

LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR IN TANZANIA
Monitoring and evaluation actors, activities and use in selected villages of Mzumbe ward, Mvomero district

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In 2013, a six-year programme (2013-2018) of Vlir-UOS funded inter-university cooperation between Flemish universities and Mzumbe University of Tanzania was launched. One of the four projects of the Gre@t programme focuses on strengthening of academic capacities, activities and outputs in the area of local governance. This brief highlights selected findings from a study on local education governance with a focus on two villages around Mzumbe University (Changarawe and Vikenge). Primary data for this study was collected in mid-2014 through preliminary village studies, a household survey and semi-structured interviews with actors at village, ward and district level who are directly and indirectly involved in the education sector service delivery and governance.

In order to improve local service delivery the government of Tanzania has elaborated a number of reform policies and programmes, including the Tanzania Local Government Reform Programme (TGRP). Under this programme, a set of new mechanisms has been designed to improve governance of local service delivery. These mechanisms are focused on both the supply and demand side of service delivery and include amongst others the use of all types of monitoring and evaluative (M&E) activities. 'Evaluation' is generally defined as 'the systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results' (OECD/DAC, 2002: 20) while 'monitoring' is understood as 'a continuous management function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievements of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds' (OECD/DAC, 2002: 28). While 'monitoring' and 'evaluation' are clearly distinct activities, they are highly complementary. As Kusek and Rist (2004: 13) put it, 'evaluation is a complement to monitoring in that when a monitoring system sends signals that the efforts are going off track, then good evaluative information can help clarify the realities and trends noted with the monitoring system'.

The basic functions of M&E are, on the one hand, the fulfilment of 'accountability' towards funders, taxpayers and citizens, and, on the other hand 'lesson learning' and 'feedback' towards management and policy makers.

A broad distinction can be made between:

- *Inside government (bureaucratic) top-down* types of M&E activities (such as routine monitoring of service delivery that feeds into Education Management Information systems, supervision, inspection, audit, district league tables, etc.).
- *Outside government bottom up initiatives.* These are also often labelled social accountability initiatives, including activities of citizen (budget) monitoring, client-oriented initiatives such as monitoring by user committees and monitoring activities by CSOs or social media.
- *More hybrid forms of combined initiatives* (such as participation of CSOs in government-led M&E activities).

Besides these types of M&E there are also the more traditional 'political' ways in which governments and service providers can be held accountable. More specifically, citizens can hold politicians and policy-makers accountable through elections and complaint mechanisms while politicians themselves can also monitor service providers and hold them accountable.

This study focuses on the functioning and effectiveness of different M&E mechanisms in the education sector in Changarawe and Vikenge, two neighbouring villages in Mzumbe Ward. More specifically, the aim is to map and (comparatively) analyse:

- different types of M&E mechanisms and their (perceived) functioning in the education sector
- the use of M&E information for accountability and learning by different actors involved
- citizens' reporting of and access to education-related information.

M&E actors, activities and outputs

Schools

As main actors of service delivery, the primary and secondary schools are also the principal suppliers of education data. Primary schools officially have to send data to the Ward Education Coordinator, while public secondary schools officially have to send data to the District Secondary Education Officer and the Regional Education Officer. The only private school included in the study, Askofu Adrian Mkoba Secondary School, which is owned by the Roman Catholic Church, reports to the priest of the nearby church, who subsequently reports to the Bishop.

The primary and secondary schools in Changarawe and Vikenge collect and analyse data on access, quality and delivery of services, revenue collection and students' performance. The schools mainly collect data through reality checks and key informant interviews. Vikenge Primary School is the only school that also collects data through surveys. These surveys are mainly used to collect data on the expected number of new pupils for subsequent school years. Among the primary schools Vikenge Primary School is also the only school that reported increased M&E activities and quality of M&E outputs which they relate to more importance attached to M&E and more attention to quality of the outputs within the school. The head teacher of Changarawe Primary School is most critical with respect to the M&E outputs. Unlike the other two primary schools, he is of the opinion that the quality of the reports has

decreased due to less attention to quality of M&E outputs.

As regards the secondary schools, there is in particular, a difference between Mongola and Mzumbe Secondary schools. While the first is far more critical of the quantity and quality of M&E outputs, Mzumbe Secondary School's head master is highly positive of the quantity and quality of the M&E outputs. In his opinion, more importance attached to M&E within the school and the district has triggered the amount of M&E activities while increased experience has been conducive for increased quality.

Reports of all primary and secondary schools are mainly descriptive monitoring reports that do not include an analysis (evaluation) of the information provided which puts into perspective the learning potential. According to the head masters and teachers, analysis of information rather takes place orally during school board meetings as well as during meetings with actors at ward and district level.

Top-down (bureaucratic) actors at ward and district level

The *Ward Education Coordinator* is responsible for supervising all education activities at ward level, which includes e.g. monitoring the delivery of education, the attendance of teachers and students and involvement of the community (United Republic of Tanzania, 2013). Mzumbe's Ward Education Coordinator compiles information from the primary schools and officially reports to the District Primary Education Officer and the Ward Executive Officer. The quantity of M&E activities and quality of M&E outputs of Mzumbe's Ward Education Coordinator have increased over time due to the use of computers and to more importance attached to M&E within the ward and the district. The Ward Education Coordinator is the actor that exchanges education-related information with most of the other actors (interviewees). She is also considered to be one of the actors with most influence when it comes to the way other interviewees think and act as far as education issues are concerned.

Specific education actors at district level include the District Primary Education Officer, the District Secondary Officer and the District Primary Education Inspectorate. The *District Primary*

Education Officer, who is head of a department of 23 staff members, is responsible for ensuring and monitoring primary education in the district and is alike the Ward Education Coordinator considered to be an influential actor (interviewees). At district level data from schools are compiled and entered in an electronic Education Management Information System. Five staff members are specifically responsible for statistics. According to our interviewees, quality and quantity of M&E did not really increase over time. Reports of the public secondary schools are directly sent to the *District Secondary Education Officer*, who is the head of a department with four staff members (none of them are women).

An important top-down actor who stimulates accountability and learning in the education sector is the *District Primary Education Inspectorate*, is responsible for the inspection of primary schools. According to the interviewees, quality of the reports has increased over time due to more attention given to quality of reporting. While officially 80% of the schools have to be inspected each year (of which 50% are non-announced inspections, 25% entire school inspections, 20% follow-up inspections and 5% visit inspections), in Mvomero district only 21.8% of the schools were inspected in 2013, which is to a large extent due to staff shortages (interviewees).

As Mvomero District has recently included monitoring and evaluation among its priorities in the education sector (see April-June 2014 progress report of the Primary Education Development Programme), it is possible that this translates into more resources being allocated to education M&E.

Besides education-specific actors at ward and district levels, there are also a number of other actors who are *indirectly involved in education-related M&E*. At ward level, the *Ward Executive Officer* is responsible for revenue collection, developmental issues and law-and-order functions at ward level. He receives information from the Ward Education Coordinator and the *Village Executive Officer* who has similar responsibilities at village level. At district level, the *District Executive Director*, who is formally the most powerful civil servant, receives information from all district actors as well as the Ward Executive Officers. The *District Commissioner*,

who is the representative of the state and the ruling party, is in practice the most powerful actor in the district. Mvomero's District Commissioner is well-connected and exchanges information with various actors at district, ward and village levels.

Finally, another important actor at district level is the *Internal Audit Office* (3 members, headed by a woman) which is responsible for financial (and performance) auditing of all local government entities and service delivery units (such as schools). At school level, this amongst others includes financial auditing of the grants that are allocated from districts to schools, i.e. the Capital Development Grant (for planned education infrastructure and maintenance) and the Capitation Grant (non-salary expenditures).

School boards

The most important bottom-up actors that demand and use information are the school boards which consist of parents and teachers. Interestingly, there are striking differences among the gender-based composition of the school boards of primary and secondary schools with women being more represented among the first (38 to 46 %) than the second (20 to 25%). The profile of the chairpersons also substantially differs: a primary school board in Vikenge and Changarawe is more likely to be headed by a farmer (aged 41-44) while all secondary school boards are headed by lecturers of Mzumbe University (aged 47-65).

While the school boards of Changarawe and Mzumbe Primary Schools and secondary schools meet every trimester, the school board of Vikenge Primary School meets three times a month. During board meetings information from the head teacher/ head master, who is also the board's secretary, is discussed, on the basis of which decisions are made. School boards are formally accountable to the district, through the obligation to send minutes to the District Education Officer, but in practice minutes are hardly ever sent (see also Prinsen, 2007).

The chairpersons of the school boards in Changarawe and Vikenge do not even mention that they officially have to report to the district; in fact most of them mention they do not have to report to anyone. Only the school board of Vikenge Primary School officially reports to the

village council, while the school board of Mzumbe Secondary School officially reports to the regional commissioner.

Non-governmental organisations and local media

In Changarawe and Vikenge two non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are currently active in the education sector, i.e. World Vision and Childhood Development Trust Fund Network (CDTFN). World Vision supports the community in different sectors, while CDTFN is involved in service provision and policy advocacy in the education and health sectors. For both NGOs M&E activities and the quality of M&E outputs have increased, but underlying reasons for the increase differ. In World Vision, M&E activities have increased due to more pressure from higher level authorities (at division level) and the quality of M&E outputs has increased due to more attention to quality in the organisation. In CDTFN M&E activities have increased due to more importance attached to M&E in the organisation and the quality of M&E outputs has increased due to more pressure from funding agencies. Both NGOs, but especially World Vision, exchange education-related information with many other actors.

The local media, amongst which, the most important ones are Abood radio and TV have become more active in the follow-up and reporting on education sector performance.

Elected bodies/persons

At the level of Mvomero district, monitoring by the elected councillors is mainly done through the *District's Council standing committee on Education, Health and Water*. It consists of 12 members (4 women) and is currently headed by a female District Councillor who resides in Vikenge and is considered an influential actor. The council members do not engage in systematic data collection and quarterly report to the district council on the basis of ad-hoc data collection, reality checks, anecdotal evidence and complaints by citizens. Their monitoring activities are not focused on issues related to educational substance on which they often have limited knowledge. They rather focus on social issues (e.g. school dropouts due to pregnancy) and issues related to school infrastructure such as water and sanitation facilities.

A similar type of monitoring is also performed by the 7 members of the *Ward Development Committee* (no women). The latter is chaired by the *Ward Councillor* who is responsible for supervision of education, health and water issues. Mzumbe's Ward Councillor is one of the actors who exchanges education-related information with relatively many other actors.

At village level, 5 members of the *Changarawe Education Committee* (2 women) and the 8 members of Vikenge's Social Services Committee (1 woman) report similar education-related information to the village council and the village general assembly. The latter is in principle the most important body for citizen's bottom-up accountability. In reality however, participation of citizens is low, both in Changarawe and Vikenge, as they consider it to be ineffective which is partly related to fact that the village assembly is in their opinion more a forum through which central level directives are disseminated and imposed.

Use of M&E information

Not all the M&E information that is collected or exchanged is used. Our findings highlight that 76.9% of the information that is shared between the actors has been used for learning, while 48.6% of the information has been used for sanctioning.

Our study further distinguishes among different types of use of M&E findings and processes:

- *Conceptual use*: use for awareness raising among citizens and among actors (mainly teachers) involved
- *Instrumental use*: use for effective changes in education practices, policies and processes. These changes might be related to three dimensions of service delivery (Skelcher, 1993):
 - service power issues: quantity and quality of education services, sanctioning of actors and users
 - strategic power issues: revenue collection, budget allocation
 - structural power issues: priority setting and access to decision-making

Our findings generally highlight that information is more used for conceptual use and for

instrumental use related to the quantity and quality of education while it is less used for changes in budget allocation or revenue collection. Among local level actors, information is hardly used for priority setting while it also does not feed into decisions regarding more systemic issues (such as changes in e.g. in the composition or mandate of decision-making bodies).

Schools

- School-based M&E information is (intensively) used by head teachers/masters to increase awareness among actors involved (in particular the own teaching staff) and parents regarding school performance (Vikenge Primary School, Mzumbe Secondary School) as well as to increase awareness on the need for parents to contribute to the functioning of the school (Mzumbe Primary School, Mongola Secondary School).
- It is only in Changarawe Primary School and Askofu Adrian Mkoba Secondary School that information is used to sanction actors. These sanctions are rather soft and include naming and shaming of teachers of Changarawe Primary School during parents' meetings (e.g. if they forgot to list contributions of parents) and friendly (privately) reprimanding of teachers of Askofu Adrian Mkoba Secondary School in case their pace of teaching is too slow.
- Only Mzumbe Primary School does not use information to sanction users (parents and pupils). Parents of bad performing students are e.g. visited and 'sanctioned' in case they do not pay their contributions.
- Within Changarawe Primary School and Vikenge Primary School, the use of information to bring about changes in the availability and quality of education increased over time. Particularly Vikenge Primary School has acted upon information regarding its low performance to expand its education offer.
- Schools do not use information to bring about changes in priority setting or in access to decision-making (e.g. changes in composition or mandate of school boards).

Top-down (bureaucratic) actors at ward and district level

- Among our interviewees, the Ward Education Coordinator is the only actor that uses

information for instrumental changes in all areas.

- Most top-down actors use information to bring about changes in the areas of strategic and structural power. The District Secondary Education Officer and the Ward Executive Officer for instance both refer to the increasing priority given to the construction of laboratories. Some of our interviewees however put into perspective the importance of district and ward level bureaucratic M&E for strategic and structural issues. They refer to the overarching influence of central level directives and initiatives such as the 'Big Results Now' in priority setting and budgetary allocation.
- At village level, Village Executive Officers sometimes use information to increase awareness about education among the entire community. While this use is rather limited, it is important as schools and school boards tend to reach in particular those citizens who are already enrolled.

School boards

- All school boards use, to varying degrees, information received from the head teacher/master for awareness raising, changes in availability and quality of education delivery and sanctioning of users.
- Some school boards also use information to change priorities; the school board of Changarawe for example has used M&E information to prioritise the construction of additional students' toilets above the construction of toilets for teachers, as this was considered to generate a positive effect on enrolment.

Non-governmental organisations and local media

- Information from World Vision and CDTFN is especially used for awareness among citizen and education actors involved.
- In the past information from World Vision has also fed into use for sanctioning of actors and users. As sanctions were effective and set an example, nowadays less sanctioning is needed (interviewees).
- Local media's reporting on the education sector is primarily meant to feed into awareness raising among citizens, other social accountability actors (such as NGOs),

the elected as well as actors who are directly and indirectly involved in education service delivery.

Elected bodies & persons

There is generally limited use of monitoring information by committees at district, ward and village levels.

Interviewees highlighted that this is related to the perceived low quality of this information and the fact that monitoring mechanisms in the education sector itself are considered to work adequately which lowers the need for additional monitoring by actors who are not specialised or knowledgeable on education issues.

Village and ward level committees and councils also have limited budgetary discretion as capital development grants and capitation grants are directly transferred from districts to schools.

Citizens' reporting of and access to education-related information

Among the respondents of our household survey, the first person to whom education related problems are reported to is the head teacher/master; 68.3% of the respondents in Changarawe report complaints to the head teacher/master and 85.4% of the respondents in Vikenge. Local and higher level government, whose supervision is also considered to have contributed to an increased quality of education, are also mentioned often.

A large majority of the respondents of the household survey receive information about school-related issues in the village, i.e. 89.7% of the respondents in Changarawe and 96.5% in Vikenge. As expected, these percentages are higher among respondents whose children are enrolled in one of the village schools (even 100% among the respondents in Vikenge with children in schools). Most respondents receive information on pass rates, while not much information is received on teacher absenteeism. More than half of the respondents who gave their opinion about the quality of information considers it to be good to excellent.

Focusing on changes over time, respondents highlight that the amount of information received

has generally increased, however they would still like to receive more information on various education-related topics, and particularly on budgets and teacher absenteeism.

Most of the respondents receive information informally, especially through friends and neighbours, while also local village leaders and household/ family members are quite often mentioned. These percentages are higher in Vikenge than in Changarawe, while relatively more respondents in Changarawe receive information through formal channels (such as the school board or the village council). Comparing information channels which are currently used with preferred information channels highlights that respondents would like to receive more information through school boards, local media and village notice boards.

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This brief was prepared by Nathalie Holvoet, Liesbeth Inberg, Elisabeth Lulu and Yona Matekere. For a more detailed overview and discussion of the findings, see Holvoet, N., Inberg, I., Lulu E., and Matekere, Y. (2015) *'Local education sector governance in Tanzania. Mapping monitoring and evaluation actors, activities and use in two selected villages of Mzumbe ward (Mvomero District, Morogoro Region). Preliminary Findings'*. Antwerp: Institute of Development Policy and Management, University of Antwerp and Mzumbe: Institute of Development Studies, Mzumbe University.