

**PROMOTING INTER-COMMUNITY-SCHOOL RELATIONS  
THROUGH THE CAPITATION GRANT IN GHANA**

by

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B.A. Honours, University of Toronto, 2004

A PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS (PLANNING)

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

School of Community and Regional Planning

We accept this project as conforming  
to the required standard

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
January 2010

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## Promoting Inter-Community-School Relations Through the Capitation Grant in Ghana



“It takes a whole community to educate a child.”

– African proverb

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF ACRONYMS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>LIST OF BOXES.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION: EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT.....</b>	<b>8</b>
1.1 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM: ENHANCING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION....	8
1.2 BACKGROUND OF THIS PROJECT .....	9
1.3 PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES .....	12
1.4 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS .....	13
1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT .....	16
<b>2.0 HISTORICAL CONTEXT: APPLICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS IN PLANNING AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN GHANA .....</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION .....	18
2.2 DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY.....	19
2.2 PARTICIPATION AND ITS APPLICATION TO EDUCATION.....	21
<b>3.0 EDUCATION IN GHANA.....</b>	<b>25</b>
3.1 EVOLUTION OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY.....	25
3.2 DECENTRALIZATION OF EDUCATION IN GHANA .....	26
3.3 SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION .....	27
3.4 EVOLUTION OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION IN GHANA.....	29
<b>4.0 CAPITATION GRANT .....</b>	<b>31</b>
4.1 OPERATIONAL MECHANISMS OF THE CAPITATION GRANT.....	31
4.2 STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES OF CAPITATION GRANT .....	33
4.3 EFFECTS OF THE CAPITATION GRANT IN GHANA.....	35
<b>5.0 FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>38</b>
5.1 STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION .....	38
5.2 STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVES ON COMMUNITY/PARENTS' ROLE IN SCHOOLS.....	40
5.3 CAPITATION GRANT AND THE COMMUNITY .....	44
5.4 CONCLUSION .....	49
<b>6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>51</b>

<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: SURVEY FOR PARENTS .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: SAMPLE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SPIP) .</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: UBC BEHAVIOURAL RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD APPROVAL</b>	
<b>CERTIFICATE .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>APPENDIX D: CONTACT LETTER .....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM.....</b>	<b>61</b>

## List of Acronyms

BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
EFA	Education For All
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
GES	Ghana Education Service
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEO	Metro Education Office
MOESS	Ministry of Education, Science and Sports
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SMC	School Management Committee
SPIP	School Performance Improvement Plan

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Map of Ghana and Takoradi .....	10
Figure 3: Regions of Ghana.....	11
Figure 2: Mean Annual Income Per Capita (GH¢).....	11
Figure 4: Difference between Rural and Urban Communities .....	20
Figure 5: Arnstein's "Ladder of Citizen Participation" .....	21
Figure 6: Rose's Spectrum of Participation.....	22
Figure 7: Process of Designing the SPIP.....	32
Figure 8: Flow of Capitation Grant Funds .....	33
Figure 9: Gross Enrollment Ratio after abolition of school fees.....	34

## List of Tables

Table 1: Mean Annual Income Per Capita by Locality .....	11
Table 2: Roles of the community analyzed using Schaeffer's Seven Levels of Participation .....	42

## List of Boxes

Box 1: Schaeffer's Levels of Participation in the Education Sector .....	22
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## **Acknowledgements**

This project would not have taken off nor would it have completed without the invaluable support of the following people.

Officers and staff at the Metro Education Office in Takoradi, Ghana welcomed me with open arms and were pivotal in getting this project started. The Public Relations Officer and the Assistant Director of Supervision provided me with much needed guidance in getting oriented with the local schools. The many wonderful Circuit Supervisors took the time out of their hectic schedules to take me to the schools so that I could subsequently conduct interviews there. The head teachers, teachers, SMC and PTA chairpersons that I had the privilege of interviewing were such pleasant people, and I am also grateful to each and every parent who filled in the surveys. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Joseph Ghartey Ampiah at the University of Cape Coast for insights and knowledge that helped me better understand the context and background.

Special thanks goes to the Imbeah family, without whom this project never would have materialized. Thank you Jojoo, Nora, and Nana Kofi for your generous support and assistance and for your kind hospitality. I would also like to thank Doris Anson-Yevu and Christophe Etou for being my family in Ghana and for helping me navigate the Ghanaian system. I miss you all so much and look forward to the day we meet again.

Having a wonderful supervisor and second reader made this project especially enjoyable for me. Dr. Leonora Angeles was not simply a fantastic academic supervisor, but was my mentor and a friend who somehow always made time for me when I needed it most. A heartfelt thanks is also extended to Dr. Bonny Norton for her guidance over the past year.

I had the fortune of being surrounded by an amazing cohort of colleagues at SCARP. I would like to especially thank Danielle Blond Wauthy, Lucia Scodanibbio, Maira de Avila, Sawngjai Dear Manityakul, for their endless support and encouragements through this process, and for being such fabulous friends.

Last but not least, I thank my family, for having faith in me and believing in my potential.

January 2010

## Executive Summary

In recognition that education is fundamental to the development of a nation, countries have made strides towards achieving the Millennium Development Goal that states that, “By 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.” In Ghana, as part of a wider educational policy of providing Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE), the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports introduced the Capitation Grant in 2005. This grant provides each school with 3.00 Ghana cedis (approximately \$3.00 CDN) per student enrolled, and aims at replacing the revenue schools have lost due to the abolition of school fees. As parents no longer have to pay school fees to send their children to school, enrollment rates in schools increased.

This report examines the effect that the Capitation Grant has had on the relationship between schools and their surrounding community. It is written for the Takoradi Metro Education Office with the goal of providing recommendations on how to promote community participation in school management and to enhance community-school relations in the long run. The “community” in this project context refers to the parents of the students, the members of the School Management Committee (SMC), and Parent Teacher Association (PTA), who compose the interest-based community of the school. Community participation in education is considered important as it is seen to contribute to improving access to education and quality of education. It is also thought to have positive spin-off effects for the community, such as empowerment of the community and increased social capital.

This study was conducted in the city of Takoradi, in the Western region of Ghana, where six schools were chosen as a sample. Based on interviews with head teachers, teachers, officers at the Takoradi Metro Education Office, and surveys filled in by parents, the study found that the Capitation Grant has generally had a positive impact on community-school relationships. However, there is room for improvement and what is more, an opportunity to use the Capitation Grant to further strengthen this relationship. There is an increase in the level of interest in school management expressed by the majority of parents/community, and 70% of parents desire to participate in deciding the use of the Capitation Grant. Therefore, the timing seems suitable to examine concrete ways of having the community participate through this grant, and through doing so promote active participation by the community.

To capitalize on this opportunity, the following recommendations are made:

- Increase transparency in the budgeting process of the Capitation Grant at the school level by sharing the budget draft with the community and encourage feedback from them.
- To increase transparency, schools need to improve their methods of communication with the parents and community members so that the information is readily available to interested community members.
- Head teachers and Circuit Supervisors shall identify a person to champion the budgeting process who can act as the bridge between the school and the community regarding this grant.

- If resources permit, capacity-building training for community members to develop budgeting and financial management skills and knowledge of good pedagogical practices that contribute to quality education can help communities participate in a meaningful manner.

It is hoped that creating this new channel for the community to voice their opinions will provide an opportunity for the community to take another step towards growing into their role of being partners in the provision of education. Cooperation between the community and schools can strengthen the community-school relationship and enrich the education of the children.

## 1.0 Introduction: Education and Development

Education is a fundamental building block for the sustainable development of a nation. The international community has emphasized the promotion of education through commitments such as Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Countries across the globe have taken measures to “Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.”<sup>1</sup> Encapsulated in this aspiration is the recognition that universal access to quality education builds human capital. The development of human capital through education will then contribute to the sustainable, economic and social development of the country.

The Government of Ghana has taken significant steps towards achieving this goal. Their constitutional commitment to Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) has been reflected in several policy frameworks and expressed in government strategy papers. As a part of this effort, the government introduced the Capitation Grant in the 2005/2006 academic year. Initiated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MOESS), the Capitation Grant is a type of formula funding scheme aimed at replacing abolished school fees. These school fees were levies that pupils’ parents had to pay in order to send their children to school, and were used for school repairs, teaching and learning materials, etc.

The abolition of school fees in Ghana has removed the financial barrier that had prevented many parents from sending their children to school. Through the Capitation Grant, each public basic school<sup>2</sup> now receives GH¢3.00<sup>3</sup> (approximately \$3.00CDN) per student enrolled in their school. As a result of the introduction of this grant, the enrollment rate in basic schools increased significantly.<sup>4</sup> Though there are a multitude of ways in which this new policy could be examined and analyzed, this project takes an in-depth examination of the grant’s impact at the local, community level; specifically, its impact on community-school relations.

### 1.1 Statement of Problem: Enhancing Community Participation in Education

Prior to European colonization, children in Africa were taught the necessary lessons of life from elders in the community. With the introduction of formal state-sponsored education, teaching of children became the responsibility of the state. However, in Africa where the community is a fundamental component in an individual’s life<sup>5</sup> and belonging to the collective entity is valued, the community’s involvement in raising their children remains important. Moreover, the role of the community in children’s education is considered crucial, not only in African societies but also worldwide.

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO, Millennium Development Goals: Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education, 21 March 2009 <<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/education.shtml>>.

<sup>2</sup> “Basic School” in Ghana refers to 2-years of pre-school education (4-5 years old), 6 years of primary education, and 3 years of junior high school education.

<sup>3</sup> The local Ghanaian currency is the Ghana cedi (GH¢).

<sup>4</sup> UNICEF, Achieving Universal Primary Education in Ghana by 2015: A Reality or a Dream?, Working Paper (New York: Division of Policy and Planning, 2007), p4.

<sup>5</sup> Patrick Watt, Community Support for Basic Education in Sub-Saharan Africa, Working Paper (Africa Region: World Bank, 2001), p1.

Across the globe, participation of the community is seen to contribute to improving the access to education (including retention of students in schools), and the quality of education.<sup>6</sup> As community members know the local circumstances, their participation and input allows educational services to be tailored to suit the local context. This helps to make education not only more accessible to the local students but creates a more meaningful learning experience for them, as it would better connect their education to their environment and surroundings, developing a stronger link between their school and community life. Encouraging the community to participate also enhances the community's sense of ownership over their schools. In turn, the community can play the role of a "watchdog" to ensure quality education is being provided, while the school itself feels a sense of accountability towards the community within which it is located.

Merits of community participation are not limited to educational benefits. These forms of collaboration between the school and community foster trust between the actors, which can cultivate community cohesion and build social capital. There are opportunities for capacity building, as local community members gain new knowledge and awareness of their own community's social, economic, and political conditions, and develop new skills through participation. Furthermore, increased participation of the community can empower and inspire the local population to be a catalyst for bottom-up change.<sup>7</sup>

This project focuses on the relationship between schools and their surrounding community and seeks to understand how the community-school relationship can be better enhanced through community participation. Through interviews with key stakeholders in the schools and in their surrounding communities, it attempts to analyze the various stakeholders' understanding of the Capitation Grant, particularly its use, challenges, as well as their perceptions of the role of the community in the public education system. Based on this, this project provides recommendations on how the process of planning the use of the Capitation Grant can be further improved to strengthen community-school relations and improve the quality of public education in Ghana.

## **1.2 Background of this Project**

In the summer of 2008, I was hired for a short-term position with a Japanese international development consultant firm working on a teacher-training project in Ghana. My four months spent as a project assistant provided me with a general understanding of the education sector in Ghana, including its key players, policies, and its challenges. I also gained a broad understanding of the interconnectedness of the political, historical, social, economic, and cultural aspects that all are inextricably linked to one another. Hoping to take advantage of my opportunity, I stayed in Ghana for an extra month to conduct further research for this masters project.

This research is a case study that focuses on one education district among the 162 school districts that exist for basic education in Ghana. Time and resource constraints allowed for a close examination of only one school district. Takoradi Metro Education

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<sup>6</sup> Fusheini Adam, "Community Participation in School Development: Understanding Participation in Basic Schools Performance in the Nanumba District of Ghana," Thesis submitted for MPhil degree in Public Administration and Organization Theory, University of Bergen, 2005, p3.

<sup>7</sup> John Pryor, "Can community participation mobilize social capital for improvement of rural schooling? A case study from Ghana," *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 35.2 (2005): 193-203, p194.

District was chosen as I had a contact there that could introduce me to the district education officers and their supervisors.

Figure 1: Map of Ghana and Takoradi



(Source: www.cia.gov)

### **Takoradi, Western Region of Ghana**

Takoradi is located approximately 300km west of Accra, and is the capital of the Western Region of Ghana. Including the population of its twin city, Secondi, it is the fourth largest city of the country with a population of 300,000. Situated along the coast, it was formerly the main port in the country and still remains a major transit hub for the southwestern area of Ghana. It is one of the fastest growing cities of Ghana with its economy based on light industrial, agricultural, and fishing enterprises. In addition, the recently discovered oil reserve off the coast is expected to bring an influx of related businesses and usher in new economic opportunities in the area, thereby intensifying this growth.

Much like the rest of Ghana, the urban dwellers of Takoradi generally have higher literacy and income levels than people living in the rural areas. Literacy and income levels specifically for Takoradi could not be found, but as a reference, in 2005/2006 almost 70% of the urban adult population of Ghana was literate, in comparison to only 40% of the rural adult population. As for income levels, the mean household income based on locality is shown in the table below. The urban areas of Takoradi fall under "other urban", while rural areas are "Rural Coastal," as Takoradi is a coastal city.

Table 1: Mean Annual Income Per Capita by Locality

Locality	Mean Annual Income Per Capita (GH¢)
<b>Urban</b>	517
Accra (capital)	564
Other urban ( <b>Urban Takoradi</b> )	<b>494</b>
<b>Rural</b>	305
Rural Coastal ( <b>Rural Takoradi</b> )	<b>368</b>
Rural Forest	323
Rural Savannah	232
<b>Ghana</b>	397

(Source: Ghana Statistical Service, 2008)

In addition, below is the income level of the Western region (in which Takoradi is located) in comparison to the rest of the country.

Figure 2: Mean Annual Income Per Capita (GH¢)

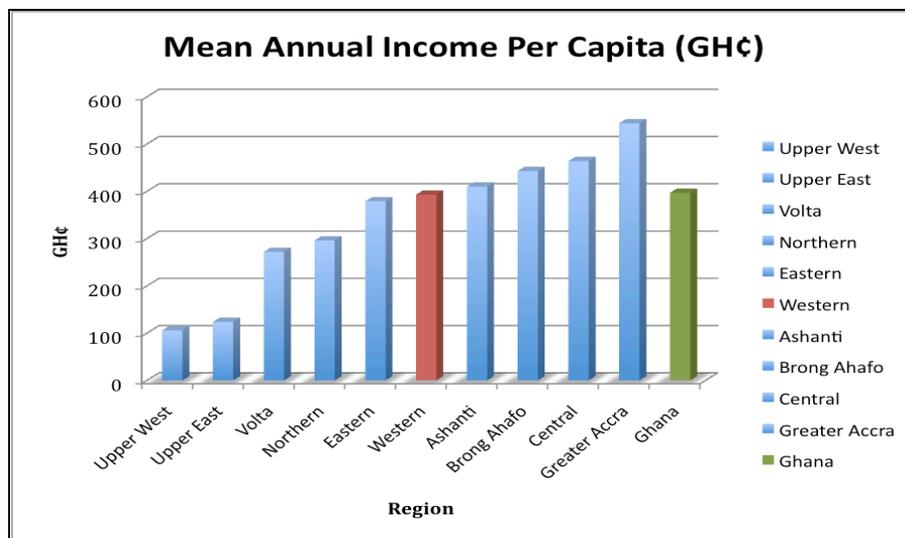


Figure 3: Regions of Ghana



(Source: Ghana Statistical Service, 2008)

The Western region is traditionally inhabited by the matrilineal Akan ethnic group, which includes the Fante and Ashanti sub-ethnic groups. However, the urban centres are highly heterogeneous.

### Education

Among the 10 regions within Ghana, the Western Region was ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the provision of quality education in the academic year of 2006/2007.<sup>8</sup> This was based on a calculated score using the percentage of trained teachers, percentage of trained female teachers,

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, "Education Sector Performance Report 2007," July 2007, p94.

core textbook ratio, repetition ratio and percentage of students who passed the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE).<sup>9</sup> In the Secondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Area, there are 105 nursery schools, 118 primary schools, 79 junior high schools, 11 senior high schools and technical schools. Takoradi is also home of Takoradi Polytechnic, one of the most reputable tertiary institutions in Ghana.

At the national level, the level of educational attainment of the population of Ghana remains low. Approximately 31% of all adults have never attended school, while only 38.6% have completed basic education. Only 13.6% have completed secondary education or higher.<sup>10</sup> However, with renewed commitment to universal primary education and increased access to basic education, statistics collected between 2005-2006 show the attendance rate of persons of school-age at 86%.<sup>11</sup>

In this regional and national context, I took the opportunity to meet with local educational officers, teachers, parents, and community members in Takoradi to discuss the Capitation Grant and community-school relationships in their schools.

### **1.3 Project Goals and Objectives**

The overall goal of this study is to provide Takoradi Metro Education District with recommendations on how to promote community participation in school management and to enhance community-school relations in the long run. Specifically, it will explore how the abolishment of school fees through the introduction of the Capitation Grant has affected this relationship, and how they may build on existing assets to strengthen it.

To achieve the project goal, the following objectives were pursued:

- Describe and assess the community's knowledge of the Capitation Grant
- Analyze how the abolition of school fees has changed the attitude of parents, and how teachers and school administrators perceive this change
- Examine the various stakeholders' (teachers, district education officers, parents, local leaders) perspectives on the significance of community participation in education

Based on these findings, the project draws upon lessons and knowledge from academic literature, as well as other empirical research and case studies to provide useful tools and ideas. As the local education officers are much more knowledgeable about education and the local context, I utilize my planning background to provide an outsider's perspective and comment on community engagement and participatory processes. I also identify ways in which schools in Takoradi can further build upon existing assets in their schools and surrounding communities through maintaining and building community participation and support for their local schools.

As this project will contribute to a better understanding of how a change to fee-free structures can affect community-school relationships, it may have broader implications such as the following:

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<sup>9</sup> Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) is a standardized test taken in order to enter senior high school.

<sup>10</sup> Ghana Statistical Service, "Ghana Living Standards Survey," September 2008, piv.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

- Provide “lessons learned” for other countries with future plans to abolish school fees, so that they can incorporate the lessons into their policy formation to ensure maintenance of community support and participation in schools after education fees are removed.
- Inform future policies / programs targeted at promoting educational quality, community participation, and community development, among others.

Finally, this project will add to existing literature on community participation in education, as well as the recently emerging literature on fee abolition.

#### **1.4 Methods of Data Collection and Analysis**

During my employment period in Ghana, I learned of the Capitation Grant. This grant aims to improve the quality of and access to basic education by removing school levies and essentially making basic education free. The Capitation Grant can be used for several different components, and the categories for its use are broken down into “Improving Access”, “Provision of Teaching and Learning Materials”, “School Management”, “School Facilities”, and “Community and School Relationship.” I chose to focus my analysis on this grant to marry my two interests in education and community development.

A personal friend in Accra put me in touch with a Circuit Supervisor at Takoradi Metro Education Office (MEO). When I arrived in Takoradi and met with her, she then introduced me to the Assistant Director of Supervision, and the Public Relations Officer at the MEO. After discussing with them the general objectives of my project and gaining their comments and feedback, I revised my project proposal.

Initially, this research was to focus on how the grant funds that are allocated to “Community and School Relationship” were being used. However, upon having discussions with MEO staff and examining the records on how the grants were being used in the schools, I learned that in fact, hardly any of the money was being allocated for this use. At that point, a shift in the research focus was necessary.

Through interactions with officers at Takoradi MEO, it came to light that the relationship between schools and its local community had evolved since education became free. This caught my attention and interest, and I decided to take up the topic of how the relationship had been affected by the Capitation Grant.

A detailed project proposal and interview questions were developed to accurately capture the intention of the project. To begin to implement the project, the research proposal and interview questions were submitted to the Behavior Ethics Review Board of the University of British Columbia, and was approved after minor revisions. On the Ghanaian side, official contact letters that I would take to schools were signed and approved by Takoradi MEO. These are important formalities in Ghana, as Ghanaian society often operates with the use of official letters.

The following sections elaborate on details of school sample, interviews and focus groups, surveys, and analysis methods.

## School Sample

With the assistance of officers at Takoradi MEO, I identified 6 schools that would comprise my sample. These schools were chosen taking into consideration the following factors to obtain a balanced sampling as much as possible.

- urban/rural
- deprived/non-deprived<sup>12</sup>
- geographical location and coverage within the district
- accessibility

Out of the 6 schools, 3 schools were in the urban centre of Takoradi, and 3 were in rural areas of the metro education district.

Geographically, the schools were spread across 2 urban circuits (sub-districts within Takoradi Metro Education District) and 2 rural circuits. Two of the 3 rural schools were somewhat accessible by *trotros*<sup>13</sup> or local buses. However, some of the *trotros* run so infrequently that it clearly presents an obstacle for teachers who commute to the school. One rural school had no *trotros* running to the school, and I had to be driven there by one of the Circuit Supervisors. All of the urban schools were easily accessible as they were located within the urban centre of Takoradi.

It was not possible to access data on academic performance levels of the students at the schools. However, it is expected that the levels varied widely among the 6 schools. In one of the rural schools, only 2 students out of the 25 who took the BECE passed the exam to continue on to senior high school.<sup>14</sup> It is likely that the urban schools had much higher BECE pass rates.

## Interviews and Focus Groups

At each school, I interviewed the following persons:

- Head Teacher
- Teachers (minimum 1 teacher per school)
- School Management Committee (SMC) Chairman and/or Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Chairman

The interviews followed a semi-structured format, and were conducted in English. As English is the official language in Ghana and medium of instruction in schools, most Ghanaians have functioning command of English.<sup>15</sup> At most schools, both the SMC chairman and PTA chairman were interviewed. As much as possible, interviews were conducted one-on-one. However, due to time constraints and difficulty in coordinating schedules, some interviews were conducted in a focus-group format.

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<sup>12</sup> In Ghana, some schools in rural areas with fewer resources are designated as “deprived,” and are eligible for additional support. These districts are selected based on low performance using the following indicators: gender parity, enrolment, teacher quality, infrastructure, etc. There are 53 deprived districts in Ghana.

<sup>13</sup> Some local buses however, only run when the bus fills up, which can mean that passengers are waiting for over an hour until the bus departs.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Teacher, Interview conducted by author on 3 December 2008 at school.

<sup>15</sup> This of course depends on the level of education that the person has received. Most of my interviewees had no trouble communicating in English.

At Takoradi MEO, I interviewed the Assistant Director, Public Relations Officer, and conducted a focus group with 3 Circuit Supervisors. (Circuit Supervisors are responsible for overseeing their assigned group of schools and act as the liaison between the schools and the MEO.)

In addition, I was fortunate to meet with and interview Dr. Joseph Ghartey Ampiah, Lecturer, Institute of Education at the University of Cape Coast. As this was my final interview after having completed all other data collection, I shared with Dr. Ampiah my initial findings. He enriched my research with his further analysis of some of my findings and provided supplementary information that filled in some of the gaps in my research.

### **Surveys**

Surveys were also conducted to obtain comments and opinions from parents of the pupils. A copy of the survey questionnaire is provided as Appendix A.

- Approximately 400 surveys were distributed to parents of students in 4 schools (2 rural and 2 urban schools).
- Surveys were only distributed to parents of children in grades 5 and 6, as these children were enrolled in school prior to the introduction of the Capitation Grant. Therefore, their parents could comment on the difference in their attitude before and after the grant was introduced.
- 180 useable surveys were collected.

Some sections of the survey were tallied up and analyzed using more quantitative approaches of calculating the percentage of parents who made a certain response.

### **Analysis**

My analysis is based on the data collected from primary sources listed above and supported by secondary sources. Secondary sources include:

- Literature review on community participation in education in developing country contexts (many of which are on Ghana specifically)
- Policy documents and reports published by the Ministry of Education in Ghana
- SMC/PTA Handbook printed by Ghana Education Service
- Circuit Supervisors Handbook printed by Ghana Education Service
- News articles from reputable Ghanaian and international news sources
- Other relevant reports and documents

### **Limitations of Research**

Some limitations of this research are the following:

- Power dynamics: When individual interviews were not possible to set up due to time constraints, focus groups with a mix of teachers and head teachers as well as PTA and SMC chairmen were conducted. It is possible that because of the presence of their supervisor/subordinates/colleagues in the same interview, some individuals did not feel comfortable being completely honest in their replies.
- Language: English is the official language of Ghana and most of the people I interviewed spoke it fluently. However, Ghanaian English differs slightly in use of words so I may have missed some of the subtle nuances.

- Although I had spent 4 months in Ghana prior to beginning my research, there still may have been inaccurate assumptions based on cultural differences that affected my research process and data quality.

At this stage, it is difficult to assess how much the findings of this study can be applied to other areas of Ghana. There have been reports, however, published very recently by organizations such as the World Bank and UNICEF that seem to support some of the findings of this project.<sup>16</sup>

### ***1.5 Organization of this Report***

This report will continue in the following section with a theoretical discussion on the definitions of community and participation, as well as discuss research findings from recent studies that inform this project. It will then provide an overview of decentralization of education in Ghana in section 3.0, including the policies that led to the introduction of the Capitation Grant and structures in place for community participation. In section 4.0, the operational features of the Capitation Grant, how similar policies have functioned in other African countries, and the current known effects of the grant in Ghana are discussed. Findings from this particular research will be in section 5.0, followed by recommendations in section 6.0.

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<sup>16</sup> World Bank and UNICEF, Abolishing School Fees in Africa: Lessons from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi and Mozambique, Publication (Washington: World Bank, 2009), p144. This report mentioned the perceived decreased in community interest after the introduction of free education (fee abolishment).

## 2.0 Historical Context: Application of Key Concepts in Planning and Community Participation in Ghana

In the 1980s, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) advanced neoliberal development strategies that encouraged countries to liberalize trade, privatize state enterprises and allow for free markets. State intervention was reduced and expenditures were minimized. However, instead of having the intended economic effect, countries that adopted these policies experienced economic decline. As a result, basic services were in disarray; the education sector experienced deterioration in school infrastructure, lack of teaching materials, and insufficient number of trained teachers, all of which led to low quality of education and even lower enrolment rates.<sup>17</sup> Governments promoted free universal primary education in an attempt to reverse this trend, but this only resulted in a further strain on limited resources.<sup>18</sup> Criticisms led to policy changes in the 1990s, which saw the state's role become more complementary to the market system. It was at this time that decentralization gained focus as the structure through which poverty alleviation and democratization could be achieved.

Decentralization is "the process of re-assigning responsibility and corresponding decision-making authority for specific functions from higher to lower levels of government and organizational units."<sup>19</sup> In educational decentralization, this entails the devolution of decision-making power over areas such as curriculum design, school administration, and financial management to regional, municipal, district offices or to the schools themselves.

Two of the most prominent arguments that support decentralization are efficiency and effectiveness through enhanced accountability.<sup>20</sup> As decisions will be made at a level that is 'closer to the people,' this allows for better-informed decisions based on the local context. As resource allocation will incorporate and reflect such preferences expressed by the local community, this improves allocative efficiency. In addition, the service receiver is able to monitor closely and will be in a better position to hold the decision-makers accountable. In the school setting, the community can hold the service provider accountable, which in turn can improve the quality of teaching and learning.<sup>21</sup> Consequently, community participation in newly decentralized structures was seen as not only a democratic right but also a means to achieve these goals.<sup>22</sup>

Much like in the rest of the world, the government of Ghana's initial motivation for decentralization was to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools and to increase efficiency in the education sector by moving the locus of decision-making to the local level. At the time, however, there were also economic motivations, as

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<sup>17</sup> World Bank and UNICEF, pxi.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Paqueo and Lammert in Emanuela Di Gropello, A Comparative Analysis of School-Based Management in Central America, World Bank Working Paper (Washington: World Bank, 2006), p1.

<sup>20</sup> Kamiljon T. Akramov and Felix Asante, Decentralization and Local Public Services in Ghana: Do Geography and Ethnic Diversity Matter?, Paper presented at the CSAE Conference 22-24th March 2009 (Oxford: St. Catherine's College, 2009), p5 & Di Gropello, Chapter 1.

<sup>21</sup> Akramov and Asante, p5 & Di Gropello, p3.

<sup>22</sup> Pauline Rose, "Community Participation in School Policy and Practice in Malawi: balancing local knowledge, national policies and international agency priorities," Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education 33.1 (2003): 47-64, p49.

decentralization originally entailed the concept of “cost-sharing” in which along with the decision-making authority, the responsibility for fundraising was also delegated to lower levels.<sup>23</sup> It was for these multitudes of reasons that decentralization was seen an essential component of an overall development strategy in Ghana, including the education sector.

### **2.1 Community Participation in Education**

The concept of community participation in education was promoted for various reasons. It was clear that governments simply did not have the financial capacity to single-handedly provide social services. As a means to replace the abolished school fees, governments turned to communities to contribute to the “cost-sharing” of educational services. With this financial responsibility also came increased decision-making powers so as to facilitate the involvement and participation of these contributors. This was thought to encourage schools to be more accountable to the community and ensure cost-effectiveness in the use and management of scarce resources.<sup>24</sup> Increased accountability can motivate teachers to work harder, and these factors can together serve to improve not only the access to education but also its quality.

Community participation was also promoted based on the assumption that engaging the community as a stakeholder in local schools would be a positive influence. Input from the community in the decision-making regarding local schools would make education more responsive to local circumstances, promoting a sense of local ownership and commitment, and cultivate partnership between the community and the school. By tailoring the schools’ governance, management and curricula to their local context through accommodating the concerns and incorporating the needs of the community, it could also generate stronger demand and interest in education. As a result, more parents are likely to support the schools and ensure their children attend regularly.

There are also spin-off effects of community participation in education. Participants can gain skills through their involvement, thereby resulting in the capacity building of the community. Community participation can also spark a sense of empowerment in the community, which can be a catalyst for the community to tackle other local challenges they may be facing. It also has the potential to create a strong network of local leaders to play a leading role in such endeavors, and build social capital. At a broader level, involving a wide range of people in the decision-making process can contribute to democratization and enhance social cohesion.

As this concept of community participation in education became entrenched in the literature and practice of decentralization in the educational sector, many countries underwent restructuring and reform. Ghana was no exception and its government passed legislation in 1997 to decentralize education and enhance the responsibility of the district and community levels.

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<sup>23</sup> Jordan P. Naidoo, Education Decentralization in Sub-Saharan Africa - Espoused Theories and Theories in Use, Paper presented at CIES Annual Conference March 6-9, 2002 - The Social Construction of Marginality: Globalization's Impact on the Disenfranchised (Orlando: University of Central Florida, 2002), p8.

<sup>24</sup> Joseph Mankoe and Bill Maynes, "Decentralization of Educational Decision-Making in Ghana," International Journal of Educational Development 14.1 (1994): 23-33, p30.

## 2.2 Definition of Community

In discussing community participation in public education, there is a need to first examine what “community” means. Various conceptualizations of community exist grounded on sociology, psychology, and anthropology, among other disciplines. With regards to education, various scholars in the field have adopted the following categorization of communities presented by Bray.<sup>25</sup>

- *Geographical communities* are those in which official or unofficial geographical boundaries outline the community and those people residing within that boundary are members of. Examples of such communities would include villages, towns and districts. Schools’ administrative boundaries are also a form of geographical community; however, in the case of Ghana, there are no such school catchment boundaries for schools. Parents are able to send their children to any school in the country, regardless of where they reside, as there are no policies that restrict students’ attendance to their district or even region.
- *Identity-based communities such as ethnic, racial and religious groups* can also compose a community. This is especially true for minority groups surrounded by a larger majority and may have self-help support structures in place to maintain their group cohesion. In Ghana, most rural villages are inhabited by people of the same ethnic group. On the other hand, urban centers tend to have a diverse population, interspersed with pockets of neighborhoods with higher concentration of certain ethnic groups.
- *Interest-based communities* are communities based on shared family or educational concerns. These communities are more fluid and can expand and contract on a regular basis. For example, parents concerned with their children’s welfare form parents’ associations, which can create a community, but when children leave the schools, the parents will also leave the association.

The various types of communities mentioned above may or may not be formally organized. Features intrinsic to some communities may make them more conducive to formal organizational structure, whereas others will exist without the establishment of a formalized decision-making structure for the community. For schools in Ghana, two types of formal organizations exist for community members, which are the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and School Management Committee (SMC). These organizations include teachers, local leaders (including elected leaders as well as traditional leaders), and parents of the students attending the school.

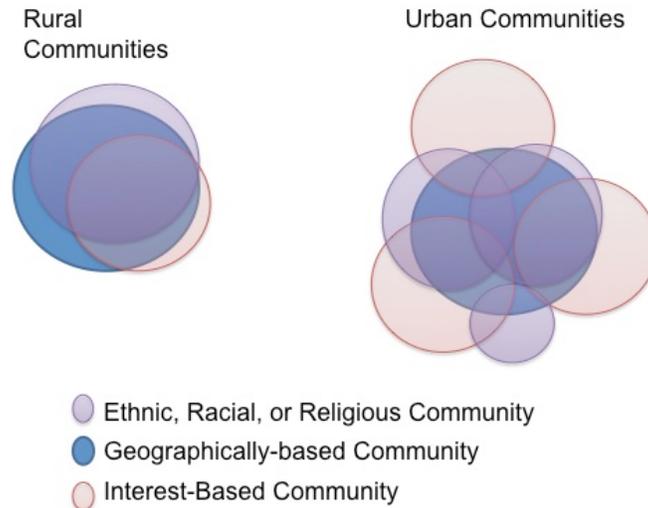
Communities also overlap and many layers of communities exist. Individuals will identify with multiple communities at any given time, as being a member of one type of community does not preclude them from being a member of another type of community. An interest-based community forms naturally around a school through the parents of the students, and the members of this community are often members of the local geographic community. However, this can depend on the rural/urban setting. In rural areas, the

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<sup>25</sup> Mark Bray, *Decentralization of Education: Community Financing*, Directions in Development (Washington: World Bank, 1996), p1.

geographical community is likely to overlap more with the interest-based community of the school compared to urban settings.

Figure 4: Difference between Rural and Urban Communities



(Diagram developed by author from Bray, 1996)

In rural areas, there is often a single school in the village and the villages are isolated from one another. Though some parents send their children to live in a different region with a relative so that their children can go to a better school, most children attend their local school. Therefore, a geographically-defined community overlaps with the interest-based community comprised of parents of the students attending the schools and other leaders who are involved in the management of the school. Furthermore, in most villages,<sup>26</sup> the residing population is predominantly of the same ethnic and/or religious background and therefore the geographical community also overlaps with the ethnic/religious community.

However, it is different in urban areas where there are several schools located within walking distance. Parents are more likely to be selective in choosing which school they send their children due to the availability of options. As well, their income levels may allow them to afford sending their children to farther schools that may have additional costs (e.g. transportation costs). In these schools, a geographically-bound community is less applicable to the school unit, as the people living near the school are not necessarily the ones sending their children to that school, and the geographical community around the school does not see the school as something belonging to the community. Therefore, in urban areas, a socially constructed, interest-based community overlaps little with the geographically-based community. Moreover, the ethnic/religious community is also of little relevance, as there are diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds that are inter-mixed in urban centers.

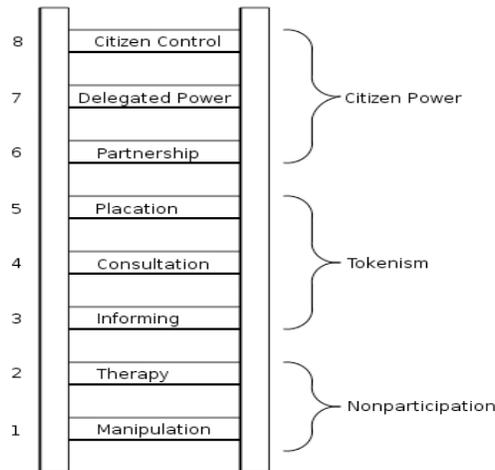
<sup>26</sup> However, there are also some villages in Ghana which exist as physical geographically-bound entity, but because they are a settler village where families' ancestors had migrated to and were not originally from, the people have not cultivated a sense of belonging or collective community identity. In these villages, a sense of geographically-bound community may be minimal among its residents. Pryor, p200.

The research methodology of this project entailed interviewing district administrators and education officers, head teachers, teachers, PTA and SMC members (who can be a parent or a community member without children in the school), and surveying parents. This reflected representatives of interest-based communities of the schools, and did not sample members of the geographical community who do not belong in the interest-based community. Therefore, in this project, the “community” will focus on parents of the students in the schools and the members of the SMC and PTA, who compose the interest-based community of the school, which also includes geographical community members.

## 2.2 Participation and its Application to Education

Like the concept of community, there are various ways in which the concept of participation can be defined and categorized. The literature regarding community participation in education presents various conceptualizations of participation. One that is often referred to is the classic “ladder of citizen participation” developed by Arnstein.<sup>27</sup>

Figure 5: Arnstein's "Ladder of Citizen Participation"



(Source: Arnstein, 1969)

Although this ladder is not a perfect model representing all forms of participation, it is useful to demonstrate that “there is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power to affect the outcome of the process.”<sup>28</sup> Shaeffer took Arnstein’s ladder and proposed its application to the education sector along seven rungs instead of eight:

<sup>27</sup> Sherry R. Arnstein, "Ladder of Citizenship Participation," *Journal of American Institute of Planners* July, 4 (1969), original page unknown.

<sup>28</sup> Arnstein, original page unknown.

Box 1: Schaeffer's Levels of Participation in the Education Sector

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

(Source: Shaeffer, 1994)

Notable is that the lower four rungs use the term "involvement" (with the exception of the lowest rung), whereas the higher rungs use the word "participation." "Involvement" can be seen as a generic term that implies a passive form of collaboration. In contrast, "participation" has the connotation of a much more *active* role, suggesting a form of partnership in a more genuine sense.<sup>29</sup>

Rose also provides a simplified spectrum in which she describes two extremes of participation. At one end is "pseudo-participation" in which, at best there is a consultation process, but ultimately the decision-making powers do not rest in the hands the citizens and they are merely agreeing to something that has already been decided. It tends to be "extractive" whereby the citizens provide financial resources or provide labour for the maintenance or construction of the school (or for other material resources needed in the classroom). On the other end of the spectrum there is "genuine participation" in which the participants have the power to shape the outcome. This type of participation is not imposed but is voluntary and is spontaneous.

Figure 6: Rose's Spectrum of Participation



(Diagram developed by author from Rose, 2003)

These discussions on participation shed light on the various levels and ways in which communities can participate in education. However, there is danger in simply expecting that increased participation and enhanced decision-making power delegated to the community will create positive change.

<sup>29</sup> Sheldon Shaeffer, Participation for Educational Change: A Synthesis of Experience, International Institute for Educational Planning (Paris: UNESCO, 1994), p17 & Sheldon Shaeffer, "Collaborating for Educational Change: The Role of Parents and the Community in School Improvement," International Journal of Educational Development 12.4 (1992): 277-295, p280.

In the past, there has been over-optimism regarding the community's ability to influence the improvement of teaching and learning occurring in schools. "Development practitioners excel in perpetuating the myth that communities are capable of anything, that all that is required is sufficient mobilization (through institutions) and the latent capacities of the community will be unleashed in the interests of development. The evidence does little to support such claims."<sup>30</sup> This notion of community participation as a panacea also prevailed in the education sector, but the traditional form of merely inserting the parents and community members into the school structure was found to be ineffective. Structures such as PTAs and SMCs that govern schools have the potential to be effective in engaging the community, but if they are organized in a way that is unrepresentative or are restricted in its decision-making ability, it severely limits the genuine participation of the community.<sup>31</sup> Blindly pushing for community participation often leads to "pseudo-participation."

It is not only the level of decision-making power that is delegated to the community, but their knowledge of the subject in which they are being asked to participate is also important. Key research findings demonstrate that community members need an opportunity to develop an understanding of the factors that contribute to better quality of education.

- In research conducted by Chapman et al in Ghana, it was found that community members seemed to focus on "form over substance."<sup>32</sup> In other words, if there were no overt criticisms or complaints being made, it was assumed that the quality of education being provided in their schools was high. This suggests that community members do not have a well-developed idea of what instructional and school management practices are effective in providing quality education.
- Without a reason and opportunity to develop their understanding of educational processes and the elements that contribute to effective education, communities are inclined to depend on "conventional wisdom" of what a good school should look like. This "conventional wisdom" often applied by communities is, in most cases, not grounded on empirical fact that it will contribute to educational quality.<sup>33</sup> For example, a poor, rural community in which public infrastructure is scarce will attach value to a visibly well-maintained school facility,<sup>34</sup> and may be more inclined to spend funds on infrastructure upkeep rather than additional training for the teachers.

These findings are not arguments against community participation, but demonstrate that without the knowledge of good educational practices, communities have limited ability to affect the learning outcomes of students.<sup>35</sup> The prevailing consensus is that there is a

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<sup>30</sup> Francis Cleaver, "Institutions, Agency and the Limitations of Participatory Approaches to Development," B. Cooke and U. Kothari, Participation: The New Tyranny? (London and New York: ZED Books, 2001), p46.

<sup>31</sup> A. De Grauwe, et al., "Does decentralization lead to school improvement? Findings and lessons from research in West-Africa," Journal of Education for International Development 1.1 (2005), p5.

<sup>32</sup> David Chapman, et al., "Do communities know best? Testing a premise of educational decentralization: community members' perceptions of their local schools in Ghana," International Journal of Educational Development 22.2 (2002): 181-189, p186.

<sup>33</sup> Chapman et al, p186.

<sup>34</sup> Watt, p20.

<sup>35</sup> Ann Condy, Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning through Community Participation: Achievements, Limitations and Risks: Early Lessons from the Schooling Improvement Fund in Ghana, Social Development Working Paper (London: Department for International Development, 1998), p15.

need to provide training to allow community members to gain a better understanding of what constitutes good educational practices, and an opportunity to consider what actions on their part can help support and encourage such learning, thereby allowing them to grow into their role.

When there is a balance between adequate decision-making power alongside knowledge of good educational practices is when community has the best chance of making a positive contribution. Therefore, there is a need to provide both knowledge and power in order for community participation to be meaningful to the community, the school, and the pupils.

### 3.0 Education in Ghana

Administratively, Ghana's basic education is under the Ghana Education Service (GES) agency within the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MOESS). Ghana Education Service is responsible for the delivery of basic and secondary education, as well as other sub-sectors such as technical/vocational institutes and teacher education. With a multitude of responsibilities, GES has control over approximately 80% of the annual expenditure on education in the public sector. Since educational reforms in 2007, Ghana's basic education now includes 2 years of kindergarten, 6 years of primary, and 3 years of junior high school. These 11 years of schooling are free and compulsory as promised under Free Compulsory Basic Education (FCUBE).

As students complete their basic education, they must take the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) in order to continue on to senior high school. In 2008, BECE pass rate was 62%, indicating that of the students who sat to write the exam, 62% passed in order to qualify to continue on to senior high schools or technical institutes.<sup>36</sup> In the 2007/2008 school year, the completion rate for primary was 88%, and 67.7% for junior high school. Ghana's goal is to achieve 100% completion rates for basic education by 2015.<sup>37</sup>

#### 3.1 Evolution of Educational Policy

In 1957, Ghana was the first sub-Saharan country to gain independence in Africa. For the next 15 years, its education system was considered the best in the continent,<sup>38</sup> and one to which other African countries looked as a good example. Ghana offered education for free to its citizens in the 1960s; however, economic decline led to the reversal of fee abolition, which resulted in limiting access and deteriorating quality of education.<sup>39</sup> The proportion of GDP allocated for education took a dive from 6.4% in 1976 to approximately 1.0% in 1983 and 1.7% in 1985.<sup>40</sup> Basic teaching materials such as textbooks were unavailable, infrastructure was in disrepair, and to make matters worse, qualified teachers dissatisfied with the state of education in Ghana left the country to seek a better life in neighboring Nigeria which was experiencing growth with their newly discovered oil. Unqualified teachers then filled in the available teaching positions in Ghana, further lowering the quality of education.

In 1987, Ghana underwent significant educational reforms. As the previous system with 17-years of pre-tertiary education was heavily criticized for being inefficient and easily marginalizing the poorer population, this was shortened to 12 years. In addition, school hours were increased, and a policy to ensure all teachers are qualified was adopted. An emphasis on better educational planning and management were agreed upon. Around the same time, the international commitment to Education for All (EFA) was adopted, further pushing the educational agenda forward.

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<sup>36</sup> Think Ghana, [Trunk News: 2008 BECE Results - Best in 10 Years](http://news.thinkghana.com/education/200808/21668.pgp), 27 August 2008, 15 September 2009 <<http://news.thinkghana.com/education/200808/21668.pgp>>.

<sup>37</sup> UNICEF, p3.

<sup>38</sup> World Bank in Kwame Akyeampong, [Whole school development in Ghana](#), Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005 The Quality Imperative, 2004, p4.

<sup>39</sup> World Bank and UNICEF, p5.

<sup>40</sup> World Bank in Akyeampong, p4.

The government of Ghana has demonstrated its commitment to improving education through policy initiatives in the past two decades. In the 1992 Constitution, the government of Ghana committed to taking steps towards free, compulsory and universal basic education, which was followed up by the launch of FCUBE in 1996. Since then, this commitment has been continuously reflected in newer policy initiatives such as the Educational Strategic Plan (ESP) for 2003-2015, Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) I and II, Educational White Paper, and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

With regards to community participation, the FCUBE policy recognized that the community has an important role to play in the decentralization of education, and this was the catalyst for the creation of SMCs and PTAs. Specifically, this model of having PTA and SMC was initiated through the USAID-funded Quality Improvement in Primary Schools (QUIPS) program in 1997, the year following the launch of FCUBE. As a component within the QUIPS program, the Community School Alliances project sought to improve the quality of education through promoting the participation of the community in educational services. During the 7 years of the project, the project set out to increase community awareness, responsibility, and advocacy for their local education. Their main task was to strengthen and maximize community-based resources through enhancing local school-support organizations such as the PTA and SMC.

Historically, it had been the communities who initiated and established basic schools in many parts of Ghana. Communities played a central role in the development and provision of education until education became centrally managed by the government, at which point the level of community involvement declined.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, in many ways, the promotion of community participation is a reverse trend to put education back into the hands of the community.

### **3.2 Decentralization of Education in Ghana**

The process of decentralization in Ghana was initiated with the 1988 reforms, which saw the creation of 85 districts in the 10 regions of Ghana. The 1992 Constitution stated, "Ghana shall have a system of local government and administration which shall, as far as practicable, be decentralized,"<sup>42</sup> further endorsing this process of decentralization. The Constitution created a three-tiered sub-national governance structure in Ghana made up of the regional (Regional Coordinating Councils), district (District Assemblies), and sub-district (town councils, unit committees) levels. The Local Government Act of 1993 provides the legal framework for this commitment outlined in the constitution.

Ghana Education Service (GES) began to undertake decentralization of pre-tertiary education around 1998. This saw the responsibility and authority over the management of educational resources, services, and staff be devolved down to the district and school levels. At the school level, decentralization of educational decision-making took the form of "School-Based Management (SBM)". The concept behind SBM is that "decentralizing decision-making authority to parents and communities fosters demand and ensures that schools provide the social and economic benefits that best reflect the priorities and

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<sup>41</sup> Ghana Education Service, "SMC/PTA Handbook: Improving Quality Education through Community Participation," January 2001, pi & Watt, p4.

<sup>42</sup> Republic of Ghana, "[http://www.judicial.gov.gh/constitution/chapter/chap\\_20.htm](http://www.judicial.gov.gh/constitution/chapter/chap_20.htm)," 1992, The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana 1992, 1 December 2009  
[http://www.judicial.gov.gh/constitution/chapter/chap\\_20.htm](http://www.judicial.gov.gh/constitution/chapter/chap_20.htm), Chapter 20, Article 240.

values of those local communities.”<sup>43</sup> This led to the creation of PTA and SMC at each school in Ghana. It has been claimed that such organizations that exist to support local education are the “basic building blocks for stronger school and community collaboration.”<sup>44</sup>

### **3.3 School Management Committee and Parent Teacher Association**

At the school level, there are two bodies through which the community is involved in school affairs. The PTA is “a mechanism for building parent support for the schools and involving them in activities of their schools.”<sup>45</sup> In contrast, the SMC is the body that provides a monitoring and supervisory role in the school, to ensure that quality educational services are being provided “through efficient management and equitable allocation of resources.”<sup>46</sup>

In the SMC/PTA Handbook distributed throughout the country, the differences in the two bodies are outlined as follows:

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<sup>43</sup> World Bank, What is School-Based Management? (Washington: World Bank, 2007), p1.

<sup>44</sup> Shaeffer (1994), p12.

<sup>45</sup> Grace Akukwe Nkansa and David W. Chapman, "Sustaining Community Participation: What remains after the money ends?," Review of Education 52 (2006): 509-532, p515.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

School Management Committee (SMC)	Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
<p>The School Management Committee is “a school community-based institution aimed at strengthening community participation and mobilization for education delivery.” It is “a representation of the entire school community of a particular school...the school community, therefore, becomes its constituency.”<sup>47</sup></p> <p><b>Members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District Director of Education or representative</li> <li>• Head teacher</li> <li>• District Assembly member</li> <li>• Unit Committee representative</li> <li>• Representative appointed by the Chief of the town/village</li> <li>• Two members of teaching staff</li> <li>• Past pupils’ association representative</li> <li>• Representative from PTA</li> </ul> <p><b>Powers and Functions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control general school policy</li> <li>• Report periodically to Director General of Education and District Education Oversight Committee through the District Director of Education</li> <li>• Ensure school infrastructure is maintained in sanitary and safe condition</li> <li>• Assist head teacher in resolving conflicts</li> <li>• Refer serious disciplinary cases to the District Director for action</li> <li>• Negotiate for land for school projects, e.g. school farm, football field</li> <li>• Refrain from encroaching upon authority of head teacher</li> </ul>	<p>The Parent Teacher Association is “an association of parents and teachers in a particular school,” and is non-governmental, non-sectarian, non-partisan, and non-commercial. It is made up of “parents, guardians and teachers who are interested in children’s education.”<sup>48</sup></p> <p><b>Members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chairman</li> <li>• Vice Chairman</li> <li>• Secretary (teacher)</li> <li>• Financial Secretary (parent)</li> <li>• Treasurer (parent)</li> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> Committee member (parent)</li> <li>• 2<sup>nd</sup> Committee member (parent)</li> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> Committee member (head teacher)</li> <li>• School welfare officer</li> </ul> <p><b>Powers and Functions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist in school maintenance and repair of infrastructure</li> <li>• Ensure welfare of students and teachers (e.g. provision of accommodation for teachers, procure textbooks for students)</li> <li>• See performance of children</li> <li>• Make regular visits to schools to monitor children’s performance</li> <li>• Assist in solving any problems at school</li> <li>• Help maintain discipline by reporting lateness, etc., to school authorities</li> <li>• Cooperate with other organizations/agencies having common interests regarding quality education</li> <li>• Refrain from encroaching upon authority of head teacher</li> </ul>

(Source: Ghana Education Service, 2001)

Though this handbook outlines institutional differences and provides definitions of the role of the two bodies, it also explains the intentional blurring of the roles and responsibilities of the SMC and PTA. This is to encourage joint mobilization towards achieving the overarching goal of delivering education of high quality. It also expects that through such collaborative efforts, the distinct roles for each body will gradually emerge.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Ghana Education Service (2001), p9.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p1.

A study was conducted about effectiveness and sustainability of SMC and PTA after the foreign donor's (USAID) funding ceased in 2004. This study found that the two most important elements that contributed to the sustainability of organizational structures that were put in place to promote community participation were local leadership and social cohesion. In communities with a dominant leader (the official position that this leader occupied varied depending on the community - e.g. head teacher, SMC or PTA chairman, local chief), this leader's ability to coherently mobilize and unify both the authorities and the power of the key personnel was crucial. These leaders were dynamic in their leadership, and invested their personal time and resources into advancing the agenda of school improvement.<sup>50</sup>

### **Implications for this research**

In the course of this research project, it was difficult to measure the level of effectiveness of the SMC and PTA of the schools sampled. This was due to time and resource constraints, as well as this level of analysis being beyond the scope of this project. It also would have been difficult to measure the true effectiveness of the SMC and PTA without immersing oneself for a long period of time in the community. In a simple interview, interviewees are unlikely to openly admit or discuss the weakness or ineffectiveness of their own school's SMC or PTA. As a general comment however, it can be said that many SMC are not fully functional bodies.<sup>51</sup> As Dr. Ampiah commented, "SMCs do not meet very often and in many cases, they are not really functioning."<sup>52</sup>

### **3.4 Evolution of Community Participation in Education in Ghana**

Since the provision of education was transferred to the national government, the expectations of the ways in which the community participates in public education has undergone some shifts. Initially, their involvement was limited to assisting in the maintenance and provision of school infrastructure and attendance at school events. Some of the "traditional" forms of community participation in schools are the following:

- Participation in maintenance and provision of school infrastructure such as toilets
- Assist in searching for, or provision of accommodation for teachers
- Provision of basic necessities to pupils
- Provision of land for school gardening, farming, other agricultural activities
- Allowing use of other communal resources (e.g. church facilities) for school activities
- Attendance at PTA meetings, school events such as Speech Days, Open Days

These responsibilities still exist, as seen in the roles and responsibilities outlined in the SCM/PTA Handbook above. In comparing these forms of participation with Shaeffer's adaptation of Arnstein's ladder, their level of participation in the past was that of a lower rung, particularly rungs:

3. Involvement through the contribution (or extraction) of resources, materials and labour

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<sup>50</sup> Nkansa and Chapman, p526.

<sup>51</sup> Mikiko Nishimura, et al., "A Comparative Analysis of Universal Primary Education Policy in Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, and Uganda," *Journal of International Cooperation in Education* 12.1 (2009): 143-158, p153.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Dr. Joseph Ghartey Ampiah, Interview conducted by author on 3 December 2008 at University of Cape Coast & Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, Preliminary Education Sector Performance Report 2008, Report (Accra: Republic of Ghana, 2008), p23.

2. Involvement through attendance and the receipt of information (e.g. at parents' meetings), implying passive acceptance

Since educational reforms in 1987 and the increased emphasis on (re)incorporating the community in education, expectations for community participation in education changed to include:

- Participation in the management of schools
- Participation and consultation in the protection and maintenance of school property and infrastructure
- Supervision and monitoring of student attitudes and attendance at schools
- Monitoring of teacher performance

This can be described as middle-range rungs between:

6. Participation as implementers of delegated powers
5. Participation in the delivery of a service, often as a partner with other actors
4. Involvement through consultation (or feedback) on particular issues

Therefore, there has been a rise in the level of expected community participation. One study noted that the challenge in increasing community participation in education is that although the expectations for their level and form of participation has increased, this has not been paralleled by the increase in the community's capacity to take on such responsibilities.<sup>53</sup> There is a need for increased capacity-building training to allow for the community to grow into their role that has expanded.<sup>54</sup> This is taken into consideration in recommendations made in section 6.0.

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<sup>53</sup> Chapman et al, p187.

<sup>54</sup> Watt, pviii.

## 4.0 Capitation Grant

Despite the introduction of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana and the FCUBE policy to make education free, in reality, parents were still paying district levies and other fees. A survey conducted in early 2005 found that there were 76 different types of fees and levies being charged in public basic schools across Ghana.<sup>55</sup> Such fees were one cause of irregular attendance, as students may be able to afford school fees for one term but not the following term, which then led to higher drop out rates. Moreover, these costs created a significant financial barrier for many parents and children to accessing basic education. For these reasons, the abolition of school fees was considered a key policy intervention.<sup>56</sup> Though the policy of FCUBE had existed in Ghana since 1996, it was not until the nationwide introduction of the Capitation Grant in 2005 that this policy actually took form. Thus for almost 10 years, the idea of fee abolition existed in policy but implementation was slow to begin.

After an initial pilot year in 2004/2005, the Capitation Grant was introduced nation-wide in Ghana in the 2005/2006 academic year. For every pupil enrolled, each public basic school received GH¢3.00 (approximately \$3.00 CDN) per academic year. The grant removed the financial barriers for students to access education while replacing the revenue schools had lost due to abolition of school fees. The grant was the financial and administrative pillar that supported the FCUBE policy of free education. Moreover, by empowering schools to plan and carry out activities that improve the quality of their schools (in the form of School Performance Improvement Plans), it further promoted decentralization of educational decision-making to the local level and encouraged local participation in schools.<sup>57</sup>

The funding for this scheme initially came from the Highly-Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Fund and from the Social Impact Mitigation Levy. From the following year onwards, the government of Ghana incorporated these costs into their national budget.

### 4.1 Operational mechanisms of the Capitation Grant

At the school level, the use of the Capitation Grant is determined through designing the School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP).

#### School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP)

The SPIP is a document that outlines what each school will use their Capitation Grant for. It outlines all of the actions to be carried out using the Capitation Grant funds, and these activities are broken down into the following components:

- Improving access: E.g. enrollment drive to encourage students to attend school at the beginning of each term, support for children who are especially needy.

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<sup>55</sup> Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, Policy Evaluation Study: Package of Policy Interventions - Capitation Grant, School Feeding and Disadvantaged Criteria, Policy Evaluation Study (Accra: MOESS, 2007), p10.

<sup>56</sup> Robert Darko Osei, et al., Effects of Capitation Grant on Education Outcomes in Ghana (Accra: Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research, 2009), p1.

<sup>57</sup> Athena Maikish and Alec Gershberg, Targeting Education Funding to the Poor: Universal Primary Education, Education Decentralization and Local Level Outcomes in Ghana, Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009 *Overcoming Inequality: Why governance matters*, p2.

- Provision of teaching and learning materials: E.g. provision of textbooks, pens, paper, etc.
- School management: E.g. provision of stationary, support for SMC/PTA, administration costs
- Community and school relationship: E.g. organize school visits, organize communal labour, effective PTA meetings, provide welfare services to teachers
- School facilities: E.g. provide desks, toilet, equipment for games

Each school is to draw up a SPIP for the entire school year. In addition to the activities and components listed above, the SPIP also includes information regarding who is responsible for overseeing each activity, resources needed, time frame for action to take place, and who monitors the activity. A sample SPIP is attached in Appendix B.

Drawing the SPIP follows the procedure as shown in figure below.

Figure 7: Process of Designing the SPIP



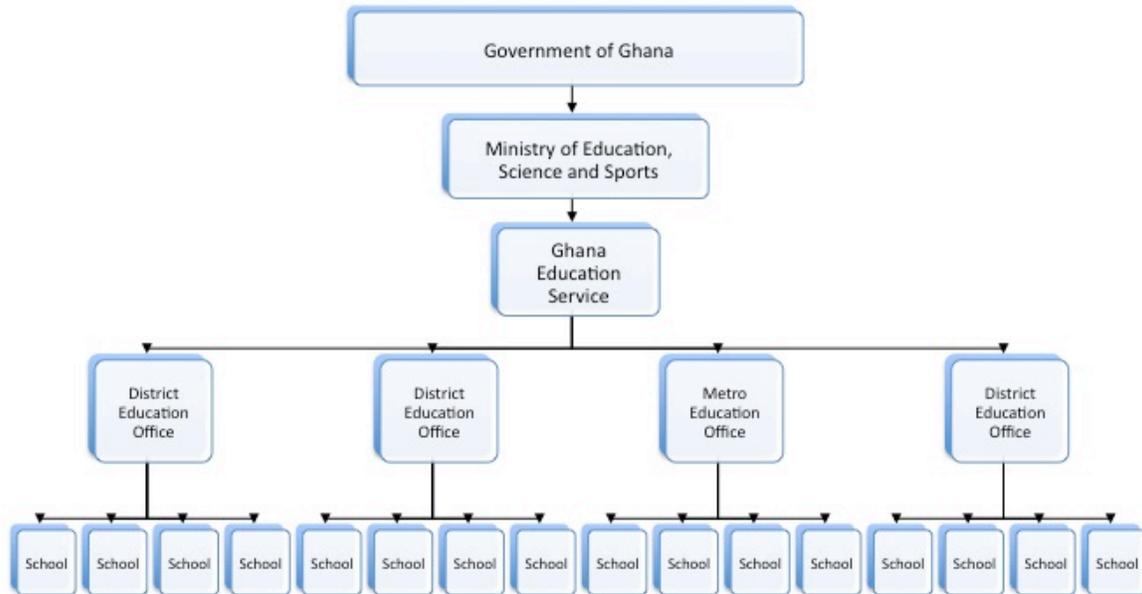
(Diagram developed by author from GES, n.d.)

As shown in the diagram above, the teachers and head teachers discuss the needs of the school to first draft the SPIP, then the SMC chairperson approves the SPIP before it is submitted to the District Education Office. If the SMC chairperson has questions or feedback, they can be shared with the teachers when the SPIP is submitted for his/her approval. If the SMC chairperson has concerns about the draft SPIP, he/she can ask the head teacher to redraft the SPIP. However, in reality, this rarely happens and the SMC chairperson approves of the SPIP without much discussion.

### Flow of Funds

Capitation Grant funds are deposited into the GES account from the central government. From there, individual checks are issued to the District Education Offices (Takoradi MEO is essentially a District Education Office), which are deposited into an account specifically for the Capitation Grant. The District Director of Education and the District Accountant are the signatories to this account. From the district education offices, the funds are transferred to each school's account based on their enrolment figures. Signatories to the school's account are the head teacher and the assistant. This flow is show in the diagram below.

Figure 8: Flow of Capitation Grant Funds



(Diagram developed by author from GES, n.d.)<sup>58</sup>

### Monitoring

Each school is to maintain documentation of all grant funds that are used, including appropriate receipts and forms. Head teachers and SMC chairman are to submit monthly and quarterly reports of expenditures and activities completed to the District/Metro Education Office. The Circuit Supervisor, an officer at the District/Metro Education Office who is responsible for communication between the District Education Office and individual schools, is to visit each school twice per term. They are to check up on the implementation progress of the activities outlined on the SPIP, submission of relevant forms and reports, and the abolition of all mandatory levies in the schools.

The internal auditors of GES will monitor school accounts and conduct an audit of the grant twice per year. Copies of their report are submitted to the SMC, District Director of Education, and Regional Director of Education.

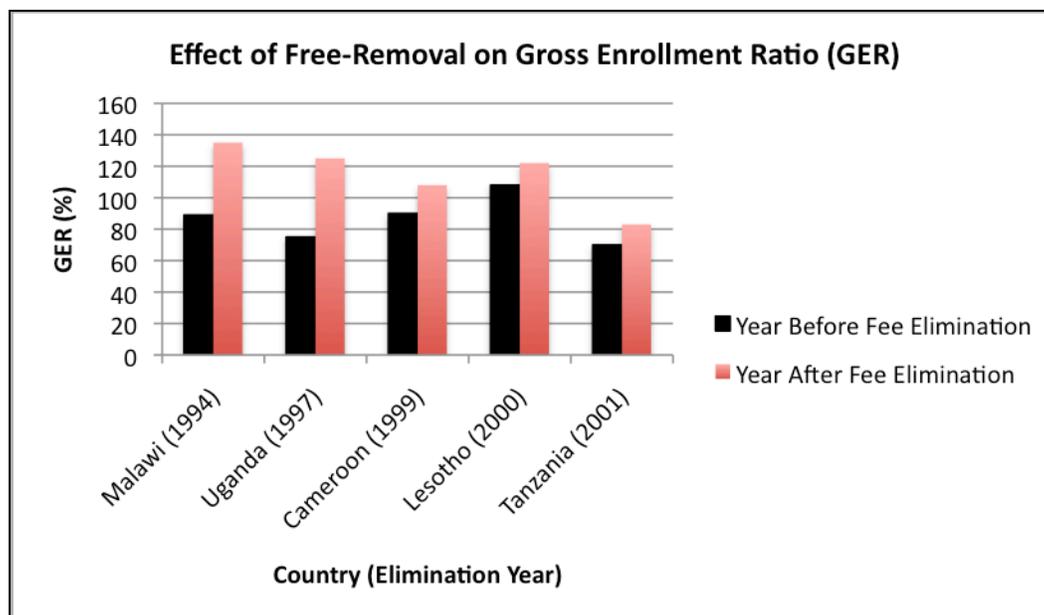
### 4.2 Strengths and Challenges of Capitation Grant

Other African countries have implemented similar policies to eliminate school fees. Malawi was one of the first to abolish school fees. Other countries that followed include Lesotho, Kenya, Tanzania, and Zambia. Studies of other countries' experiences of abolishing school fees have found the following:

<sup>58</sup> Ghana Education Service, "Guidelines for the Distribution and Utilization of Capitation Grants to Basic Schools," (n.d.).

- Eliminating school fees has increased access to education as seen through an increase in school enrollment, especially for disadvantaged children such as girls, orphans, and children living in rural areas.<sup>59</sup>

Figure 9: Gross Enrollment Ratio after abolition of school fees



(Source: USAID, 2007)

- Abolishing school fees however, still does not completely free families from the burden of paying for education. There are many other costs such as uniforms, textbooks, and workbooks that are borne by the families. This is not an argument against fee-abolishment, but rather a reminder that are still significant obstacles to reach EFA goals.<sup>60</sup>
- There are also opportunity costs for families that are unaccounted for.<sup>61</sup> When a family sends a child to school, the indirect cost of losing a helping hand around the house or the farm can be a negative impact for the family, thereby preventing parents from sending their children to school. This is especially the case for poor families who rely significantly on the income brought in by their children.<sup>62</sup>
- A sudden increase in enrollment has the danger of lowering the quality of education due to the inability of schools and teachers to absorb the new pupils.<sup>63</sup> For example, when Malawi abolished their school fees, the pupil-classroom ratio shot up to 119:1, and the teacher-student ratio to 62:1.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Nishimura et al, p152 & David Plank, School Fees and Education for All: Is Abolition the Answer?, Working Paper (Washington: USAID, 2007), p2.

<sup>60</sup> Plank, p3.

<sup>61</sup> Plank, p3 & World Bank and UNICEF, p11.

<sup>62</sup> Plank, p3.

<sup>63</sup> World Bank and UNICEF, p4 and p12.

<sup>64</sup> Plank, p3.

- Observations from countries suggest that community involvement and support for local education wanes after the abolition of school fees, as community members interpret the elimination of school fees as the transfer of full financial responsibility over education to the government.<sup>65</sup> In many cases, the relationship between the school administration and parents and communities weakened.<sup>66</sup>
- Abolishing school fees can result in the decrease of school revenue, as parents and community members are no longer making voluntary and/or compulsory contributions. In this case, the abolition of fees can put the schools in further financial crisis than before.<sup>67</sup>
- Generally, parents and community members have expressed appreciation for fee-abolition, especially its equitable nature of benefiting those who could not previously afford education.<sup>68</sup>

Though it had been argued that school fees present the biggest obstacle in trying to achieve EFA,<sup>69</sup> the international community is just beginning to understand some of the positive as well as negative consequences of abolishing school fees. Further research is necessary to better devise alternatives or make modifications, to which this project hopes to contribute to.

### **4.3 Effects of the Capitation Grant in Ghana**

In Ghana, free basic education was initiated with the introduction of the Capitation Grant in 2005. There have been both positive effects of this grant as well as challenges identified. The positive impacts are the following:<sup>70</sup>

- There was a 16.7% overall increase in enrollment in basic schools in 2005/2006 school year compared to 2004/2005.
- There was a 10% increase in primary school gross enrollment, bringing the total national primary enrollment to 92.4%.
- Rise in enrollment was observed in all 10 regions of Ghana. The largest increase was seen in the Northern Region where rates were lowest.
- Enrollment of girls increased by 18.1% and boys by 15.3%.

The abolition of school fees has also had negative unintended consequences. In Ghana, some challenges that have been identified so far are the following:

- Insufficient number of public basic schools to accommodate the increase in enrollment since the inception of the Capitation Grant. An initial assessment found that an additional 440 public basic schools are necessary.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Plank, p5 & Nishimura et al, p153.

<sup>66</sup> Nishimura et al, p157.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, p153.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, p155.

<sup>69</sup> Plank, p1.

<sup>70</sup> UNICEF, p4.

<sup>71</sup> MOESS (2007), p11.

- There is an acute shortage of teachers, particularly in the rural areas. As a result, worsening teacher-pupil ratios can lead to lower academic performance of students.<sup>72</sup>
- The monitoring system to ensure effective use of the grant is in need of improvement.<sup>73</sup>
- General perception of teachers, SMC and PTA members was that the Head Teacher was misusing the grant money, and that the money was not being allocated effectively.<sup>74</sup>
- SMC and PTA felt that they were unable to share in the administration and utilization of the grant, thereby making them less effective in their roles, the SPIP poorly implemented, and weakening accountability.<sup>75</sup>
- Many Head Teachers expressed that the administrative procedure for the grant was cumbersome and tedious.<sup>76</sup>
- An “equalization factor” may be necessary to ensure that the deprived schools with lower enrolment are provided additional baseline amounts so as to ensure equitable distribution of resources.<sup>77</sup>

In April 2006, the Policy Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit within the Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation division of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports in Ghana conducted an assessment of some of the policies implemented, including the Capitation Grant. This report concluded with recommendations on improvements to the design and implementation of the Capitation Grant such as:<sup>78</sup>

- Create targeting mechanisms to better serve and reach underserved populations.
- The grant should include incentives for enhanced performance.
- Mechanisms for more efficient use of the grant should be introduced. These include removal of unnecessary management practices, better school record management, implementation of SPIP with active involvement of the SMCs, and training Head Teachers on effective use of the grant.
- GES should work in collaboration with District Assemblies to empower the SMCs and communities to monitor the implementation of the SPIP.

In the following section, the impact that the Capitation Grant has had on community-school relationships will be further discussed, as per findings from field research. One research project conducted on abolition of school fees concluded, “abolishing school

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<sup>72</sup> Nishimura et al, p146.

<sup>73</sup> MOESS (2007), p12.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, p46.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, p22.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, p46.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, p47.

fees without an effective strategy for replacing revenues and protecting instructional quality is likely to do more harm than good, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable children. If a policy goal is to accomplish anything more ambitious than simply increasing the number of children who enroll in school, then a more sophisticated approach is required.”<sup>79</sup> The recommendations put forth in section 6.0 do not attempt to provide policy alternatives as discussed in the comments above, but rather, to make improvements to the currently existing structure for community-school relationships.

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<sup>79</sup> Plank, p7.

## **5.0 Findings**

This section will first discuss broader findings regarding the stakeholders' understanding of the importance of community participation in schools and the value it brings to education. Then it will take a closer look at the community/parents' response to the Capitation Grant.

### ***5.1 Stakeholders' Perspectives on the Significance of Community Participation***

Through interviews and surveys, education officers at Takoradi MEO, teachers, head teachers, SMC/PTA chairpersons, and parents were asked "Do you think the participation of the community/parents in school management is important? Why or why not?" This question was important to ask in attempting to understand the various stakeholders' views on the significance of community participation. Their replies can shape the future endeavors to manage community participation, whether that involves creating a means to increase the level of participation or to modify the mechanisms so that it is done more effectively.

#### **All Stakeholders**

An analysis of the replies to this question found that all stakeholders see the value in community participation. Though various explanations were given, the reason that was given most commonly by all stakeholder groups was that participation of the community can help to improve the management of their school and by extension, improve the quality of education. Collaboration with community members and exchange of information is thought to help the school in educating their children. All stakeholders (community/parents, teachers, and MEO officers) seemed to recognize that the community input and participation are valuable.

The top reason for community participation was the same for all stakeholders, but other reasons for community participation that were mentioned had a slightly different focus.

#### **Community and Parents**

The community/parents, in addition to the reason stated above, commented that the community/parents should participate in school management also because (in order of more to less frequently mentioned):

- Participation allows them to stay informed on the developments at school. Being informed on what happens in the schools is important, so that they may better understand the challenges that schools are facing.
- The school is in the community and therefore, it belongs to them. Community/parents are stakeholders in the school and thus should participate.
- Participation helps parents to stay informed on the performance of their children.
- They should play a monitoring role to ensure education of high quality is being provided at their schools.

There is notable emphasis on participating as a means to stay informed on issues surrounding the school and their children's education. This suggests that the community

sees their role as a recipient of information, still embracing the “traditional” forms of participation as mentioned in section 3.4. But they also consider themselves to have a valid stake in the quality of education, and want to ensure this through active participation in forms of monitoring and supervision of the schools, showing signs of the community adopting the newer roles that were introduced since educational reforms in the late 1980s (also discussed in section 3.4).

### **Teachers and MEO Officers**

The replies from school teachers and MEO officers were very similar to each other. They explained that community/parent participation in school management is important because:

- “The children in the schools are coming from the community, so the link between the school and community is important,” explained an MEO officer. As the school is located in the community and belongs to the community, the community/parents are important stakeholders and thus as stakeholders, they should participate.
- The school needs a good relationship with the community in order to provide quality education. As one MEO officer said, “the school needs the support and buy-in of the community, and in order to get that, regular and consistent participation of the community in school management becomes important.” This comes in many forms, for example, when the community/parents are informed of the financial challenges that the school is experiencing, they are more willing to help. Without this assistance, the school cannot overcome challenges. These are not only limited to financial assistance by the community, but also in providing children with assistance outside of the school.
- It helps the development of the community. It is not only for the individual children’s education, but education is, as one teacher said, “paramount to the development of any community. If people are not educated, development will also suffer. If the school is in the community, it is the responsibility of the community to participate to ensure that the school provides the pupil in the community with good education which will bring about development in that community.”

These replies are less about informing the community and more about cultivating a collaborative partnership with the community through their participation. One educational officer said “better partnership means better education.” The teachers and MEO officers recognize that the school and community provide mutual benefits to one another, and these benefits can be best achieved through cooperation and collaboration.

### **Analysis**

Other than the top reason mentioned by all parties (i.e. community participation can help improve school management and quality of education), there is divergence in the perspectives held by the groups regarding the significance of community participation. Because the community/parents are on the recipient side and the teachers and educational officers on the providers’ side of educational services, these groups have an investment in and expectation of the schools that are distinct from one another. Therefore, it is understandable that they focus on different aspects of why the community should participate in school management.

In examining the reasons for community participation, comparing the community/parents responses with that of the teachers and MEO officers show that although the teachers

and MEO officers seek community participation as a means to develop and ensure the effectiveness of a collaborative relationship between the community and the school, the community/parents still see the receiving of information through participation as a key element, though they also include more active means of participation such as monitoring. These differences in expected levels of participation are discussed further in the following section regarding the role of the community in education. Focusing on concrete roles allows for a more tangible and concrete discussion on levels of participation.

## **5.2 Stakeholders' Perspectives on Community/Parents' Role in Schools**

There were a wide range of responses from respondents when asked, "In your opinion, what is the role of the community and parents in schools? (In other words, what should the community/parents be doing to ensure quality education in their schools?)".

### **Community and Parents**

The most common responses from the parents and community members (i.e. SMC and PTA chairpersons) were the following:

- Regularly visit the schools. To ensure good education, to stay updated on their children's performance, and be aware of what is happening at the schools, parents should maintain communication and interaction with the school by visiting their children's school on a regular basis. (25 respondents)
- Attend PTA meetings. Parents should attend meetings held by the PTA to help teachers plan improvements to the school and education being provided to the children. Some respondents also said parents should attend PTA meetings to provide input and express their views to enhance the better education for children. (22 respondents)
- Provide financial support to the school. Parents and community should be supporting the schools' finances through paying PTA levies, contributing in kind or in cash. Some parents also described their sense of responsibility to financially contribute to their children's education and not assign full responsibility to the government. (22 respondents)
- Join in the decision-making. Parents and community members should join teachers in discussions of issues surrounding the schools. Because the community and parents bring a breadth of information regarding the community and students that the teachers at schools do not necessarily have access to, their input in the decision-making process at schools is valuable. (17 respondents)

Other reasons raised were:

- Support schools in delivering quality education to the students. This ranged from broad comments such as "ensure quality education," to slightly more detailed comments such as "cooperate with teachers for the welfare of the students." (11 respondents)
- Provide basic needs to the children. Parents and community are responsible for the provision of basic necessities such as food, books, uniform, and other learning equipment. (11 respondents)
- Organize school visits and communal labour. (8 respondents)

## Teachers

In comparison, the teachers' replies to a similar question in interviews found that teachers also placed the most emphasis on parents regularly visiting the schools.<sup>80</sup>

- Regularly visit the schools
- Provide financial support to the school
- Provide welfare to teachers (in forms of accommodation)
- Provide basic needs to the children
- Act as supervisor/monitor of school quality
- Supervision of students outside of school

## MEO Officers

The educational officers at Takoradi MEO, however, did not explicitly mention that the community/parents should frequently visit the schools, but emphasized that they serve two roles:

1. First is a supervisory role in which they are the “watchdogs” of quality education. They raised an example whereby a parent came to the MEO to submit a complaint about their child’s teacher, and commended this parent’s spirit.
2. They also spoke about a supportive role, and commented that without the support of the community, the schools would not run smoothly because the schools are community-based.

Officers expressed the value that the community brings, speaking about an example where certain items were stolen from the school and it was the community who helped resolve the issue. They recognize that the community can act as the eyes and ears, looking out for the school as well as bringing locally specific knowledge that teachers who are often not from the locality, may not possess.

## Analysis

In analyzing all of these identified roles of the community by various actors, Shaeffer’s adaptation of Arnstein’s “ladder of citizen participation” becomes useful. The table below shows the role of the community/parents as identified by the community/parents, teachers/head teachers, and MEO officers in relation to Shaeffer’s seven rungs of participation in education. Not all roles that were described were mentioned; only those that were repeatedly raised were included.

Each role of the community/parents identified is categorized under a level of participation. Some of the roles described such as “support schools” can be different levels of participation depending on the details and mechanisms by which the community/parents would enact this role. Therefore, it is categorized under the lowest likely rung that this role can be described as (in darker shade) and also categorized

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<sup>80</sup> It was not possible to accurately count the number of teachers that gave each reply. This was due to the fact that not all interviews were conducted one-on-one; some interviews had up to three teachers being interviewed at the same time. A comment made by one teacher may or may not have been made by other teachers in the same interview had they not been interviewed together. Thus, exact record of the number of teachers who gave certain responses cannot be presented.

under higher rungs that it may be possible to achieve depending on the specifics of that role (in lighter shade).<sup>81</sup>

Table 2: Roles of the community analyzed using Schaeffer's Seven Levels of Participation

		<b>Role of the community / parents</b>	1) Mere use of the service	2) Involvement through attendance and receipt of information	3) Involvement through contribution (or extraction) of resources, materials, and labour	4) Involvement through consultation (or feedback) of particular issues	5) Participation in the delivery of a service, often as a partner with other actors	6) Participation as implementers or delegated powers	7) Participation in real decision-making at every stage
Identified by...	Parents / Community	Regularly visit the schools							
		Attend PTA meetings							
		Provide financial support to school							
		Join in decision-making							
		Support schools							
		Provide basic needs to children							
		Organize school visits / communal labour							
	Teachers / Head Teachers	Regularly visit the schools							
		Provide financial support to school							
		Provide welfare to teachers							
		Provide basic needs to children							
		Supervise/monitor school quality							
	Supervision of students outside of school								
	MEO	Supervise/monitor school quality							
		Support schools							

Some observations are:

- Much of the roles defined by the three groups of stakeholders are concentrated on the “involvement through contribution” (rung 3).
- Roles such as “support schools” and “supervision of students outside of schools” mentioned by the teachers suggest that the teachers see the community as a partner in the provision of education. There is recognition of mutual dependency that, used effectively, can benefit the children and their education.
- Though not shown in this table, “supervise/monitor school quality” was also mentioned by some parents. However, merely 3 parents identified this, and compared to other

<sup>81</sup> It would have been particularly useful to analyze the current *actual* level of overall participation of parents/community in school management, and compare it to the table above to examine the difference between the actual roles that the community/parents are fulfilling versus the roles that they identify as being important. However, an analysis of the overall participation level is out of the scope of this research. It is still useful to examine the roles identified by the community/parents as important in understanding their expectations and desires with regards to participation.

roles identified, it was an insignificant number and therefore did not make it on this list. Moreover, these 3 parents were all from the same school, which suggests that this particular school may be more advanced in the level of involvement of the parents.

- For the teachers and MEO officers to raise “supervise/monitor school quality” is significant, as this role can push the level of involvement from rung 4 to a higher level. Rungs 4-5 are the crucial shift between *involvement*, which is more of a passive means of participation, to a more *active* form of participation.<sup>82</sup>

Comparing the three groups of stakeholders:

- Of the three stakeholder groups, the community/parents most emphasize involvement through receiving information (rung 2). This is in line with the previous discussion about the importance of community participation, in which the community/parents raised receiving information as one of the most important aspects of community participation.
- Teachers and MEO officers identified roles for the community that have the possibility to reach as far as rung 6 of the ladder. The results in this table suggest that the teachers and MEO officers are more inclined to identify roles of the community that are higher in the ladder of participation.

The community/parents seem to place stronger emphasis on roles that entail the community/parents receiving information and contributing in various ways (rung 2-3), whereas the teachers and MEO Officers identify more roles that are potentially on the higher levels (rungs 3-6).

However, there is also a sense from the community/parents that they are seeking more than simply being on the receiving end of information. What is particularly noteworthy is that the community/parents themselves identified “join in decision-making” as a part of their role. The self-identification of this role is a big step in moving further along the continuum towards genuine participation as described by Rose.

These responses from the community/parents, teachers, and MEO officers are desirable. As Shaeffer states, “in many societies, movement up these rungs – to the third or fourth rung (passive involvement in decision-making and in consultation and feedback) – would already represent considerable progress.”<sup>83</sup> Therefore, the fact that the community/parents identify roles that are on the 4<sup>th</sup> rung, and teachers and MEO officers identifying roles that go even beyond those rungs is a positive finding that demonstrates the stakeholders’ receptiveness towards trying to reach higher levels of community participation.

In considering the steps ahead, it is important to keep these different points of view in mind. When considering how to strengthen the relationship in a way that is meaningful to everyone, a way to marry these different perspectives on the reasons for community participation is important so that participation can be enhanced in a manner that meets everyone’s needs and motives.

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<sup>82</sup> Shaeffer (1994), p17.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

### **5.3 Capitation Grant and the Community**

The majority of parents and community members expressed that the introduction of the Capitation Grant increased their level of interest in the management of school funds.

In the survey, parents were asked whether the Capitation Grant has changed their level of interest in the management of school funds. In their answers, they were asked to circle one of the following:

- a. YES, it has increased my interest
- b. YES, it has lowered my interest
- c. NO, it has not changed my level of interest

From the surveys collected, almost 60% of the parents chose “a. YES, it has increased my interest.” Only 9% said that their level of interest decreased, and approximately 30% said that their level of interest did not change at all.

Interestingly however, interviews showed that the level of parents’ interest as perceived by teachers and SMC/PTA chairpersons were different than what the parents have expressed through the surveys. Some teachers expressed concern with the shift in attitude of parents.

#### **Perceived decline in Parents/Community interest level**

Several teachers and members of the SMC and PTA stated in interviews that they have observed a declining interest of parents since the Capitation Grant. According to some of these key players, because parents were the direct funders of schools through school fees and PTA levies prior to the introduction of the grant, parents were more interested in school management and in ensuring that the money was used efficiently and purposefully. However, the administrators speculated that as parents are no longer directly paying from their pockets, they are now less interested in the running of the school and its use of funds. In addition, in some schools (though not all), the teachers have observed parents’ lack of willingness to pay for additional school funds (i.e. PTA levies which schools can still collect through agreement)<sup>84</sup> since the Capitation Grant began.

In extreme cases, teachers at one school commented, “Now, when the school asks for money, the parents think that teachers are cheating them or lying.” In this case, there is a sense of distrust of teachers held by parents, who now believe the teachers embezzle the funds. These parents believe that schools now receive large amounts of money in lump sums and are suspicious when schools say that they do not have sufficient funds. This was also mentioned in the nation-wide study conducted by Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation Division of the Ministry of Education in April 2006.<sup>85</sup>

The teachers have observed the above negative shifts in attitude, ranging from lack of interest to distrust towards schools. Though this is not the case for all schools and all

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<sup>84</sup> Regarding fees and levies, “subject to approval from the district assemblies, communities and PTAs may impose special levies or fees on their members for the purpose of raising funds for school projects, provided that no student shall be asked to leave school if his or her parents cannot pay.” World Bank and UNICEF, p101.

<sup>85</sup> MOESS (2007), p22.

parents, it was observed in more than one school, and mentioned by more than a few teachers and SMC and PTA chairpersons that were interviewed.

Some of the reasons for these negative attitudes are the following:

- Dissemination of inaccurate and misleading information driven by political agendas. In the fall of 2008, general elections were held in Ghana. As a part of their political platform, the incumbent party placed strong emphasis on their achievement of having made education “free.” In rallies and speeches, not only did they repeatedly remind citizens that thanks to their policies, parents no longer had to pay school fees to send their children to school, but went further to inaccurately claim that parents should not be paying *any* money whatsoever towards their children’s education. In reality, this is far from the truth. Parents still must pay for their children’s exercise books, uniform, etc., and moreover, PTA levies can still be collected upon agreement at each school. However, as the message of ‘free education’ has been reinforced in the minds of the parents due to political campaigning, this has made it difficult for schools to raise funds towards needs that cannot be met through the Capitation Grant.
- Lack of transparency regarding the Capitation Grant. Very few schools mentioned that they discuss the SPIP at PTA meetings, and those that did said they do not discuss them extensively. One head teacher had written out the SPIP on a large piece of paper and displayed it at the school for all to see (this head teacher later stopped doing so because the late disbursement of the funds made the SPIP pointless). However, no other schools had made any similar efforts to make the information available and accessible to parents and the wider public. This lack of transparency, in some cases, was not just to the parents and community members but also among the teachers. In one school, teachers said they had never seen the SPIP because the head teacher decided everything, and therefore they had no idea how the grant money was being spent. A teacher then jokingly said that the Capitation Grant was the head teacher’s “poverty alleviation fund”, insinuating that the head teacher could be misappropriating the funds without anyone knowing. If even the other teachers are unaware of the use of the Capitation Grant, the parents are likely to be even less informed. Without the availability of information to better inform parents on the status of school finances, it is a challenge to gain their support, and moreover, without transparency in the process and its use, it can plant a seed of doubt in the minds of the parents and community regarding the honesty of the school when they are approached for supplementary funds.
- Parents are not informed of the plan and use of the Capitation Grant, but they are asked to provide financial assistance when schools have no funds. Parents’ knowledge of the Capitation Grant was minimal, i.e. most parents know that education has become free, and many also know that schools receive GH¢3.00 per student. However, most parents do not know of the SPIP, and therefore do not know how the Capitation Grant is spent, and what it can be spent on. Very few parents could identify what the grant had been used for in the previous year. Parents are only informed of school finances when the school is asking them for financial assistance, as they are not involved in the decision-making process of neither the use of the grant nor the monitoring of its use. A surprisingly high number of parents are aware that the funds from the Capitation Grant are not released to the schools in a timely manner, corroborating the inference that parents are only consulted when funds are not there or are insufficient. If parents are consulted on school financial management only when

the school needs parents to provide financial support, this then creates the perception that schools are always asking parents for money. For parents, it becomes a situation where “talk about money means that the school will ask us for money.” The school’s perception of parents’ disinterest could be attributed to the fact that their interaction with parents regarding finances only comes up when schools need funds, a discussion matter which automatically discourages parents.

However, interviewees who raised these concerns still explained that the positive changes in parents and community attitudes still outweighed the negatives. Specifically, positive changes brought on by the introduction of the Capitation Grant included:

- Parents and community members now feel compelled to send their children to school. Before, some children would not be at school during school hours because their parents could not pay the school fees. Now, if there are children roaming in the community during school hours, community members will approach them and ask “why are you not in school?” and encourage them to go because it is now free.
- As students are no longer being sent home for not having paid school fees, this has helped smooth over micro-level relationships between the parents and the teachers. This was mentioned by many teachers, and many SMC and PTA chairpersons.
- Overall, there is an increased awareness towards education now that it has become accessible to everyone. This is seen in the earlier point, where community members will approach children and ask why they are not at school.

Therefore, though there are some negative shifts in attitudes of the community and parents, which are leading to lack of interest and in more extreme cases, distrust towards teachers, such extreme cases are rare. Even with the negative shifts, these were outweighed by positive changes in the community/parents’ attitudes.

In terms of these changes affecting the relationship between the community and its local school, the overall impression from interviews with teachers and community members/parents was a positive change brought on by the abolition of school fees. Though there were undesirable situations in some schools where parents were now less willing to spend money on their children’s education, when asked if this has strained the relationship between the schools and the local community, everyone explained that although there were new difficulties that the Capitation Grant has created, overall, the Capitation Grant has been good for everyone.

In some schools, teachers and SMC/PTA chairpersons interviewed commented that the parents still understand the need to pay supplementary fees. As one head teacher said, when they explain to the community/parents the details of why their financial contribution is being sought, they are on board and are willing to provide their support.

Moreover, although interviews showed that some teachers and SMC/PTA chairpersons had observed a decline in the interest of some parents, this should not be overly exaggerated. It must be kept in mind that only 9% of the parents said that their level of interest decreased after the introduction of the Capitation Grant. Thus, the perceived decrease in level of interest may not accurately capture the reality of the majority of the parents’ interest. Survey results show that there were still almost 60% of parents who stated that their level of interest had increased. For those parents whose level of interest

did in fact decrease, the issue may not be their lack of interest but rather, a lack of effective ways in which parents can channel and express this interest in a constructive manner.

This is supported by the next finding that parents/community members generally feel that they should be participating in the decision-making process of the Capitation Grant.

### **Community's Interest in Participation**

In line with the results from the question above, when asked "Do you think the community/parents should participate in deciding what the Capitation Grant is used for? Why or why not?" 70% of survey respondents said that yes, community/parents should participate. This meant that the community is generally interested in participating in deciding the use of the Capitation Grant.

The most frequently mentioned reasons raised by the parents for why the community/parents should participate were:

- To provide input. As the community/parents know the issues and problems of the local community and interact with the students outside of the school environment, their expertise of the locality enables them to have valuable input into the Capitation Grant. (27 respondents)
- For community/parents to be better informed on the use of the Capitation Grant. Parents expressed that they would like to know and better understand how their children's school is using this grant. (24 respondents)
- To increase transparency and enhance accountability. Involving the community members/parents increases the flow of information regarding the Capitation Grant, thereby making the allocation and use of the Capitation Grant more transparent. Moreover, transparency allows for monitoring of the decisions made, enhancing accountability of the schools. (14 respondents)

Though less frequently mentioned, other reasons were:

- Community/parents should participate because the Capitation Grant is coming from citizens' taxes. Therefore, as citizens, they have the right to have a say in what the money is used for. (3 respondents)
- To better support the schools. By being involved in the decision-making process, the community/parents can be aware of the shortcomings of the grant and other challenges faced by the school in meeting financial needs, and therefore better able to provide support where necessary. (6 respondents)
- Community and parents have a responsibility over their children's welfare. The well-being and education of the students is not solely the responsibility of the teachers. Parents and community members have a large part to play, and therefore, should be involved in discussion regarding school finances. (8 respondents)

On the other hand, the respondents who responded that "no, community/parents should not participate" stated the following reasons:

- It is beyond the authority of the community and parents. As one parent wrote, “Because it is a government affair and therefore should be left to them.” Other parents also explained that as there are guidelines on how it is used, there is no need for parents and community to intervene. (13 respondents)
- School authorities are capable of making the right decisions. One respondent said “no, management of schools is in the hands of the school authorities. They know where they are facing difficulties and their strengths as well.” (10 respondents)
- There would be too many divergent opinions. Opening up discussions for parents and community to provide input would not only slow down the process of decision-making as it would entail listening to multiple opinions, but if there are clashing opinions, it can even lead to conflict. (4 respondents)

The two main arguments of those who were not supportive of community/parents’ participation related to infringing upon the powers of the school authorities and having faith in the school to manage the finances appropriately.

When taking note of the urban-rural categorization, surprisingly, it was the urban schools that were more likely to have parents who are opposed to parental/community participation, whereas the community/parents of rural schools seemed to have a stronger desire to participate.

There are several hypotheses for this contrast between the urban and rural parents. This can be attributed to any of, or a combination of the following factors:

- My sample of parents in rural schools was too small to capture the parents who were opposed to participating in decision-making surrounding the Capitation Grant. I had a larger sample of parents in urban schools. Had there been more parents included in rural schools, there may have been more people who were opposed to community/parent participation in the Capitation Grant.
- Urban schools generally have more parental involvement on a regular basis. Therefore, they are more likely to have developed a relationship of trust with the school administrators, therefore they are more inclined to entrust them with the management of the Capitation Grant without their input.
- Conversely, parents sending their children to schools in urban centers are more detached from their schools. As one head teacher explained, “In urban areas, parents drive and drop off their kids at school, the kids leave school right after they are done, there is less attachment to community and aren’t really involved in schools.” Therefore, they do not see the need, interest or reason for parents to participate in the management of school finances.

More generally, there are other reasons why parents and community members might feel they do not need to have a say in the decision-making process surrounding the Capitation Grant. These are:

- *The power imbalance between the school staff and community members.* If parents and community members perceive the teachers and school administrators to have

legitimate authority that they do not feel they can challenge or even monitor, they may feel they have nothing to contribute to the process.<sup>86</sup>

- *The burden of participation.* Participation can entail a “burden” that some parents are not willing to take on. Parents simply may not want to be burdened with more responsibilities that would be attached to increased participation.

Further in-depth research would be necessary to identify which of the above reasons contribute to the reasoning of the parents who responded that they should not be participating. It must be noted however, that these were 30% of the respondents, with the majority 70% of parent respondents saying that parents and community should be participating.

To summarize the past two points made, the majority of parents have expressed that the Capitation Grant has increased their level of interest in the management of schools. Secondly, many parents have also expressed their desire to participate in deciding the use of the Capitation Grant. This desire to participate in the decision-making regarding the use of the Capitation Grant is consistent with earlier findings about community participation in general. Community/parents identified “join in decision-making” as one of the principal roles of the community in school management.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

While there have been many definitions written on the concept, the increasing emphasis on local participation has also made the concept of ‘participation’ something of an elusive, hard-to-achieve, transcendental concept. Increasing community participation on the ground can feel like an overwhelmingly monumental task. However, as it has now been a few years since the inception of the Capitation Grant, the timing seems particularly ripe to attempt to further strengthen the community-school relationship.

Though the Capitation Grant has improved the overall community and school relationships, there is certainly room for improvement and moreover, an opportunity to use the Capitation Grant to further strengthen this relationship. With the increased level of interest in school management expressed by the majority of parents, and desire of 70% of parents to participate in deciding the use of the Capitation Grant, the timing seems suitable to examine concrete ways of incorporating the community/parents’ participation in this grant, and through doing so promote active participation of the community.

Though the ultimate goal in promoting community participation may be to achieve the highest rung of the participation ladder, this is a long process that requires incremental steps. The interest sparked by the Capitation Grant can be a catalyst to moving towards the next step.

Currently, the allocation of Capitation Grant funds are decided through drawing the SPIP. As described in section 4.1, the current procedure to design the SPIP is based on minimal involvement of the community. The SPIP is drawn up by the teachers and head teacher, then requires the approval of the SMC chairman. There is no arena for the average parent to gain information on the SPIP and provide input prior to its approval.

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<sup>86</sup> Interview with Dr. Ampiah, 3 December 2008 at University of Cape Coast.

Though the SMC chairman's approval represents the indirect approval of the community and parents, this mechanism remains tokenistic and lacks deeper engagement with the community members on how the funds are used. In addition, in some cases, the SMC chairman does not have children in the school, but he/she takes on the role because they are the most educated in the area. However, as they do not have a direct, personal investment in the school, their commitment can be lacking.<sup>87</sup> This is another good reason to open the decision-making to other parents/community members who have a direct stake in the use of the grant.

When asked whether they thought community/parents' participation in the Capitation Grant would be helpful, one teacher said "yes – if they get to understand the amount coming and they realize its not sufficient, if you ask them to contribute, it will not pose any problems. Because they know what the money is being used for and they know GH¢3.00 is not enough, so they will be more supportive in having to pay when funds are necessary." As captured in this comment, community/parents participation can also allow for better communication and understanding between the school and community, thereby fostering a stronger cooperative relationship. In Malawi, there have been observations of parents changing their once passive attitude towards their children's education and schools to becoming more cooperative when they realized the lack of resources at the schools.<sup>88</sup> Ghana can follow these steps too. Moreover, a report that examined the effects of fee-abolition in five countries (including Ghana) summarized that,

Apart from providing essential financing, use of school grants has many other positive impacts, such as promoting closer cooperation between, and empowerment of, schools and local communities; revitalizing school councils; and enhancing accountability of schools in use of money and learning outcomes. These positive results, in turn, are essential ingredients of a comprehensive strategy for quality improvement. School grants are an effective instrument for promoting quality improvement, as they increase resources made available to schools for quality inputs and they offer many advantages to schools and communities from managing these resources.<sup>89</sup>

As the Capitation Grant has now reached its fifth year of implementation, MEO officers, teachers and SMC chairpersons have become familiar with the procedures entailed in this grant. Building on this foundation, there is now an opportunity to carve a greater role for the parents/community in response to their increased interest in the management of school funds and desire to participate in deciding the use of the grant.

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<sup>87</sup> Interview with Dr. Ampiah, 3 December 2008 at University of Cape Coast.

<sup>88</sup> Nishimura et al, p153.

<sup>89</sup> World Bank and UNICEF, p16.

## 6.0 Recommendations

In order to capitalize on the increased interest in school management sparked by the inception of the Capitation Grant, and to incorporate and respond to the community's desire to partake in decision-making of the use of the Capitation Grant, the following recommendations are made.

### **Increase transparency in the SPIP and encourage feedback from the community.**

Rather than simply having the SMC chairperson give a stamp of approval when the initial draft of the SPIP is drawn up by the teachers, the SPIP should be shared with the parents and community in order to illicit comments and feedback. This can be done at convening, for example, a joint SMC/PTA meeting specifically for this purpose. Or, it can also be incorporated in a discussion at a different meeting that all parents and community members are invited to.

### **Schools need to develop a better communication plan or strategy when dealing with parents and community members.**

Communication of the meeting before it takes place is important. Teachers should remind their students to communicate the meeting to their guardians, and speak with parents whenever there is face-to-face contact. (Printing letters to parents to inform them is unrealistic due to financial constraints.) In schools where parents sometimes come to pick up their children, teachers can place extra effort to make contact with these parents prior to the meeting to inform them of the meeting, and encourage them that this is the place where they can give input in to the management of the school.

Simple methods of communicating the SPIP to parents can be effective in informing and attempting to engage the parents/community in discussions. As mentioned before, one head teacher had written out the SPIP on a large sheet of paper for everyone to see, providing transparency to the SPIP. If the information is readily available it can reach a wider population, especially since not all interested community members are able to attend meetings. Making this information available community-wide is an essential step in informing the community and encouraging their input.

### **Identify a leader to champion the SPIP**

Learning from a study<sup>90</sup> that found that having a dominant leader is a key factor in having an effective SMC or PTA, identifying a local leader who can champion the SPIP may be a means to engage the community and parents. This person may or may not already hold an official position in the community or in the SMC or PTA. Head teachers and circuit supervisors can keep an eye out for such people, and such a leader can be the bridge between the school and community/parents regarding the Capitation Grant and SPIP.

### **Capacity-building for the community**

Ideally, the community would receive training on financial management and budgeting. Such training was provided to SMC chairpersons when the Capitation Grant was initiated, but has not been implemented since. Reaching the 5-year mark of the grant, it is a good time to re-introduce such training. Moreover, research also found that though the community's responsibilities had increased, their capacity to take on such roles had

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<sup>90</sup> Nkansa and Chapman, p526.

not been built (as mentioned in section 3.4).<sup>91</sup> In order for the community to participate meaningfully, decision-making power alongside the knowledge of good educational practices is sought.<sup>92</sup> However, financial cost of such training is always a barrier in developing country contexts, and Ghana is no exception. In such cases, increased communication between teachers and community members can allow for flow of pedagogical knowledge from teachers to the community members. Increased involvement of the MEO officers in advisory roles at the community level may also allow for further transfer of this knowledge to the community members.

### **Addressing Other Challenges**

The biggest foreseeable challenge in sustaining the engagement and interest of the community in the long-term through the Capitation Grant is the late disbursement of the funds. The funds are disbursed from the central government to the district level, and then to each school's own bank account. However, this amount consistently does not come in time, and no one seemed to know why and where the delay is caused. When I conducted my interviews in November, the schools were finally just receiving funds that were expected back in April.

The late disbursement of funds creates a challenge as it can render the SPIP useless. The SPIP outlines what and when the funds are to be used for. If the budget execution is impossible due to late funds, a predictable criticism is that it would negate the purpose of having the community participate if the SPIP cannot even be followed through. If the community participates in drawing up the SPIP but it cannot be carried out anyway, this could lead to disappointment of the community, and create disincentives for future participation. This is a plausible scenario, however, the district and school-level personnel (to whom this report is written for) have very little they can do about the late arrival of funds. It is an external factor that is beyond their control, thus it is more fruitful to discuss how this challenge can be overcome.

Mechanisms to counter this expected lateness are needed. Including the parents and wider community in discussions about how to deal with the late disbursement may be one method. Seeking their advice can reassure the community and parents that their input matters and help to maintain their interest. For example, if a school is planning to use some of their Capitation Grant for a cultural activity but the grant does not come in time, engaging the community in discussion about what can be done instead, or how the activity can still be implemented is a meaningful way for them to participate. This allows the community to still contribute to the decision-making process, while encouraging the school and community to work together to overcome a challenge.

It is hoped that creating this new channel for the community to voice their opinions will provide an opportunity for the community to take another step towards growing into their role of being partners in education provision. Cooperation between the community and the schools can strengthen the community-school relationship and enrich the education of the children.

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<sup>91</sup> Chapman et al, p187.

<sup>92</sup> Condy, p15.

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6. In your opinion, what is the role of the community/parents in schools? (In other words, what should the community/parents be doing to ensure quality education in their schools?)
  
7. Do you think the participation of the community/parents in school management is important? Why or why not?
  
8. The following 5 components are the components for which the Capitation Grant can be used.

Components
<b>Improving Access</b> (includes funds for enrolment drive, support for needy pupils)
<b>Provision of Teaching and Learning Materials</b> (includes funds for adequate textbooks, cardboard, pens, strings, crayons, etc.)
<b>School Management</b> (includes provision of stationery, funds for effective administration, effective SMC/PTA)
<b>Community and School Relationship</b> (includes organizing school visits, communal labour, provide welfare services to teachers)
<b>School Facilities</b> (includes repair desks and chairs, maintenance of toilet and urinal, etc.)

In your opinion, which components are most important in providing good education to your child? Please rank the above 5 components in order of highest to lowest priority.

(Highest Priority) 1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

(Lowest Priority) 5. \_\_\_\_\_



9. Other comments:

Thank you for your participation in this survey.

**Appendix B: Sample School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP)**

**SCHOOL CAPITATION GRANTS**

**SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Name of School: Takoradi Metro Primary School

School Performance Improvement Plan for 2007/2008 Academic Year

<b>COMPONENT/ TARGET</b>	<b>ACTION TO BE TAKEN</b>	<b>WHO IS RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>RESOURCES NEEDED</b>	<b>TIME FRAME</b>	<b>WHO MONITORES</b>
1. Improve teaching and learning	Providing teaching and learning materials	Head Teacher	GH¢45.00	Sept 07 – Aug 08	Circuit Supervisor
2. School management	Provision of stationary	Assistant Head Teacher	GH¢90.00	Sept 07 – Aug 08	Head Teacher
3. Examinations	Printing of examinations	Assistant Head Teacher	GH¢800.00	Sept 07 – Aug 08	Head Teacher
4. In-service training for teachers to upgrade their skills	Organize school-based in-service training for teachers	Head Teacher	GH¢60.00	Oct 07 – July 08	Circuit Supervisor
5. Sports	Organize school games and sports festival	Sport Secretary (teacher)	GH¢300.00	Sept – Dec 07	Assistant Head Teacher
6. Culture	Organize cultural activities / carols	Culture Coordinator	GH¢150.00	Dec 07 – July 08	Assistant Head Teacher
7. Minor Repairs	Repair broken tables, chairs, desks	Head Teacher	GH¢90.00	Sept 07 – Aug 08	SMC Chairman
8. Sanitation and health	Procure materials for first aid kit	Assistant Head Teacher	GH¢40.00	Sept 07 – Aug 08	Head Teacher
		<b>Total</b>	<b>GH¢1575.00</b>		

Prepared by Head Teacher

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Endorsed by SMC Chairman

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by Metro Director of Education

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C: UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board Approval Certificate



The University of British Columbia  
Office of Research Services  
Behavioural Research Ethics Board  
Suite 102, 6190 Agronomy Road, Vancouver,  
B.C. V6T 1Z3

### CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - MINIMAL RISK

<b>PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:</b> Leonora Angeles	<b>INSTITUTION / DEPARTMENT:</b> UBC/College for Interdisciplinary Studies/Community & Regional Planning	<b>UBC BREB NUMBER:</b> H08-02384
<b>INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:</b>		
<b>Institution</b>		<b>Site</b>
N/A		N/A
<b>Other locations where the research will be conducted:</b> Two public elementary schools in the district of Takoradi, in Ghana. Interviews with teachers and parents will mostly be conducted in the classrooms of the schools. Some interviews may take place at the district education office, or at the interviewee's work place, or elsewhere that the participant and interviewer feel comfortable.		
<b>CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):</b> Asuka Yoshioka		
<b>SPONSORING AGENCIES:</b> N/A		
<b>PROJECT TITLE:</b> Promoting Inter-Community-School Relations Through the Capitation Grant in Ghana		
<b>CERTIFICATE EXPIRY DATE: November 19, 2009</b>		
<b>DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:</b>		<b>DATE APPROVED:</b> November 19, 2008
<b>Document Name</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Protocol:</b>		
Professional Project Research Proposal	N/A	October 21, 2008
<b>Consent Forms:</b>		
Consent Form (revised)	N/A	November 12, 2008
<b>Questionnaire, Questionnaire Cover Letter, Tests:</b>		
Interview Questions	N/A	October 23, 2008
<b>Letter of Initial Contact:</b>		
Contact Letter	N/A	October 21, 2008
The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.		
<p><i>Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board and signed electronically by one of the following:</i></p> <hr/> <p>Dr. M. Judith Lynam, Chair Dr. Ken Craig, Chair Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair Dr. Laurie Ford, Associate Chair Dr. Daniel Salhani, Associate Chair Dr. Anita Ho, Associate Chair</p>		

## Appendix D: Contact Letter



**SCHOOL OF COMMUNITY AND  
REGIONAL PLANNING**  
**Centre for Human Settlements**  
1933 West Mall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Rm 242  
Vancouver, BC, Canada V6T 1Z2  
Phone 604-822-5254 Fax 604-822-6164  
[www.scarp.ubc.ca](http://www.scarp.ubc.ca)

### Contact Letter (Interview Participants)

University of British Columbia, College of Interdisciplinary Studies  
School of Community and Regional Planning, Master's Professional Project

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing to invite you to participate in an interview as part of my research towards my Master's Professional Project "Promoting Inter-Community-School Relations through the Capitation Grant in Ghana." As you are involved directly or indirectly in the management of the Capitation Grant, I am interested in interviewing you for approximately 30 minutes to learn about your views and experiences with the Capitation Grant and inter-community-school relations.

To provide you with some background information, I am a second year Master's student studying at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. I am enrolled in the School of Community and Regional Planning, with a focus on Comparative Development Planning. I have spent the last 3 months in Ghana as an intern for an in-service teacher training project within the Teacher Education Division at Ghana Education Service. During that time, I learned of the Capitation Grant and became interested in how it is being used to promote relations between schools and the community in which it is located. Upon completion of my internship, I hope to conduct research towards my Master's project regarding this topic.

My research will seek to understand the current use of the Capitation Grant as well as the process being undertaken to decide how the grant will be used. I would also like to gain a grasp of the various stakeholders' views on the role of the community in the public education system. The overall objective of the research is to enable school administrators, educators and other stakeholders in making better-informed decisions about the budget planning and use of the Capitation Grants to strengthen community-school relations and further improve the quality of public education in Ghana.

Thank you very much for considering this invitation. If you have any questions, please contact me through Madame Imbeah at the District Education Office in Takoradi (024-997-7482), or contact me directly with the below email address or phone number.

Warm Regards,

Asuka Yoshioka  
M.A. Candidate, University of British Columbia  
Mobile Number: 024-904-2431 Email: [asuka\\_y@hotmail.com](mailto:asuka_y@hotmail.com)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

## Appendix E: Consent Form



**SCHOOL OF COMMUNITY AND  
REGIONAL PLANNING  
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Vancouver, BC, Canada V6T 1Z2  
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### SUBJECT CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

#### Promoting Inter-Community-School Relations through the Capitation Grant in Ghana

**Principal Investigator:**

Leonora Angeles, Associate Professor  
School of Community and Regional Planning, University of British Columbia  
Tel: 1-604-822-9312, Fax: 1-604-822-6164; Email: [angeles@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:angeles@interchange.ubc.ca)

**Co-Investigator:**

Asuka Yoshioka, M.A. Candidate  
School of Community and Regional Planning, University of British Columbia  
Tel: 024-904-2431 (1-604-724-0427 in Canada); Email: [asuka.yoshioka@gmail.com](mailto:asuka.yoshioka@gmail.com)

This research is being conducted as a Professional Project for the student's Master's degree.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this research is to understand the process of determining the use the Capitation Grant. It seeks to understand the perceptions held by stakeholders of the role of the community in the public education system, and how this may be affecting the use of the Capitation Grant. You are being invited to take part in this research because you are involved directly or indirectly in the management of the Capitation Grant.

**Study Procedures:**

The study will involve an interview of up to 30 minutes in length. The interview can take place at the school that the participant's child attends, or the participant's place of work, home, or other location where he or she will be comfortable. With the consent of the participant, the interview will be tape-recorded. If tape-recording causes any discomfort to the respondent, the interviewer will only type notes on a laptop computer instead.

**Confidentiality:**

The identities of people interviewed for this research study will be kept strictly confidential. No direct quotations will be used in the final version of the study.

The audio tape recordings of interviews will be available only to the principal and co-investigator. In order to ensure confidentiality, all documents and audio tapes will be identified by code numbers and kept in a locked filing cabinet.

**Contact:**

If I have any questions or would like further information about this study, I may contact any of the principal or co-investigators using the contact numbers or email addresses above.

If I have any concerns about my treatment or rights as a research subject I may call the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 1-604-822-8598. Or, I may also contact Nora Imbeah at Takoradi District Education Office at 024-372-2333.

**Consent:**

I confirm that this document has been translated to me and that I understand its contents.

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy. I also understand that I do not waive any of my legal rights by signing this consent form.

I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

I consent to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Participant