Africa Educational Research Journal　Number 5 (2014)　pp.35-55

Challenges and prospects of parental and community participation in education for equitable and quality learning in post-2015 Africa : A review of the theoretical and empirical literature

Taeko Okitsu
(The University of Tokyo)

1. Introduction

With the 2015 deadlines of the Dakar Framework for Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) approaching, a number of proposals on post-2015 agenda to date have drawn a renewed attention to the imperative of the quality and equity of education. Most notably, the Muscat Agreement (UNESCO 2014b) adopted at the Global Education for All Meeting (GEM) in May 2014 in Oman proposed "ensuring equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030" as the overarching goal for education. Likewise, the Report of the Open Working Group (OWG) of the UN General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) included "ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all" in their proposed goals (UN 2014). [1)]

The challenges of achieving quality and equity in education are most prominent in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). There was a notable increase in the net enrolment ratio in primary school from 58% in 1999 to 78% in 2011, partly due to the abolition of official school fees (UNESCO 2014c). However, more than 20 % of the region's primary school age population is still out of school, with over half of them being girls (ibid). Research indicates that girls from rural areas and the poorest households are the least likely to be in school among others such as the disabled, ethnic and linguistic minorities (UNESCO 2014a). Moreover, only 56% of the children who entered the first grade were expected to reach the last grade, presenting a serious obstacle to achieving the goal of Universal Primary Education (UPE) (ibid.). There is also a serious learning crisis in the region too. The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/4 (UNESCO 2014a) estimates that only two out of five children in the region reach grade 4 and learn the basics, resulting in almost 80 million children not learning while in schools (ibid). The report warns that children from poor and vulnerable households are least learning (ibid).

One of the strategies adopted in SSA to address the access and the quality of basic education in the last two decades or so has been decentralization of education and promotion of community participation in school affairs. They are seen important not only to increase much needed school resources to achieve UPE but also more importantly, to improve the quality of education on offer. In particular, participatory school based management (SBM) has been much promoted. It is expected that parental and community participation in school governance will improve the accountability of schools and teachers towards the parents and local community they serve, which in turn will result in high pupil achievement (World Bank

2003; Barrera-Osorio et al. 2009; Bruns et al. 2011). Community participation in pedagogical affairs has also been encouraged in SSA, often through the introduction of localized curriculum with the help of parents and community members, with the aim to make learning more relevant to the diverse local contexts (Hoppers 1994; UNESCSO 2000).

The high expectation for community participation in school governance notwithstanding, the causal relationship between community participation in school management and student outcomes or other proxy indicators such as teacher attendance in the SSA has been mixed (Duflo et al. 2008; Brunst et al. 2011). Several qualitative studies exploring the 'processes' of community participation in school governance in SSA suggest that the mere establishment of the participatory space such as school management committees (SMCs) can not necessarily be translated in active popular participation nor in the increased accountability of school towards parents and local community (Suzuki 2002; Pryor 2005; Okitsu 2011; Yamada 2014). Rather, the available evidence indicates that the efficacy of community participation in school governance greatly varies according to institutional, socio-economic, cultural and historical contexts in which such reform takes place. Rose (2003) observed that community participation practiced in Malawi was mostly 'pseudo' participation where citizens were merely extracted of resources for school financing, while the 'genuine' participation where citizens participate in real decision making in school affairs was limited. Furthermore, several studies report that the accent on community participation in school affairs may run the risk of reinforcing inequality between schools and within school community, instead of redressing it (Rose 2003; Sayed 2002).

While much research and policy focus in SSA has been placed upon parental and community participation within school, there is relatively little emphasis on the need of improved parental engagement in their own children's wellbeing and learning at home (Marphatia et al. 2010). Yet, family-school-community partnerships should not be limited to parental and community participation in school governance. As Epstein (1996) points out, comprehensive and diverse types of parent activity are the key to optimal result for pupils' learning. In fact, in contrast to the limited volume of literature on parental involvement in their children's learning at home in the context of SSA, the studies in the developed countries tend to look at the role of parents both within school and at home. It is argued that there is a clear benefits of positive parental participation in children's learning at home, by way of improved academic achievement (for example, Gonzales-DeHass et al. 2005; Jeynes 2005; Emerson et al. 2014).

Taken together, there is an urgent need to delineate the factors that hinder or facilitate effective parental and community participation in school and at home, which can increase the quality in learning in for all in SSA, particularly for the poor and the disadvantaged. Accordingly, this paper provides a rigorous review of both theoretical and empirical literature pertaining to parental and community participation in education in SSA, both in school and at home environments. In particular, it sheds lights on the complexities of life at the local

level and how it affects quality of education and inclusion. Furthermore, on the basis of the evidence in the literature, it attempts to identify those approaches which have the greatest prospects on parental and community participation in education both within school and at home that have the positive impact on quality and equity in pupils' learning.

There is a need to clarify what 'quality learning' means in this study. While academic outcomes are more easily measured than other aspects of learning outcomes, certainly it is not the only one nor necessarily the best indicator of learning. With the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED) being among the key features of post-2015 education agenda, the increasing attention is being made to a need of non-cognitive and transformative learning for individual and social change (UN 2014). While recognizing the importance of broad aspects of learning, what this study refers to as 'quality learning' is mostly limited to student academic outcomes. It is because available evidence mostly examines the relationship between parental participation and student academic achievement.

This paper begins by exploring the concepts of parental and community participation in education both in school and at home. This is followed by a review of the extent to and the way in which parental and community participation in school and at home is practiced in SSA drawing on the empirical literature. Furthermore, it examines the influence of such practices on quality, relevance, and equity in learning. Finally, it concludes and suggests several recommended strategies to make parental and community participation in education to be more genuine and more effective in SSA, so as to contribute to the improvement of learning, particularly that of the poor and the disadvantaged.

2. Theoretical Perspectives of Parental and Community Participation in Education

This section reviews the theoretical perspectives pertaining to parental and community participation in education both within school and at home, particularly in light of its expected effect on the achievement of quality and equity of learning. In order to serve such purpose, this section is divided into two sub-sections – (i) theoretical perspectives for parental and community participation in school governance, and (ii) theoretical perspectives for home-based parental engagement in pupil's learning.

2.1. Theoretical perspectives for parental and community participation in school governance

(1) Models of education decentralization and parental and community participation in education

The review of literature on community participation in school governance has to be considered within the wider context of decentralization literature. As the space of this paper is limited, this paper restricts itself to the concepts of decentralization policy concerning

education sector.

Although there is no consensual definition of decentralization, most authors agree that decentralization involves “a transfer of authority, power, and functions to perform some service to the public from an individual or an agency in central government to some other individual or agency which is usually ‘closer’ to the public to be served” (Turner & Hulme 1997). Dyer and Rose suggest (2005) that decentralization within education should take into account which aspects of the service should be decentralized. Also, centralization and decentralization are not necessarily dichotomous concepts but rather, the central authority often retains power over and responsibility for certain types of decisions which are considered matters of national interest (Hurst 1985).

Several forms of education decentralization have been ascribed various definitions by different commentators. Bray (2003: 205-206) divides decentralization into three major subcategories according to the degree of transfer of authority: *deconcentration, delegation*, and *devolution*.

Others categorize the types of decentralization in education with respect to the justification for the locus of control in education. McGinn and Welsh (1999), for example, distinguish three types of decentralization in education according to where the authority of control is located: *professional expertise, market efficiency and political legitimacy*. Different models of decentralization in education are driven by different rationales supported by different ideologies about the role of the state and its citizens (community) concerning education. More importantly, they defines the type of participation and the accountability relationship envisaged.

Among these three models of education decentralization, the one stimulated by *professional expertise* model mostly delegates educational controls to regional or school authorities such as head teachers. Accordingly, this model does not necessarily involve community participation, and the accountability relationship is most commonly upwards or sideways within the public education professional hierarchy. Decentralization based on *market efficiency* generally advocates the marketization of education and encourages the creation of greater choice between different schools. It is argued that the accountability of schools and teachers to the parents of pupils will be enhanced, and bad schools will be eliminated as a competitive market allows people to ‘vote with their feet’ (World Bank 2003; Patrinos & LaRocque 2007). In contrast to decentralization motivated by *market efficiency*, decentralization stimulated by a concern for *political legitimacy* believes that not only parents but wider members of the ‘local community’ have the political right to take part in decisions affecting the work of the school (Lauglo 1995; Ranson et al. 1999).

(2) The argument for community participation in school governance for the poor

In recent years, the control and professional monopoly of education decision-making has been under attack on a wide scale. This has resulted in national and international advocacy for

decentralization reforms based on *market efficiency* and/or *political legitimacy*, rather than the one based on *professional expertise*.

In particular, decentralization driven by *political legitimacy* - which is the focus of this paper - has become a very popular reform in developing countries and in SSA in particular, often described as participatory SBM. In this model, various power is decentralized to the school level while parents and even wider community members are expected to take part in the decision-making of their local school affairs.

The proponents of this model of decentralization advocate that parents and wider community members have the political right to take part in decisions affecting the work of the school institution (Lauglo 1995: 14). Accordingly, the final decision rests with laypeople rather than education professionals such as teachers. Employing a theory from organizational analysis, Hirshman (1970) calls this type of behavior the 'voice' by which parents and wider community members can politically express their dissatisfaction with the school.

Community participation in curriculum development has also been advocated globally, as a way to give space for indigenous knowledge to come into the classroom other than teacher selected or book knowledge (UNESCO 2000; Hogan 2008). For instance, the adaptation of a core curriculum and syllabus to the local context through the active participation of parents and local community members have been widely advocated (UNESCO 2000).

The emphasis on community participation in school governance is also supported by the public choice theorists who emphasize the power of the 'client' (parents and students) in education services. They see it as a key to hold 'sellers' (schools and teachers) to account for results while the resources are used more efficiently, which in turn will lead to greater student achievement (Gershberg & Winkler 2003; World Bank 2003; Bruns et al. 2011). In these two models of decentralization, school is directly accountable to parents. The World Development Report 2004 (World Bank 2003) sets out the clearest articulation of this paradigm on the education reform. It calls this types of direct school accountability to parents a 'short-route accountability' in education governance and favors it as a means to achieve better student achievement for the poor (ibid). On the other hand, the report argues that the 'long route accountability' – accountability of the politicians or policy makers for education - often relatively malfunctions in offering better services for the poor in developing countries. Underlying ideological assumption is that the state, its bureaucracy, and public service providers are not effective nor equal providers of education services or social services in general particularly in poor countries (Rose 2003, 2005; Mundy 2008).

The recent global promotion of community participation in school governance notwithstanding, a role for communities in schooling has always been evident in SSA mainly in the form of support for school construction (Rose 2003). However, the role of communities has recently become formalized in policy in many developing countries mainly through the establishment of SMCs or SGBs (school governing bodies) (ibid).

Different types of community participation are often envisaged in this respect, the two

main models being (1) creating new, community–managed schools, or (2) strengthening community management in existing government schools (Miller-Grandvaux & Yoder 2002). Regardless of the type of community participation in schooling, the proponents of community participation in school governance often use 'community' as an unproblematic analytical unit and assumes that the 'community' is homogeneous, harmonious and non-hierarchical. Furthermore, the proponents generally assume that parents and wider community members have the abiding will and ability to take part in local school affairs meaningfully. At the same time, the claim that community participation in school governance will improve school accountability towards parents pivots upon the assumption that teachers are willing and able to respond to the demands expressed by parents and community. As will be discussed later, the empirical research in SSA suggest that reality is often somewhat different from these assumptions.

Furthermore, as Bruns et al. (2011) and Emerson et al. (2014) suggest, there is limited evidence in the international research both in the North and South that attending school-based activities that are not directly connected to learning has an impact on student academic outcomes. However, parental and community participation in school governance continue to attract national and international policy-makers' attention in SSA rather than being totally rejected.

2.2. Theoretical perspectives for home-based parental engagement in pupil's learning

(1) Parental participation in children's learning at home – important form of parental participation in education proposed in Epstein's theory of three overlapping spheres

As mentioned in the previous sub-section, much policy and research focus in SSA has been placed on parental and community participation mostly defined in terms of financial and in-kind contributions to schools as well as in the management of schools, often through the establishment of SMCs or SGBs. The public choice theorists particularly stress on the importance of this type of participation in education, mainly viewing parents as a 'customers' or 'clients' of education services.

However, in the developed countries' context, theoretical and policy debate concerning parental and community participation in education is not limited to the area of school financing and management. Rather, it tends to be much broader and treats parents as 'co-educators,' not just 'customers' (Emerson et al. 2014). It typically includes not only participation in school governance and financing but also parents' engagement in pupil's learning at home and daily communication with teachers about pupils' progress. This is resulted from the view that learning begins well before children enter school, and once children are attending school they continue to learn both inside and outside the classroom (ibid). [2)]

One of the most influential conceptual models of this type of broad and integrative

parental participation model linking home-community-school in children's education was presented by Joyce Epstein. Epstein (1996, 2001) assumes that school, family and community are the three main contexts in which children are growing up. She described this joint venture as 'overlapping spheres of influence' and argues that they directly affect student learning and development. In other words, Epstein (1996, 2001) assumes that the influence on children's development is optimized when families, schools and communities have overlapping objectives and responsibilities for children and work together and play collaborative, complementary and supportive roles, based upon mutual respect. Similarly, Coleman (1990)'s theory of social capital recognizes the collaboration among parents, students and teachers can strengthen students' commitment to school.

Epstein (1996) specifically presumes that parental-school-community partnership in education has to take place in six different areas, namely, (i) basic parenting at home such as ensuring the child's health, safety and preparedness for school and for providing positive home conditions; (ii) communicating between school and families regarding school programs and student progress; (iii) parental involvement in volunteering at school such as assisting teachers in the classrooms; (iv) parental involvement in home learning; (v) parental involvement in school decision making such as through school councils; and (vi) collaborating with the community such as programs for after-school care. Thus, in this model, not only parental participation within school, but also their basic parenting and engagement in pupils' learning at home are seen central means of improving pupil's learning.

In the context of SSA, Watt (2001) similarly presents broader view of parents-community-school partnership and suggests that parental participation in pupils' should include their support to their children's learning at home. Watt (ibid: 28) indicates that such roles may include; ensuring that children attend school regularly and arrive on time; making certain that they have breakfast before lessons begin; providing a space for them to study at home; reviewing their work and monitoring progress; helping with homework; providing educational activities pertinent to school successes and regular communication with teachers.

(2) International research concerning the influence of parents' engagement in pupils' learning at home on academic and non-academic outcomes

There are a number of quantitative studies in the North that assess the links between parental engagement in children's learning at home and academic achievement (Emerson et al. 2014). Many of them demonstrate that parental engagement in the form of at-home good parenting and support to learning has a positive effect on children's achievement, transition to higher levels of education programs, lower drop-out rates, more regular attendance and higher graduation rates (Jeynes 2005; Pushor 2007). Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) data also indicates that positive and active parental engagement in pupils' learning improve educational outcomes (OECD 2011).

Fan and Chen (2001) show that parental expectation and support for their children's

learning creates the conditions for improved student outcomes. Similarly, Ganzales-DeHass et al. (2005) found that when parents are involved in pupils' learning, pupils reported increased effort, concentration, attention, interest in and responsibility for learning and higher perceived competence.

Some studies also indicate that parental engagement improves student moral, emotional, social and behavioral development and a greater sense of personal competence and self-efficacy for learning (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005; Pushor 2007; Jeynes 2007, Duckworth et al. 2009, cited in Emerson et al. 2014). Furthermore, some studies provided evidence that there is a positive correlation between parental engagement in learning activities at home and children's performance in literacy, among families with low socioeconomic and educational backgrounds (Jones & White, cited in Edge et al. 2008).

Unfortunately, even in the developed countries, parents are reported to face a number of challenges engaging in their children's education and welfare at home. Mostly, economic hardships in families coupled with high demand for work for living, low levels of their education level and related low self-efficacy are cited as contributors to a parent's failure to conduct their important parenting role (Edge et al. 2008).

In this regard, Epstein (2001) suggests that if parents are not able to establish a stable home environment, schools should assist families in their basic responsibilities of ensuring learning and wellbeing of their children at home, by setting up family-support programs, and organizing parent education and by doing home-visits. Accordingly, in many developed countries, the majority of parental participation programs have been targeted at low-income communities where educational participation and achievement tend to be lower (Emerson et al. 2014). Research has found that explicit invitations made by teachers and schools are especially important for parents who do not see themselves as having a strong role or ability to contribute to their child's education and learning (Hoover-Dempsey 2005, cited in Edge et al. 2008).

These suggestions appear to have a particular importance in the context of SSA, where many parents suffer from chronic poverty while having only low level of education attainment themselves. As such, Watt (2001) notes that in SSA, parental engagement in basic parenting and supporting children's learning can be conducted not only by individual parent but also in a collective manner with the support of teachers and parental associations such as parent teacher associations (PTAs) or SMCs (ibid).

3. Empirical Evidence Concerning Parental and Community Participation in Education and Their Influence on Equity and Quality of Learning in SSA

3.1. Relationship between parental and community participation in school governance and student outcomes in SSA

The international and national promotion of participatory school governance notwithstanding, the causal relationship between the existence of SMCs and student outcomes in SSA has

so far been mixed (Bruns et al. 2011). As Yamada (2014) argues, the mixed result may indicate that the existence of these formal structures does not always mean active or effective community participation in school governance. Rather, the success of the intervention may more critically depend on other contextual factors embedded in society in concern.

3.2. Factors that hinder or promote effective parental and community participation in school governance

Advocates of community participation in school governance generally assume that parents and wider community members equally have the abiding will to take part in school decision making for the benefit of all children. However, the available empirical research in SSA suggests that such willingness is invariably qualified by complex socio-cultural, economic, political and institutional factors in which such reform take places.

For example, multiple studies identified culture, the history of collective action, and the activities of enterprising individuals in community, the values attached to formal schooling as factors that influence the nature and degree of participation (Maclure 1994 [on Burkina faso]; Tshireletso 1997 [on Botswana]; Pryor 2005 [on Ghana]; Yamada 2014 [on Ethiopia]). Other studies demonstrate that community members who do not have children in the concerned school or the parents who live very far from school may not be willing to participate, as they judge that the cost of participation overweigh the benefits (Suzuki 2002 [on Uganda]; Okitsu 2011 [on Zambia]; Yamada 2014 [on Ethiopia]).

Several studies also report that parents are often unaware of the roles of themselves or of the mandates of the SMCs or PTAs in the first place (Marphatia et al. 2010 [on Burundi, Malawi, Senegal and Uganda]; Okitsu 2011 [on Zambia]). In some cases, parental roles in school governance defined in various policy documents are confusing or contradictory (ibid). In Zambia, PTAs are mandated to take part in annual school planning; monitor the implementation of such plan; monitor teaching and learning in classroom and monitoring the use of school grant and their own contribution. However, the majority of parents were unaware of such roles assigned to PTAs and mostly believed that their role was merely to contribute to school either financially or in-kind (Okitsu 2011). Parents' limited knowledge about their rights and the mandates assigned to participatory structure such as SMCs and PTAs is partly attributed to the absence of manuals and guidelines in local languages, and partly to the lack of effective dissemination of information about its composition and function (ibid).

In addition, while the participation of community people in the development of local curriculum is much advocated, rural people may not necessary favor diversity in the curriculum and rather regard schooling chiefly as an important means to get high academic qualifications in order to be selected for secondary school or to gain white collar jobs in urban areas (Maclure 1994 [on Burkina Faso]; Okitsu 2011 [on Zambia]). Thus, community perception sometimes sets the parameters of its collaborative space, even when the

opportunity for such participation arose.

Such a lukewarm attitude of parents often resultes from their perceived limited ability and agency to take part in managerial and pedagogical aspects of schooling, which in turn arose form their own low literacy level and social status. Additionally, the interpretation of 'free' education as meaning that everything related to schooling was the responsibility of trained professionals also at times reinforces such a stance (Suzuki 2002; Rose 2003; Nishimura et al. 2008; Okitsu 2011).

In addition, teacher's resistance to the sharing of power with laypeople is also widely cited as significant barriers to effective lay people participation in key decision making in schools (Chimombo 1999 [on Malawi]; Suzuki 2002 [on Uganda]; Rose 2003 [on Malawi]; Pryor 2005 [on Ghana]; Okitsu 2011 [on Zambia]). Chimombo (1999) and Tshireletso (1997) in their studies in Malawi and Botswana respectively suggest that teachers tend to have little regard for the input of the community in school management, considering the involvement of local populations in academic and administrative affairs to be an intrusion.

The study on community participation in rural Zambia (Okitsu 2011) further demonstrates that parents are generally uninterested in the actual teaching and learning processes – e.g. the instructional method employed or the manner in which teachers interact with their pupil, even though it is an influential factor in school quality. For many parents whose education experience is limited, the instructional method might be an area that was beyond their knowledge and experience.

However, it is widely reported that many parents do care about school quality and are keen to be informed of school's resource flow, including their own contribution (Suzuki 2002 [on Uganda]; Okitsu 2011 [on Zambia]). Parents often judge school quality on academic output as expressed by the pass rate in national examinations and the moral and attendance of teachers. Some parents go through their children's exercise books to check the attendance of both pupils and teachers (Okitsu 2011 [on Zambia]; Yamada 2014 [on Ethiopia]).

Theoretically, the meetings of PTA or SMC serve as democratic space in which parents and members of the community air their views and concerns about school quality and resource management. However, in reality, it is not uncommon that parents hesitate to press their point of view freely at such fora as they feel that they do not have sufficient ability, knowledge, experience or language skills to articulate their opinions in a public meeting. By definition, participation requires time, effort, resources, expertise and confidence. In this regard, it has been widely reported that the poor, the disadvantaged, the illiterate, women and social and ethnic minorities are often less endowed with the material and cultural resources necessary in order to play their new governance roles effectively (Rose 2003 [on Malawi]; Dunne et al. 2007 [in SSA in general]; Okitsu 2011 [on Zambia]). Some parents also hesitate to express their concerns for fear of the negative consequences such as potential revenge from teachers (Suzuki 2002 [on Uganda]; Okitsu 2011 [on Zambia]).

Several studies report that even the concerns are expressed by some parents at public

meetings, such voices are often dismissed as illegitimate by the teachers (Suzuki 2002 [on Uganda]; Okitsu 2011 [on Zambia]). Okitsu (2011) observed that it was more often the rule than the exception that teachers blamed bad parenting for low educational output rather than offering reasonable explanations for their own behavior. As such, contrary to the policy and theoretical premise, the participatory space often reinforces the existing unequal power relationship between school and community. This is often reinforced by the fact that parents are only consulted once decisions have been reached (Okitsu 2011; Marphatia et al. 2010).

Furthermore, several empirical studies report the widespread occurrence of local elite capture and the dominance of SMC by the few powerful members who are often economically and socially more privileged than the rank and file members. As a result, a newly opened participatory space such as SMC often serves merely to maximize the narrow interests of certain parents who know how to manipulate the democratic process, while the voices and protests of socially and economically disadvantaged are less likely to be heard (e.g. Suzuki 2002 [on Uganda]; Rose 2003 [on Malawi]; Pryor 2005 [on Ghana]; De Grauwe et al. 2005 [on Benin, Guinea, Mali and Senegal]; Sayed and Soudien 2005 [on South Africa]; Dunne et al. 2007 [in SSA in general]; Essuman and Akyeampong 2011 [on Ghana]; Okitsu 2011 [on Zambia]). Sayed and Soudien's study on South Africa reported that SGBs in white dominated schools excluded black parents from SGBs and refused to consider appointment of black teachers. Furthermore, the same study reported that schools for colors or Indians had been able to justify reluctance to admit poor black student. These cases show SGBs can facilitate exclusion rather than inclusion and points to the need to rethink aspects of the power to be decentralized to the school level (ibid).

In other cases, the members of SMC and PTA are often hand-picked by the school instead of being democratically elected by the rank and file members, with the result being the absence of any legitimacy of such organization (Marphia et al. 2010). The general lack of transparency in financial management by their leaders also often leads to parental mistrust of participatory institutions, leading to their demotivation to attend meetings or provide their financial or in-kind contribution to school. As such, as opposed to the largely unproblematic use of the concept of 'community' as an analytical unit, the composition of community in reality is much more complex and often highly hierarchical. Thus, it should be acknowledged that participation may contain the inherent risk of reinforcing pre-existing intra-community inequalities.

While their concerns and opinions rarely been heard, parents are often only requested to contribute to school either financially or in-kind. However, the lack of transparency of their contribution coupled with low quality of education on offer sometimes discourage them to contribute to school, resulting in the chronic shortage of school resources (Okitsu 2011 [on Zambia]). Also, it is reported that SMC or PTA executives and teachers do not always ensure that community contribution requirements do not exclude any child from the opportunity to go to school (Rose 2003 [on Malawi]; Okitsu 2011 [on Zambia]. Indeed, despite free education policy adopted in many countries in SSA, there are cases where the children of those parents

who were unable to contribute to school are either openly suspended from school by the teachers and PTA executive members, or not allowed to sit at examinations (Okitsu 2011 [on Zambia]). Even if pupils are not explicitly suspended for non-payment, persistent reminders for payment often made many pupils withdraw of their own accord in order to avoid public disgrace (ibid). Thus, in such a context, putting the accent on community participation in school may run the great risk of increasing inequity between schools and households, as determined by the varying socio-economic, geographical and cultural endowment of each community, instead of redressing them.

Furthermore, several studies suggest that limited resources and authority granted to schools and teachers also often constitute a considerable barrier to the increased responsiveness of schools towards parents (Rose 2005; Dunne et al. 2007; Okitsu 2011). The catch-all slogan of decentralization notwithstanding, the evidence suggests that little of the decentralization reform in SSA is accompanied by distribution of the corresponding resources necessary for schools to be accountable towards parents and the wider community. In particular, rural schools lacks high quality and sufficient teaching forces, recurrent budgets, textbooks and other educational materials, safe and healthy school infrastructure that is conducive to learning, or capacity to take on the responsibilities expected of them. Formula-based capitation transfers have been introduced in many countries to compensate for lost school revenue due to a free education policy. However its amount is often too small while the timing of disbursement is highly unpredictable (Dunne et al. 2007 [in SSA in general]; Okitsu 2011 [on Zambia]).

The issue of community schools warrants particular attention in this regard. Many community schools in SSA were established by default due to the failure of the government to provide affordable education institutions in remote rural areas (Gershberg & Winkler 2004; Rose 2006). In her study of non-state education providers, Rose (2006) found that most state support to community schools was inadequate or inappropriate. In addition, Maclure (1994) and Okitsu (2011) conclude that in Burukina Faso and Zambia respectively, given the fact that there was serious widespread poverty in the locality, parents were unable to pay teachers' salaries, which resulted in the problem of attempting to sustain unremunerated volunteer teaching.

Nevertheless, several studies acknowledges the examples of successful parental and community participation in school management in SSA that increased school accountability (Muskin 1999 [on Mali]; Akyeampong 2004 [on Ghana]; Dowd 1997, cited in Rose 2006 [on Malawi]; Honda and Kitano 2013 [on Niger]). Several studies suggest that holding fair and regular election of PTAs and SMCs members through secret ballot contribute to the increased accountability and legitimacy of these participatory institutions, which in turn increase people's motivation to participate (Okitsu 2011 [on Zambia]; Honda and Kitano 2013 [on Niger]).[3)] Such strategy may help ease the parental fear of upsetting the local elite on whom many people's lives are dependent.

Indeed, several studies revealed that the parents and other members of the local community tend to redouble their participation in school affairs –such as contribution to the school and attendance of meetings – when they are certain that their efforts are matched by those of the teachers in educating their children in line with their expectations (Suzuki 2002; Okitsu 2011; Honda & Kitano 2013). These evidence indicate the importance of ensuring accountability in schools.

Yet, these kinds of initiatives are typically not uniformly evident in all school all of the time, but tend to be determined by the quality of school leadership, the cultural, economic and social capital of parents and wider community that exist in the specific socio-cultural dynamics of the community. Moreover, these cases are mostly the ones which were assisted by non-governmental organization (NGOs) or international donors often through the provision of capacity building and training of key local actors. The challenge remains therefore to ensure that such participation can be scaled-up nationally and sustained after the externally funded project withdraws.

3.3. Relationship between parental engagement in children's learning at home and student outcomes

The number of studies that investigated the relationship between parents' engagement in their children's education at home and student outcomes in SSA is extremely limited. The available small body of evidence shows a positive relationship between the two (For example, Kabarere et al. 2013). Kabarere et al. (2013)'s study on parental engagement in children's education in rural Rwanda demonstrates that parents of children in high performing schools are significantly more involved than their peers in low performing schools particularly on concern for having healthy children, support for learning, gender sensitivity and care and protection. However, a degree of caution is required when interpreting findings from such experimental studies. Positive association are purely correlational and causal link cannot be assumed. Moreover, it is difficult to ascribe direct causality between parental support for learning at home and student outcomes, because of the possibility of other fixed variables such has family socio-economic background and education level, which may positively impact student outcomes.

Despite such difficulty in establishing causal relationships between parental engagement and academic achievement, several qualitative studies in SSA point towards a range of parental practices at home that contribute to pupils' motivation to learn. For example, a qualitative study by Marphatia et al. (2011) conducted in Burundi, Malawi, Senegal and Uganda demonstrates that when parents support children in their homework, pupils reported feeling secure and more competent in their abilities to succeed. Furthermore, the same study demonstrates that the children respond positively to high parental support and engagement - even if parents cannot help with homework – citing a feeling of importance and motivation to do better (ibid).

Unfortunately, the number of benefits related to pupils' learning and welfare notwithstanding, many parents in SSA and those of the poor and illiterate in particular face a number of challenges in providing conducive environment and support to their children's learning both in terms of their willingness and ability to be engaged. Those barriers to parents' effective engagement in children's learning at home in SSA will be discussed in the next sub-section.

3.4. Factors that hinder or promote effective parental engagement in children's learning at home

Several studies in SSA show that even parents whose own education attainment is limited generally spoke of their value of educating their children, mainly as a means to achieve social mobility through improving the family's economic status (Okitsu 2011 [on Zambia]; Donkor et al. 2013 [on Ghana]). However, these study also show that the value attached to formal education held by parents does not automatically reflect what they actually do to support their children's education.

In her study in rural Zambia, teachers perceived that insufficient household provision of food, clothing and learning materials constituted great barriers to effective learning (Okitsu 2011). Both Okitsu (2011 [on Zambia]) and Donkor et al. (2013 [on Ghana]) show that parents tend to presume that all they have to do in their children's education is to send their children to school, by paying PTA fund and providing school uniform and not be involved in any other aspects of their education. Teachers often complain about parents' belief that the behavior and academic performance of the pupils was the sole responsibility of the teachers - a notion that was further reinforced by the free education policy (Okitsu 2011).

Some studies also report that encouraging pupils to attend school is not necessarily an established norm across the parents in rural areas, which result in a highly erratic attendance and high dropout rate of pupils (Barrett 2005 [Tanzania]; Okitsu 2011 [on Zambia]). Teachers often cite the heavy reliance on child labor and household chore, widespread cultural expectation of early marriage of girls as the reason for erratic attendance of many pupils (Okitsu 2011). On the part of parents, while they generally acknowledged the importance of education, their short-time survival needs often discourage them to continue to send their children to school (ibid). In addition, parents often withdraw their children from school, when they judge that the cost of investing in education outweighed the benefits (ibid). It is particularly so as many parents are now somewhat doubtful of the current power of schooling to achieve the expected degree of social mobility, since education on offer is low, while many secondary school graduates remained unemployed (ibid).

Such situation is often exacerbated by the prevailing cultural and economic activities in community that serve against the pupils' attendance as well as their motivation to learn. For instance, Okitsu (2011) reports that pupils stopped going to school in rural Zambia, where illegal sale of fuel and prostitutions had started offering lucrative financial opportunities

for many villagers. In such a situation, pupils and their parents judged that whether going to school or not they can still make a living from such illegal activities, thus leading to the dropout of the school or the erratic attendance (ibid).

Several studies also report the unwillingness of parents to make school visits to communicate with teachers (Hamunyela 2008 [on Namibia]; Okitsu 2011 [on Zambia]). Parents' reluctance to visit schools to communicate with teachers about their children's education is partly due to language barriers, the low confidence in their ability to comprehend education matters arising from their low level of education attainment and perceived negative attitude of teachers (Okitsu 2011).

Inadequate parental attention and supervision of their children's homework were also widely reported (Marphatia et al. 2010 [on Burundi, Malawi, Senegal and Uganda]; Okitsu 2011 [on Zambia]). Okitsu (2011) found that many parents believed that supervising their children's homework is the responsibility of trained professionals, not that of parents. Even when parents acknowledge wider aspects of their roles in assisting their children's education, their ability to get involved is often challenged by their limited education experience, high illiteracy rate, socio-economic status, which is also often affected by seasonal economic hardship. For example, Marphatia et al. (2010) shows that the extent of parental help of children in their learning at home depends on how confident they feel about their own knowledge and skills. At the same time, the several studies also observed that some parents get around this by using different strategies to monitor their children's homework, such as through checking their exercise book or asking them to do something specific (Marphatia et al. 2010 [on Burundi, Malawi, Senegal and Uganda]; Okitsu 2011 [on Zambia]). In Zambia, several head teachers have made persistent efforts to get parents go through their children's homework and sign the exercise books. While they complained that not many parents have responded to such invitation positively, they still felt that talking to parents persistently and cordially had an impact on changing the attitudes of some parents (Okitsu 2011). On the other hand, when head teachers do not believe parents either have the resources or the ability to support learning at home, they are less likely to encourage teachers to engage with parents (Marphatia at al. 2010; Okitsu 2011). Marphatia et al. (2010: 31) indicates that "this prevailing attitude may potentially limit parental involvement, doing little for those parents who already lack confidence in their ability to participate." These evidence together suggest the imperative to support head teachers in the acquisition of knowledge, attitude and skills for engaging parents effectively in the learning process.

4. Conclusion

The review of the theoretical and empirical literature suggests that parents, wider local community members, and schools can play important complementary roles in enhancing a child's learning. The roles of parents can include their 'genuine' participation in school governance to make schools accountable for them, as clients of education service. In addition,

parents also have their important role as 'co-educators,' supporting and encouraging child's learning at home; providing home and local environments that are conducive to schooling and learning; and communicating with teachers regularly about a child's progress.

The empirical literature reviewed in this paper however suggest a number of challenges that exist for their participation both as clients of education services and as co-educators. In order to overcome the barriers to effective parental and community participation in education for quality learning for all children, several strategies can be considered, although they need to be ultimately adjusted to respective social, economic and cultural contexts.

First and foremost, the roles, rights and responsibilities of parents and other members of the local community, teachers and head teachers need to be clarified and publicized in the local language for wide dissemination.

It is also imperative to build the capacity and confidence of parents and local community members, especially those of the poor, women, the illiterate and the rural dwellers to engage effectively with the SMCs executives and teachers. The provision of adult literacy and numeracy classes and capacity building in the area of effective public deliberation might help them to express their concerns and opinions about their schools confidently and effectively. Equally imperative is to empower parents, particularly those of little education, by availing them with the data about the of quality of education that their children are offered as well as school resources flows. Such data should be supplemented by the information about the respective responsibilities of the central state, regional authorities, school and parents about ensuring quality education. [4)] At the same time, it should be acknowledged that community participation in school governance is highly political, practiced by parents and local community members whose interests are often conflicting with each other. Accordingly, what aspects of power is delegated to SMCs and SGBs should be carefully appraised. As Sayed and Soudien (2005) indicate, decision about student admission policy may be problematic.

At the same time, support should be provided to parents to enhance their role as 'co-educators.' Specifically, the efforts should be made to build their skills and confidence to encourage and monitor children's learning effectively; to provide home environment conducive to learning; and make close and regular communication with teachers on their children's progress. In addition, teachers and SMCs may be able to consider collectively to organize parent education programs; to make home visit targeting the pupils who tend to be absent from school; and to assist children's homework after school by volunteer parents who are relatively well-educated in the community, for example.

For some families, however, securing basic necessities, such as food, shelter, and medical services occupies so much time that participation in education may become a secondary priority (Diets 1997, cited in Lemmer 2007: 224). Likewise, economic hardship often makes parents unable to create conducive learning environment to pupils at home, provide nutrition and clothing, let alone to provide school-related materials (Okitsu 2011). As Lemmer (2007) suggests, strategies to assist parents to cope with disadvantaged livelihood situations should

be actively thought along with their capacity building in enhancing their participatory roles in education.

The role of the teachers and head teachers for building effective and trusty partnership between school and parents cannot be overemphasized. The training for teachers both in the pre-service and continuous professional development programs to equip them with the appropriate moral, attitudes and techniques to communicate with parents and local community members can be considered. Furthermore, if schools and teachers are to be accountable for results, they too need to be empowered with the necessary resources – human, financial and technical - to offer quality education. Often time, the prioritization of decentralization and parental and community participation in education undermine the vital role of the central state. The state should not abdicate its responsibilities of providing sufficient number of high quality and well-trained teachers using appropriate pedagogical approaches; teaching and learning materials; safe and healthy school environments that are conducive to learning for all children; and sufficient school grant that is timely disbursed. 'Long route accountability' which politicians or policy makers have towards citizens cannot simply be replaced by 'short-route accountability' through parental and community participation in school governance. This is important particularly in light of ensuring equity between schools, as those schools that are located in remote and impoverished areas face many social and economic disadvantages.

Finally, discussion should take place among broad stakeholders - including parents, local community members and teachers - what they mean by 'quality' learning; what moral, skills and competencies that they want their children to acquire; and how each stakeholder can contribute to ensuring such 'quality' learning for all children. As noted in the introduction, quality learning does not necessarily be limited to academic outcomes expressed as test scores. In ensuring sustainable future for all in the rapidly changing and interdependent globalized world, much global level discussion on post-2015 agenda focuses on reorienting the meaning of quality learning. The 'Muscat Agreement' at the Global EFA Meeting (GEM) in Oman suggested that ESD and GCED need to be incorporated in the post-2015 education agenda. ESD and GCED envisage broader notions of quality of learning that emphasize social, emotional and moral aspects of learning for individual and social change. While certain aspects of quality learning may be universal, their application must be adapted to different contexts incorporating local needs and wishes.

Clearly, more evidence-based research is needed to enhance a greater understanding of how policy and practice works in the areas of parental and community participation in education both in schools and at home in SSA. In particular, the evidence-based knowledge need to be accumulated as to how parental and community participation influences pupils' outcomes and development, particularly those from the disadvantaged families.

Notes

1）The OWG was established following the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, commonly known as Rio+20. Consisting of 70 Member States sharing 30 seats, the OWG has been working over the past 18 months to develop a set of SDGs for consideration by the UN General Assembly. On the 19th of July 2014, the OWG finalized their report.

2）Some researchers make reference to an ecological theory of child development which emphasizes multiple interacting systems of influence and dynamic interactions between the child, the education system and wider social contexts over time (Bronfenbrenner 1979).

3）Nevertheless, it should be noted that the appropriateness and effectiveness of a secret ballot might be subject to cultural considerations, and thus cannot necessarily be assumed to be a guaranteed means of the free and fair election of community representatives in all contexts. Specific strategies need to be considered in the particularities of each context.

4）In this regard, while at the system level rather than individual school level, the citizen-led activities by UWEZO may be one of the promising endeavors currently practiced in East Africa. UWEZO conducts annual household assessments of basic literacy and numeracy levels in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda and use such data to promote countrywide conversations and debates about learning, using radio and television for wide reach (Save the Children 2013).

References

Akyeampong, K. (2004) Aid for Self-Help Effort? A Sustainable Alternative Route to Basic Education in Northern Ghana. *Journal of International Co-operation in Education*, 7 (1), 41-52.

Barrera-Osorio, F., Fasih, T. Patrinos H.A. & Santibáñez, L. (2009) *Decentralized Decision-Making in Schools – Theory and Evidence on School-Based Management*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Barrett, A. M. (2005) Teacher accountability in context: Tanzanian primary school teachers "perceptions of local community and education administration. *Compare*, 35(1), 43-61.

Bray, M. (2003) Control of Education: Issues and Tensions in Centralization and Decentralization. In: Arnove E.D. & C.A. Torres (eds.), *Comparative Education: The Dialectic of the Global and the Local*. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, pp.204-228.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979) *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bruns, B., Filmer, D. & Patrinos H.A. (2011) *Making Schools Work – New Evidence on Accountability Reforms*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Chimombo, J. (1999) *Implementing educational innovations: a study of free primary education in Malawi*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sussex.

Coleman, J.S. (1990). *Foundations of Social Theory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

De Grauwe, A., Lugaz, C., Balde, D., Diakhate, C., Dougnon, D., Moustapha, M. & Odushina, D. (2005) Does decentralization lead to school improvement? – Findings and lessons from research in West-Africa. *Journal or Education for International Development*, 1(1), 1-15.

Donker, A.K., Issaka, C.A. & Asante, J. (2013) Cultural Practices and Education in Ghana: The Effects

of Traditional Culture on Parental Involvement in Education. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*. 2 (7), 110-120.

Dunne, M., Akyeampong, K. & Humphreys, S. (2007) School Processes, Local Governance and Community Participation: Understanding Access, Creating Pathways to Access. *University of Sussex Centre for International Education Research Monograph* 6.

Dyer, C. & Rose, P. (2005) Decentralisation for educational development? An editorial introduction. *Compare*, 35 (2), 105-113.

Edge, K., Tao, S. Riley, K. & Khamsi, K. (2008) *Teacher quality and parental participation: An exploratory review of research and resources related to influencing student outcomes*. Institute of education, University of London.

Emerson, L., Fear. J., Fox, S. & Sanders, E. (2012) *Parental engagement in learning and schooling: Lessons from research*. A report by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) for the Family-School and Community Partnerships Bureau: Canberra.

Epstein, J. L. (1995) School/family/community partnerships. Caring for the children we share. *Phi Delta Kappan*, May: 701-712.

Epstein, J. L. (1996) Family-school links: How do they affect educational outcomes? In A. Booth and J. Dunn (eds.), *Family-School Links: How do they affect educational outcomes?* Hillsdale, N.J. : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Epstein, J. L. (2001) *School, Family and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools.* Older, CO: Westview.

Essuman, A. & Akyeampong, A. (2011) decentralization policy and practice in Ghana: the promise and reality of community participation in education in rural communities. *Journal of Education Policy,* 26 (4), 513-527.

Fan, X. & Cheen, M. (2001) Parental involvement and students' academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 13, 1-19.

Ganzales-DeHass. A. R. Willems, P. P, & Doan Holbein, M. F. (2005) Examining the relationship between parental involvement and student motivation. *Educational Psychology Review*, 17, 99-123.

Gershberg , A. I. & D. Winkler (2004) Education Decentralization in Africa: A Review of Recent Policy and Practice. In: Levy, B. & S. Kpundeh (eds.), *Building State Capacity in Africa: New Approaches, Emerging Lessons*. Washington, DC: World Bank, pp.323-356.

Hamunyela, M. N. (2008) *A Critical Analysis of Parental Involvement in the Education of Learners in Rural Namibia*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Pretoria.

Hirschman, A. O. (1970) *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Honda, S. & H. Kato (2013) Scaling Up in Education: School-Based Management in Niger. In Chandy, L. et al. (eds.) *Getting to Scale: How to Bring Development Solutions to Millions of Poor People*. Brookings Institutions Press, pp.277-304.

Hoppers, W. (1994) Questioning the School – What Room for the Local Perspective? In: Takala T (ed.) *Quality of Education in the Context of Culture in Developing Countries*. Tampere: Tampere University, pp.41-66.

Hurst, P. (1985) Decentralization: Panacea or Red Herring? In: McLean M and Lauglo J (eds.), *The Control of Education: international perspectives on the centralization–decentralization debate*. London: Heinemann Educational Books, pp.79-99.

Jeynes, W. (2005). A meta-analysis of the relation of parental involvement to urban elementary school student academic achievement. *Urban Education*, 40, 237-269.

Jeynes, W. (2007) The relationship between parental involvement and urban secondary school student academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Urban Education*, 42(1), 82-110.

Kabarere, V. Muchee, T. Makewa, L. N. & Role, E. (2013) Parental Involvement in high and Low performing schools in Gasabo district, Rwanda. *International Journal about Parents in Education*, 7 (1), 30-42.

Lauglo, J. (1995) Forms of Decentralisation and Their Implications for Education. *Comparative Education*, 31 (1), 5-29.

McGinn, N. & Welsh, T. (1999) *Decentralization of education: why, when, what and how?* Paris: UNESCO/IIEP.

Maclure, R. (1994) Misplaced Assumptions of Decentralization and Participation in Rural Communities: primary school reform in Burkina Faso. *Comparative Education*, 30 (3), 239-254.

Marphatia, A., Edge, K., Archer, D. & Legault, E. (2010) *Politics of Participation : Parental support for children's learning and school governance in Burundi, Malawi, Senegal and Uganda*. London: ActionAid/Institute of Education.

Miller-Grandvaux, Y. & Yoder, K. (2002) A Literature Review of Community Schools in Africa. *Support for Analysis and Research in Africa Project,* USAID.

Mundy, K. (2008) Civil Society and Its Role in the Achievement and Governance of "Education for All". *Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2009*. Paris UNESCO.

Nishimra, M., Yamano, T., & Sasaoka, Y. (2008) Impact of the universal primary education policy on educational attainment and private costs in rural Uganda. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 28, 161-175.

OECD (2011) What can parents do to help their children succeed in school? *PISA in Focus. 2011 (10).*

Okitsu, T. (2011) *Policy and Practice of Community Participation in the Governance of Basic Education in Rural Zambia*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sussex.

Patrinos, H.A. & LaRocque, N. (2007) *Enhancing Accountability in Schools: What Can choice and Contracting Contribute?* Washington, DC: World Bank.

Pryor, J. (2005) Can Community Participation Mobilise Social Capital for Improvement of Rural Schooling? A Case Study from Ghana. *Compare*, 36 (2), 193-203.

Pushor, D. (2007). *Parent Engagement: Creating a Shared World*. Invited Research Paper, Ontario Education Research Symposium, January 18-20, Toronto.

Ranson, S., Martin, J., McKeown, P. & Nixon, J. (1999) The New Management and Governance of Education. In: Stoker, G. (ed.) *The New Management of British Local Governance*. London: Macmillan, pp.97-112.

Rose, P. (2003) Community Participation in School Policy and Practice in Malawi: balancinglocal knowledge, national policies and international agency priorities. *Compare*, 33 (1), 47-64.

Rose, P. (2005) Decentralisation and Privatisation in Malawi: Serving the Needs of the Poor? *Compare*, 35 (2), 153-165.

Rose, P. (2006) Collaborating in Education for All? Experiences of Government Support for Non-State Provision of Basic Education in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. *Public Administration and Development*, 26, 219-229.

Save the Children (2013) The Right to Learn: Community Voice in Schools. *In Demand Sensitive Schooling: Evidence and Issues.*

Sayed, Y. (2002) Democratising Education in a Decentralised System: South African Policy and Practice. *Compare*, 32 (1), 35-46.

Sayed. Y. & C. Soudien (2005) Decentralisation and the construction of inclusion education policy in South Africa. *Compare*, 35 (2), 115-125.

Suzuki, I. (2002) Parental Participation and Accountability in Primary Schools in Uganda. *Compare*, 32 (2), 243-259.

Tshireletso, L. (1997) They are the Government's Children-School and Community Relations in a Remote Area Dweller (Basarwa) Settlement in Kweneng District, Botswana. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 17(2), 173-188.

Turner, M. & Hulme, D. (1997) *Governance, administration and development: making the state work.* West Harford, CT: Kumarian Press.

UNESCO (2000) *The Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All, Meeting our Collective Commitments.* Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO (2014a) *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013/14 – Teaching and Learning: Achieving quality for all*. Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO (2014b) *Global Education for All Meeting – 2014 GEM Final Statement: The Muscat Agreement.* Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO (2014c) *Sub-Saharan Africa 2013 EFA Report.* Presented at the Global Education for All Meeting, Muscat, Sultanat of Oman, May 12-14.

United Nations (2014) *Report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals.*

Watt, P. (2001) Community Support for Basic Education in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Africa region human development working paper series.* Washington, DC: World Bank.

World Bank (2003) *The World Development Report 2004*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Yamada, S. (2014) Determinants of 'community participation': the traditions of local initiatives and the institutionalization of school management committees in Oromia Region, Ethiopia. *Compare*, 44 (2), 162-185.