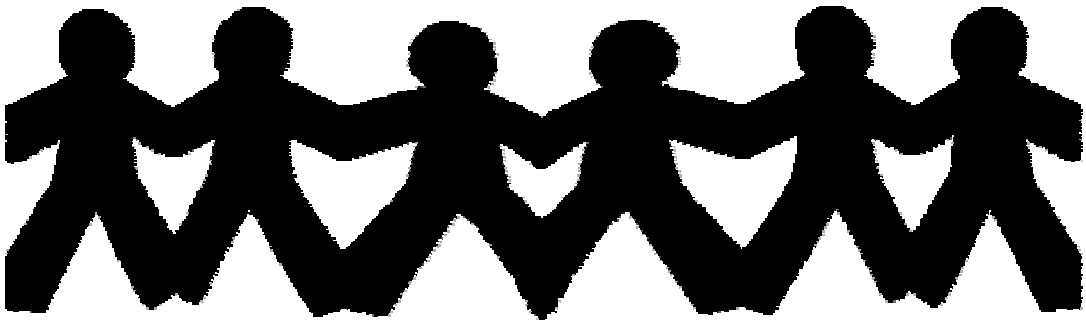
EFA Thematic Study

Community Partnerships in Education:

Dimensions, Variations, and Implications



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Executive Summary

Article 7 of the 1990 World Declaration on Education for All observed that national, regional, and local educational authorities have a unique obligation to provide basic education for all. However, the Declaration continued, these bodies cannot be expected to supply every human, financial or organizational requirement for this task.

To help achieve the goal, the Declaration suggested that:

> New and revitalized partnerships at all levels will be necessary: partnerships among all sub-sectors and forms of education; … partnerships between government and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, local communities, religious groups and families.

This study focuses on one of those types of partnerships: between governments and communities.

The notion of government-community partnership was of course not new. Such partnerships had operated in a range of settings for many decades. As the architects of the Jomtien Declaration were aware, however, reoriented and extended partnerships were necessary. Such partnerships could contribute to the planning and implementation of basic education programs, to increased effectiveness, and to stronger feelings of community ownership.

The decade which followed showed the wisdom of the emphasis on partnerships. While the goals set in 1990 have not yet been fully achieved, much more has been achieved than would have been possible in the absence of partnerships.

However, deepening experience has also shown complexities. Models which work in one setting may not work in another; and models which operate well at one point in time may not operate so well subsequently. In many systems, greater emphasis on partnerships requires some decentralization of structures; but governments are commonly ambivalent about loss of control. They also fear loss of efficiency and increase in inequalities in decentralized systems; and they may be uneasy about the diversity of practices which results from the increased number of decision-makers.

A further dimension concerns the role of the state. Operation of effective partnerships may require radical changes in this domain. Changes which require significant reduction in the role of the state may be particularly uncomfortable to government personnel, and may also be disquieting to other members of society.

The Meanings and Dimensions of Partnership

The notion of partnership implies shared decision-making, in which all partners play active roles. These roles are not necessarily equal: frameworks may have dominant and subordinate partners. However, the essence of partnership is that each actor has an independent voice and a way to shape the outcomes of negotiations. While in many settings the government is appropriately the dominant partner, this model is not, and should not be, universal. In many contexts governments and communities play equal roles; and in some situations the communities are the dominant partners while governments are the subordinate ones.

Whatever the balance between the partners, ingredients which must be present include:

- *willingness to respect the viewpoints of other partners,*
- *identification of common tasks, and*
- *collaboration in pursuit of ways to accomplish the task.*

The 1990 Jomtien declaration emphasized the need for partnerships to be "genuine". This raises the question what a "false" partnership might be. The chief answer would be a situation in which the major actor did not truly listen to the aspirations of the other actors, imposed its own agenda, and/or coerced others to agree.

Unfortunately, the experience since the Jomtien conference has shown many examples of false partnerships as well as of genuine ones. In particular, governments have commonly viewed communities as convenient providers of resources for education on models totally controlled by the governments. A situation in which communities are expected just to provide pupils, materials, finance and other resources for schools which are totally controlled by governments cannot be called a genuine partnership. And the fact that such models in many countries have failed to provide education of appropriate quantity and quality is a strong reason why the objectives and nature of partnership need to be reviewed.

In some settings, it may be added, the imbalance is on the other side: communities are the dominant partners and give little voice to governments. These communities may be willing to take government resources, but are unwilling to listen to the governments' visions on how those resources should be used. This situation is less common; but it does exist, and needs to be brought into discussion to show that imbalances are not always the fault of governments. Genuine partnership, it must be stressed, requires all *actors to respect viewpoints, to identify common tasks, and to collaborate in implementation.*

Within this overall framework are many variations in precisely who does what under what circumstances. Contexts and needs vary greatly in different parts of the world. Moreover, education is a multifaceted endeavor, and each facet may need a slightly different balance in the roles of different actors. Thus the balance of control may not be the same, for example, in the matters of core curriculum, maintenance of buildings, teacher deployment, and discipline of pupils. Again, different models may be identified which have worked better in some settings than in others.

The Nature of Communities, and the Mechanisms for Partnership

The word 'community' can mean different things to different people in different circumstances. This fact requires care when analyzing circumstances in particular settings.

For present purposes, the most important types of communities are:

- *geographic communities*, which embrace the individuals living in relatively small areas such as villages, districts or suburbs;

- *ethnic and racial groups*, especially ones which are minorities and which have self-help support structures;
- *religious groups* of various kinds;
- *communities based on shared family concerns*, including Parents' Associations which are based on adults' shared concerns for the welfare of their children; and
- *communities based on shared philanthropy*, and in many cases operated by specifically-designated charitable and/or political bodies.

These communities are not always well organized in a formal sense. For example, not all geographic communities have formal bodies through which voices are heard and collective decisions reached. Indeed, in many settings it is difficult to state where the community begins and ends. Moreover, communities are rarely homogenous. Most communities have sub-groups which do not always operate together and in harmony; and even in tightly-defined geographic areas some individuals and groups may not consider that residence in a particular location necessarily makes them part of a community.

Experience shows, however, that schools can themselves be important focal points for creating and fostering community identity. Many schools have formal committees which are responsible for representing parents in decisions concerning the planning, development and operation of the institutions. Many schools also have broader associations to bring together not only parents but also community members.

The existence of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) concerned with education deserves particular comment because the proliferation of NGOs in many parts of the world was among the particularly striking aspects of the decade which followed the 1990 Jomtien Conference. In some settings this change was the result of government encouragement, but elsewhere governments were neutral or even discouraging. Whatever the causes of proliferation, it has brought a major change in circumstances and is among the elements requiring reassessment of approaches and strategies.

Conclusions

Even with the advent of globalization, the different regions and sub-regions of the world of course remain very diverse. No single formula for partnership can be presented to take account of all types of circumstances. Appropriate policies for rural areas may be very different from those for cities; policies for dynamic communities will differ from those for passive communities; and the varied historical legacies of colonialism, politics and economics have different implications for different societies.

Nevertheless, the architects of the World Declaration on Education for All were wise to emphasize the need for partnerships; and their message remains as valid at the beginning of the new century as it was in 1990. In the search for appropriate partnerships between governments and communities, much can be learned from comparative analysis. This study does not provide a single recipe for success which can be utilized everywhere. But it does show some models which have worked well in some settings; and it shows some pitfalls which in other settings have caused frustration and failure.

Partnerships will remain one of the keys to the achievement of appropriate quality and quantity of education for all. Although this study focuses only on government and community partnerships, some of its lessons apply to all types of partnerships. All actors in educational processes need to review the nature of their existing collaboration, and to identify ways in which partnerships can be strengthened in pursuit of the common goal.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACE	Asociación Comunal para la Educación
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AKES-K	Aga Khan Education Service-Kenya
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
APE	Association des Parents d'Elèves
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CABE	Central Advisory Board of Education
CBO	Community-Based Organization
DPEB	District Planning and Education Board
EDUCO	Educación con Participación de la Comunidad
EFA	Education for All
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
MCM	Municipal Council of Mombasa
MEC	Mandal Education Committee
MSIP	Mombasa School Improvement Programme
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PA	Parents' Association
PEB	Provincial Education Board
PEC	Panchayat Education Committee
PRC	People's Republic of China
PROBE	Public Report on Basic Education
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
PTCA	Parent-Teacher-Community Association
SC	School Committee
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCEFA	World Conference on Education for All
ZEC	Zilla Education Committee
ZIP	Zona de Influencia Pedagogica

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Introduction

The starting point for this study is Article 7 of the World Declaration on Education for All. The Declaration emerged from the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA), which was held in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990. It stated that:

> National, regional, and local educational authorities have a unique obligation to provide basic education for all, but they cannot be expected to supply every human, financial or organizational requirement for this task. New and revitalized partnerships at all levels will be necessary: partnerships among all sub-sectors and forms of education; … partnerships between government and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, local communities, religious groups and families…. Genuine partnerships contribute to the planning, implementing, managing and evaluating of basic education programmes. When we speak of "an expanded vision and a renewed commitment", partnerships are at the heart of it.

This study, prepared a decade after the World Declaration, examines some dimensions of partnerships in education. It notes the rationale for this clause in the World Declaration, comments on the experiences upon which it was based, charts some of the paths which have been forged during the decade which followed the 1990 World Conference, and discusses appropriate future directions.

In order to permit reasonable depth, the study covers only some of the partnerships envisaged by the World Declaration. As will be evident from the title, the primary focus is on communities. These communities are of many types, operate in diverse settings, and have multiple partnerships. The study primarily focuses on their partnerships with government at various levels. The chief goal is to identify lessons from what has and has not worked in settings of different kinds. Like the World Conference, the concern is with the quality as well as the quantity of educational provision. The study also notes some of the wider implications of partnerships for social and political development.

In line with the Jomtien mandate, the work is mainly concerned with the less developed countries of the world. However, even poor countries may have rich communities, just as rich countries have poor communities. In such cases, a major question for policy makers concerns ways to harness the resources and energies of prosperous communities while protecting and encouraging their less prosperous counterparts. The study is concerned with urban communities as well as rural ones.

Within the education sector, the study is mainly concerned with primary schooling. Obviously partnerships also exist at other levels and in other types of education; but the restriction in focus is necessary to permit some depth of analysis.

One of the major themes when analyzing the nature of partnerships between communities and governments is the extent and impact of centralization and decentralization. The periods both before and after the Jomtien conference brought considerable advocacy of decentralization as a mechanism to improve the provision of education in less developed countries. Much of this advocacy failed to distinguish between the many types of decentralization, and glossed over the fact that in some circumstances increased centralization of decision-making was more desirable than increased decentralization. However, decentralization was certainly desirable in many settings; and a particular need was to find structures in which governments shared control in a more balanced way with communities and other actors.

The study begins by presenting the conceptual framework in greater depth. It then turns to rationales for advocacy of partnership in the education sector. Different actors of course have different motives. However, many of these motives overlap with and complement each other. Some statements about partnership are rather idealistic, and they are not always grounded on empirical reality. Nevertheless, identification of rationales provides a benchmark against which to evaluate the actual experiences set out in subsequent parts of the study.

Also important for macroscopic understanding is awareness of major trends over the decades. These are the focus of the next section, which discusses emerging concepts of partnership within the framework of the changing role of the state in education systems. The Jomtien conference was held during a period in history in which the central role of the state was being seriously questioned. During the period since the Jomtien conference the questioning has grown louder, and major shifts have been evident in some countries. This has implications for communities as well as for governments.

Following these quite broad analyses, commentary turns to two particular mechanisms through which partnership is operationalized. The first concerns school governance. The study notes different models for school committees and parents' associations, and notes both positive and negative features of experiences in a number of settings. The second mechanism, which may be linked, concerns financing. Much has now been learned about the nature of partnerships as they affect and arise from community financing, and about administrative structures within centralized and decentralized systems.

The next section analyzes the impact of innovations in a number of domains. It gives particular attention to recruitment and retention of pupils; to teachers and their conditions of service; educational achievement; equity tensions; and political dimensions. These areas are of particular importance to policy-makers at the apex of education systems.

Finally, the two concluding sections highlight major lessons learned, summarize trends since 1990, and comment on future prospects. While strategies for the future must vary according to context and priorities, some common principles may be identified as a guide for policy makers.

Box 1: Partnerships – A Persistent Theme

The 1990 Jomtien call for strengthened partnerships was echoed at the 1996 mid-decade review in Amman, Jordan. The final report of that meeting (International Consultative Forum on EFA 1996, p.26) observed that:

> As governments seek ways to decentralize responsibility for education, equalize educational opportunities, and raise more funds, they need strong and innovative allies. The [Amman] Forum noted that greater and more active partnerships have been one of the most successful outcomes since Jomtien.

As the report added, however, "building partnerships is easier said than done". The Forum tried to evaluate critically the conditions in which partnerships can thrive, and pointed to new directions for their development. The present study builds on that work.

Concepts and Parameters

To provide a framework for what follows, certain terms need to be defined and/or explained. The first is the concept of *primary education*. While at first sight this seems to be clear, particularly when primary schools are distinct from kindergartens and secondary schools, closer examination may reveal complexities. In general, the study focuses on institutions with an explicit educational purpose operated for children in the approximate age-range six to twelve years by governments or

independent operators. However, education systems may vary in the length of the primary cycle. Thus, while in Nepal and Maldives for example the primary cycle lasts only five years, in Malawi and Kenya it lasts for eight years. Sharp distinctions will not be drawn in this study, because in most cases the general nature of the organization and content of schooling is more important than the specific duration of formal cycles.

Another potential complexity is that some societies have institutions which operate parallel to mainstream schools but serve many of the same functions. In some settings, these institutions are described as nonformal rather than formal. However, the dividing lines between the categories are blurred. Bangladesh, for example, has a system of institutions run by the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) which operate parallel to government primary schools and serve 1.2 million children (Ahmed et al. 1993; Nath & Chowdhury 1999). Whether the BRAC institutions are formal or nonformal could be debated, but for present purposes such a debate would not be very useful. The main point is that they serve the educational needs of primary-school-aged children; and the BRAC model has inspired innovations in such countries as Chad, Uganda and Malawi (Hyde 1999a). Other initiatives which could be classified as either formal or nonformal include community schools in Egypt, El Salvador and Mali, which operate parallel to the mainstream government system with support from various external donors (Zaalouk 1995; Reimers 1997; Muskin 1999). All these models are within the framework of the study. Indeed they are of considerable importance because in many cases they have instructive forms of partnership from which lessons can be learned.

The second term to be defined is *partnership*. One dictionary (Procter 1980, p.791) rather naturally defines partnership as "the state of being a partner". The question then turns to the definition of partner, to which the answer is "a person who shares (in the same activity)". For the present study sharing in the same activity is indeed important, though the concept can apply to organizations as well as to persons. Although in many contexts the word partnership implies more or less equal sharing, it does not necessarily do so. This study will give some examples in which communities are the dominant partners, and other examples in which communities are the subordinate partners. The nature of partnerships varies widely in different settings and at different points in time.

Two terms which are related to partnership are *involvement* and *participation* (Shaeffer 1994, p.16). Most analysts consider involvement and participation to be relatively weak forms of activity. Partnership implies more active and committed involvement. Partners share responsibility for a joint activity, whereas participants may merely cooperate in someone else's activity.

A further term to be defined is that of *community*. At this point, the complexities multiply. Hillery's classic paper (1955, p.113) noted 94 alternative definitions of community, and observed that the list was still not exhaustive. Without going too deeply into this matter, it is useful here, based on the observations by Wolf et al. (1997, pp.9-10), to note that a community has at least some of the following features:

- a network of shared interests and concerns,
- a symbolic or physical base,
- extension beyond the narrowly-defined household, and
- something that distinguishes itself from other similar groups.

However, some authors warn against coarse generalizations in identification of communities. As noted by Wolf et al. (1997, p.10), communities may expand or contract according to the need and situation. Also, the voices of all stakeholders may not be heard equally; and although multiple and possibly overlapping communities sometimes come together to achieve common objectives, they may have different ideas about the ways in which those objectives can best be achieved.

Nevertheless, with these caveats and qualifications, it is possible to identify several types of community which are particularly prominent in the field of education. For present purposes, the most important types are:

- *geographic communities*, which embrace the individuals living in relatively small areas such as villages, districts or suburbs;
- *ethnic and racial groups*, especially ones which are minorities and which have self-help support structures;
- *religious groups* of various kinds;
- *communities based on shared family concerns*, including Parents' Associations which are based on adults' shared concerns for the welfare of their children; and
- *communities based on shared philanthropy*, and in many cases operated by specifically-designated charitable and/or political bodies.

Examples in this study will be taken from each of these types of community. They vary considerably in their degrees of formal structure, for some are quite fluid while others are officially registered as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) or Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

Schools can themselves have a community-building function which is important for social development quite apart from the educational role. As noted in 1999 (p.10) by Kader Asmal, South African Minister of Education, a functioning school "is a true community in its own right, and an indispensable centre for the wider community's social and cultural needs and interests". To help achieve goals of community-building and social cohesion, the South African government has devoted major effort to the creation and operation of school governing bodies. Other countries may be faced by different circumstances and challenges; but the general point remains that schools in all societies may be focal points for community activity and development. School committees are important instruments for achieving these goals, especially when they include not only parents but also representatives of religious organizations, commercial bodies, NGOs, and other groups.

The role of NGOs deserves special mention, first because they received particular prominence at the Jomtien conference and second because their role developed further in the decade which followed. In some parts of the world, the NGO sector remains small. This is the case in China, Eritrea and Iran for example. However, NGOs are particularly active in countries as diverse as Brazil, Egypt, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Philippines and Thailand (Chen 1997, p.576). They can be an important force for poverty eradication, reinforcing and complementing government activities. NGO work is not always unambiguously constructive; but many productive partnerships between governments and NGOs achieve results which would otherwise have been impossible.

The fact that many NGOs participated in the Jomtien conference both reflected the changing times and helped to shape the outcomes of the conference. Some participants felt that NGO voices were being clearly heard in fora of this type for the first time; but, if so, the final report (WCEFA Secretariat 1990, p.34) explicitly recorded the view of the Co-Rapporteur-General that it would "not be possible after this week for anyone to consider having a major educational conference or meeting without the participation of these important groups".

The growth of the NGO sector during the 1990s increased the diversity. Some NGOs are large, while others are small; some are tightly organized, while others are loosely organized; some have multiple national and international connections, while others are parochial in focus and operation. This creates a further problem for analysis, because the term NGO, like the term community, can cover so many different types of body.

Box 2: Partnerships and a New Way of Working

One of the syntheses of roundtable themes prepared after the WCEFA (Fordham 1992, p.22) elaborated on the concepts of partnerships presented at the Conference:

> Developing strong partnerships with parents and communities means a new way of working for governments, for service agencies, and for educators. Above all, it means *listening* to the needs of local communities and addressing their local agendas. It means becoming familiar with the people and their religious beliefs, their customs and even their food taboos. Then it is possible to see how best to build on what they know.

The synthesis added that listening to people:

- means recognizing the diversity of cultures, languages, customs, and resources which make up societies, rather than seeking uniformity;
- means training – for teachers, administrators, specialists – to sensitize them to the needs of communities and to ways in which they can involve parents in the education of their children;
- means recognizing that education as well as child care begin in the home and within the community, and must be nurtured there.

Rationales for Partnership

Within every partnership, the various actors may have different reasons for collaboration. For example, when governments, communities and international agencies work together, each side may have a different reason for doing so. In most settings, however, one may identify a cluster of important rationales for engaging in partnerships:

- ✓ *Shared experiences and expertise*. Each partner can bring knowledge and skills to the task at hand.
- ✓ *Mutual support*. When circumstances are difficult, partnership provides mutual support to persist in efforts to achieve goals.
- ✓ *Division of labor*. Collaboration can allow partners to concentrate on the tasks that they do best. The tasks which one partner can do best are not necessarily the ones that other partners can do best. In this situation, division of labor permits all sides to gain.
- ✓ *Increased resources*. When each partner brings resources to the common forum, the total availability of resources is increased. These resources can be human and material as well as financial.
- ✓ *Increased sense of ownership*. When people work together on a task, they are more likely to feel a sense of ownership than if the task is performed for them by someone else.
- ✓ *Extended reach*. Different partners may have voices in different places. This can extend the reach of initiatives.
- ✓ *Increased effectiveness.* When partners come together, they each bring their own perspectives. They may help each other to identify obstacles to effective implementation of programs, and ways round those obstacles.
- ✓ *Evaluation and monitoring.* When partners have links to different sectors of society, they can complement each others' efforts in assessing the impact of programs. This information can be used to make necessary adjustments and improve impact.

While these rationales are quite generally applicable, some commentators have made specific observations on the value of partnerships within the context of education for all. For example, the WCEFA Framework for Action (WCEFA Secretariat 1990, p.58) presented two main reasons for an emphasis on partnerships. One, focusing on resources, would be placed by many people at the top the list:

> Partnerships at the community level and at the intermediate and national levels should be encouraged; they can help harmonize activities, utilize resources more effectively, and mobilize additional financial and human resources where necessary.

The other rationale focused more specifically on learning:

> The demand for, and participation in, learning opportunities cannot simply be assumed, but must be actively encouraged. Potential learners need to see that the benefits of basic education activities exceed the costs the participants must bear…. Also, learners tend to benefit more from education when they are partners in the instructional process, rather than treated simply as 'inputs' or 'beneficiaries'.

One of the three volumes which synthesized the roundtable themes and which was prepared following the WCEFA (Windham 1992, p.3) made related but slightly different observations:

> Whether through new organizational structures or through reorienting existing structures to include a basic education component, local and national partnerships can help provide materials, facilities and personnel to meet the basic education challenge. A special benefit of this broadening of participation is to focus greater public attention on educational issues and to establish a stronger societal commitment to the principles of the World Declaration.

Other actors may have different or additional reasons for wishing to promote partnerships. For example, UNICEF (1998b, p.11) has stressed *sustainability*:

> [P]artnerships at this time of economic uncertainty will strengthen the capacities and maximise the investments needed to ensure that programmes for children are sustainable in political, technical, managerial and humanitarian terms.

This statement also mentions *politics*. A comparable perspective has been presented by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which has argued that partnerships can promote democratization and help weak voices to be heard. Also, the agency has suggested, partnerships can help in *accurate identification of needs*. These perspectives are embodied in the statement (USAID 1998, p.24) that:

> The complex political economy of the education sector requires participation in and ownership of both the process and the results of problem identification, strategy building, and reform implementation to: 1) arrive at informed and appropriate solutions; 2) achieve consensus, cooperation, and acceptance; 3) fairly and efficiently distribute financing responsibility; and 4) dislodge entrenched interests in the status quo. Experience and research show that educational reform must be demand-driven, and its success depends on the ongoing support and involvement of the stakeholders in this dynamic process. Systemic reform will require that fora, mechanisms, and systems (e.g. … town meetings, parent-teacher-student associations, and NGO umbrella organizations) be put in place to give voice to both the outspoken and seldom-heard groups, to support their development, and to integrate and respond to their concerns.

In some countries, external agencies seek partnerships with local communities in order to circumvent governments which the agencies do not consider sufficiently oriented to the needs of disadvantaged groups and democratic voices. In other cases, external agencies operate through governments, and do not themselves have direct dealings with local communities.

While many governments advocate partnership so that they can gain access to the resources of communities, many communities advocate partnership so that they can gain access to the resources of governments. Only the most prosperous and well-organized communities can by

themselves run entire school systems, and partnerships with larger entities provide ways to secure not only financial but also human and other resources. But the fact that both governments and communities consider partnerships as a way to access the resources of each other is not necessarily a contradiction. Both sides realize that the collaboration permits their reach to be considerably extended; and both sides achieve more through partnership than they would on their own.

From the perspectives of communities, partnership with governments can give further benefits in addition to resources. One concerns public recognition. Partnership with government may strengthen legitimacy, which in turn facilitates institution-building. Communities may also gain access to technical expertise, including teacher training and advice on planning and management.

However, where partnership is initiated, and how far it goes, depends on circumstances. Some communities feel confident of their own goals and resources, and prefer not to enter partnerships with either governments or other agencies because the communities fear that the partnerships would bring interference and loss of control. In other cases, schemes initiated by governments in the name of partnership are in fact efforts to "pass the buck", i.e. to reduce the financial and other burdens on governments by simply decreeing that henceforth certain types and levels of schooling are the responsibility of communities rather than of governments. Lynch (1997, pp.77-78) has observed that:

> Moves towards greater involvement of local communities in the provision of primary education have often been little more than thinly disguised means to move the burden of financing onto the backs of the poor, where such approaches have not included the allocation to those communities of adequate and appropriate resources to fulfil the devolved functions.

This observation raises important issues of equity and of local capacity, which will be considered in subsequent sections of this study.

Box 3: Partnerships and Self-Interest

The fundamental basis for all partnerships is self-interest. Partnerships are only likely to endure if they recognize and build on this fact. As pointed out by Sack (1999, p.12):

> It would be easy to provide a long list of partnerships in a variety of contexts: politics (running mates), business (banker and entrepreneur; co-owners), the family (husband and wife) and social spheres (mother and midwife), sports (coach and player), education (teacher and learner; teachers and Ministry of Education)… No matter how broad the variety, they all have something in common: when all is said and done, the most powerful motive for the partnership is self-interest. People enter partnerships because there is something to be gained from it. Success in partnership is heightened when all concerned are explicitly aware of their own and their partner's interests. Success is also promoted when the partners share a common goal of mutual attainment of each partner's interests, as well as mutual respect for each other's interests.

Historical Perspectives

The concept of community partnership is not new. This becomes especially clear if one takes a perspective of centuries rather than years. Prior to the 20th century, most formal education was provided by private individuals or by religious bodies. The notion that governments should take responsibility for education only grew during the 19th century, reaching a peak in the mid-20th century (Archer 1984; Green 1997). When colonial governments decided to take an increasing role,

in many cases they commenced by aiding the schools provided by missionaries and other religious and voluntary groups (Bereday & Lauwerys 1966; Cummings & Riddell 1994). In this sense, partnership has a long history.

The notion of state responsibility for education was fuelled by various international conventions. For example, the 1948 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights included the clause (Article 26) that elementary education should be compulsory. This was followed by a similar clause in the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child (Principle 7). Flowing from and contributing to such declarations was a view that education could only be made compulsory if the state was willing to provide access free of charge and in sufficient volume. Such sentiments were enshrined in the constitutions of various countries, particularly ones gaining sovereignty during the initial decades following World War II.

Accompanying this perspective, moreover, was a widespread view, particularly in newly-independent countries, that the state should take the lead role in education in order to promote national unity and to underwrite basic standards. Partly for this reason, the authorities in some countries nationalized all non-government schools.

By the 1980s, however, the world had witnessed a fundamental shift. In part this was linked to arguments favoring privatization, which had its stronghold in the economic sphere but flowed over to the social sector. Government operations, it was argued, tended to be inefficient and unresponsive to changing circumstances, and private enterprises were said to be more client-centered (James 1989; Kitaev 1999). For governments in low-income countries, the possibility of greater contributions to education by the private sector held out the prospect of increased sharing of the heavy load of operating education systems. This perspective was reflected in the 1990 Jomtien Declaration. It was echoed three years later in the Delhi Declaration (UNESCO 1994), which emanated from an Education for All summit of leaders in nine high-population countries. The preamble of the Delhi Declaration (clause 2.8) included the statement that:

> education is, and must be, a societal responsibility, encompassing governments, families, communities and non-governmental organizations alike; it requires the commitment and participation of all, in a grand alliance that transcends diverse opinions and political positions.

Although governments still saw themselves as the principal actors, they did not see themselves carrying the burden alone. Widespread perceptions accorded an increasingly prominent place to non-government actors.

The role of the state underwent shifts in relatively prosperous societies as well as in less developed ones. In England, for example, the influential 1967 Plowden Report stressed the importance of parental support for children in schools. A movement of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) gathered strength and focused on cooperation between schools and homes. By the late 1960s many Local Education Authorities were appointing parent governors to schools, and this trend gathered strength in the 1970s. The 1980 Education Act took reform further still, requiring schools throughout the country to have governing bodies which included parents (Kogan et al. 1984).

Parallel developments were evident in other relatively prosperous countries. In Australia and the USA, reforms were based on democratic principles which argued that participants in education systems had the right to greater recognition (Dimmock et al. 1996, p.6). Parental participation also became more prominent in France, Italy and the German Federal Republic. Beattie's (1985) analysis of these countries argued (p.228) that parental participation was attractive to governments because it appeared to be inexpensive but could provide strategic benefits. On the one hand were educational benefits arising from closer liaison between schools and homes; and on

the other hand were political and administrative benefits because problems could be removed from the overcrowded central agenda and resolved, often more effectively, at lower levels.

The shifts in industrialized countries inevitably influenced patterns in less developed ones. Although the reforms in Western Europe, North America and Australasia emphasized parental inputs, attention was also given to links between schools and broader communities (Ryba & Kallen 1975). The contexts were of course substantially different in less developed countries (Houghton & Tregear 1969; King 1976; Sinclair with Lillis 1980; Johnson 1997); but at least some policy-makers considered links between schools and communities to be important for financial, pedagogic, political and other reasons.

However, the 1980s and 1990s brought qualitative shifts in the types of actors involved in the education sectors of less developed countries. As noted above, one particular feature of this changing pattern was the growth in the number and activities of NGOs. Bowden's (1997, p.4) historical review suggested that "the suspicion, even antagonism that has existed towards NGOs over many years is lessening". He added:

> NGOs rely more on government for their funding than ever before, and for achieving basic NGO aims in many areas of development. In addition, bilateral and multilateral agencies are increasingly incorporating the community-oriented approaches of NGOs in their projects.

Bowden observed that this increased cooperation is linked to the fact that all parties seem less certain of their roles, and of the solutions to the problems that they face. Awareness and tolerance of the weaknesses and strengths of NGOs on the one hand, and of governments and aid agencies on the other, is strengthening the dialogue.

Nevertheless, the consequences are not all entirely positive. As Bowden pointed out (p.4), many NGOs are becoming contractors, losing in the process their NGO focus. Approaches to community mobilization, group development, and the concentration on the very poor, Bowden observed, are being replaced by skills in proposal-writing and project management. This suggests that partnerships may not always be entirely beneficial to all concerned.

Commentary on historical perspectives must also include remark on the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and elsewhere. At the time of the 1990 Jomtien conference, the cracks and their implications were only beginning to become apparent. However, trends accelerated rapidly, with the result that half a decade later only a handful of old-style communist regimes remained in power. The collapse of communism brought an even more dramatic change in the role of the state in those countries than in longstanding-capitalist countries. Most governments in former-communist countries had neither the inclination nor the resources to maintain their previously centralized control of education. In most such societies, at least part of the gap was bridged by entrepreneurs. Communities of various kinds also mobilized themselves for self-help initiatives, realizing that if they did not, then the shortfalls in quantity and quality of education would be even more severe (Heyneman 1997; UNICEF 1998a). Some other countries, such as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and the People's Republic of China, remained officially socialist but in practice became heavily dominated by market economics and by strategies in education which resembled those of their former-socialist counterparts (Gannicott 1998). Thus the overall framework at the end of the 1990s gave independent actors, operating either on their own or in partnership with governments, much greater place than had been the case a decade earlier.

Box 4: The Changing Role of the State

The World Bank is among agencies which have noted the changing role of the state and its implications for partnerships. The Bank's 1999 *Education Sector Strategy* observed (pp.2-3) that:

> Governments are becoming less the direct producers and providers of goods and services and more the facilitators and regulators of economic activity…. In education, government still plays a leading role – and most likely always will – especially in the financing of primary and secondary education. But other entities are involved and likely will become increasingly so in the decades ahead…. The vital question now is not whether other-than-government roles in education will expand – they will – but rather how these developments should be incorporated into countries' overall strategies. Partnerships will be crucial.

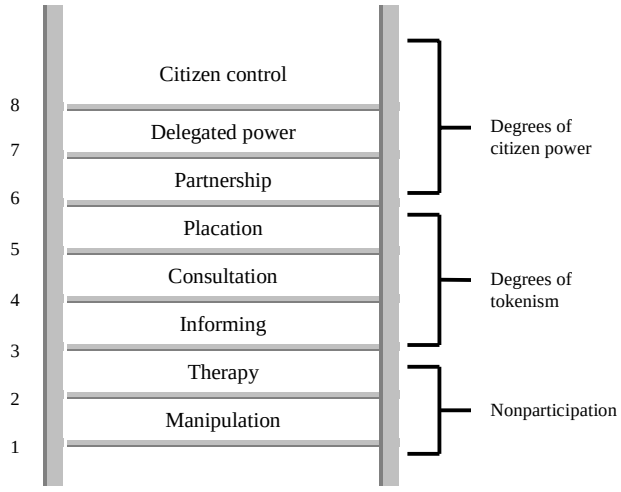
Participation and Partnership: Distinctions and Forms

Ladders and Matrices

As noted above, many analysts consider the concepts of participation and partnership to be related but not synonymous. Partnership is commonly considered a stronger form of activity than participation. However, some analysts have considered participation to be a broad umbrella term which includes several types of activity including partnership.

A seminal paper by Arnstein (1969) in the field of planning presented what she called a ladder of citizen participation (Figure 1). The eight rungs of the ladder were divided into three groups. At the bottom level, manipulation and therapy were really considered to be non-participation. The next three rungs – informing, consultation and placation – were considered degrees of tokenism. Partnership was the label on the sixth rung, which was placed in the group of citizen power. However, it was not considered so strong as delegated power or citizen control.

Figure 1: A Ladder of Citizen Participation



Source: Arnstein (1969), p.217.

The model is useful to the present discussion for two reasons. First, it distinguishes partnership from weaker forms of participation. In these weaker forms, endeavors to promote participation may amount to little more than window dressing. As Arnstein observed (p.216):

> There is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power to affect the outcome of the process.

Arnstein illustrated this point with a French poster (Box 5) drawn to explain a student-worker rebellion. The poster asserted that participation without redistribution of power is a meaningless and frustrating process for the powerless. It allows the powerholders to claim that all sides were considered, but makes it possible for only some of those sides to benefit. As such, it is likely to maintain the status quo.

Box 5: Participation and the Status Quo

I participate; you participate; he participates; we participate; you participate; **they profit.**

Source: Arnstein (1969), p.216.

The second reason why Arnstein's ladder is useful to the present discussion is that it shows the upper limits as well as the lower limits of partnership. Thus rungs seven and eight take citizen power to such extremes that balances are reversed. At the highest rungs of the ladder, governments and other actors are likely to be treated by citizen groups to only token or weaker forms of participation. It is useful to note the possibility of this type of situation in the field of education. Where communities and other agencies running schools are so powerful, the situation cannot really be called partnership any more than it can at the lowest rungs of the ladder. A case can be made in some settings for more government inputs and controls on communities to ensure coherence in education systems and protection of the poor.

The ladder is of course only a simplified model (Fagence 1977, p.125); and Arnstein herself conceded (1969, p.217) that the real world of people and programs might have 150 rungs with less sharp and 'pure' distinctions among them. Nevertheless, the fact that the ladder has proved useful in the specific domain of education has been demonstrated by the work of Shaeffer (1992a, 1992b, 1994) and Reimers (1997).

Shaeffer (1994, pp.16-17) devised a slightly different ladder for analysis of participation in the education sector. His ladder was influenced by Arnstein's, but had seven rather than eight rungs. They were:

7. participation in real decision-making at every stage – problem-identification, feasibility-study, planning, implementation, and evaluation;
6. participation as implementers of delegated powers;
5. participation in the delivery of a service, often as a partner with other actors;
4. involvement through consultation (or feedback) on particular issues;
3. involvement through the contribution (or extraction) of resources, materials, and labor;
2. involvement through attendance and the receipt of information (e.g. at parents' meetings), implying passive acceptance; and
1. the mere use of a service such as a school.

Shaeffer, viewing involvement as a weaker form of activity than participation, commenced three of the four lower rungs on his ladder with the word involvement and only the top rungs with participation. Shaeffer's goal at that time was to analyze participation rather than partnership. However, the word partner did explicitly appear in the fifth rung.

Reimers (1997, p.150) built on this work and sought to make understanding more concrete. He devised a matrix (Table 1), in which aspects of Shaeffer's rungs were placed along the horizontal axis and some specific functions in the education sector were placed along the vertical axis. The matrix could be used in comparison of education systems. However, this would not just be a matter of placing ticks in boxes. Some functions are arguably more important than others, and therefore should not be treated as if they are equal. For example, textbook distribution is largely a mechanical process, whereas curriculum development addresses more deeply the content of education.

Table 1: Matrix of Dimensions and Degrees of Community Participation in Education

Community role/ Education functions	Use of service	Contribution of resources	Attendance at meetings	Consultation on issues	Involvement in delivery	Delegated powers and decision-making	'Real' powers and decision-making at every stage
Designing policy							
Mobilizing resources							
Curriculum development							
Teacher hiring and firing							
Supervision							
Payment of salaries							
Teacher training							
Textbook design							
Textbook distribution							
Certification							
Building and maintenance							

Source: Modified from Reimers (1997), p.150.

Reimers argued that the matrix could be used first to map the starting and ending points in a process of management reform, and second to define the different stages needed to progress in that continuum. For instance, he suggested, it might be unrealistic to expect communities of parents who have traditionally lacked a voice in the conduct of school affairs to play a significant role in school organization just because they have been given a checkbook to pay the teachers' salaries. However, transferring this function to communities might be a sensible starting point to increase the competencies of local communities and their sense of efficacy, and gradually to change the skills and attitudes of parents, teachers and administrators.

Examples of Application

El Salvador

Reimers (1997) used his framework to analyze a reform in El Salvador called *Educación con Participación de la Comunidad* (Education with Participation of the Community) or EDUCO. The model was based on a community self-help initiative that had operated during a 1980-92 civil war. During the war, communities had realized that they could not expect assistance from the government, and had hired their own teachers for children in schools that had been closed. In 1988, about 1,000 such community groups were operating. However, the system was unstable because communities had no formal contracts with teachers, and teacher assignments were frequently interrupted when the associations' funds dried up (World Bank 1994).

EDUCO was launched in 1991 as a way to expand access to preschool and junior primary education in rural areas. Initially, the primary education part covered only the first three grades. In the first year of the scheme, six experimental projects were established. Parents were organized into *Asociaciónes Comunales para la Educación* (Community Education Associations, or ACEs), which were legal entities able to receive government funds in exchange for provision of services. The Ministry gave each ACE enough funds to hire a teacher and purchase limited supplies, helped with organization, and provided training. By 1992, 958 ACEs operated 1,126 classrooms for 45,000 students in all 14 departments in the country. Plans were devised not only to spread the model to further parts of the country but also to expand the EDUCO schools to all six primary grades (World Bank 1994, p.2).

Reimers observed (1997, p.158) that results concerning participation were mixed. Community associations successfully managed the responsibilities delegated to them by the Ministry; but in EDUCO sections that were opened in existing schools, the community associations were to a great extent managed by school principals. Community associations in EDUCO schools played a larger role than their counterparts in traditional schools in providing materials and supplies; but schools of both types were equally likely to have parents' associations, and the nature of supervision by the Ministry was similar. Reimers added (p.160) that:

> The EDUCO experience also teaches us that school autonomy and local participation are not panaceas and that they are outcomes of insufficiently understood processes more than they are conditions that can be produced by decree. The fact that spaces are opened for participation does not mean that those spaces will be occupied, and that the resulting quality of education will be better.

Nevertheless, other evaluations have shown significant effects of community ownership on teacher motivation, and some effects on academic achievement (Jimenez & Sawada 1998; Sawada 1999). The EDUCO model could be considered one of quite strong partnership, because significant powers were granted to the communities while retaining government involvement and financing.

Papua New Guinea

In a very different part of the world, a reform which was in some ways similar to that in El Salvador was embarked upon in Papua New Guinea. As in El Salvador, a significant part of the context was scarcity of government resources and a desire to increase enrolment rates, though the model did not arise from civil war.

The reform arose out of a 1991 Education Sector Review which had been critical of the education system's inadequate coverage, low retention rates, and irrelevant curricula (Tetaga 1993). Despite its relatively small population of 4.5 million, Papua New Guinea is a diverse society with over 800 indigenous languages. Prior to the reform, some communities had operated vernacular

preschools on a self-help basis, but the whole of the mainstream school system used English as the medium of instruction. The reform aimed to increase the scope for vernacular-medium instruction, and also to lengthen the cycle of basic education.

Papua New Guinea's national education system was created in 1970 by bringing together the various separate education systems operated by churches and other bodies (Smith 1975). The reform gave the government a stronger role, and in this respect was a type of centralization. The government took over responsibility for macro-level planning, and also paid teachers on a unified salary scale. However, churches and other voluntary bodies still played major consultative and organizational roles, and thus became partners in the unified system. In 1995, for example, only 47.0 per cent of primary schools were owned by the government, and almost all the others were formally owned by churches even though they operated within the public education system.

Strong traditions of community participation were also evident at the school level. Each school was required to have a Board of Management with community members, and communities were responsible for major parts of the physical infrastructure of their schools.

Prior to the 1990s reform, the structure was 1+6+4+2, i.e. one year of preschool education, six years of primary schooling, four years of junior secondary, and two years of senior secondary schooling. The reform grouped the year of preschool education with the first two years of primary education, and called it the elementary level. The next stage was six years of primary education, leading to Grade 8. Students who continued took two years of junior secondary and two years of senior secondary schooling. This gave a basic structure of 3+6+2+2. The architects of the system envisaged that for some time the old and new systems would operate in parallel, with one phasing in and the other phasing out.

Table 2 shows the distribution of powers and responsibilities for elementary education following the reform. Most striking was the fact that communities and agencies (meaning churches or other sponsoring bodies) could decide on the language of instruction. This was consistent with the previous arrangement for vernacular preschools, but was a sharp change from previous practice concerning the mainstream school system. In the previous system of vernacular preschools, most teachers were selected and paid by the communities and agencies. In the new elementary school system, communities and agencies are responsible for selection of the teachers, subject to approval at higher levels, but finance for salaries is received from the national government.

Table 2: Distribution of Powers and Responsibility for Elementary Education, Papua New Guinea

National government	*Provincial Education Boards (PEBs)*	*Provincial governments and agencies*	*Communities and agencies*
Teacher training	Oversee developments at the provincial level	Local teacher training	Establish, own and manage schools through committees
Teacher certification and registration	Identify and select teachers for training	Technical assistance to schools	Assist curriculum development in areas such as traditional culture, morals and ethics
School registration	Ensure that school sites are appropriate	Awareness	Select teachers for training (subject to PEB approval)
Curriculum guidelines	Acquit funds provided for curriculum development, training and materials	Administration	Decide on language of instruction
Production and supply of curriculum materials		Planning	Security for school Infrastructure
Supervision and guidance		Infrastructure development	
Teachers' salaries			

Source: Papua New Guinea (1994a).

The planners of the reform placed considerable stress on community roles. For example, one document (Papua New Guinea 1994b, p.4) stated that:

> Community involvement will become easier. Those communities that are demanding expansion can much more easily provide bush material classrooms and other needed infrastructure for the village based Elementary Schools…. Also, [effective involvement of] communities in building and managing the educational solutions to problems that they have been pressing the government to resolve for them is likely to ease some of the political pressure. Participation builds ownership and a better understanding of the true nature of the educational problems facing the country.

However, initial evaluation suggested that this type of statement was over-idealized and simplistic. In some parts of the country, the early years brought *decline* in participation. Some communities which had previously been willing to operate vernacular preschools now felt that such operation was the responsibility of the government (Institute of National Affairs 1997, p.22).

Nevertheless, significant elements of partnership on Shaeffer's scale were evident in the fact that communities could recruit teachers, subject to higher level approval, and that government financing for salaries and supplies was matched by community financing of buildings and land. Also, significant partnership was evident in the choice of language for instruction, and then in the development of materials for the curriculum (Josephs 2000, pp.22-26). The model showed clear domains in which government and communities worked together for a common purpose.

Community Partnerships in Governance

Allied to the above discussion are questions concerning structures for school governance. These structures are of considerable importance as vehicles for community partnership at the local level. Questions may particularly focus on the size, composition, and powers of these bodies, and on the ways in which community partnerships are actualized in practice.

To address these questions, it is useful to consider models of several types. One model is a national education system which gives legal status to school governing bodies. A second model has Parents' Associations which do not have such strong legal status but which can nevertheless be important within public education systems. A third model covers embraces clusters, village education committees and similar bodies, each of which may be responsible for several schools within a particular area.

Legally-incorporated School Boards

The Papua New Guinean system deserves elaboration because it is a good example of a model in which the law requires schools to have governing bodies and sets out aspects of the structure and functions of these bodies. The basic model has operated since 1970 and thus has had time to mature. The reforms of the 1990s did not change the requirements for school governing bodies.

The law which set up the national education system required each primary school to have a Board of Management with at least five members who were "broadly representative of the community served by the school" (Papua New Guinea 1970, Section 71.1). Each Board was required to include the head teacher and another teacher's representative, and could include representatives of the church or other agency operating the school provided these people did not form a majority. The law also required Boards to meet at least once a term. These provisions were largely repeated in the 1983 and 1995 Education Acts which updated the 1970 one. Boards were made responsible for setting the general philosophies of their schools; planning; construction and maintenance of classrooms, teachers' houses and ancillary facilities; enrolment of pupils; and discipline of students, including punishment by suspension or expulsion.

One survey of the composition of 565 Boards of Management (Bray 1988, p.158), representing nearly a quarter of the total in the country, showed that only 1.6 per cent had fewer than five members, 34.2 per cent had five to eight members, 36.8 per cent had nine or 10 members, and 27.4 per cent had 11 or more members. In general, communities did not seem to consider it necessary for Board members to have been to school themselves, and a large percentage of members were illiterate. The proportion of members with wage-earning jobs, even excluding the head teachers and the teachers' representatives, was far higher than their proportion in the population as a whole; but many Boards included subsistence farmers, some of whom were chairpersons. Many boards also made careful efforts to secure geographic representation. Where schools served several villages, for example, Board members were commonly selected to ensure that each location was represented. This procedure did not always operate smoothly, and complaints were frequently voiced that representatives from distant villages did not attend meetings. Urban schools sometimes made deliberate efforts to ensure representation of each of the main ethnic groups resident in the area served by the school, but this tended to be organized less carefully. Females were underrepresented. Among 541 schools giving data, 65.4 per cent indicated that they had no female Board members, and 21.6 per cent indicated that they had only one female member.

Among the functions listed by the law, the construction and maintenance of buildings were taken most seriously by the majority of Boards (see also Preston 1991, p.283). Indeed many Board members were unaware of the other functions. One reason why the Boards were particularly aware of their responsibility for buildings and facilities was that they were reminded by the teachers. The staff may be less enthusiastic about encouraging their Boards to assume responsibility for enrolment of pupils and discipline, for teachers commonly prefer to take on these duties themselves.

The decision to make Boards of Management responsible for buildings and facilities has several important consequences. First, it relieves the government of expenditure, and thus spreads the financial burden. Second, it increases diversity between schools, for some communities have more resources and some Boards take their duties more seriously than others. This diversity can cause discontent among teachers, some of whom may consider themselves poorly treated, and it also increases imbalances between urban and rural schools. Third, the policy allows the physical plant of the schools to mirror the communities much more closely than would otherwise be the case. If governments were responsible for buildings, they would probably employ standard designs and take little account of the local availability of particular building materials or the traditions of specific areas. Because of the present policy, many classrooms are built of the same materials as their neighboring village houses, and they exhibit considerable variety around the country. Moreover, the villagers can readily engage in construction, which is an area of their own expertise. Consultation with villagers on curriculum and textbooks is less easy or productive because they are not areas of local expertise.

Concerning the general philosophies of the schools, much is of course determined by educational traditions, the social and economic framework, and the national and provincial governments. Nevertheless, Boards can contribute in religious matters. They can organize pastors to provide religious instruction, and they can request prayers to be held at the beginning and end of each day. Although they are not able to hire or fire teachers, they are allowed to indicate the types of individuals they would like to be appointed and to recommend specific persons. Examples are easy to find in which Boards have requested teachers of particular religions, or have requested the removal of teachers who have abused their positions through drunkenness, inappropriate sexual behavior, or other anti-social practices. Thus the Boards can discipline teachers and perform a role which in isolated villages would be impossible for the provincial authorities.

The Papua New Guinean model may usefully be compared and contrasted with models in other countries. In Kenya, for example, the law states that each full (eight-grade) primary school should have a committee of 13 people: one parents' representative for each grade, two District Education Board representatives, two sponsor's representatives, and the head teacher (Kenya 1999).

Following a fairly common model, but not made explicit in Papua New Guinea, the head teachers are required to be secretaries of their committees. This arrangement ensures that the school's voice may be clearly heard, and that the minutes and other records are kept by someone who is competent for such a task. The arrangement also ensures that the head teacher does not become chairperson, which might be considered excessive dominance.

A 1998 survey of 187 schools in all of Kenya's eight provinces found that school committees were generally functioning, and did hold regular meetings. The report indicated that local communities did not feature highly on the head teachers' agenda during their routine management activities. However, it added (Kenya 1999, p.74) that:

> Participation of parents/communities in the management of the school … is crucial especially as the parents contribute a large proportion towards the cost of primary education. Schools may have very little choice but to hold frequent meetings, if only to discuss financing of the recurrent expenditure of primary schools

Other Kenyan studies (e.g. Juma et al. 1999) have expressed concern about the fact that in many schools the role of the community seems mainly to be restricted to provision of finance and facilities.

The Kenyan government, with assistance from the UK Department for International Development, has engaged in a major program of training and support for primary school committees. Initial evaluations of this program have already shown substantial impact. It has been reported, for example, that many more school committees now have an input into school development planning, and that this has improved the feelings of ownership and community involvement (Herriot et al. 1999). This is partly because head teachers have been trained in planning, and in management principles such as consultation and accountability. Communities are said to trust their head teachers more, and to have a better understanding of the roles of different actors. Training workshops have included sensitization on gender issues, and have also given head teachers tools for reaching out to their communities.

In both Papua New Guinea and Kenya, the operation of school boards is underpinned by legal requirements. This is clearly important; but analysis in other countries (see e.g. Gershberg 1999a for commentary on Mexico) shows that it is far from sufficient. As noted at the beginning of this study, fundamental ingredients for effective partnerships include self-interest and mutual respect. In both Papua New Guinea and Kenya, the schools could generally perceive benefits from involvement of community members; and the community members could generally perceive benefits from the schools. However, such relationships cannot be taken for granted. Whereas teachers are salaried employees who can be required to allocate time to meetings, community members usually donate their time voluntarily. In Kenya, improvements in the operation of school committees was greatly assisted by resource inputs from the external donor. Such resource inputs are not available in all contexts; but the fact that the Papua New Guinean model has been operating reasonably well since 1970 shows that models can be established and then maintained on a long-term basis as part of the general culture of institutions.

Box 6: School-Level Partnership in Thailand

When they are well organized, school committees can be a very important vehicle for partnership at the institutional level. Wat Sai Ma Primary School in Thailand provides an example.

The school was established in a Buddhist temple in the 1930s. Initially it catered only for the first three grades, but it gradually expanded to cover pre-school, primary and junior secondary levels.

Wat Sai Ma school has a standard committee of the type found in nearly all of Thailand's primary schools. It is comprised of parents, teachers and benefactors, and meets four times a year. In addition, the school has six sub-committees, each with 12 to 24 members, which meet twice a year. These sub-committees are for academic affairs, activities, personnel, finance, buildings, and community relations. The sub-committees discuss issues identified by the school, and recommend proposals to the school committee. Members are volunteers or invitees from the community, and each sub-committee has a teacher as secretary.

The academic and personnel sub-committees promote community participation by soliciting suggestions to enhance the curriculum, recruiting volunteer teachers for co-curricular activities, and raising funds for equipment. The activities and community relations committees strengthen the community's faith in the school through public information about school activities, visiting community leaders and benefactors, and encouraging the active involvement of the community on Children's Day, Teachers' Day and in sports and other competitions. The buildings committee has been responsible for the fund mobilization campaign which involved 74 donors, each credited with construction of a specified number of square feet of a new building. The finance committee identifies funding sources and projects such as concreting of the temple grounds to benefit both school and community, and the yearly donation of 10 bicycles to lower secondary students from distant homes.

This school has a successful partnership with strong leadership and cooperation between the principal, teachers, parents and other community members. The actors respect each other, and operate in balanced harmony. It is the sort of model which governments can promote through training, encouragement and support.

Source: Martin (1996), pp.30-31.

Parents' Associations

While school committees usually have some parents who are members, the committees are necessarily limited in size. Many schools have larger bodies which bring most or all parents together. In some countries they are simply called Parents' Associations (PAs), though in many countries, particularly anglophone ones, they are called Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) to show a specific link between parents and teachers. In francophone countries they are commonly called *Associations des Parents d'Elèves* (APEs). In some parts of the Philippines they are called Parent-Teacher-Community Associations (PTCAs) – a term which shows a broader base and which emphasizes that all persons in the community, rather than just parents, are welcome to join.

Parents' associations usually have their own executive committees to make decisions on activities and overall operations. In systems which have separate school committees, conflict can arise between the two bodies. Gershberg (1999a, p.72) has highlighted this problem in Mexico, and Wolf et al. (1999, p.28) have made similar remarks about Malawi. Concerning the latter, school-level personnel interviewed by Wolf et al. made many comments on this difficulty. For example:

- "School committee and PTA are quite similar. They sometimes collide on what they think their responsibilities are."
- "The PTA and the school committee conflicted. Both thought it was their responsibility to collect money."
- "There were clashes between the PTA and the school committee so the school committee disbanded the PTA. Here the school committee wants to be the PTA."

As one interviewee remarked, a key element for avoiding this type of conflict is a clear, written statement of respective roles, powers and duties. In most systems where such statements exist, parents' associations are seen as broader bodies which operationalize decisions made by the school committees and other authorities.

Martin (1996) has highlighted tensions that can arise in the membership and operation of parents' associations. In some systems, membership is only granted to parents who pay annual fees. This is seen as a way not only to raise revenue but also to increase the sense of commitment among members. In other systems, membership is defined more loosely. All parents are considered to be members if they have children studying in the schools. Yet in some contexts, Martin points out (p.54), automatic membership is not only unappreciated but even resented. Parents and other community members may feel that they are considered little more than cheap labor to contribute to their schools at the behest of small groups which operate at the center and make decisions which affect the majority.

This matter leads to questions about the role of parents' associations. In some settings they are indeed seen by governments and by teachers as simply a resource to assist the operation of the school. In these settings, the element of partnership is not strong because it is too one-sided. In other settings, parents' associations have much wider roles. Much depends not only on cultures but also on structures. Ideally, schools have committees of some sort (either legally-mandated school committees or executive committees of parents' associations), but those committees have mechanisms for reaching out to the broader bodies of parents and community members both to listen to their views and to harness human, financial, and other resources.

In Myanmar, the government is working with an NGO called the Community-based Educational Development Association to train PTAs. The project aims not only to help PTAs to operate more effectively, but also to extend their role from fund-raising and maintenance and construction of buildings. Under the project, PTAs collect baseline data with the help of enumerators, set annual enrollment and retention targets in consultation with teachers and head teachers, conduct house-to-house advocacy with parents and unenrolled children, manage the construction of latrines and water-supply systems for schools, and provide incentives to encourage needy children to participate in school (Bentzen 1997, p.6). The project is in one sense a centralized initiative; but it promotes partnership at the school level, and in the sense that it empowers communities is decentralizing. It is another example of the sort of initiative which would be worth trying in other countries.

One beneficial aspect of parents' associations is that they seem to be natural bodies with fairly clearly defined membership bases. Kemmerer (1990, p.381) has pointed out that school catchment areas do not always coincide with traditional community boundaries. In such circumstances, residents of the catchment area may have to overcome older rivalries to serve the school. Parents are a good place to begin the process of community-building, because they may be assumed to have a natural interest in the education of their children.

In some settings, moreover, governments actively promote the process of community-building by making financial grants to parents' associations. This is in marked contrast to the more common situation in which the associations are expected to be bodies which raise their own resources to make up for shortfalls in government provision. For example, in Sindh Province of Pakistan, the government decreed in 1992 that each school should form a PTA. To assist the associations to conduct meaningful activities, in 1998 the provincial government distributed 423 million rupees (US$10 million) to 27,000 primary schools (Dean 1999; Merchant 1999). The resources were provincial government counterpart funds in a project assisted by the World Bank, and were designated for repairs and purchase of furniture and educational materials. At the same time, the government provided training for PTAs to assist them with organization and management. An exercise of this magnitude naturally encountered some problems; but it was an instructive

illustration of an attempt to adjust the balance of control in a system which had been very bureaucratic and had given communities little room for independent decision-making.

Box 7: Cooperation to Improve Community Links in Kenya

In 1994, a group of partners came together to launch the Mombasa School Improvement Programme (MSIP). Evaluation in 1999 showed that the project had achieved far-reaching results, and that much of the success could be attributed to improved linkages between schools and communities (Anderson & Nderitu 1999).

The initial memorandum of understanding identified three parties to the agreement which set up the project:

- the Municipal Council of Mombasa (MCM),
- the Aga Khan Education Service-Kenya (AKES-K), and the
- the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF).

The bulk of funding came from or via the AKF, while the AKES-K implemented the project in conjunction with the MCM. During the period 1995-98, the project moved through three phases to serve 50 primary schools in the public sector.

Even at the formal contractual level, the project was the result of government-NGO partnership, for the MCM is an arm of the government and the AKES-K is an NGO. However, partnership went much beyond this, and in particular included communities. The project employed a Community Development Officer, who worked as a bridge between schools and communities. He held multiple meetings with groups and individuals, showing how parents and other community members could support the schools and how the schools could work with communities. The results included expanded quantity and improved quality of education in the Mombasa region. The 1999 evaluation showed that the partnerships at several levels had achieved major successes.

Clusters and Village Education Committees

In some parts of the world, formal bodies oversee several schools rather than single institutions. Some may serve several villages in some form of cluster arrangement, and others serve single villages that have multiple schools. In many cases, these bodies also play an important role in promoting partnership between governments and communities.

Clusters

Some countries have long histories of grouping of schools for various purposes and under various labels. In Bolivia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Peru such groups have been called nucleos, whereas in India they have been called complexes, in Mozambique they have been called Zonas de Influencia Pedagogica (ZIPs), and in Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand they have been called clusters (Bray 1987; Rivarola & Fuller 1999). In some settings, these groupings have primarily had an administrative purpose within the government hierarchy, and have had little to do with community partnership. In other settings, they have been a vehicle for school-community collaboration.

Cambodia is among the countries which developed a school cluster system during the 1990s (Dykstra & Kucita 1997). Several models were established in different provinces. One model was established by the government in conjunction with UNICEF, and other models were established in conjunction with a range of NGOs. A common objective of all the models was to redress imbalances in education by grouping schools that were located near each other: strong schools were grouped with weak schools in such a way that the latter could benefit from the former. Clusters also acted as a focal point for training and for sharing of resources. The National Cluster School Committee (1995, p.2) explained that:

> A cluster … is a grouping of 6-9 primary schools for administrative and educational purposes. It is an organization of schools in the same vicinity … for the benefit of sharing available resources such as teaching and learning materials, facilities and staff so that the access for all children and the educational quality of all schools within the cluster are improved.

This document added (p.3) that the innovation implied a degree of decentralization and could permit strong local participation in decision making. The vehicle for local participation is the Cluster Committee. The standard composition of each committee is:

- village chief (honorary chair),
- cluster school head,
- head teachers of each school in the cluster,
- teacher representatives from each school,
- a representative of the PTAs,
- the head of the cluster technical committee, and
- a Buddhist monk.

The cluster system has promoted community partnerships in several ways. First, clusters have provided guidance and support for PTAs and other community bodies in member schools; and second, the cluster system has been a vehicle for community groups to contribute to arenas which are wider than their own institutions. The fact that the standard Cluster Committee includes a Buddhist monk reflects an explicit effort to involve an important component of the non-school community in addition to parents of school-going children.

Experience with the cluster scheme in Cambodia has naturally been varied in different parts of the country. Yet although some clusters have worked more smoothly than others, the scheme is generally considered to have achieved substantial successes in promoting infrastructure for schooling and in improving the quality of education. Those responsible for the clusters also state that the system has assisted in recruiting children for schools. For example, Dykstra & Kucita report (1997, pp.10-11) of one case in which:

> parents from the floating fishing village on Tonle Sap Lake tried to organise their own schools but could only furnish classrooms and teachers (whom they recruited) for about 25% of the school-age children. They learned of cluster schools from other parents in the town when they came to market, and afterwards journeyed for two days to the provincial education office to insist that someone come to see their community and their children and help them to plan floating cluster schools. By the time the officials arrived a few months later, they had formed their own cluster school PTA even though schools were lacking and all members themselves were illiterate.

Experience with cluster models having longer histories shows that structures need to evolve over time. Needs change, contexts change, and the individuals operating systems change. Partly for these reasons, the nuclearisation schemes in Peru and Costa Rica which were launched in the 1970s did not survive the early 1980s (Bray 1987). Similarly, the cluster scheme in Sri Lanka was abandoned in the late 1980s. That is not necessarily problematic, because initiatives may serve particular purposes at particular times, and should not be adhered to if the tides of history have brought new needs and different emphases. At the same time, cluster schemes have been sustained in other countries. In Thailand, for example, clusters were initiated in the 1950s and in 1980 made part of the official administrative hierarchy (Kunarak & Saranyajaya 1986). Detailed case studies (e.g. Wheeler et al. 1992) show that the clusters can strengthen government and community partnerships by providing a forum for school and community representatives to learn from each other. Clusters can also be vehicles for training and for sharing of resources.

Village Education Committees

One of the most instructive models of committees which govern multiple schools in single villages is found in India and is known as Panchayati Raj. The roots of this system go back several centuries, but it was given prominence in 1992 when the national constitution was amended to strengthen the system. The 73rd amendment covered rural structures, and the 74th amendment covered their urban counterparts (India 1992). A panchayat is an institution of local self-government in rural areas, and is the counterpart of the municipality in urban areas. The constitutional amendments set out the size and composition of the membership of panchayats and municipalities, and decreed that panchayats should play a major role in the organization, provision and supervision of primary and secondary schooling. Municipalities were also expected to have educational functions, but their roles were not so far-reaching.

As one would expect, the implementation of the Panchayati Raj system varies considerably within India. In part this is a function of diversity of state-level legislation, though wide variations also exist within states (Mahajan 1998). In Andhra Pradesh State, the official hierarchy of administrative bodies has five tiers leading up to the District level, with School Committees at the bottom, and Panchayat Education Committees occupying the next tier. Table 3 sets out the official framework for the composition of these bodies. At most levels, at least some women must be included in the committees. Some members are elected, while others are nominated and yet others occupy posts in an official capacity.

Table 3: Official Hierarchy of Education Committees in Andhra Pradesh State, India

	No. of Members in Category	Designation	Method of Selection
School Committee (SC)			
Parents, including 1 mother	3	Members	Nomination
Senior-most teacher	1	Convenor	Seniority
Panchayat Education Committee (PEC)			
Sarpanch	1	–	Elected
Senior-most teacher	1	Convenor	Seniority
Parents of school children (in multiples of 2 if there is more than 1 school in the panchayat, including 1 mother)	2	Members	Nomination
Parents of nonformal education students, including 1 mother	1	Member	Nomination
Mandal Education Committee (MEC)			
Mandal President	1	Chairman	Elected
Mandal Education Officer	1	Convenor	Official
From among PEC members, including 1 mother	2	Members	Nomination
Parents from the Mandal, including 1 mother	3	Members	Nomination
Teachers from the Mandal	2	Members	Nomination
Zilla Education Committee (ZEC)			
Chairperson, Zilla Parishad	1	Chairman	Elected
District Collector	1	Vice-Chairman	Official
Members of Legislative Assembly	2	Members	Nomination
Members of Zilla Parishad	2	Members	Nomination
Parents from among PEC members, including 1 mother	2	Members	Nomination
Teachers	3	Members	Nomination
Student who secured highest marks in Class IX examination in the District	1	Member	Merit
District Planning & Education Board (DPEP)			
District Collector	1	Chairman	Official
Nominee of District Planning Committee	1	Member	Nomination
Educational Experts	3	Members	Official
Principal, District Institute of Education & Training	1	Member	Official
Teacher	2	Members	Nomination
District Education Officer	1	Member	Official

Source: Kumar (1998), pp.32-33.

Table 4 provides more information on this system by indicating the functions and powers of the various committees. To some extent, of course, each level liaises with the next higher level, and the higher levels oversee the lower levels. However, the Panchayat Education Committees (PECs) have a clear role in setting school calendars, monitoring attendance of children and teachers, creating and maintaining infrastructure, promoting enrollment, budgeting, and various other managerial functions.

Table 4: Functions and Powers of Education Committees in Andhra Pradesh State, India

		SC	PEC	MEC	ZEC	DPEB
1.	Determine school calendar and times		*			
2.	Monitor attendance of children and teachers	*	*			
3.	Periodical review of children's performance	*				
4.	Create and maintain infrastructure	*	*			
5.	Implement school nutrition, mid-day meal, health care and immunization	*	*			
6.	Sports activities			*		
7.	Science exhibitions		*			
8.	Cultural activities		*	*	*	
9.	Recruit, appoint and fix service conditions and emoluments of teachers and disciplinary control over them		*			
10.	Sanction leave, transfers and disciplinary action against staff and teachers		*	*		
11.	Promotional activities including enrollment drive, parents' meetings, measures to reduce drop-out rate	*	*	*		
12.	Undertake and monitor adult literacy and nonformal education programs		*		*	
13.	Training of local teachers, PEC members and volunteers					*
14.	Oversee the functioning of teachers' centers					*
15.	Accord permission to start new schools			*	*	
16.	Levy education cess		*		*	
17.	Manage the education fund and prepare accounts		*	*	*	
18.	Prepare budget			*		
19.	Prepare annual school report		*			
20.	Prepare annual Education-for-All report		*			
21.	Plan schools and other types of education in the district					*
22.	Recommend suspension of ration cards of parents who do not send their children to school		*			
23.	Administer high schools and evaluate their performance				*	
24.	Arrange distribution of textbooks					*
25.	Review the school calendar					*
26.	Oversee implementation of vocational and audio-visual education					*

Source: Modified from Kumar (1998), pp.34-35.

The next question, of course, concerns implementation of these official requirements. Although the 73rd Constitutional Amendment was only approved in 1992, a considerable body of research has been accumulated both on the Panchayati Raj institutions which were established prior to the constitutional amendment and on changes since that time (e.g. Dhar 1997; Nuna 1997; Annigeri 1998; Tyagi 1999). In many settings, increase of responsibility at the school and village level has not been accompanied by adequate resources; and decentralization always brings with it the possibility of lower-level units making the sorts of decision which higher-level units do not support. However, the reform did reflect and require a significant change in thinking. Even in the initial years it seemed to bring some successful forms of partnership in which governments and communities worked together to advance both the quantity and the quality of education, though longstanding traditions could not be completely changed with ease and speed.

Community Financing

Issues concerning the sources and control of finance have already been mentioned, and underlie almost all dimensions of community partnership in education. This section begins by considering the possible spectrum of situations with different balances in partnerships but sometimes with hidden similarities. It then turns to controversies concerning fees for primary education. The third part addresses other ways to raise resources; and the fourth part links financing to control, pointing out that community provision of resources does not always provide commensurate control over how those resources are utilized.

Contrasting Situations but Hidden Similarities

Analytically, one may envisage a spectrum of situations with different balances of funding. At one end of the spectrum are systems in which all resources come from the government and no resources are contributed by communities. At the other end are systems in which all resources come from communities with nothing from governments. Deeper scrutiny may show that this model is over-simplified, but it is a useful starting point for consideration.

In general, systems which are fully funded by governments have low degrees of community partnership, though communities may be invited to assist in the operationalization of policies and plans determined by the government. Conversely, systems which are fully funded by communities commonly have low degrees of government partnership, though governments may insist that school managers meet certain requirements in maximum class size, minimum teachers' qualifications, etc.. From the perspective of partnership, therefore, the most instructive situations are ones in which governments provide some resources and communities provide others. Particularly common are models in which governments provide some or all of the teachers' salaries, and communities provide land, buildings and other facilities.

Within these intermediate categories of shared resourcing, many variations may exist. For example, systems may be basically government-operated but with substantial community inputs; or they may be basically community-operated but with substantial government inputs. Often it is necessary to scrutinize actual patterns rather than to rely on labels. This may be demonstrated by contrasting Cambodia and Indonesia:

- In *Cambodia*, the dominant provision of primary education is normally described as a public system. However, research in 1997/98 showed that within this so-called public system, the government provided only 12 per cent of total costs. Households and communities met 60 per cent of total costs, while politicians met 10 per cent, and NGOs and external aid agencies met 18 per cent (Bray 1999, p.42). Many of the community contributions were solicited on a village basis, in which community members were taxed and made other inputs even if they had no children currently in the schools. Contributions were also made by Parents' Associations, working as collective bodies. Some village leaders had become expert at soliciting contributions from community members who were resident abroad. In these cases, the community was defined in terms of historical and emotional ties rather than place of residence.
- In *Indonesia*, over 3 million pupils at the primary level, representing over 10 per cent of the total, attend privately-owned Islamic institutions known as *madrasah ibtidaiyah* (World Bank 1998, p.123). Although nominally private, in 1995/96 these institutions received 71.3 per cent of their income from the national and regional governments (Bray & Thomas 1998, p.41). The other 28.7 per cent was provided by families, communities, and the foundations which operated the schools. In this situation, communities were defined according to a combination of religion and place of residence.

This pair of situations shows the danger that labels may be misleading. Although Cambodia ostensibly has a public system, in practice most inputs come from non-government sources; and although this part of the Indonesian system is ostensibly private, in practice the bulk of inputs come from government sources.

One question to be explored further, however, concerns the extent to which in the domain of financing the distinctions between governments, households and communities are real. Governments of course derive incomes from many sources, including royalties on minerals, government-owned enterprises, and foreign aid. Yet the main source of income for most governments is taxation. Again, taxes may be of many kinds, including taxes on businesses and property. However, in the majority of countries most taxation income is obtained from individuals and households. In this sense, some government revenues are ultimately derived from the same sources as the non-government revenues: governments gain their incomes from individuals and households, and communities gain their incomes from individuals and households.

Table 5 shows data on taxation revenues by region as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Although considerable variation exists within groups of countries, taxation levels in industrialized countries are generally higher than those in less developed countries. In turn, this means that governments in industrialized countries are able to pay large sums for primary and other levels of education, and are less in need of direct household and community inputs. Less developed countries, by contrast, tend to have less sophisticated structures for taxation. This means that their governments are less prosperous, and that the governments are unable to invest large amounts in education.

Table 5: Taxation Revenue as a Percentage of GDP, 1997

Group of countries	Taxation as % of GDP
High human development	26
Medium human development	13
Low human development	11

Source: United Nations Development Programme (1999), pp.184-187.

The importance of considering taxation may again be illustrated by reference to Cambodia. While in Cambodia the bulk of investments in primary education are provided directly by households and communities rather than by the government, Cambodia has a very inefficient system of taxation. Cambodia's ratio of taxation to GDP was just 6.0 per cent in 1994 (Asian Development Bank 1996, p.33). The regional average (for 26 Developing Member Countries of the Asian Development Bank) was 14.4 per cent, and figures for specific countries included 20.2 per cent in Malaysia and 17.2 per cent in Thailand. Thus in Cambodia, households and communities may have been paying large direct amounts for primary education, but they were paying small indirect amounts.

Situations similar to those in Cambodia may also be found in other settings. In Uganda, for example, households and communities in the late 1980s and early 1990s met between 65 and 90 per cent of the total costs of primary education (World Bank 1993, p.35); but that was chiefly because overall government operations had practically collapsed, which in turn meant that very few taxes were being collected. Communities realized that if they wanted schools, they would have to help themselves – perhaps investing directly some or all of the resources which under other circumstances they would have had to pay in taxation. Comparable comments might be made about such countries as Chad and Somalia (Esquieu & Péano 1994; Shartz 1998).

This set of statements does not imply that community financing is necessarily an appropriate alternative to taxation. One major purpose of most taxation systems is to extract greater proportions of revenue from the rich than the poor. This, in the language of taxation, is "progressive", and spreads the burden of education over populations and even generations in what is arguably a more desirable way. Community financing, by contrast, is more likely to be regressive – i.e. to demand proportionately more from the poor as a percentage of total incomes than from the rich. Also, as a source of finance, taxation is better suited than community financing to long-term investments of the types needed in the education sector. As such, one major recommendation might be that governments with weak taxation systems strengthen them. Meanwhile, however, in some settings community financing operates as an alternative to taxation.

An alternative possibility is one in which the structure of government is strong and far-reaching. In some settings, such structures include micro-level as well as district, regional and national governments. In these cases, the boundaries between community and government may be blurred. This was especially the case in old-style communist systems, where the distinction between a commune and a community derived from semantics and/or the political orientations of the observer more than from identifiable structures.

This point may be illustrated by patterns in the People's Republic of China. The 1990s brought weakening of government structures because of political changes and the advent of the market economy, but up to the late-1970s communes were still an important part of the structure of governance and also played a major role in the financing of education (Robinson 1988). Communes were subsequently abolished in a formal political sense and to some extent replaced by informal structures. Thus many communities in China employed their own teachers, known as *minban* teachers. Recently this term has been broadened to include teachers in private schools; but at the primary level the majority of *minban* teachers during the 1980s and 1990s were employed by communities rather than by private entrepreneurs. In the mid-1990s, 40 per cent of all primary teachers, and 50 per cent of rural ones, were *minban* teachers (Cheng 1997, p.400). Some of these were in rich communities, but many were in poor ones. Related to this, a 1995 study of the financing of primary education in 491 poor counties showed that 14.6 per cent of the total costs were met by communities, and a further 6.7 per cent by households through per-pupil fees (Jiang et al. 1997, p.27). This was part of a transition from centrally-planned activities to a more flexible system in which more decisions were made at the local level. The new structures were substantially different from the old ones; but in many parts of the country the commonality remained that financial resources were contributed by households and communities to sustain their local schools.

Fees for Primary Education

Mention of fees for primary education raises a policy issue which is controversial. Most communities which fund substantial parts of school budgets rely on per-pupil fees for a major part of their revenues. Communities commonly find that fees are the only way to ensure regular revenues in cash, which are needed to pay teachers' salaries and meet other recurrent needs. Fees also have the advantage that the people who pay them can clearly see a link between their payments and the services provided. However, many policy-makers find the notion of fees, particularly for primary education, problematic. This is chiefly because they are mindful of the danger that the poorest families may be excluded from school by the existence of fees. Also, fees may be regressive because poor families tend to have more children than rich families. In addition, systems which charge fees encounter various administrative complications arising from the costs of collection and the need for accounting arrangements to reduce the danger of money going astray.

Opposition to fees has deep roots in various international declarations. One of them, as noted above, was the 1948 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Article 26 of the Declaration stated that "education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages". Principle 7 of the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child stated that "the child is entitled to

receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages"; and Article 13 of the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights stated that "primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all".

Significantly, a clause of this type was not included in the 1990 Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All. This may reflect some evolution in thinking. The summary of roundtable discussions (Windham 1992, p.3) observed that "'free' education provided by government alone is often of an insufficient quality to benefit the individual child, the community or the country". The report continued (p.4):

> The neediest pupils will not be able to adjust to user-fee financing schemes with the same ease as middle and upper-income pupils.

This statement clearly envisaged the possibility of fees, and instead shifted the question to how the poor should be protected in contexts where such fees existed. The implied logic was that fees for middle and upper-income pupils might actually be desirable, on the grounds that school systems need the resources and that these people can afford to pay. The World Bank has gone further, stating (1999, p.19) that in "in principle, fees and other contributions paid by non-poor beneficiaries could free up public resources for targeting to the poor".

For those who accept this approach, the next question concerns mechanisms for protecting the poor. Part of the problem is that communities themselves may not be sympathetic to the plight of the poorest. Muya et al. (1995) report that in Kenya many parents feel exploited by school committees, which are sometimes considered demanding and unsympathetic to the burdens they impose. Similar comments have been made about Uganda by Opolot (1994).

However, survey of experiences in different countries shows that many communities do have leaders who are sensitive to the needs of the poorest. These leaders may reduce the monetary charges on the poorest, and/or permit families to provide labor or materials instead of cash, or waive charges altogether (Bray 1996a, 1997). The question then becomes how such practices can be encouraged. The answer partly lies in raising awareness at the school and community level of the consequences of not making allowance for the needs of the poorest. Governments can also assist communities by pointing out some of the mechanisms for assisting the poor.

In summary, views on fees at the primary level tend to be polarized. On the one side are agencies and individuals who are vehemently opposed to fees. Oxfam (1999, p.239) is among the agencies in this category, on the grounds that "high cost is probably the single most important factor excluding the children of poor households from school". Also, although the 1990 Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All was silent on the matter, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989, maintained the tradition of the predecessor international declarations. Article 28 of the Convention stated that signatories recognized the right of the child to education, and "with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular … make primary education compulsory and available free to all". In the years that have followed, a powerful lobby has constantly called attention to the matter (see e.g. Oxfam 1998; UNICEF 1999a).

On the other side, however, is a growing group of agencies and individuals who are more tolerant of fees in education. This has been particularly evident in tertiary education, and has also been witnessed at secondary and even primary education. The argument, as indicated, is that education sectors need all the resources they can get, and that fees in some circumstances provide enough resources to secure not only the quantity but also the quality of education. Middle-income and rich parents, the argument goes, should be actively encouraged to contribute resources; and a fee-free education policy is misguided if it prevents willing parents from contributing to education. Scholarships and other mechanisms for protecting the poor can be financed from revenues provided by the middle-income and rich.

Other Ways to Raise Resources

Communities may have many other ways to raise resources for education. The range of different methods has been analyzed elsewhere (Bray 1996b, pp.8-13), but is worth summarizing here.

One important distinction is between resources for capital needs and for recurrent needs. For capital works, community leaders commonly organize focused activities such as launching ceremonies. In Nigeria and Kenya, for example, fund-raisers rely on community structures to create a sense of obligation, and even impose sanctions on individuals who do not contribute (Igwe 1988, pp.111-112; Hill 1991, pp.237-238; Rugh & Bossert 1998, pp.32-55). In prosperous and well-organized communities, these events may raise substantial amounts of money.

Among the alternative ways to raise money for capital works are fêtes, carnivals, cultural shows, harvest festivals, raffles, and sponsored walks. In these cases, government-community partnerships may exist at the micro-level as well as at higher levels, for government-employed teachers commonly work with community members to organize the events.

A further way to raise resources either for capital or for recurrent needs is through a levy on each household or individual. Tsayang (1998) and Moorad (1999) have described the ways in which decisions are commonly made in Botswana. Some individuals and households contribute cattle, but others contribute money according to minimum and maximum rates determined at village meetings. Each meeting is usually organized by the school committee, and presided over by the village chief. Strikingly similar systems may be found in parts of Asia. For instance in Lao People's Democratic Republic, construction of rural schools is commonly overseen by chairpersons of Community Associations. Levies may be imposed on individual adults, or they may be by household. Commonly, households are levied equal sums, regardless of the incomes of those households or the numbers of their school-aged children, though perhaps with some allowance for substitution of labor in the case of households which are very poor (Bray 1996a, p.31). Comparable systems are used in parts of India (Rajagopal & Sharma 1999, p.61).

Where collection of cash is problematic, teachers may be willing to accept at least partial payment in food, accommodation and/or labor. Madagascar has become known for its "drums of rice schools" in which teachers have been paid in rice (Tilahimena 1999, p.7). In Mali, the communities of schools run by the NGO World Education have paid teachers an average of US$50 per month in cash, but have provided additional inputs in kind worth US$35 per month (Tietjen 1999, p.38). The additional inputs include lodging, firewood, millet, land for cultivation, and help with cultivation.

Schools sponsored by religious organizations may also meet recurrent needs from collections made during church/temple/mosque/synagogue ceremonies, and from other regular sources of income such as rent on properties. When religious organizations have more than one school, they may be able to subsidize the deficits of some institutions from the surpluses of others. Also, teachers and other workers in religious schools commonly work at less than the market rate, therefore providing a hidden subsidy. Many religious schools in low-income countries are also able to attract funds from religious organizations in more prosperous countries.

Balances of Financing and Control

A common expression in the English language states that "He who pays the piper calls the tune". It means that the person (or organization) which provides the finance decides how that finance is spent. However, in the domain of community financing of education, this expression is not always applicable. Communities do not always have great control over the content and scale of education, even when they make major financial inputs. In many government-sponsored schemes, community

financing is seen as an alternative to direct taxation, and communities have little more control over their funds than they would over taxation revenues. Communities may also have limited control in schemes sponsored by donor agencies. Indeed, as observed by Wright & Govinda (1994, p.22) "it is not always clear that partnerships with communities are designed to encourage genuine participation and fair control, rather than simply getting communities to pay more for the pet schemes of others".

This is not always the case, of course. Much depends on the willingness of governments to devolve decision-making, and of the communities to take it up. In Papua New Guinea, as noted above, communities may have the power even to decide on the languages of instruction despite the fact that the government meets the major costs of elementary education.

Nevertheless, comparative analysis shows that governments have an array of tools to influence and direct community decisions, even where communities provide substantial proportions of the total costs. These tools include:

- *Controls on registration of schools*. Governments may insist that schools must be registered, including schools that are independently managed and financed. They do this first to help shape the geographical coverage of education, and second to permit enforcement of regulations.
- *Teacher recruitment, qualifications and salaries*. Some governments insist that all teachers in both government and community schools be employed by the public service. This does of course require those governments to have sufficient budgets; but it allows the governments to control teacher recruitment, qualifications and salaries. Usually this is done in the name of quality, but political and other factors may also be involved.
- *Enrollment of marginalized groups*. One danger of leaving most decisions to community leaders is that school systems may discriminate against marginalized groups, defined by gender, class, race, religion or other criteria. Governments sometimes insist that community schools be open to pupils who are not members of those communities.
- *Curriculum*. Governments may be anxious that community schools teach certain core elements and promote values which are consistent with national unity. In some countries, regulations restrict the extent to which communities can devise their own curricula.
- *Buildings*. Some governments insist that, for the safety of the pupils, buildings meet minimum standards of various kinds. This may include not only the quality of basic construction but also adequacy of ventilation and lighting.

The challenge for policy makers is to decide what sorts of controls are necessary in what sorts of situations. In some cases controls are desirable to harmonize components of national education systems and to safeguard the rights of the children. However, in other cases controls stifle community initiative and make a mockery of claims about partnership.

The Impact of Innovations

Having examined the nature of community partnerships in a range of settings, it is important to turn to the impact of innovations in this domain. Consideration of durable models in conjunction with innovations permits identification of lessons for the continuing challenge to secure adequate quantity and appropriate quality of education for all.

This section considers impact under five sub-headings. It begins with recruitment and retention of pupils, which is a major part of the quantitative challenge. It then turns to the recruitment, salaries and monitoring of teachers, which are important dimensions in the qualitative

challenge. The inputs of pupils and teachers, when combined with curriculum, books and other inputs, lead to outputs in the shape of academic and other aspects of educational achievement which are considered in the next section. The two remaining sections focus on equity and on political dimensions.

Recruitment, Retention and Attendance of Pupils

Clear evidence shows in many contexts that involvement of communities in the operation of schools can help in the recruitment, retention and attendance of pupils. Schools run by NGOs have their own missions to serve target populations for religious, philanthropic and other reasons; and schools run by governments are assisted in their outreach by community members on their school committees. Community members commonly have deeper understanding of the circumstances of particular families, of relationships between individuals, and of micro-politics. Also, in settings where turnover of teachers is considerable, community members on school committees may provide an important element of continuity.

These general observations may be substantiated by specific examples in different countries:

- *India*. One model in India is the Shikshakarmi Program in rural and remote parts of Rajasthan (Rajagopal & Sharma 1999). This initiative was launched in 1987 with the goal of revitalizing educational processes and extending outreach. The program started by taking over dysfunctional government primary schools in areas where teacher absenteeism was acute and the enrollment and retention of children were poor. Since 1991 the program has also opened new schools, and by 1997 it served 2,000 villages and provided schooling for 157,300 children. Every year, the persons in charge of the schools work with community members to conduct surveys of the children who are and are not attending the schools. Children are recruited, and the teachers work hard to ensure that children stay in school once they have been enrolled. Of course this is not always straightforward. Rajagopal & Sharma point out (1999, p.68) that "caste/class and village power dynamics do often come into play", with negative as well as positive consequences. However, the program has had major successes as a result of the partnerships which have been built with government, professional groups and community organizations.
- *Bangladesh*. A comparable model, which has grown much larger, is that of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC). As noted at the beginning of this study, BRAC schools serve 1.2 million children. The children are all from disadvantaged backgrounds, and most live in rural areas (Nath et al. 1999). BRAC screens entrants through careful surveys to ensure that they come from poor families who are not normally reached by the conventional system. Rugh & Bossert (1998, p.68) have stated that "BRAC's programs unquestionably lead to the increased educational participation of children in terms of enrollment, attendance, and completion".
- *Papua New Guinea*. The context and system in Papua New Guinea, as described above, is rather different from these models in India and Bangladesh. The model in that country is of community participation in Boards of Management of primary schools in the national system of education. Evaluation of the operation of the Boards of Management has indicated that community members commonly join forces with teachers and others to encourage children's attendance and punctuality (Preston 1991). Sometimes Board members are assigned to follow up cases of poor attendance by visiting the children in their homes; and some Boards even impose fines for poor attendance or lateness.
- *Madagascar*. Parents' Associations exist in all of Madagascar's primary schools. The associations operate as interlocutors between the schools and the communities, and help both to recruit pupils and to make schools more attractive. At the primary level, about a quarter of pupils attend private schools which receive subventions from the government. In the mid-1990s, households and communities contributed over a quarter of the costs of primary and secondary education, thus permitting a considerably greater total volume of education than

would have been possible had everything relied on the state (Rahaririaka & Péano 1999). A system of contracts between government and communities launched in 1994 had an even greater impact than anticipated. Between 1994 and 1997, nationwide primary school enrollments increased by 32 per cent. This was achieved by a 21 per cent increase in ordinary schools, but a 44 per cent increase in community-partnership schools. In 1997/98, enrollments in the latter represented 37 per cent of the national total (Tilahimena 1999).

These examples are from diverse contexts, but illustrate the general point that community partnerships commonly help significantly in the recruitment, retention and attendance of pupils.

Teachers and their Conditions of Service

The issues surrounding employment of teachers, and their conditions of service, are more complex. Again it is necessary to distinguish between schools which are primarily operated by governments but with community participation, and schools which are primarily operated by communities albeit perhaps with some government supervision and support.

In most systems which are primarily operated by governments, the authorities are anxious to retain control over recruitment, deployment, remuneration and discipline of teachers. Their chief motivation is a concern with equity in distribution of resources. In turn, this concern may be linked to issues of social cohesion and national unity. This is among the reasons why the government of Kenya merged the categories of government and self-help harambee secondary schools in the mid-1980s (Rugh & Bossert 1998). In Bhutan, the government has permitted and encouraged establishment of community schools at the junior primary level, but from the outset has retained control over teachers salaries and conditions of service (Bray 1996c); and Colombia's *escuela nueva*, which is explained in more detail below, is basically an alternative within rather than outside the formal state education system (McGinn 1998).

Government concern for equity sometimes leads to ambiguities and conflicts. For example, after Namibia's independence in 1990, the government placed considerable stress on community involvement in schools, in order both to foster democratic processes and to improve schools through community inputs. However, because the government felt that it had the political and moral imperative to promote equity, checks to community authority were maintained or were enacted to prevent racially- or ethnically-based hiring of teachers. Consequently, school boards were told that they had the right to choose teachers but regional officials sometimes refused to accept the communities' choices (Wolf et al. 1999, p.29). This tension between decentralization and centralization proved difficult to resolve, and seemed likely to be a continued feature.

Elsewhere, government-run education systems suffer from poor quality and inertia. This is especially obvious in parts of India, and has been graphically illustrated by the Public Report on Basic Education (PROBE). The research team reported some bright spots but also many negative ones. The PROBE report added (1999, p.57) that, aside from attracting poorly-motivated individuals, the teaching profession may actually deter those who have a genuine attraction to teaching as a pedagogical or social endeavor; and even if teachers commence their work with some motivation, many of them lose it over time.

It is in such circumstances that partnership with communities, and particularly with NGOs, seems an attractive way to revitalize education systems. India can in fact report some success in this, at least in some areas (PROBE 1999, p.106-114; Rajagopal & Sharma 1999); and parallel successes have been evident in parts of Pakistan (Baqir 1998). However, patterns are complex, and few formulae are applicable to all circumstances (Box 8).

Box 8: Patterns of Teacher-Parent Relations in India

The PROBE report (1999, pp.65-66) contained the following observations about teacher-parent relations:

> Parents and teachers have a tendency to blame each other for the failures of the schooling system. This situation may sound like the death-knell of teacher-parent relations. However, some mutual criticism is quite natural in this context, and does not necessarily rule out practical cooperation. In fact, given the current state of affairs, it would be quite worrying if parents were full of praise for teachers or vice versa. Their respective demands do have a positive role to play in the improvement of the school system….
>
> The nature of teacher-parent relations varies a great deal between different villages. In a majority of villages, there is active cooperation. In Khurd (Rajasthan), for instance, the teacher has won the appreciation of the village community for his punctuality and sense of duty, setting in motion a virtuous circle of good will. At the other extreme, there are cases of palpable tension between teachers and the parental community. This applies in Bisariya (Bihar), where parents ended up appointing a retired teacher to help in the local school, deserted by its own headteacher. Antagonism is also the norm with non-functional schools, which reflect a fundamental breakdown of the teacher-parent relation. An intermediate pattern arises when teachers are identified with specific factions within the village. This is particularly frequent in villages with sharp divisions of caste and class….
>
> Perhaps the most common pattern is one of scant interaction between parents and teachers. Parents, even if unhappy, see little scope to influence the teachers. The latter, for their part, have little interest in active interaction with parents, or may be satisfied with selective interaction. Two-thirds of the headteachers we interviewed felt that the attitude of parents towards the school was 'helpful', but what they understood by this reflected low expectations of parental cooperation: asked to elaborate, the most frequent comment was that parents helped by sending their children to school regularly. Less than 30 per cent of the headteachers reported that they had asked for any specific help from the parents during the preceding 12 months *and* obtained a 'favorable' response. One both sides, inertia is the dominant attitude.

Moreover, teachers who benefit from loose administration and poor supervision of course do not welcome tighter systems of accountability through communities. They are especially resentful when they consider communities to lack the professional skills and insights necessary to make appropriate interventions. India's Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) particularly cautioned (1993, p.13) that:

> The past experience indicates that the teaching community has not always been happy in its interaction with the Panchayati Raj bodies. Issues relating to recruitment and transfers seem to have created misunderstanding between these bodies and the teaching community.

With this in mind, the CABE suggested that the state would need to lay down clear guidelines with respect to various aspects of personnel management, particularly norms for posting and transfer of teachers. However, even when clear guidelines exist, potential for friction remains.

One ingredient in this potential for friction is the question of teachers' salaries. The 1980s and 1990s brought considerable advocacy of community partnership as a way to reduce teacher costs. This was a major motivation for the reform in Papua New Guinea, mentioned above, which separated elementary from primary education and made the elementary grades community-based; and it has been a major motivation for a similar reform envisaged in neighboring Vanuatu (Vanuatu 1999). In China, community-employed *minban* teachers have generally been paid less than their government-employed counterparts; and when salaries were raised through government subsidies and more standardized conditions of service, a new category of community-employed supplementary *daike* teachers emerged. Likewise in Mali, much of the attractiveness to the government of the Kolondieba community schools project arose from the "vastly lower salaries paid

to community school teachers", who received between 8 and 12 per cent of the salaries of their government counterparts (Muskin 1997, p.51). Under such circumstances, it is little surprise that at least some teachers and their unions view proposals for community partnership with suspicion, fearing that their status and conditions of service will be eroded.

However, community partnership can of course have the opposite effect of increasing the incomes of teachers. As noted above, in many settings, teachers receive contributions from their communities either in cash or in housing, food, labor or other forms. Further, teachers' unions which are concerned about employment may recognize that community partnership expands the volume of education, and thus increases the number of jobs for teachers. Yet community-run schools are much less likely to offer teachers job security. Only the best-organized communities can embark even on medium-term (let alone long-term) plans; and the financial circumstances of communities commonly fluctuate according to the initiative, enthusiasm and abilities of particular individuals who occupy leadership positions. Moncada-Davidson (1995, p.67) has pointed out that in El Salvador, the absence of job security has lowered the average quality and performance of EDUCO teachers because positions of public school personnel are considered much more attractive.

Many governments and NGOs make a special effort to appoint teachers from within local communities on the assumptions that these teachers will relate to their communities more effectively than outsiders would, and that community monitoring will keep the teachers accountable and dedicated. However, while these assumptions may have a basis of logic, they are not necessarily valid. Researchers contributing to India's PROBE report (1999, p.98) indicated that they "found no evidence that teachers posted in their own village perform better than others". Indeed, the report observed, locally-employed teachers may lack the neutrality of outsiders and be associated with particular factions within their villages (Box 8).

Finally, one particular domain in which communities need inputs from government is in the training of teachers. While communities may be able to recruit and pay teachers, only the largest and best organized non-government bodies are able to provide pre-service and in-service training. In almost any model for educational provision, this domain seems to need at least some provision by the government.

Educational Achievement

One of the three volumes which synthesized the roundtable themes of the Jomtien World Conference (Fordham 1992, p.37) made a link between community partnership and educational outcomes:

> Changes in the way schools are administered, especially if they make clear efforts to relate to the local community, can change perceptions about the school's interaction between the school and the community. A surprising result is that the positive ideology that is engendered is more important to educational success than the economic resources provided to the school by the community.

This type of assertion seems intuitively true. Indeed the "surprising result" is perhaps not so surprising when given further thought. Community partnership may improve the accountability and transparency of school operations, and can certainly provide support for pupils. The impact of these factors is difficult to prove empirically because many other factors affect achievement and evaluations cannot easily isolate the specific effects of community partnership. Also, researchers are not in full agreement on the best ways to define and measure educational achievement. Nevertheless, educational achievement is so important that efforts have been made to secure research evidence in a number of contexts.

One setting in which this has been investigated is Kenya's Mombasa School Improvement Programme (MSIP). Evaluation of the MSIP noted that during the life of the project, the Mombasa District results on national primary school examinations improved dramatically (Anderson & Nderitu 1999, p.118). The evaluators did not fully ascribe the improvement to the inputs of the project, but did consider the MSIP, and especially the community links, to have contributed significantly.

Elsewhere in Africa, the impact of community-school models which represent alternatives to the dominant school systems has been assessed in Mali. Muskin (1999) has evaluated the schools operated by the US-based NGO, Save the Children. The initial project design emphasized vernacular instruction and a three-year cycle which was expected to be terminal for the pupils. However, the terminal nature of this model was changed a few years after the project was launched, so that pupils could proceed to upper primary education and French-medium secondary schools. Muskin's evaluation found (p.62) that the quality of basic education provided by the project schools matched that in the government schools. Arithmetic scores were on a par; and while pupils in the community schools had lower test scores in local knowledge, their scores in reading and writing in the vernacular exceeded the French-language literacy scores of their counterparts in the government schools.

However, the Save the Children community schools project is relatively young, and has received a level of international attention and external assistance which could not be proportionately sustained if the scale were greatly increased. Moreover, close examination reveals that, despite the emphasis on communities in the name of the project, the actual nature of community involvement has been quite limited. The community management aspect consisted of construction of schools with roofs, windows and furniture provided by the donor, the composition and regular operation of a school committee, and the payment (at the equivalent of only US$6 per month) of one teacher per school for the morning session and another for the afternoon session. The limited volume of community inputs to some extent resulted from the design of the project. The schools were located in a rural area which had shown little interest in the government-run system, and one major goal of the project was to stimulate demand. With that in mind, the NGO made substantial inputs in teaching materials and equipment. Indeed Tietjen (1999, pp.70-71) commented that "the funding formula used by the Save the Children model seems to define – whether or not intentionally – the community members more as recipients than partners and owners of the school". It is thus questionable how far the academic results could be attributed to community involvement as opposed to other factors.

A similar comment may be made about the *escuela nueva* of Colombia, mentioned above. This model has a longer history, since it originated in a 1975 government-initiated reform which targeted rural children, used multigrade teaching, and aimed at a student-centered approach. The program was expanded, and by the early 1990s embraced 18,000 rural schools. Community inputs are chiefly in the domain of curriculum and outreach. For example, students undertake field trips which encourage appreciation of their local communities and take advantage of local resources to make students' learning more relevant. Also, the original *escuela nueva* design envisaged that at the beginning of the school year teachers would visit the homes of all their pupils. Comparison with conventional schools has also shown higher levels of community participation in such activities as adult education, agricultural extension, athletic competitions, health campaigns and community celebrations (Rugh & Bossert 1998, p.108). One evaluation of *escuela nueva* institutions which had been in existence for five years or more found that their students scored higher in third grade Spanish and mathematics, and also in fifth grade Spanish (but not mathematics) than students in the conventional system (Psacharopoulos et al. 1993). *Escuela nueva* students also scored higher on civic and self-esteem tests in both grades. The fact that the *escuela nueva* model had been implemented first in the most disadvantaged schools with fewer teachers increased the significance of the results. McGinn (1998, pp.43-46) also reported positive evaluation data. However, it is difficult strongly to ascribe positive results to community participation. The main focus of the study by Psacharopoulos et al. (1993) was multigrade teaching rather than

community partnership, and McGinn (1998) indicates that links between schools and communities were in practice very varied.

Data are also available on El Salvador's EDUCO model. Jimenez & Sawada (1998, p.19) found that average scores in standardized tests of mathematics and language indicated poorer performance among EDUCO students than among their counterparts in rural traditional schools. However, they added, this was not surprising given the fact that EDUCO students came from disadvantaged backgrounds. Allowance for this fact could show that the scores of students in the two systems were equivalent. Moreover, Jimenez & Sawada did indicate (p.19) that one particular element of community participation in the EDUCO schools had a clear effect. This was the monitoring of teacher behavior by the parents and their representatives. Sawada (1999, p.29) observed that "teacher effort … in EDUCO schools with the high intensity of community participation is consistently better than in traditional schools". More active monitoring of teachers has also been reported in Nicaragua (Rivarola & Fuller 1999, p.515).

Bangladesh's BRAC model also deserves mention again. According to Nath et al. (1999, p.20), children in BRAC schools generally perform at an equivalent level to their counterparts in government schools in reading and numeracy. In life skills and writing, the BRAC students may perform better. Again, this seems to be testimony to the power of at least some types of alternative schooling. The BRAC model is especially important because, in contrast to the community schools in Mali, it has been sustained over time and has gone to scale. Again, however, the achievements may reflect the good organization of the NGO that runs BRAC rather than the specific community links of the model.

Moreover, in some settings community initiatives may lead to inferior outcomes. This is especially likely to be the case when communities recruit their own teachers but suffer severe financial constraints in doing so. Kenya's harambee secondary schools were well known to produce inferior products until the government moved to nationalize the system in the 1980s (Lillis & Ayot 1988). Questions also arise about the community-run elementary schools in Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu; and community schools which multiplied in Zambia during the 1990s similarly had to struggle on very meager resource bases (Kelly 1998). These examples again stress the need for government partnership with communities, so that communities are not left entirely to struggle on their own.

In summary, when other factors are equal it seems very likely that community inputs to schools will promote learning outcomes. To supplement the studies quoted above, the finding of a 26-country study conducted under the umbrella of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement may be noted (Postlethwaite & Ross 1992, p.32). The degree of parental cooperation had the strongest link with school effectiveness among all 56 indicators selected from the 300 initially examined. Community links can improve the relevance of schooling, and school-home liaison can assist with pupils' homework, emotional stability and other important factors. However, many other important ingredients are also involved. Community partnership cannot by itself work miracles; but it is certainly important.

Equity Tensions

Community inputs of certain kinds and in certain places can of course help reduce social disparities. In general, however, community inputs by themselves are much more likely to increase disparities. Where community initiatives imply self-help, the communities which are most likely to help themselves are those which are already advantaged. Historically, recognition of this fact was among the major justifications for increasing the role of the state and for reducing the roles of communities in education. Equity issues may have many dimensions. The most obvious spatial ones are regional and rural/urban. Other dimensions are socio-economic, ethnic, racial and gender. Each deserves some comment here.

Beginning with regional differences, Kenya is one country in which at least some disadvantaged districts have remained disadvantaged because they have had low incomes in the first place and therefore found it difficult to embark on self-help (Mwiria 1990; Rugh & Bossert 1998). Similar problems have been encountered elsewhere. In China, for example, conditions along the east coast are markedly different from those in the western interior (Lewin & Wang 1994). In some societies, regional variations reflect cultural variations. In Nigeria and Tanzania, regional imbalances have less to do with the distribution of natural resources than with the fact that peoples of certain ethnic groups have stronger traditions of community organization than do others (Igwe 1988; Samoff 1990).

A variation on this problem experienced in some countries is of racial inequalities. In Zimbabwe, which during the late colonial era had suffered from racial segregation, great emphasis was placed on community financing during the 1980s as a way to generate resources and expand educational provision. However, the policy operated differentially. As recounted by Maravanyika (1995, p.12):

> Schools in former white areas established Management Agreements with government. These enabled Management Committees to levy parents so that the schools could buy additional school equipment and other teaching resources or recruit additional staff to reduce the government stipulated teacher/pupil ratio which some white parents considered too high for effective teaching, or introduced specialist subjects not covered by government such as music and computing. In short Management Committees were concerned with maintaining former colonial privileges and standards.

Maravanyika pointed out that the large amounts charged by the Management Committees were generally out of the reach of the ordinary black parents, and that the method of financing perpetuated racial inequalities.

Most societies also suffer from rural-urban disparities in educational provision. The tendency is for inequalities to be compounded rather than reduced by government policies. Because it is usually more difficult to foster community initiatives in urban than in rural areas, governments commonly provide extensive resources for the urban schools while expecting the rural ones to help themselves (Lee 2000). Urban residents are less likely to identify themselves as part of tight social groups, and they are more likely to have multiple commitments which obstruct extensive participation in school affairs. However, urban communities may be able more easily to raise cash resources, and may have better educated and more articulate school-committee members.

Nevertheless, the schools operated by some types of community are more likely to be located in towns than in rural areas. The Independent Chinese Schools in Malaysia are in this category, chiefly because the Chinese communities have always been concentrated in urban areas (Tan 1988). One effect of this form of community activity, therefore, has been to extend the imbalance in facilities between rural and urban areas – a fact which has become of added significance when substantial numbers of non-Chinese families have also chosen to enroll in the schools.

Further inequalities may be socio-economic. Again, relatively prosperous groups are likely to be in a better position than impoverished groups to form partnerships with governments. Moreover schools, like other types of projects, many be vulnerable to exploitation by the better-off classes. As observed by Bhatnagar & Williams (1992, p.4):

> Sometimes resources for development can be captured by local elites and used primarily for their own benefit rather than [that of] the intended beneficiaries. This happens because local elites usually have advantageous ties to national elites, because they have access to and information about resource allocation procedures, and because they can use threats and force against the disadvantaged.

This type of situation can arise in many parts of the world. It is particularly obvious in less developed societies, but may also be a feature in more developed ones.

On the other hand, governments may see community partnerships as a way to serve groups which would otherwise be beyond the authorities' reach. In Singapore, a Council on Education for Muslim Children, better known as Mendaki, was founded in 1981. Almost all its members were from the minority Malay racial group. The main rationale for founding the association was to help the Malay community catch up with the Chinese and Indians in educational performance. Mendaki receives strong government support. Part of the rationale for this was set out by Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew in 1982. "A government-run scheme," he pointed out (quoted by Tan 1995, p.344), "cannot achieve a quarter of the results of this voluntary, spontaneous effort by Malays/Muslims to help themselves". Recognizing the limits of government actions, he added:

> You can better succeed because you will be more effective with Malay/Muslim parents than government officers.... You can reach them through their hearts, not just their minds. You have the motivation and the dedication and commitment. This emotional/psychological support can make a vast difference between a student who tries, fails, and tries again, and another who fails and gives up.

In this example, the government has used partnership with a community organization to reduce disparities. One irony, however, is that the Mendaki lead was followed by establishment of parallel groups for the Chinese, Indian and Eurasian groups, and disparities between the groups have to some extent been maintained.

Finally, gender inequities must be considered. Once again, patterns may be complex, for different communities may behave in different ways. In many societies, parents who are forced to make a choice are more likely to invest in the schooling of boys rather than girls (Herz et al. 1991; Odaga & Heneveld 1995; Colclough et al. 2000). This factor may be of considerable importance where community financing requires payment of fees. Also, the fact that many school committees are dominated by men may cause some issues of importance to girls to be overlooked. One response, as in India's Andhra Pradesh State, has been to insist that committees have at least one female member. Another response, followed in Burkina Faso has been to encourage separate women's groups to operate alongside and in coordination with school committees to address the specific needs of girls (Coulibaly & Badini 1999). Mothers' clubs which operate separately from school committees are also an important feature in Fiji Islands (Tavola 2000).

In these types of situation, the role for governments may be to operate in partnership with community leaders to rectify imbalances (Hartwell 1998). Two specific projects may be highlighted in which governments have formed partnerships with communities and with NGOs to tackle gender imbalances:

- *Pakistan*. In the western province of Balochistan, major strides have been achieved through a Community Support Program launched in 1990 (Bakhtiari et al. 1999; Baloch & Hussain 1999). Initially, government and other personnel had believed that parents were resistant to girls' education. They have found that with the right approaches, parents and communities can be not only receptive but even enthusiastic. By 1999, over 1,000 schools had been established with community partnership particularly to serve girls. Part of the key was community selection of female teachers from their own villages, and supervision of the schools by Village Education Committees. Many NGOs in other parts of Pakistan have comparable partnerships with the specific goal of enhancing the education of girls (see e.g. Haque 1998; Nizamani & Jamil 1999).
- *Egypt*. In 1992, a community-school project was initiated in the deprived rural parts of Egypt's Upper Nile region (Zaalouk 1995). The project brings together the government and several NGOs, and is assisted by UNICEF. A related project received support from the

> Canadian International Development Agency. Both projects have targeted girls, and since 1995 they have been coordinated by an Education Innovation Committee in the Ministry of Education. According to UNICEF (1999b, p.51), "a movement is on its way, with community schools viewed as a catalyst for social change and personal transformation". By 1998, in three of the most deprived governorates nearly 200 community schools had been established. Their success in helping girls was particularly noteworthy, though boys were recruited too.

In summary, by themselves community self-help initiatives are likely to increase rather than decrease geographic and social disparities. This is because the groups which are already advantaged are in a better position to help themselves than are the groups which are disadvantaged. This fact can be a justification for direct government interventions for the disadvantaged groups. However, these interventions are still more likely to succeed if they take the form of partnerships with those groups. Thus while governments need to monitor their partnership schemes to ensure that scarce government resources are not chiefly being devoted to groups which are already well-endowed, they should also note that partnerships can be a powerful instrument for reaching the disadvantaged.

Box 9: Encouraging Participation by the Poor

Participation in educational activities requires energy, skills and long-term vision. These qualities are not abundant among the poor. Yet the poor are the principal unreached group in the goal of education for all.

The World Bank (1996) has considered this matter in its *Participation Sourcebook*, which identifies ways to increase participation in World Bank projects. One suggestion (p.147) is that the poor should be given incentives to participate. Partnership schemes can demonstrate ways in which schools and their members can reach out to serve the needs of the poor, as well as vice versa.

The *Participation Sourcebook* also highlights the need to understand informal community organizations. In a typical poor community, the book suggests (p.152):

> Some of the most active community organizations are informal. They are not listed in any documents, and they may be unknown even to people familiar with the communities (extension agents, local development agency staff, and so forth). Leaning about these groups entails visiting the communities and talking with inhabitants about the decision-making units present.

One recommended way to proceed is through simple 'institutional mapping'. Local people are asked to identify the community groups by drawing circles of differing sizes – the larger the circle the more important and influential the institution it represents. The extent of shared decision-making among groups can be represented by how circles are placed in relation to one another: the closer together and the more overlapping, the greater the degree of interaction between the represented groups. These graphics, sometimes called "chapati diagrams", have proved effective in identifying informal groupings that are important safety nets for poorer groups and for revealing that some of the more obvious organizations are actually quite weak.

Political Dimensions

The political dimensions of community partnership are obviously considerable. First, linking back to comments made at the beginning of this study, is the large question about the role of the state in education. The 1980s and 1990s brought a significant shift in this domain worldwide (Taal 1993; Torres & Puiggrós 1995; Green 1997; Kitaev 1999), which both reflected and caused fundamental political transitions.

The notion of partnership has a generally positive tone, suggesting that the state and its partners work together in harmony. However, this is clearly not a universal pattern. Some governments feel threatened by community activity in the field of education, and some communities resent what they see as continued state dominance within partnerships.

The threats arising from community activity may be linked to inequalities of the type noted above. As pointed out by Molutsi (1993, p.118):

> Partners often advance different agendas. They may emphasise local needs very much at the expense of regional and national needs. Inequality in the status of partners may also create conflict and endless disputes which could easily retard progress.

Alternatively, threats to governments may arise from a feeling of inadequacy. In Cameroon, for example, until the early 1980s *Associations des Parents d'Elèves* (APEs) were outlawed because in the political context they were considered potentially subversive (Boyle 1996, p.618). However, financial crisis in that country, as in other parts of the region, has required the state to accommodate APEs and even to rely on them for important supplementary funding (Tembon 1999). In some countries, APEs have grouped together to form umbrella organizations which negotiate with their governments and which are significant political forces. In these settings, the power of the state is greatly weakened by the financial constraints typical of contemporary times.

In other settings, the political threat may come not so much from parents' bodies within public schools as from independent NGOs. As noted above, Pakistan is among the countries in which NGOs working in the education sector flourished during the 1990s. This was in particularly sharp contrast to the pattern two decades earlier, for in 1972 the government nationalized all schools. In 1979 this policy was reversed, and by 1990 5,000 NGOs were said to be active in the education sector (Baqir 1998, p.178). As the decade progressed, the number of NGOs and CBOs (Community Based Organizations) continued to grow. The government welcomed the fact that they helped bear the burden of education, but was less enthusiastic about the fact that many NGOs were highly critical of government performance. The facts that some NGOs were badly run and that others were fronts for political activity gave the authorities grounds for periodic crack-downs. In turn, these measures stirred more political antagonism in some NGOs, and made the situation more complex (Mumtaz 1997, p.187).

In some countries, school committees and other community bodies may also be influenced by local and national political forces. This was a major feature of Kenya's harambee movement during the 1960s and 1970s (Anderson 1973; Hill 1991), and to some extent remains a feature in contemporary times. Writing about Fiji Islands, Tavola (2000, p.18) pointed out that "schools are political entities, and reflect the communities that they are in". She presented case studies in which factional politics, sometimes allied to racial divisions, had negatively affected schools.

Political forces have also been very evident in Cambodia, where rival politicians have considered schools to be a key instrument for extending their influence. A survey of 77 schools in 1997/98 found that 40 per cent had received school buildings from one or more politicians during the mid-1990s (Bray 1999, p.45); and in 13 per cent of cases the whole school had been named or renamed after a politician. In some instances the politicians were reported to have paid for all construction, but in other instances communities had provided counterpart resources. From a community perspective, the system provided a channel to secure resources which might otherwise have been unavailable. However, some observers viewed the situation with ambivalence. Pich, for example (1997, p.45) expressed the view that "schools are not the appropriate ground for political activities"; and the influences of political forces could be divisive as well as enabling.

Faced with such circumstances in Uganda, the government has chosen to work with external donors to create a highly centralized mechanism for allocating resources. Criteria have been made very transparent, and targeting of resources to the poorest communities has been

supported by random checking. Seel (1999, p.7) reported that while such a system might sound non-participatory, district officials greatly welcomed it because the mechanism enabled them to resist undue pressures from local interests. She added (p.7) that:

> Many grant recipient communities seemed genuinely surprised and delighted to receive a grant after years of neglect and were adamant that the ranking system should be continued, feeding in suggestions (for example: not giving quite such a strong weighting to schools with no classrooms as compared with those with a number of ramshackle classrooms put up by parents, since it was felt that both communities could be equally poor).

Another positive feature was that at least some politicians came to like the system. They used the ranking system to build their own political capital, in the process gaining a reputation for fairness.

Patterns in Namibia exemplify another type of situation. As noted above, one of the main challenges in post-colonial Namibia has been to achieve racial integration. Prior to Independence in 1990, Namibia had been controlled by neighboring apartheid South Africa. To some extent, the policy of the Namibian government to promote community participation in education undermined the policy of promoting equity. In some urban areas, concentrations of white parents were able to dominate school boards and then set fees which were high enough to exclude most non-white learners. Also, the power of some urban school boards, due to the sophistication and relative wealth of their members, created problems for regional offices. One school board hired an airplane to take members to the regional office in order to provide input on teacher hiring and textbook delivery decisions (Wolf et al. 1999, p.46).

Turning again to more positive experiences, harmony is most likely to exist where both (or all) partners clearly perceive benefits that can be derived from the partnership. This does not necessarily require the partners to have equal powers and inputs: in many circumstances subordinate partners may be content to be subordinate, and dominant partners may be content to be dominant. Such a situation broadly exists in Hong Kong, for example, where over 80 per cent of primary schools are operated by churches, voluntary associations and other community bodies but with financial inputs from the government which exceed 95 per cent of the total, and with corresponding control by the government over syllabuses, staffing ratios, class size, and many other dimensions (Adamson & Li 1999). The school sponsoring bodies like this system because it is stable and is mainly funded by the government; and the government likes the system because it provides links with communities while permitting overall control. The various sides operate with mutual trust, and the system has been working well for several decades (Sweeting 1995). Similar arrangements may be found in Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Chad and Togo. The Senegalese government has a contract with Catholic schools under which the government pays at least 80 per cent of teachers' salaries; and in Côte d'Ivoire the government covers 60 to 70 per cent of teachers' salaries in such schools (Kitaev 1999, p.84).

Box 10: The State and Decentralization

In 1999, UNICEF's annual publication *The State of the World's Children* focused on education. One theme of the report concerned partnerships and the changing role of the state. The publication observed (p.66) that:

> The formation of partnerships has become a central concept in planning and managing education, especially in situations were significant numbers of children are deprived of education. The State retains responsibility for setting national objectives, mobilizing resources and maintaining educational standards, while NGOs, community groups, religious bodies and commercial enterprises can all contribute, making education a more vital part of the life of the whole community.

The publication added (p.68) that:

> Partnership in the service of Education for All involves all segments of society in guaranteeing child rights. For it to work, however, the State must be prepared to relinquish some of its decision-making powers to lower levels of the system.

As might be expected, the state in some countries is more willing to relinquish control than in others. And when control is relinquished, it does not have uniformly positive effects. Nevertheless, the overall sentiment about the need for a changing role of the state is widely shared.

Key Lessons

The lessons from experience may of course be of different levels and degrees of magnitude. Some lessons are fundamental and have broad application, while others may apply to the mechanics of different circumstances. Here, the main stress is on the key lessons for the broad picture.

Fundamental Approaches

At the most fundamental level, two lessons deserve emphasis above all others:

A. ***Partnerships are important.*** Experience before and since the 1990 Jomtien conference clearly shows the value of partnerships in the goal of education for all. Governments cannot do everything by themselves; and communities cannot do everything by themselves. When they join forces, the chances of success are much enhanced.
B. ***Each situation is different.*** Despite the general lesson that partnerships are important, each setting requires individual tailoring. What works in one situation may not work in another; and what works at one point in time may not work so well subsequently. This requires great flexibility. Approaches based on the perspective that "one size fits all" are unlikely to be successful and sustained.

These points might seem obvious. However, they are sometimes overlooked, and deserve emphasis because they provide part of an overall framework for policy.

General Principles

Building on these two fundamental approaches, several further lessons may be identified. The following seven points deserve particular stress:

1. *Partnerships need trust*. This trust must be on both sides: governments must trust communities, and communities must trust governments. This is not to imply that each side should not seek

guarantees and build in safeguards. Indeed such guarantees and safeguards would seem in most circumstances to be both sensible and desirable. Nevertheless, the words of President Abdou Diouf of Senegal, expressed in the context of international partnerships, could equally refer to government and community partnerships. As observed by President Diouf (1999, p.34), trust is built on:

> mutual recognition of each partner's institutional and self-interests, expectations, problems … and cultures. It is maintained through common experience, permanent communication, and proximity, which facilitate mutual understanding.

The reality in many countries is that governments and communities do not trust each other. Governments may feel threatened by well-organized communities, and contemptuous of poorly-organized ones. Communities may feel skeptical of government promises that old bureaucratic norms have changed, and intimidated by imbalances in access to expertise and other resources. In such a situation, the partners will be unwilling to help each other to meet institutional and other goals. Positive effort is needed on both sides.

2. *Partnerships need long-term commitment.* One encouraging sign is that advocacy of partnerships, like advocacy of decentralization, has been a consistent, sustained and growing theme for over a decade. In many (though not all) countries, such advocacy has survived abrupt changes of government and economic climate. Partnerships cannot be built up overnight, not least because trust is an essential ingredient. As in other relationships, efforts to collaborate commonly bring disappointments as well as success. Only with long-term commitment can partnerships be sustained in the face of short-term set-backs.

3. *Partnerships need clear and mutually accepted roles.* Government and community partnerships do not need equal roles to be played by both sides. Indeed in most settings that would be impossible: governments can command huge financial, human and other resources, while communities can only be minor players with limited resources. However, the major and minor players can still operate well together if participants are clear about their roles and are respectful of each other. The precise nature of roles will of course vary in different settings. For example, in one setting government might pay all teachers' salaries, while in another setting the community will pay salaries. Likewise, in one setting all buildings and land might be provided by government, while in another they will be provided by the community. The most important ingredients are that in each particular setting all sides are clear about their roles, and that the partners have mutual acceptance of the roles of others.

4. *Partners must focus on both big and small pictures.* Governments are more likely than local communities to have a big picture of the patterns and directions of development. National governments of course have broader remits than regional governments, which in turn have broader remits than local governments. But communities, almost by definition, are likely to have narrower visions which focus on their own localities or religious, ethnic or other groups. Harmony on the one hand requires governments to understand the smaller pictures on which communities mainly focus, and on the other hand requires communities to understand the bigger pictures on which governments mainly focus.

5. *Partnerships need nurturing*. Skills do not develop overnight, and attitudes may take even longer to adjust. This commonly requires deliberate efforts by the actors concerned. Partnerships do not usually happen by themselves. Sometimes they are precipitated by crisis; but in those cases the bonds usually dissolve when calmer times return. Sustained partnership, like other relationships, requires the actors to take positive measures to promote the goal. Governments may need to provide training and employ other measures to enhance community capacity. At the same time, governments must listen to the expressed needs of communities. As noted in Box 3 above, such listening requires recognition of the diversity of cultures,

languages, customs and resources. It also requires recognition that education begins in the home and within the community, and must be nurtured there.

6. *Partnerships are relationships between individuals as well as institutions*. Ministries, NGOs and community bodies are institutions. However, they are all composed of, and run by, individuals. As observed by Sack (1999, p.12):

   > At the end of the day, the nature and quality of the relationships between institutions, ministries and agencies will depend on how individuals get along and work together. It will also depend on how those individuals manage *within* their respective institutional constraints (deadlines, procedures, reward structures, priorities, etc.) and how they communicate their constraints to their partners working in other institutions.

   One problem is that although institutions are durable and evolve slowly, individuals within those institutions may change jobs frequently. This makes the exercise of partnership more difficult. Frequent turnover of personnel can create frustration and fatigue, and militates against awareness of past decisions, strategies, accomplishments and lessons. Institutions need to be mindful of this problem, and seek ways to tackle it through good record-keeping and careful briefing of new personnel.

7. *Genuine partnerships involve much more than mere contribution of finance*. Some governments are chiefly interested in partnerships as a mechanism to secure resources and to reduce budgetary crises. In too many settings, so-called partnership simply becomes an alternative to taxation. Communities are expected to provide cash, labor and/or materials with little voice in the ways that these resources will be used. In a few settings the opposite pattern is found: governments disburse money to communities and then expect this disbursement to lead to feelings of cooperation. Neither approach can be called genuine partnership. Focus only on finance fails to secure the much deeper benefits that can be gained from shared decision-making on the substance of education.

The Significance of Broad Historical Legacies

This study has repeatedly stressed that the nature of strategies must vary according to circumstances. This includes broad historical legacies as well as more immediate economic, political and other circumstances. In some settings the soil for the development of partnerships is more fertile than in others. For example, many African and Asian societies have long traditions of community organization and self-help for social and economic purposes (King 1976; Abreu 1982; Biak Cin & Scandlen 1988; Haq & Haq 1998). These traditions can be built on, revitalized and reshaped to fit continuing and new demands in the goal of education for all. Other societies, including for example those with Soviet legacies, have weaker traditions of community self-help. This may partly be because of differing cultural factors, and partly because of a long history of centralized government provision of practically all social services.

Elaborating on this point, it is useful to compare cultures in such countries as Russia and Mongolia with those in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). In Russia and Mongolia, traditions of community self-help remain weak because of social and political factors. Following the triumph of communism in the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the Russian authorities stressed that the state had sole responsibility and duty to provide education for its citizens. Mongolia became the world's second communist state in 1924, and for the next six and a half decades was heavily influenced by models in Russia and other parts of the Soviet Union. In addition, the fact that a large proportion of the Mongolian population was (and is) both scattered and nomadic further militated against formation of close bonds between communities and schools. The early 1990s brought collapse of communism, and both Russia and Mongolia officially became capitalist states. However, the combination of social factors and the long legacy

of communism meant that community partnership was an alien concept which could not easily be fostered.

The PRC and Lao PDR are instructive contrasts. Communism in those two countries survived the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. However, both countries moved to market economies; and the governments of both countries found it much easier in the 1990s to promote partnerships with communities. To some extent this was because communist government was a much more recent innovation than in Russia and Mongolia: in the PRC it dated from 1949, and in Lao PDR it dated from 1975. Other factors were that cultures were more strongly oriented towards community organization and self-help, and the communist governments of the PRC and Lao PDR had not espoused such extreme versions of state dominance in education as had their counterparts in Russia and Mongolia (Robinson 1988; Asian Development Bank 1993). Among the results has been that during the 1990s significant forms of government-community partnership could be developed with relative ease in both the PRC and the Lao PDR, even though the states remained officially socialist.

Nevertheless, even in countries of the former Soviet Union which had little tradition of community activity, the 1990s brought some important new initiatives. In Russia, this included advocacy of 'state-societal' schools in which the state provided no more than 49 per cent of the capital and in which other bodies, including communities or other non-governmental groups, provided the remainder (Borevskaya 1999). The balance in provision of funds was matched by a balance in the exercise of control. Likewise, communities in Azerbaijan and Albania realized that the government was no longer in a position to provide much support, and moved to self-help in an effort to retain at least some of the previous high standards of education (UNICEF 1998a, p.80). In such settings economic crisis has softened attitudes on both sides: governments have become more interested in the idea that communities can help share financial burdens, and communities have become more willing to contribute resources in order to maintain infrastructure for their children. What has started with rather narrowly-focused financial dimensions has in many cases broadened to other dimensions including planning and curriculum.

Decentralizing shifts have also been evident in many other parts of the world (Cummings & Riddell 1994; Lauglo 1995; Fiske 1996). Some of these shifts have simply been from higher to lower levels of government, and not all have involved partnerships with communities. Nevertheless, this study has demonstrated that a significant number of decentralizing shifts did involve such a partnership.

Once again, however, official policies have not always matched actual practice. In this connection, Gershberg (1999a, 1999b) has instructively contrasted patterns in Mexico and Nicaragua:

- In *Mexico*, two reforms in the period 1978 to 1997 were officially described as decentralization. The first, between 1978 and 1992, involved the deconcentration of the federal government's ministry of education by establishing Federal Delegations in each state. The second, launched in 1992, officially transferred responsibility for direct service provision from the federal government to the states. Each school was required to form a Social Participation Council; and each municipality was expected to have a Municipal Education Council.
- In *Nicaragua*, decentralization was a feature of the 1990s. During the period 1979 to 1990, Nicaragua was governed by the revolutionary Sandinista regime. Major changes were achieved in education, which included a far-reaching literacy campaign (Arnove 1994). These achievements, however, emanated from a highly centralized regime. In 1990, decentralization became a goal of the new, counter-revolutionary government. One part of this highly politicized movement was an Autonomous Schools Program which required establishment of school councils comparable to their counterparts in Mexico (Rivarola & Fuller 1999).

The contrasts in the actual operation of these reforms is striking. Gershberg (1999b, p.758) criticized the Mexican reform, and bluntly described the attempt to operate Social Participation Councils as a failure. One reason, he suggested, was that Mexico had little history of grassroots mobilization. Indeed, rather to the contrary, it had a long history of tight, centralized, single-party, state control. Further, the reform legislation gave the Social Participation Councils only advisory power over school personnel, budgets and curricula. The Nicaraguan councils, by contrast, took hold because the central government had stronger political will. Parents had a majority voting block on the councils, and they were granted significant powers in resource allocation and personnel management. Both were top-down initiatives; but the Nicaraguan example shows that major changes can be achieved even under such circumstances. Ironically, the legal basis for the change was much clearer in Mexico than in Nicaragua. But this shows that laws by themselves are inadequate tools for effecting change, and that political motivation is a more important ingredient.

In a very different context, lessons may also be learned from the radical reform of New Zealand's education system. Reform commenced in 1988 with a report entitled *Administering for Excellence* (Picot 1988). Part of the background lay in an electoral setback to the government in 1987, when 'problems in education' were found to have been a major determinant of voting patterns (Ramsay 1993, p.262). A major plank of the reforms was transfer of responsibility for running schools from the government's Education Department to teachers and trustees. This placed administration of schools in the hands of local people, and ensured decision-making at that level rather than in a distant bureaucracy.

Ferguson (1998, p.8) observed that the reform created "deep shock" for many who had devoted their lives to building the education system up to that point. The size and powers of the central administration were drastically reduced, and schools were forced to respond to market forces and community needs from which they had hitherto been distanced. The reform was very controversial; but Ferguson (p.47) asserted that nobody within the current education system in New Zealand would want to revert to the way things used to be. She added that:

> There is a much stronger notion of partnership between boards of trustees and staff. With the occasional dramatic exception, most would claim improved relationship and communication between parents and teachers leading to enhanced learning.

The New Zealand context is of course very different from the majority of settings with which the Education for All movement is concerned. New Zealand already had a well-educated populace and strong 'human capital' which could be mobilized. However, the reform has instructive parallels with that in Nicaragua as a broadly successful, top-down, "root and branch" initiative. Taken together, the Nicaraguan and New Zealand reforms show that radical and beneficial change can be achieved in very different settings.

In systems which do become more decentralized, governments have to be more tolerant of diversity. The need for such tolerance may be evident in countries with relatively low enrollments, such as Mali and Pakistan, as well as in countries with high enrollments such as Azerbaijan, Albania and New Zealand.

Elaborating on the situation in Mali, at one level the government welcomed the schools operated by NGOs during the 1990s because they helped reach communities and children who would otherwise have been unreached. In 1997/98 schools operated by diverse NGOs served 83,400 children; and in the Koulikoro District, for instance, they had raised the enrollment rate by 10 per cent (Mali 1999, pp.7-8). However, the government felt uneasy about the nature of the model employed by some NGOs. For example, the model operated by Save the Children emphasized vernacular instruction in contrast to the French-medium mainstream system, and employed teachers on looser conditions of service compared with the government system. Indeed, despite legislation which established the Save the Children institutions as schools, key ministry

representatives considered them to be 'literacy centers' rather than 'real' primary schools (Tietjen 1999, p.25); and official statistics listed the Save the Children schools separately from other institutions (Mali 1999, p.8). The government was more comfortable with other NGO models which seemed closer in structure to the mainstream public system, but had some ambivalence even about them. Some resolution to the problem was achieved when Save the Children devised a bridging program to allow children to move from its vernacular schools to French-medium schools in the public system. However, the government, while welcoming NGO initiatives because they have increased the volume of education and reached children who would otherwise have remained unreached, still had to tolerate greater diversity in the system than existed in the former, more centralized system (Esquieu & Péano 1996).

An alternative situation is one in which the starting point for the balance between the actors has been rather different. Thus some societies have had rather decentralized systems which have exhibited considerable diversity and had problematic features in terms of equity and coherence. In Asia, for example, the small territory of Macau until recently had a very uncoordinated collection of systems which operated independently of each other. Macau was a Portuguese territory which in 1999 was reunified with China on a model which followed the 1997 reunification of Hong Kong (Bray & Koo 1999). In 1987 the government of Macau commenced steps to strengthen the education system so that schools would be less variable in quality, and so that the public could be assured of minimum standards in education. The government did this by entering a partnership with schools, providing finance, training and guidance. The intervention of the Macau government permitted launch of a fee-free education system which aimed to improve access for the poor. Also, the strengthening of coherence within the education system meant that pupils could more easily transfer from one school to another, and could progress through the system with a wider range of options.

This observation leads to a broader point about the role of the state in protecting the interests of the poor. The United Nations Development Programme (1997, p.101) has pointed out that "the call for people's mobilization must not be a justification for the state to abdicate its responsibilities". It has added (p.101) the observation that a poverty eradication strategy "requires not a retreating, weak state but an active strong one". Thus, despite the widespread calls for decentralization, policy-makers should consider the limits of reform and should pay careful heed to balances. Returning to Arnstein's ladder, a strong case can be made for avoidance of extremes at both bottom and top. When education systems are operated exclusively by governments, they tend to be excessively bureaucratic and inflexible; but when they are run exclusively by communities and other non-government actors, they may be inequitable and fragmented. Partnership provides a more appropriate intermediate balance. The precise nature of this balance will of course vary in different situations. It may also need different emphases at different times (Box 11).

Box 11: Walking on Two Legs, or Travelling on Two Railway Lines

In the People's Republic of China, partnership between government and community takes various forms and has gone through various shifts. One important shift was a decentralization policy launched in 1980. The rationale set out in an official document (quoted by Cheng 1997, p.394) could be echoed elsewhere:

> In a large country such as ours, which is heavily populated and economically under-developed, the task of universalizing primary education cannot be shouldered by the government alone.

The authorities mobilized rural communities and local enterprises to construct and operate schools. The government paid some teachers, but encouraged communities to employ additional personnel. The overall policy was known as "walking on two legs".

The basic philosophy of partnership was maintained in the 1990s, and did much to promote the quantity and quality of primary education. Over the years, however, the government has made various adjustments in the weight on each leg. For example, while the reform in 1980 increased the weight on communities, adjustment in 1986 reduced it by providing government subsidies for the salaries of community-employed teachers. The early 1990s brought a different element when private entrepreneurs were encouraged to play an increasing role; but again the government monitored and support this initiative.

Sometimes, an appropriate balance between government and community has been achieved, and steady progress can be made like a train moving with equal weight along each railway line. In other circumstances, periodic adjustment has to be made to the weightings. This is more like walking, where weight is placed first on one leg and then on the other.

Points of Leverage

Finally, it is useful to highlight some key points of leverage for initiating and extending change. Many of these have been mentioned in the preceding pages; but the major ones can be grouped together and listed together with others which might otherwise escape attention. Once again, the nature of the points of leverage will vary in different societies according to economic, political and other factors. However, the following six points deserve particular emphasis.

1. *Promote public awareness of goals and rationales.* For obvious reasons, government personnel will be much more likely to work with communities, and communities will be more likely to come forward to work with governments, if a clear statement of goals and rationales has been disseminated and agreed upon. This requires extensive and sustained commitment through discussion, documentation, television, radio, public speeches, etc.. In countries as diverse as New Zealand, Nicaragua and South Africa, advances in community partnership have evolved through far-reaching political changes. However, fundamental political change is not essential: in many settings policy-makers can achieve a great deal through existing frameworks.

2. *Encourage teachers to reach out and to listen.* Teachers commonly underestimate the extent to which community members can contribute solutions to educational problems. Carron & Ta Ngoc (1996, pp.171-176) have compared aspects of school-community relations in China, Guinea, India and Mexico. In China, class teachers are expected as part of their normal duties to visit the home of each student at least once a term. Data collected in Zhejiang Province in 1990 showed that many teachers did indeed fulfill these duties (Cheng 1996, p.92). In Guinea, India and Mexico, by contrast, teachers had weak knowledge of their students' homes; and when parents came to the schools, the teachers' main objectives were to remind the parents of various responsibilities in supervising children, paying fees, and repairing the buildings. Very rarely were parents involved in broader discussion about what happens in the classroom and about the major policy dilemmas facing their schools. Regrettably, developments in China

during the 1990s brought weakening of old standards and practices, especially in urban areas. However, experience in many contexts shows that even parents who themselves have low levels of education are commonly both able and willing to make major contributions in these domains. Teachers can also reach out to identify ways in which the school can serve the community, as opposed to ways in which the community can serve the school. School buildings can be opened for community functions, and both students and teachers can assist with community initiatives to improve the environment, address moral or religious issues, support the elderly, etc..

3. *Employ community development officers and similar personnel.* Box 7, above, mentioned the role of the Community Development Officer in the Mombasa (Kenya) School Improvement Project. This individual played a major role in liaison between schools, homes and communities. Similar personnel have been successfully employed in projects in other countries (see e.g. Hyde 1999b, p.13). In some settings a major task for such personnel is to *create* a sense of community in circumstances where it is lacking. Governments which are concerned about cost-effectiveness may find that the salaries of these people represent an excellent investment.

4. *Form parents' associations and/or school committees.* While in some countries parents' associations and school committees have long histories, in other countries they are recent innovations or do not exist at all. Experience in various settings has shown that where parents' associations have their own executive committees which are separate from the school committees, careful liaison is necessary to define roles and coordinate actions. However, the benefits of such associations and committees have been resoundingly demonstrated in a wide range of settings. Where they do not already exist, a strong case can be made for their establishment. Membership of the committees does not need to be confined to parents. In Cambodia, for example, a key role is commonly played by Buddhist monks.

5. *Provide matching grants, contracts and other resource inputs.* In many countries, community interest and partnership has been stimulated through matching grants of various kinds. Such grants may either be equally balanced (i.e. the government provides one dollar to match every dollar contributed by the community) or geared in some way (e.g. the government provides three dollars for every dollar contributed by the community). Gearing is a mechanism to provide extra incentives to communities which need them. Matching grants can be free-standing if desired, or can be mixed with block grants given to schools at flat rates. The government of Mauritius has provided such a mixture, with a ceiling on the funds provided in matching grants in order to permit financial planning on the government side (Mauritius 1991, p.112). In Pakistan, provincial governments have found that grants to PTAs both stimulate and empower communities to embark on stronger partnerships (Khan & Rafi 1999). The approach in Madagascar has been to establish formal contracts in which the government provides construction materials and in many cases teachers, and communities undertake the construction and agree to enroll and retain pupils (Tilahimena 1999).

6. *Provide Training.* Almost all innovations need capacity development of various kinds. Teachers may not be good at working with parents and other community members; and parents and other community members may not be good at working with teachers. In countries as diverse as Kenya, Pakistan and Fiji Islands, governments and NGOs have run workshops and provided handbooks and other materials for government officers, head teachers, and community leaders. Such training may focus on such basic skills as record-keeping and chairing of meetings. It may also call attention to issues such as transparency in decision-making, gender and socio-economic equity, curriculum and facilities planning, discipline, and employment of school leavers. In some countries, resources invested in school-level and community-level workshops have greatly improved the efficiency and effectiveness of education systems.

Where community self-help initiatives are already strong, the greatest need may be for harnessing and guiding initiatives rather than for stimulating them. In these cases, governments may need to provide technical and professional information, for example in building designs, accounting, and curriculum development. They may also need to insist on some controls, e.g. on registration of teachers and open enrollment for pupils of all religions, genders, socio-economic strata, etc..

In contrast, where self-help initiatives are weak, governments may need to find ways to stimulate them. The tactic in Azerbaijan and Albania has been to commence with the small number of groups which are responsive, in order to provide a demonstration effect to communities which might be more reluctant. This strategy risks creation or exacerbation of inequalities, and also of course demands resources from the government or other agencies. However, at least some inequalities might need to be tolerated in order to achieve broader objectives; and allocation of resources to develop partnership models might in the long run prove the best type of investment.

All these strategies require sensitive application. This study has emphasized that partnership has a political dimensions as well as an educational one, and reforms sometimes lead to unexpected outcomes. However, sufficient experience has accumulated to show that productive partnerships can be fostered in circumstances of almost all types.

Box 12: Planning for Partnerships

Discussing the goal of stronger partnerships at the school and community level, Shaeffer & Govinda (1997, p.17) highlighted the importance of planning. "Community-school partnerships do not easily happen by themselves", they stressed; "they must be planned for and trained for".

Elaborating on this statement, Shaeffer and Govinda continued (p.17):

> The system as a whole needs to accept and incorporate certain structural and procedural changes that facilitate strong partnerships among the school, the community, and local education offices. The transfer of some authority (and responsibility) down to the level of the school and out to civil society is one such change. But teachers can be trained to think of themselves as "extension agents" of the ministry, working with and in the community as well as in the school; supervisors can be trained to see that one of their roles is to animate these partnerships; and community leaders can be helped to understand better the variety of support that they can offer to the school.

Conclusion

The decade following the 1990 World Conference on Education for All brought some major changes in patterns of educational provision. Among the most significant was expansion of the need for educational provision to match population growth. This growth was especially marked in the less developed countries of Africa and Asia.

The decade also brought significant shifts in general perceptions of the role of the state. Governments are still generally seen, and see themselves, as the dominant agencies with responsibility for basic education. However, the non-government sector has grown significantly, and now occupies a much more widely accepted place. Some institutions in the non-government sector are independent agencies operated on either a for-profit or a not-for-profit basis. Other institutions work in partnership with governments. The opening paragraphs of the present study highlighted the "expanded vision" held by the signatories to the World Declaration on Education for All. Part of this vision was that "new and revitalized partnerships" would be formed. This was indeed a feature of the years that followed.

Of course this pattern was not seen uniformly. New and revitalized partnerships were more evident in some countries, and in some regions within those countries, than in others. Much depended on political and financial climates, and on longstanding traditions concerning the governance of education. In general, however, partnerships were much more evident at the end of the decade than at the beginning. This was allied to a general shift towards decentralization of much decision-making; and it included an evolution from weaker forms of participation to stronger forms of partnership. In terms of Arnstein's (1969) and Shaeffer's (1994) ladders of participation, more activity was evident in the higher rungs than previously; and in terms of Reimers' (1997) matrix, more examples could be identified towards the right end of the chart than previously.

Many challenges of course remain. One is that the notion of partnership can have multiple meanings and implications, which leads to fuzzy conceptualization and imperfect implementation. Another is that the goals of different partners do not always coincide, and mutual accommodation is difficult. Also, reduction in the role of the state can lead to increase in inequities of various kinds; and the mechanics of operation of partnerships often leave much to be desired.

Nevertheless, the emphasis on partnerships in the 1990 World Declaration has been proven wise and generally appropriate. In the continuing quest to achieve high quality basic education for all, partnerships will remain a key ingredient. In many settings, governments and communities have found ways to work together harmoniously and productively. If past lessons are built upon, the goals will surely be achieved more effectively.

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