



**Consortium for Research on  
Educational Access,  
Transitions and Equity**

**School Processes, Local Governance and  
Community Participation: Understanding Access**

**Máiréad Dunne, Kwame Akyeampong  
and Sara Humphreys**

**CREATE PATHWAYS TO ACCESS  
Research Monograph No 6**

**July 2007**



**US**  
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Sussex School of Education  
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Consortium for Research on  
Educational Access, Transitions & Equity

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Address for correspondence:

CREATE,  
Centre for International Education, Sussex School of Education,  
University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton BN1 9QQ,  
United Kingdom

Tel: + 44 (0) 1273 678464

Author Email: [mairead.dunne@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:mairead.dunne@sussex.ac.uk)

Website: <http://www.create-rpc.org>

Email: [create@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:create@sussex.ac.uk)

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## **List of Acronyms**

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| BoGs   | Board of Governors  |
| CARs   | Country Analytic Reviews  |
| CREATE | Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity |
| EFA    | Education for All   |
| MDGs   | Millennium Development Goals  |
| NGOs   | Non Governmental Organisations  |
| PTAs   | Parent Teacher Associations   |
| RPCs   | Research Programme Consortia  |
| SGBs   | School Governing Bodies   |
| SMCs   | School Management Committees  |
| SPAMs  | School Performance Appraisal Meetings                                 |
| VECs   | Village Education Committees  |

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## **Preface**

Improving access to education in poor countries has to address the issues that surround relationships between communities, schools and local educational governance and administration. National and international initiatives frame the environment in which educational services are delivered, but they have limited purchase on transforming what happens at the local level where actions and decisions shape how educational access is realised. This review seeks to look across and within community, school and local authority arenas to provide insights into inclusion and exclusion and the processes as well as events that will influence improved access.

The review focuses on literature from Sub Saharan Africa and South Asia with a special emphasis on countries where CREATE is undertaking fieldwork. It develops its thematic concerns in relation to local governance, community participation, and school processes and seeks to inter-relate these within a conceptual model that highlights their interdependence. This is complemented by discussion of different methodological perspectives on researching access which argues the case for more contextualised analysis at the local level which places more emphasis on agency. The review identifies gaps in research on teacher management, school governance, decentralisation, processes of exclusion, characteristics of vulnerable communities, school processes, and progression through schooling. It invites research concerned with improved access to build on what is known and translate this to different contexts and the concerns of stakeholders at local levels.

Professor Keith Lewin  
Director of CREATE

## **Summary**

The main aim of this study is to provide an overview of the research that has explored aspects of access that surround formal state schooling. The specific focus of this review concerns research on the relations within and between schools, communities and local governance institutions and their combined influence on access within local contexts. Each of these three social sites individually could be the subject of a research review but in distinction from this, in this review we draw together literature that contributes to understandings of the local processes, that is, the ways in which schools, communities and school governance institutions inter-relate to produce particular access outcomes. The underlying assumption of this review is that it is these inter-connections are central to the local conditions of access and exclusion.





# School Processes, Local Governance and Community Participation: Understanding Access

## 1. Introduction

The main aim of this study is to provide an overview of the research that has explored aspects of access that surround formal state schooling. The specific focus of this review concerns research on the relations within and between schools, communities and local governance institutions and their combined influence on access within local contexts. Each of these three social sites individually could be the subject of a research review but in distinction from this, in this review we draw together literature that contributes to understandings of the local processes, that is, the ways in which schools, communities and school governance institutions inter-relate to produce particular access outcomes. The underlying assumption of this review is that it is these inter-connections are central to the local conditions of access and exclusion.

The focus of this review is part of a much broader concern about access in CREATE and as such the research interests of this paper are circumscribed by a model of access provided in Figure 1 below.

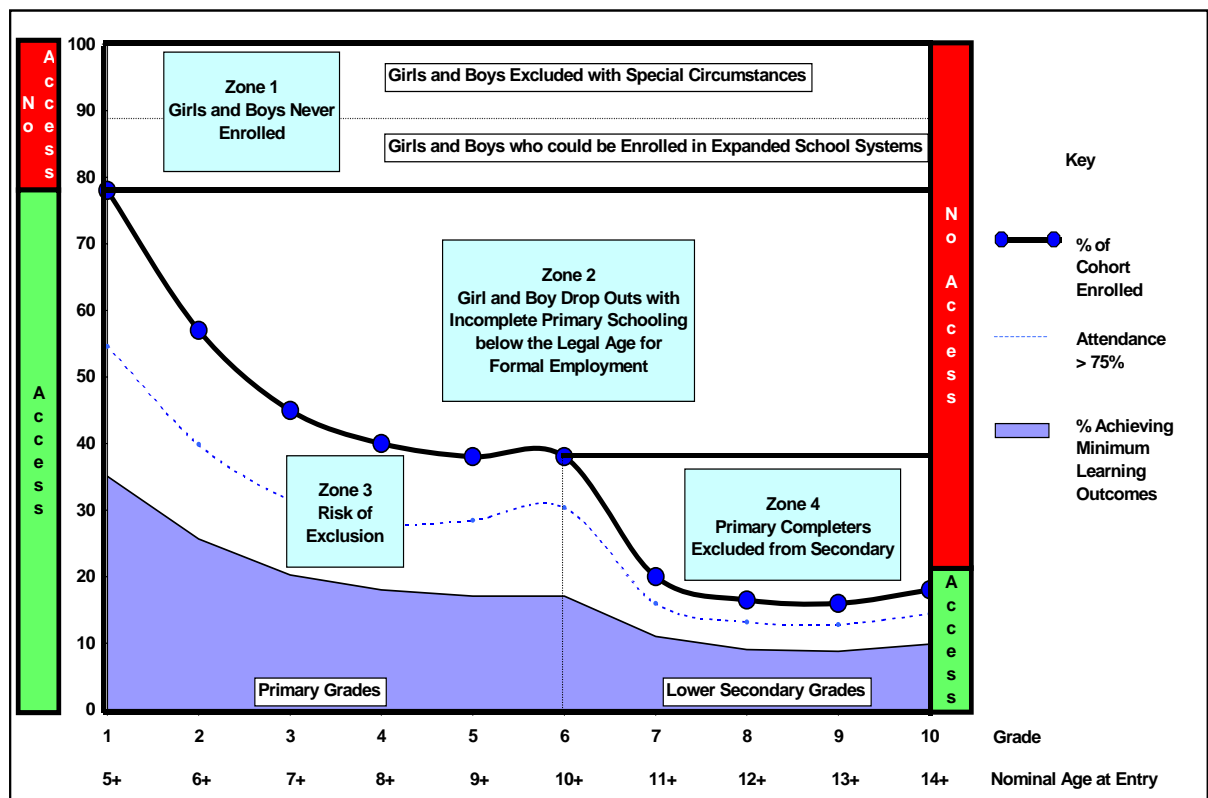


Figure 1: Access and Zones of Exclusion from Primary and Secondary Schooling

Figure 1 schematically represents key issues and patterns related to access from Grade 1-10. It pinpoints four zones of exclusion that provide important focal points for research and intervention in the efforts towards full enrolment in primary schooling. These include Zone 1 exclusions that refer to those children who have never enrolled in school, Zone 2 exclusions of those children who at one time had enrolled in school but have dropped out; Zone 3 children who are in school but at risk of dropping out and the increasingly important Zone 4 exclusion in which primary school completers do not continue into secondary school. As suggested by the model in Figure 1 above, however, the focus on access as both outcome and as a process is central to this review. For example, while Zones 2 and 4 refer to dropout as an outcome, along with Zone 3 exclusions, they also concern dropout as a process. Similarly, while Zone 1 demarcates a particular group without access to formal schooling at all, at the same time it is important to view this access outcome as produced through local processes of exclusion. More specifically, within this review it is the ways that communities, schools and local governance institutions individually and collectively create the conditions of exclusion and also respond to children who do not have access, that are significant in all the zones of exclusion.

In order to understand what is happening in terms of access in local settings at the point of educational service provision, in this paper we have located schools in a network of relations: first with local systems of educational governance and administration and second with their communities (see Figure 2 below). So, while the key focus is upon access to schools, our assumption is that schools do not operate in isolation but that relations with the community and with local governance institutions shape what happens in schools and in the processes of educational inclusion. We explore the literature that helps to inform us about these particular sets of inter-institutional (school – local government – community) relations and their influences on access. Understandings of how these institutions articulate at the local level can help to inform us about the processes of access for different population groups across all the zones of exclusion indicated in Figure 1.

**Figure 2: Relational Network of Access or Exclusion**

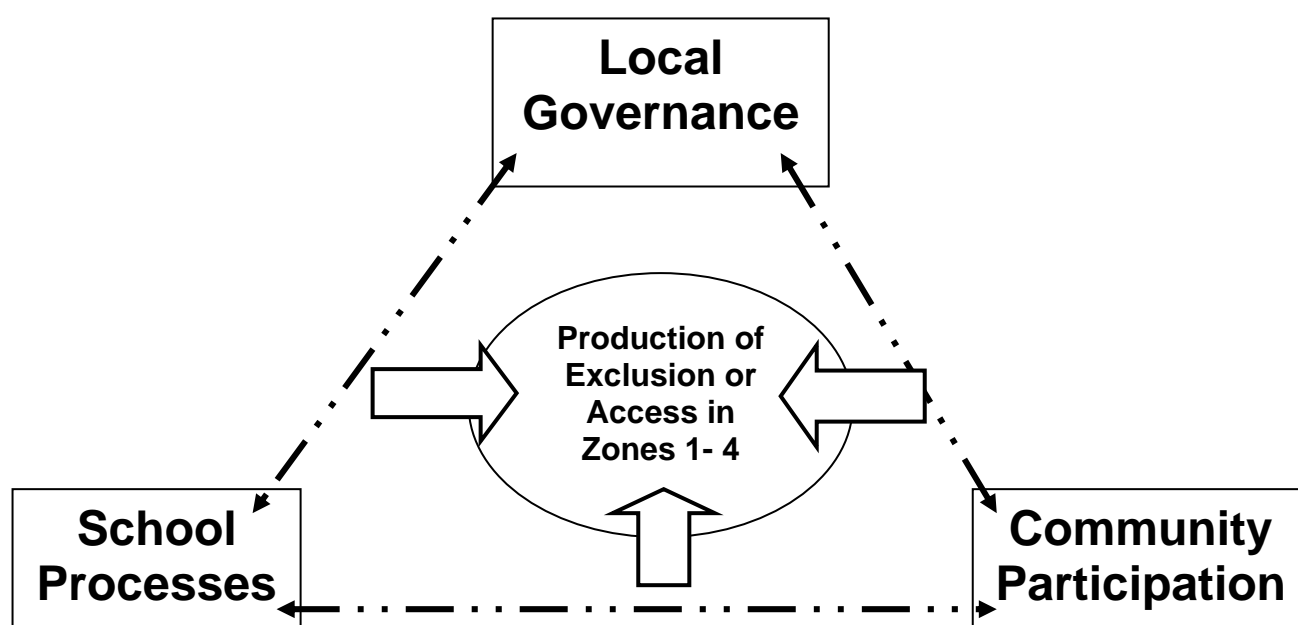


Figure 2 illustrates the relational network that is central to this review and while these may be influenced from the national level (which also mediate donor or international community concerns) this is not the focus in our review. Our key concerns are with school processes (formal and informal) and they way these emerge from their relations with local governance and communities. More specifically, the forms of support, regulation and monitoring operationalised through the local government have an influence on how schools are organised and run, with direct and indirect effects on the access children have to education. The significance of this aspect of educational provision has become increasingly emphasised in the current context of widespread decentralisation. In a similar way, home and community contexts play a significant part in decisions to attend and stay in school or not. Levels of poverty, local lifestyle, especially locally available non-school opportunities for school-age cohorts, and cultural norms and practices all impact on access. At the same time, the way that the school is embedded in community life is also significant. The relationships within and between these three dimensions; the school, local educational governance and community provide the nexus for this cross-national review of access.

The schematic description of the focus of this review, in Figure 2 above, firmly locates our concerns at the local level. This moves us to look at issues of access from points beneath the macro-level descriptions that have been useful in pinpointing zones of exclusion and patterns of access at regional, national and international levels. In general terms, this move towards the micro-level, on the one-hand, has the effect of reducing the generalisability of research but on the other, provides increased capacity in terms of greater contextual and relational detail and analysis. In this review we are interested in the latter and thus in research that cuts through to the local level of educational service provision and specifically research that has explored how micro- and meso-level conditions and practices impact on access in its broadest terms.

The relational dynamics of the local level are highly significant to policy implementation and the achievement of Education for All (EFA) goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) concerning access. The distinctive contribution of this paper is in the way it complements macro-level research through a focus on micro- and meso-level phenomena. In this review of research that explores local diversity we hope to highlight research into the perspectives of stakeholders on the ground where access is enjoyed, threatened or denied. Insights from the local level have the capacity to provide better contextual understandings with which to moderate macro-level perspectives and through this produce more informed theorisations. These indigenous knowledges can also stimulate a critical re-engagement with the conceptual and policy frameworks that structure the field. In the longer term, the potential lies in the subsequent development of empirical studies and locally relevant evidence from which to construct more considered and appropriate local intervention and advocacy.

The contextual range of the review will remain predominantly within four specific countries: Bangladesh, India, Ghana and South Africa. Where appropriate and available, research in countries within the broader regions of South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa has also been included. Beyond references to national locales and their populations, where possible the review will also highlight how different social groups, within and across national boundaries, are differentially excluded from educational opportunities. The 'poor' and 'girls', for example, are two overlapping population

groups identified as having more limited access to formal schooling. The review of the local level will help us to glean the contextual contingencies of why and how educational exclusion operates at the micro-level for the children of particular excluded social groups.

This survey of the literature on school process, school governance and community as they impact on access must also be accompanied by an account of the range of methodological approaches. It is after all the methodological pathways of research into access that produce the conceptual, theoretical and practical insights that shape the field. Different approaches to research provide different understandings about access and the relevance of a variety of institutional, personal and contextual factors. While our focus on the inter-relations of the three themes (local governance, community and schools) at the local level imposes certain methodological limitations, it has significant potential to offer complementary insights and perspectives with which to critique the dominant theoretical constructions around issues of educational access to basic formal education. These methodological considerations are vital to the review and to the critical process through which we will identify research gaps in the field of study.

Following this introduction the next chapter provides the main review with separate sections attending to Local Governance, Community Participation and School Processes. Each section is organised around the main issues emergent from the reviewed literature and, where evident, the exclusionary processes and outcomes related to the four Zones have been highlighted. Each section also concludes with a summary. In Chapter 3, we provide an overview discussion that includes a critical review of the methodologies used in the reviewed research. We also highlight the complexity of literature searches on educational access in ‘developing’ country contexts, which in this case were exacerbated by the cross-cutting themes of the review and our efforts to open new theoretical space with which to understand local level influences on educational exclusion (also see Appendix I). The chapter concludes with the identification of research gaps and the preliminary delineation of eight research foci.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a narrative based on reviews of literature on access at the local level. It is organised around three themes: school governance, school processes and community participation. However, there are inevitable overlaps in that some research addresses more than one of the themes. In such cases the research will be included within the relevant theme and may appear more than once in this chapter. Within the annotated bibliography this kind of research will be only one entry.

The range of research reviewed includes studies that have explored micro-level phenomena, e.g. within the classroom and around the school as well as research that has taken a more distanced view and looked at, for example, particular communities or schools as institutions. The whole focus of this cross-national review is to work from the ground up, working from the local sites of access to increase understandings of social motivations and practices. These more adequate understandings and theorisations of educational inclusion at the local level can then be used to inform why policy constructed at national level has not taken root in particular locales. In turn this could be used to boost EFA through more appropriate policy and intervention.

Our review attempts to deliberately open theoretical and empirical spaces in which the complexities of life at the local level and how it affects access can be explored. The perspectives of those players integral to widening access are often over-ridden or closed out by aggregated statistics that do not capture the complexities and contingencies of their lives. This is especially the case for those excluded in the policy process and often absent in research accounts. Local stakeholder perspectives although rarely considered in any depth in policy formulation, have an important but underplayed bearing on the realisation of policy intentions (Motala, 1995; Molteno, Ogadhoh & Crumpton, 2000; Sookrajh, Gopal, & Maharaj 2005). The work of this review is to bring together insights from research that provide more nuanced understanding of access and dropout and to indicate how they might contribute to fresh theoretical takes on inclusion and persistent problems in educational access.

As the three themes provide the nexus of our concerns with access it is important that they are integrated such that we do not repeat the theoretical compartmentalisation that separate, for example, in- and out- of school factors in explanations of dropout and retention (Motala, 1995). On our part, we hope to highlight the inter-relationships between the three themes in the research literature and identify the balance and gaps in empirical work as they relate to the question of access to basic education.

### **3. Local Governance**

#### **3.2 Forms of decentralisation**

The review of literature on education decentralisation has to be considered within the context of the general decentralisation literature. This literature is vast and only elements that are relevant for discussing issues about educational access are dealt with here. Thus, it restricts itself to concepts and practices of decentralisation policy as they apply to Education in developing country contexts in the hope of understanding how they shape educational policies and practices on access. In effect, this section of the review aims to produce a critical evaluative synthesis of key issues in the education decentralisation literature and relate these to issues about access to basic education in developing countries.

Decentralisation has in the last two to three decades become almost synonymous with reforms in governance and accountability in many developing countries (Litvack *et al.*, 1998). Not only is it seen as a pathway for improved delivery of social services, but it has also come to stand for a mechanism to improve the democratisation of decision-making for increased system efficiency (see Jutting *et al.*, 2004). In many countries in Africa, for example, where system restructuring has been going on, it has come to be regarded as a key part of restructuring management of service delivery (UNESCO, 2004b). But the gap between decentralisation policy and practice is usually wide in many developing country systems (e.g. in Malawi – Davies *et al.*, 2003). The complexities and weaknesses within environments in which it is introduced produces outcomes that are not predicted by decentralisation policy. Particularly in contexts of poverty, decentralisation can produce less than desirable outcomes. For example, it can become susceptible to manipulation by elite groups (UNESCO, 2004b). But as far as EFA goals are concerned, the key question is whether as Bray & Mukundan (2004:14) point out, “decentralisation is likely to provide the desired expansion of access and improvement in quality of provision ...” But before exploring this question, it is instructive to review how it is generally conceptualised in the literature.

Figure 3 provides a useful summary of how the literature discusses forms of decentralisation. Decentralisation is not simply a unitary concept, but has different forms for different functions. According to Naidoo (2002:2),

“it (decentralisation) may be defined in terms of the form (functional activities) and level (national to sub-national) as well as the nature or degree of power that is transferred. Administrative, fiscal, market and political dimensions capture the form (functional activities) and level (e.g. national to sub-national and local) of decentralisation while devolution, de-concentration, and delegation refer to the nature and degree of power being transferred”

In other words, it covers a range of concepts with different implementation implications, especially in the degree of responsibility intended to be transferred to local actors. As de-concentration it aims to redistribute administrative responsibilities within the central government whereas in what some describe as its ‘purest’ form, as devolution it seeks to create or strengthen autonomous action of local actors and

institutions outside central government control (Allan, 2004; Kataoka, 2006). Devolution could also refer to the 'transfer of competencies from the central state to the distinct legal entities' which could include non-governmental and private organisations (Jutting et al., 2004). Another way of viewing devolution is as a process of devolving administrative and fiscal responsibility to lower levels of government.



**Figure 3: Dimensions of Decentralisation**

| Form                                    |                | Degree of Power                             |                                     |
|---|----------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Overlapping<br>Functional<br>Activities | Market         | Devolution<br>Delegation<br>Deconcentration | Continuum from<br>highest to lowest |
|   | Political      |   |                                     |
|   | Fiscal         |   |                                     |
|   | Administrative |   |                                     |

Source: Naidoo (2002)

But, decentralisation does not mean a relinquishing of all forms of control from the central government or administration to the local level (De Gauwe et al., 2005). As Kataoka (2006) points out, even in contexts where devolution of roles and responsibilities are intended, central governments have continued to exercise some control or oversight of many responsibilities devolved to local government.

The new relationship that is emerging under decentralised governance between central and local government would seem to provide opportunities for how new roles and responsibilities might be conceptualised to provide equitable access to basic education. If the problem of access to basic education is construed as a political and economic one, then decentralisation may be seen as the response in offering citizens increased opportunities to participate in local-decision making to improve access to education and make it a worthwhile investment especially for the poor. What is clear from the literature is that imbalances and disparities in human and resource capacity in poor countries can actually make decentralisation exacerbate inequities in society (Davies et al., 2003; De Grauwe et al., 2005). Due to gaps in human and material resource capacity between urban and rural regions devolving power and decision-making completely to the local level actually has the potential to widen the development gap between rural and urban areas. As was found in Ghana, the widespread introduction of PTAs and SMCs has served urban communities better because they have been able to muster financial capital to improve quality of some urban schools, thus widening the quality gap between them and rural public schools. The reason for this is because as Akyeampong (2004:42) has noted, “unlike the situation in many advanced countries where the socio-economic environment and infrastructure for equitable delivery of education programmes is much more even, for many countries in the developing world especially Africa, there can be very uneven conditions”. Thus, decentralisation in systems that are not appropriately adjusted to its fundamental requirements for effectiveness can lead to outcomes that undermine the very reason why it is introduced in the first place (see Davies et. al., 2003).

De Grauwe et al., (2005:2) point out that, “... in many countries two forces combine to push for decentralisation: first, external pressure by international development agencies and experts; and second, internal political expediency in national contexts, where the public authorities are unable to organize or finance basic public services”. What the literature reviewed seldom throws up is how international development agencies, and indeed, national governments, have used decentralisation policy to specifically address problems of access to basic education. These are problems that are locally manufactured; when children do not attend school at all (Zone 1), dropout (Zone 2) or are excluded from secondary (Zone 4) after successfully completing

primary schooling, this is usually down to the interplay of family poverty, adverse socio-political conditions and lack of economic opportunities. If decentralisation, in principle, is expected to shift decision-making closer to local actors and shareholders (Chapman, 2000; Naidoo, 2002) to improve access to services including education, then the argument goes that this will create a more equitable society and help achieve the goals of EFA. But some studies show that attempts to decentralise services and decision-making faces great obstacles and may not necessarily serve the poor (Davies et al., 2003; Jutting et al., 2004; De Grauwe et al., 2005). The poor may not be in the position to actively engage in decisions about service delivery due to their lack of political bargaining power (UNESCO 2004 b).

What the literature also indicates is that in many contexts decentralisation of critical decision-making on school development has produced desirable outcomes, especially in terms of local government and communities taking up responsibility for building classrooms, hiring community or contract teachers, or raising funds for school infrastructure development (see PROBE 1999; Ahmed et al., 2003; World Bank 2004; De Grauwe et al., 2005). What appear to have received scant attention are initiatives where local authorities, schools and local communities have galvanized their efforts to address ‘software’ issues such as improving access to schooling.

The rest of the review is organised under five broad areas that have implications for improving access to basic education especially for poor and marginalised groups: decentralisation and decision-making; fiscal accountability, monitoring and inspection; local governance; and school governance, and decentralisation of teacher management. The final section of this review evaluates and highlights gaps that call for further research.

### **3.2 Decentralisation and decision-making**

Within the last two decades there has been a big push by international development agencies to make decentralised governance a key part of reforms to improve education service delivery in developing countries (Naidoo 2002; De Grauwe et al., 2005). This increasing policy shift is usually based on the assumption that decentralised systems are leaner and therefore better at responding to local needs (Rondinelli, 1981). Within the local community context, shared educational concerns, such as persistent dropout, high pupil absenteeism, and utilisation of school fees are expected to galvanize community and local government action (Chapman, 2000). Decentralisation of education service delivery, it is also argued, can produce greater community pressure for transparency and accountability in school management (Chapman, 2000). In Ghana, for example, education decentralisation has been presented as the vehicle for strengthening management efficiency and accountability by locating critical decision-making of education matters at the district level.

“Decentralisation will be the major driving force in strengthening efficiency and accountability of resources and results. Basic education will be made accountable to local level authorities with development and operational responsibilities transferred from central government to the districts. Self-regulation mechanisms through school communities at grass roots will be introduced” (Government of Ghana, 2000:35)

In Malawi, the government hoped to improve the management of education through greater decentralisation of educational decision-making:

“Given that improved planning and management thrive better in situations characterised by reduced centralisation of decision-making; the Government will support efforts aimed at promoting decentralised administrative structures and the participation of stakeholder groups in educational decision-making” (MoESC, 2000:6 cited in Davies et. al., 2003)

These aspirations are common in many developing countries reform policy programmes that are aiming to decentralize education services, but the reality is often very different (see, Tikly 1996; Davies et. al. 2003; Rose 2003; De Grauwe et al., 2005; Sayed and Soudien, 2005). Case study evidence from many different countries indicates that aspirations of decentralisation policy rarely produce the kind of outcomes expected (Tikly 1996; Naidoo 2002; De Grauwe et al., 2005). Nevertheless, this has not dampened commitment to its goals. In the main, developing country education systems that have pressed forward with decentralisation have not readily devolved power and control over education management, financial administration and teacher management to the local level. Also, as Davies et al, (2003) have clearly illustrated in their case study evidence from Malawi, introducing new structures is much easier than changing some of the critical levers that can make decentralisation work, such as the changing work culture, and improving accountability and resources.

In some West African systems the aspect of devolution practiced sees elected local authorities being given a number of responsibilities such as the construction, equipment and maintenance of basic schools (World Bank 2004; De Gauwe et al., 2005). What is mostly lacking is the authority and capacity of local authorities to restructure their systems so that they can provide more efficient delivery of services (Chapman 2000). Initiatives to decentralise school governance, for example, often leave out crucial decision-making responsibilities, for example, the power to allocate resources for context-specific needs. A good example is the introduction of capitation grants for schools to manage their own affairs. Its provision is mostly based on a uniform allocative formula usually determined at national level. The literature presents education decentralisation in developing countries as burdened by bureaucratic bottlenecks reflecting a reluctance to allow lower levels of government complete autonomy over administrative and resource management (Tikly 1996; World Bank 2001; De Grauwe et al., 2005). But, it also explains why decentralisation falters in many of these countries. Reluctance to devolve key decision-making is sometimes explained as the cause of weak human resource capacity and poor accountability procedures. The work of Davies et al., (2003:150) in Malawi clearly illustrates this problem, where a pilot district that was receiving donor funding faced the problem of having a ‘minimum baseline numbers of staff in a decentralised office which enable joint decision-making, functional meetings and delegation of routine duties.’”

Decision-making challenges can also derive from difficulties in altering traditional lines of authority. In Ethiopia, for example, a hierarchical institutional arrangement in decentralisation ‘prevented lower level government agencies from making legitimate allocative choices’ that would have seen schools enjoying substantial share of public expenditure allocated to primary schools (World Bank, 2001). Similarly, in a case

study of four countries (Zimbabwe, Chile, India & Tanzania) Tikly (1996:22) revealed that ‘decentralisation of decision-making power ... often proved more rhetorical than real’ because there was ‘a tendency for bureaucratic establishments to protect their power and not to cede power to ... groups they do not trust’. The literature points out that in many instances education decentralisation occurs without changes to the incentive structure to motivate accountability and transparency (Colclough 1994; UNESCO, 2000; World Bank, 2001). In effect, decentralisation policy hardly creates new ways of working that balances responsibility with accountability. The reluctance to devolve critical decision-making to local agencies and actors reflects to an extent, the deep-seated hierarchical relationship between central and local government that resists change to shift power and control away from the centre.

As noted earlier, some evidence suggests that decentralisation can actually foster inequities, due mainly to differences in financial capital at local level (Chapman, 2000; UNESCO 2004b). This occurs when financial responsibility is partially or totally devolved to local governments. Urban and affluent communities are able to raise more resources than poorer communities. Devolving key decision-making responsibilities to poor rural districts which may lack the requisite human resource capacity and infrastructure to deliver goals of decentralisation also undermines its objectives.

Decentralisation places more demands on local institutions, schools and in particular headteachers (Chapman, 2000). Local government systems lacking in human resource capacity, usually have restrictions placed on their responsibilities under decentralised regimes (e.g. Malawi). But, instead of seeing local governments as inefficient and lacking capacity for responsive decision-making, we would argue that it is better to look for potential and opportunities within these systems that can boost their institutional capacity and sensitise them into adapting their operations to meet the challenges of improving access and quality in schooling (see Akyeampong, 2004). With new constitutional mandates giving local education authority fiscal power to manage schools (i.e. build, maintain and manage schools), as has happened in places like Uganda and Ghana (Naidoo 2002; Akyeampong 2004;) the opportunity to redistribute authority to the local level has increased, but so also have the expectations.

But the picture painted by the literature on education decentralisation in developing countries is not all gloom and doom. Convincing examples of its potential are illustrated in De Grauwe et al., (2005) which provides case studies of decentralisation policy and practice in four West African countries<sup>1</sup>. These studies show ‘elements of hope’ for decentralisation policy in poor countries. For example, in these countries it had more or less motivated parents to show greater interest in their childrens’ education, to the extent that in some places the functioning of local education offices was financed. Although, De Grauwe et al (2005), agree it might not be a sustainable policy, and that its ‘impact on equity is probably negative, it nevertheless shows a commitment to education, which is an indispensable building block for any decentralisation policy’ (2005:11). Furthermore, it is an *indication of demand for education* that could serve better purposes than the usual purpose of resource

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<sup>1</sup> Countries are Benin, Guinea, Mali and Senegal

mobilisation. To illustrate this point, they describe a specific situation where in one school PTA members contacted parents of children absent from school for a considerable length of time and made efforts to convince these parents to send their children back to school. In another example, increased awareness of the role of the community in school development had encouraged one older woman in the community to take up the responsibility of caring for pupils with minor health problems, thus making the 'school a more child-friendly one' (2005:12). Thus, despite the considerable evidence of lack of effectiveness in decentralisation policy, the process in many countries has raised awareness and commitment among local players to take more active role in addressing problems of education.

De Grauwe et al. (2005) found that there was 'a strong belief among parents, teachers, local councillors and education officials ... *that decentralisation was the way forward*', (p. 12) (emphasis added) although teachers tended to be less positive. Also, there was ample evidence that decentralisation had encouraged local actors to mobilise resources to help tackle problems of quality and access to education. Such evidence is an indication that given the right environment decentralisation can help shift the balance of responsibility for local decision-making on matters that affect the lives of local people into their own hands. But Allan (2004) argues that poor people mostly tend to lose out in terms of access as a result of decentralisation, and that 'for the poorer sections of society to benefit ... local governments must engage civil society to try to disengage local elites pursuing their own interests (p. 19). However, this seem easier said than done.

If the new challenge for local government is to provide leadership that energises local communities, headteachers and teachers into action to improve access then what is needed is better understanding of how hierarchical power relations undermine local agency. Naidoo (2002) reviewed decentralisation policy and practice in six sub-Saharan African countries (Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Uganda & Zimbabwe) and concluded that core education decisions are hardly ever decentralised in a way that encourages genuine local community participation in decision-making. He argues that the key to real benefits of decentralisation are its emphasis on *redistribution, inter-governmental finance*, and the extent of *local participation in decision-making*. These are lacking to varying degrees in the countries he studied. Similarly, Chapman (2000) examined trends in educational administration in East Asia which showed that what the network of provincial, regional and district education offices largely did was to duplicate the structure of the central ministry, and that there was very little communication either between levels of ministry or across units at the same level. To address such challenges, others recommend a gradual transfer of autonomy to the local level – that is, allow lower levels of government to earn their autonomy by demonstrating their capability before allowing them to graduate to higher levels of responsibility and discretion within acceptable levels of risk (World Bank 2001; UNESCO 2004b).

In general, the literature reveals very little celebration of the positive impact of decentralisation policy 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 (see De Grauwe et al., 2005). 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.

### **3.3 Fiscal Accountability**

In some developing countries funding mechanisms used to allocate resources from central government have been used to encourage local governments to promote high enrolments in local government schools (Tikly 1996). However, the key to their success lies with greater responsibility and accountability for financial management devolved to the school level. Transparent approaches to resource allocation have been known to result in allocative decisions responsive to community demands as has been reported in Uganda (Reinikka & Svensson, 2005). In Ghana, the Ministry of Education embarked on capacity building plans for district education authorities with focus on improving management efficiency and transparent decision-making (MOESS, 2006). But, emphasis on vertical accountability has reinforced hierarchy as the dominant institutional arrangement in decentralisation. What appears not to have attracted much interest is 'horizontal accountability' to beneficiaries and stakeholders. If greater participatory decision-making responsive to local concerns is to take place satisfactorily, then this needs to enter into the decentralisation implementation strategy.

Much has been written about fiscal accountability and the challenges it poses in decentralisation. Although some might argue that decentralised decision-making without fiscal control is a cosmetic exercise, this may arise due to the lack of local capacity in preparing educational plans and budgets, (see the case of Malawi as reported by Davies et al., 2003). If in order to improve access to basic education local authorities and schools have to work together to determine and raise budgets, through local taxation and from central government sources, there must be local and external accountability mechanisms that ensure that resources are not captured by elite groups. As noted in the World Bank (2001) evaluation of decentralisation practices in Ethiopia, the extent of school-based management relies on whether school directors are able to assure good levels of fiduciary support and also ensure that resources meant for classrooms are not siphoned off. This is particularly crucial under recent moves to introduce capitation grants to schools to cover non-wage expenditure in some developing countries (Ghana, Rwanda, and Uganda are good examples).

Reinikka and Svensson (2005:2) have provided very powerful evidence of how a 'newspaper campaign in Uganda aimed at reducing capture of public funds by providing schools (parents) with information to monitor local officials' handling of a large education grant program". From government data this capitation grant programme appeared to work well but the evidence on the ground suggested that monies were not actually reaching schools. What the campaign did was to publicise which schools had been allocated money in the local newspapers. The effect was dramatic - schools received more than 80 percent of their entitlements in 2001 as compared to only 24 percent in the mid-1990s. The study found that with the

improved access to information about central government disbursement of funds to schools, this had impacted significantly on school enrolment and quality of education provision.

Clearly, where greater responsibility and accountability for financial management is devolved to schools, this can offer opportunities to use resources to improve quality and enrolment (Tikly, 1996). However, ensuring that budgets for schools are not unduly reduced through inappropriate budget allocative practices at district education level or are not misappropriated by heads seems to be the most pressing challenge. One recommendation is for schools to develop their annual plans with indicative resource provision developed by SMCs and community representatives including parents (World Bank, 2001). The evidence from Uganda would suggest that this has to include transparent accountability measures using the popular media. For example, FM radio broadcast are becoming quite a common phenomenon in many African countries reaching both urban and poor communities alike. Radio broadcasts as well as print medium could be used to alert schools and communities about funds that have been allocated to improve quality and access.

An important observation made by De Grauwe et al., (2005) is that government financial support to districts rarely takes into account different district and school characteristics and needs. 'In Senegal, for instance, the same budget for transport expenses was provided to all regions and districts regardless of the geography and the number and quality of schools' (De Grauwe et al, 2005:10). It would make sense to prioritise financial support to districts which are at a greater disadvantage with respect to infrastructure, school support services and management personnel.

Autonomy and accountability at local authority and school levels is not a simple and straightforward matter. What happens or fails to happen on the ground reflects the difficulties of shifting traditions and long-standing practices. As De Grauwe et al., (2005:10) have pointed out the situation can be described as paradoxical:

“where autonomy is needed it is lacking because of a rigid control which, however, is inefficient and counterproductive. And where control is needed, for example, as regards the use of parent contributions, it is equally lacking. As a result ... the already scarce resources are not used as much as they could be for educational improvement”.

Also, in the four country case studies De Grauwe et al., found that none of the countries emphasised the monitoring of actions taken at the local level. In particular, information about how schools were using funds or how local education offices were using funds allocated to support schools was completely lacking.

### **3.4 Monitoring and inspection**

Decentralised management of schooling is another popular area of policy emerging in education reforms in some developing countries (see World Bank, 2004; Sayed & Soudien, 2005). Traditionally, most district education offices have been responsible for school inspection mainly to check teachers' lesson plans, teacher and pupil attendance records etc (Fobih, Akyeampong & Koomson, 1999; World Bank, 2004). Few studies have raised and discussed the issue of the systematic monitoring of

school attendance and participation that provides information for strategic decision-making to improve access to basic education. For example, Colclough (1994) found, in an evaluation of primary school systems in sub-Saharan Africa, virtually no reference to community and school governance initiatives focused on increasing school enrolment. In Ghana, for example, circuit supervisors who visited schools rarely went beyond checking staffing numbers and enrolments for the purpose of addressing problems of teacher absenteeism or low enrolment (World Bank, 2004). Similarly, rarely do district education offices respond to information from monitoring and evaluation reports on problems of teacher absenteeism and poor enrolments (see, World Bank, 2004; Akyeampong & Asante 2006). The fact is, in many developing countries, supervision or inspection practices fail to inculcate any sense of accountability in teachers (Steyn & Squelch, 1994) or those doing the supervision or inspection (see Ahmed and Nath, 2005). Sometimes the reason has been the sheer number of schools inspectors have to inspect or supervise. A case in point is where in one Senegalese district four inspectors were responsible for supervising nearly 800 teachers (De Grauwe et al., 2005). Coupled with inadequate resources for regular school visits, it is easy to see why local education offices are unable to plan strategically and focus their efforts where they are most needed (Davies et al., 2003). This may also explain why in the case of Ghana, external school supervisors (circuit supervisors), have not been able to provide effective support to schools that go beyond mere inspection of school records (Fobih, Akyeampong & Koomson, 1999).

Sayed and Soudien (2005) have described practices in South African schools where although the policy says all children have a right to be admitted in school, in reality schools had interpreted the policy to suit their interest and ended up excluding certain children from particular ethnic backgrounds. This is evidence of how devolution of decision-making to the school level is no guarantee that democratic principles will be applied to ensure equity and fairness in school management affairs. What is interesting about the South African case is the apparent lack of a system of local authority inspection that could have dealt with some of the 'hidden' practices of exclusion.

### **3.5 Local government and school governance**

One of the purposes of decentralising education services is to widen the participation of non-education professionals at local community level in the running and management of schools (Grauwe et al., 2005). The most significant study in our search which examined the relationships between various actors, i.e. local authorities, education offices, communities and school staff, was by De Grauwe et al., (2005). This was based on a four country case study in West Africa. Some of their key findings in terms of how this relationship worked are as follows:

- Generally, the interest of local authorities in education affairs rarely went beyond the visible, mainly because few municipalities had adequate resources that would have allowed them greater participation in school-level affairs. Often their tax base is low and they experienced considerable delays in transfer of funds from central government.
- Competing demands on districts meant that the affairs of schools were not always a high priority.



- The relationship between elected local authorities and education offices was usually characterised by conflict rather than collaboration. Crucially, their different legitimacies are in confrontation: “education officials refer to their professional legitimacy, while local authorities emphasize their political legitimacy”.
- Relationships between the school heads and the PTA chair tended to be strong. Teachers and PTA members were often poorly informed about key decisions. The composition of PTAs (‘many are illiterates ... chosen because of their usefulness, for example, mechanics or plumbers’) was such that they lacked the power to hold the headteacher to account. Crucially, many PTAs did not constitute a true representation of parents and the community.
- The culture of accountability and participation was generally weak, allowing headteachers in particular to monopolize decision-making. (pp.4-6)

These findings are particularly important when we come to think of how the relationship between education offices, local authorities, schools and communities can be constructed to engage with challenges of access to schooling. For example, failure to tackle and resolve some of them will undoubtedly weaken the aspiration to make local actors key agents in promoting effective access to schooling.

Local government institutions usually replicate the functions of national ministries (Chapman, 2000). This means often their involvement in education has mainly been on regulatory grounds. When Tikly’s study (1996) examined the experiences of four countries (Zimbabwe, Chile, India & Tanzania) in local government provision of schooling, he found that their focus was more on ‘official’ responsibilities based on traditional roles, rather than on attempting to redefine their roles in response to peculiar needs.

The main emphasis of the discourse on education decentralisation is usually about local government’s ability to finance schooling, the efficiency with which they distribute resources and the nature of taxes and levies used to fund education. A gap, we find, is research which produces understandings of how local institutions can work hand in hand with communities and schools to tackle issues of persistent dropout, high pupil absenteeism, and generally engage with school management groups to find solutions to problems of education.

School management committees (SMC) are the most recent governance initiative to hit developing country education systems in the last two decades or so. In Ghana, for example, SMCs have been set up and its member’s undergone training on developing work plans for school improvement (World Bank, 2005; MOESS 2006). But their impact varies widely and is generally not impressive. In other studies, SMCs roles and responsibilities have been found to conflict with those of PTAs (De Grauwe et al., 2005). In the study of primary education quality in Bangladesh, Ahmed and Nath (2005) found SMCs had in principle total management control over primary schools but in practice were not able to exercise their authority. SMCs were usually made up of people who did not fit their role as they had been elected by friends and relations of headteachers and elected representatives.

In Ghana, one way in which schools have been made more accountable to local communities, especially in poor rural areas, has been through the introduction of school performance appraisal meetings (SPAM). This is the closest we see as creating space for schools, local communities, and district education offices to face and address school quality improvement issues. SPAMs, in this context, present the best opportunity for parents' to voice their concerns about educational quality. However, not many parents or household members attend SPAMs (only 6 percent in a survey of households (World Bank, 2004). A typical complaint of teachers in SPAM meetings was that parents' are failing in their duty to ensure that pupils attend school. Parents, on the other hand, complained about teacher absenteeism and their poor commitment to teaching. Headteachers who are responsible for taking many of the issues addressed in SPAM meetings forward lacked the authority and autonomy to take relevant and appropriate action (World Bank, 2004).

In relationships between local education authorities and schools, there is some ambiguity over who is responsible to whom and for what (Tikly 1996; De Grauwe et al., 2005). Tikly (1996:26) argues for, 'a clear legislative and regulatory framework that defines the nature and extent of power and responsibility over schooling between levels and tiers of government if confusion and ambiguity are to be avoided'. But, judging from some of the evidence reviewed, this is unlikely to galvanise action at the local level, especially where decision-making stills remains authoritarian and the poor have little political power for bargaining (UNESCO, 2004b). Increasingly, headteachers are being expected to spearhead localised decision-making to improve schools, but many lack the requisite management skills and authority to deliver objectives of education decentralisation at school level (Chapman, 2000). More importantly, many lack the respect from their own teachers and communities to facilitate and implement decisions (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2006).

Generally speaking, the findings of studies in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia indicate that the implementation of governance reforms (along with other decentralisation measures) is encountering major difficulties. Teacher opposition to these reforms has been intense in some countries. In Nepal, for example, some teacher unions have resisted plans to hand over the management of schools to communities because of fear that their rights and privileges will be trampled upon and teachers will be excluded from decision-making. In Bangladesh, there is widespread dissatisfaction with how school management committees are functioning. They tend to be dominated by head teachers and local political leaders and do not have sufficient resources to carry out their designated responsibilities (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2006).

Also, in both sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, school and teacher relationships with local communities tend to be more problematic in rural areas (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2006). In Lesotho, 'the reasons for this are that teachers and parents are less likely to have common goals for children or it is more difficult to find competent individuals for school management and advisory committees' (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2006:23).

### **3.6 Decentralisation of Teacher Management**

Different models of teacher management present different challenges and their effect on schools. Improved teacher management advocated within the context of

decentralised education service delivery has been seen at least as increasing teacher accountability to schools and communities within which they work (Gaynor, 1998; World Bank, 2004). Decentralised teacher management, in places where it has been introduced, has enabled local authorities to address acute shortage of qualified personnel and introduce incentives to improve teacher performance (Gaynor, 1998; Bennell & Akyeampong, 2006). But where this has meant that local communities contribute to the salary costs of teachers, this has come to represent a burden on the poor and increased dependency on external assistance, usually in the form of NGO support.

There is some evidence that locally determined incentives help to improve teacher performance, especially in areas where teacher salaries are low (Gaynor, 1998). The World Bank supported programme in Mexico which linked teacher payments to attendance helped to produce high completion rates and low repetition and dropout rates. Under this scheme, teacher attendance improved by 60 percent (Gaynor, 1998). Although, payment by results is unpopular among teachers and their unions in developing countries (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2006), it does demonstrate the effect that locally determined incentives can have on teachers' attitude to their work. Bennell & Akyeampong (2006; p24) found in their study of teacher motivation and incentives in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, that 'the degree to which teachers are properly accountable to their clients (children and parents) and their managers (head teachers and district and national level managers) has a powerful influence on teacher motivation levels. But, in South Asia, in particular, the 'accountability culture' is very weak (Ramachandran, et al. 2005; Kahn, 2006; Devkota, 2006). In Nepal government primary school teachers cared little about the impact that their performance had on their students' achievement. Whereas among private school teachers the 'accountability culture' is high because of constant teacher evaluation on the basis of student performance (Devkota, 2006)

What the literature we reviewed does not reveal is the deliberate use of localised incentives to motivate teachers to address problems of access. This seems to be an area that might require action research to investigate the kinds of locally determined incentives that would encourage teachers to be sensitive and proactive when it comes to problems of attendance and dropout.

The social background of teachers can also exacerbate low levels of accountability. In India, in particular, 'the social hiatus' between teachers and children is wide in government schools with most teachers belonging to upper castes and most children coming from low castes (Ramachandran, et. al., 2005). Sadly, as Ramachandran (2005) points out, social attitudes and community prejudices continue to play an important role in determining the ability and willingness of teachers to reach out to children, which raises a number of important questions relevant to improving education delivery at local level - to what extent are the benefits of decentralised teacher management affected by teachers not hailing from the locality or who have different ethnic or social backgrounds? How does it affect their sense of commitment to the problems of education in the community such as low enrolment and participation in schooling? There is evidence that teachers who work in schools in their home areas tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction than their colleagues who are 'strangers' in the locality (De Grauwe et al., 2005), partly because those originating from the local area are more likely to have supportive extended family and

social networks, be known to the community, and have higher levels of commitment to promoting education and development activities in the area, than those who have little or no connection with the school community. Urban-based teachers who are posted to rural schools tend to come from better-off family backgrounds and often face considerable difficulties, even hardships, adapting to village life (Hedges ,2002; Bennell & Akyeampong, 2006). What there is little understanding of is whether education decentralisation (including the recruitment and management of teachers by local institutions and schools), makes any difference to how teachers are recruited and deployed, and what effect it has on their attitudes to children and parents. What De Grauwe and his associates found in the four West African countries they studied was that, local level recruitment of teachers' ensured greater commitment to local schools, but because these teachers were not on any recognised career path, turnover was high. Also, a problem with local recruitment of teachers found in the West African country studies was that relatives and friends were appointed as teachers by principals or PTA chairs. (De Grauwe et al., 2005)

In parts of Asia, districts, communities and schools are taking on greater responsibility for teacher selection and deployment (Chapman, 2000). Where the responsibility for teacher deployment and management resides further away from local institutions and schools, this has been found to create social distance between teachers and local institutions. Gaynor (1998:69) argues that *'if the responsibility for teacher management is to be given to regional or district administrative levels, it is important to have a rationale for doing so based on the value to teaching and learning, to ensure that there is agreement on the specific functions for which the region or district will be responsible, and to describe the devolved responsibilities'*. But, quite clearly even more important are the personal identities of teachers and how that influences their professional behaviour including their attitudes and commitments to challenges of schooling, especially in rural areas (Akyeampong & Stephens, 2002; Bennell & Akyeampong, 2006). There is also evidence that pre-service teacher training does not adequately prepare teachers for practical problems in rural areas, especially working with parents and communities and implementing incentive schemes (Steyn & Squelch ,1994; Lewin & Stuart ,2002). If teachers are to be allies in tackling low enrolment and participation in schooling, their ability to work and relate well with communities members and parents is even more crucial.

### **3.7 Local Governance and Access – a summary**

The review of literature on local governance attempted to identify studies that focused on the inter-relations between local government institutions, schools and local communities. In particular, our interest was on understanding how local government institutions have influenced teacher management, school governance, local accountability, and local decision-making for school improvement. With the exception of the De Gauwe et al., (2005) study, we found very little research that dealt *directly* with exploring this relationship. There was a lot of emphasis in the education decentralization literature on issues relating to local finance of education, provision of school buildings, teacher recruitment, deployment, appraisal, promotion and training. The sociological dimensions of the inter-relationship between local governance, local communities and schools remain a minor concern on the policy and research agenda. This is an important missing gap, particularly because of its implications for key determinants of access to basic education.

When children do not attend school, dropout or do not progress from primary to secondary, this is not simply a problem for schools or parents, but also for society. Local government institutions that are sensitive and responsive to the problem that this poses to children and to society's future, would see high dropouts, low completion rates etc. as issues threatening community's development and adopt appropriate local level policies in response.

In conclusion, the key issues emerging from this part of the review can be summarized as follows:

- Decentralisation is defined and enacted as a process that is supposed to make decision making more appropriate to local contexts with the involvement of local actors and institutions. But in reality, decentralisation only creates partial devolution of power, and tends to replicate deep seated hierarchical power relations operating on the delegation of power (Bray and Mukundan, 2004; Rose, 2005,). In terms of how it relates to improving access to schooling at the local level, it raises questions about the extent to which local communities and schools can 'own' and address problems of low enrolment and participation in schooling, when they still see the problems as belonging elsewhere, and are unable to adapt local structures and systems to address local problems of education.
- Local government institutions often lack the required human resource capacity to take on critical planning and decision-making roles. Reluctance to devolve power is from both sides – taking power at local level is risky in contexts of strong authoritarian histories of governance. The question that this raises is how will this affect educational access as a localized issue – who takes up responsibility for supporting poor districts to address their problems of access to schooling, how do we ensure that this does not increase disparities and dependency on external agents such as NGOs that are not sustainable?
- There is also the issue of teacher management and accountability. Increased decentralization of teacher management has its benefits and challenges. It can create opportunities for making teachers more accountable to school management on matters of quality, student retention and progression. But, teachers and their unions are often uncomfortable with moves to make them directly accountable to communities, especially if this means their voice in the decision-making process is not given much attention. Moves to recruit local people with fewer or no professional qualification to fill acute teacher shortages are suited for decentralized teacher management systems, but are seen as undermining professionalism by qualified teachers. Research is needed that explores the advantages and disadvantages of local recruitment on improving access to education.
- School governance bodies and decision-making is another area that the review looked at. Although, PTAs and SMCs are being set up in many education systems in developing countries, there are tensions and contradictions in their roles and responsibilities that undermine their effectiveness. Also, the composition of these bodies may not necessarily be representative of parents

and communities. Finally, the composition of school governance bodies has implications for the extent to which headteachers can be held accountable.

- The relationship between education offices, local authorities, schools and communities, is clearly not an unproblematic one. There are different interests and priorities for each group and the limited evidence we examined in the literature suggests that, the relationships can at times be tenuous and contradictory. It is not entirely clear whose involvement in school is being promoted by decentralization policy, and how these relationships might work to address exclusion issues in Zones 1, 2 and 3.
- Monitoring and evaluation procedures are not widely reported in the research although these practices reinforce a top-down hierarchy in which information is collected but not used for feedback or for formative purposes in school development.

## **4. Community Participation**

### **4.1 Introduction - Schools within Communities**

As with the other sections, in this section on community participation and access there will be an emphasis on the core countries, drawing on a few key studies but supported by other literature. One source of information has been the significant body of literature on girls' education (for example, Avotri et al., 2000; Colclough *et al.*, 2003, Kane, E. 2004). The majority of these researchers have been Western educationalists working within economic frameworks, concentrating on identifying reasons for girls' non-enrolment, attendance or persistence in schools, which is generally measured against the situation for boys. Similarly, there is a substantial body of literature focusing on community participation in schooling, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa (see for example the reviews in Watt, 2001, and Miller Grandvaux & Yoder, 2002). Although some of the literature, such as the Miller-Grandvaux and Yoder review, also refers to community schools managed wholly by communities, this review predominantly focuses on the complex relations between communities and government schools, leaving aside community involvement in non-state provision of schooling (see Rose, 2007).

Although much of the policy literature assumes communities to be homogenous, harmonious and static, whose resources can collectively be mobilised for a perceived collective community good (see for example DeStefano, 1996), our position is that they are multi-layered, with their own hierarchies, determined to an extent by age, gender, ethnicity, caste, function within the community etc., and dynamic, as power relations are played out on a daily basis in accommodation and resistance. The composition of communities too is always changing, with people dying or being born into them and migrating in and out of them. Moreover, communities in all but the most isolated sections of societies are not the idealised 'traditional' communities envisaged in educational policy documentation, but fractured and fragmented communities constructed through the various processes of for example, colonialism, post-colonialism and civil unrest (Sommers, 2002; Sefa Dei, 2004; Pryor, 2005; Sookraj, Gopal & Maharaj, 2005).

Thus, it follows that there is not just one experience or understanding of community-school relations within a particular community but multiple experiences and understandings, experienced individually and collectively, which themselves change within individuals, contingent on social circumstances and practices. This variety and dynamism is not reflected in many of the studies consulted, especially those mainly comprising quantitative data (see for example Khandker, 1996, Academy for Educational Development, 2002)

Even putting aside the questionable assumption that there is such an entity as a school community, there is the question of which community? Another of the problems of government policies is the notion of a school firmly embedded in a particular geographical community, whereas in fact, community members (in terms of school parents, for example) can be drawn from diverse communities, at considerable distance from the schools (Rose, 2003; Soudien & Sayed, 2004), especially in the case

of secondary schools (Francis *et al.*, 1998). Conversely, as when settlements have come about through migration, community members living in the locality of a school might actually feel greater allegiances to schools in other 'home' communities (Pryor, 2005); so too might people who have the choice of sending their children to a school outside their geographical community because it is perceived to be better quality (see for example PROBE, 1999, in India, Francis *et al.*, 1998, in Nigeria, or Soudien and Sayed, 2004, in South Africa).

Similarly, teachers within schools can feel allegiance to other communities (see Section 2.2.6) and accountability 'upwards' to the school management and to the local government department (Watt, 2001). Alternatively, community affiliations can be articulated in terms of ethnic, kinship or gender groups (Bray, 1996). Thus, the notion of community<sup>2</sup> itself is problematic. The disparateness of these strands of communities and their impact on issues pertaining to access will be explored more in the section on community participation.

First, this section of the review looks at the characteristics of communities identified in the literature as having the greatest difficulties in accessing formal education. This is followed by a summary of community views on schooling. Next, attention focuses on community views of children in relation to both the school and the household/community and the effect these views can have on access. The review will then turn to community participation in schooling, looking in particular at the formal means of community participation in schools, such as financial support and labour, involvement in school governing bodies, management committees, parent-teacher associations etc., before turning the tables and examining what is written about the ways in which schools are involved in communities through outreach activities and how this can increase the potential to improve access.

## **4.2 Community characteristics**

Within the literature on educational access the community has often been constructed within discourses of poverty (Subrahmanian, 2003) as the econometric literature (see for example UNESCO, 2003) has identified the most affected communities in terms of out-of-school children (in Zones 1 and 2) in particular national contexts within South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa as being poor and rural. Within these communities girls, more often than boys, are more likely to be out of school (UNESCO, 2003, 2004). Nevertheless, despite poverty being the key determinant of entry or persistence in school, studies have shown it is not the only factor (Colclough *et al.*, 2000; Vasavi, 2003). Moreover, poor families are willing to make considerable financial sacrifices for formal schooling although only if it is perceived to be good quality (PROBE 1999; Boyle *et al.*, 2002; Ahmed & Nath, 2005).

Specific studies on urban communities were less apparent in the literature consulted despite the fact that new communities (in geographical terms) are constantly being formed on the fringes of large cities as urban migration continues to increase in many developing country contexts. As Vasavi (2003) notes in relation to India, 'these growing metropolises ... attract large numbers of rural migrants, but provide no

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<sup>2</sup> See Bray, 1996, and Watt, 2001 for further discussions. However, despite our conceptualisation of plurality, for the purposes of this literature review the singular 'community' will more commonly be used, as it is in much of the literature reviewed.



institutional and systemic structures for children to receive education' (p. 76). Issues of access to government schooling for children in urban slum areas clearly merit further study using this schema, in addition to existing studies of children in conflict, who, it is claimed, are often hiding in cities (Sommers, 2002). Studies of non-formal or private schooling (such as Thompson Ekundayo, 2001, on non-formal education in Kenya, and Tooley et al., 2006, on private education in Nigeria) have also looked at the schooling needs of children in Zone 1.

Other specific community groups that feature in the literature on community and educational access are distinguished in terms of religion. Muslim communities in West Africa, for example, are often implicitly criticised for not wanting their children, and girls in particular, to attend school and therefore be subject to harmful influences of Westernisation (Avotri et al., 2000; Academy for Educational Development, 2002; Bray, 2003; see CNRS on education for Muslim communities). In India and Nepal, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are often singled out as particularly disadvantaged communities, both in terms of poverty (and therefore unable to pay schools fees or needing child labour at particular times) and in terms of being at the receiving end of caste prejudices by government school teachers, who are generally from 'upper' castes and considered particular social groups too 'dirty' to teach (PROBE, 1999; Ramachandran et al., 2005). Their mistreatment of children from these communities can force children to dropout of, or be withdrawn from, school (PROBE, 1999; Vasavi, 2003).

Orphans too have also been identified as a vulnerable group (particularly due to HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa) (Hepburn, 2001; Subbarao & Coury, 2004; Ssewamala, 2005), as have children who have been displaced or otherwise affected by conflict (Sommers, 2002).

Parents featured as the principal community members in the research on communities and schooling and are frequently constructed in deficit, explicitly by school and educational authority officials, as children's non-enrolment or attendance is often ascribed to parental lack of education, ignorance about the importance of schooling, lack of interest or poverty (PROBE, 1999; Boyle et al., 2002; Vasavi, 2003; Ahmed & Nath, 2005), and sometimes implicitly by authors (for example Asian Development Bank, 1998). Even when teachers are reported to be aware that parents are too poor either to pay fees or school costs or to spare a child's labour, they nevertheless still hold them responsible for ensuring their child's attendance at school and therefore implicitly criticise them when they fail to do this (PROBE, 1999; Ahmed & Nath, 2005). Conversely, parents in numerous studies construct teachers and schools as being in deficit, sometimes expressing their dissatisfaction by refusing to enrol or by withdrawing their children from school (Boyle et al., 2002; Suzuki, 2003). Studies in India, however, indicate that sometimes parents internalise these deficit constructions of themselves in relation to schooling, which may negatively affect their children's participation in schooling (PROBE, 1999; Balagopalan, 2003). Unsatisfactory parent-school relations in a variety of contexts have been associated with non-enrolment and dropout (see for example, Asian Development Bank, 1998, PROBE, 1999, Engelbrecht et al., 2005, and Pryor, 2005)

In the studies reviewed children generally featured as victims either of household-based child labour or of parental poverty and concomitant poor health that either does

not enable them to enrol in school, or causes them to dropout (PROBE, 1999; Boyle et al., 2002) although child labour and attendance at school are not necessarily mutually exclusive (UNESCO, 2003). In addition, the extent to which children exert agency in choosing to miss or dropout of school, rather than being asked by, or negotiating with family members, in order to work is often not clear in studies.

Irregular attendance, which particularly affects children from poor families, can often result in excessive corporal punishment and or harassment and further absenteeism or dropout (Ahmed & Nath, 2005). These connections are only exceptionally made in the literature (see PROBE, 1999, or Ahmed and Nash, 2005). More often, though, characteristics are identified separately – for example, the extensive literature on corporal punishment explains its effects in terms of truancy or absenteeism, particularly affecting boys (see Human Rights Watch (HRW), 1999, in Kenya; Kuleana, 1999, in Tanzania; UNICEF, 2001, in South Asia; Soneson, 2005, in Zambia) but does not make connections with the possible reasons why pupils might be beaten that lie outside the school, such as absence due to poor health or family needs. Similarly, studies looking at out-of-school reasons why children might not attend school regularly (see for example Dachi & Garrett, 2003; Lloyd & Hewett, 2003) do not follow through the possible effects of poor attendance (other than in terms of poor performance) such as the likelihood of increased teacher abuse or punishment, resulting in further absences.

Importantly, children rarely featured in the literature reviewed as community members in their own right outside their location within families, with duties as family members in terms of household chores, caring for siblings and involvement in agricultural or business activities. Clearly, this is an area worthy of further exploration.

### **4.3 Community views on schooling**

Formal schooling can be viewed both symbolically and pragmatically and often simultaneously in contradictory ways. First, schools are generally conceived as symbols of modernity, as colonial, and now post-colonial, products. Although they are more usually viewed positively as vehicles to social and economic progress (Ahmed & NaTh, 2005), they can be viewed negatively as unwanted vehicles of Westernisation and a threat to ‘traditional values’ (Academy for Educational Development, 2002; Bray, 2003). The fact that many community members in rural locations have never been to school can contribute to a sense that the school is an unknown (PROBE, 1999). This can be further exacerbated by school tendencies to adopt rigid time-tabling, uniforms, language policies, rules and regulations, organisational systems, curriculum content and disciplinary procedures which are far removed from the daily life experiences of most villagers (see Singh, 1995, for example, and Section 2.4 on school processes). Often the flexibility and greater curricular relevance of non-formal education programmes or community schools is highlighted in contrast to the unresponsiveness of formal schooling (see for example Miller-Grandvaux & Yoder, 2000; Ahmed & Nath, 2005).

One way to mitigate the effect of alienation between communities and schools has been to recruit local teachers (Academy for Educational Development, 2002; Miller-Grandvaux, 2002). There has been a strong drive in this regard in Bangladesh, for

example (Khandker, 1996; Haq & Islam, 2005). Local recruitment of teachers is likely to enable more female teachers to be recruited since they do not need to leave families, which can encourage girls in Zone 1 to enrol and those in Zone 3 to persist (UNESCO, 2003). Another factor which can help bring communities closer to schools is teaching in the local language, or conducting bilingual classes (Kane, E. 2004; Trudell, 2005). This can also increase the likelihood of parental involvement in school work (DeStefano, 1996; Benson, 2000), which is often assumed to be likely to improve retention and achievement (Benson, *ibid.*). See also Section 2.4.3.

While within certain communities, as described above, they might be considered as threatening alien cultures, schools were more often viewed positively by communities as symbols of modernity and 'progress' (PROBE, 1999; Balagopalan and Subrahmanian, 2003), crucial for acquiring skills for an industrialised society. Parental acceptance of the value of formal schooling in rural areas often also entails acceptance of children migrating to urban areas in search of commercial, service or government jobs (PROBE, 1999; Pryor & Ampiah, 2003). The desire to be part of this process of modernisation and benefit from its perceived financial and social benefits (even when in reality pupils may have little chance of reaping these rewards) in part explains parental and pupil acceptance of learning in the dominant official (often colonial) language even when pupils might be more likely to understand if they were being taught in a local language they could understand (Palme, 1999; Humphreys, 2005; Trudell, 2005; see also Section 2.4.3).

As research in Ghana has shown (Pryor & Ampiah, 2003; Pryor, 2005), qualification inflation can also affect parental views on the value of primary schooling where primary completion is not necessarily a guarantee of employment. If children are unlikely to gain a secondary school qualification, which frequently entails moving out of the village to a larger urban settlement, then parents can view completion of primary schooling in itself as not worthwhile (Pryor & Ampiah, *ibid.*).

The location of schools has also been an important determinant of parental willingness to send children to school. Not only does the proximity of a school increase the chance of a parent enrolling a child in school, and minimise the likelihood of their dropping out on account of a school's accessibility (Asian Development Bank, 1998; Boyle *et al.*, 2002), but it also satisfies parental concerns for child safety, particularly for girls (PROBE, 1999; Colclough *et al.*, 2003; Kane, J. 2004). Thus, in rural areas where secondary schools in particular are not in close proximity parents are reluctant to send girls to school (UNESCO, 2003).

Recent research in the area has shown that parental decisions about children's access to schooling are often intimately related to quality (PROBE 1999; Vasavi, 2003; UNESCO, 2004) and that these decisions are not one-off decisions, but are ones that may be revised according to perceived changes in the school and/or in social circumstances within the household or community (Boyle *et al.*, 2002). In particular, teacher absenteeism, alcoholism, unprofessional teacher-pupil relations (such as sexual harassment or abuse of pupils, including excessive corporal punishment), poor qualifications and inadequate pedagogical skills have all been cited in a variety of national contexts as reasons for non-enrolment or withdrawal of children from school (see Asian Development Bank, 1998; PROBE, 1999; Balagopalan & Subrahmanian, 2003; Vasavi, 2003; Ahmed & Nath, 2005; Pryor, 2005). Interestingly, Boyle *et al.*'s

(2002) six-country study noted gender-differentiated attitudes with male household heads being more concerned with organisational and management issues and teacher qualifications, whereas female parents/carers were more concerned about welfare issues, such as teacher attitudes towards students, provision of food and a safe environment. Children too were more concerned about welfare issues.

#### **4.4 Community views on children**

The frequently econocentric literature on communities and schooling constructs children as important family resources and the schooling of children in terms of direct, indirect and opportunity costs. The latter are of particular concern here. They vary according to the time of year and circumstances. At harvesting times in rural areas, for example, children are often needed to work and when exams coincide with labour demands they can have detrimental effects on pupil performance (Boyle et al., 2002), with implications for retention. The need for children to work is often seasonal and fluctuating, depending not only on agricultural seasons, but also on family crises or illnesses, when older siblings, and girls in particular are withdrawn from school to look after other family members (PROBE, 1999; Boyle *et al.*, 2002;). This has become particularly acute in households affected by HIV/AIDS (see for example Kadzamira & Chibwana, 2000, in Malawi). Studies have shown that teachers are often not sympathetic to these reasons for children missing school (see PROBE, 1999; Dachi & Garrett, 2002).

Indeed, the wealth of literature on gender and access has shown in various country contexts that family expectations about children's involvement in household chores and income-generating labour demands are gendered (e.g. Bredie and Beeharry, 1998; Boyle et al., 2002; Colclough et al., 2003). Girls are frequently engaged more and for longer in household tasks than boys and consequently girls cite household work as a reason for non-attendance more often than boys (FAWE, 1997; PROBE, 1999; UNESCO, 2003). Female tasks are also often more time-bound, such as preparing meals at home, and they cannot necessarily be fitted around homework or study time. However, boys' greater access to being involved in income-generating activities or the greater demand made by families for male labour for certain agricultural work is often the reason for their eventual dropping out of school (UNESCO, 2003), especially if they are performing badly.

Research in a number of national contexts has shown that gendered expectations also exist as regards appropriate levels of schooling for boys and girls. Some formal schooling is seen as desirable to increase marriage prospects for girls, or to enable them to be better mothers and carers within the family although at the same time girls' marriage prospects are sometimes said to be harmed if they are 'overeducated' (PROBE, 1999) Moreover, these prospects can also be damaged if girls are perceived to be at risk from sexual violence in schools (PROBE, 1999; Colclough et al., 2003). In addition, a number of girls in rural areas or 'traditional' communities dropout of school either to get married or on account of pregnancy. As Chilisa (2002) has noted with reference to countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, these girls find it difficult to return to school after giving birth even where government regulations now allow re-admittance.

Boys, on the other hand, are often considered more likely to be able to reap financial rewards for their schooling and so their education generally takes precedence over their female siblings in poor households, where choices have to be made about who can be sent to school (PROBE, 1999; Boyle et al., 2002).

Evidence in a number of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa has shown that orphans and/or more distant family relatives are often asked to work longer hours than family members and are less likely to go to school (Case et al., 2000, in UNESCO, 2003)

#### **4.5 Community participation in schools**

Recent interest in community participation in formal education has come from two distinct sources. As with the prioritisation of decentralisation, it has emerged both from neo-liberal imperatives for more efficient use of financial and material resources promoted by organisations such as the World Bank and bi-lateral agencies, together with increased political advocacy for greater community ‘ownership’ and involvement in decision-making (Rose, 2003; Pryor, 2005). However, greater community involvement has frequently been a top-down imposition and not a response to demands from communities for greater involvement. Indeed, in various national contexts many communities themselves consider this kind of participation as an additional burden on the already considerable demands on their time and resources (Watt, 2001; Pryor & Ampiah, 2003; Rose, 2003), whereas school and local government officials often ascribe what they perceive to be poor or non-involvement by parents to lack of interest or lack of formal education (PROBE, 1999; Vasavi, 2003).

The key arguments made in the literature reviewed in favour of community participation are summarised in Figure 4 alongside some of the concerns or difficulties associated with its practice. The extent to which these issues apply in different contexts varies and complexities on the ground are inevitably oversimplified.

**Figure 4: Issues Surrounding Community Participation in Schooling**

| <b>Arguments in favour of community participation</b>                      | <b>Concerns about community participation in practice</b>                                |
|--|--|
| Mobilisation of additional resources for schooling (through cost-sharing)  | Participation often limited to financial or material contributions                       |
| Increased ownership (e.g. through resource allocation and decision-making) | Accountability of schools often more upwards to local government than out to communities |
| Increased accountability of schools  | Decrease in state responsibility but often not a   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Increased efficiency in schools  | concomitant relinquishing of power  |
| Increased responsiveness of schools to local needs   | Costs a burden on communities, especially the poorest   |
| Increased choice in schooling  | Uncertain sustainability of community participation   |
| Better pupil attendance (through increased parental involvement) and achievement                 | Greater likelihood of the school/teachers being pressured by local politics   |
| Greater teacher professionalism  | Unequal access to participation on formal school bodies (according to gender, level of schooling, ethnicity, locality, caste, SES, political affiliation etc.)  |
| Improved educational quality (through increased accountability and extra resources)              | Lack of clarity of remit or 'real authority' for participatory bodies   |
| Improved democratisation and social cohesion within the community                                | Inequitable participation in schooling<br>→ those excluded less willing to support schooling<br>→ decisions made that exacerbate inequities   |
| Acquisition of new skills in the community through participation in school management/governance | Teachers may feel threatened by greater community/parental involvement  |
| Means of implementing educational decentralisation   | Idealised view of unitary geographical community fails to take account of diversity of needs<br><br>Lack of community skills for meaningful participation → need for capacity building<br><br>Participation often uni-directional from communities to schools according to the school's demands |

Increased community involvement is seen to be important in improving their children's enrolment and persistence in school as well as school accountability to the community (See Section 2.2.2). As mentioned earlier, however, school officials often feel more accountability 'upwards' to the state (Watt, 2001; see Sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3).

The most salient participation in schools is at the level of providing financial or human resources. Financial contributions occur through school fees, or through fund-raising projects or contributions (voluntary or otherwise) to school development funds (Watt, 2001) whereas human contributions often take the form of labour in constructing school buildings. This sort of support for schools is well documented in a range of literature (e.g. Bray, 2003; Watt, *ibid.*) concerned with community financing and cost-sharing and the obvious point has been made that the communities that are

expected to contribute more to school-financing either directly or indirectly are often those that can least afford to contribute, thus exacerbating regional and urban-rural and gender inequities (Watt, 2001; Bray, 1996, 2003; Rose, 2003). Further, communities are often asked to contribute resources without any say over how those resources are used (Bray, 1996; Rose, 2003). However, less often mentioned in the literature concerned with decentralisation and community financing, is the fact that parents' inability to contribute financially (in terms of fees, development fund contributions, uniforms etc.), even when schools waive the fees for those who can not pay or when contributions are voluntary, can result in their children being stigmatised and bullied at school, or disciplined or sent home. This can ultimately result in disaffection and dropout (see PROBE, 1999, in India, Suzuki, 2003 in Uganda, or Rose, 2003, in Malawi; Soudien and Sayed, 2004, in South Africa; UNESCO, 2003).

Another aspect of formal parental involvement in school occurs through participation on governing bodies (SGBs), school management committees (SMCs), parent teacher associations (PTAs) and village education committees (VECs). Much of the literature cites poor community involvement in such processes with PTAs, for example, often not established or not functioning despite government mandates (PROBE, 1999; Heystek, 2003; Ahmed and Nash, 2005). Where these bodies are more active, there have been conflicts between, for example, PTAs and SMCs, in part because of unclearly defined and/or overlapping responsibilities or because certain groups have gone beyond their mandates (Passi, 1995; De Grauwe et al., 2005; Ahmed & Nath, 2005).

Research in various African and South Asian contexts has shown how there is unequal access to participation in such bodies according to socio-economic status, race, caste, social class, location, political affiliation and gender (PROBE, 1999; Therkildsen, 2000; Karlsson, 2002; Bush & Heystek, 2003; Rose, 2003; Soudien & Sayed, 2004; De Grauwe et al., 2005). Even when elected onto such committees, some voices are inevitably heard above others. *Headteachers*, in particular, have been singled out in a number of studies as having especially strong influence on these bodies (Soudien & Sayed, 2004; De Grauwe et al., 2005). In South Africa, for example, this has been shown to result in skewed participation in important activities such as selecting the medium of instruction and setting school fees (Soudien and Sayed, 2004), which, we can infer, will have far-reaching implications for some children's access and participation. In particular, political affiliation and cronyism has been identified as a serious problem in the establishment and functioning of various school-community bodies to the detriment of poorer parents (PROBE, 1999; Ahmed & Nath, 2005; De Grauwe, et al., 2005). At the same time, however, various commentators have noted that these participatory bodies have often not been mandated with genuine decision-making powers (Therkildsen, 2000; Watt, 2001; Rose, 2003; Ahmed & Nath, 2005) although SGBs in South Africa, however, would seem to have greater decision-making powers (Bush & Heystek, 2003) than many.

Thus, parents and communities are expected to become further involved in schooling in a variety of ways but generally in ways determined by the school, laid down by central and/or regional or local government and driven by international policy agendas (Therkildssen, 2000; World Bank, 2004). Policy literature on community involvement continues to emphasise the need for capacity building within the community to enable them to participate in these ways (e.g. Chapman et al., 2002; Heystek, 2003; Bush &

Heystek, 2003), without questioning what it is they are being asked to be involved in (Rose, 2003). Another assumption that is only just beginning to be questioned is that there is a uni-directional relationship from the community to the school, rather than the reverse, despite the seemingly obvious point that they are interdependent. It is only recently, that there has been a call for schools to reach more into the community (Pryor, 2005). Far more often, however, the main conclusions in the literature point to encouraging the community, often erroneously conceived as a harmonious group in deficit, to ‘pull together’ and participate in particular ways for the perceived collective benefit of their children.

Importantly, and in contrast to the difficulties cited above, community participation in schooling has been judged to be working well in the rare instances where there are good understandings and relations between schools, communities and local educational authorities, operating within a stable social context with a history of community mobilisation and a genuine commitment to community decision-making (see for example PROBE, 1999, on successes in Himachal Pradesh, India, and the Academy for Academic Development, 2002, and De Grauwe et al., 2005, on some countries of West Africa).

#### **4.6 Community participation – a summary**

The sub-headings in this section of the literature review arose out of engagement with the literature. It therefore began with the necessary problematisation of the often homogenous and static conceptualisation of the term community before pointing out the consequent implications for identifying community needs as multiple and dynamic. The review then identified particular groups that featured strongly in the literature, in particular parents in poor rural communities. The following two sections on community views on schooling and community views on children, though discussed separately, are intimately connected in that parental notions of both childhood and adulthood are implicated in attitudes to formal schooling, with gendered implications for access. Section 2.3.5 turned to formal means of community participation in schooling. The main points of the preceding section were:

- In the literature on community participation and schooling communities are frequently typified as rural and poor.
- Poverty is identified as the main determinant for non-enrolment and economics remain central to the dominant discourse of community decisions about whether children enrol or persist in school in terms of direct and indirect costs, opportunity costs or as a result of cost-benefit analyses of the return on schooling.
- The prime focus on communities is on adults as parents, whom teachers and school administrations hold responsible for the attendance of their children in school.
- Children are constructed as gendered family resources as extensive literature notes gendered expectations of children as regards different types of labour, and consequent available time to attend school or complete schoolwork in particular contexts.



- Gendered expectations of levels of schooling and employment and/or marriage prospects also affect enrolment or persistence in school, with girls more often disadvantaged.
- Community views on schooling are contradictory and complex. Schools can be perceived as alien cultures, which threaten to disrupt traditional ways of life though more often they are seen as gateways to modernity and economic betterment for the family.
- Parents' concerns with issues of school and especially teacher quality and child safety cause them constantly to reassess the value of schooling for their children. These decisions also differ according to the age and gender of the child.
- The continued pressure for increased official participation in schools by parents and other community members (such as through SMCs and PTAs) has been 'top down'. It has been advocated especially by international donors in efforts to improve efficiency and accountability and share costs.
- The overriding form of participation has been financial (either in terms of money, labour or materials) resulting in further entrenching social inequities between and within communities.
- At the level of school decision-making, participation is often cosmetic and characterised by unequal access to, or participation in, these bodies in the first place (according to gender, political party affiliation, social/professional status etc.).
- Increased capacity building in the community to enable participation in schools has been advocated without critical examination of what the community has been asked to participate in.
- The literature on communities deals extensively with reasons which prevent children from accessing school, and talks in general terms about the potential effects of poor attendance on examination performance, the likely connections with some of the other 'in-school' consequences (such as being bullied or disciplined on account of parents being unable to pay fees or afford a uniform) that might contribute to dropout remain underdeveloped. Similarly, connections with local governance, such as the result of deploying teachers from particular social and ethnic groups.
- There is very limited research on the ways that schools participate in communities especially with respect to addressing poor attendance and dropout.
- Despite discussion in some of the literature about the various ways that communities can be defined and conceptualised, they are generally conceived explicitly or implicitly as geographically based even though this tends to

misrepresent the local arena especially in increasingly fragmented urban contexts, which clearly warrant further study.

## **5. School Processes**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In this section the focus is on school processes and we explore what we know about how these influence inclusion. We will present a narrative based on research that has focussed on the school as a social site that plays a key part in access and inclusion. This includes a consideration of how the experiences in school influence dropout as outcome and as process. The purpose here is to review existing studies of school practices, organisational arrangements and relations that contribute to our knowledge and understanding of access. We have organised this theme into four main sections in which we start by looking at formal aspects of school processes initially exploring research on school management, and in the following section, on the curriculum. We then consider daily life in schools with an examination of the research on informal school practices. The penultimate section takes a look at the school and its external relations with the community and local governance and through this we begin to draw the themes of the review together. We conclude with a summary overview of the research reviewed within this theme on school processes.

### **5.2 School organisation and teacher management**

The internal organisation of schools has a fundamental influence on the educational experiences of students and upon the professional practices and development of teachers. This has become an increasingly important focus in the literature as issues of quality have become integrated with concerns about access (for example see UNESCO, 2004, and Ahmed & Nath, 2005). From a macro-level perspective, even where schools are the focus or unit of analysis, their internal operation and daily life are not a primary concern. As with most quantitative approaches, this macro-level research can produce accounts of what is going on within and across contexts, but it can tell us very little about in-school cultures and practices. Our concern here is to focus on exactly that, and to help inform how national trends in educational participation are produced at the micro-level.

In broad terms the organisation and structure of formal schooling is remarkably similar globally. While the rigidity and bureaucratic structure have been subject to considerable criticism and given rise to certain alternative forms of education (see Section 2.3) the idea of a school has become defined by common organisational properties. Departures from this organisational form bring with them concerns about differentiated, low quality or sub-standard educational opportunities (Ramachandran & Sethi, 2001; Govinda, 2003). Resistance to change has also been reported as a major obstacle even during a period of educational transformation in South Africa (see for example, Steyn & Squelch, 1994). More relevant to our concerns here, is that while the institutional structure may be recognisable across a huge range of contexts, the ethos within schools can vary enormously. School management is fundamental to the way schools are run, to the ethos and to daily life in school. The headteacher has been highlighted as significant to good management and central to school quality and outcomes (Van Wyck, 2001; Ahmed & Nath, 2005). Successful strategies to ensure that schools operate according to the timetable and to sustain teacher discipline are

aspects of good management. It has also been seen to have the potential to ameliorate the negative relationships between poverty and student achievement and to characterise more urban than rural schools.

Poor teacher and student discipline, in particular, has been associated with low performing schools and with problems of access and retention (Academy for Educational Development, 2002; Dunne *et al.*, 2005a). Low levels of teacher professionalism are widely reported including absenteeism, lack of punctuality and non-attendance in class even when in school (PROBE, 1999; Bennell & Akyeampong 2006). In both South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa poorly qualified, unskilled and unmotivated teachers using teacher-centred pedagogies have been identified as having a direct influence on access and dropout (Asian Development Bank 1998; Academy for Educational Development, 2002). Extending this to issues of quality, a study in India has shown teacher attendance to be a strong predictor of student learning (World Bank, 1997). This has particular implications for Bangladesh where research shows that many government schools posts remain vacant for more than a year (Ahmed and Nash, 2005).

For many teachers low and irregular pay means that their work in school is one of many occupations and income streams (Francis *et al.*, 1998; Haq & Islam, 2005). For others, teaching is a stepping-stone in a pathway to alternative more lucrative careers or to further educational opportunities. A study in Ghana indicated that more male than female teachers were in teaching due to the lack of alternatives rather than for vocational reasons (Avotri *et al.*, 2000). These transitional staff with their lower commitment were found to be more prevalent in lower performing schools and to present particular difficulties in staff discipline (Dunne *et al.*, 2005a). An absence of leadership by school heads exacerbates the situation. There are enormous challenges to the exercise of good school management that are evident especially in contexts of low pay, a lack of incentives and minimal support for headteachers in staff discipline. Problems of school leadership and the retention of teachers have highlighted the need for improvements in the conditions of teacher labour (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005). Teachers are central to the efficiency of education systems within which teacher related expenditure comprises a large proportion of national education budgets (World Bank 1997; Lewin & Stuart, 2003). The fiscal restraint and worsening classroom conditions caused by increased access are likely to add to these difficulties with educational quality as already crowded classes expand (Ahmed & Arend-Kuenning, 2006), which will in turn exacerbate teachers' working conditions. There is little research on how teacher professionalism might be improved or extended in these contexts.

Based on assumptions about role models, the disproportionately lower educational access of girls has prompted calls for an increase in female teacher numbers (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005). This appears to have enjoyed positive support within national policies and from communities who relate the presence of a female teacher to child safety, especially the safety of their daughters (UNESCO, 2000). Although the numbers remain low, trends in a range of South Asian countries over the 1990's show higher than expected increases of female teachers in most countries. However, research in both regions indicates that female teachers are usually clustered in urban schools (UNESCO, *ibid.*; Dunne *et al.*, 2005). Where there is low female progression into secondary schools, more commonly in rural areas, a cycle is set up that sustains

low numbers of available local female teachers. A similar cycle is likely to be in operation with respect to ethnicity / caste but there is limited research on how differentiated access to basic education consolidates stratification in the opportunities and outcomes in further education and the labour market. Returning to gender, there has been some success in Bangladesh, where specific efforts have been made to encourage more female teachers to take up posts and stay in the rural areas (Haq & Islam, 2005). It has also been suggested that teachers working in their own localities have higher levels of satisfaction in their work (De Grauwe *et al.*, 2005; Bennell & Akyeampong, 2006).

Despite the general consensus about the need for more female teachers, their participation continues to be constrained by their traditional domestic duties, the availability of childcare, distance and travel arrangements or available accommodation, their household disposition and co-operation (Teas, 1993). These constraints often restrict the performance of female teachers. Poor transport systems cause their lateness and irregular attendance giving rise to negative community and student relations (UNESCO, 2000). Community views have been widely cited as crucial to increased and sustained access (Pryor & Ampiah, 2003; see Section 2.3.3). Constraints persist in relation to in-service and career development opportunities with studies indicating that while female teachers tended to stay longer in teaching, they were often in more junior posts than comparable males. To add to this, there is evidence of a prevailing cultural resistance to female authority in which, interestingly female as well as male teachers expressed preference for male school leaders (Dunne *et al.*, 2005). While female teachers are often more qualified than their male counterparts dominant constructions of appropriate femininity identifies female teachers as sincere, sympathetic, less corrupt and more effective for early years teaching (UNESCO, 2000). So despite policy and training priorities with a direct concern for the access and retention of girls, a lack of gender sensitivity or focussed strategies produce limited numbers of women as teachers and school managers.

The teacher has been a strong focus in debates about the inefficiencies and ineffectiveness of schooling (Akyeampong, 2003; Lewin and Stuart, 2003) that has also highlighted their centrality to access and equity (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005). Teacher training has been found wanting as new teachers are not adequately prepared for practice in large or multi-grade classes, for the additional difficulties in rural areas or for dealing with first generation school goers (UNESCO, 2000; Lewin & Stuart, 2003; Little, 2006). Not only is this related to Zone 3 and 2 exclusions of those who do get access at least once, the local knowledge and reputation about quality is also likely to militate against access and exacerbate Zone 1 exclusions as the value of schooling is not evident to parents and communities (Avotri *et al.*, 2000; see also Section 2.3.3). Even for those who secure and sustain access at the primary level, the difficulties with and for teachers has impact on Zone 4 exclusions as retention to secondary school is usually competitive and based on examination results. Concerns about access are multiply interconnected with issues surrounding the teacher. The focus in this section has been more on their formal management within schools; informal aspects will be discussed later in Section 2.4.4.

Alongside the management of teachers, the conditions and resources in a school are an important aspect of its organisation. These are also part of the working conditions for teachers. Poorly equipped classrooms and overcrowding are particular problems

that have been related to low quality and high repetition and dropout rates. Poor toilet facilities have been raised as especially significant for sustained school attendance by girls (Avotri *et al.*, 2000). Schools' efforts to improve the physical environment often refer back to the community with demands, for example, for special funds or physical labour from parents for new buildings or for students to provide their own classroom furniture (Steyn & Squelch, 1994; Asian Development Bank 1998; Academy for Educational Development, 2002; Dunne *et al.*, 2005; see also section 2.3). Very little is known about the community perspectives on these particular demands from schools or more general about the relations with teachers and/or the school as a community based organisation.

In the current context of widening participation, community participation and greater competition in the educational market there have been significant changes to the work of school headteachers. The need for more explicit forms of external and internal communications, consultation and negotiation, financial oversight and fund raising has demanded new school leadership skills and processes not traditionally associated with headship (Steyn & Squelch, 1994). The direction of these transformations implies the need for more negotiated and responsive management in institutions that are very different from the bureaucratic and hierarchical structures previously associated with schools. Despite this, evidence about internal school consultations either in staff meetings or student councils is severely limited. In most places the transformation towards greater administration with a wider range of responsibilities has presented headteachers with considerable challenges and difficulties yet they have enjoyed little support or training from ministries (Steyn & Squelch, *ibid.*; Ahmed & Nath 2005; De Grauwe *et al.*, 2005).

The weak relationship between national policy, local educational governance and school organisation, management and practices has particular relevance to issues of access and retention. While there are often policies in place for widening and sustaining the access for all children, these are often not followed through to implementation. While local education offices usually have a monitoring role and the collection of annual school statistical returns there is little evidence of its involvement in policy implementation or in the inspection or monitoring of actual practices of registration, retention and progression (Ahmed & Nath, 2005; De Grauwe *et al.*, 2005). The research evidence is thin, although exclusionary admission practices on racial grounds have been highlighted in South Africa (Jansen, 1998; Bush & Heystek, 2003; Soudien & Sayed, 2004). There is less focussed research on the official admission procedures but both research on the inclusion of special education students (Muthukrishna, Farman & Sader, 2000) and the establishment of educational markets (see Rose, 2007) suggest that unregulated discriminatory practices are widespread.

At secondary school, examination grades have acted as a standard way to allow selective entry and although widely used these admission procedures effectively limit retention, regulate access and contribute to Zone 4 exclusions. Although the research elsewhere suggests that community/family illiteracy has some influence on access in all Zones, there is little evidence of organisational capacity or willingness by school managers to provide outreach to such parents. In a similar vein, there is no evidence that local governments either inspect or support schools in their admission practices. Despite the significance to access at Zone 1 and Zone 2, there appears to be little accountability or research about the management of admission and registration in

schools. Experience indicates, however, that schools complete standard returns about their pupil intake for the local authorities. Although the quality and use of this data is often variable, it does constitute some connection between schools and the local government offices which has the potential to be used for accountability purposes. Nevertheless, school practices with respect to registration, progression and re-admittance are also variable and often effectively unregulated. Although there may be firm policies in place and inspection and monitoring procedures laid down, these often have little impact in schools. Weak policy implementation, low local capacity and the lack of accountability have produced often idiosyncratic and dysfunctional organisational structures and practices at the school level. This also applies to practices related to progression, repetition, dropout and re-admittance. These, along with the in-school monitoring of attendance and punctuality are key to understanding and preventing Zone 3 and Zone 2 exclusions. Formal school management strategies to support staying in school or to follow up dropouts are not widely reported (Asian Development Bank, 1998). More research is needed in these multiple aspects of school management and headteacher strategies that facilitate the re-admission of dropouts and maximize student and teacher retention.

There has been an identifiable stream of literature around the causes of dropout especially of girls (see for example Asia Development Bank, 1998). While much of this has focused upon the community and outside school factors (see for example Abraha *et al.*, 1991, King & Hill, 1993, Colclough *et al.*, 2000, and Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005) there is much more limited research on the in-school factors that militate against wider access or produce dropout. Of these, some have used school quality indicators (e.g. teacher qualifications, pupil-teacher ratios, etc.) in quantitative and statistical approaches (see for example, Levin & Lockheed, 1993, Dalin, 1994, and Heneveld 1994) and others include qualitative studies (see for example, Baden, Hassim & Meintjes 1998 and Lloyd, Mensch & Clark, 1998). The overwhelming sense from the research, whether quantitative or qualitative, is one of organisational dysfunction and teacher deficit. This has given rise to the overlapping of research and advocacy that reasserts external priorities through a re-articulation of imperatives and commitments derived and expressed elsewhere by others (see for example Herz, 1995, Motala, 1995, and World Bank, 1997). The descriptions of ineffectiveness, inefficiency and irrationality emerge from the imposition of material, theoretical and methodological structures from macro-level perspectives that dominate the field of research. These representations help to sustain a view into the field and context that constrains inventive school management initiatives for broader inclusion (Sookraj, Gopal, & Maharaj, 2005). References to potentialities in the local arena are rare. There is an evident absence of the perspectives from within, from the local stakeholders, which are vital to understandings of life on the ground, processes of school management, teachers work and, of course, to access issues and exclusion from school.

### **5.3 Curriculum, assessment and learning**

In this section we move to consider formal aspects of the curriculum, assessment and learning as they impinge on issues of access. This relates predominantly to the policy debates about the curriculum and the research that connects these to practice and aspects of exclusion. The focus is upon the formal construction, classification and framing of knowledge within schools. There is a proliferation of research and

intervention in this area in which persistent tensions relate back to theoretical and philosophical differences about the purposes of schooling and the relations between school and society. Even though these tensions often resurface in educational policy and practice debates, in the daily life of schools much of this is taken for granted and left unquestioned. This is despite theoretical perspectives that refer to the politics of knowledge and regard the structures and processes of the curriculum as acts of power that of themselves are exclusionary. Sociologists of the curriculum point to the power relations implicit and explicit in curriculum, and raise issue with whose knowledges become legitimated and whose perspectives are privileged. These analyses locate the curriculum as integral to the production and regulation of learner identities and in social stratification (see for example Apple, 1990; Bourdieu, 1990; Bernstein, 1996 and Arnot & Dillabough, 2000). These insights have implications for efforts towards inclusion in which new learners are exposed to dominant knowledge structures and relations enshrined in the school curriculum from which they have previously been marginalised. Jansen (1998) discusses this with respect to the inclusion of 'African' and 'Coloured' students into former 'Whites'-only schools in South Africa. Similar epistemological issues have been raised by feminists and post-colonial theorists with respect to research methodologies (see for example, Stanley & Wise, 1983; Mohanty, 1991; and Smith, 1999).

The key point to be made here is that the 'normal' structure and rhythm of schooling is not neutral and that as a part of its construction and operation there are multiple ways in which it is exclusionary. Notwithstanding the long-term benefits of an education system and EFA, the high costs force most national governments to make pragmatic decisions and policies that control and differentiate the educational access and careers of students. For example, alongside the traditional academic curriculum, particular students are channelled into specific forms of education such as vocational education. Perhaps the most explicit example of the ways in which exclusions operate through education systems can be found in the assessment arrangements that have become a natural part of the educational landscape. Examinations and tests are often used for selective purposes for access to the curriculum at a range of different points in the system. With respect to our concerns, examinations often play a significant part in determining and limiting Zone 4, access to secondary school and may also contribute to the processes of dropping out from Zone 3 to Zone 2.

While the official curriculum is extraordinarily similar across a wide range of geographical locations, it emerges from multiple ideological and operational dilemmas and debates framed by specific contexts and times. Issues of access and inclusion are precipitated whatever the particular curriculum format and configuration. For example, at the systems level, the quality / equality tension impinges on the balance between breadth of access and the development of specialised expertise. This in turn invokes polarised debates of international competitiveness versus local relevance often worked out against aspirational visions of mass education derived from models of more exclusive schooling (for example, English public schools or Whites only schools of the colonial era). These tensions often remain unresolved and produce curriculum compromises scarred by political expedience with contradictory policy initiatives and interventions, further fragmented by uneven implementation and unregulated practices within a global context of increased uncertainty and risk. Despite the context of widespread decentralisation and



advocacy for teacher professional involvement and community participation there is little evidence within the literature of any of these influencing the official curriculum. In our discussion so far we have raised issues with the problematic nature of the curriculum and begged the question of ‘access to what?’ On the one hand the ‘what’ of schooling and the curriculum have been shown to influence family decisions to send their children to school (see section 2.3.3) and therefore access as outcome. On the other hand, the ‘what’ is integral to the quality issues in which access and dropout are both framed as processes rather than singular events or outcomes. The quality of schooling influences access at a number of levels for example, access to particular curriculum subjects, progression, and retention especially where performance in high stakes examinations is an entry requirement. Other quality issues include the supply of textbooks (Obura, 1991; UNESCO, 2004a), teacher subject knowledge (World Bank, 1997) and teacher capacity for curriculum development (UNESCO, 2004a; Kadingdi, 2004). These concerns form an overlap between the research programme consortia (RPCs) on Quality and Access. While there are many varied issues that surround educational quality here we will develop four strands that were prominent in the literature on access.

The language of instruction is a highly contentious curriculum issue at the primary level since ‘educational language choices are never neutral’ (Heller, 1995:93) but connected to issues of power and ideology (Arthur, 1996; Hameso, 1997). Consequently, national policies have fluctuated, moving back and forth from emphasising instruction in local languages, official language(s) (which often include a majority local language, such as Bangla in Bangladesh, and one or more colonial languages, especially English) or transitional bilingual programmes (see Hameso, *ibid.*; Tollefson & Tsui, 2004). The tensions here place concerns for optimal learning against those related to international recognition and competitiveness. A key problematic relates to students and teachers who may have incomplete command of the language of instruction whether it is English, another official language or a local language (Molteno, Ogadoh & Crumpton, 2000; Ahmed & Nath, 2005; Humphreys, 2005). Within classrooms, the local language is often used to supplement conceptual explanations initially presented in an added language. In addition, the increasing mobility of the teaching workforce means that they are less likely to be familiar with the first language of the learners. These language issues also provide potential barriers to inclusion in Zone 1 where the parents and local communities might have difficulties communicating and connecting with schools (see Section 2.3). They can also influence dropout and Zone 2 as the difficulties of learning through another language alongside other school quality issues deter re-admittance. Children who do not have the medium of instruction and assessment as their first language, and who have little or no exposure to the language outside school (particularly those in remoter rural areas), are especially disadvantaged (see for example Brock-Utne, 2001; Humphreys, 2005; Trudell, 2005). Conversely, middle-class children in urban areas are more advantaged. The lack of mastery of the medium of instruction has negative consequences for some students’ progress and retention where they are based on examination success. Despite the above potential problems, it is interesting to note that teaching and learning through English has become an important marketing point for schools in the mushrooming private sector (see Rose, 2007)

Within schools there are issues of access to particular areas of the curriculum that become apparent when subjects become optional. The clustering and higher

performance of boys in science and of girls in languages has been evident in the research (Finn, Dulberg & Reis, 1979; Dunne *et al.*, 2005). The gender segregation of the curriculum while not sanctioned in policy does influence performance and access to teacher training (Gaynor, 1997) and patterns of enrolment in higher education (Dunne & Sayed, 2006). As with basic education, the curriculum provision in further education has also been identified as lacking gender sensitivity (Odaja & Heneveld, 1994; Lloyd, Mensch & Clark, 1998; Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005). So while progress may have been made in increasing access, curriculum channelling within institutions restricts access to the broad curriculum that has implications for future life chances and more pertinently to entrance to teacher education. The lower performance in mathematics by girls for example has been shown to reduce their entry to teacher education colleges (Akyeampong, 2003; Kutor *et al.*, 2005).

Examinations play a key role in progression and retention (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2003) and are significant to access in Zones 2, 3 and 4. While examination results are directly related to individual student performance, the data are used in multiple ways, for example, to indicate school quality and for teacher accountability which has intended and unintended backwash effects on classroom processes (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2001). More pertinently for our concerns in this review, examination results have been used as a means of restricting access. While this is rationalised in terms of 'ability' and performance, using tests for admission or progression into the next grade, has been shown to privilege particular ethnic or social class groups (PROBE, 1999; Ahmed & Nath, 2005; Sayed & Soudien, 2005). Internal school processes, especially those that do not operate automatic promotion, can result in repetition, the prolonging of time in school and dropout. Research from Ghana showing that less than a third of students in school passed their English and mathematics examinations (Avotri *et al.*, 2000) suggests enormous implications for progression and retention and for issues of teaching and learning quality. The examination system clearly plays an important part in dropout as an outcome and through the backwash effect into the approaches to teaching and learning in the classroom (Lewin, 1998; Akyeampong, Pryor & Ghartey, 2006) it is also implicated in dropout as process. Research in Bangladesh shows that examination pressure has given rise to extensive use of private tutors (often these are the same school teachers) which produces further differentiation as the costs are beyond the reach of the most poor (Ahmed & Nash, 2005). An analysis of items in the end of primary school examinations across a number of African countries shows the predominant demand is recall (Lewin & Dunne, 2000). Given the backwash effects and the high stakes nature of these examinations, the limited adoption of learner-centred pedagogies is less surprising.

Pedagogy has been central to recent policy prescription and international efforts to improve schools (Ramachandran & Sethi, 2001; UNESCO, 2004a). Teacher-centred pedagogy typifies many classroom contexts in which teachers are ill-prepared to adapt their teaching approach to suit the learning needs of their students (Rosenberg, 1998; Ahmed & Nath, 2005). The research suggests that the limits of this pedagogy have a direct effect on dropout (Asian Development Bank, 1998). The authoritarian and distant relations between teacher and students have been discussed as either detrimental to 'good' quality learning or alternatively as more culturally appropriate for some contexts (Sey, 1997; Tabulawa, 1997). The reluctance of teachers to embrace learner-centred pedagogies has also been related to the conditions of their work. Research on multigrade classes provides evidence of the constraints within

which some teachers work and discusses the implications for dropout in large classes with a wide age spread (Asian Development Bank, 1998; Little, 2006).

Predominant descriptions of the curriculum refer to its rigidity and its solidification within the highly bureaucratic educational infrastructure. We have pointed to the access implications of the language of instruction, examination arrangements, curriculum tracking and pedagogical relations. In particular we note the absence of influence of local stakeholders in the shape and emphasis of the school curriculum. The top-down approach to the curriculum militates against teacher participation in curriculum development. These hierarchical authority lines also characterise the classroom in which the dominance of teacher-centred pedagogies limit the opportunities for student participation in the classroom and more broadly in school life (Pryor *et al.*, 2005). These absences have been mirrored in the research which has barely started to elicit student or teacher perspectives (Akyeampong, Pryor & Ghartey, 2006), despite the potential to provide insights into access issues related to curriculum and pedagogy (also see Section 2.4.4)

#### **5.4 The Learning Environment**

This section turns to the daily life in schools and as such it traces the policy debates into the schools and classrooms in a variety of contexts. Inevitably the research base tends towards more meso-/micro-level case studies that explore just how things work out on the ground. In this sense the imperatives and intentions at the policy level are traced through their complex and multi-layered trajectories into everyday practices in schools. While recognising the potential influences and interactions of local governance and the community on the shape of these practices we focus here on the school. The previous section dealt with the more formal aspects of the curriculum whereas here we explore the research that has focussed on the more informal aspects of the curriculum and school life. Rather than focussing on what the policy intended, we are concerned with what actually happens and the ways in which this is more or less inclusionary. In these terms we are looking predominantly at the processes and practices of exclusion.

Research on the institutional regimes of schools through the small-scale qualitative approaches has a much shorter history than the macro-level or policy related research. Its strengths are in the way it can capture insights from the participants in the field of inquiry and in its potential to deconstruct the deficits that often emerge from broader scale policy research (see also Section 4.2). Approaches to research that provide avenues for the articulation of local insights and understandings have been cited as critical to the development of post-colonial theories (Mohanty, 1991). Particular examples may be found in the research on gender that have sought to examine the informal school environment or institutional regimes and the part that these play in perpetuating gender differentiation in education. (Examples include: Gordon, 1993; Maimbolwa-Sinyangwe & Chilangwa, 1995; Kutnick, Jules & Layne, 1997; Sey, 1997 and Brenner, 1998).

Building on these, more recent work has provided gender analyses of institutions that have been used as the basis for theoretical development. More specifically, the binary gender categories of female and male, used almost as a matter of course in macro-level quantitative work (and qualitative work that makes the same conceptual

assumptions) have come under critique. The intention is not to dismiss the value of this form of gender monitoring, quite the opposite, but it is to move beyond the limitations of notions of gender as presented in the statistical categories. The categories imply that gender is an outcome or status in which sex and gender are not differentiated. A reliance on this static and fixed sex category which relates only to the surface characteristics, militates against understandings of the complex social processes of becoming a gendered individual. From the latter perspective gender identities rather than given and fixed are accomplished through continuously repeated performances of femininity and masculinity. Rather than an outcome or category becoming gendered is an active process that has social significance. In terms of school processes, recent research has used these more complex and heterogeneous conceptualisations of gender and sexual (masculine and feminine) identities to understand what is going on in learning environments (Morrell, 2001; Leach, 2003; Pattman & Chege, 2003; Dunne *et al.*, 2005; Humphreys, 2005). These studies serve to illustrate the potential of this kind of research to offer a different perspective on schooling, and perhaps re-open the concerns for educational development in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa from another angle which highlights and theorises the 'realities' played out on the ground.

In this section we are concerned with the school as an arena of social interaction and the way every-day experiences of school life influence access and inclusion. Beyond the formal circumscription of school structures and process referred to within national and international policy we focus on the informal aspects of school life which are the contexts of practice. We will confine our main discussion to two sets of interactions, teacher-student and peer relations as they relate to dropout as process, Zone 3 and 2, and with their implications for access in Zone 4 and 1.

Teacher and student interactions are central to understandings of the school as a social arena. School and classroom studies indicate strong social hierarchies in which age and gender relations play an important part. Despite the international pressure towards learner-centred education, many studies indicate the dominance of teacher-centred pedagogies and distant authoritarian relations between teachers and students (Brodie, 1995). These forms of inter-relations are regarded by some as a reflection of the broader community relations and social hierarchies and thus as more culturally appropriate (Tabulawa, 1997). Strong traditions of top-down, authoritarian social interactions have also been used to explain the problems with decentralisation and with the new professional responsibilities of teachers in, for example, local curriculum development (see for example Ahmed & Nath, 2005). More specifically, advocacy for teacher participation in local level, 'bottom-up' curriculum development confronts teacher expectations that they provided with the curriculum specifications from a higher authority through which they are 'told' what to teach.

Teacher-student interactions operate in the same mode such that within the school and classroom there is little or no space for student participation. Similarly there are few formal opportunities for student involvement in school matters through for example schools councils (Hunt, 2004; Pryor *et al.*, 2005). The authority and centrality of the teacher has been widely reported within the classroom and around the school. Teacher-centred pedagogies persist despite the recognition of international demand for teacher transformations towards more learner centredness (Tabulawa, 1997; Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005). In general, the classroom is characterised by

competition for teacher attention with an absence of any encouragement for students to help one another. Despite this, there have been some 'successes' noted in projects focussed on the inclusion of students with disabilities or from disadvantaged castes (Molteno, Ogadhoh & Crumpton, 2000; Ramachandran & Sethi, 2001). There is, however, more limited research on teacher perspectives on these classroom conditions and their approaches to teaching.

The contribution of gender research to the study of these informal aspects of schooling has been dominant. Although there is clearly an enormous range of different classroom contexts in terms of educational quality and outcomes, the research provides evidence of persistent gendered practices. Within the classroom teachers allow boys to dominate the physical and verbal space. Rather than intervene in the effective gender segregation in mixed schools, school practices accentuate it. This has an important part to play in the reproduction of a gender hierarchy that is dominated by males. While there may be occasional resistance from the female students, the tendency is for them to enact stereotypical gender roles, for example, cleaning classrooms, taking up limited space in the school field and remaining silent and subordinate to their male peers (Dunne *et al.*, 2005). Neither male nor female teachers actively encourage girls' participation (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005). In contrast, they can be seen to further traduce the girls through their low expectations of their performance (Gordon 1993; Avotri *et al.*, 2000) which they explicitly voice and use as a means to motivate boys. This kind of interaction is significant to the production of gender and sexual identities in which boys are 'encouraged' to improve their performance as a means of asserting their masculinity and dominance. With minimal teacher intervention boys also attempt to silence the girls, harassing and ridiculing them if they attempt to answer the teacher's questions. It is with these closer understandings of the context that issues of access and in particular the difficulties with the re-admittance of dropouts, especially school-girl mothers, can be better understood and addressed.

The influences of everyday informal school processes on learner identity have been raised by other research (see for example Harber, 2001). Explorations of the inclusion of refugee children have shown that the discursive construction of their identities was reduced to their refugee status that focused on their vulnerability and was marked by stigma and negative connotations. This had damaging effects on their school life experiences (Sookraj, Gopal & Maharaj, 2005). Similar phenomena have been identified by Jansen (1998) with respect to black children as schools integrated in the post-apartheid era in South Africa and in South Asia with respect to caste (PROBE, 1999; Vasavi, 2003).

Research reports that girls are subject to high levels of bullying and sexual harassment, not only from their male peers but also from male teachers (Leach, 2003; Dunne *et al.*, 2005). This is a persistent feature of school life for many boys and girls in and outside the classroom, around the school and on their way to and from home (Burton, 2005). Despite complaints from the girls most teachers regard this as 'normal' and it usually goes unpunished. This kind of intimidation and the way school practices construct gender and sexual identities have implications for child safety. Schools can be arenas of risk and danger; they are not unequivocally safe places (Mirembe & Davies, 2001; Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005). Parental fears for the safety of daughters in particular have an important bearing on Zone 1 access. Violence in

school has recently emerged in a stream of studies that have explored the sexual violence and abuse of girls in schools (Mirembe & Davies, 2001; Leach *et al.*, 2003; Burton, 2005; Dunne *et al.*, 2005; Humphreys, 2005; Dunne, Humphreys & Leach, 2006). These report sexual relationships between male and female students as well as the sexual abuse of schoolgirls by male teachers. Although the latter is against the professional code of practice and the law these often go on unhindered by criminal prosecution (Leach *et al.*, 2003; Dunne, Humphreys & Leach, 2006). While gender accounts of physical and sexual violence often cast girls as victims, they are also often complicit in the gender regime, and also found to engage in violence (Avotri *et al.*, 2000; Bhana, 2005) and transactional sexual relations (Luke & Kurz, 2002; Leach *et al.*, 2003; Burton, 2005). Nevertheless, given the general conditions, many research recommendations call for more 'girl-friendly' schooling (Shabaya & Konadu-Agyemang, 2004; Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005)

Associated with the above, student discipline has been the subject of a number of studies that found largely unregulated practices which often contravened policy guidelines (Ramachandran & Sethi, 2001; Van Wyck, 2001; Tafa, 2002; Humphreys, 2005). The importance to teachers of corporal punishment as a disciplinary strategy has been shown in case study research in Botswana where due to teacher pressure a headteacher who tried to follow the letter of the policy was removed from the school (Dunne *et al.*, 2005). In a similar way, even where corporal punishment has been officially banned it persists often with the complicity of parents (Morrell, 2001; Ahmed & Nath, 2005). Its practice has been reported as highly gendered with more boys than girls subject to acts of corporal punishment and in some cases it has been described as extremely severe with the excessive use of sticks, electrical cord etc. (Humphreys, 2003; Dunne, Humphreys & Leach, 2006). There are reports of teacher lateness and poor attendance in school or class, as well as idiosyncratic behaviour within which corporal punishment is a constant threat (see also Section 2.3.3). Verbal abuse has also been found to be commonplace (Vasavi, 2003) and for many students far more damaging than corporal punishment. Research also suggests that children from poor families who could not afford the school uniform or books were often subject to more verbal and physical discipline which had negative effects on their learning (PROBE, 1999; Ahmed & Nath, 2005). There has been a noted tendency for male teachers to administer corporal punishment often on behalf of their female colleagues. The gender hierarchy and association of physicality with masculinity have also witnessed challenges to female teacher authority by male students. Other forms of student resistance have included truancy and dropout that is more prevalent among boys than girls (Dunne *et al.*, 2005).

The above catalogue of conditions and interactions in school has been found to be exacerbated in rural areas and in contexts of poor school management and teacher discipline. The limited research on student perspectives indicates that students wanted to attend school and study but disliked punishment and bullying (Avotri *et al.*, 2000). Most small scale qualitative studies indicate that the informal aspects of school life contribute to dropout and provide a hostile environment for re-admitted students. The research, some of which we have already discussed, suggests that the factors that militate against school access, produce forms of internal or silent exclusion and encourage dropout. These include poor quality teaching; lack of teacher intervention in student interactions; violence and corporal punishment; sexual harassment and abuse; school girl pregnancy; and the locally available income-generating possibilities

(PROBE, 1999; Ahmed & Nath, 2005; see also Section 2.3). Despite the opportunities, school-based professionals appear to do little to disrupt or question normative school inter-relations. There is also limited evidence that neither schools nor teachers pro-actively engage in strategies to afford greater access in Zones 1 and 3 or to follow up student dropouts in Zone 2 (Ahmed & Nath, 2005). The conditions inside schools and the influence on the production of identities and social relations have led some researchers to cast doubt on the value of schooling and to challenge the dominant economic and social rationale which constructs schools as an unequivocal social good (Bloch & Vavrus, 1998; Longwe, 1998).

We have already noted that there is often weak policy implementation at the level of the school and classroom. This might suggest that the gulf between the policy makers and those required to implement policy is wide and/or perhaps that they are responding to different priorities and agenda (Dyer, 2000). Nevertheless this gap will continue to be presented in terms of localised deficits until we have better understandings of the local stakeholders and their practices with which to speak back and inform policy and intervention. Given our conceptual schema (see Figure 2) that locates access as emergent from the interconnections between local social institutions (see Section 2.2 and 2.3), in the next section we move to consider the research into the ways that schools manage their external relations.

### **5.5 Schools and external relations**

Schools and classrooms do not operate in a social vacuum therefore a view of the impact of school processes on access needs to locate schools within the wider social milieu. We start with a brief reference to school funding issues that are seen as critical to school access. In recognition of the impacts of poverty on access many research recommendations call for increased resources in primary education, usually through higher state financial input. Suggestions for the ways increased funds might be best used to increase access, e.g. through the abolition of school fees, feeding programmes, scholarships, improved systems of local decision making, however, are much more highly defined than are its possible sources (see for example, World Bank, 2001, Academy for Educational Development, 2002, and Ahmed & Arend-Kuenning, 2006). More relevant to our concern with school processes, however, is the association of increased funding with improvements in the quality and value of schooling which act as important non-financial incentives for parents to send their children to school (World Bank, 1997; see also Section 2.4). This has been shown to be particularly important to family decisions concerning girls' access to schooling (PROBE, 1999; Leggett, 2005). For other researchers, reductions in both direct (e.g. fees) and indirect costs for the poorest families are seen as an important way to increase access (Herz, 1995; World Bank, 1997; Avotri *et al.*, 2000; UNESCO, 2000).

In more direct terms too, good communications and relations between the school and the community are seen to have positive effects on access. The development literature is replete with calls for greater inter-connectedness between public services institutions and their client groups (see for example Naidoo, 1990). This characterises the debates in the 'North' as well as the 'South' and is evident in cross-sectoral approaches to development that are current with donor agencies. In the same vein, many research recommendations urge greater connection between schools and their communities as well as between local and central government and schools. Little or

no critique, for example in terms of local capacity, is offered of the assumption that greater connectedness is preferable and/or achievable, rather it underpins many policy and practice imperatives emerging from EFA literature across a huge range of diverse contexts (World Bank, 1997, 2001; Ramachandran & Sethi, 2001; Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005). Here, at the risk of some repetition of points raised in other sections of this review, we will briefly consider the literature that refers to this interconnectedness as it bears on school processes.

The first dimension concerns the interaction between the school and the community as an aspect of school process (see also Section 2.3). The general tenor within the literature is that greater involvement would have a positive effect on access and survival in school as well as upon school quality. Community participation has been seen as generally beneficial to school management, school development, the supervision of students and improved community attitudes. These all contribute to increased access and improved quality education (Academy for Educational Development, 2002; De Grauwe *et al.*, 2005). The communities that are most involved in schools are generally characterised by stable incomes, organised community groups, urban settings, a willingness to develop the community with awareness and positive attitudes towards schooling. In turn, participation is successfully encouraged in contexts where examination results are good, the community contribution is not confined to finances and where they are involved consistently in decision making at the school. Conversely there are non-participating communities characterised by poverty and the common causes of dropout include poor parental attitudes, low literacy, seasonal labour, the use of a non-school language at home and distance to school. A variety of 'special' circumstances, for example, of migration, in refugee camps, in conflict zones and of high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates are also associated with reduced levels of community participation (Sookraj, Gopal & Maharaj, 2005) These all present difficulties with access that are exacerbated for girls and minority groups (Herz, 1995; Asian Development Bank, 1998; Avotri *et al.*, 2000).

Given the potential gains in access and retention, school–community relations have been a focus of attention in the literature (see Section 2.3). Although there are suggestions of the need for more research on community perspectives (Ahmed & Nath, 2005; Leggett, 2005), the main focus appears to be advocacy. The call is for better communication in which the less apparent benefits of schooling can be explained as worthwhile against the immediate costs of schooling to poor families (Herz, 1995; Avotri *et al.*, 2000; Nayar, 2000). In addition, successful strategies to bridge the sustained association between community poverty and low participation have also been reported, through, for example, linking literacy programmes with community schools (Academy for Educational Development, 2002). Of particular relevance here has been the idea of 'responsive schooling' in which the connections between the school and society are strengthened (Molteno, Ogadhoh & Crumpton, 2000). The more holistic approach is viewed as necessary for improved student learning with community involvement affecting more appropriate and accountable schooling (Herz, 1995; Molteno Ogadhoh & Crumpton, 2000). This notion of responsiveness is especially important as it introduces a more relational understanding of school–community interaction. The negative effect of teacher lateness and absenteeism on parental attitudes is one more obvious example of this interaction (UNESCO, 2000). The impetus is to move away from essentialised representations of



'poor' communities with 'adverse cultural practices' (Colclough *et al.*, 2000) and away from a compartmentalised focus on communities as well as from representations of schools as monolithic organisations. This may be realised through explorations of the heterogeneity of community-school relations and, more specifically, of how the contingencies of lifestyle and context influence children's access and retention. It is in this conceptual context that Leggett's (2005) call for more research on the community perspective and Molteno, Ogadhoh & Crumpton's (2000) idea of responsive schooling seems entirely appropriate to understandings of, and interventions for, wider access to education. There is, however, limited research that engages with views of the school (and local government) from the different community perspectives especially those that have migratory or seasonal lifestyles and/or whose children have limited access.

Community participation in schooling is most often channelled through formal bodies such as the PTA, BoG and/or SMC. Even where these are set up they are often unrepresentative (De Grauwe *et al.*, 2005; see also Section 2.3) and/or community involvement in schools and school involvement in the community is limited especially outside the urban areas (Dunne *et al.*, 2005). For resource-poor communities the invitation to participate might also act as a deterrent as they are unable to contribute money or time. The influence of these formal community participation bodies on schools has also been variable with little research that connects how this participation affects school processes or experiences in schools (see Section 2.3). While experience in the post-apartheid educational restructuring in South Africa points to the need for mechanisms for participation to be established, it also indicates mixed perceptions about increased levels of parental involvement. The welcomed additional support has to be weighed against unrealistic expectations and demands and the increased workload for headteachers in administration and meetings (Steyn & Squelch, 1994). In the midst of the advocacy for increased communication with school stakeholders (World Bank, 2001) research evidence suggests both costs and benefits of community involvement (Herz, 1995) for both schools and communities with some negative effects in terms of equality and access. For example, in South Africa the admission policies of school governing bodies were seen to produce school populations differentiated by race and class (Bush & Heystek, 2003) or to place headteachers in difficult situations with respect to cutting teacher jobs (Steyn & Squelch, 1994). In Ghana, the force of local community opinion threatened the re-admittance of school-girl mothers to junior secondary schools despite national policies that stipulate their right to access (Dunne *et al.*, 2005). School-community relations clearly have implications for access and what goes on inside schools but the research that provides detail on how and in what ways remains limited (see Section 2.3 for further discussion)

This brings us to the second set of external relations affecting school processes, the reciprocal influences of local government (see section, 2.2). There is recognition that the access and quality improvements in schools cannot be effected by communities alone (Academy for Educational Development, 2002). The role of local government in providing guidance and training and in improving school management and learning conditions, accountability, as well as increasing community participation, highlights the significance of local external relations to school processes (Steyn & Squelch, 1994; World Bank, 1997; Academy for Educational Development, 2002; De Grauwe *et al.*, 2005). As highlighted earlier (See Section 2.2) decentralisation has had an

influence, often in unanticipated ways, on educational service provision and school development. The gap between macro-led policy formation and micro-level practices in schools remains wide even at times of positive popular support for systemic reform. While the rhetoric of decentralisation refers to notions of democratisation and increased participation enduring cultures and practices at the school level provide effective resistance to the new roles and relationships implied. With reference to Ghana, Kadingdi (2004) explores this gap between policy and practice and demonstrates how difficult it is for teachers to embrace opportunities for autonomous professionalism which require them to develop curriculum and pedagogy without specific instruction from the administration. It is in this context that the relationship between the local systems of governance and schools and teachers has implications for what goes on inside schools. As has been reported with more specific reference to the curriculum, the character of local governance impacts on forms of teacher support and hence on classroom implementation (see Astiz et al., 2002 for an example in mathematics).

There are some cases, nevertheless, where local governments have been successful in improving access. In Bangladesh large increases in girls' enrolments have resulted from local government initiatives. The consequences of these have been an increased demand for girls' secondary schooling, more female teachers and research on the employment opportunities for girls (Raynor, 2005). While these government initiatives appear to have been successful in terms of access in Zones 1, 2 and 3, it is less clear about the effects on retention to secondary school, Zone 4 exclusion.

The importance of the community and civil society in increasing school and local government accountability has been asserted in the Kenyan context (Elimu Yetu Coalition, 2005). Despite this, the research indicates that the willingness or capacity of local government to support schools generally and more specifically in attending to community perspectives has however been limited (PROBE, 1999; Ahmed & Nath, 2005; see Section, 2.2, for a fuller discussion). This includes failures to increase school and teacher accountability (UNESCO, 2000); recruit more female teachers despite some community preference for them (Teas, 1993; UNESCO, 2000); train teachers for the difficulties in rural areas (World Bank, 1997); or provide teachers and headteachers with appropriate guidance and in-service training (Steyn & Squelch, 1994). In other interventions these demands for accountability to the community have been reconfigured into the notion of community support which has been used to change the emphasis away from systemic and teacher deficit to an explicit recognition of their difficult working conditions (Ramachandran & Sethi, 2001). Even so, the lack of special programmes to facilitate access for the more disadvantaged groups (Asian Development Bank, 1998) suggests a breakdown in the triangular relations between school, community and local government with limited demand from, or accountability to, the disadvantaged community.

The disjuncture between the three local level institutions has prompted a range of alternative responses including a re-emphasis on the importance of national government leadership despite widespread decentralisation (World Bank, 1997) as well as strategies to by-pass the government altogether and move to more direct assistance to communities (World Bank, 2001). From our perspective, rather than move to these kinds of alternatives or interventions, the purpose of this part of the review has been to highlight the inter-connectivity of schools and the importance of

their external relations in influencing their structure, organisation and operation. On this basis we suggest that there is a need for more research that focuses on the local and the ways in which communities and local governments inter-relate to support improved and sustained access to schools.

## **5.6 School processes and access – a summary**

In this review we have focussed on research about school processes and have drawn out the implications for access within the conceptual schema presented in Figure 1. Importantly, in these terms schools are understood as defined not only by physical conditions and resources but through multiple sets of relations enacted by people in specific local contexts and cultures. In the review of literature on school processes we have identified four key strands of the research and explored both the substantive contributions and their approaches to research or intervention. In this concluding section we provide bulleted summaries of the key points under four headings.

### *School organisation and teacher management*

- School management has been highlighted as important to school quality and teacher professionalism, which are important ‘pull’ factors in school attendance and progression across all the zones and levels of access. Little is known about different leadership styles and management processes with staff and students or about how headteachers address or involve the local community.
- In contexts of decentralisation and marketisation there is a recognised need for more negotiated and responsive management in schools. The limited research points to a remarkable lack of training or local government support for headteachers in the management of schools, teachers’ professionalisation or in the development of negotiation and consultation skills. These absences leave us with little evidence of issues that have direct and indirect implications for access in all zones and levels.
- There is also very little known about the community perspectives on the school, the support demands from schools or more generally about the relations with teachers and/or the school as a community-based organisation. The role of local education officers in facilitating school-community relations is also under-researched.
- Policy implementation has been shown to be influenced by local stakeholders and can result in unregulated discriminatory practices. While local education offices have an official monitoring role there is little evidence of involvement in policy implementation, school and teacher support or in the inspection or monitoring of actual practices of registration, teaching and learning, professional development or retention and progression.

### *Curriculum, assessment and learning*

- The research describes the curriculum as prescribed and received knowledge that lacks relevance both in terms of content and in the processes of teaching

and learning. In most contexts the traditional academic curriculum has survived and ossified with curriculum reform or alternative curricula usually cast as second rate.

- Teachers are typified as reluctant to engage in curriculum development, learner-centred education or student participation. This has been cited as contributing to poor quality education and poor student achievement with implications for dropout and access in all zones. There is limited research on teacher perspectives, student perspectives or the influence of different teaching and learning styles on either examination or non-examination outcomes.
- The language of instruction remains a vexed issue that has implications for learning especially in the early years and more generally for communications with local communities. The widespread adoption of English as the medium of instruction in the private sector has been noted.
- High-stake assessment procedures dominate and have the double impact of limiting pedagogies and classroom activities as well as reducing the scope for teacher engagement in curriculum development. This persists despite the high profile, internationally supported, quality agenda.
- Assessment has been used intentionally and in more covert ways to restrict access to schooling either with respect to admission or progression. This has implications for access, repetition, for dropout, as outcome and process and re-admittance.

#### *The learning environment*

- School ethos and the learning environment are constructed by formal/official and informal aspects of the school life. Every day school life is comprised of complex sets of social relations and practices that take place both within and outside policy prescriptions.
- Institutional analyses of schools show both teachers and students channelled into gender stereotyped curriculum subjects and limited by expectations with respect to performance and participation. Gender research has provided analyses that underscore the significance of schools in the production of identities (masculine/feminine; good /poor learner; refugee etc.). Nevertheless, despite the advocacy, there is minimal description of exactly what 'girl-friendly schooling' means or research evidence of its efficacy.
- Micro-level studies repeatedly refer to high levels of violence, bullying, antagonistic gender relations (between and among staff and students), abuse of teacher power and sometimes sexual abuse of girls. Student and teacher disciplinary measures within and outside the policy recommendations are found to be highly significant to issues of truancy, dropout, re-admittance, access and exclusion. Where teachers act against the professional code and/or the law, there has been limited evidence of any disciplinary or legal action.

- There is little research on how a pupil's community and family responsibilities influence their inter-relations with teachers and peers, their positioning within school and their learner identities.

*Schools and external relations*

- There is minimal research on school interconnections with external stakeholders, but there is some evidence of limited and uneven external relations. Relations between the local education offices and schools are formal and distant with limited evidence of support offered by local officials. There is limited evidence of school involvement with the community and/or local government to address quality issues or of collaborative engagements to address access. This is especially the case in poor and marginalised communities.
- Reciprocal inter-relations between the school and the community have been advocated as important to school and teacher accountability. The influence of these formal community participation bodies on schools has also been variable with little research that connects how this participation affects school processes, quality and/or access in any of the zones.
- The reviewed research provides limited examples of the ways that schools are proactively engaged in communities and in particular in promoting Zone 1 access or following up dropouts. Similarly there are limited examples of the ways that schools can adjust their timetables and modes of operation to fit with the needs of the local community lifestyle e.g. in migratory or seasonal work.
- There is no evidence in the reviewed literature of local governance support to schools relevant to the specific zones or levels of exclusion.
- With one or two exceptions, there is minimal research on the perspectives from the local stakeholders and consequently limited understandings of life on the ground where educational services are offered and access is enjoyed or denied. For example, very little is known about how different communities view the school, the support demands from schools or more generally about the relations with teachers and/or the school as a community based organisation.
- There is a need for more research that focuses on the local and the ways in which communities and local governments inter-relate to support improved and sustained access to schools.

## **6. Discussion**

### **6.1 Overview**

Our principal concern in this cross-national review has been with the local setting and the social processes of access. As we discuss in greater detail later in this chapter, views into the field are crucial both to how research can inform us and to the construction of theoretical frameworks with which to understand what is going on. We have identified three intersecting institutions as germane to our interests in access at the local level, where schooling is provided. Our concerns have been with the internal and external dynamics within and between these institutions (school-community-local government). While much of the research and data about access emanates from macro-level descriptions and the analysis of different contexts, our focus has been to look at research that explores the local level. It has become increasingly clear to us that the dominant macro-view of access provides a veil that precludes an in-depth understanding of the social complexities in the local arenas of access.

While the quantitative macro level data is of value, by definition it cannot represent life in local situations, within and between the local institutions, which instead it tends to oversimplify. In part this results from the plane of vision that cannot provide details of the local level. Importantly, however, it also relates to the way that research builds a theoretical edifice that is then built on by further research. The dominance of the macro-view has produced conceptual and theoretical connections that are used (sometimes unreflexively) to structure more research. The effect is to sustain the theoretical assumptions and methodological approaches that have been constituted by this macro-perspective. This is not only evident in quantitative and macro-level research; it has been influential also in closer meso- and micro-level research using qualitative methods. What often emerges from many of the studies framed in this genre is a restatement of development imperatives replete with notions of localised and sometimes individualised deficit (also see sections 2.2.1 and 3.2). The local is understood through the veil of the macro- and the policy-makers perspectives rather than emergent from the perspectives of the local stakeholders. Significantly, these dominant assumptions and perspectives are also integral to much intervention research and practice.

Our interests with access issues in the local arena demand that we go beneath the veil of the theoretical frameworks that support the macro-view, and work towards new understandings of the power dynamics on the ground. For us this is vital to the generation of fresh insights into persistent problems with widening access to education. Along with others already researching in the field, this review provides further impetus for an open, critical and reflexive engagement with the local social contexts in which the three institutions intersect in the processes of school inclusion in all zones.

In the next section we return briefly to the key structure of CREATE, the zones and levels of exclusion and summarise how our review relates to these. This is followed by a section of further methodological discussion (also see Appendix 1). In the final section we provide outline suggestions for empirical studies to address gaps identified

in the review. Consistent with the conceptual schema we provided in Figure 2, these suggested studies have been developed by integrating the gaps identified in the review summaries of each of the three strands that structured this review.

## **6.2 Zones and Levels of Exclusion**

CREATE has provided a model that identifies four zones of exclusion. These are, Zone 1 which refers to those children who have never gone to school; Zone 2 which includes dropouts; Zone 3 which relates to those in school but at risk of dropping out; Zone 4 refers to those pupils who complete primary but are excluded from secondary school. While all represent specific access outcomes they are all also processual i.e. they are manifestations of sets of local inter-relations between interested institutions and stake-holders. In this review we have been concerned with how these inter-relations between the school, community and local government (whether they are active and functional or not) work to influence the processes of getting initial access in Zone 1, re-admittance in Zone 2, dropping out in Zone 3 and getting access to secondary school in Zones 4. So while reviewing research about access and educational inclusion as process, we also looked at its relevance to the zones and within that, to specific levels, e.g. early years.

Despite the potential to identify particular access problems at specific points in a school career, our review produced very few findings that were zone or school-level specific. In part this is because of the way we constructed the field for the review. For us the processes of educational inclusion are produced through different configurations of institutional inter-relations between schools, communities and local government. Research that specifically focuses on the inter-relational network has not been sufficiently developed for us to make any strong statements specific to a particular zone of exclusion. As stated in Chapter 1, our basic assumption is that trends and degrees of access at any point emerge from relations between the three institutions with points of low access where the inter-relations are incomplete or have broken down. In this sense our schema (see Figure 2) complements the CREATE model (see Figure 1) by offering a transverse section of the curve that shows levels of access and zones of exclusion. This complementary perspective provides the space for the development of empirical work that has enormous potential to contribute to knowledge and theory about access in the four zones.

Within the literature we reviewed where specific references were made to poor access, low retention and/or dropout, these were usually presented as resulting from the dysfunction of one of the three institutions. Exclusion in Zone 1, for example, was commonly attributed to the community and usually regarded as an outcome in a way that occludes the processes through which initial access is achieved. From our perspective this imposition of community deficit in Zone 1 is an oversimplification, which does not recognise the situated context and the part played by the school and/or local government. These same sets of relations and interactions operate in all the zones of exclusion as access is afforded in the nexus of interactions between the three institutions. This lack of specificity to the zones of exclusion therefore indicates the first set of gaps in the literature. There is need for empirical work that explores particular configurations of institutional interactions at the zones and the levels of education where access is limited. For example, there is limited research on the ways that local education departments are structured and operate to establish and address

particular problems with access in their own contexts, or on the ways that they include the schools and communities in addressing these zones of exclusion.

### **6.3 Methodologies**

Our literature review on access has been bounded by three strands in the literature, local governance, school processes and community participation. While we have constructed the nexus of our interests in the intersection and interaction of these three strands, there was a tendency in the literature to compartmentalise these concerns. The discussion of Zone 1 exclusion in the previous section is one example of this. Many studies we came across, that in the first instance appeared to address one of the three strands, in the end only superficially or peripherally related to the nexus of our interests. Our conceptualisation of the field presented considerable difficulties in the review, as it has required us to look at the available research often from a different angle from that of the authors. This added to the difficulties in accessing data that we have described in Appendix II. These included the variability in key words, the geographical references and the time constraints, in for example, getting recent research in doctoral theses. All of these latter accessibility problems exacerbated the conceptual limitations of the research included in this review.

While the structure of our research review reflects a separation of the institutions in the three strands, we have been trying to move the agenda on by emphasising the interactions through connecting the internal and external dynamics of each, especially as they influence access issues. In the same vein, we recognise that we have shifted the focus from concerns with policy per se to those of practice within the arenas of their (non-) implementation. In this sense we are looking at the consequences of policy (intended and un-intended) at the local level for a range of stakeholders as they interact with the contextual and cultural vagaries of their lives. Our concerns are with the multiple local stakeholder perspectives and our interests are in grounded theorisations of inclusion in all zones.

In advance of our discussion of the dominant methodologies in the reviewed literature, it has been important for us to locate our interests, as above, and to emphasize that the processes of researching (methodologies and methods) have a fundamental influence on research findings (Dunne, Pryor & Yates, 2005) (see also Appendix 1). So, for example, the macro-perspective evident in national and international audits tells us little about individual experience within specific social arena. In addition, the dominant conceptual distinctions and categories of the macro-perspective, over time, have become solidified and assumed in descriptions of social life and in understandings of social reality (Bourdieu, 1987). In the process of research these frozen and truncated categorical distinctions are reconstructed as they are reflected back into the arena that they attempt to describe (Dunne, 2007,). This is of special concern in the field of development studies as, not only do global and local power relations (e.g. through aid conditionalities and compliance) influence national and district priorities, research too plays a significant part in making conceptual distinctions that are used to inform policy. .

Throughout the review we have tried to be conscious of the way in which powerful international bodies (e.g. development agencies and international banks) have constructed the theoretical field. While we recognise the importance of macro-level



and quantitative research, our efforts have been to explore how these insights concerning the ‘what’ of access may be bridged into understandings of the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ in specific contexts. Qualitative understandings of the processes ‘going on’ in the social arena that are also described by quantitative data are especially important as they provide the space to explore how macro-level phenomena, for example international commitments and national policies, work out for different kinds of people in particular contexts. The articulation of these local insights and understandings has also been cited as critical to post-colonial theories of development (Mohanty, 1991). Insights from the local level, as suggested above, can start to inform us about how and why the globally agreed targets seem less imperative in particular contexts and without necessarily constructing cultural deficit (see for example, Colclough *et al.*, 2000, and their notion of ‘adverse cultural practices’). In this respect, opportunities for counter-discourses are opened up in which, for example, the data categories used in monitoring may be interrogated for their constraining effects on understanding the field/contexts they are used to describe and indeed whether they measure what they claim to measure. By the same token explorations of the similarities, differences and inconsistencies in and between quantitative and qualitative research within and across contexts might provide productive ways to engage in critique of the theoretical constructs used to describe the field (Humphreys, 2005).

Macro-level quantitative studies dominate research in education in developing contexts and issues of access. Nevertheless, as our review and annotated bibliography indicate there are a growing number of more qualitative studies, especially using case-study approaches. In some of the latter descriptive statistics are used either to help locate the context within broader educational development measures or to expand on the local detail in relation to the specific research focus (e.g. gender or rural statistics and proportions). In general, these studies do not critique the theoretical construction of the field and work within the conceptual terrain that usually derives from various monitoring categories (e.g. gender, age, teacher qualifications etc). As suggested elsewhere the use of either qualitative or quantitative research methods or both does not, on its own, indicate a particular methodological approach (Dunne, 1996; Dunne, Pryor & Yates, 2005).

A significant number of studies are from, or sponsored by, international agencies or NGOs, in which there is a tendency to ‘look at’ the developing context that is characterised by financial constraint and economic poverty. This has effects on the ‘tone’ of the research. There is an identifiable imperative associated with much research, even though it may come from a range of interest groups, from international agencies to local researchers. These imperatives of policy and/or practice bring with them a concomitant deficit. The macro-view gets stuck at this level of the ‘what’, in which policy priorities can only guess at the power dynamics and interests that produce the ‘deficit’. Within more contextually focused work the causes of the deficit often err towards structural explanations in which individual agency is either absent, ‘sympathetically’ passed over or ignored (e.g. the construction of girls as victims). Although beyond the scope of this review, there is interesting work from cultural studies that explores this absence and its quiescent construction of the racialised, gendered and colonised ‘other’ (see for example Said, 1978, Bhabha, 1990, and Ware, 1992). Within gender work in particular, there is a strong sense of advocacy founded on the Human Rights agenda and in which female empowerment provides the

motivation for lists of policy and practice imperatives as well as accounts of specific interventions (see for example Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005). The 'tone' of much research is often either paternal and/ or self-righteous suggesting that the while religion has been expunged, missionary zeal and evangelism for particular kinds of development outcomes remains prevalent.

The limited engagement with agency results from the predominance of structuralist and enlightenment accounts within development research. This focus on social structure and systems has deflected attention away from the ways in which different people interact with local structures and systems. It has also tended to polarise and differentiate organisations and people rather than seeing them as interactive and connected by institutional discourse, rules and practices (Giddens, 1984; Parker, 2000; Hall, 2002). As a result little empirical or theoretical space has been afforded for research on biography, identity or institutional regimes (Kabeer & Subrahmanian, 1996, offer one example). In particular these approaches have the potential to highlight processes and the on-going, multi-dimensional experiences of becoming. Research in this genre provides the capacity to understand individual agency, fluidity, flux and change that work against the more static models of social life that emphasise structure, fixity and solidity. The idea of identity as performative (Butler, 1990), introduces an important emphasis on the every-day practices in and between schools, communities and local government offices which construct and regulate everyday life and normalise unequal power relations. Within this institutional nexus, age, authority, ethnicity and gender etc. provide boundaries that constitute cultural norms that construct differentiated capacities to perform specific tasks and to command the resources of space and time. These are all constructed through acts of power and exclusion (Thorne, 1993; Parker, 2000) constantly acted out over time and maintained in the face of contestation in the interests of those with the most privilege. This is especially significant to the concerns of this review as research in this genre has the potential to provide more textured accounts of different contexts which underline the importance of local knowledges in the practice and production of more critical insights and understandings of global trends.

Whether founded on structuralist or poststructuralist methodologies, the emphasis on intervention and the urgency of the imperatives for change in research on education and development have resulted in strikingly little of the more conventional social research that tries to explore and explain 'what is going' in a particular arena. With the more widespread legitimisation of qualitative research there has been a rise in studies using ethnographic methods and that elicit the perspectives of stakeholders. There are, however, only limited examples of longitudinal studies using ethnographic methods. These have been conducted by a variety of combinations of national and international researchers alone or in collaborative teams. Although extrapolation from the micro- to the macro-level is difficult, some of this research has been extraordinarily rich and has demonstrated the potential to contest the traditional methodological approaches and conceptual frameworks applied to the field (see for example Ahmed & Nath, 2005). Few studies, however, incorporate stakeholders (see for example Ramachandran & Sethi, 2001) or practitioners as researchers; rather their responses are interpreted with respect to theoretical structures that precede the data collection. In terms of access, there have been some researchers who have indicated the necessity to include students' voices (Avotri *et al.*, 2000) and recognise this as vital to overturning the 'conservative discourse of perceived inclusion' (Sookraj,

Gopal, & Maharaj, 2005). These methodological omissions present a conceptual block in which deductive reasoning (often with a framework of deficit rather than potential) makes it impossible to gain fresh insights or recast the perspectives of those inhabiting the local arena in more appropriate theoretical reconfigurations. This is not to suggest that only insider accounts are valid, it is rather to point to the importance of process in methodological and theoretical advances. Opportunities for local stakeholders and researchers from different locations (North, South, and different South contexts) to engage in dialogue have been limited, despite the potential to inform us why and how the dynamics of the 'local' work.

#### **6.4 Conclusions and Identification of Gaps**

In this final section we have brought together the summaries from the literature review (refer to sections 2.2.7, 2.3.6 and 2.4.6) with the methodological concerns and on this basis we have outlined below some areas for empirical study. The main gaps we have identified concern the issues of power and identity as they are played out in and between the intersecting institutions and within which context access is enabled or denied. Alongside this, the methodological demand is for deeper sociological engagements in the local level to produce contextually located studies in which stakeholders' voices and/or participation will be brought to bear on the theoretical frames that construct the field. Through this we anticipate the production of new insights that emerge from empirical work and sociological analyses that will provide opportunities to critique the current dominant theoretical premises in research on access and educational exclusion. Importantly, these insights will also provide the basis for more appropriate intervention and advocacy through which to achieve the EFA goals.

We have listed eight areas for study. These are described by a title and some indicative research questions. Through this we have pointed to gaps in the substantive literature with respect to some, if not all of the four country contexts directly involved in CREATE (Bangladesh, Ghana, India and South Africa). Given the focus of this review we are also at pains to highlight the importance of methodology to the empirical work outlined. It should be evident that we want to privilege the local stakeholder perspectives in the empirical work. While for us this is crucial, it still leaves open a wide range of approaches to the substantive areas. In particular, we would like to point to the productive possibilities of using action research which links research to personal / professional reflection and improved practice in the local context. Several of the research areas could be adapted for this kind of research, for example: Area 1: Teacher management and accountability is one example in which teachers or headteachers could engage with their own and the school practices with respect to access. Similar opportunities are available in the areas described below for other stakeholders to be lead researchers in aspects of the empirical work. Area 2: School governance bodies and decision-making would offer these possibilities. The advantages of an action research approach are related to the potentially immediate influences on practices that can extend access. Such effects could be multiplied by using groups or teams of local stakeholders researching contextual and /or professional practices related to access. The possible arrangements include, for example, a group of headteachers from schools in a given location of low access or using a school location as the focus of a team comprising community, local government and teacher representatives as researchers.

There are two further approaches that offer particular methodological possibilities. In the first instance we want to acknowledge and suggest that some useful comparative work with other countries within South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa could enrich these suggested studies. With respect to Area 3, 'Decentralisation and educational demand', for example, a comparative study of Rwanda and Ghana, with their different models of decentralisation, might provide useful insights and examples of good practice. Secondly, longitudinal studies and a life-history approach also offer the potential to explore access issues over time and life cycles. These approaches would be particularly relevant to Area 4, Pathways to exclusion and 5, Vulnerable communities.

What follows are eight areas that have emerged as research gaps from this review in which further empirical work can offer insights into issues of access. The title indicates the main focus which is refined through the sub questions. All of these should be read with respect to their relevance to issues of access and to the zones and levels of exclusion.

### ***Research Areas***

#### ***1. Teacher management and accountability***

How do teachers define their professional responsibilities?

How do school managers, local educational officers and communities define teachers' professional responsibilities?

How do local education officials support headteachers and teachers in their professional responsibilities?

For what, and to whom, do teachers feel accountable?

How do headteachers mediate teacher accountability?

How do headteachers encourage teachers to develop their professionalism?

What are the tensions and contradictions in the various views on teacher responsibilities and how do these impact on inclusion, especially in Zones 2-4?

#### ***2. School governance bodies and decision-making***

What are the regulations with respect to appointments onto school governance bodies (e.g. SMCs, VECs)?

What is the extent of compliance to these regulations in practice?

What is the composition of school governance bodies in contexts of different levels of access? Which groups are not represented?

How does the composition of school governance bodies impact on decision-making processes?

To what extent are these decisions informed by school efficiency, equity or political contingency?

What impact do the decisions made by school governance bodies have on access in Zones 2 and 3?

#### ***3. Decentralisation and educational demand***

How do different forms of decentralisation (e.g. devolution, deconcentration, delegation etc.) stimulate demand for schooling?

How do local education officers gauge community access needs and respond in contexts of differentiated levels of access?

How are responsibilities for particular zones and levels of exclusion distributed in the local education office?

How do the contrasting professional and political commitments of local government officers, headteachers, teachers and community members' impact on decentralisation practices?

How do local education offices mediate the priorities and demands of schools, teachers and communities?

In what ways does decentralisation influence formal and informal school processes?

#### ***4. Pathways to exclusion***

What are the key factors that characterise the pathway from Zone 3 'at risk' to Zone 2 'dropout'?

To what extent are school experiences / processes / silent exclusion implicated in these pathways?

How do dropouts explain their own pathways out of school and the barriers to re-admission?

What is the balance of in-school and out-of-school factors in processes of dropout?

How do schools, teachers, communities, parents and local education officers explain pathways out of school and the barriers to re-admission?

How do schools recognise and respond to the multiple community and family responsibilities of students vulnerable to dropout? How does this affect school attendance and persistence?

To what extent are gender, caste, socio-economic status and ethnicity significant to dropping out?

How do the school management, teachers, communities and the local education officers attempt to address exclusion in Zones 2 and 3?

#### ***5. Vulnerable communities***

What kinds of educational services are provided for vulnerable community groups (e.g. informal urban settlements, migratory communities, communities in conflict zones)?

What are the dominant patterns of admission, attendance and dropout in these communities?

How do schools adapt to diverse local community lifestyles?

What are the barriers to educational access for vulnerable community groups?

How do the communities view the educational opportunities available to them?

To what extent do community lifestyles militate against educational access?

What role does the local education office play in providing for the educational needs of vulnerable groups?

What is the contribution of school-age children to the communities' economic activities?

How are community notions of childhood and coming of age significant to school access and persistence?

#### ***6. School relations and exclusion***

How do teacher views of different students influence teacher-student relations and their classroom pedagogies?

What are student views of teacher-student and peer relations in school and do these impact on attendance, truancy, progression and achievement?

What is the influence of different forms of student discipline on the learning environment?

To what extent do schools and teachers involve students in unofficial non-academic tasks (e.g. use of student labour for private / personal purposes) and how does this impact on access and progression?

What opportunities are there for student participation in school decision-making (e.g. school councils)?

How do headteachers' relations with teachers and students impact on the ethos of the school? And how does this affect access?

What official/unofficial action is taken by local government officers in response to inappropriate relations in school?

What formal channels exist for parents to complain about inappropriate relations in school?

### ***7. Assessment, progression and access***

What are the factors that work against pupils accessing secondary education?

What school procedures and processes are in place to assist pupils in their transition to secondary school?

What are the non-academic factors (e.g. opportunity costs) that discourage or prevent pupils who have successfully completed their primary education from proceeding to secondary school?

What are the characteristics (gender, socio-economic status, etc.) of children who fail end-of-year tests? What are the consequences for access?

How are teachers and schools accountable for the examination performance of their students? What is the effect on Zones 3 and 4 of exclusion?

How is school progression managed in school and what influence does this have on dropout?

### ***8. Zone 1 exclusion***

To what extent are schools, school governance bodies and local education officials pro-active in promoting access in Zone 1?

What is the impact of admissions procedures and processes on initial access to primary school?

How does school language policy and practices influence curriculum access and progression in early years?

How do parents and the community rationalise Zone 1 exclusion?

What are the characteristics of those who gain access in contexts of high levels of Zone 1 exclusion?

How are the children excluded at Zone 1 participating in community and family life?

We have offered eight areas for possible empirical work that have emerged from gaps we have identified in the literature. They are all concerned with local level studies but taking any one of these forward would require cross reference with the country specific reviews (CARs) and negotiation about their relevance and application in particular country settings. Each would need to be explored and elucidated further with the country teams and in relation to the priorities and capacities in the country contexts. This might also provide the basis for comparative cross-country studies. It is on the basis of these negotiations that the focus, shape and timeline for studies would be agreed and engaged with.

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## **Appendices**

## **Appendix 1 Report Methodology**

### **A1.1 Searching the literature**

Conducting a literature search is never straightforward and the call for greater systematicity in reviewing literature is easier to make than to respond to. There were numerous difficulties in conducting this review, not least of which were constraints on time and resources.

More particular to this review was the fact that we looking at access in a less conventional way. As described in Chapter 1 we were interested in the interconnections between school governance and processes and their embeddedness in communities. To a large extent the literature is not organised in ways that facilitated this approach to investigating access. This therefore entailed seeking out seemingly only tangentially relevant documents, at times, in order to tease out small sections in them, and making connections where the authors perhaps had not, since their intentions and their conceptualisations of the issues were different.

Anticipating the difficulty in locating relevant documents, we kept the initial search broad, using the key words 'Africa', 'Asia' (or 'South Asia' if the particular search facility permitted) and 'primary education', 'basic education' or 'primary schooling'. In the case of relatively small databases, such as those of Oxfam or Save the Children, 'education' was sufficient. The titles, abstracts and keywords (depending on what was available) were scanned and an initial 'long list' of potentially relevant literature was compiled. After the broad brush strokes of the preliminary searches (see Appendix 1A for list of databases and search terms), more specific terms were used to conduct searches in two large databases; ERIC on OCLC and the combined ELDIS/BLDS search in the British Library for Development Studies. In the case of ERIC, details could be imported into Endnote (see Appendix 1b for the full list of searches). The long list of 160 entries was then reduced to 61 priority documents through discussion among ourselves, with the remainder on standby in case the selected documents failed to yield useful information.

The criteria for the selection of documents, in addition to the above-stated substantive area, were that the publications had to be no earlier than 1990. Within South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa we focused on the core countries of Bangladesh, India, Ghana and South Africa, unless the title/abstract indicated that the document was of specific relevance to our focus, for example, the involvement of parents in school governance. Articles giving regional overviews were also sought while conference papers were ignored, as were articles under five pages and purely statistical surveys. Unfortunately there was insufficient time to consult relevant doctoral theses.

There are a number of points that were striking about the literature search. First, it soon became apparent that there was inconsistency and lack of aggregation in search terms, both within and across databases. For example, articles and reports about countries such as Malawi and Bangladesh were not necessarily covered by the search term 'Africa' or 'Asia'. As another example, a search of the BLDS/ELDIS database produced 12 results for 'primary schooling', three of which, surprisingly, were not all covered within the 120 results for 'primary education'. The vagaries of search terms also meant that several articles, which were known to be relevant, did not materialise

through the search. Thus, after the ‘systematic’ search we added to our lists of work with which we were already familiar or that had been recommended to us that contained useful insights.

As regards the substantive finds, there was much more literature available on Sub-Saharan Africa than on South Asia. This might be explained by a number of factors including firstly the limit of this review to research in English rather than other national languages, the fact that South Asia comprises fewer nations than Sub-Saharan Africa despite a higher population, and the searchable terms used. Within the African results, literature on South Africa was far more abundant than on any other country. This is probably due to a combination of historical factors, such as a high number of higher education institutions which have a strong research capacity and relatively easy access to publishing in international journals in English. Also, South African research journals were visible in the ERIC database in a way that other national research journals were not, in part it was also because the ‘Africa’ of South Africa came up on searches for the continent.

We did not access literature on Francophone and Lusophone countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The dominance of publications in English was compounded in some countries either because of a less developed research capacity, national language issues or because there have been fewer donor-funded activities, which often drive the research and intervention activity. Even given these constraints, it is clear from many lists of references that research and interventions related to various aspects of school access are going on in various countries but that the reports or theses were often not readily accessible either outside the country, or beyond the institution carrying out the work.

### **A1.2 Collaboration**

Our collaborative approach has been vital both in the processes and products of this review. In more technical terms this was about a division of labour and responsibility for certain aspects of the review and the final narrative. More importantly the process was punctuated by team meetings in which we exchanged substantive and methodological insights gained in reviewing the selected literature. Our collective critical engagement has been important in general and particular discussions of different assumptions and approaches made by various researchers. Through this process we have developed a standpoint that has brought together methodological and substantive gaps in the field. This enabled us collectively to develop a conceptual landscape and a methodological awareness that we have expanded on through this review. As highlighted in Chapter 1 this provides a complementary perspective from the dominant macro-level research and the interaction with which has enormous potential for reflexive theorising and innovative practice with respect to access.

We return to issues of methodology in Chapter 4, where we discuss the dominant approaches to the research we have reviewed in this cross-national research study.

## **Appendix 2 Review Paper Searches**

Not included: items under 6 pages, conference papers, purely statistical surveys  
Search Last 16 years (from 1990)

### **Broad searches**

ERIC (both OCLC and Dialog)

SOUTH ASIA and BASIC EDUCATION *not* ADULT EDUCATION *not* HIGHER  
EDUCATION (145)

AFRICA and PRIMARY EDUCATION (244 in OCLC; 147 in ERIC Dialog)

AFRICA and PRIMARY EDUCATION and

access (14)

dropout (3)

enrollment (7)

retention (32)

information recording (4)

educational quality (167)

BLDS/ELDIS combined:

SOUTH ASIA and EDUCATION (104)

AFRICA and PRIMARY EDUCATION (120)

AFRICA and PRIMARY SCHOOLING (12)

AFRICA and BASIC EDUCATION (84)

World Bank

AFRICA and SOUTH ASIA collections

UNESCO

UNICEF

EDUCATION (32)

DfID

AFRICA and EDUCATION (81)

SOUTH ASIA and EDUCATION (53)

SIDA -

EDUCATION and AFRICA (55)

EDUCATION and ASIA (53)

USAID

BASIC EDUCATION and SOUTH ASIA (514)

BASIC EDUCATION and AFRICA (?)

DANIDA - no database and link to development library not working

NORAD - no database

Save the Children (UK)

EDUCATION and AFRICA (2)

EDUCATION and ASIA (2)

Oxfam

EDUCATION and AFRICA (51)

EDUCATION and ASIA (19)

ADEA - poor search facility

Asian Development Bank - couldn't access

Africa Development Bank - limited access

**More specific searches**

LOCAL GOVERNANCE (ERIC on OCLC)

| Keywords                               | No. found | No. selected | No. repeats |
|--|-----------|--------------|-------------|
| ED. GOVERNANCE and AFRICA              | 56        | 16           |             |
| ED. GOVERNANCE and ASIA                | 17        | 0            |             |
| ED. GOVERNANCE and SOUTH ASIA          | 4         | 0            | 4           |
| DECENTRALI#ATION and AFRICA            | 26        | 7            | 6           |
| DECENTRALI#ATION and ASIA              | 14        | 1            |             |
| DECENTRALI#ATION and SOUTH ASIA        | 2         | 0            |             |
| LOCAL ED. AUTHORIT+ and AFRICA         | 18        | 3            |             |
| LOCAL ED. AUTHORIT+ and ASIA           | 11        | 0            |             |
| LOCAL ED. AUTHORIT+ and SOUTH ASIA     | 1         | 0            |             |
| SCHOOL MONITORING and AFRICA           | 27        | 4            | 1           |
| SCHOOL MONITORING and ASIA             | 8         | 0            |             |
| SCHOOL MONITORING and SOUTH ASIA       | 1         | 0            |             |
| LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY and AFRICA        | 6         | 1            | 1           |
| LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY and ASIA          | 0         | 0            | 0           |
| SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY and AFRICA       | 16        | 6            | 1           |
| SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY and ASIA         | 9         | 0            |             |
| SCHOOL INSPECTION and AFRICA           | 1         | 1            | 1           |
| SCHOOL INSPECTION and ASIA             | 0         | 0            |             |
| DISTRICT OFFICE+ and AFRICA            | 4         | 0            |             |
| DISTRICT OFFICE and ASIA               | 4         | 0            |             |
| LOCAL POLICY and AFRICA                | 68        | 13           | 8           |
| LOCAL POLICY and ASIA                  | 38        | 0            |             |
| LOCAL POLICY and SOUTH ASIA            | 5         | 0            |             |
| LOCAL GOVERNMENT and AFRICA            | 51        | 16           | 11          |
| LOCAL GOVERNMENT and ASIA              | 32        | 0            |             |
| LOCAL GOVERNMENT and SOUTH ASIA        | 7         | 0            |             |
| REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION and AFRICA     | 15        | 0            |             |
| REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION and ASIA       | 12        | 0            |             |
| REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION and SOUTH ASIA | 2         | 0            |             |
| TEACHER DEPLOYMENT and AFRICA          | 0         | 0            |             |
| TEACHER DEPLOYMENT and ASIA            | 0         | 0            |             |
| TEACHER RECRUITMENT and AFRICA         | 1         | 0            |             |
| TEACHER RECRUITMENT and SOUTH ASIA     | 0         | 0            |             |
|  |           |              |             |

COMMUNITY (ERIC on OCLC)

| Keywords                                  | No. found | No. selected | No. repeated |
|---|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION and AFRICA        | 68        | 9            | 4            |
| COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION and ASIA          | 40        | 0            |              |
| COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION and SOUTH ASIA    | 9         | 0            |              |
| COMMUNITY SCHOOLS and AFRICA              | 131       | 20           | 7            |
| COMMUNITY SCHOOLS and ASIA                | 63        | 2            | 2            |
| COMMUNITY SCHOOLS and SOUTH ASIA          | 18        | 2            |              |
| PARENT* PARTICIPATION and AFRICA          | 46        | 8            |              |
| PARENT* PARTICIPATION and ASIA            | 19        | 0            |              |
| PARENT* PARTICIPATION and SOUTH ASIA      | 3         | 0            |              |
| PARENT* VIEWS * AFRICA                    | 8         | 1            |              |
| PARENT* VIEWS * and ASIA                  | 6         | 0            |              |
| PARENT* VIEWS * and SOUTH ASIA            | 2         | 0            |              |
| COMMUNITY FUNDING and AFRICA              | 39        | 2            | 2            |
| COMMUNITY FUNDING and ASIA                | 30        | 1            | 1            |
| SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS and AFRICA     | 1         | 1            |              |
| SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS and ASIA       | 1         | 0            |              |
| SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS and SOUTH ASIA | 0         | 0            |              |
| SCHOOL CATCHMENT and AFRICA               | 0         | 0            |              |
| SCHOOL CATCHMENT and ASIA                 | 0         | 0            |              |
| SCHOOL CATCHMENT and SOUTH ASIA           | 0         | 0            |              |
| SCHOOL LOCATION and AFRICA                | 19        | 0            |              |
| SCHOOL LOCATION and ASIA                  | 18        | 0            |              |
| SCHOOL LOCATION 7 SOUTH ASIA              | 5         | 0            |              |
| CHILD LABOUR and AFRICA                   | 1         | 1            |              |
| CHILD LABOUR and ASIA                     | 2         | 0            |              |
| CHILD LABOUR and SOUTH ASIA               | 1         | 0            |              |
| COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT and AFRICA          | 5         | 4            | 3            |
| COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT and ASIA            | 33        | 0            |              |
| COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT and SOUTH ASIA      | 7         | 0            |              |
|   |           |              |              |



SCHOOL (ERIC on OCLC)

| Keywords                                 | No. found | No. selected | No. repeats |
|--|-----------|--------------|-------------|
| SCHOOL PROCESSES and AFRICA              | 38        | 3            | 3           |
| SCHOOL PROCESSES and SOUTH ASIA          | 6         | 0            |             |
| SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION and AFRICA         | 80        | 6            | 6           |
| SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION and ASIA           | 17        | 0            |             |
| DROPOUT and AFRICA                       | 15        | 1            | 1           |
| DROPOUT and SOUTH ASIA                   | 0         | 0            |             |
| ADMISSION* and AFRICA                    | 30        | 4            | 2           |
| ADMISSION* and SOUTH ASIA                | 2         | 0            |             |
| ATTENDANCE and AFRICA                    | 15        | 6            |             |
| ATTENDANCE and SOUTH ASIA                | 2         | 0            |             |
| REPETITION and AFRICA                    | 10        | 2            | 1           |
| REPETITION and SOUTH ASIA                | 0         | 0            |             |
| TRUANCY and AFRICA                       | 1         | 1            | 1           |
| TRUANCY and SOUTH ASIA                   | 0         | 0            |             |
| DISCIPLINE and AFRICA                    | 43        | 2            |             |
| DISCIPLINE and SOUTH ASIA                | 2         | 0            |             |
| CORPORAL PUNISHMENT and AFRICA           | 4         | 3            | 3           |
| CORPORAL PUNISHMENT and SOUTH ASIA       | 0         | 0            |             |
| SCHOOL VIOLENCE and AFRICA               | 23        | 6            | 4           |
| SCHOOL VIOLENCE and SOUTH ASIA           | 0         | 0            |             |
| SCHOOL MANAGEMENT and AFRICA             | 43        | 9            | 9           |
| SCHOOL MANAGEMENT and SOUTH ASIA         | 6         | 0            |             |
| INFORMATION RECORDING and AFRICA         | 1         | 0            |             |
| INFORMATION RECORDING and SOUTH ASIA     | 0         | 0            |             |
| HEADTEACHERS and AFRICA                  | 9         | 0            |             |
| HEADTEACHERS and SOUTH ASIA              | 2         | 0            |             |
| TRANSITION** and AFRICA                  | 92        | 0            |             |
| TRANSITION** and SOUTH ASIA              | 13        | 0            |             |
| TEACHER STUDENT RELATIONS and AFRICA     | 12        | 2            | 2           |
| TEACHER STUDENT RELATIONS and SOUTH ASIA | 2         | 0            |             |
| CLASSROOM INTERACTION and AFRICA         | 17        | 0            |             |
| CLASSROOM INTERACTION and ASIA           | 2         | 0            |             |
| QUALITY OF TEACHING and AFRICA           | 75        | 2            | 1           |
| QUALITY OF TEACHING and ASIA             | 6         | 0            |             |
| PEDAGOGY and AFRICA                      | 54        | 2            | 1           |
| PEDAGOGY and SOUTH ASIA                  | 6         | 0            |             |
|  |           |              |             |



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### Report Summary:

This review explores research insights that illuminate the interactions between communities, schools and local education authorities and shape patterns of educational access. It argues that more emphasis is needed on local, contextually grounded studies that give more weight to agency and the perspectives of stakeholders directly engaged in delivering educational services. Findings are collated and gaps identified in research on teacher management, school governance, decentralisation, processes of exclusion, characteristics of vulnerable communities, school processes, and progression through schooling.

### Author Notes:

Dr Máiréad Dunne is Senior Lecturer at the University of Sussex who has written extensively on the relationships between policy and the micro-sociology of educational and institutional processes and the production of identity. Other research interests include methodologies, feminism and post-colonial theory. Dr Kwame Akyeampong is Senior Lecturer in Education in CIE, with research interests in management of educational change, teacher education, decentralisation and assessment. Dr Sara Humphreys is Visiting Lecturer in CIE. Her research interests include gender, classroom-based research, school discipline and language use in the classroom

### Address for Correspondence:

CREATE, Centre for International Education  
Sussex School of Education, University of Sussex  
Brighton BN1 9QQ, UK.

Website: <http://www.create-rpc.org>

Email: [create@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:create@sussex.ac.uk)

