

The Changing Pattern of Policy and Planning

Major changes, often encouraged by international agencies, are taking place in education governance among most DMCs. In varying degrees, at different speeds and following a range of paths, there is growing devolution of education responsibilities and, in some cases, decision authority. This general trend can have profound effects on the actors in education decisions: the strategies for change; the opportunities for localizing curricula; the operational meaning given to such concepts as quality, efficiency and relevance in education; and how education services are financed. These changes may have equally profound effects on the direction and content of the roles of international agencies.

This section analyzes the issues and trends in education governance, most particularly the trends of evolution of the structure of policy making² and planning. Two country case studies of somewhat different approaches to devolution of education decisions are described. The potential benefits and risks are identified, and the conditions necessary for sustaining cycles of planning, monitoring, knowledge utilization, and education improvement are explored.

Decentralization and Localization

Although experimentation with community development has historically been widespread, policy making and planning among DMCs are functions typically associated with central governments. The formal responsibilities for development of major policies and comprehensive planning legally or by tradition frequently reside with the national legislature and within ministries of education, finance, and planning. Based on the assumption that policy is primarily an activity of senior officials in the central bureaucracies, international

² The term 'policy' is used in many different ways. Policy can refer to a law, a binding government decision, a set of goals, an organizational commitment, or a general strategy. Policy making, as the process of determining policy, depends on the definition of policy. Given the several meanings of policy, the term policymaker could refer to legislation, government officials, various education organizations, administrators, or teachers. Discussion here assumes that policy implies an authoritative statement or set of guidelines involving government or legal bodies and subject to enforcement. Because of the legal or formal connotations of the term policy, some governments, when describing sanctioned education reforms or changes, prefer to use the term 'strategy'. Education policy making, as the term is used here, is typically a process of making major education choices and setting directions for the education system or one or more subsectors. It is an intensely political process involving high-ranking bureaucrats, elected officials, and a variety of concerned groups. The transparency of the process varies across governments and cultures. It is customary to distinguish between the processes of policy formulation and policy implementation, although in practice the demarcation is often unclear.

agencies have given much attention to technical assistance and capacity building projects designed to inform and support policymakers in their work.

The shift in the processes and locus of control of policy and planning in education in DMCs is well under way in several countries and at an initial stage in others. The motivations for movement of education decisions away from the center reflect dissatisfaction with existing centralized systems. The objectives include:

- to find an alternative or addition to central government financing because of insufficient central resources, by requiring local governments to share financial responsibilities and develop private support;
- to improve efficiency of education as part of a general movement toward market-based development strategies that replace central planning;
- to increase the efficiency, relevance, and effectiveness of education by encouraging participation of parents and the community; and
- to reflect new models of planning and decision making which, for purposes of increased relevance and improved quality, emphasize wider participation and collaboration.

Decentralization³ is generally related to the granting of some of the national government's authority to lower level units with the implication that local institutions can be developed that are, to a degree, autonomous from the central government. Decentralization typically further implies the right to develop local resources to be utilized at local discretion, thereby strengthening local government units financially and legally.

Table 14 summarizes the status of education governance in eight DMCs. Two cases, the PRC and India, are described below in more detail.

Table 14: Cross-Country Comparisons of Education Decentralization

Country	Center	Province	District	Village
PRC	Macro management or macro guidance. As part of a decentralization program, the central government developed a financial responsibility system that authorized the raising of funds at each of the local, provincial, and central levels.	Implements national laws, regulations, and policies; length of schooling, yearly enrollment selection of textbooks, number of teachers, and teaching salaries.	Within national guidelines responsibilities determined by provincial government. Local governments permitted to raise resources through various forms of taxation.	Community education committees generate funds and material assistance; engage in macro management of schools: supervision and assessment; encourage community participation.
Indonesia	Beginning dialogue on development of a more limited role emphasizing the establishment of regulations, setting standards, evaluation.	Coordination of implementation of policy on basic education. Partner with the center in planning and	Beginning of dialogue on steps to improve planning and management capacity at the district level. Consideration	

³ Terms frequently used in discussing decentralization include localization, individualization, devolution, democratization, deconcentration, debureaucratization, and privatization.

Country	Center	Province	District	Village
		managing teacher training; mediator between education authority in district level and MOEC.	of training local expertise.	
Kyrgyz Republic	Establish national policies, plans, and programs; develop legal and legislative base for education; develop and maintain national R&D; provision of national standards, testing, and certification.	<u>Region:</u> Gradual assumption of responsibilities for regional planning, standards, and finance; coordination of associations and groups involved in education.		
Nepal	The Planning Commission sets guidelines for broad national policy and planning providing the Ministry of Education overall education development directions. The Ministry of Education drafts national policies and plans, coordinates the national-level programs, and conducts monitoring and evaluation.	<u>Region:</u> The Regional Education Directorate (RED) coordinates, monitors and evaluates programs at the regional level. RED has the authority to recruit teachers at the secondary level.	The 75 districts through the District Education Office (DEO) are the implementing units and district-level coordinating, monitoring, and evaluation units. Each district has an education committee representing community organizations, parents, and head teachers. The committee reviews district-level programs.	The School Management Committee (SMC), consisting of an elected local chairman and representatives from parents, oversees school development activities and approves programs to be forwarded to the DEO. The SMC raises local funds in support of the school and mobilizes the community for other school assistance.
Pakistan	The federal government is responsible for national policies and programs for all social sectors including education. The federal Ministry of Education (MoE) sets policy standards, develops curriculum, prepares national plans and budgets (with the Ministry of Finance). MoE further acts as a technical resource and as a channel of communication on national education policy to the provinces.	The province has primary responsibility for implementing education plans and programs, and formulates provincial policies, regulations, and procedures. Primary education management through separate directorates. Production of textbooks.	The provinces are divided into divisions and further subdivided into districts (districts are divided into talukas and tehsils). The district has authority to recruit teachers and select school sites.	Village education management committees manage day-to-day school activities.
Philippines	Formulation of policies, strategic planning, and budget preparation; development of standards for facilities, curriculum and teachers; R&D; monitoring and program assessment.	<u>Region:</u> Technical assistance in local instructional and program improvement; monitoring and evaluation of Division office; budget coordination;	Organization of school-based in-service training, organization of textbooks and materials' distribution system in district; general administration	

Country	Center	Province	District	Village
		management training of principals and supervisors. <u>Division:</u> Policy implementation; division strategic planning; program development and implementation; instructional supervision; monitoring and evaluation of district and school performance.	support to schools; management of district-level indicator systems.	
Papua New Guinea	Foundational policies for all levels of education, curriculum development; teacher training, examinations, and certification; planning and professional support to provinces; organizing supply of textbooks; management of tertiary institutions and national high schools; mobilization of funds and donor liaison.	Development of policies on school fees; implementation of provincial education plans; data collection for national-level ordering and distribution of textbooks and materials; appointment of secondary level teachers; teachers' salaries; financial aspects of capital works; operation and maintenance costs.		Responsible at primary and elementary levels for: nonsalary budgeting for operation and maintenance; maintenance of teachers' houses; expansion and maintenance of adult literacy.
Viet Nam	The Ministry of Education and Training has major responsibility for policy formation, national examinations, directing and inspecting all education curricula, and managing directly more than 40 universities. Other ministries also control and manage various kinds of education institutions. Central education authorities act as a redistribution mechanism when local resources are insufficient.	The provinces operate college-level institutions (established to meet local human resources demand) and all secondary schools. Eighty percent of the general education budget is paid from local resources (province and below).	The districts manage primary and lower secondary schools. (Much of the support for these schools come through mobilizing local resources.) Local contributions cover much of the expenditures on building construction, teachers' salaries, and school fees.	All schools have an association of parents and students. Parents are asked to pay more of the costs of education.

MOEC: Ministry of Education and Culture.

Source: Information from ADB Country Sector Studies.

The PRC Case

From 1949 to 1978, the PRC was characterized by highly centralized policy making, planning, and administration. Local governments with little discretion implemented central policies. In the late 1970s, as part of a broad program of

economic and fiscal reform, the PRC developed new policies affecting education governance and designed to stimulate provinces to maximize their efforts for revenue collection. A major objective was to test the capabilities of management of townships, particularly to test the potential of rural areas to raise funds and accept responsibility for managing primary and middle schools.

An important early step in education decentralization in the PRC was taken when in 1985 the Ministry of Education became the State Education Commission (SEdC) with increased powers for coordination of all ministerial efforts in education. Education decentralization took the form of administrative and financial devolution, with emphasis on the latter. Diversification in education funding required mobilization of local sources to be supplemented by central government subsidies. Further provided is a level of autonomy and flexibility in school-level management. The ongoing, dynamic national reform movement currently involves all provinces which make frequent adjustments responding to feedback from local areas. The main responsibilities of national, provincial, municipal, county, and township levels are distinguished as follows.

The *central government* retains authority for creating basic laws and policies, sets development direction, prepares medium and long-term national plans, supervises implementation, provides coordination of regional programs; conducts national research and development; monitors education outcomes, disseminates successful experiences to lower levels; promotes equity in education services; designs national curriculum; and sets national education standards (e.g., teacher qualifications, length of basic education, university entrance requirements).

The *provincial governments* implement all national laws, policies, and mandates in education. For the purpose of making adaptations to local settings, a provincial government may establish any education policies that are consistent with national policies. Examples are curriculum modifications and choice, and even development of textbooks. Provincial governments are held accountable for meeting education finance goals agreed upon in contracts between provincial and lower level governments.

The *township and village levels* are involved in financing school construction and meeting other capital expenses. The townships in a limited sense now make policy by making decisions about allocation of funds directly to schools. Townships and villages also share with the provinces responsibilities for monitoring performance. In this decentralization process, private schools have emerged. Local educationalists and scholars have begun to take the lead in developing more private and *minban* (people-run) education institutions. Such institutions are operated and financed by local communities, social organizations, and individuals who cater to evolving market needs and people's pressing demand for better education.

At the *school level*, principals manage relationships with the community, participate with school staff in the development of teaching materials, and supervise teachers. An important function of principals is the mobilization and utilization of community resources in developing flexible strategies to attain higher school quality.

The policy for all provinces in the PRC has emphasized central leadership, regional responsibility, and divided (by level) management. Much of the new policy, or national experiment, appears to be working remarkably well. However, the PRC has experienced serious problems of inequity across and within provinces during devolution. There appears frequently to be a trade-off between equity in education opportunities and the flexibility, adaptiveness, and innovation achieved through decentralization (Box 3). Additionally, many technical planning difficulties constrain effective decentralized operations.

The range in available local resources in the PRC has led to a range in the amount of capital construction, level of teachers' salaries, and quality of school facilities. Generally, areas with higher incomes and more financial resources provide better education services than the poorer areas. The distinction can be enormous. For example, in 1985 the ratio of the per capita education expenditures in the eastern, central, and western parts of the PRC was 1:0.80:0.71, and in 1995 the ratio was 1:0.62:0.54 (Zhou 1997). The extent to which such disparities have led to differences in education output is unclear.

The PRC has placed heavy demand on regional human resource planning, at times distinguishing between coastal and interior areas. The coastal areas, which are comparatively rich in technical and scientific personnel and advanced education facilities, have encouraged the development of both small town enterprises and larger export-oriented industries. These efforts are seen as very significant to total national output. Education reform at all levels is expected to contribute, particularly in terms of supply of human resources, to these national economic development programs.

The unprecedented growth of an export-oriented economy has led to urgent problems in education. One problem concerns demand for skills produced by basic education. Another question is how regional higher education institutions can strengthen the training of complex talents needed for further development of the export-oriented economy and thus help increase the PRC's competitiveness among the international market economies.

Box 3: Inequities Resulting from Decentralization – The PRC

As pointed out by Cheng (1994, 62), decentralization in the PRC has facilitated local initiatives and mobilized local resources. Much of the achievement in the country's basic education during the past decade is attributable to the introduction of decentralization. However, Cheng observes (p.62), "China is not immune from the usual disease – regional disparity – which is brought about by decentralization."

For poor communities, decentralization has meant a perpetuation of financial shortage. "To them," Cheng remarks, "if schools are to survive, money has to come from elsewhere, presumably from the 'state.' To these places, the central government would regain its legitimacy only if it could resume its financial responsibility in education." The disparity is not only a matter of economics. It reflects a tug-of-war between the ideology of the planned economy on the one hand, and the ideology of the market economy on the other.

The challenge to policymakers, thus, is the creation of a completely new model of education governance, with all the necessary accompaniments of individual skills, institutional capacities and resources. The challenge to planners and administrators is to provide useful information to policymakers and to make the new model particularly responsive to local and regional evolving economic demands.

The India Case

The scope of constitutional, legal, and administrative changes made possible through comprehensive education decentralization policies is well illustrated by the case of India. As in many Asian countries the policy making, planning, and administration of schools in India is a complex process carried out through a number of institutions at various levels. With many widely dispersed schools, poor vertical and horizontal communication, and limited capabilities in monitoring and evaluation, achieving effective management is difficult. Over the years there have been many efforts at partly decentralizing decisions to the district level. These have met with limited success.

In 1992, India laid the foundation for a significantly different pattern of education governance by amending its national constitution. This action was seen as important both symbolically and substantively. The 73rd constitutional amendment authorized states to establish a three-tiered (village, block, and district) governance structure of locally elected bodies – the “Panchayati Raj” institutions – and to transfer to these bodies certain authorities from state government agencies. Primary education was one of the most important areas to come under the Panchayati Raj institutions (Box 4).

These changes brought new roles and new stakeholders at each political

Box 4: The Panchayati Raj Initiative – India

Jain and Hochgesang (1995) are among analysts of India's Panchayati Raj initiative. They explain that:

As a part of the long process of evaluation of institutional framework for the development of rural areas, the system of Panchayati Raj assumed importance. Though the concept of democratic decentralization was to bring in the Gandhian concept of Grama Swaraj, it could not, however, be realized as it was generally affected by political and administrative factors. With the introduction of the Seventy-Third Constitutional Amendment, a new initiative for strengthening the system of Panchayati Raj was taken. For the first time adequate representation for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and women was provided at all levels. Five-year fixed tenure, regular elections, financial allocations, finance commissions, assignment of defined functions from planning to execution of schemes for economic development have become the major achievements of the new legislation. In spite of the fact that many questions remained regarding the functions and finances, the constitutional status accorded to the Panchayati Raj bodies will undoubtedly make them vibrant institutions for rural development.

Table 15: Responsibility of Panchayati Raj Institutions for Primary Education, Various Three-Tier Indian States, 1995

<i>State</i>	<i>Zilla parishad (District)</i>	<i>Samiti panchayat (Taluka or block)</i>	<i>Gran panchayat (Village)</i>
Andhra Pradesh		Manage elementary and higher elementary schools.	
Gujarat	Primary education: recruit primary school teachers; construct school buildings.	Establish primary school; primary education.	Primary schools.
Karnataka	Establish and maintain ashram schools; promote primary education.	Promote primary education; construct, repair and maintain schools.	Promote public awareness and participation in primary schools; ensure enrollment and attendance in primary schools.
Madhya Pradesh		Establish primary school buildings.	Inspect schools; construct and maintain primary schools; distribute free textbooks and uniforms; manage scholarships for scheduled caste/scheduled tribe primary-school children; organize nonformal education.
Maharashtra	Establish, maintain, inspect and repair primary schools; provide teaching aids to primary schools.	Primary education.	Promote education.
Rajasthan	Ensure proper functioning of primary schools.	Promote primary education.	Supervise primary schools; transfer, post, and disburse salary of primary schoolteachers.
Uttar Pradesh	Construct and maintain primary schools.	Establish and maintain primary schools.	Establish primary schools.
West Bengal	Construct primary schools in flood-affected areas; supervise primary schools.	Promote primary education.	Construct primary schools in flood-affected areas; Distribute textbooks.

Source: Jain and Hochgesang 1995.

and administrative level. The center, through the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Department of Education, traditionally has been deeply involved in policy making, national-level planning, finance, and technical support. Under the reforms many of these functions will continue. Additionally, the central leadership in technical support to the districts is expected to increase at least for a time, and thus increase – not decrease – the challenges for the central education authorities. Generally, the changes represent a movement toward defining the role of the state as setting standards and

evaluating performance. Modifications in roles include: development of a monitoring system; changing focus of research to include issues of primary education, particularly measurement of learning achievement; strengthening capacity of states to use data; and providing instructional support.

At the state level (Table 15), state ministries of education are supported by state departments and directorates or secretariats of education, all of which are accountable to the chief minister of state. At the district level – historically an important unit of administration and management but changing under the Panchayati Raj legislation – a district education officer and staff are responsible to the state department.

At the district, block, and village levels, reforms will transfer significant resources and responsibilities to Panchayati Raj institutions, including appointing and transferring teachers, allocating funds to schools, generating resources through fees and donations, and academic supervision.

At the school level, principals have been largely expected to perform a number of routine administrative tasks including drawing up timetables, establishing standards for student promotion, assigning teachers to classes, determining expenditures on instructional aids, and raising extra funds for the school. Under the reform, principals are expected to assume more responsibility in fostering a positive teaching and learning environment and assist the community in local planning.

Since the 1992 constitutional amendments, substantial changes have begun as Panchayati Raj institutions at the district, subdistrict, and village levels have become fully operational. The intent of the new framework is to lead to broad-based community support for primary education, school-level responsibility for effective instruction, and a system of professional support from higher administrative levels to lower levels.

The depth of these changes varies from state to state. But if fully implemented, the reforms will require the building of new institutional capacity, new management systems, and new individual skills. Systems of communication and coordination, particularly between district and state and between district, block, and village, need to be developed to support changing roles in policy and planning as well as resource allocation. The district as the emerging level responsible for much planning requires more sophisticated technical knowledge, monitoring and evaluation skills, and a supporting information system. At the village level, new education committees have been formed with authority for allocating resources to improve school efficiency and quality. Head teachers and community members need to become informed in their new roles in supporting teaching and learning, and in assessing school-level quality.

Achievements, Risks, and Problems

Financial, administrative, political, and education arguments can be advanced in favor of decentralization of education administration. Expected benefits include improvements in (i) education quality by encouraging decisions on management and teaching to be made by personnel closest to the school and

classroom, and (ii) efficiency by freeing local education officials from layers of bureaucracy. Decentralization is also frequently seen by central ministries as a way to develop new sources for financing.

Although decentralization in various forms has a long history in some Asian countries, evaluating its progress is difficult. Several governments claim successes in implementing policies of decentralization, including PRC, India, and Thailand, and both successes and failures have been reported internationally (Bray 1999). There are also examples of communities that, without mandates from the center, participated in improving their schools. The record would seem to show, however, that central actors increasingly are willing to test new policy ideas locally, seek input from stakeholders, and include persons with field knowledge on national commissions.

Although evidence from formal evaluation is often lacking, policymakers and planners in many countries now have had the opportunity to reflect on their considerable experience in the implementation of decentralized programs. The frequently mentioned problems and constraints include:

- local authorities increase administrative activities, but control remains in the center;
- the gap in education opportunity is widened between students in wealthy and poor areas;
- central government reduces its fiscal support to local areas;
- funds collected locally are not used locally;
- the community focuses on issues of narrow self-interest;
- power over decisions becomes concentrated in local elites;
- participation is viewed as too time consuming;
- the desired level of openness and collaboration in decision making cannot be obtained;
- school administrators and teachers resist outside participation;
- local analysis of problems and supported changes may threaten the political order; and
- deciding how much participation in planning is appropriate may be very controversial.

Successful decentralized programs of education often depend on the capabilities of local government. With reference to the Pacific DMCs (Group 7), but with wider relevance, the Papua New Guinea Study for ADB (1997) notes that:

Effective local government, which has the potential to coordinate community development and local services and infrastructure, is particularly important in countries comprising many scattered islands, yet it is noticeably weak, even dysfunctional, in most Pacific DMCs. In Western Samoa, rural water supply schemes that have been most successful are the ones in which local reluctance to participate in "self-help" schemes forced government to manage them. In many provinces in Papua New Guinea, primary health and education services run by communities

assisted by provincial governments are so poorly administered that they are in a situation of near collapse.

The study continues:

Many donors retain faith in the idea that the inefficiency of the state apparatus can be compensated for by designing community-managed, participatory development projects, and that more effective development processes might be achieved by working directly with communities. Unfortunately, there is little evidence to show that community-managed development projects are more efficacious than those managed by the state.

Not surprisingly, new expectations for local planning and participation in education decisions may involve uncertainties, obstacles, and risks. Central bureaucracies accustomed to being the only policy and planning actors now must share responsibilities. With shifts in some functions to the district and village levels, e.g., the flow of central moneys directly to districts, stakeholders at the provincial level may lose valued control. In addition to the new policies, laws, and institutions required for a new decision-making approach, an extended period of time may be required before partnerships between levels of government can become effective (see Box 5).

Decentralization may only mean transfer of autocratic behavior to local institutions. On the other hand, local governments and communities may become highly dissatisfied if only administrative functions are delegated and neither resources nor decision-making power are transferred. At the heart of the reform process is the decentralization of powers and responsibilities from the national and provincial levels toward the district and local government

Box 5: Mobilizing Local Participation – Pakistan

The assumption of policymakers in Pakistan was that effective involvement, participation, and mobilization of communities would be effective for the promotion of basic education and improvement in quality. Unfortunately, communities are not well organized and motivated. Although a few steps in this direction have been taken by constituting village education committees, school management committees, and parent-teacher associations, their roles are not clearly defined and their linkage with the education functionaries has not been properly established.

Mahmood (1997) points out that:

There is a need to sensitize the population at large, prepare them and make them responsible for eventual take over of the local-level institutions. For this purpose empowering the District and Tehsil-level functionaries of the Education Department need to be activated to promote community mobilization and make use of their powers to give local support to communities in administrative and financial matters.

levels. Unfortunately, the issue of who is responsible for what is not often clearly understood. Further, any attempt at evaluation of the success of decentralization must raise the question: Valued by whom? Do, for example, central and provincial policymakers and planners have the same evaluation criteria as parents and teachers?

Planning and Sustaining Decentralized Education Changes

Article 7 of the 1990 World Declaration on Education for All observes that "new and revitalized partnerships at all levels will be necessary, partnerships among all subsectors and forms of education" (World Conference on Education for All 1990). The changing patterns of governance require new approaches to planning. The traditional, centralized planning model, reflected to varying degrees in the popular five-year national plans and found in most DMCs, attempts to set targets based on given or assumed priorities, translate targets into a set of inputs with associated costs, allocate responsibilities for implementation, and, perhaps, develop detailed implementation procedures. The basic assumptions of this approach include:

- general targets can be translated into specific education inputs;
- accurate data can be acquired on size, number, and costs of inputs; and
- implementation is a rather straightforward process of administrative decisions.

Experience suggests that this model is seriously flawed, as indicated by the poor record in attaining the targets of national plans.

Two fundamental assumptions of the typical centralized model are that planning is an essentially linear process, and that a discrete set of identifiable inputs will result in the desired education outputs and outcomes. This planning approach has a poor record under centralized structures, and has even less validity as decentralization proceeds. Policies of decentralization, as they develop beyond deconcentration, involve a range of local stakeholders in a process of developing and assessing ways to improve education and acquire supporting resources (Box 6). Interaction and dialogue, often in face-to-face groups, suggest a more open-ended, inquiry-oriented model of planning. Central-local partnerships, if transparent and collaborative, rely on communication and consensus, not merely political power. A new model of planning and decision making thus emerges: initial targets are temporary benchmarks of only heuristic value; expert knowledge from the outside becomes only one input to decision; information and communication among stakeholders keep the planning process moving; and education practice, as well as education research, illuminates major decisions.

The concept of central-local partnership can be controversial (Bray 2000). Partnership may be an association of individuals or groups with very different

perspectives and beliefs. This relationship usually operationally involves a combination of teamwork, conflict resolution, and community collaboration.⁴ Thus, success of partnerships in planning, implementation, and sustaining reform depends on the newly formed group's expectations of its members, the ability of individuals to learn from each other, and the recognition that rewards basically go to all members of the group. Collaboration may therefore include debate, argument, negotiation, discussion, and compromise. Planning and implementation of decentralization of education governance may require skills and understanding not often prominent in traditions of centralized planning.

Sustainable decentralization requires the development of new skills and insights among individuals, and additional capacity among institutions to manage education change. Required planning and actions include:

- creation of demand for improvement (given the limitations of supply-driven assistance);
- creation of reliance on local resources;
- participation and sharing of information;
- division of tasks among stakeholders;
- identification of stakeholders;
- diagnosis of community needs and types of support;
- identification of relevant existing local organizations;
- formulation of methodology for mobilization of the community;
- development of technology for planning, implementation, and monitoring; and
- capacity building and long-term commitment.

Sustainability depends on adequately answering the basic question: What decision-making authority is best allocated to each administrative level? And the correlative question: Which education activities are best carried out at which level? The answers can be tested only through experience and may vary from country to country and by local context. Moreover, there are further questions: Best for whom? Where are the economies of scale? What are the comparative advantages of different management options?

At the school level, sustainability requires at least three conditions: shared goals regarding the learning objectives of the school; professional, student-focused commitment among teachers; and autonomy to allocate instructional resources flexibly. There is also an obligation to hold the school accountable to the community for outcomes in the context of national indicators. These are challenges for which many education systems are ill prepared.

⁴ Shaeffer (1992, 280) makes the following distinction between collaboration and decentralization: *collaboration* is a consultative process at best, where the new actors share the burden with the traditional administrators of education and help improve the conditions of classroom teaching, to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of schools, and to deliver their services, without quite becoming a "partner" in the process. *Participation* would add 'intervention' to the above definition: the ability to get involved in governance, policy, and administration; to serve as a more equal partner in planning, managing, and evaluation; and to gain power (and empowerment) through the process.

The changes in governance with decentralization of certain authorities and increased involvement of citizens in education and political decisions require increased levels of information and analytical ability. Sustainability suggests the need for learning through continued cycles of design, redesign, study, evaluation, exchange of information, action, etc. The typical monitoring is unlikely to be sufficient if it is limited to tracking the delivery of goods and expenditures of funds and if it relies only on the traditional mid-term and final program and project evaluations. Fundamentally, this process needs both a planning and evaluation process that assists the development and critique of information and communication processes that foster individual and organizational learning; and a political and administrative context in which such learning translates into monitored actions and continued inquiry.

In developing systems of decentralization, two basic questions suggest a fundamental choice: Is the central government willing to support local conditions that lead to full partnership in the planning of education and community-level ownership of significant education decisions? Or is the prime interest to foster a centrally controlled system that more effectively monitors local units?

Improving School-Community Relations

Williams (1997) compares “government-provided education” with “collaborative government-community education” (Table 16). Certainly, over the last several decades much of the remarkable growth and development of education in DMCs is attributable to “government-provided education.” The changing patterns of education governance, however, responding to limitations of central management, have brought a new focus on local communities and their relationships with schools.

Most communities face a number of shared education problems, such as fees and other costs borne by parents, school-work relationships, and persistent dropouts. Such concerns, under certain conditions, may provide a common purpose and a sense of priorities, and may facilitate community dialogue on school matters. Supporting conditions include: experience of the community in participatory decision making;⁵ willingness of governments to share control while continuing to provide resources; and commitment on the part of public and private organizations involved to a process of continuing learning. The latter condition implies that coping strategies or solutions to problems emerge from examination and study of local experience as well as from analysis by outside technical expertise (Shaeffer 1992).

Understanding the potential for constructive community-school relationships requires examining who the participants are, what the contributions are that the community can make to the school, and the ways in which the school

⁵ Reimers (1997, 148) suggests that the kind of intelligence needed to address school problems at the local level is process intelligence, not intelligence about contents. What is most needed is a change in paradigm regarding how education systems change and learn from their experience, rather than a set of policy prescriptions to be implemented by schools.

can support the community (Bray 2000). Those individuals and organizations particularly significant in bringing school and community together include parents, teachers, local government, NGOs, women's groups, local enterprises, colleges and universities, government through its laws, policies, and education bureaucracy, and international organizations.

Schools, for their part, can share information, technical knowledge and facilities, and can contribute labor to community projects. Efforts in these directions can build a foundation of understanding, making community support more feasible. Communities, of course, are not of one mind, and may not place a high priority on education. Yet, given the ongoing interest or possibility of mobilization, the types of possible school support are numerous. The contributions of community involvement to schools may be grouped under three areas: support for the instructional program, supplements to school resources, and managing the schools (Table 17).

The potential risks involved in devolution of education responsibility and authority were discussed earlier. In some cases, there will be setbacks to reforms that have moved support and management of schools. Agreement on

Table 16: Models of School and Community in the Provision of Education

	<i>Education providers</i>		
	<i>Traditional community-based education</i>	<i>Government-provided education</i>	<i>Collaborative government-community education</i>
Purpose of education	Socialization into community; Survival of community.	Socialization into national culture; Political, economic development of state.	Socialization into national and local cultures; serves local and national improvement.
Nature of knowledge to be acquired	Transmission of local economic skills and community norms.	Transmission of state-approved knowledge.	Negotiable; usually state-approved knowledge adapted to local needs.
Emphasis	On community.	On individual and state.	On individual as member of both community and state.
Vision of community's role	All-encompassing.	Passive recipient; Potentially disruptive of government's project.	Negotiable; ranging from community as focal point of development effort to community as important arm of the government.
Role of government	None to the extent that government does not interfere.	Assumes complete responsibility for provision of education.	Negotiable; ranging from source of support for education defined by community to virtually complete control.

Source: Williams 1997, 57.

resource allocation to provincial and local levels has had ill effects. Even communities capable of organizing themselves successfully to participate in addressing the problems do not necessarily agree on the types of solution. And building and implementing strategic plans and plans of action may require unavailable technical skills. However, with the involvement of major stakeholders, capacity to acquire necessary resources, and persistent leadership, the benefits can be long lasting not only in education but also in the strengthening of other sectors.

Table 17: How Involvement of the Community Can Improve Education

<i>Area of education</i>	<i>Type of community involvement</i>
Provide support for instructional program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivate an environment supportive of school program • Improve enrollment, retention, attendance • Monitor study at home • Ensure all students have adequate study space • Identify and help students with problems • Help students with family emergencies • Boost morale of school staff • Provide assistant or regular teachers • Provide instruction in specific areas (where teachers lack expertise) • Pass on community knowledge • Provide apprenticeships/work opportunities
Supplement school resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donate land for school • Donate labor/materials to build/help build school building • Repair/maintain facilities • Donate equipment, learning aids (e.g., books, teaching materials) • Raise money for school
Provide support for school management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure greater likelihood for successful implementation of school programs • Foster responsibility among parents for children's learning • Provide greater material support • Provide manpower to reduce burden on school staff • Supply expertise • Assist in fund-raising, provide moral support and general advice • Provide new ideas, serve troubleshooting functions • Serve on advisory/management committees • Assume joint responsibility (with school) for planning, managing, evaluating local school programs • Come to assume, over time, major responsibility for local education, formal and informal, with government support and technical assistance • Take over most of the management functions of the school, with minimal government assistance

Source: Williams 1997, 63.