more than 60 pupils per teacher) are also unacceptable since they are detrimental to learning.

4.7 Impact on Access to Primary Education

33. The study findings show that implementation of the mechanism was partially successful in meeting its objectives. It has improved access to primary education with enrolment rates increasing rapidly. Consequently, disparities in enrolment rates between rural and urban areas, between rich and poor and between girls and boys have been narrowing. However, the quality of teaching and learning seems to have worsened during implementation of the mechanism.

6. CONCLUSIONS

34. The DSS mechanism, designed to facilitate provision of UPE, had been generally well received and had achieved positive outcomes. The general philosophy (hinging on partnership of stakeholders in the education sector), political, economic, financial, and social underpinnings of the mechanism were sound and realistic. In some instances, however, timing of the launch of the mechanism was handled more as a matter of political expediency rather than a well thought out and planned school financing strategy. No situation analyses seem to have been conducted prior to launch of the mechanism, explaining the many obstacles encountered during its implementation. The lesson we can draw from this is that early and good planning is an imperative for effective implementation of the mechanism. Such analyses, should capture critical issues in the design and management of the mechanism including training of school heads, their deputies and SMC on the management of funds; sensitization of parents and communities of their role; requirements for additional teachers and classrooms; and oversight capacity. Finally, the block grants were given to schools using well known formula and eligibility criteria (primarily enrolment statistics). Clear guidelines had been issued to ensure transparency and accountability in the application of the funds.

35. Like in previous experiences with cash transfers or non-monetary (e.g.: Bolsa Escola in Brazil and Progreffa in Mexico) benefits to poor households aimed to encourage poor households to further invest in their children education, there are evidence to believe that the DSS program, has contributed to increase access to primary education. However, there are still some disparities, especially in terms of access to education, between urban and rural areas. In rural areas, girls still getting less schooling opportunities than boys. If this gap in schooling is not closed, then inequality across gender will deteriorate, and most aggravating is that, poverty traps can endure. The policy implication is obvious: if the objective is to reduce inequality, then the state must intervene by providing incentives for children in rural areas to attend school. Such incentives may consist of: school lunch programs, cash transfers to poor households.

36. Financial constraints and inefficiency in the allocation of resources, however, may hamper the implementation of such policies. This suggests that foreign support is still necessary in order to improve the quality of education. Nevertheless, indicators of internal efficiency, such as drop out rates, and repetition rates indicate that pupils are now moving more rapidly through the system. In contrast, quality of teaching has slightly deteriorated. This implies that further training would be fundamental. Generally speaking the main steps would consist of: (i) pre-service training and continuous upgrading of teachers; (ii) training of teachers who are capable of managing multiple classes; (iii) distance learning and introduction of new technologies; and (iv) the involvement of non-trained should be considered in order to level off the high pupil to teacher ratios.

37. On the other hand, lack of control and organization seemed to be critical in ensuring transparency in the application of resources. In some districts, school principals did not follow the MOE guidelines aimed to improve the management of the DSS grants. As pointed out before, concepts such as costs and revenues were hardly understood. Therefore, in order to achieve a more successful capacity development program, school leaders should be trained to deal with control and management. Moreover, since implementing transformation programs requires changing the culture of the system, the districts and the schools, and the communities, therefore, Ministry of Education should work with teacher and leadership training to ensure that their graduates are fully trained and prepared for their roles in the new education economy. Moreover, the implementation of decentralized programs such as the DSS requires disaggregated data in order to ensure an accurate monitoring of the progress.
38. Although, the MOE guidelines that rule the implementation of the DSS program clearly define a role for community members, however, the public involvement in managing and planning issues at school level still limited. Parents/Students Association an innovative feature of community participation in basic schooling in a number of countries constitutes a huge promise in the management of education systems.
39. Finally, there are some basic strategies that were revealed to be fundamental in ensuring successful support programs in the education sector in a number of countries. Such strategies include: (i) involvement of multiple stakeholders including business, cultural institutions, students and marginalized groups. In addition, effective literacy programs may have to accompany capacity building for local communities. This is relevant because, lack of technical skills by community leaders has led to incomplete participation; (ii) clarification of roles of all stakeholders also seems to be important for the success of the program; (iii) regional and district education offices must be equipped to: facilitate communication, better utilize supervision and supervisors, and provide feedback for the schools in terms of resources.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE WAY FORWARD

40. The study made following recommendations and suggestions for enhanced management and performance of the DSS mechanism:
 - (a) It is difficult for a teacher who has no training in accounting matters to effectively manage school funds. Therefore, the government should consider employing accounts clerks in schools to manage the FPE funds, as happens in secondary schools.
 - (b) A one week seminar on financial management is not enough, and therefore, the government should be organizing more intensive training sessions in financial management for the head teachers, their deputies and the members of the SMCs. This training of the school managers should be regular and continuous. In addition, it would be good for the MOE to make it compulsory for teachers in training colleges to do courses in financial management. In the long run, this will go along way in reducing financial management problems experienced by majority of the public schools.

- (c) The money allocated per pupil per year for teaching and reading materials as well as for other expenses is not enough. It is imperative, therefore, for the government to source for more funds (from both local and external resources) in order to increase the allocation per pupil.
- (d) The ministry auditors and inspectors should be visiting schools more often and should offer guidance to school committees and head teachers on a continuous basis. It is therefore, imperative the MOE increase their capacity in this area.
- (e) The public seem to know very little about the mechanism apart from the fact that education is free. There is, therefore, need for a clear campaign to sensitize the population about the policy and the program, including explaining clearly the roles of the various stakeholders in the implementation of the program.
- (f) The government should address the long-term sustainability of the FPE program and the mechanism, as well as issues of quality assurance and maintenance of standards.
- (g) There is need for the government to differentiate between urban schools and rural schools in the allocation of funds, instead of awarding equal amounts to schools solely on the basis of enrolment.
- (h) Overall, the government should also address the macro socio-economic issues and challenges that affect not only enrolment, but also learning and retention rates. These include poverty, hunger, sanitation, disease, etc.
- (vi) The government should address the issue of sustainability of the FPE program as well as quality assurance.
- (vii) The institutions of the state that are charged with the responsibility to fight corruption should live up to their expectations. The Auditor General's Office (which has already done good work); the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of parliament; the Inspector General of Government (IGG); the Criminal Department of the Police; the Director of Public Prosecution should move more into action.
- (viii) The MOES should carry out a value for money audit on the mechanism every two years to guide its extension to secondary education.

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