School-based Management:

Reconceptualizing to Improve Learning Outcomes

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Educational decentralization is a worldwide phenomenon, but as a concept it hides more than it reveals. It often refers to the devolution of some authority to the local school and community level, but two large problems remain. First, in all cases, key aspects of authority are retained at the regional and central level. In this sense, decentralization is a misnomer. Second, when decentralization does occur, it usually refers to structural elements (such as site-based councils), thereby missing the day-to-day capacities and activities that would make it work for school improvement.

What will move us forward, we believe, is to obtain a greater specific understanding of (a) under what conditions does school-based management produce best results, and (b) what are the relative roles and relationships between the school/community and the region/center.

This review paper pursues these questions in four sections. First, we review briefly the literature from Western sources to identify why school-based management (SBM) usually fails. Second, we consider very recent literature which unpacks the questions of SBM to identify the conditions and processes under which SBM does work. Interestingly, these factors involve both internal school/community conditions and external infrastructure components. Third, we take up recent research in developing countries to identify the similarities and differences to the Western research. We especially focus in this third section on projects which are obtaining promising results. Fourth, we summarize the main strategic implications for establishing powerful school-based developments which positively affect learning outcomes.

1. The Failure of School-based Management

Six years ago we reviewed several empirical studies involving SBM, concluding that SBM, in its then present form, did not impact teaching and learning (Fullan, 1993). We mention three of the more carefully conducted studies here. For example, Taylor & Teddlie (1992) examined classrooms in thirty-three schools in the United States — of these, 16 schools had established SBM programs as part of a new pilot project initiative, and 17 schools served as a control group which had not adopted SBM. The 33 schools were from the same district. Taylor and Teddlie did find that teachers in this study did not alter their practice … increasing their participation in decision-making did not overcome norms of autonomy so that teachers would feel empowered to collaborate with their colleagues. (p.10)

Other evidence from classroom observation failed to indicate changes in classroom environment and student learning activities. Despite considerable rhetoric and what the authors saw as 'a genuine desire to professionalize teaching', 'the core mission of the school seemed ancillary to the SBM project' (p. 19). Again, substantive change in the pedagogy (teaching strategies and assessment), and in the way teachers worked together on instructional matters proved to be elusive. These findings would not be as noteworthy, claim the authors, except for the fact that 'the study occurred in a district recognized nationally as a leader in implementing restructuring reforms' (p. 16). Similarly, Hallinger, Murphy and Hausman, (1991) found that teachers and principals in their sample were highly in favor of restructuring, but did not make connections 'between new governance structures and the teaching-learning process'.

Virtually identical findings arise in Weiss' (1992) investigation of shared decision-making (SDM) in twelve high schools in eleven states in the US (half were selected because they had implemented SDM; the other half were run in a traditional principal-led manner). Weiss did find that teachers in SDM schools were more likely to mention involvement in the decision-making process (i.e., composition of committees, procedures, etc.) but 'schools with SDM did not pay more attention to issues of curriculum than traditionally managed schools, and pedagogical issues and student concerns were low on the list for both sets of schools.' (p. 2)

The research since 1993, which focussed directly on SBM, reports essentially the same results on a very thorough review of research. Leithwood and Menzies (1998) examined 83 empirical studies of school-based management. Building on Murphy and Beck (1995), Leithwood and Menzies identify four types of SBM: administrative control (the principal is dominant); professional control (teachers are dominant); community control (parent/community dominates) and balanced control (parents and professional are equals). Of the 83 studies reviewed, 28 were classified as administrative, 37 as professional, 33 as community, and 2 as balanced.

Leithwood and Menzes' overall conclusion is that:

> There is virtually no firm, research-based knowledge about the direct or indirect effects of SBM on students … the little research-based evidence that does exist suggests that the effects on students are just as likely to be negative as positive. There is an awesome gap between the rhetoric and the reality of SBM's contribution to student growth in light of the widespread advocacy of SBM. (p. 34)

The above findings are not surprising, largely because SBM is an amorphous umbrella concept which is treated as an end in itself. In order to unravel the role of SBM we must focus on the more basic questions of (a) What are we trying to accomplish, i.e., To what end is SBM a means?, and (b) What are the pathways and associated conditions for pursuing these more basic ends?

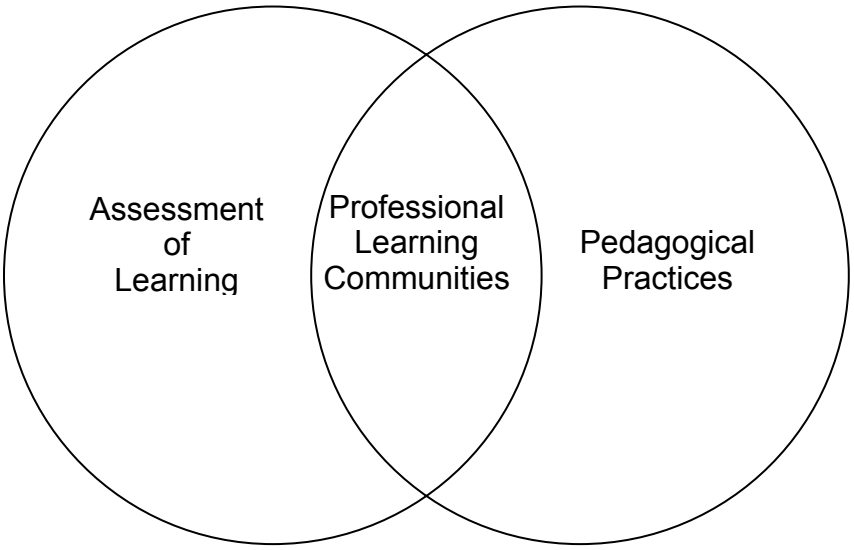
In other words, SBM has failed to live up to its promise because as a general strategy, SBM fails to specify and otherwise is unlikely 'to trigger changes in the chain of variables linking [SBM] to student learning' (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998:340). We now turn to a more promising analysis of SBM.

2. SBM Reconceptualized

Coming at school development from another direction, those of us who have studied "collaborative cultures" or "professional learning communities" have shed more light on the conditions under which improvement occurs. The clearest example is the combined work of Newmann and Wehlage (1995) and Louis and Marks (1998). These authors examined school reform in a large survey sample of 800 schools, and a more focussed set of case studies involving 24 schools.

Newmann and his colleagues found that some schools did disproportionately well in affecting the performance of students (in mathematics, science and social studies). The essence of their findings is that the more successful schools had teachers and administrators who (1) formed a professional learning community, that (2) focussed on student work (assessment), and (3) changed their instructional practice (pedagogy and support for learning in the classroom) accordingly in order to get better results. They did this on a continuous basis (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 The nature of professional learning communities (Adapted from Newmann and Wehlage, 1995, and Louis and Kruse, 1995).



As Louis and Marks (1998) put it:

> Our findings suggest that the organization of teachers' work, in ways that promote professional community, has a positive relationship with the organization of classrooms for learning and the academic performance of students. Professional community among teachers proved to be associated with both [effective] pedagogy and social support [in the classroom] for achievement among students. (p. 558)

Another powerful example is provided by Bryk et al (1998) from their longitudinal study of the Chicago school reform over the past decade. They found

that schools that made a difference worked differently as professional communities of teachers discussed and acted on new ideas:

> In schools making systemic changes, structures are established which create opportunities for such interactions to occur. As teachers develop a broader say in school decision making, they may also begin to experiment with new roles, including working collaboratively. This restructuring of teachers' work signifies a broadening professional community where teachers feel more comfortable exchanging ideas, and where a collective sense of responsibility for student development is likely to emerge. These characteristics of systemic restructuring contrast with conventional school practice where teachers work more autonomously, and there may be little meaningful professional exchange among co-workers. (p. 128)

Our label for what is happening in these schools is 'reculturing' or 'capacity-building' i.e., this is a process of increasing the focus on core instructional goals, processes and outcomes by improving the capacity of teachers and others to work together on these matters. (Fullan, 1999) These findings and analysis have advanced us considerably (but not completely as we shall see below). To know the inner workings of professional learning communities contributes great insights. For example, this has enabled us to recommend that teachers must become more 'assessment literate' (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1998) Assessment literacy refers to the capacity of teachers—alone and together— (a) to examine and accurately understand student work and performance data, and correspondingly, (b) to develop classroom and school plans to alter conditions necessary to achieve better results. Schools, in fact, do

better when they pay close attention to external standards and corresponding achievement data.

There are two further components that must be added before we can draw more positive conclusions about reconceptualizing SBM. The first of these is that little has been said about the role of parents and communities. There is considerable evidence that engagement and rapport between the community and the school enhanced learning of students, but that such involvement, especially in disadvantaged school is limited (Epstein et al, 1997; Coleman, 1998). Bryk et al, in the Chicago study found that successful schools, in addition to developing a professional community, also actively pursued 'the engagement of parents and community resources'. These schools:

> …maintain a sustained focus on strengthening the involvement of parents with the school and their children's schooling. They also actively seek to strengthen the ties with the local community and especially those resources that bear on the caring of children. As these personal interactions expand and become institutionalized in the life of the school, the quality of the relationships between local professionals and their community changes. Greater trust and mutual engagement begins to characterize these encounters. In contrast, schools with unfocused initiatives may set more distinct boundaries between themselves and their neighborhoods. Extant problems in these relationships may not be directly addressed. The broader community resources that could assist improvement efforts in the school are not tapped. These schools remain more isolated from their students' parents and their communities. (Bryk et al, 1998a, pp. 127-8)

As we shall see in the next section, school-based reform in developing countries may more naturally encompass parent and community involvement as part of a seamless local development reform effort.

The second component left out up to this point involves the realization that SBM decidedly does not mean leaving decentralized schools and communities on their own. There is now growing evidence, most of it recent, that SBM must also be addressed in terms of the external infrastructure likely to promote the kind of capacity-building we see happening in successful projects.

Wohlstetter et al (1997) in addition to confirming that successful SBM schools focus on instructional improvement through professional learning communities, found that the immediate external infrastructure is essential to SBM development:

> … the successful districts we studied were gradually introducing changes in the information, accountability and control systems to enable schools to become self-improving entities, better able to effectively manage themselves. They were also introducing change to the district-level organization to support and stimulate school-level improvement. (p. 54)

Similarly, Louis and Marks (1998:a561) conclude that, while individual teacher performance is critical and needs to be supported within the school, ‘schools and teachers will need help from outside in learning new forms of pedagogy and in how to assess the development of classroom qualities that foster learning’.

It is only recently that attention has been paid to the concept of the external infrastructure needed to support SBM. Bryk et al (1998) have made an

excellent start on this component. Although they are referring to local districts, their formulation can be extrapolated to larger regional and state entities. Bryk et al argue that four elements of an external reform infrastructure must be systemically incorporated:

- Maintain decentralization;
- Provide for local capacity-building;
- Establish rigorous external accountability;
- Stimulate access to innovation.

The first element is to maintain and develop *decentralization policies* (such as SBM and local agency responsibilities). While this first aspect says “trust decentralization,” the other three components, in effect say “but not completely” (because it will not happen on its own). The trick is not to abandon failed SBM, but to strengthen it. The second aspect, *local capacity-building*, does just that. Here the investment is in policies, training, professional development, ongoing support, etc. in order to develop the capacity of schools and communities to pursue and sustain improvement at the local level within a national context of policies. These activities range from training for school teams, local school councils, redesign of initial teacher education, and the panoply of new activities that will be needed to prepare teachers, principals, parents, and so on to function as professional learning communities inside and outside the school.

Third, *a rigorous external accountability system* must be built into the infrastructure. Schools do best when they pay close attention to standards and performance. The external accountability system generates data and procedures

that make this more likely and more thorough. However, such a system must be primarily (not exclusively, as we will see in a moment) based on a philosophy of capacity-building, i.e., a philosophy of using 'assessment for learning' and otherwise enabling educators to become more assessment literate. No external formal accountability system can have an impact in the long run unless it has a capacity-building philosophy. While this is the foremost primary goal, the external accountability system must also have the responsibility to intervene in persistently failing situations. Balancing accountability support and accountability intervention is obviously a tough call, but this is precisely how sophisticated the external infrastructure must become.

Fourth, ideas are important; scientific breakthroughs about learning are on the rise; innovations are being attempted around the world. Therefore, the *stimulation of innovation* must be a strong feature of the infrastructure. Investments must be made in research, development, innovative networks, etc., so that the marketplace of educational ideas is constantly being stimulated. The external system must help schools and school districts access ideas, and through capacity-building, support the development of accountable professional communities.

We are now in a position to reconceptualize SBM for success. We have said that instead of thinking of SBM as an end in itself, let's identify what produces better results, and then ask if SBM can contribute to this enterprise. We have focussed on three key non-structural elements: 1) building professional learning communities; (2) developing the two-way seamless relationship between schools and their communities; and (3) establishing and extending infrastructures

which contribute to (1) and (2), as well as serving as a framework for external accountability.

In brief, SBM is local capacity-building operating within an external framework. While SBM has a structural element, it is culture that is the primary agent of change, i.e., a culture that focuses on that of continuous improvement. It is when SBM contributes to the local problem solving and mobilization of effort by all stakeholders that it succeeds.

One final, and absolutely critical caution: There is a fatal flaw in the research. Even the best research on SBM identified factors and conditions associated with success, *it does not tell us how to establish those conditions when they do not exist*. Put another way, research portrays successful cases once they are 'up and running' (and in a very few cases how they evolved), it provides little insight on how to get there. For example, let us consider Beck and Murphy's (1998) excellent article on 'Untangling the Variables' in SBM. Beck and Murphy found that SBM works when there is 'a learning imperative', 'a community imperative', 'a capacity-building imperative', and a 'leadership imperative.' Beck and Murphy (1998:383) argue that people at the local level 'must feel a sense of urgency about learning, community, capacity-building and leadership, and garner the knowledge and skills to enable them to respond to these imperatives.' SBM *enabled* schools to proceed more quickly and effectively when these imperatives were evident; it did *not cause* the condition to happen. In other words, strategies must focus directly on capacity-building and other aspects of establishing a learning culture; new policies and structures may be a necessary, but are not a sufficient step for reform.

In conclusion, we can now better conceptualize what is needed for SBM to be effective, and even be fairly precise about how it can work. (See also the ten strategic intentions in Caldwell and Spinks, 1998.) But, there is no silver bullet or short cut to getting it to happen. Senge (1999) comments that most leadership-driven reforms have failed, even those advocating local development, because they fail to appreciate the conditions under which local capacity can evolve. As he puts it:

> Leaders instigating change are often like gardeners standing over their plants, importing them: “Grow! Try harder! You can do it!” No gardener tried to convince a plant to “want” to grow. (p. 8)

To appreciate that SBM means developing professional learning communities, establishing new capacities across the school and community, and developing broader infrastructures that stimulate and support local development in light of national goals, is a first step toward overcoming the past failures of most SBM efforts.

3. SBM in Developing Countries

As we have seen, establishing effective SBM is difficult in Western countries, even where there is often more of a tradition of local authority, and where more resources are available. In many developing countries where there is a legacy of hierarchical or top-down models of education management from colonial days, it represents a radical change. Not only do those in power at central and middle levels of management have to give up control, but also those at the school and community level have to be willing and capable of operating in new ways. Further, new forms and responsibilities with respect to accountability

must shift to school levels, whereby accountability becomes *outward* to parents and local communities as well as *upward* to regional or central authorities.

Clearly, the professional development or learning needed to make such shifts is enormous. As Hanson (1997) observed:

> Decentralization is not created by passing a law. Rather it must be *built* by overcoming a series of challenges at the center and the periphery by, for example, changing long established behaviours and attitudes, developing new skills, convincing people in the center who enjoy exercising power to give it up, permitting and sometimes encouraging people to take creative risks, promoting and rewarding local initiatives, and maintaining continuity with the decentralization reform even as governments change. (Hanson, 1997:14)

It is not surprising that there is not yet any overall evidence that SBM in developing countries is directly linked to improvements in the quality of learning. What is instructive, however, is to identify those cases that begin to specify the conditions under which decentralized reform strategies do make a difference. Thus, we have opted to review in more detail a few well-researched case studies that will inform us about the circumstances under which SBM can be more fully assessed. These studies come from Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Anderson and Nderitu (1999) provide a thorough evaluation of the Mombasa School Improvement Programme (MSIP) in Kenya. The Mombasa SIP began in 1994 with a five year mandate. It involves a three-way partnership among the Aga Khan group, the Municipality of Mombasa, and the Mombasa School District. There are 112 schools in the district ranging from urban to rural. Anderson and Nderitu (1999:2) state that “the district had a history of poor

education performance and a reputation of low community involvement and support for primary education."

The authors summarize the overall aim of the project as improving the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools:

> Major strategic components of the project addressed in this evaluation include the provision of classroom-based inservice teacher training to promote the use of child centered teaching methods; efforts to strengthen the capacity of local Teacher Advisory Centers (TACs) to provide professional support for teachers; management training for headteachers and municipal education officials (e.g., inspectors, school advisors, TAC tutors); and the mobilization of parent involvement and financial support for education at the school level [through the facilitation of a Community Development Officer]. (Anderson and Nderitu, 1991:1)

Anderson and Nderitu found that implementation of SIP has become widespread (since mid-1996), that there is evidence of impact on the work of teachers and their relationships to students and community members, and that while it is too early to assess the impact on student learning outcomes, most of the evidence is positive.

What is more helpful, given our reviews earlier in this paper are the findings about the conditions under which impact is achieved relative to each of the constituency groups.

Six conclusions are drawn about *teachers:*

1. Frequent individual professional assistance leads to new teaching methods in practice.

2. Some teachers implement “activities” without obvious connections to learning.

3. Inquiry-oriented teaching and learning activities are the most difficult to master.

4. Teachers rarely involve students in activities that require them to express or demonstrate their understanding of key concepts and procedures.

5. Most teachers demonstrate a novice understanding of small group learning methods.

6. Teacher access to continuous external and classroom-based professional development and material support is needed to enable teacher mastery of activity-based child centered teaching methods. Teacher Advisory Centers (TAC) have been crucial in this regard.

For *headteachers:*

Changes in headteacher management include:

1. Reflective practice;

2. School development planning and setting priorities;

3. Participatory management;

4. Financial management;

5. Personnel management.

The training and support of headteachers is a crucial component of decentralized strategies everywhere. Thus, Anderson and Nderitu's following finding is especially revealing:

> The most significant impact of MSIP on headteachers has less to do with management training, than with the creation through MSIP of a powerful infrastructure of teacher development and school improvement. The new infrastructure enables headteachers to put into practice many of the ideas and methods introduced to them through management training.
>
> Ready access to ongoing management training follow-up assistance and collegial networking is a necessary component of any system- wide program of teacher development and school improvement.

Similarly, the findings about the mobilization of parents and community are instructive:

> The key strategy for developing effective parent and community participation was to employ a Community Development Officer (CDO) to work with PTAs, community leaders, school personnel, and municipal agencies.
>
> The MSIP parent/community involvement strategy includes training for education personnel on how to work effectively with parents and communities, as well as intervention with parents at the school and Teacher Advisory Centers, including parent education.
>
> There is a continuing need for persons with expertise in the areas of parent/community involvement to assist with initial mobilization

activities and with institutionalization and further development where project inputs have already taken hold.

A host of obstacles, difficulties and details at the level of implementation of MSIP must be taken into account, but the main findings are consistent with (and add to, as we shall conclude later) what we know to be necessary for effective school-based improvement.

Another interesting initiative is the Bodh Shiksha Samiti project (Chetna, 1995). Working in the slums of Jaipur, India, the Bodh project uses a child-based philosophy of education linked to an integrated community schools strategy. The child, the teacher and the community join together in a participatory endeavor to provide space (including the use of open areas) for learning, to establish meetings to deliberate on absenteeism and suggest remedies, and to assist teachers in building learning activities. Every Bodh teacher, in all programmes, makes daily visits to the community and holds meetings with family members.

After initial success in informal settings, the Government of Rajasthan has become a partner to adopt and implement the Bodh approach for a five-year period (which began in 1994) in ten schools run by the state. The strategy to implement the 'Adoption Programme' is consistent with the observations we have been making throughout this paper. The programme is being implemented 'through a sustained and continuous process of introducing Bodh's conclusion and teaching methods to government school teachers, and assisting them to continue these as part of their own practice.' (Chetna, 1995:13) The process of implementation involves a built-in monitoring system of checklists and reports on progress, and a corresponding network of meetings in which 'teachers meet

regularly for fortnightly workshops, where they share their experiences in greater detail, using their diaries and planning … for the next fortnight's teaching-learning activities.' (p. 19)

The Chetna evaluation was only two years into the five-year period. Among initial difficulties, according to the Bodh researchers are:

- Convincing teachers to teach and relate to children differently (what we called earlier, reculturing teaching and learning);

- Keeping momentum going among key decision-makers, such as school heads, in light of high turnover rates;

- Getting teachers and heads to accept responsibility for community involvement.

Despite these growing pains, the researchers report the following specific achievements:

- A comparative assessment, based on the findings of benchmark studies in the government schools under the programme, has established that the level of children's cognition attained through these innovative methods is much higher than those of schools not involved in the programme.

- The programme has brought the government teachers out of systematic rigidity and there is perceptible qualitative improvement in classroom culture, teacher-student relationships and parental involvement in school activities.

- There is a general appreciation of the programme and a growing demand for its expansion. (Chetna, 1995:15)

The critical issue in expanding the programme beyond the initial highly committed core group involves training and support, which the researchers refer to as 'capacity-building':

> The teacher training programme seeks to inculcate greater professionalism in the teachers in order to evolve in them an appropriate vision and approach to children's education. The emphasis is on exploring ways and means of community level knowledge, material and resources for attaining a sense of relevance in education and developing a sense of ownership in the community. The training needs to be consistent with pedagogic innovation, evolve a system of learning-teaching, working from and grounded in the grass-roots level. (Chetna, 1995:17)

The Bodh programme is small scale, and is moving increasingly into a broader dissemination phase. For the immediate future, the goals are (1) to strengthen the quality of the model and its support system, and (2) play the role of catalyst for improved education on a wider level.

A third, well-documented study, comes from the Roads to Success (RTS) report in rural Pakistan. Farah (1996, 1997) has conducted an in-depth evaluation of school improvement in 32 schools in four provinces. Four indicators of success were used: enrolment, attendance, repetition rate, and retention—data were not available on student performance. The findings are now familiar:

- Critical causal factors in the process of positive school change include a combination of a competent headteacher (and teachers) and a supportive community;

- Heads and teachers can form a cluster of schools to help each other;

- Parents/communities support schools through:
  - involvement with their own children's learning;
  - involvement through securing facilities and financial support for the school;
  - involvement through participation in school activities. (Farah, 1997)

Farah (1997) provides an interesting discussion on school governance and decision-making. We have already said that participation in governance is not necessarily related to improvement in learning. It is only when the *majority* of teachers engage the *majority* of parents that success is possible on a wide scale. Thus, the role of school or community councils is not an end in itself, but a possible accompaniment to creating ownership in the community. The evaluation of Phase 1 of RTS resulted in a recommendation to establish Village Education Committees (VECs) to encourage parents/community involvement and to offer a mechanism for participation in governance.

Farah (1997) lists a number of cautions in establishing VECs and corresponding recommendations —a list incidentally not unfamiliar to those who have evaluated the introduction and implementation of Chicago's Local School Councils over the past decade. (Bryk et al, 1998) Using focus groups with different stakeholders, Farah identifies initial problems:

- Conflicting perceptions and tensions with respect to VEC's role;
- Lack of ownership and non-involvement by local education officers, some teachers, some parents;

- Conflict of power and factionalism;
- Lack of experience in working through committees.

Farah concludes that VECs could be very valuable, but suggests that they must be developed carefully including:

- Close monitoring and support of VECs, especially at the initial period of their formation;
- Identify and share examples of successful VECs;
- Training, support and reward headteachers for their efforts to involve the community;
- Address the problem of political interference and patronage which exists at the village and district levels;
- Increase the sense of local responsibility (Most policy is seen as initiated from the top with little sense of accountability at the local level);
- Better training and support for teachers—both pre-service and inservice—are currently considered to be weak with respect to methods and content.

The problems, in other words, are enormous. As Farah (1997:25) concludes, the implementation of VECs requires 'not only the formation of a structure but also the development of a culture of community participation'.

Other studies of SBM and school improvement provide similar conclusions. For example, the Escuela Neuva (EN) project in Latin America is a carefully designed low-cost educational model that has been able to improve the

quality of rural basic education in Columbia (Schiefelbein, 1991). The support system is organized into four sets of factors:

i. A demonstration school showing that the model works;

ii. At least five specific low-cost materials;

iii. A well defined training package for changing teachers' attitudes;

iv. A school management style (based on learning materials, teacher guides, physical arrangements for learning corners and the like. (Schiefelbein, 1991:20)

EN attempts to maximize student participation in learning and builds the relationship between the school and the community with easy-to-do activities. Unlike earlier programs, EN has been now attempted on a massive scale in over 20,000 schools using carefully streamlined implementation guidelines. While it is difficult to assess the quality and impact of implementation on such a scale, the project has demonstrated that good quality is feasible on a large scale—in spite of limited resources.

Shaeffer and Govinda propose a framework for school management after reviewing case studies from Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, Chile, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Peru, South Africa, and Thailand. Shaeffer and Govinda identify five assumptions of a shift in focus to school level development:

- System-wide reforms, planned at and implemented from the top of the system, often leave the core processes of teaching and learning in individual schools virtually untouched;

- Schools need frequent and consistent support;

- Each school operates in a unique context and with unique growth potential;

- The education system must develop a more effective system for ensuring greater accountability for what it does;

- Schools are playing an increasingly critical role in an increasingly complicated development process. (pp 1-2)

Shaeffer and Govinda conclude with four lessons from the case experiences:

- Schools need to be seen and treated as unique units of planning, decision-making, and management;

- School staff—teachers and headteachers—have to be treated as individuals interested in, and capable of, developing their schools (with training and assistance);

- Involvement of more partners in support of the school is useful but requires changes in how schools are managed;

- Community-school partnerships do not easily happen by themselves—they must be planned for and trained for. (pp 16-17)

Finally, a very recent review by Farrell (1999) provides an excellent summary of “common features” associated with some successes:

- Child-centered rather than teacher-driven pedagogy;

- Active rather than passive learning;

- Multi-graded classrooms with continuous progress learning;

- Combination of fully trained teachers, partially trained teachers and community resources;

- People—parents and other community members are heavily involved in the learning of the children, and in the management of the school;

- Peer tutoring—older and/or faster-learning children assist and “teach” younger and/or slow-learning children;

- Carefully developed self-guided learning materials, which children, along or in small groups, can work through themselves, at their own pace, with help from other students and the teacher(s) as necessary—the children are responsible for their own learning;

- Teacher and student-constructed learning materials;

- Active student involvement in the governance and management of the school;

- Use of radio, correspondence lesson materials, in some cases television, in a few cases computers;

- On-going and regular in-service training and peer mentoring for teachers;

- On-going monitoring/evaluation/feedback systems allowing the “system” to learn from its own experience, with constant modification of/experimentation with the methodology;

- Free flows of children and adults between the school and the community;

- Community involvement includes attention to the nutrition and health needs of young children long before they reach school age;

- Locally adapted changes in the cycle of the school day or the school year;

- The focus of the school is much less on 'teaching' and much more on 'learning'. (pp. 13-14)

4. Summary and Implications

Are the factors related to SBM in developing countries dissimilar to those found in research in Western countries? Yes and no. The main types of factors and strategies are similar:

- New teaching and learning methods;

- Developing learning relations among teachers inside and outside the school;

- Mobilizing and supporting parents and communities to play an active role;

- Establishing external structures to train and support headteacher, teachers and others;

- Redefining accountability so that teachers and heads become more 'assessment literate' and assessment becomes more transparent.

There are differences in emphasis in reform efforts in developing countries, some of them advantageous:

- There is a greater degree of cultural shift and redistribution of power toward the school level;

- The capacity to play new roles is less well developed, especially in leaders (heads, local district leaders) and in teachers who could, in turn, advocate and support others;

- The external infrastructure to support SBM is less well developed;

- Because of limited resources, strategies must rely more on human labor such as involving parents and communities, something the West has not been good at;

- Good learning materials have a greater impact because they have previously been limited or non-existent.

In terms of strategic implications, we now know that SBM is not just a structural change; it is a cultural change. We know that SBM does not mean leaving local development on its own; in fact, to work, SBM must have vibrant two-way interaction among local, regional and national personnel. Based on our review, we recommend four sets of strategies to guide the further development of SBM:

1. Review and strengthen policies aimed at decentralization.

Policies must explicitly stress local responsibilities and authority, but must do so by placing it in the context of external relationships that will be necessary for ongoing development and review.

2. Review and build an infrastructure or sets of agencies whose main role is to stimulate and support local capacity at the school and community levels.

We saw many examples in the review such as Mombasa's Teacher Advisory Centers and Community Development Officers, and Pakistan's Village

Education Committees. The main point is to assess the possibilities, to conceptualize what is needed, and to begin strengthening or establishing new entities in the local and regional areas.

3. Establish a data-gathering system aimed at developing 'assessment literacy' on the part of local and regional groups.

This strategy focuses on 'accountability', but does so in a way that is designed to develop new habits and inquiry which enable people to track and improve performance relative to student learning, participation and capacity of different roles and groups, obstacles encountered, problem-solving strategies and the like.

4. Be simultaneously persistent and patient.

If we know anything from the last quarter of a century's study of the change process, it is that there is no ready-made model of change that will provide a shortcut to success (Fullan, 1999). To be successful, reform requires local ownership. You cannot legislate ownership. It must be developed in each context which has its own unique history. Local ownership, however, can and must be stimulated and supported from the outside. There is, as we have seen in the review, a growing knowledge base about what kinds of strategies will be most productive in this inside-out/outside-in development.

It is necessary then, to be persistent and practice, to conceptualize and design strategies based on the knowledge base about reform processes, to trust the process, and to look for and consolidate promising patterns as they arise in the course of monitoring reform efforts.

The key issues remains about how to move forward in countries without a tradition of local democracy. A recent series of articles on local development in developing countries in the Toronto Globe & Mail (1999) is instructive. The article describes how one village in Biharipur, India was negatively affected after receiving a grant to establish a school with expectations of strong community-based involvement. After receiving the grant, the village was required to form a committee of 23 members to decide on the school site. As the author reports: "What followed was the steady disintegration of a community" as local factions disagreed and divisiveness and violence escalated.

SBM then is clearly not just a structural reform, or not even just an educational reform. There are two more basic elements required. First, within the educational system, the strategy must focus on the preparation and support of trained teachers, the fostering of leaders and supervisors, and the availability of books and learning materials. It may be necessary to rely heavily on learning materials as the capacity of teachers and supervisors is built up. To do this first task, an infrastructure must also be established which in turn fosters the development of educators and access to material.

Second, parent and community involvement is both a means to better education, and more basically, a component of local development. In this sense, the goal is not school development, but social change towards greater equity and economic productivity.

In conclusion, SBM is not an end in itself; not a short-term solution; not decentralization. Rather, SBM is a means of altering the capacity of the school and community to make improvements; it is something that will require training, support and other aspects of capacity-building over a period of time; and it is

local improvement in the context of natural goals and accountability. The case studies referred to above in Section 3 indicate that progress can be made, as they provide lessons for the do's and don’ts of going about large-scale reform projects. The advice is to incorporate these lessons into new design strategies, monitor and process learning as the strategies unfold, be persistent, and be patient. Finally, in moving toward SBM, it might be best initially to define the strategy as working to establish the preconditions (e.g., capacity of teachers, principals and community members and corresponding infrastructure support) for SBM to work.

We are at a stage where large-scale reform aspirations of a truly deep nature are being pursued. Never before has there been such an international push in this direction. Never before has the knowledge base been so strong and accumulating. Never before have the complexities and challenges been so evident. The next decade represents a significant opportunity to expand the scope of reform efforts while at the same time achieving greater depth of change, which in turn means greater capacity for reform in subsequent decades.

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