Primary School Leadership for Education Quality

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Leadership & Management of Change Large Scale Project: L&M

Joint RPC Conference
Education Access, Quality and Outcomes in Low and Middle Income Countries
Institute of Education, 15 November 2010
OBJECTIVE

Inform on effective practices of leading and managing change to improve primary education quality within disadvantaged communities in Ghana and Tanzania

PARTNERS

University of Cape Coast
Ghana

University of Bath, UK

University of Bristol, UK

University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Aga Khan University
Pakistan
School leadership is critical to quality

Given:
- an enabling policy environment
- professional support
- training

Head teachers can improve the quality of T&L in their schools
Research Design

META-ANALYSIS

BASELINE ACTIVITIES
• Needs analysis workshop (Policy and practitioner levels)
• Baseline studies

ACTION RESEARCH
Headteacher Diaries / Facilitators reports

CASE STUDIES

School Self-Evaluation tools
Quality issues identified by HTs

- Teachers’ time on task and commitment
- Parental support for child learning
- Access to resources
- Community Support
- Frequency of changes in policy
- Support from Educational Authorities
- Headteachers' leadership
- Decentralisation (extended role of HT)
Headteachers …

- Lacked confidence to initiate change (Gh)
- Not adequately prepared for leadership
- Did not see themselves as promoters of learning.
- Found it easier to mobilise community and parents than improve T&L (Tz)
- More motivated to improve T&L for upper than lower years
A Headteacher’s Lamentation

“You see, I taught for fifteen years before I became a head but they say I should teach as well … I teach and I do administration going to district office, attending meetings, doing many things and teaching at the same time but I’m not paid double pay. It’s not fair .. We headteachers are cheated … They should make teachers to help children to learn so we heads do the administration’

A rural head, Ghana
Enabling Headteachers

- Action Research and School-Self Evaluation workshops
- HT supported to set research agenda (identified school-level challenges inhibiting quality education)
- HT encouraged to identify and introduce interventions for addressing challenges
- Guided to keep diaries and report on findings
- Regular contact with facilitator
- Peer support group
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<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Impact</th>
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<td>Girls not occupying leadership positions</td>
<td>• Engaged female role models to interact with pupils.</td>
<td>Girls’ participation in leadership improved their confidence</td>
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<td>• School and class prefect positions given to girls</td>
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<td>Pupils travelling long distances arrive late at school. This affects learning.</td>
<td>• Dialogue with community/SMC &amp; Educational Authorities.</td>
<td>• Pupil lateness reduced.</td>
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<td>• Re-organised time table</td>
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<td>• Performance, e.g. in maths, improved</td>
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<td>Truancy and parent inaction.</td>
<td>• Close monitoring and support to small number.</td>
<td>• Truancy reduced throughout school</td>
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<td>• School-wide strategy, led by truancy committee</td>
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<td>• Advice given to neighbouring school</td>
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<td>• Efforts to engage students in class</td>
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POLICY IMPLICATIONS

• Head teacher training should be prioritised
  – Emphasis on leadership for learning
  – AR in which HT sets agenda
  – Skills and tools for evaluating school quality

• Management of head teachers
  – Ongoing facilitative support at district level
  – Some level of autonomy for HT professional practice
  – Identify and target struggling schools

• Develop leadership capacity of district level officers & inspectors
  – In facilitative learning-focused management styles

• Top-down policies aligned to bottom-up initiatives
IMPACT ON POLICY

Ghana: Findings informed

• MOE’s 2010 Education Sector Review

• Primary school leadership development programmes

• On-going review of Headteachers’ Handbook
THE BIG QUESTION?

How can we ensure sustained professional support for headteachers to enable them to create school environments for quality T&L?
FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

• Role of district level officers in quality improvement

• Role of school inspectorates in supporting school level initiatives

• *Monitoring* and *evaluation* of HT professional development programmes

• Leadership, corporal punishment policy and pupil learning