

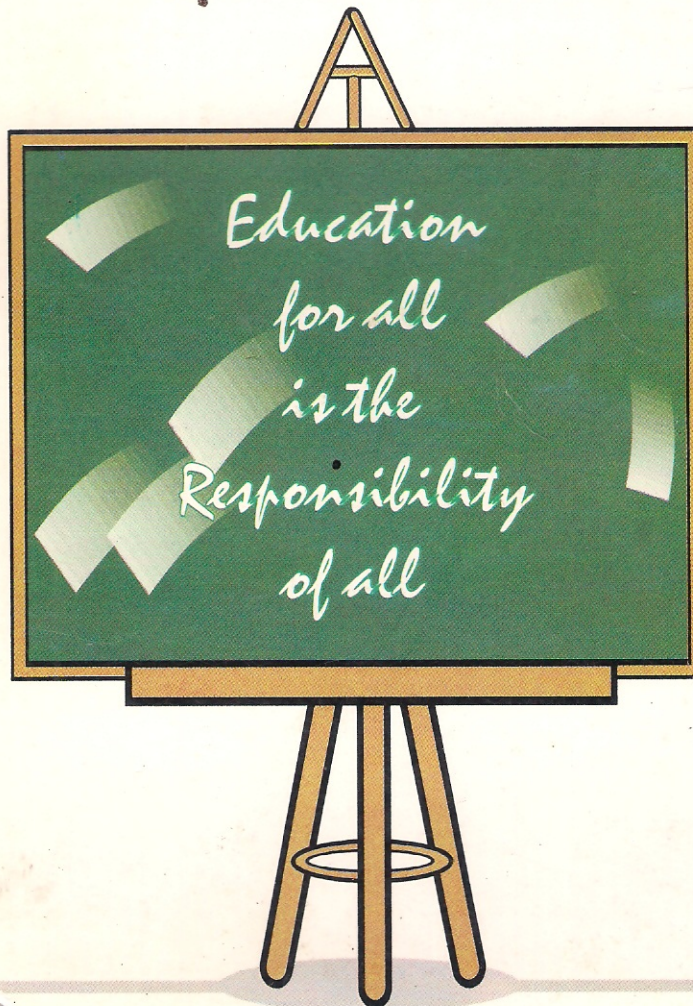


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Community Participation in Universal Basic Education (UBE) in a Dwindling Economy — Lessons from World Bank Reviews

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Abstract

This paper reviews various World Bank reports on community participation in education in South America, Asia and African countries and argues that there are lessons to be drawn for the challenges of community participation in the sustainability of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria. The paper provides contextual definitions of *community* and *participation* and draws lessons from contexts where such concepts were applied. It then draws lessons to the applicability of such concepts within the implementation framework of UBE in Nigeria.

Introduction

Policymakers, educators and others involved in the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme are seeking ways to utilize limited resources efficiently and effectively in order to identify and solve problems in the education sector and to provide quality Education For All (“the responsibility of all” as the sub-slogan of the UBE Programme in Nigeria) children. Their efforts have contributed to realizing the significance and benefits of community participation in education, and have recognized community participation as one of the strategies to improve educational access and quality. This is not to say that community participation is something new in the education delivery, however. It did not suddenly appear as panacea to solve complex problems related to education. In fact, not all communities have played a passive role in children’s education. For instance, Williams (1994) stresses that until the middle of the 19th century Europe, responsibility for educating children rested with the community. Although there still are places where communities organize themselves to operate schools for their children today, community participation in education hasn’t been fully recognized nor extended systematically to a wider practice.

Increasing amounts of research on this topic have been conducted since the late 1980s, and there are more and more resources becoming available. In preparing and implementing any efforts to promote community involvement in education, it is important to understand the whole picture of community participation: how it works; what forms are used; what benefits it can yield; and what we should expect in the process of carrying out the efforts. A deeper understanding of this issue is important since the link between community involvement and educational access and quality is not simple and involves various forms. This paper summarizes these issues by focusing on the outcome of World Bank studies which cover some selected third world communities and their strategies for sustaining collective participation and implementation of Basic Education.

Community Participation in General Education

What is Community?

Communities can be defined by characteristics that the members share, such as culture, language, tradition, law, geography, class, and race. As Shaeffer (1992) argues, some communities are homogeneous while others are heterogeneous; and some united while others conflictive. Some communities are governed and managed by leaders chosen democratically who act relatively autonomously from other levels of government, and some are governed by leaders imposed from above and represent central authorities. Zenter (1964) points out three aspects of communities. First, community is a *group structure*, whether formally or informally organized; in which members play roles, which are integrated, around goals associated with the problems from collective occupation and utilization of habitational space. Second, members of the community have some degree of *collective identification* with the occupied space. Lastly, the community has a degree of *local autonomy and responsibility*. Bray (1996) presents three different types of communities, applied in his study on community financing of education. The first one is *geographic community*, which is defined according to its members' place of residence, such as a village or district. The second type is *ethnic, racial, and religious communities*, in which membership is based on ethnic, racial, or religious identification, and commonly cuts across membership based on geographic location. The third one is *communities based on shared family or educational concerns*, which include parents' associations and similar bodies that are based on families' shared concern for the welfare of students.

What is Participation?

The term "participation" can be interpreted in various ways, depending on the context. Shaeffer (1994) clarifies different degrees or levels of participation, and provides seven possible definitions of the term, including:

- *involvement* through the mere use of a service (such as enrolling children in school or using a primary health care facility);
- *involvement* through the contribution (or extraction) of money, materials, and labor;
- *involvement* through 'attendance' (e.g. at parents' meetings at school), implying passive acceptance of decisions made by others;
- *involvement* through consultation on a particular issue;
- *participation* in the delivery of a service, often as a partner with other actors;
- *participation* as implementers of delegated powers; and
- *participation* "in real decision making at every stage," including identification of problems, the study of feasibility, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Shaeffer stresses that the first four definitions use the word *involvement* and connote largely *passive collaboration*, whereas the last three items use the word *participation* instead, implying a much more *active role*. Shaeffer further provides some specific activities that involve a high degree of participation in a wider development context, which can also be applied in the education sector, including:

- collecting and analyzing information;
- defining priorities and setting goals;
- assessing available resources;
- deciding on and planning programmes;
- designing strategies to implement these programmes and dividing responsibilities among participants;
- managing programmes;
- monitoring progress of the programmes; and
- evaluating results and impacts.

What is Community Participation in Education?

Education takes place not only in schools but also within families, communities and society. Despite the various degrees of responsibilities taken by each group, none can be the sole agent to take 100% responsibility for educating children. Parents and families cannot be the only group of people for children's education as long as their children interact with and learn from the world outside their families. Communities and society must support parents and families in the bringing up, socializing, and educating their children. Schools are institutions that can prepare children to contribute to the betterment of the society in which they operate, by equipping them with skills important in society. Schools cannot and should not operate as separate entities within society.

Since each group plays a different role in contributing to children's education, there must be efforts to make a bridge between them in order to maximize the contributions. Education takes place most efficiently and effectively when these different groups of people collaborate. Accordingly, it is important to establish and continuously attempt to develop partnerships between schools, parents and communities.

Many research studies have identified various ways of community participation in education, providing specific channels through which communities can be involved in children's education. Colletta and Perkins (1995) illustrate various forms of community participation: (a) research and data collection; (b) dialogue with policymakers; (c) school management; (d) curriculum design; (e) development of learning materials; and (f) school construction. Heneveld and Craig (1996) recognized parent and community support as one of the key factors to determine school effectiveness in Sub-Saharan Africa.

They identify five categories of parent and community support that are relevant to the region: (1) children come to school prepared to learn; (2) the community provides financial and material support to the school; (3) communication between the school, parents, and community is frequent; (4) the community has a meaningful role in school governance; and (5) community members and parents assist with instruction.

Williams (1994) argues that there are three models of education and community. The first one is *traditional community-based education*, in which communities provide new generations of young people with the education necessary for transmitting local norms and economic skills. In this model, education is deeply embedded in local social relations, and school and community are closely linked. The government, being of little use in meeting the specialized training needs of industrialized economies, plays a minor role, providing little basis for political integration at the national level. The second model is *government-provided education*, in which governments have assumed responsibility for providing and regulating education. The content of education has been largely standardized within and across countries, and governments have diminished the role of the community. However, a lack of resources and management incapability has proven that governments cannot provide the community with adequate educational delivery, fully equipped school buildings, and a full range of grades, teachers and instructional materials. This triggers the emergence of the *collaborative model*, in which community plays a supportive role in government provision of education. Williams further presents a model that shows the relations between the role of community and local demand, as show in Table 1.

Table 1. Local Demand and the Role of the Community

	High Local Demand	Low Local Demand
Initial Community Attitude Toward Education	Positive	Indifferent/Resistant
Role of Community	Potential support to supplement & reinforce government action; Can support schools in ways government cannot	Can block/underline educational efforts
Key Variables Determining Community Role	Community lacks ways to provide support	Match between content/delivery of schooling & local values, needs, economic constrains
Goal of Government Intervention	Provide useful ways community can support schools	Adapt content/delivery of schooling to local context; Provide education useful to community

Source: Williams, James H. (1994) "The Role of the Community in Education."

Epstein (1995, 1997) seeks ways to help children succeed in school and later life, and focuses on partnerships of schools, families and communities that attempt to: (a) improve school and school climate; (b) provide family services and support; (c) increase parents' skills and leadership; (d) connect families with others in the school and in the community; and (e) help teachers with their work. She summarizes various types of involvement to explain how schools, families, and communities can work productively together:

- (1) *parenting* – to help all families to establish home environments that support children's learning at schools;
- (2) *communicating* – to design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication that enable parents to learn about school programmes and their children's progress in schools as well as teachers to learn about how children do at home;
- (3) *volunteering* – to recruit and organize parent help and support;

- (4) *learning at home* – to provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with home-work and other curriculum-related activities, decisions and planning;
- (5) *decision making* – to include families in school decisions, to have parent leaders and representatives in school meetings; and
- (6) *collaborating with the community* – to identify and integrate resources as well as services from the community in order to strengthen school programmes, family practices and student learning.

What can Community Participation in Education Do?

The goal of any kind of activity that attempts to involve community and families/parents in education is to improve the educational delivery so that more children learn better and are well prepared for the changing world. There are various reasons to support the idea that community participation contributes to achieving this goal. Extensive literature research has resulted in identifying the following rationales that explain the importance of community participation in education.

Maximizing Limited Resources

Most governments all over the world have been committed to delivering education for their children. Particularly after the World Conference on Education for All, assembled in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, an increasing number of countries have attempted to reach the goal of providing education for all. However, governments have found themselves incompetent to do so because of lack of resources and capacities. Learning materials as well as human resources are limited everywhere, particularly in developing countries. The focus has shifted to finding efficient and effective ways to utilize existing limited resources.

Although some communities have historically been involved in their children's education, it hasn't been fully recognized that communities themselves have resources to contribute to education, and they can be resources by providing local knowledge for their children. Involving parents, families and communities in the process of research and data collection can reveal to them factors that contribute to lower enrolments and attendance and poor academic performance in their schools. Furthermore, parents are usually concerned about their children's education, and often are willing to provide assistance that can improve the educational delivery.

In places where teacher absenteeism and poor performance are critical issues, parents can be part of the system of monitoring and supervising teachers, ensuring that teachers arrive at classrooms on time and perform effectively in the classrooms. Parents and communities are powerful resources to be utilized not only in contributing to the improvement of educational delivery, but also in becoming the core agent of the education delivery.

In Madagascar, where Government investments at the primary level have been extremely low, parents and communities contribute money, labour and materials (World Bank 1995b). The absence of government support leaves the school infrastructure, equipment, and pupil supplies to the parents and the community. As a result, community and parents are in the centre “in keeping the schools going (p.30).”

Developing Relevant Curriculum and Learning Materials

Communities and parents' involvement helps achieve curriculum and learning materials that reflect children's everyday lives in society. When children use textbooks and other materials that illustrate their *own* lives in their community, they can easily associate what they are learning with what they have already known. In Papua New Guinea, community schools set the goal to link the culture of the pupils' home community with the culture of the school. Accordingly, the schools consider the community as the centre of learning as well as the focus of education.

As a result, the community programme schools have become central to the national curriculum development, which enables community life, such as festivals, customs, musical instruments and local business activities, to be reflected in the curriculum (Goldring, 1994).

Another example is found in Colombia's *Escuela Nueva* for multigrade schools that incorporates a number of innovative components, including community participation in school curriculum (Colleta and Perkins, 1995). In each learning task, self instructional textbooks guide students to identify examples and cultural elements from their own experience and allows local materials to be accumulated in the learning centres. The oral tradition is transcribed and classified. Local crafts, jobs and economic activities, health problems, geography, landscapes, transport, sports, dances, food, animals, vegetation, and minerals are also described and classified for use in learning experiences. Children in *Escuela Nueva* are using curriculum relevant to their way of life and that of their communities, which helps develop a series of basic learning needs, skills, attitudes, values, and knowledge that enable the children to continue learning and applying what they learn in their communities (de Arboleda, 1991). These are strategies that could be directly used in Nigerian communities, which have rich oral traditions in order to sustain the UBE programme through community participation.

Identifying and Addressing Problems

Communities can help identify and address factors that contribute to educational problems, such as low participation and poor academic performance. This is well illustrated in the case of the Gambia, in which the techniques of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) were adapted to education. The work was carried out in order to understand why girls do not attend schools, to mobilize communities around these problems, and to assist them in organizing their own solutions (World Bank 1995a). Thirteen local researchers were trained in PRA that allowed the participation of all groups in a community, including illiterate and literate, young and old, females and males. A sample of seven rural villages was selected, in which a team of researchers worked with residents focusing on group discussions, mapping of the village, calendars of income and expenditure, and matrices of community and education problems. The research revealed that key disincentives to educating girls were related to: (a) inadequate supply of schools, particularly middle schools; (b) high costs of schooling; (c) higher risk of early pregnancy; (d) loss of respect for traditional values, particularly obedience and humility towards husbands; and (e) perceptions, particularly among men, that girls will be less successful in life generally. A further step was taken in two of the seven communities where residents were invited to select six important problems from a longer list that they had developed previously which they could begin to address in a practical way, utilizing mainly their own resources. Various options for solving problems were devised and those seeming to have the highest chance of success were integrated into a Community Action Plan.

Promoting Girls' Education

Community participation can contribute to promoting girls' education (UNICEF, 1992). Through participating in school activities and frequently communicating with teachers, parents and communities can learn that girls' education contributes to the improvement of various aspects of their lives, such as increased economic productivity, improved family health and nutrition, reduced fertility rates, and reduced child mortality rates. Involving parents and communities in discussions as part of school activities also helps to identify factors that prevent girls from schooling. Parents are encouraged to express their concern and reasons why they are not sending their daughters to school. For instance, many parents in rural areas are reluctant to send their daughters to schools located in distant areas, concerned about the security of their daughters on the way to and from the school. In addition, since girls are important labours in the household, helping their mothers to do the chores and take care of their young siblings, the time that requires going to and from school seems too much to waste for the parents.

These issues are serious obstacles and have to be addressed and overcome in order to promote girls' education. Involving parents and communities in school activities also helps to identify possible teachers in the community, especially local female teachers, which greatly helps girls' education. Furthermore, in places where communities are indifferent in girls' education, elderly people or religious leaders who are respected by community members can convince them to send their girls to schools, if the dialogue with these respected people takes place successfully.

Creating and Nourishing Community-School Partnerships

There are various ways to bring parents and community members closer to schools which they serve, including: (a) minimizing discontinuities between schools and communities, and between schools and families; (b) minimizing conflicts between schools and communities, schools and families, teachers and parents, and what is taught in school and what is taught at home; (c) making easy transition of pupils going from home to school; (d) preparing pupils to engage in learning experiences; and (e) minimizing cultural shock of new entrants to schooling (Cariño and Valismo, 1994). Communities can also contribute to schools by sending respected community members, such as religious leaders or tribe heads, to the classrooms and talk about community history, traditions, customs, and culture, which have been historically celebrated in the community. Schools themselves can contribute to community efforts by developing sustainable solutions to local problems. One example is found in the *Social Forestry, Education and Participation pilot project* (SFEP) in Thailand, documented by McDonough and Wheeler (1998).

The purpose of the project is to change teaching, learning, and school-community relations by involving fifth and six grade students in studies of local village problems related to forest management. The students visited communities and asked questions about village history and the origins and causes of various forest-related problems. Community members helped them understand concepts taught in schools, and students used any resource available within the communities to enhance their understanding. In addition to gathering data from villagers, students went to nearby forests to study plants and animals as part of their regular science lessons. Some local villagers came along as "experts" to help them understand various species indigenous to that village. McDonough and Wheeler examined the project and found that communities have much to contribute to the education of their youth. If given the chance to become more involved in the education of their youth, communities come to see that their knowledge about village history, social relations, and economic structure is relevant to what students could learn in school. In addition, the curriculum can be linked to daily life and teachers are able to use a much wider array of resources to improve student learning.

Realizing Democracy

Where schools are perceived as authoritarian institutions, parents and community members do not feel welcomed to participate in their children's education. They are not capable of taking any responsibility in school issues and tend to feel that education is something that should be taken care of by educational professionals at schools. Many people, especially minority groups in many developing countries, develop this kind of negative attitudes towards schools because they are not treated by teachers with respect. For instance, those who do not speak the country's official language and embrace other than mainstream traditions and culture feel discouraged in classrooms where teachers don't show respect to their linguistic and cultural diversity. In the history, there were times when children were prohibited from speaking their first language in schools and they got severe punishment when they broke the rule imposed by the school or the government. This educational environment is unfavourable to parents and children and, therefore, contributes to these students' low participation, poor academic performance, and high repeat and dropout rates. Involving communities in schools is a way of reaching democracy through identifying and addressing inequities embedded in institutions and society as a whole. In addition, it is a strategy to create an environment in which parents feel comfortable participating in schools. Reimers (1997) considers the case of *Fe y Alegría* (Faith and Joy), a non-governmental organization which provides formal and nonformal education at different levels in 12 countries in Latin America, as a good illustration of this approach. *Fe y Alegría* schools attempt to achieve the curriculum that recognizes and builds on the community where the students live. The schools also aim to use teacher training to promote appreciation of the diversity of student backgrounds and students' use of non-standard forms of language in school.

This innovation attempts to place the schools where they belong in the community, and promote mechanisms for community involvement in running the school. Reimers argues, "this is very important for the support of democracy as it promotes local participation to solve local problems-education (p.41)."

Moreover, parental involvement in education is seen as a right, or as an outright democratic value in some countries. According to OECD study (1997), "in Denmark, England, and Wales; parents have a right to be represented on the governing bodies of schools; in France, they have a right to representation on a whole range of policy-making bodies; the Parent's Charter gives English and Welsh parents a number of rights, including the right to certain information from the school; in Spain, the Constitution recognizes the right of teachers, parents and students to participate in defining the scope and nature of the education service; and forthcoming legislation in Ireland will place parents at the center of the education process, and give them a wide range of statutory rights in relation to education (p.26)."

Increasing Accountability

Parental involvement in education, particularly in school governance, is seen as a means of making schools more accountable to the society which funds them. This has been witnessed in some places such as England and Wales, Canada and the United States. The notion of parental involvement for accountability derives from a more market-oriented concept in which school-family partnerships are viewed rather like business partnership, through which the two parties receive mutual and complementary benefits which enable them to operate more effectively (OECD, 1997).

The extensive examination of six case studies on the Philippines, Kenya, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Colombia and Bolivia lead Rugh and Bossert (1998) to the conclusion that teachers and other school staff feel they should be accountable to community clients only when the community holds some power over them: when they either come from the same village and have social ties; if their continued employment or salaries depend on community satisfaction; or sometimes when community education committees exist to manage the schools and members are empowered to exert their influence (p.157). They also argue that accountability is developed through routine parents' meetings and reporting systems on student progress. When parents contribute their time, labor, materials, land, and funds, they tend to be more involved in school activities, including participating in meetings with teachers and monitoring teachers' performance. Teachers and school staff, in turn, feel more obliged to deliver better education for the students in order to respond to the needs of parents and communities. Participation can greatly help develop accountability, which contributes to improving the education delivery.

A Community Support Programmes (CSP) process in Balochistan, Pakistan, was developed to ensure village commitment to girls' education. It defines the responsibilities of the community and the Directorate of Primary Education. The greater the participation of the community, both financially and in-kind, means they are more likely to demand accountability from staff. Parents are also more involved in the day-to-day management of the school where they see what is happening and what needs to be corrected. The CSP has formed Village Education Committee (VEC) that consists of five to seven men whose daughters will attend the school. VECs are formed to serve as the school's official representative to the government. The forming of VECs has contributed to the CSP's establishment of an organizational structure that encourages teachers' and local administrators' accountability to parents. Once the school is opened, VEC members are empowered to report teacher attendance or behaviour problems to the government and to recommend teachers for training.

Ensuring Sustainability

One of the major factors to ensure sustainability of programmes is the availability of funds, whether from governments, private institutions, or donor organizations. In this regard, community participation in education cannot ensure the sustainability of schools by itself since communities oftentimes have to rely on external funding to keep the programme sustained. However, involving community is a way to ensure that the benefits brought by a development programme will be maintained after the external interventions are stopped. Thus, sustainability is dependent on the degree of self-reliance developed in target communities and on the social and political commitment in the wider society to development programmes that support the continuation of newly self-reliance communities (Lovell, 1992). Community members are expected to be actively involved in the process of interventions through planning, implementation, and evaluation. Furthermore, they are expected to acquire skills and knowledge that will later enable them to take over the project or programme.

Improving Home Environment

Community participation can contribute to preparing and improving home environment, by encouraging parents to understand the benefits of their children's schooling. A World Bank study (1997) which analysed primary education in India, discovered that families were aware of what education could contribute to their children's learning achievement, even in disadvantaged districts. It also showed that students from families that encouraged children's schooling, by allocating time at home for study, encouraging reading, and supporting their children's educational aspirations, scored significantly higher on tests of learning achievement.

The study also shows that families who are involved in schools not only have a better understanding about education but also become more willing to cooperate with schools in attempts to improve children's learning. In addition, parents can help their children with homework, and make sure that children are physically ready to learn at schools. From their extensive literature research, Heneveld and Craig (1996) argue that the parent and the community are one of the key factors to determine school effectiveness because they can prepare children's readiness to come to school and their cognitive development, by ensuring children's well-balanced nutrition and health.

Community Participation and Education in Nigeria

In Nigeria, various development partners have pioneered community development initiatives aimed at empowering communities to take total control of their education programmes. I will illustrate with two fairly good examples. DFID, through the British Council, provided Nigerian communities with its Community Education Programme which was aimed at enhancing learning achievement among primary age and adult learners, particularly girls and women, by improving quality and increasing access to basic education in Isukwuto/Umunneochi Local Government area of Abia State in Eastern Nigeria and the nomadic groups in Adamawa/Taraba states in Northern Nigeria. Community members from the participating villages helped to design their own projects to be implemented through Community Education Committees. The importance of getting local stakeholders to have ownership of their projects was recognised at an early stage. Community priorities from Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), and within the broad mandate of the UBE programme, were thus identified as:

- building and refurbishing adult and craft centres
- providing learning materials, envisaged as primers, for adult learners
- providing spectacles for older learners and payment for literacy instructors
- providing English classes in Abia State
- developing the use of materials in local languages for the Ibibio in Akwa Ibom
- increasing the use of Fulfulde for the Fulani nomads
- linking literacy with income-generation activities in Abia State to encourage support for the project.

Community members made commitments to what they could realistically do to help with their projects. They were made aware that the funding available was fairly small and was for a limited duration.

The adult educators who facilitated proceedings during the consultation exercise stressed the importance of community self-help and how the communities could show commitment by supplying labour and materials.

The Fulani clan leaders included the commitment to dialogue with heads of households to promote enrolment at school and attendance at literacy classes. The communities in which these commitments were honoured had a continuing and active involvement, which contributed greatly to the success of the project in those areas. The communities elected the Community Education Committees, which gave a measure of power to the local people.

It also created some problems because the desires of the communities were not always in line with the guidelines set down by the donors. In particular, gender balance was an integral part of the programme as it was originally conceived. In one project no women at all were elected initially. The project manager then had to go to the communities and explain the requirement of female participation. New elections were held, women were elected, and to the project manager's surprise, ninety per cent of the communities chose to have women as their treasurers.

A second development partner, the World Bank had been the only major development agency during the 1990's to support the primary education sector in Nigeria. It focused its role in supporting the implementation of the universal primary education. The Bank provided assistance in the form of a credit to support the Primary Education Project that was implemented in two phases. The project was aimed at upgrading and monitoring quality in primary education, improve planning and research capacities, and contribute to the improvement of resource allocations. The first phase was more of a consolidation phase that provided support for planning UBE. The second phase was more focused and concentrated upon a limited number of schools throughout Nigeria. Five main issues were addressed: human resource capacity, access and equity, quality, and information for decision-making. These choices were strategic and based upon the experience gained in the first phase, such as the capacity within the country, the cost of interventions, the need to make an early and visible impact, and the contribution that could be made by all levels of government and local communities.

Through the World Bank credit loan facilities, it was open to communities to propose, through first National Primary Education Commission (NPEC), and later Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), a series of self-help projects that would attract *counterpart* funding from the *communities* aimed at financing projects that would increase enrolment and improve the quality of education in the various communities. Indeed, this strategy was the outcome of client-consultations with various stakeholders in a series of field-dependent surveys undertaken on behalf of the World Bank by a team of consultants throughout the country from 1995. Two broad swathes of community-based projects were initiated, PEP I and PEP II (Primary Education Project).

The latter was specifically designed to form a bridge between the PEP I and UBE, in which over 7,740 projects were envisaged to make significant impact in many communities throughout the country.

In all of these projects, planning and execution was done by local communities with financial assistance from the World Bank credit facility. The Project Implementation Committees set up to implement the project is drawn exclusively from the local community. The projects themselves take extremely diverse dimension and included:

- renovation and rehabilitation of school buildings,
- provision of toilet facilities for the children,
- provision of first aid and safe drinking water,
- creating programmes for the education of persons who need basic education but could not obtain same through formal education using existing facilities
- provision of electricity
- provision of access road
- setting up craft centres
- school gardening programmes

All these were aimed at incorporating the ideas of Universal Basic Education and at the same time provide a meaningful education or conditions for learning for the pupils and other learners through community inputs. The various successes recorded for the programmes show that once communities are financially and managerially involved in decision-making about projects in their locality, they tend to value it and use it as a basis for increasing enrolment.

Challenges of Community Participation and UBE in Nigeria

Having seen the significance of community participation in various communities around the world, let us now focus on how these models of participation can empower the UBE programme in Nigeria.

Community participation can contribute to UBE delivery through various channels. The following is a list of ways through which communities can contribute to the education delivery

- advocating enrolment and education benefits;
- boosting morale of school staff;
- raising money for schools;
- ensuring students' regular attendance and completion;
- constructing, repairing and improving school facilities;
- contributing in labour, materials, land, and funds;

- recruiting and supporting teachers;
- making decisions about school locations and schedules;
- monitoring and following up on teacher attendance and performance;
- forming village education committees to manage schools;
- actively attending school meetings to learn about children's learning progress and classroom behaviour;
- providing skill instruction and local culture information;
- helping children with studying;
- garnering more resources from and solving problems through the education bureaucracy;
- advocating and promoting girls' education;
- providing security for teachers by preparing adequate housing for them;
- scheduling school calendars;
- handling the budget to operate schools;
- identifying factors contributing to educational problems (low enrolments, and high repetition and dropout); and
- preparing children's readiness for schooling by providing them with adequate nutrition and stimuli for their cognitive development.

All these were indeed some of the demonstrable outcomes of the various projects in communities as initiated by the communities and funded through the efforts of development partners.

To Establish Communication Channels

In order to exercise any kind of community participation, there needs to be understanding among all stakeholders, all people who are targeted. Reasons and benefits of community participation have to be clearly addressed and understood by people. In addition, a continuing dialogue between schools and community is essential because it usually takes a long period of time to yield any benefit. Also all the stakeholders need to share the understanding that responsibility to educate children cannot be taken by a single group of people. One of the strategies to contribute to successful community participation in the UBE is to intensify the *social marketing campaign*, and an *awareness campaign*, in order to promote community involvement in children's education. Such campaigns, already embarked on by the Department of Social Mobilization in the UBE, and designed to target parents and community members can help them increase the understanding of the communities on the benefits of their collaboration with teachers and schools. It is also helpful if community members themselves can get involved in the campaigns, so that they feel more responsible and attempt to recruit more people from communities.

To Conduct Continuous Assessment

It is important to conduct assessment of any practices of community participation continuously, once the implementation gets started. The communities are always evolving and so are their needs and demands; therefore, the strategies need to be modified and tailored accordingly. Original plans need to be carefully designed and examined, but also need to be flexible enough to leave room for making changes in the efforts of the implementation. Specifically, the assessment should look at the degree of the effects of the practices. Also important is to make sure that the different stakeholders' voices are reflected in the implementation practice.

Conclusions

Community participation itself is not a goal in educational delivery, or a panacea to solve complicated issues contributing to poor educational quality in both developing and developed countries. It is a process that facilitates the realization of improving educational quality and the promotion of democracy within society. Further, it is a process through which communities can take effective control of their own affairs from their own perspectives. There are many restraints to community participation that were glossed over by this review. As experience with the Nigerian World Bank-assisted Primary Education Project (PEP) shows, while the concept of counterpart funding is laudable in identifying and sourcing for funding for educational projects, sheer poverty in the communities limits the amount of fund they can offer. Further, there was the expectation from the communities that once their basic problems of funding can be taken care of by an external agency, they do not need to provide additional funding to sustain locally relevant projects.

Community participation in the realization of a mass education programme like the UBE offers the following advantages:

- increased demand for education
- increased access and enrolment
- improvements in gender equity
- improved retention, particularly of girls
- increased quality of education
- improved student performance
- good results with untrained teachers
- new methods of teaching and learning
- improved attendance and promptness for both teachers and students

- improved infrastructure
- increased government and outside support (for existing schools)
- increased government-community relations and partnerships
- effective parents' associations or PTAs
- communities more involved in education
- increased parental participation
- increased relevance of schools to local needs
- impacts on national education systems and education reform.

The challenges for community participation mirror, in many ways, their strengths, thus revealing that it is not simply the innovation of the community school that improves education, but a whole range of factors. Challenges include:

- poor student performance
- poor teacher qualifications
- lack of recognition for unofficial teacher training
- poor quality of education
- lack of support and supervision for teachers
- lack of teachers
- lack of local resources
- lack of community financing
- lack of government support
- not reaching gender equity goals
- low enrolments, dropout, and repetition
- poor infrastructure and lack of textbooks and materials
- lack of sustainability (financial, managerial)
- lack of places for community school students to continue and lack of certification
- hostile attitudes toward and lack of information about community schools
- lack of legislation regarding community schools
- lack of contact with other schools for academic or extra-curricular activities
- lack of community school students continuing their education in public schools.

Despite these challenges, community participation is one of the best methods through which the objectives of the UBE Programme in Nigeria could be achieved. For the programme to succeed, the communities must take ownership of the programme at the grassroots levels.

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