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AFRICA EDUCATION WATCH

GOOD GOVERNANCE LESSONS FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION

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Abbreviations

AEW	Africa Education Watch
EFA	Education for All
HDI	Human Development Index
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
SMC	School Management Committee
SPIP	School Performance Improvement Plan
SWAp	Sector Wide Approaches
TI	Transparency International

Terminology

The present report uses consistent terminology to refer to specific actors or institutions in the education system: head teachers, School Management Committees, Parent-Teacher Associations and District Education Officers. The table below presents the national equivalents of these terms in each of the seven countries.

Country	Head Teacher	School Management Committee	Parent-Teacher Association	District Official
Ghana	Head teacher	School Management Committee	Parent-Teacher Association	Ghana Education Service (GES)
Madagascar	Directeur d'école	Comité de gestion scolaire/FAF	Association de parents d'élèves/FRAM	Circonscription scolaire (CISCO)
Morocco	Directeur d'établissement scolaire	Comité de gestion scolaire	Association de parents et tuteurs d'élèves	Délégation provinciale
Niger	Directeur d'école	Comité de gestion scolaire	Association de parents d'élèves	Direction régionale et inspection
Senegal	Directeur d'école	Comité de gestion scolaire	Association de parents d'élèves	Inspection Départementale de l'Education Nationale (IDEN)
Sierra Leone	Head teacher	School Management Committee	Parent-Teacher Association	District Education Official
Uganda	School head teacher	School Management Committee	Parent-Teacher Association	District Education Officer (DEO)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

About this report

This report presents a regional overview of accountability and transparency in primary education management in seven African countries. It has been produced within the framework of Africa Education Watch (AEW). AEW is a three-year programme (2007-2010) implemented by Transparency International (TI) that focuses on governance in the management of public funds in the primary education system.

Rationale

Since the late 1990s the management of primary education in much of Africa has been subject to structural changes intended to bring it closer to the 'user', and to give citizens at the local level (particularly parents) a greater stake in management. The goal is to increase accountability, oversight and responsiveness. The new administrative and fiscal arrangements have placed more responsibilities on regional, district, communal and school level authorities.

TI's AEW programme seeks to discover whether these new decentralised systems are effective in controlling malpractice, monitoring the flow of resources, and preventing corruption, resource leakages and delays. Particularly, it asks whether school administration is now a genuinely accountable and participatory governance system.

Methodology

As part of this programme, TI undertook a large-scale assessment of the effectiveness of decentralised accountability structures. It covered seven countries: Ghana, Madagascar, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda. Countries surveyed were selected based on the presence of a TI Chapter in the country with previous experience working on education. Another criterion was representation of socioeconomical and cultural differences.

In each of these countries, the TI Chapters reviewed how primary education is financed and implemented field surveys and interviews to assess the quality of governance in schools and transparency in the management of their resources.

The TI International Secretariat (TI-S) worked closely with TI Chapters on the design of four different survey questionnaires and methodology, as well as on the data quality control process and overall coordination of the work carried out by the chapters. To design the questionnaires, TI drew on input from national and international education experts, civil society activists, and survey experts. All surveys were carried out between March and May 2008 by TI Chapters in the above-mentioned countries with the exception of Uganda, where a consulting firm implemented the survey under the supervision of the local TI Chapter.

In each country, four types of respondents were interviewed: households, head teachers, heads of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and local governments (district education officers). A minimum of 60 schools were randomly selected and surveyed. On average, 58 head teachers and 58 heads of PTAs were interviewed in each country. Additionally, at least 1,000 households were selected from the schools' roster and interviewed. A proportion of those interviewed were also members or heads of the School Management Committees (SMCs). An average of 10 district officials were also interviewed in each country.

Respondents were asked about the existence of channels and mechanisms for voicing opinions and monitoring accountability, the use of such mechanisms by parents, experiences and perceptions of corrupt practices and any other problems they identified at their schools.

For detailed information on the methodology used for the surveys, please refer to Annex 2.

Background

Education development

Since the international commitments to Education for All (EFA), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, there have been significant efforts, primarily through reducing direct costs to parents, to increase primary school enrolment. Developing countries and their partners increased efforts to improve the efficient and proper use of public funds – reducing waste, mismanagement and leakage.

Decentralisation

In many countries, including most of the countries surveyed as part of the AEW programme, district and school level managers have taken over the responsibilities for administering school finances (mainly through school grants). Part of the rationale for this increased decentralisation is that it will increase responsiveness to local needs and, critically, subject schools to more effective local oversight and make them more accountable to the community. AEW sought (i) to examine if this works by assessing the efficiency of decentralised school management systems and school governance structures and their effect on the management of educational resources, and (ii) to identify forms of corruption in primary education management and financing, and highlight specific risk areas.

The countries

All of the countries surveyed as part of the AEW programme receive external development support. By law, all guarantee free primary education. However, they represent significant differences in terms of demography, political models and socio-economic indicators. Four countries (Ghana, Madagascar, Sierra Leone and Uganda) have implemented a system of grant funding to schools.

Findings

Financial systems

There was very limited availability of financial documentation at district education offices and at schools. Financial records were in most cases unavailable or incomplete. In countries that recently introduced school grants, the availability and completeness of financial records was only slightly better. Overall, 85 percent of schools surveyed across all countries had either deficient accounting systems or none at all.

Additionally, the unpredictability of when and how much funding or resources reach schools undermines both planning and any meaningful financial oversight. There is a tendency for schools to record the different sources of funding separately (and sometimes not at all), which compromises transparency.

Information

Parents surveyed confirmed they had little opportunity to examine school finances but also said this was not of great interest to them. Parents do not actively seek a greater role in financial oversight. For example, 80 percent of parents across all countries did not try to access financial information about their child's school. Some feel constrained by their lack of education or literacy, but many express a lack of interest, which poses important questions in terms of how to make local oversight and citizen monitoring of service-delivery a reality. Financial information is not normally displayed at district offices and rarely at schools, even where public display is compulsory. Records may be accessible, on request, in the office of the district official or head teacher, but they are usually of a poor quality and difficult to understand without proper training. Overall, 64 percent of schools surveyed across all countries did not display any budgetary information at all, with worrying peaks of 80 percent and 85 percent in Ghana and Senegal respectively.

Participation

AEW studied how parents (and others) participate in the official local bodies that are supposed to allow them to play a role in school management: SMCs and PTAs. SMCs are compulsory in all AEW countries and were in place in nearly all schools surveyed. In some cases the findings suggest that the SMC can be "captured" by the head teacher and/or local elites, reducing its ability to monitor financial activities independently. While 61 percent of parents surveyed felt that PTA decision-making was transparent, only about half (49 percent) felt that SMC decision-making was transparent. In most cases, parents had only a limited understanding of how SMCs work. The role of SMCs and PTAs varies in different countries (and in different schools), particularly in regard to how involved they are in financial decision-making. Members of these bodies are given limited financial management training and support, which raises serious questions about their ability to fulfil their role of planning and monitoring school resources.

Corrupt practices

AEW highlights three corrupt practices that concerned parents: (i) abusive demands for fees that by law have been abolished (ii) embezzlement of resources, and (iii) abuse of power by teachers or officials. There is confusion, notably among parents, as to which demands for fees are legal. Budget shortfalls sometimes force schools to seek additional funds, but as registration fees are supposed to have been abolished for basic education in all surveyed countries, it is very worrying that an average of 44 percent of parents still report paying them. The average amount that parents report paying is US$4.16 per child for one school year. In all countries surveyed, this represents a major hurdle for a large majority of the

population, particularly in Madagascar, Niger and Sierra Leone. In addition, parents report paying fees – legally or not – for textbooks, private tutoring, and exams.

Reported abuses of power include systematic absenteeism and, to a lesser extent, sexual harassment.

While parents and head teachers did not report high levels of corruption in schools, the poor quality of accounting and financial record keeping at district and school level makes it impossible to assess the truth of these claims.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the analysis of the AEW surveys and on the recommendations put forward by the TI Chapters in their own national reports.

While most of the recommendations below are addressed to Ministries of Education (MoEs) in the surveyed countries, international development partners are encouraged to use bi- or multilateral discussions with MoEs to seek support for their implementation, and to offer financial support to cover their costs.

Additionally, civil society organisations have an important role to play by providing expertise and outreach to parents and local communities.

Clarify responsibilities

The increasing decentralisation of responsibilities has added to the confusion about the roles of sub-national bodies, such as district education offices and communes, and overwhelmed their capacity.

- Governments must clarify and publicise the roles and responsibilities of sub-national agencies, particularly with regard to financial transfers, control and support to schools.
- Governments must review and reinforce the institutional and organisational capacity of sub-national agencies, particularly districts, to provide adequate support to schools and exercise external oversight of their financial processes.

Strengthen school financial regulations and control

School regulatory frameworks are often unclear, funding for schools is not transparent and external inspections are conducted infrequently.

- Governments must review and revise regulations on financial record keeping to ensure that they are both comprehensive and consistent; best practices must be documented and included in guidance manuals for school managers.
- Training of head teachers and SMC members in basic financial management should be widely implemented to ensure that school managers have the required skills to perform their duties.
- Inspections of schools need to be regular and should address compliance with both school management and SMC and PTA regulations.
- MoEs, with the help of civil society where possible, must proactively inform parents about which demands for fees are legitimate, when they can be levied and by whom and how much; they also must put complaint-mechanisms in place and widely advertise them to parents.
- Information about material and funds allocations to schools must be made public at district level, school by school, through notice boards and local media. This information must be made accessible at school level by the SMC and publicised for parents or any other citizen or elected representative so that they can track distribution.

Empower local accountability structures

Local accountability structures (SMCs and PTAs) are currently ill-equipped to address transparency issues and exercise their oversight role.

- The respective roles of SMCs and PTAs should be clarified and action taken to raise public awareness of their responsibilities.
- Pro-active steps should be taken to stimulate, motivate and empower the school community to become actively engaged in school life. These may include national campaigns to raise the awareness of parents and local communities of how they can participate in the school decision-making process.
- Civil society organisation programmes that empower communities and promote their participation in school management and oversight should be supported and financed by international development partners, as well as allowed and encouraged by MoEs.

1 INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1990s the management of primary education in much of Africa has been subject to structural changes intended to bring it closer to the 'user', and to give citizens at the local level (particularly parents) a greater stake in management. The goal is to increase accountability, oversight and responsiveness. The new administrative and fiscal arrangements, in line with the Dakar Framework for Action of Education for All (EFA),[1] have placed more responsibilities on regional, district, communal and school level authorities to work together to reach the EFA targets. One of the reasons for promoting this decentralisation is the hope that by bringing the resources and decision-making processes closer to parents and communities, it will strengthen governance, and the resources available for primary education will be better used.

TI's AEW programme seeks to assess whether these new decentralised systems are effective in controlling malpractice, monitoring the flow of resources, and preventing corruption, resource leakages and delays. Particularly, it asks whether school administration is now a genuinely accountable and participatory governance system.

This Africa Education Watch report brings together the findings of surveys and research conducted by TI Chapters in seven participating countries in 2008: Ghana, Madagascar, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda.

The present report outlines the issues that impact primary education and frame discussions about governance and management at school level, including EFA targets and decentralisation. The core of the report covers the findings from the seven national surveys, presents some comparisons between these results and analyses regional trends. These include a discussion of primary school budgets and the way schools receive and manage their finances. It describes areas of particular concern, such as access to information, local participation in school management structures, accountability and corrupt practices.

The last section makes recommendations based on the survey findings. These are intended to identify and inform possible reforms at the national or international level, as well as to provide a guide to governments, development partners and non-governmental organisations who wish to identify areas where they can work to improve governance in primary schools.

While this report looks at regional trends and common issues, the National Assessment Reports provide a more detailed analysis of the issues and challenges specific to each country. These reports can be downloaded at: **www.transparency.org/aew**.
Summaries are also available on the same website.

Education for All

GOAL 1
Expand early childhood care and education

GOAL 2
Provide free and compulsory primary education for all

GOAL 3
Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults

GOAL 4
Increase adult literacy by 50 percent

GOAL 5
Achieve gender parity by 2005, gender equality by 2015

GOAL 6
Improve the quality of education

2 EDUCATION AND GOVERNANCE BACKGROUND

Since the Dakar Conference on Education for All (EFA) in 2000, governments and the international community have sought to make EFA a reality. The Gross Intake Rate[2] of students in primary education has increased by 22 percentage points in Sub-Saharan Africa between 1999 and 2006 (from 90 percent to 111 percent), but educational inequalities persist and there are about 35 million out-of-school children in the region (UNESCO, 2009). Demand for quality education and the necessary scaling-up of resources for primary education poses a challenge to many countries. In such a context, the careful management of resources becomes even more important: financial leakage, waste and inefficiencies result in fewer resources available to achieve the EFA goals.

2.1 Governance in education

Good governance in education, broadly defined, is about ensuring that the necessary resources for an efficient and effective education system (financial, material and human) are managed in a transparent and accountable manner. A well-organised, well-managed and transparent education system is essential for achieving quality primary and basic education.[3] Governance covers all the ways the state interacts with society – at the central, regional, local and school level – including the distribution of power in decision-making and how the decision-making process affects citizens.[4]

Governance in education

"As with any service, education provision is affected by wider governance conditions. When democracy, transparency and respect for the rule of law are weak, accountability and participation suffer. Within the education sector, governance structures link many actors and define the terms of their interactions. The ability of parents to participate in school decisions, hold schools and teachers to account and secure access to information is conditioned by the allocation of rights and responsibilities under governance systems. Governance rules also define the terms on which governments recruit, allocate and train teachers. They have an important bearing on the skills and motivation that teachers bring to the classroom. Beyond the classroom, governance systems shape the relationship between school bodies, local government and central government. They define who sets priorities and makes decisions in key areas ranging from the curriculum to teacher management, and the monitoring and supervision of schools. In the area of finance, education governance is about how priorities are set and how resources are mobilized, allocated and managed."

Global Monitoring Report for EFA, 2009, p.129.

2.2 The regional education context

Decentralisation

Decentralisation has become a buzzword covering a wide range of practices. It includes devolution of power from the central government to local authorities, including municipalities and, in some cases, to schools. Many countries, often with strong encouragement from their international partners, have adopted decentralisation as part of an effort to increase efficiency through local accountability and responsiveness.

Decentralisation initiatives raise issues of financial and professional capacity at sub-national levels. They also change relationships between education officials and local authorities and the nature of their responsibilities and accountability to the communities they serve, namely parents and children (De Grauwe & Diakhaté C., 2005). Decentralisation is designed to change the locus of, and persons involved in, decision-making and execution of responsibilities. There is, of course, a range of approaches, levels and relationships within sub-national democratic structures.

Decentralisation initiatives raise issues of financial and professional capacity at sub-national levels.

Free primary education policies

Recent increases in pupil enrolment in Sub-Saharan Africa are often linked to government decisions to abolish school/tuition fees at primary level.[5] Free primary education does not always extend to free textbooks, uniforms and school materials. These costs remain a disincentive to the poorest and have allowed for some confusion over what is or is not provided free by the state.

School grants

To compensate schools for the elimination of fees and to give them some financial control, many countries have introduced a system of school block grants, often known as "capitation grants". These grants are transferred directly to the school by the state and are proportional to the number of students enrolled. Such grants are an important part of the decentralisation process and are considered one way in which a part of the operational funding of schools can be subjected to greater local oversight and used to respond to locally determined demands. In many countries such allocations are relatively recent initiatives. In nearly all countries that have them, grants have been introduced alongside a more formal system of school-based, participatory planning that in theory is supposed to share information within the local community on school improvement plans and their associated budgets.[6]

SMCs and PTAs

With decentralisation of financial management, the importance of school-level administration has increased. Schools must now take greater responsibility for financial issues and be accountable to the local community. This is usually done through School Management Committees (SMCs), which oversee management, budgets, expenditures and procurement. In a decentralised system they also take responsibility for repairs, small infrastructure improvements and the purchasing of classroom materials. They monitor attendance and behaviour and in a few cases SMCs may also be responsible for recruiting teachers. Formally established over the past decade, SMCs have mandates and interests that may overlap with the traditional Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs). In some cases, the creation of SMCs has resulted in confusion about the lines of responsibility and reporting.[7]

Teacher recruitment, retention and development

Teachers are typically the most expensive element of the primary education system in any country. The recruitment and retention of teachers remains one of the challenges for any education system, particularly where resources are limited. Schools have resorted to hiring less-qualified teachers, on limited contracts, drawn from the community, outside the public service pay and tenure structures, as a way to provide the human resources needed to cope with rapid expansion. But this practice remains controversial. These so-called "contract teachers" may be recruited and managed by the school, using public or parental funding.

The recruitment and management of public teachers has rarely been decentralised. It remains the responsibility of the central government or, occasionally, provincial administrations.

2.3 Corruption issues in education

Transparency International (TI) defines corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. TI further differentiates between "according to the rule" corruption and "against the rule" corruption. Facilitation payments, where a bribe is paid to receive preferential treatment for something that the bribe receiver is required to do by law, constitute the former.[8] In education this can be fees to enrol in schools where such fees have been waived by the state, or selling textbooks supposed to be distributed for free. The latter may be a bribe paid to obtain services the bribe receiver is prohibited from providing, such as changing exam results. The table overleaf summarises possible areas for corruption in education.

Table 1: Corruption in education

Areas of planning/management	Major opportunities for corrupt practices
Finance	• Transgressing rules and procedures / bypass of criteria • Inflation of costs and activities • Embezzlement
Allocation of specific allowances (fellowships, subsidies, etc.)	• Favouritism / nepotism • Bribes • Bypass of criteria • Discrimination (political, social, ethnic)
Construction, maintenance and school repairs	• Fraud in public tendering (payoffs, gifts, favouritism) • Collusion among suppliers • Embezzlement • Manipulating data • Bypass of school mapping • Ghost deliveries
Distribution of equipment, furniture and materials (including transport, boarding, textbooks, canteens and school meals)	• Fraud in public tendering (payoffs, gifts, favouritism) • Collusion among suppliers • Siphoning off of school supplies • Purchase of unnecessary equipment • Manipulating data • Bypass of allocation criteria • Ghost deliveries
Writing of textbooks	• Fraud in the selection of authors (favouritism, bribes, gifts) • Bypass of copyright law • Students forced to purchase materials copyrighted by instructors
Teacher appointment, management (transfer, promotion), payment and training	• Fraud in the appointment and deployment of teachers (favouritism, bribes, gifts) • Discrimination (political, social, ethnic) • Falsification of credentials/use of fake diplomas • Bypass of criteria • Pay delay, sometimes with unauthorized deductions
Teacher behaviour (professional misconduct)	• Ghost teachers • Absenteeism • Illegal fees (for school entrance, exams, assessment, private tutoring, etc.) • Favouritism/nepotism/acceptance of gifts • Discrimination (political, social, ethnic) • Private tutoring (including use of schools for private purpose) • Sexual harassment or exploitation • Bribes or favours during inspector visits
Information systems	• Manipulating data • Selecting/suppressing information • Irregularity in producing and publishing information • Payment for information that should be provided free
Examinations and diplomas, access to universities	• Selling of information • Examination fraud (impersonation, cheating, favouritism, gifts) • Bribes (for high marks, grades, selection to specialized programmes, diplomas, admission to universities) • Diploma mills and false credentials • Fraudulent research, plagiarism
Institution accreditation	• Fraud in the accreditation process (favouritism, bribes, gifts)

Source: Hallack, J., Poisson, M., 2007

3 COUNTRY CONTEXTS

This section presents key features of the seven participating countries and provides background information on their primary education systems and performance.

3.1 Political and socio-economic background

The seven participating countries have different profiles in terms of size and population (from 5 million for Sierra Leone to 30 million for Morocco), political regimes with varying degrees of political and civil liberties or stability, and socio-economic indicators.

Of the countries selected, Sierra Leone has the lowest Human Development Index[9] (HDI) rank at 179; Morocco ranks highest of the group at 127 out of 179. There are also wide disparities in the percentage of population living below one US dollar a day: about 60 percent in Sierra Leone, Madagascar and Niger compared to 17 percent for Senegal, with Ghana in between at 45 percent.

Table 2: Political and socio-economic indicators of participating countries

	Population (in millions)	HDI (ranking/ 179)[10]	GNP per capita 2006 (PPP US$)	Population living on less than US$1 per day (1990-2005)	Net aid per capita (US$) 2005	Degree of Political Freedom 2009
Ghana	23	142 (0.533)	1,240	45%	51	Free
Madagascar	19	143 (0.533)	870	61%	50	Partly Free
Morocco	30	127 (0.646)	3,860	14%*	22	Partly Free
Niger	13	174 (0.370)	630	61%	37	Partly Free
Senegal	12	153 (0.502)	1,560	17%	59	Partly Free
Sierra Leone	5	179 (0.329)	610	57%	62	Partly Free
Uganda	29	156 (0.493)	880	n/a	42	Partly Free

* Less than US$2 per day

Sources: UNESCO, 2009; UNDP, 2008; Freedom House, 2009

3.2 Primary education

3.2.1 Key characteristics of the Africa Education Watch (AEW) countries' education systems

Primary education is compulsory in all participating countries. All have legal guarantees of free primary education, normally proscribing school fees. In Ghana, Madagascar, Sierra Leone and Uganda, grant schemes have been introduced by central government to provide cash or cash equivalents to each public school in the country, typically based on the number of students enrolled (capitation grants). Ghana, Senegal and Uganda have developed the most decentralised political and administrative systems. Niger's primary education system is centrally managed.

Table 3 summarizes the key features of the education system in each participating country and classifies its level of decentralisation.

3.2.2 Performance indicators

Table 4 presents key performance indicators in participating countries. None of the countries allocates more than three percent of GNP to primary education.

3.3 Development architecture

All of the countries receive external support. Ghana and Uganda were early implementers of Sector Wide Approaches (SWAps)[11] to education development around an agreed strategic plan and with pooled financial support. Sierra Leone, Madagascar, Niger and Senegal use a similar model.

SWAps provide some opportunities for development partners and governments to establish shared agendas and procedures. Since 2000, this has included the drive for increased school community participation, and for tackling mismanagement, corruption and issues relating to overall fiduciary risk. In many countries the main development partners have strongly supported educational decentralisation and the steps taken to devolve increased responsibility, accountability and financial powers to schools.

Table 3: Key characteristics of participating countries' primary education systems

	Compulsory education (age-group)	Legal guarantee of free education	School or Capitation grant	Compulsory SMC	Decentralised structures in education
Ghana	6-14	Yes	Yes	Yes	District role in administration including financial management **Devolution**
Madagascar	6-10	Yes	Yes	Yes	Increased district, departmental and regional role in planning and budgeting **Deconcentration**
Morocco	6-14	Yes	No	Yes	Limited degree of planning autonomy for schools **Deconcentration**
Niger	7-12	Yes	No	Yes	No financial management responsibilities at regional or district levels
Senegal	7-12	Yes	No	Yes	Communes are now responsible for primary education infrastructures **Delegation/devolution**
Sierra Leone	6-12	Yes	Yes	Yes	District role in administration including financial management **Delegation/devolution**
Uganda	6-12	Yes	Yes	Yes	District role in administration including financial management **Delegation/devolution**

Sources: AEW National Assessment Reports and UNESCO, 2009.

Table 4: Key primary education indicators in participating countries

	Net enrolment rate by sex (1999-2006)	Year group completion rate (%)*	Trained teachers (2006)	Teacher/pupil ratio (2006)	Public expenditure on primary education as % of GNP (2006)
Ghana	Boys: 58% - 73% Girls: 55% - 71% Total : 57% - 72%	n/a	59%	1:35	**1.6%**
Madagascar	Boys: 63% - 96% Girls: 63% - 96% Total: 63% - 96%	27%	36%	1:48	1.2%
Morocco	Boys: 76% - 91% Girls: 65% - 85% Total: 70% - 88%	Boys: 63% Girls: 56% Total: 60%	100%	1:27	**2.9%**
Niger	Boys: 31% - 50% Girls: 21% - 37% Total: 26% - 43%	Boys: 40% Girls: 36% Total: 39%	92%	1:40	1.7%
Senegal	Boys: 57% - 71% Girls: 50% - 70% Total: 54% - 70%	Boys: 24% Girls: 37% Total: 30%	100%	1:39	**2.1%**
Sierra Leone	n/a	n/a	49%	1:44	**2.3%**
Uganda	n/a	n/a	85%	1:49	**2.5%**

*School year ending 2005

Source: UNESCO, 2009.

3.4 Anti-corruption

In most of the survey countries there are national regulations covering education entitlement, devolved responsibilities (where relevant) and financial probity in public office.

Independent bodies working against corruption have been established in Sierra Leone (see box), Madagascar and Senegal. Ghana has a long standing Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice that is mandated to investigate corruption. Uganda is in the process of drafting the necessary legislation to set one up. Most countries have regulations for public accountability and systems for auditing public expenditures. In Niger audits of National Education Plans are seen as an additional instrument to limit corruption.

Sierra Leone: Anti-corruption Commission

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), established in 2002, identified education as a sector prone to corruption and appointed "Integrity Officers" with a brief to seek out corrupt practices. This included on-site school inspections. The ACC has also suggested anti-corruption measures for education, including improved procedures for managing teachers and verifying their qualifications, introducing a complaints system, improved local procurement, and providing head teachers with training and better guidelines on how to manage financial receipts and expenditures.

4 SURVEY FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the Africa Education Watch (AEW) surveys and presents some regional comparisons where relevant. The principal areas of investigation were: primary education resources (flow, disbursement and management), access to information (in relation to primary education funding and decision-making processes), participation in local accountability structures i.e. School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), accountability, and corrupt practices in schools.[12]

4.1 Primary education resources

School resources in the seven countries surveyed by AEW come from five main sources:

- Central government (directly or channelled through district/province/regional education offices) and/or from district/province/regional education offices
- Decentralised administrations, providing limited funds mostly for infrastructure
- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other national or international agencies
- Private sector or individual donations
- Parents

Resources may be cash or equivalent (e.g. grants), or "in kind" (e.g. textbooks, human resources, school supplies, equipment, food, fuel, labour).

Infrastructure investment tends to be managed out of development budgets and was outside the scope of the AEW surveys. Infrastructure maintenance is identified in most countries as one of the "needs" that schools have to address, often by diverting funds from other budget lines or mobilising other agencies.

Financial flows

The study notes three different ways countries developed budget plans. In some countries (as in Madagascar) there is evidence of sound planning cycles: identification of needs at school level, consolidation at district and regional level and then submission to the Ministry of Education (MoE). In many countries (including Morocco and Uganda), state budgets are voted on annually by the Parliament before funds are made available to Ministries for disbursement to sub-national units. In others, identification of needs is limited to assessing the number of pupils who receive textbooks and school supplies (Niger).

Figure 1 presents the resource flows between central governments, sub-national units, schools and beneficiaries. Arrows indicate funds involved – wider arrows indicate comparatively larger sources, but are not proportional. This is a general schematic view: there are important country variations in fund-flows (both processes and amounts).[13] Black stars represent risks of corruption as identified in country reports.

Capitation grants

Capitation grants in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Madagascar and Uganda provide schools some discretionary spending power and are part of the measures intended to reduce calls on parents for fees and thus ensure free primary schooling. The stated rationales for school grants vary. Development agencies promote them as a way to devolve financial responsibilities down to the school level. The Ghanaian government states that capitation grants contribute to improved equity by reducing costs to the poor and by ensuring schools serving the poorest communities receive at least minimum resources. This report did not address the extent to which grant formulas are used to address national equity concerns, although it is of importance for pro-poor policy-making.

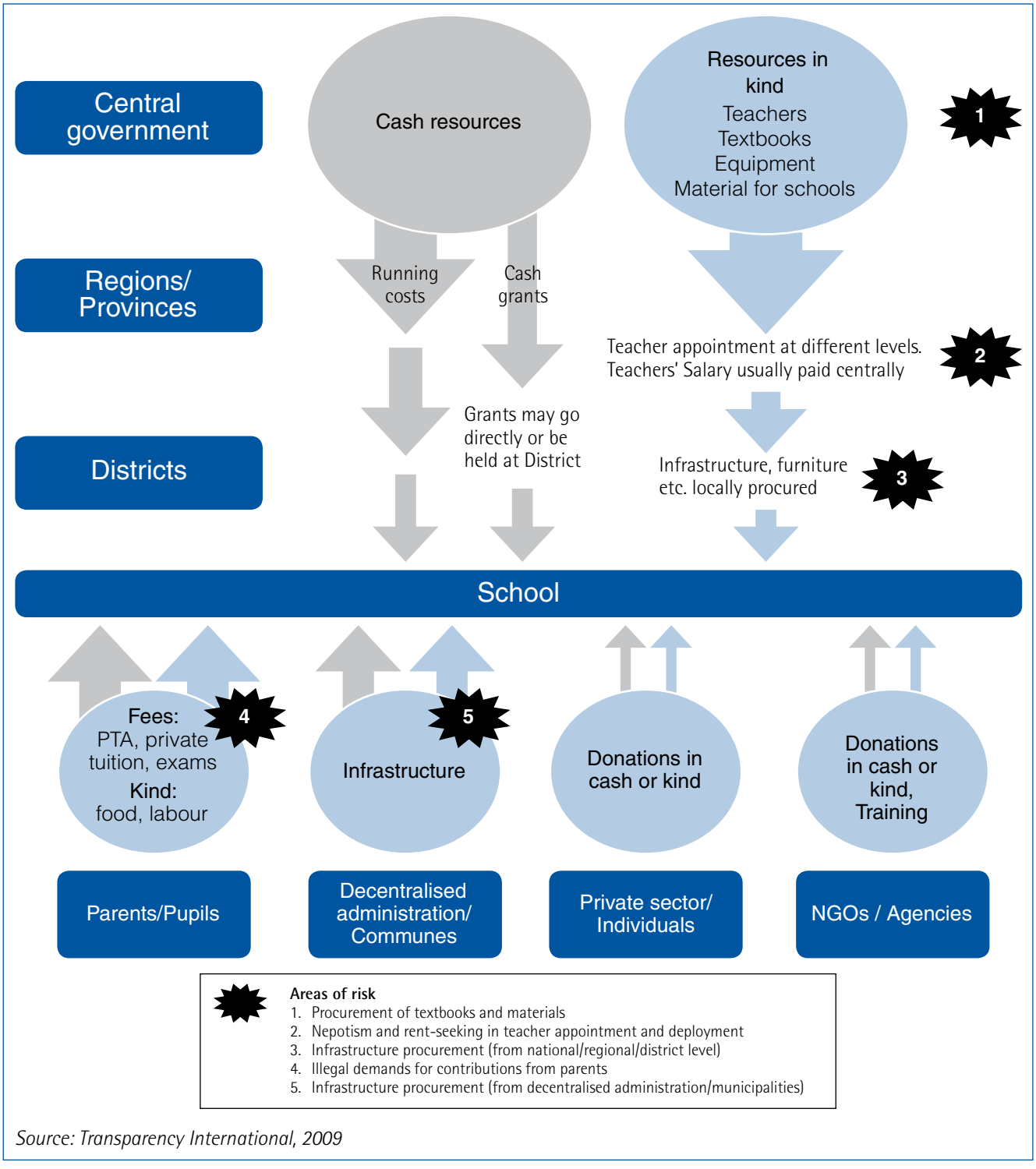
Capitation grants

Madagascar: The capitation grant is channelled from the Ministry of Education to schools through the regional education offices. SMC presidents and treasurers collect the grant from district post offices. For remote schools, the cost of travelling to collect the grant is sometimes equivalent to the grant itself.

Ghana and Ouganda: Capitation grants are allocated to District Education Offices that run separate bank accounts for each school.

Sierra Leone: Grants are transferred to local government offices and then distributed to schools.

Figure 1: Financial flows and corruption risks in primary education



Source: Transparency International, 2009

School development planning

In Ghana and Uganda capitation grants are linked to the requirement that schools develop a formal and properly-costed School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP). This is drafted by the head teacher or school staff, but requires the approval of the SMC. The rationale is that the preparation and implementation of such a plan will allow school management to respond to local conditions, and that it will promote community involvement in school planning. It is also a potential vehicle for increased community oversight of financial management and school performance.

The study's findings suggest that even in countries where school development plans are a necessary part of the financing process, they have not attracted the levels of engagement and participation necessary to make them efficient ways to improve the management of resources available to primary schooling. However, financial information in these countries is more readily available (see 'Access to Information' below).

Information systems

Systems for capitation grants require timely and accurate information about enrolments. The survey did not investigate the systems for collecting this critical data but it remains an identified challenge to count the number of students in a school, particularly where there is high absenteeism, population movement and a significant number of dropouts. In many countries the information systems are weak, and there are risks of over-counting or, indeed, that more students are attending than have been planned for, thereby increasing the strain on school resources.

Payments to schools are often late or less than expected.

Predictability of funding

The survey finds that payments to schools are often late and/or less than expected. In Uganda and Ghana payments that are expected each term reportedly have been delayed for up to a year. Similar delays are reported in Madagascar. Even with capitation formulae, many schools report that they are never sure how much will arrive. This makes planning a frustration rather than an opportunity, and implementation of any plan is constrained if funds do not arrive in full. A third of surveyed schools in Ghana report underpayment against expectations. In Morocco the allocation criteria from central to local level is unclear.

Clearly planning is difficult when head teachers and SMCs are not sure how much money they will receive or when they will receive it (see 'Access to Information' below).

These unpredictable and essentially inexplicable differences undermine the opportunities for public oversight and understanding. Administrative inefficiency is hard to distinguish from corruption at this level.

Financial systems

In Ghana officials noted that the financial coding systems used by schools do not map onto those used by the districts, so that budget consolidation and reconciliation is at risk because of coding errors. The same is true in Morocco and Madagascar where inflexible public administration budget lines conflict with schools practices and sometimes with legal requirements.

Financial systems in schools themselves are weak in most surveyed countries. Schools with limited financial autonomy have the simplest systems (Morocco and Niger). Systems are rarely able to reflect the different funding sources (Morocco, Madagascar, and Uganda) so that funds from different sources are not subject to the same rules and transparency. For example, parental contributions are usually managed separately from those of the government and or other agencies.[14] In Senegal, for example, there is no rule on how to record donations in cash or kind.

Other identified risk points

The AEW surveys did not track all central government education expenditures but they did identify high-risk areas that could impact schools. These include the risk of rent-seeking in teacher recruitment and deployment (Senegal and Niger) and the potential for leakages for any major procurement programmes, including textbooks. In Sierra Leone, particularly, there is a reported problem of "ghost teachers", i.e. teachers who are registered for payment but who do not work.[15] School level malpractice is considered in section 4.5.

4.2 Access to information

Information is a pre-requisite for active participation in the oversight of resource management, and there has been evidence, notably from Uganda, that dissemination of financial information reduces resources leakage. AEW describes the availability of budget information at national and regional levels, but the focus is on the access to information about school finances, how this information is disseminated and how it is interpreted and understood by the school community.

Public access to financial information at national, provincial or district levels

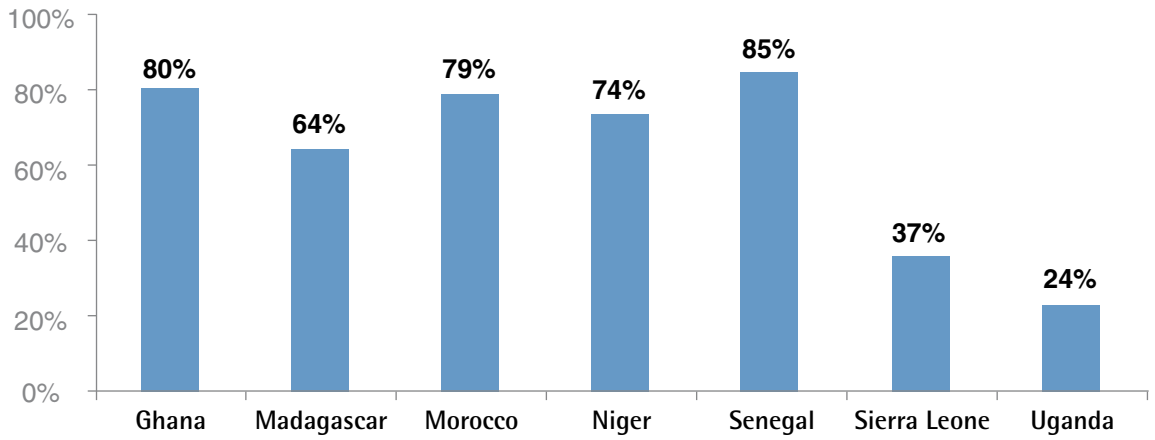
Access to budgetary and financial information on primary education at national level varies from country to country.[16] Access is greater in countries where a structured dialogue between governments and sub-national entities has produced sector plans, expenditure frameworks and joint monitoring missions, with public reporting requirements (Ghana, Niger and Uganda).

The AEW findings show clearly that there is no pre-existing public interest in financial information, and most respondents do not know where they can obtain this information.

Financial information is normally not publicly displayed at district educational offices (except in Ghana) even where this is obligatory, as it is in Uganda and Sierra Leone. In Senegal there is no information published about the central funds allocated to communes for primary education. Even where regulations require it, the reality is that there is no attempt either to provide the information to the public, or to explain what it means to the target groups (whose formal education might be minimal and/or who might not understand a budget format).

In Ghana, information about the capitation grants is posted on the Ghana Education Service[17] (GES) board in its offices. In areas where district offices have control of financial budgets, there is a great need for transparency as, in practice, these authorities have an opportunity to divert funds from school budgets to fund their own activities and operational costs, only some of which may be related to education issues. This is particularly common to pay for transportation for school visits.

Figure 2: Percentage of schools that do not display financial information



Source: Transparency International, AEW survey data

Public access to financial information at school level

For citizens and school communities to oversee finances, information must be complete, timely and consistently presented. It then has to be available in ways that allow people to understand it and use it. Financial information may be made more accessible to the general public (as opposed to the SMC and PTA) in various ways, and AEW asked particularly about notice boards or other forms of public displays on the school premises. The overall finding is that very limited efforts are made to make financial information publicly available (see Figure 2). Even where there are suitable notice boards, little financial information is displayed, and what is reported is out of date.

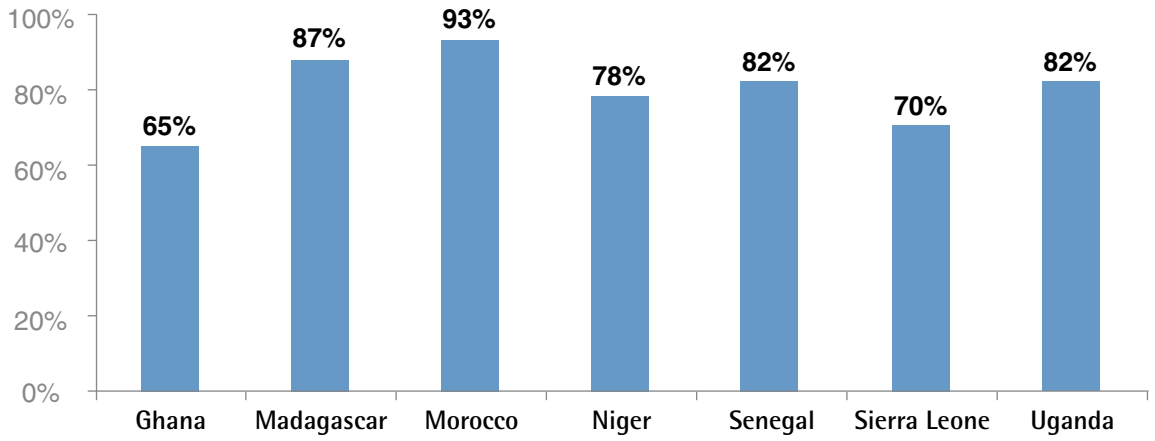
There are some examples of good practice, including the use of notice boards for the wider publication of financial information in Uganda. However the Uganda survey team noted that information was only published at the national level, and that regional and district offices do not publish financial data regularly (see the Uganda National Assessment Report for details).

Even where there are suitable notice boards, little financial information is displayed, and what is reported is out of date.

Parental access to financial information

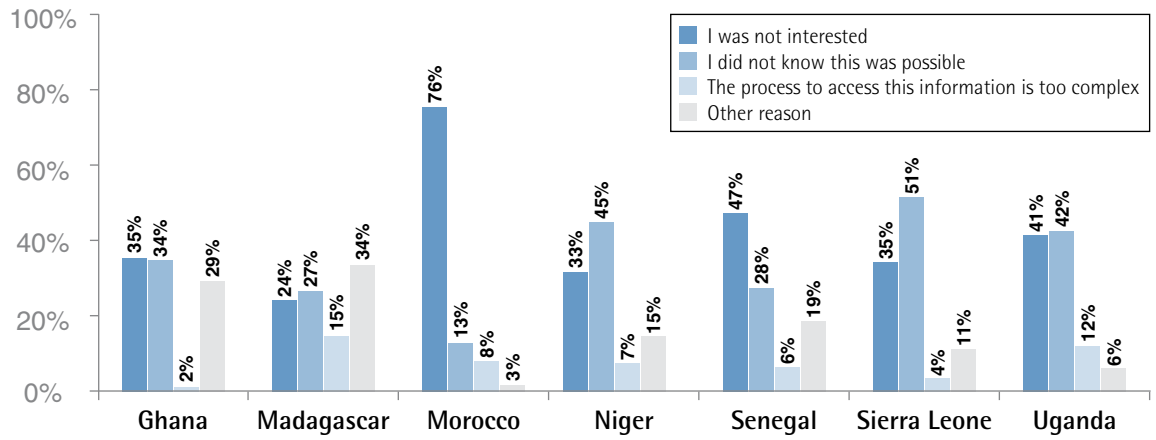
The survey shows that parents are very unlikely to receive financial information about the school. In some countries head teachers are not aware of regulations allowing parents to access school budget data. In Senegal, the survey reveals a general reluctance by head teachers and PTA and SMC representatives to disclose any financial information or supporting documentation. In other countries, head teachers stated that parents can access financial data but the majority of parent responses suggest that they cannot.

Figure 3: Percentage of parents who have not tried to access financial information about their child's school



Source: Transparency International, AEW survey data

Figure 4: Reasons given by parents for not trying to access school financial information



Source: Transparency International, AEW survey data

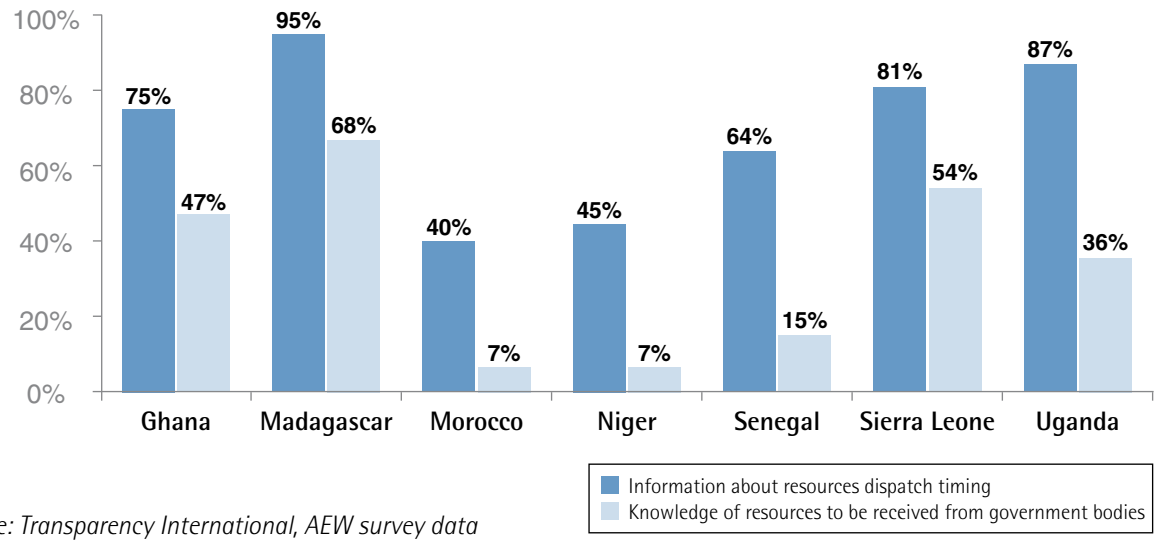
Overall, parents do not make pro-active demands for this sort of information. Figure 3 shows this trend is consistent over the region and particularly high in Madagascar, Morocco, Senegal and Uganda.

Parents gave a variety of explanations for not trying to access financial information about their child's school. Figure 4 shows the three main reasons. A significant number were not interested or did not know this was possible. Clearly parents do not know what to expect from schools and there is no evidence of attempts to help parents understand how their school is run or why this might be important. There were other explanations for this apparent parental apathy, including illiteracy (Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda).

AEW suggests parents have a limited understanding of what their children are legally entitled to from a state education or how community members can demand these rights. The findings further suggest that parents need help understanding their rights and support so that they can participate in monitoring the management and use of school resources. AEW did not find any examples of support given to parents to allow them to interpret school budgets or influence financial oversight.

This finding suggests that even if financial information is more easily available in schools, it may not lead to increased parental oversight and improved governance. Pro-active steps are needed to explain how the information could be used and what it means. Parents need to be empowered to use the information where and when it is available.

Figure 5: Proportion of head teachers who say that they are informed about the amount and dispatch timing of public resources (cash and kind) for their school



Source: Transparency International, AEW survey data

School personnel and committees' access to financial information

The AEW surveys also highlight that people with school management responsibilities do not usually know what is allocated to their schools, or even when it is dispatched. This weakens meaningful local oversight and undermines expenditure planning. The levels of awareness of head teachers are shown in Figure 5. In Morocco, Niger and Senegal they are particularly badly informed about the resources their schools will receive. Information about when resources are dispatched is overall better, although quite weak in Morocco and Niger. Head teachers in Madagascar appear to be generally better informed than their colleagues in the region. Overall, while head teachers might sometimes know when to expect resources to be sent to their school, a worryingly small percentage (reaching miniscule levels in Niger, Morocco or Senegal) knows what they can expect to receive.

In some instances this could be explained by the fact that resources are channelled through SMCs and the communications between SMCs, head teachers and PTAs are unreliable. However, this cannot account for the situation found in Morocco, Niger or Senegal.

Morocco: access to information

In Morocco resources transferred to schools by the Ministry of Education are in kind only. Unfortunately, a high percentage of school community actors in the schools surveyed are not aware of the nature and quantity of resources allocated to their school. This includes 93 percent of head teachers, 93 percent of PTA chairs, and 60 percent of district personnel responsible for education finances. The majority of head teachers and PTA representatives are not informed of resource transfers.

The AEW surveys also notes instances in which local officials do not have financial information about state allocations to schools in their catchments areas. In Sierra Leone, most of those in charge of financial management in the districts are not informed about how much is allocated to each school. Similarly, in Niger inspectors are not aware of resources allocated to their schools by the government. In contrast, in Madagascar such information is known at district level.

A worryingly high percentage of head teachers and managers do not know when resources are dispatched, or what to expect in terms of amounts or the kind of resources sent to them. In these cases planning, financial management and oversight are undermined. Such administrative inefficiencies and information black holes increase the risks of corruption.

Availability of financial documentation in schools

Most respondents had only a patchy knowledge of the regulations and processes that governed school budgets and financial records. Even key initiatives, such as capitation grants, are not always widely known or understood at a level that would allow parents and school staff to monitor their allocation, distribution and use.

Madagascar: school budget awareness

The survey shows that 82 percent of head teachers, 70 percent of PTA representatives and 66 percent of parents are aware of the annual state grant allocated to primary schools.

National reports highlight the lack of overall knowledge of what the school budget consists of in terms of allocations and sources of funding and materials (Madagascar, Morocco and Senegal).

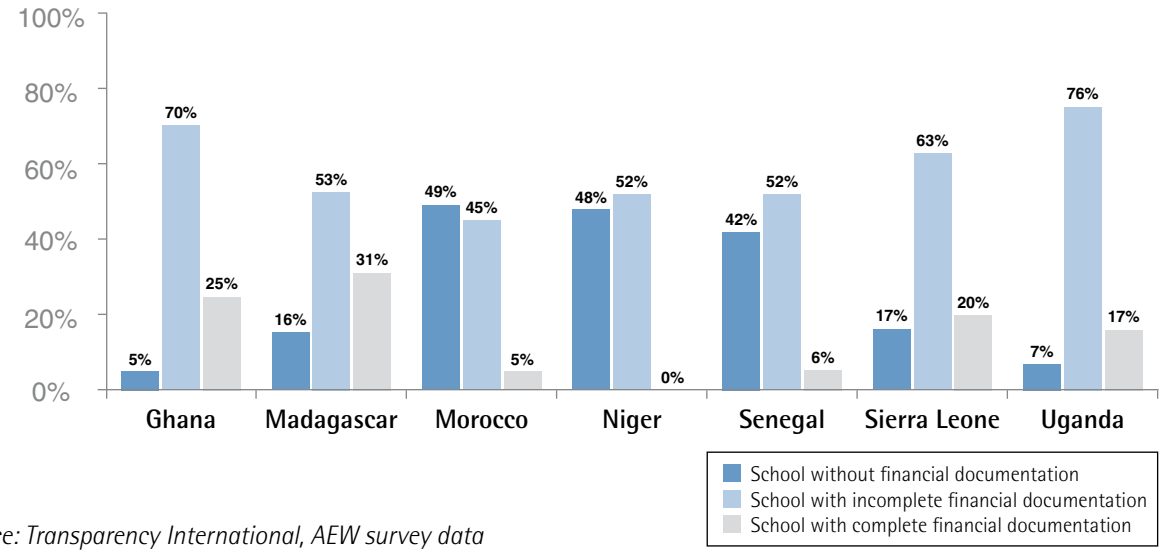
Many parents do not know who is responsible for school budgeting and management or about school management bodies and processes. This lack of knowledge of the governance structures in schools makes it harder for parents to get involved.

In some countries, heads of PTAs and head teachers disagreed about what the official financial management processes are. For example, in Morocco, 73 percent of head teachers claim their school has written financial records compared to 40 percent of PTA respondents. In Sierra Leone 93 percent of head teachers say there are written financial accounts, compared to 73 percent of PTA respondents. In reality, neither of these assertions reflect what actually happens (see overleaf).

AEW has identified severe failings in financial recordkeeping. In some countries the researchers found it impossible to find the amount, type, and source of funding or its purpose and use at school level.

In some countries the researchers found it impossible to find the amount, type, and source of funding or its purpose and use at school level.

Figure 6: Proportion of schools without any financial documentation, with incomplete financial documentation and with complete financial documentation



Source: Transparency International, AEW survey data

Figure 6 shows this gap. Schools in Morocco, Niger and Senegal stand out for their lack of any financial documentation that would allow for tracking what kind of resources are received by the school and how they are used. More schools in Ghana, Madagascar, Uganda and Sierra Leone have some financial data available, but in many cases these are incomplete.[18] The situation in Niger is clearly the worst: none of the schools visited had complete financial documentation available.

Countries with school grant mechanisms are more likely to have financial records in place (possibly due to better financial training and guidance when the schemes were established), but the records are for the most part incomplete, the sources questionable and the quality poor. Overall, 85 percent of schools surveyed across all countries had either deficient accounting systems or none at all,[19] irrespective of whether there are grant mechanisms in place.

TI's AEW found that the completeness and quality of bookkeeping was higher in schools visited more regularly by inspectors, or where the head teacher had received training in financial management.

In turn, the completeness of financial records correlated in a significant way to a drop in demands for "registration fees" and for payments in exchange for textbooks. In schools where bookkeeping is done properly, parents are less likely to face extortion by school officials.

Similarly, in schools where bookkeeping is more complete, perceptions of embezzlement (perceptions of corruption) go down slightly.

4.3 Participation

AEW sought information on who participates in school governance mechanisms. It asked parents and head teachers about parent participation in both formal and semi-formal forums where they can contribute to and monitor school management (e.g. SMCs or PTAs).

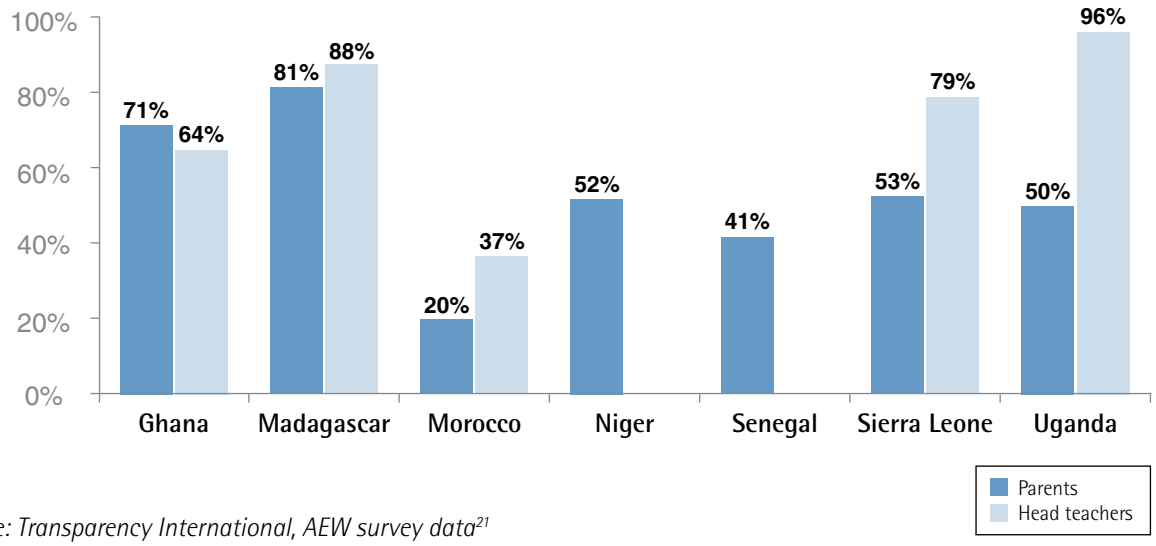
The levels and methods of community participation can be represented through the ladder below, which shows a spectrum ranging from non-participation, through various degrees of tokenism,[20] to degrees of citizen power:

8. Citizen control	Degrees of citizen power
7. Delegated power	
6. Partnership	
5. Placation	Degrees of tokenism
4. Consultation	
3. Informing	
2. Therapy	Non-participation
1. Manipulation	

Source: Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein, 1969)

Parent participation in education and schools can be analysed in this way but communities are not homogeneous. Who can participate, whose voices are heard and who can influence the agenda is a consequence of power relations within the community. Social and economic marginalisation can negatively affect the likelihood of participation. For example, the AEW data shows that the likelihood of a parent becoming a SMC member increases depending on the size of his or her household income. Poorer parents had less voice.

Figure 7: Proportion of parents and head teachers who think that "parents can influence school decisions"



Source: Transparency International, AEW survey data[21]

Parental involvement in school

As discussed earlier, parental involvement in local accountability and management structures is an important component of decentralisation: parental oversight is supposed to provide checks and balances in a system where school administrations have more resources and autonomy.

Unfortunately, AEW found that parents do not visit their children's school on a regular basis and have limited involvement in school management. Many state that "school management is not their responsibility" (Morocco and Senegal).

Ghana: School Performance Improvement Plans

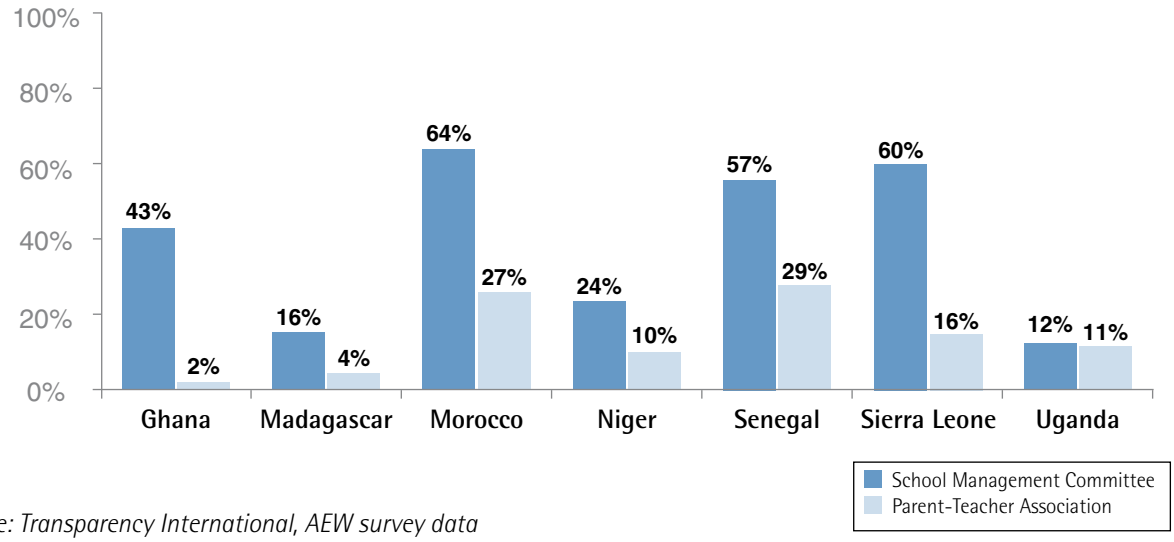
The SMC is responsible for the preparation of the School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP), which includes the funds received by the school. A budget is then prepared based on this. The SPIP is supposed to be produced with wide participation and reflect negotiated priorities.

However the survey suggests that SPIPs are neither well known, nor used to monitor spending and achievement.

In other countries (Ghana, Madagascar and Niger) parents feel they are participating in school planning and management. However, the degree of participation is not specified, and it is likely that parents may be informed and sometimes consulted, but they do not have power in decision-making. In Ghana (see box) the School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) provides a forum that could be a driver for parental participation, but in practice few parents are aware it exists.[22] In Niger, despite the fact that there is a relatively high level of parental involvement in school management, parents have a low perception of their influence in school decision-making.

It is interesting to contrast the answers. For example, in Uganda only 50 percent of parents think they can influence the school decision-making process, while 96 percent of head teachers believe they can.

Figure 8: Proportion of parents who do not know if their school have SMCs and PTAs



Source: Transparency International, AEW survey data

In most countries parents are more likely to be involved in a PTA than participate in activities and meetings of an SMC. The comparative newness of SMCs might explain this. Similarly, SMCs are still not well known by parents. Figure 8 above presents the proportion of surveyed parents who do not know if their schools have PTAs and SMCs. Parents are more ignorant of the SMC in Ghana, Morocco, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

School management structures: representation and effectiveness

In five out of seven countries surveyed all schools have SMCs. In Sierra Leone and Senegal SMCs or SMC-like structures were found in 94 percent and 89 percent of schools, respectively. In most countries the SMC includes: the head teacher, the chair of the PTA, teachers, parents and local authority representatives (i.e. from the commune in Senegal, from traditional and religious groups in Madagascar). Children can be represented on SMCs in Niger and Senegal.[23] Representatives of specific groups (women's groups in Senegal or Sierra Leone, Educative Mothers' Associations in Niger, NGOs in Madagascar, and Community-based Organisations in Senegal) are sometimes involved.

Typically, the head teacher is the secretary or chair of the PTA (Senegal and Madagascar) and/or of the SMC (Madagascar and Niger). This situation reinforces their power over school decision-making, and can threaten the influence of parents. In Madagascar, for instance, although the SMC treasurer is nominally in charge of school grants management, it is often the head teacher who plays this role, particularly in rural areas.

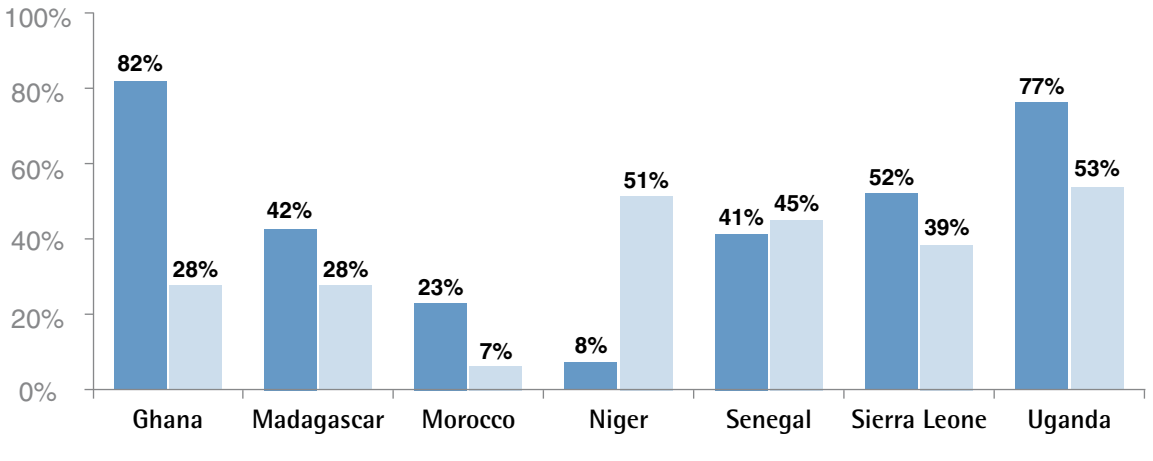
There is often an unclear distinction between the roles and functions of the SMCs and PTAs, and the overall decision-making power and influence of the head teacher, particularly in financial management. In countries with capitation grants, SMCs have management responsibility for them, but it is also common for the PTA to pay contract teachers.

Some AEW national reports question the effectiveness of SMCs to monitor finances in cases where the head teacher has a hostile approach to parental participation and ensures she/he maintains overall control over funds and decision-making, or when there is little or no communication between the SMC and the head teacher. In Madagascar, for example, although SMCs are supposed to monitor the use of the capitation grant, they are not always able to do so in practice.

The extent to which parents and communities participate in and influence the education agenda at local level is limited. Wealthier parents tend to be more involved in SMCs. Where there are positive reports, the successes are limited to increased access to information and consultation (i.e. levels 3 and 4 of the citizen participation ladder). The current situation runs the risk of tokenism in participation, rather than producing a shift in power towards a decentralised lower level with a significant degree of citizen power.

The data analysed at the regional level showed that SMCs had no meaningful influence on issues such as the quality of school bookkeeping or illegal demands for registration fees or money for textbooks. Schools where SMCs had larger membership

Figure 9: Proportion of head teachers or SMC members who say they have received training in financial management[24]



Source: Transparency International, AEW survey data

bases, held regular meetings and which had participatory decision mechanisms performed no better than schools without active SMCs. Similarly, the SMCs did not appear to be more efficient than the PTA or head teacher at solving problems brought to them by parents.

While such local management structures probably have a role to play in the architecture of decentralised education management, they have not yet demonstrated their effectiveness.

Support for participation: financial management training

The AEW surveys found that head teachers who have received financial management training perform better on many indicators of good management. For example, the quality of bookkeeping increased and the frequency of demands for illegal payments (i.e. illegal registration fees or payments for textbooks) went down.

Financial management training had a positive influence irrespective of the original level of education of the head teacher. In fact, there was a greater reduction in malpractice when the head teacher involved had a low level of education. This is important because it shows financial management training can be implemented across the board to great effect immediately with the current generation of school managers.

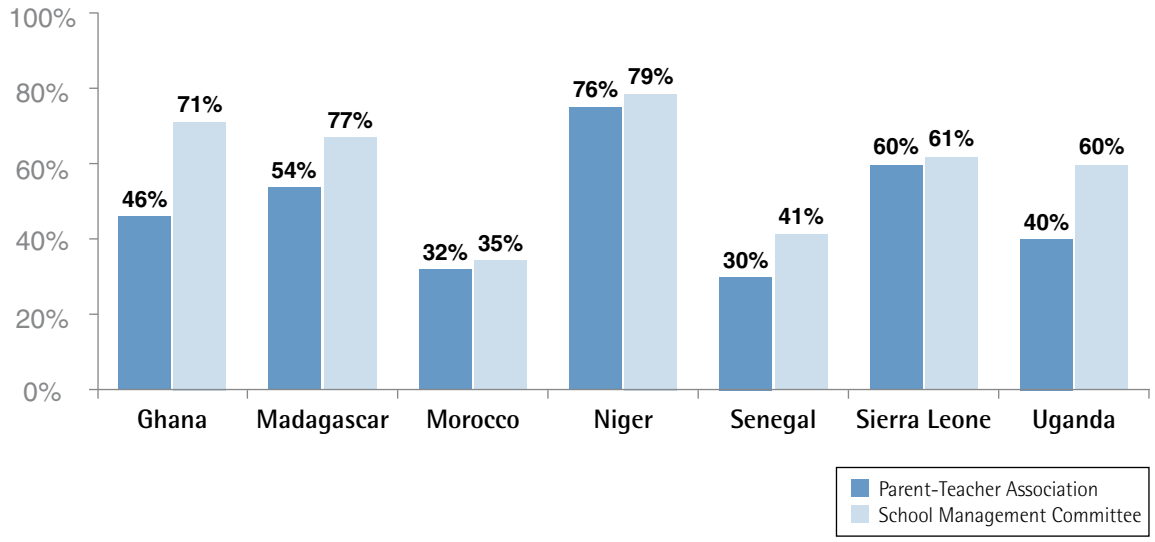
Unfortunately, the AEW data shows that many of the surveyed countries suffer from a paucity of financial management training for head teachers and SMC members.

Figure 9 shows the proportion of head teachers and SMC members who have received financial management training. There are wide regional disparities: 82 percent of head teachers in Ghana state that they have received training in financial management, compared to only eight percent in Niger. SMC members tend to receive less financial management training than head teachers. Training is more common in countries with capitation grant mechanisms (Ghana, Sierra Leone, Uganda and to a certain extent Madagascar) as this was presumably included as part of their implementation process. Nonetheless, overall the percentages of head teachers or SMCs trained in financial management remains worryingly low.

The high level of head teachers and SMC members who are not trained in financial management limits the quality of oversight over school finances, opens the door to financial mismanagement and undermines the ability of management to detect corruption.

School Management Committees have not yet demonstrated their effectiveness.

Figure 10: Proportion of parents who think that decision-making is transparent[25] in PTAs and SMCs

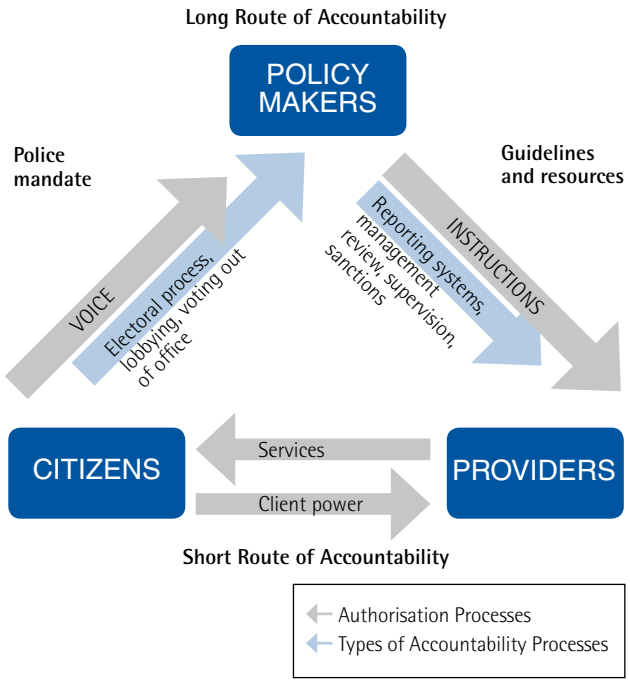


Source: Transparency International, AEW survey data

4.4 Accountability

Information and participation are steps towards building accountability frameworks in schools. These are the relationships, mechanisms and processes by which providers are held responsible for service delivery. The diagram shows the traditional view of this as it effects citizens.

The accountability framework in schools is complicated where national bodies (and their sub-national units) are responsible for critical aspects of service delivery, such as teachers, materials and infrastructure.



Sources: UNIFEM, 2008, adapted from World Bank 2003

AEW findings show some elements of "short route" accountability frameworks in schools. The "long route" was not directly investigated but could be used to address some of the shortcomings identified in the study.

Transparency of decision-making

Figure 10 above shows that parent perceptions of transparency in PTA decision-making is mostly higher than their perception of the transparency of SMC decision-making. This finding is in line with other AEW findings highlighting differences in parental perception of SMCs and PTAs. The SMCs, which were formed more recently and comprise fewer parent representatives appear more opaque to parents.

Complaints systems

Complaints systems are mechanisms for citizens/clients to report problems and dissatisfaction along both long and short accountability routes.

Complaint mechanisms are rarely clear. Formal complaint procedures may not exist (Madagascar), may not be used (Senegal), may not be known (Morocco and Sierra Leone) or may be perceived as too complex by the parents (Niger and Sierra Leone). All this contributes to the parents underreporting problems to the authorities.

All countries surveyed by AEW report similar types of complaints: bad infrastructure, lack of textbooks, materials and equipment, and delays in the transfer of funds or grants. Teacher absenteeism is particularly identified as a problem in

Table 5: Percentage of households that identified specific problems in schools and complained about them

	Ghana	Mada-gascar	Morocco	Niger	Senegal	Sierra Leone	Uganda
% of parents identifying the following problems							
Teacher absenteeism	12.5	8.8	20.5	15.4	33.3	5.1	9.0
Violence / Insecurity	5.7	4.7	9.2	3.7	11.5	5.4	5.8
Sexual harassment	1.9	0.9	1.3	0.6	2.2	3.4	5.0
Among those, % of parents who followed-up with an official complaint							
Teacher absenteeism	45.9	3.0	28.2	54.6	30.0	46.2	57.3
Violence / Insecurity	57.7	2.8	34.4	32.6	75.7	68.4	62.9
Sexual harassment	68.4	0.7	42.9	25.0	88.5	18.9	43.4

Source: Transparency International, AEW survey data

Morocco and Senegal, and there is an indication that when it occurs in other countries parents report it more readily (Niger, Sierra Leone and Uganda). See Table 5 above.

In all of the countries parents also complain about problems related to the integrity and respect of children (e.g. sexual harassment, teacher alcohol abuse, violence, etc.).

The findings reveal the majority of complaints are addressed to teachers, head teachers, PTAs and SMCs. Parents tend to complain only when problems can be solved at the level of the school and when the complaint procedure is easy and fast, such as a verbal exchange with the head teacher or class teachers. Parents have less confidence in education officials or local authorities and many also claim that complaining "does not make any difference" and "does not lead to changes". Problems of teacher absenteeism, violence or sexual harassment have more often led to an official complaint by parents.

Additional complaint routes, such as direct complaints to Ministries or to locally elected representatives, are not reported. There are no reports of an accountability channel between schools and the communes/municipalities (i.e. the lowest level of political and administrative unit), even when the latter have devolved powers over education. Some communities complained about school infrastructure and equipment directly to local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Parents do not hold local or national authorities accountable for the services they are supposed to deliver.

In some countries the AEW findings show that parents who are PTA or SMC members have a greater impact on the education authorities when they make a complaint (see box). In addition, parents who visit schools are better able to identify problems and tend to report them more to the authorities. It may be that there is a link between parents' awareness of what is happening in a school and how active they are in reporting problems and assessing a school's performance.

The fact that parents complain at school level indicates that they have a "voice" in the education system, and it is a step towards monitoring and oversight of school management, but parents rarely follow up these complaints with locally elected representatives, which limits their potential impact on the broader education agenda.

Madagascar : parental involvement and complaints

Survey results in Madagascar show a positive correlation between the number of parents' annual visits to schools and the number of education-related problems identified and followed up.

Results also stress the correlation between parental involvement in school management and complaints taken seriously by the authorities at school and local level.

This Malagasy example seems to reinforce the case for strong parental involvement as a way to heighten the responsiveness of the authorities.

Supervision, inspection and control

The AEW country reports highlight the diversity of actors mandated to carry out inspections and supervise schools. This list includes inspectors from district and provincial education authorities, inspectors from MoEs, inspectors and auditors from Ministries of Finance (MoFs), anti-corruption commission officers, and NGOs.

AEW reveals that more than two-thirds of school inspections focus on personnel and pedagogical issues. In Morocco, only one urban school in the sample recorded a visit from a Finance Ministry representative in the previous school year. In Madagascar only seven percent of recorded inspections looked into financial matters. In Niger some schools were not visited even once a year by any inspector.

There are no regulatory frameworks or guidelines in any country surveyed that mandate the frequency of inspections, which authority they are done by and what they cover. No country had formal inspections or financial controls, or provided support to improve financial management. No country listed any sanctions for head teachers or SMCs for poor performance in financial or resources management.

The AEW data shows that, where they take place, the frequency of inspections conducted by MoE officials (from district, regional and national level) corresponds to an increase in the quality of bookkeeping, and to a lower likelihood of demands for illegal registration fees by school officials. Clearly strengthening the role of inspectors and mandating more frequent school visits would contribute to a general improvement in these areas.

The lack of systematic school supervision and inspection, as well as the lack of attention to financial matters, represent missed opportunities to enforce a stricter management of the available resources and to promote good financial practices at school level.

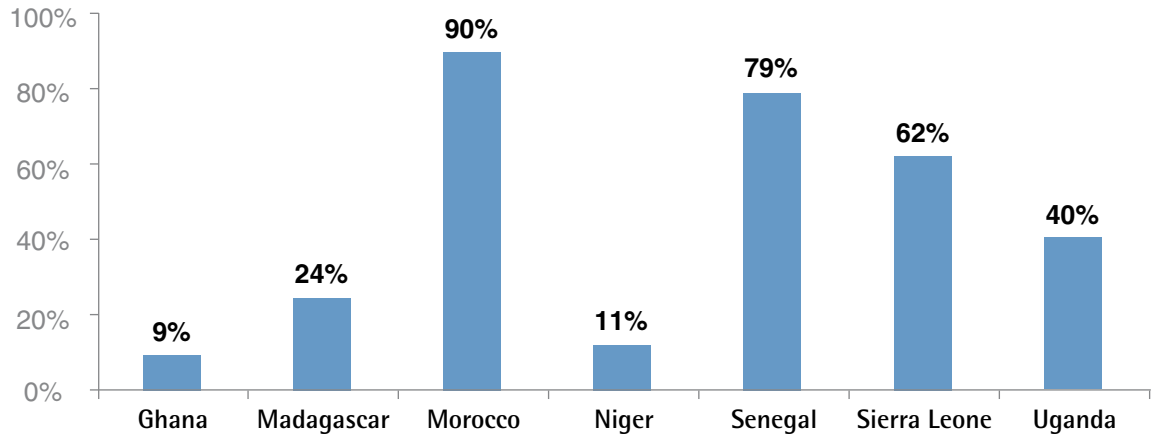
4.5 Corrupt practices

Type and frequency of corrupt practices

The unavailability and incompleteness of school and district financial records made it impossible to assess the level of leakages between district and schools. The survey focused on the respondents' perception and experience of corrupt practices. Although AEW was unable to identify significant abuses because of the lack of proper or transparent accounting procedures and management systems, the findings indicate a situation where corruption and embezzlement can flourish. The AEW surveys identified three forms of corrupt practices common to all countries surveyed: (i) illegal collection of fees, (ii) embezzlement of school funds and (iii) power abuse.

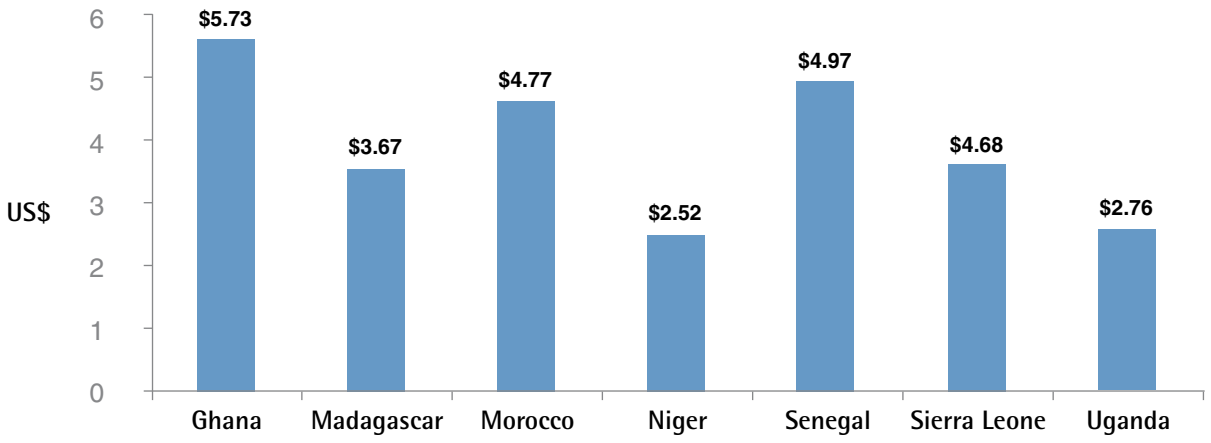
Parents are often exploited when they do not understand their legal rights.

Figure 11: Proportion of parents who report paying registration fees



Source: Transparency International, AEW survey data

Figure 12: Average amount parents reported paying as a "registration fee"[26]



Source: Transparency International, AEW survey data

Abusive collection of fees

The survey showed that parents are often exploited when they do not understand their legal rights. For example, in countries where registration fees have been abolished, parents still face charges. Figure 11 presents the percentage of parents who report having had to pay registration fees to the schools.

Overall, in all surveyed countries, an average of 44 percent of households reported paying for registration fees for one child to receive basic education. The average amount parents report paying is US$4.1 per child for one school year. In all countries surveyed, this represents a major hurdle for a large majority of the population, particularly in Madagascar, Niger and Sierra Leone. This requested amount is of particular concern as it is just one of the many fees – illegal or not – that parents must meet to finance a "free" education (e.g. examination fees, private tutoring, etc.).

Registration fees are not the only type of fees collected by schools. In Sierra Leone 27 percent of households reported paying exam fees although they are now illegal.

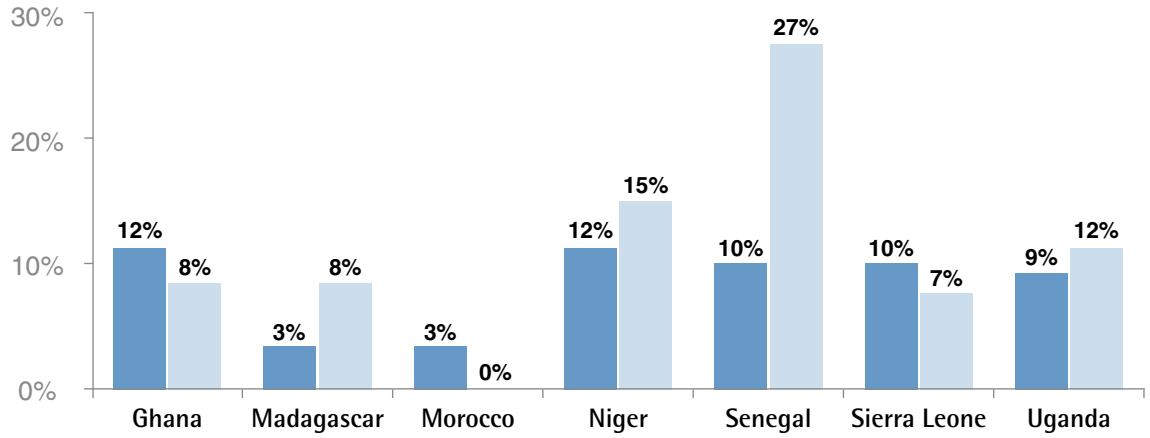
Parents were also asked to pay for private tutoring,[27] particularly in the last years of primary school. In some countries, when teachers are absent during normal school hours, parents are asked to pay for extra make-up classes. In Ghana 48 percent of households reported paying additional fees for private tutoring and in Uganda a fifth of all households reported paying for extra classes. The AEW surveys also identified some demands for payment for equipment or materials that should have been provided free. In Niger and Senegal parents received demands to pay for textbooks. Whether such demands result from corruption or from administrative failures is unclear.

In many countries there is a direct correlation between recent changes in legislation and requests for illegal fees. This may be due to confusion during a transition period, although it is not clear whether school officers abuse the change in law for personal gain or simply continue charging fees in ignorance of changes in regulation.

The practice of collecting illegal fees was particularly prevalent in schools where bookkeeping was poor and inspections rare. Fewer parents report demands for illegal registration fees in schools where the quality of financial management and oversight is higher and where there are more inspections.

Recent legislative changes have led to confusion with regard to what fees parents have to pay. Additionally, the lack of control and oversight over school finances have allowed for the collection of all kinds of "fees" to continue unchecked.

Figure 13: Proportion of head teachers and heads of PTAs who think resources are sometimes embezzled before reaching their school



Source: Transparency International, AEW survey data

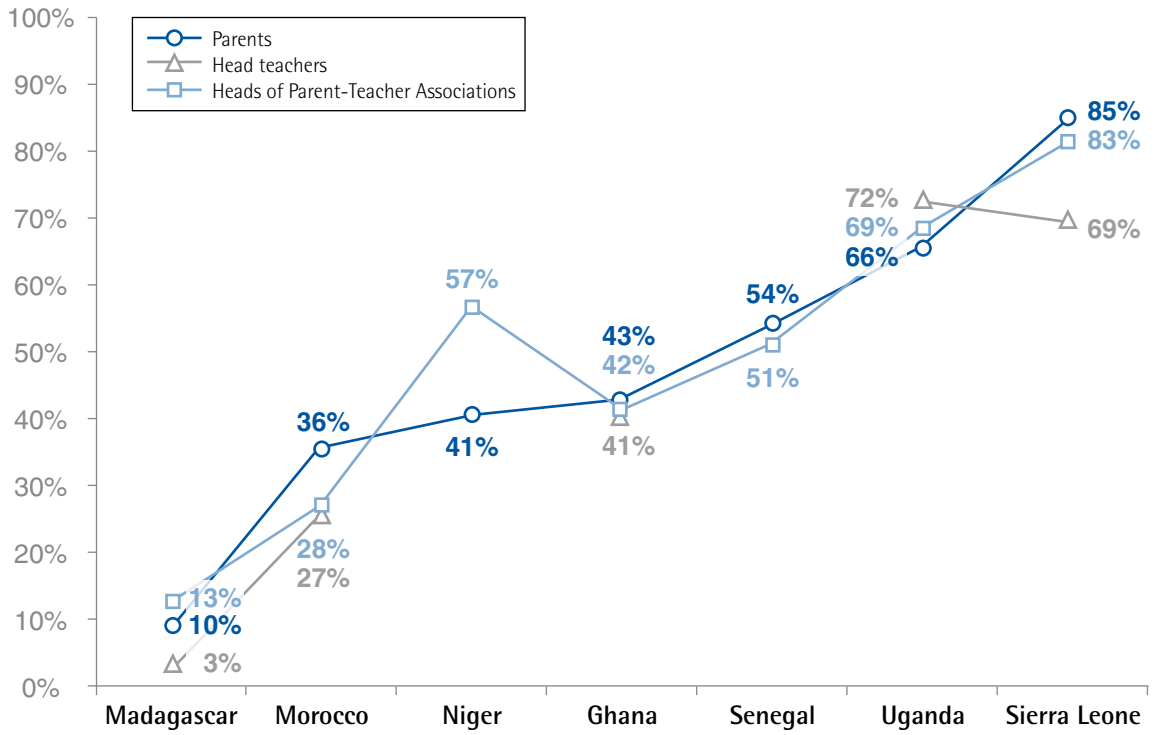
Embezzlements of school funds

Head teachers and heads of PTAs interviewed during the AEW surveys reported that they thought embezzlement of resources was taking place at higher levels of the administration. Nonetheless, few head teachers said they suspected embezzlement, as shown in the Figure 13 above.

PTA respondents in most countries confirm this trend. For example, in Sierra Leone only 7 percent think that resources are embezzled; in Madagascar it is 8 percent. However, in Senegal, a quarter of PTA respondents believed resources were being embezzled. This was more than double the number for head teachers and shows the highest discrepancy recorded between head teachers and PTA representatives regarding this issue.

Corruption is clearly a delicate topic at the school level. Head teachers showed significant reluctance to address the issue. On average 35 percent answered "don't know" or declined to answer the question about embezzlement. In Senegal and Sierra Leone the totals were 52 percent and 62 percent, respectively. This contrasts with the high percentage of head teachers in Sierra Leone who agreed with the statement "the education system is affected by corruption" (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Proportion of parents, head teachers and heads of PTAs who think "The education system is affected by corruption"



Source: Transparency International, AEW survey data

Abuse of power

AEW also investigated the level of abuse of power. This includes children made to do chores in school (Madagascar and Niger), sexual harassment (Uganda) and teacher alcoholism (Madagascar).[28]

Table 5 (see 'Accountability') highlights key issues in each country and the extent to which parents pursue them.

Overall the results show corruption is considered a significant problem but there are regional disparities with regard to the education sector. In Ghana, Madagascar, Morocco and Niger fewer parents think the education system is affected by corruption than in Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda, where a majority believe corruption is prevalent. See Figure 14 where countries have been ordered by ascending levels of perceived corruption.

Morocco : inconsistent attitudes towards corruption

Survey results in Morocco show that a minority of school participants think the education system is corrupt (36 percent of parents, 27 percent of head teachers and 28 percent of PTA representatives). Fewer still believe it subject to embezzlement (parents 1.3 percent, head teachers 3.3 percent). However, the majority of households say fighting against corruption is key to solving school problems (58 percent).

While the perceptions of the surveyed parents, heads of PTAs and head teachers seem to be at similar levels within a given country, parents are more likely to say education is affected by corruption than head teachers. This is particularly true in Sierra Leone.

Contradictions between respondents' answers show how sensitive corruption issues are in most countries (see box).

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the analysis of the Africa Education Watch (AEW) surveys as presented here, and on the recommendations put forward in the seven National Assessment Reports prepared by the Transparency International (TI) Chapters involved in the programme.
While most of the recommendations below are addressed to Ministries of Education or to civil society in the surveyed countries, international development partners active in these countries are encouraged to use bi- or multilateral discussions with MoEs to seek support for their implementation, and to offer financial support to cover their costs.

5.1 Clarification of roles and responsibilities of national, regional and district stakeholders

Countries have different approaches and are at different stages in the decentralisation process. However, there is a common weakness in the understanding of the roles and responsibilities of national and sub-national bodies, including schools administrations and School Management Committees (SMCs). The survey findings indicate a need to strengthen processes, examine the consistency and articulation of responsibilities, and improve the public understanding of these.

Strengthening decentralised processes

Strengthening processes means providing clear guidance and more support for decentralised administrations at regional, provincial and district levels. AEW underlines the need to clarify roles, responsibilities and communications between the state and its deconcentrated bodies in the areas of planning, disbursement of funds and financial control. Administrative decentralisation is dependent on financial decentralisation, and, as is noted in the Morocco country report, may require better coordination between the Ministries of Education (MoEs) and the Ministries of Finance (MoFs) in order to provide support, particularly in the area of financial management training. Where deconcentrated bodies are in charge of specific tasks, they need appropriate funding. This includes a travel budget to allow training and support to be carried out at schools.

Decentralisation has left district officials ill prepared to manage their new responsibilities. They do not have adequate decision-making powers or resources to operate in the field. Nor do they have full control over the funds they receive or adequate training to use them efficiently and creatively to support the schools under their supervision.

Recommendations

- **Ministries of Education must take steps to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of sub-national administrative bodies (e.g. District Education Offices, Académies, Circonscriptions scolaires, etc.) are made clear to the public, especially the members of PTAs and SMCs.**
- **Ministries of Education should conduct regular audits to ascertain whether sub-national administrative bodies have the capacity to carry out their oversight functions. These should include financial management issues.**
- **Additional resources must be made available to allow state officials to carry out more on-site school inspections particularly in the area of teachers' attendance, financial management and accounting.**

5.2 Strengthening legal frameworks for school budgets and financial records

Although AEW does not make a case for a more extensive legal arsenal in the fight against corruption in schools, the findings suggest a need to ensure existing laws are understood and respected. There should also be mechanisms in place to ensure accountability and transparency of school budgeting and financial records.

School budgets and financial records

AEW finds an overall lack of transparency of school budgets, financial records and bookkeeping. This is only slightly better in countries that use capitation grants. There is: (i) a general lack of knowledge of school budget allocations, how these are made and the origin and purposes of funds/in-kind contributions, (ii) a lack of clarity in the use of funds, and, worryingly, (iii) very little accountability for expenditures.

School managers and those responsible for oversight of school budgets should know the exact monetary value of budget items such as textbooks and teacher salaries. This would make the process clearer, allow for more meaningful discussions with officials and other local representatives and result in better decision-making and more accountability.

Rules and mechanisms for financial management should extend to contributions from parents, communes, the private sector, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other donors to increase clarity and accountability. At present, those that exist for financial management usually apply only to funds received from the state.

Recommendations

- **Civil society organisations, in partnership with Ministries of Education, should publish and disseminate regulations and best practices concerning school budgets and financial records.**
- **Guidance manuals must be developed and made widely available to head teachers, SMC members, and all those involved in the management of schools resources.**
- **Ministries of Education must adapt regulations to require that school budgets and financial records:**
  - **are comprehensive and include both cash and in-kind contributions (material, equipment, labour), and any additional funds collected, irrespective of their sources (parents, communes, private sector, NGOs etc.). They must also show how the resources received were used.**
  - **are consistent, comparable, transparent and subject to internal and external scrutiny and control.**
  - **are subject to independent audits with the results posted and/or announced to the school community on a periodic basis.**

School plans

The development of a school plan is an important way to engage communities with their schools. It helps bring about a better understanding of how schools work and encourages an interest in the way they are managed. A formal round of school planning also makes the budgeting process more transparent. School plans need to have clear financial commitments and performance targets/indicators. The process must be as inclusive as possible, and ensure that local accountability structures (SMCs and PTAs) are not only consulted but are actively involved. SMCs may have legal responsibilities within the process, and the involvement of PTAs ensures the wider school community participates in planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Recommendations

- **Ministries of Education must support a participatory planning process at schools where it already exists, and introduce such processes where they are not yet in place.**
- **Civil society organisations should sensitise parents and school staff to the importance of school plans and encourage them to participate in the planning process.**
- **Civil society organisations should encourage SMCs and PTAs to be fully involved in the development of school plans.**

Strengthening control and supervision agencies

The TI Chapters involved in AEW recommend strengthening supervision agencies, including the District Inspectorates. The findings suggest that school inspections are irregular and superficial and when they do occur they focus mostly on pedagogical issues and teacher issues. District officials take little responsibility for overseeing financial management, and MoF representatives rarely visit schools. When financial records are audited, inspectors look at formal compliance rather than actual results and the impact of investments and expenditures on education quality. Nevertheless, the identified link between inspections by MoE officials and the quality of bookkeeping and the reduction in the likelihood of demands for "registration fees" calls for a widening and strengthening of the role and regularity of inspections. Inspection frameworks should include practical measures to strengthen school governance and management transparency. Inspections should be tools to ensure compliance with the regulations and promote best practices in terms of financial management, teacher management and community participation.

Recommendations

- **Ministries of Education must clarify and publish what is covered in school inspections and expand the regulations where necessary to include financial management.**
- **Ministries of Education must ensure that inspectorates can fulfil their role efficiently by guaranteeing:**
  - **Inspectorates are provided with additional financial support (particularly for transport) to visit schools**
  - **Inspectorates are provided with the training and capacity to support improved financial management, budgeting and efficient use of resources**
  - **Inspection and audit results are communicated to PTAs, SMCs and the school community, including parents and elected representatives on a periodic basis.**
- **Ministries of Education and civil society organisations must identify and communicate channels and procedures for complaints about financial mismanagement to all stakeholders in schools.**

5.3 Local accountability frameworks

Clearer roles and responsibilities for SMCs, PTAs and head teachers

The AEW surveys reveal the confusion over PTA and SMC roles and responsibilities, and the country reports recommend clarification of the mandates of these two bodies. Often one committee is used in place of the other as the vehicle for participatory decision-making and oversight. They should have separate and clearly understood mandates, powers and prerogatives for action. Where the existence of SMCs is statutory and there is a mandate for planning, financial control and school oversight, this has to be stated and recognised by all in the school community. SMCs (but not PTAs) may have legal responsibility, and legal liability for financial management.

Similarly, the role of head teacher has to be clear and mechanisms put in place to ensure a correct balance of power between the role a head teacher assumes in running a school and his or her role on committees such as the SMC or PTA. A head teacher should not dominate these organisations. Finding the correct balance between the role of head teacher and an SMC in overseeing school governance is not easy. To avoid confusion and guarantee accountability, there should be clear mechanisms to ensure committees and individuals are accountable to one another, to district bodies, school staff, elected representatives, parents, children and community members in general.

The AEW country reports raise the difficult question of how illiterate committee members and parents can be involved in undertaking financial responsibilities. The SMCs should try to make financial information accessible, be it orally or pictorially, in ways that empower members and parents, whatever their level of education.

Recommendations

- **Ministries of Education must ensure that laws regulating the roles and responsibilities of SMCs, PTAs and head teachers are made clearer. They must define who does what in terms of fundraising, bookkeeping, financial management and disbursement.**
- **Civil society organisations and Ministries of Education should work together to publish and disseminate information in user-friendly formats that explains laws regulating SMCs and PTAs. This documentation should also state clearly the prerogatives and responsibilities of head teachers.**
- **Where necessary, civil society organisations should explain the roles and responsibilities of SMCs, PTAs and head teachers at school level, through information campaigns that take into account the less well-educated and literate community members.**
- **Ministries of Education and/or civil society organisations must inform parents of the procedures to report power abuse, financial mismanagement or misuse of funds by PTAs, SMCs or head teachers so that people know who is accountable for what and to whom.**
- **Ministries of Education must ensure that SMCs comply with their statutory requirements (election procedures, meeting, reporting, information-sharing and financial management) and are subject to regular inspections.**

Equal representation in SMCs and PTAs

The TI Chapters involved in AEW note the small proportion of women in SMCs and PTAs, as well as an overrepresentation of wealthier parents. SMC are legally required to be representative of all parts of the community, including women's and religious groups, and traditional chiefs. However the regulations are not always known, and often ignored. Consequently, the willingness and enthusiasm of community members to join SMCs, especially those from under-represented groups, remains unproven.

Recommendations

- **Ministries of Education and civil society organisations should encourage all members of the community to participate in PTAs and SMCs to ensure representation of potentially marginalised communities. Information about how PTAs and SMCs appoint members must be publicly displayed on school premises and advertised through information campaigns.**
- **SMCs should consult pupils regularly to ensure learners' views on priorities for school improvement are addressed.**
- **Civil society organisation programmes that empower communities and promote their participation in school management and oversight should be supported and financed by international development partners, as well as allowed and encouraged by Ministries of Education.**

Capacity building

People need the skills to understand budgets, bookkeeping, financial records and administrative systems. Because of the regular turnover of head teachers and SMC members, capacity building cannot be limited to one-off training. It requires long-term strategies, such as regular on-the-job training, support networks, advisory visits, and published guidelines. It is clearly the responsibility of the Ministries of Education to ensure that this takes place, but civil society organisations and international development partners also have a role to play through providing expertise, financial support and outreach.

Recommendations

- **Ministries of Education must take steps to simplify school budget processes and formats and must systematically introduce a way to disseminate this information publicly.**
- **Head teachers and SMCs should be trained in financial management, budget planning and monitoring of expenditures. Ministries of Education and civil society should strengthen this training with a range of follow-up activities.**

5.4 Stakeholders' engagement and empowerment

Better access to, dissemination and use of financial information

AEW country reports highlight the lack of information on financial management and data at school and district levels and make clear that better-informed parents can help reduce and prevent malpractice and abuses of power in primary education.

Uganda and Senegal make recommendations to increase citizen oversight of public expenditures in education by publicising education disbursements through the media. If citizens are able to track resources from districts to schools, leakages and unfair distribution can be identified and publicised. Publishing this information is not sufficient on its own to stop corruption, but it is a minimal condition to allow for citizen oversight. Committee members should also receive training and support to better understand financial issues. In a number of countries, including Madagascar, unchecked collection of fees are a legacy of previous practices and it remains uncertain whether these constitute malpractice or are simply the result of lack of information. If parents are aware of the laws, they are in a better position to stand up to abuses of authority.

Recommendations

- **School communities and parents must be proactively informed of regulations concerning legitimate fees and about what other contributions in cash or kind are legal:**
  - **Ministries of Education must publish fee schedules, including guidelines for discretionary fees, and these should be circulated widely along with guidelines on how to refuse illegal requests; civil society organisations should reinforce this information at school-level.**
  - **Fee and complaint guidelines and procedures must be disseminated by district education officials and elected representatives of decentralised administrations, and publicised through awareness raising campaigns. These should use local media, TV and radio to reach people who cannot read or are not involved in local forums.**
- **Information about material and funds allocations must be made public at district level, school by school, through notice boards and local media. This information must be made accessible at school level by the SMC and publicised for parents or any other citizen or elected representative so that they can track distribution.**
- **Complaints procedures must be publicised alongside the information so people know how to report irregularities.**

Parental awareness and engagement

The AEW findings show that parents have limited interest in getting involved in school management. TI Chapters believe there is a need to help parents understand their roles and responsibilities, and the advantages of being more involved in the education of their children. This requires concerted advocacy and action over time, both within the school and in the wider society. Organised civil society, particularly, has a major role to play in bringing about and sustaining such a development.

Parents should be encouraged to get involved in the development of school plans. It may be that they have stronger relationships with other local bodies than with schools and education officials. Local councils/communes, for example, have mature and democratic accountability and representative structures. However, AEW recommends strengthening the involvement of local polities (e.g. communes) and parents in the implementation of school plans.

Recommendations

- **Civil society organisations, international development partners and Ministries of Education should provide concerted support to educate parents about the benefits they gain from having well-run and well-administered schools.**
- **Ministries of Education and civil society organisations should organise national campaigns to increase awareness of the parental role in monitoring school performance, including finance and resource management, and to highlight the role of locally elected bodies in guaranteeing accountability in schools.**

Concluding remarks

The international consensus around universal basic education as the linchpin of development must now more strongly incorporate good governance at the heart of its approach. Strengthening the governance framework in education management can only result in a more efficient management of resources, and is a necessary step to improving the delivery of quality education.

The AEW study shows how the new decentralised management systems fare in terms of governance and identifies areas that require urgent attention in order to reduce corruption and ultimately to improve the quality of primary education in Africa.

Decentralisation is a first step towards empowering local communities to become involved in school decision-making and oversight and its success so far can be evaluated in view of the findings presented in the present report. AEW calls for adequate resources to build the capacity within school communities – including parents, head teachers, PTA and SMC members – and regional administrations to manage school budgets effectively and transparently. TI suggests that the broad reach of the AEW report can act as a benchmark from which to measure future progress.

ANNEX 1.
AFRICA EDUCATION WATCH

Africa Education Watch (AEW) is a three-year programme running from 2007 to 2010 and implemented by Transparency International (TI). It is funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. It covers seven countries: Ghana, Madagascar, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda.

Africa Education Watch

GOAL
Improving transparency and accountability in the use of primary education resources

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES
Ghana, Madagascar, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Uganda

TIME SPAN
3 years, July 2007 – June 2010

IMPLEMENTED THROUGH
Ghana Integrity Initiative, TI Initiative Madagascar, Transparency Maroc, Association Nigérienne de Lutte contre la Corruption, Forum Civil (Senegal), National Accountability Group (Sierra Leone), TI Uganda

The rationale for the programme lies in the observation that despite increased resources being spent on primary education in participating countries and recent increases in enrolment, education outcomes remain low, and Education For All (EFA) goals remain at risk.[29]

Decentralisation reforms from the late 1990s have focused on two areas: structural changes in the delivery of primary education to bring public services closer to the user, and giving local stakeholders a greater stake in the management of primary education. New authorities with administrative and fiscal responsibilities have been put in place at regional, district, communal, and school level.

AEW seeks to assess whether these new decentralised systems are effective in controlling malpractices, monitoring the flow of resources, and preventing corruption, resource leakages or delays.

Objectives

The key objectives of the programme are to: (i) identify approximate levels of resource leakages or delays in resource transfer from the central government to school level through targeted research on specific budget lines and in specific geographical areas; (ii) determine the extent of (illegal) fees and other costs that parents incur for their children's primary education; and (iii) assess how effective decentralised accountability structures are at controlling resources and preventing corruption, and how they function.

ANNEX 2.
SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLING

Approach

The Africa Education Watch Regional Overview is based on seven standardised surveys conducted in Ghana, Madagascar, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda.

Countries surveyed were selected based on the presence of a Transparency International (TI) Chapter in the country with previous experience working on education. Another criterion was representation of economical and cultural differences.

The TI International Secretariat (TI-S) worked closely with TI Chapters on the design of four different survey questionnaires and methodology, as well as on the data quality control process and overall coordination of the work carried out by the chapters. To design the questionnaires, TI drew on input from national and international education experts, civil society activists, and survey experts. All surveys were carried out between March and May 2008 by TI Chapters in the above-mentioned countries with the exception of Uganda, where a consulting firm was hired to implement the survey under the supervision of the local TI Chapter.

In each country, four types of respondents were interviewed: households, head teachers, heads of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) – which included School Management Committee (SMC) members – and local governments (District Education Officers). A minimum of 60 schools were randomly selected and surveyed. On average, 58 head teachers and 58 heads of PTAs were interviewed in each country. Additionally, at least 1,000 households were randomly selected from the schools' roster and interviewed. An average of 10 district officials were also interviewed in each country.

The surveys

Africa Education Watch (AEW) was interested in exploring the relationships between different stakeholders: head teachers, representatives from school governance bodies – heads of PTAs and members of SMCs – local governments (District Education Officers), as well as parents.

AEW designed four in-depth surveys. These were independently administered to users of the primary education system,[30] providers of such services (school authorities as represented by the head teacher), representatives from PTA, and district officials in charge of school matters.

The following table summarises how many of each actors were surveyed in each of the countries:

Country	Households	Head teachers	Heads of PTAs	DEOs*
Ghana	1,020	60	60	6
Madagascar	1,200	60	60	12
Morocco	1,040	60	60	16
Niger	1,200	75	75	9
Senegal	1,024	49	40	13
Sierra Leone	1,069	55	51	4
Uganda	1,064	47	55	12

* District Education Officers

Broadly speaking, respondents were interviewed about the same topics.[31] These included questions on:

- the existence and efficiency of channels to voice their opinions and whether or not there were mechanisms in place to hold school management accountable (voice and accountability structures),
- the use of these mechanisms by parents,
- the experiences with and perceptions of corrupt practices in primary schools or in the education system, and
- any other problems at schools, identified by the respondents.

This multi-pronged approach allowed for the triangulation of the assessments; that is comparing results from all parts of the school community – from service providers and managers to the users. This gave the programme a more complete picture of the issues under review.

The school formed the convergence point for all the constituencies sampled. In order to maximise the advantages of this triangulation of assessment approach, the sample unit, the design of sampling procedure and the sample size were all taken into account. Sample units were selected as follow: AEW would select schools across each country and interview their head teachers and head of PTA; then they would interview parents of children attending those specific schools, and district education officials responsible for their finances. Some of the parents interviewed as part of the household interviews were also SMC or PTA members.

To select schools in each country, AEW used a stratified random sampling procedure. In each country there were at least two geographical areas outlined from where about 60 schools were selected. Stratification took into consideration the location of the school (to allow for regions with different levels of income to be surveyed) and other characteristics on a country-by-country basis (e.g. urban or rural, 'government-owned' or 'government-assisted', faith or non-faith based, etc.).[32] At least 1,000 parents or guardians per country were randomly selected from the 2008 school year roster. The district educational officials interviewed were selected from those responsible for overseeing financial matters of the selected schools. For an overview of the surveyed regions and districts, see Annex 3.

Participating TI Chapters conducted background research on resource flows in the primary education sector, and carried out user and service-provider surveys to collect data for the National Assessment Reports.[33]

The surveys identified serious governance and accountability problems that appear commonly widespread in all seven countries. The analyses presented in the present report focus mainly on these common problems.

Limitations

There are potential challenges and constraints for large-scale field research into potentially sensitive subjects. Some country-specific challenges that we faced are identified in the reports, including access to officials and the reluctance of respondents to identify corrupt practices.

Overall the poor quality of financial records at school and district level made it impossible to track financial and in-kind resources transfers between both levels. In most cases, financial records were either completely lacking, incomplete or of such low quality that country research teams could not use them to assess the existence or scale of resource leakages at districts and schools, or in transfers between them.

Although this lack of transparency and complete financial documentation limited AEW's capacity to look into leakages, it is an important finding for future research and studies. Clearly, different methods are required to track school expenditures at all levels. Additionally, and as discussed in the present report, the lack of good bookkeeping and accounting practices at schools has dire consequences in terms of governance.

ANNEX 3.

TARGET REGIONS FOR COUNTRY SURVEYS

Ghana	Madagascar	Morocco	Niger	Senegal	Sierra Leone	Uganda
Greater Accra *1	Alaotra Mangoro	Grand Casablanca *4	Maradi *6	Dakar *7	Port Loko	Northern *10
Ashanti *2	Analanjirofo	Meknès-Tafilalet *5		Diourbel *8	Kenema	Western *11
Upper East *3	Atsimo Andrefana			Kolda *9	Freetown	Eastern *12
	Atsimo Atsinanana					Central *13
	Betsiboka					
	Bongolava					
	Diana					
	Matsiatra Ambony					
	Menabe					
	Sava					
	Sofia					
	Vakinankaratra					

*1 Tema Municipal and Dangme West District Assemblies

*2 Obuasi Municipal and Asante Akim South District Assemblies

*3 Bolgatanga Municipal and Kassena/Nankana District Assemblies

*4 Casa Anfa, Sidi Bernoussi, Moulay Rchid Sidi Othmane, Derb Sultan El Fida, Ben M'Sik, Hay Al Hassani, Nouasseur, Aïn Chock, Aïn Sbaa Hay Mhammadi, Médiouna, Mohamédia

*5 Meknès, Ifrane, El Hajeb, Errachidia, Khénifra

*6 Tessaoua, Mayahi, Dakoro, Aguié, Madarounta, Guidanroumdji

*7 Pikine, Rufisque, Thiaroye, Dakar Ville

*8 Diourbel, Bambey, Mbacké

*9 Kolda, Vélingra, Sédhiou

*10 Apac, Arua, Kotido, Lira

*11 Kamwenge, Kasese, Masindi, Mbarara, Kabarole

*12 Busia, Kumi, Soroti, Pallisa

*13 Kiboga, Mpigi, Mubende, Kampala

ANNEX 4.
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ENDNOTES

1 Education for All (EFA) is a global initiative led by UNESCO, which was started in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990. It was expanded and re-launched in 2000 in Dakar, Senegal, to re-affirm the global commitment of the 164 participating countries and to adopt the six Education for All goals. These goals (see box) express a comprehensive view of education, from early childhood care and development to literacy and life skills for youths and adults. Two of the EFA goals also correspond to the Millennium Development Goals to provide universal primary education for all and to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education.

2 "Total number of new entrants to a given grade of primary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population at the official school entrance age for that grade" (UNESCO, 2009).

3 Basic education is defined differently in different countries but can usually be taken to include primary education and some post-primary schooling, either formally or informally, that is considered a minimum preparation for life.

4 In its Anti-Corruption Plain Language Guide, TI defines Governance as "a concept that goes beyond the traditional notion of government to focus on the relationships between leaders, public institutions and citizens, including the processes by which they make and implement decisions. The term can also be applied to companies and NGOs". By extension, 'Good' governance is characterised as being participatory, accountable, transparent, efficient, responsive and inclusive, respecting the rule of law and minimising opportunities for corruption.

5 This achievement in increasing enrolment has raised other policy concerns, for example, over the challenges it poses to the quality of teaching.

6 As we will later see, primary schools in the countries that have rolled out a system of school block grants fare differently on some good governance indicators than those countries that have not done so.

7 There can be confusion between SMCs and PTAs. PTAs gather parents and school staff, usually the head teacher and teacher representatives. PTAs have been traditionally in charge of community-school relations, school maintenance and in some instances management of community teachers. In countries where there are no SMCs, PTAs are the official school-based management organisations. SMC boards have a larger representation from the community and the local authorities. In countries where schools have SMCs and PTAs, SMCs have greater management functions and responsibilities than PTAs, and are formally responsible for financial management and school bank accounts.

8 *How do you define corruption?* www.transparency.org/news_room/faq/corruption_faq

9 The Human Development Index (HDI) is a comparative measure of life expectancy, literacy, education and standards of living.

10 The first figure indicates the rank of the country (179 countries were ranked in 2008) while the number in bracket indicates the score. Scores below 0.8 but above 0.5 are associated by the UNDP with "medium human development", while scores below 0.5 are characterised as "low human development".

11 All significant funding for the sector supports a single sector policy and expenditure programme, under government leadership, adopting common approaches across the sector, and progressing towards Government procedures to disburse and account for all funds (Foster, 2000)

12 As the AEW surveys interviewed parents, head teachers, members of PTA and SMC, as well as District Education Officers, comparisons of answers will be made where relevant.

13 See the individual AEW country reports for more detail.

14 Where such contributions are deemed illegal, or their legality is in doubt, there is an incentive **not** to include them in the records.

15 For country-specific discussions of the identified problems, please refer to the separate country reports.

16 In Morocco all the reported data for the education sector are aggregated for primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

17 The Ghana Education Service is the national administrative body for education under the MoE.

18 The AEW surveys assessment of a school's financial records was made on the basis of the availability of financial data that allowed for reconciling financial information at the school level with information collected at the district level regarding transfers to a particular school, as well as financial records allowing the researchers to monitor the expenditures made by the school. When the information available at the school was insufficient to allow for proper monitoring of incomes or expenditures, the financial data at the school-level was recorded as incomplete . When no books were kept on school incomes and on expenditures, financial data was recorded as missing .

19 This finding also strongly questions the feasibility of Public Expenditures Tracking Surveys (PETS) in such circumstances.

20 In this context, tokenism can be understood to mean a practice of limited or fake inclusion of members of a group (for example parents), creating an illusion of inclusive practices, intentional or not.

21 Data is not available for head teachers in Niger and Senegal.

22 See the Ghana National Assessment Report for details.

23 Where SMCs include child representatives, their role, responsibilities and level of participation is not explored.

24 The percentages are based on the head teachers statements.

25 The question asked to the parents was: "Do you think that decisions are taken transparently? (i.e. we know what was decided and why)". The percentages represent the combined answers of parents who said that it is "mostly" or "always" the case.

26 Amount is in US$ converted at the applicable rate at the time of the survey.

27 Paid tutoring can develop into a form of blackmail and constitute outward corruption, when teachers teach only half the syllabus during official hours and pressure students to pay for private classes to learn the rest (see: Transparency International, Working Paper #4/2009, Corruption in the Education Sector).

28 In view of the varied nature of the problem, the reader is invited to consult the various country reports to learn more about this problem and what the AEW surveys could identify.

29 The EFA Global Monitoring Report identified 41 countries at risk or seriously at risk of not achieving 100 percent Net Enrolment Rate by 2015, and respectively 28 and 34 countries are at risk or seriously at risk of not achieving the gender EFA goal in primary and secondary education (UNESCO, 2008).

30 AEW chose to use the household as the unit of interview for the primary school users survey. The interview was conducted with the relative (e.g. father, mother, sister) who indicated that they were following most closely the selected child's schooling.

31 The full questionnaires can be download from www.transparency.org/aew

32 For detailed country samples download the individual AEW country reports at www.transparency.org/aew

33 The National Assessment Reports of the individual countries from each of the seven TI Chapters can be downloaded from www.transparency.org/aew

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