

CHAPTER 3

ACCOUNTABILITY IN EDUCATION: A GLOBAL OVERVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter emphasis was placed on the need and necessity for governments to comply with international conventions on good governance in order to enhance accountability in the public sector in general. This chapter will explore the concept of accountability as it relates to education. To achieve this, the role of education and the rationale for education accountability will be explained. Furthermore, characterization of models of education accountability will be given and examples drawn from developed and developing countries to highlight approaches applied by different countries to meet education accountability challenges. Finally, this chapter will conclude by isolating some critical characteristic features of education accountability.

3.2 APPROACHES TO EDUCATION PROVISIONING IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The nature, orientation and content of education systems have always been influenced and impacted upon by several environmental factors such as the size and population of a country, its wealth and economic resources, its political ideologies, culture and social reorganization and its external outlook (Steyn, Steyn, De Waal, & Wolhuter, 2003; Turner & Hulme, 1997). It is against this backdrop that education systems have been called upon to take centre stage to direct and control the processes of change to achieve developmental goals particularly in developing countries. The following paragraphs will provide a brief description on how the role of education in the African context has evolved over the years.

Education Processes before Colonisation

According to Thompson (1981) the role of education as an instrument of change in developing countries has evolved over the years depending on the nature and the needs of the society it was intended to serve. Historically, education processes in smaller and isolated traditional societies largely focused on maintaining the cohesion, stability, survival and well-being of the group.

The paramount needs of such societies generally revolved around inducting an individual into conforming to and obeying the needs of the group. The education processes were therefore geared towards ensuring that the individual fits comfortably into existing patterns of his society, i.e. socialization into the life and world view of that society. Individualism only found expression within the context of the group (Thompson, 1981).

The above paragraphs only provide a crude representation of an educational process that promoted traditional socialization as opposed to the more complex roles assigned to modern schooling that has to prepare its products for a diverse and complex world out there.

3.3 THE ADVENT OF COLONIALISM AND EDUCATION PROVISIONING

With the advent of colonialism and 'the enforced formation of larger political units embracing often large numbers of social groups' (Thompson, 1981), traditional socialization as depicted in the previous paragraphs had to give way to modern schooling because of the increased complexity of the needs of a more diverse society in a global context (cf. 2.13.2).

The role of the school therefore became more significant in promoting modernization and bringing about the desired changes. This entailed a fundamental departure from enculturation to advancing the goals of modernization and progress. It meant that schools were to prepare their products to service the bigger and centralised colonial

administrations whilst at the same time developing the necessary leadership capacity to eventually take over the administrations of their countries after independence from colonial rule. Indeed, the skills shortages were dire at the time of independence in the sixties because many colonial regimes had neglected to prepare Africans for leadership after independence (Stoesz *et al.*, 1999).

Thompson (1981) states that the growing scale and complexity of educational provision necessitated some form of centralized coordination and planning leading to escalating education costs that had to be met through the public purse and be subjected to political accountability. According to McGinn (1990), the high prevalence of centralised forms of education governance (i.e. national systems) have their origins in Europe. This is so because education systems were seen as part and parcel of the development of nation states in Europe in the late 18th and 19th centuries.

Education was seen as a means to create national political systems that would '*command the loyalties of factions that earlier gave allegiance to local elites.*' State control of education was imperative to promote national objectives that transcended local, regional and social class.

The creation of national education systems was however not without contestation, according to McGinn (1990). Often the contest for the control of education was between the state and the church, or between national elites and local groups. As nation states became more powerful, national education systems were developed and the necessary control mechanisms were put in place. These mechanisms of control that were developed in Europe were also applied in colonies where governance conflict was often between the local elites and the colonial power. Generally, conflict over education governance was often resolved through compromise and adjustments to some parts of the governance structure rather than a complete overhaul or redesign because most conflicts revolved around specific governance issues or approaches.

Todaro and Smith (2003) make the point that the resources allocated to the expansion of educational systems in the developing countries might have been better spent on needed rural public works projects or on increasing the quality of basic primary education. However, they also concede that the expansion of educational opportunities at all levels has contributed to aggregate economic growth in many countries if one takes into consideration the following:

- The creation of skilled and productive labour forces
- Widespread provision of employment and income generating opportunities for teachers, construction workers, production and printing of learner support materials, school uniform manufacturers and other related economic activities
- Provision of a cadre of educated leaders who took over from colonial leadership.

Despite the fact that access to education and therefore to economic opportunities, is often skewed and uneven, particularly in developing countries, the two authors quoted above maintain that an educated and skilled labour force is a necessary condition for sustained economic growth and development. They contend that countries that have developed successfully have generally broadened educational access to poor and rich, urban and rural. The extent to which a country will derive maximum benefits from its investment in education will be determined not by its ability to promote quantitative expansion but by deepening the quality of its graduates as the following paragraphs will illustrate.

3.4 GLOBALISATION AND ITS IMPACT ON MODERN SCHOOLING

Modern schooling is greatly impacted upon by globalization. Archer (1991) defines globalisation as a multifaceted process entailing a growing worldwide interconnectedness of structure, culture and agency and a parallel de-differentiation of traditional boundaries.

Christie (1998) adds that one characteristic feature of globalization in education is that there is policy borrowing between countries and therefore appropriate form and content of schooling are increasingly shared (cf.2.13.2). These developments are also encouraged by multinational aid agencies particularly in as far as education in developing countries is

concerned. Schools are gradually being forced to move away from preparing learners for their roles in their immediate communities, but rather for a role in the global economy.

According to Claasen (2000), global education has been devised to ensure that the curriculum reflects the global context and promotes multiculturalism. Trends in education governance in many countries point to attempts at making schools more responsive to emerging needs of their societies so that their learners can be globally competitive. The section that follows attempts to trace some of these developments.

Kraak and Young (2001) make the point that the global contexts, particularly the demands of the international corporations and organisations, have shaped education policies in many countries, both developed and developing. This impact manifests itself in increased emphasis by governments on the economic role of education and its importance in human resource development. The pressure for improved performance and for making public services more accountable through centrally determined processes has found expression in the search for measurable educational outcomes. This point was also made earlier under Statistical Accountability (cf.2.2.2.4).

3.5 POLITICAL GOALS OF EDUCATION: Basis for accountability (cf.2.2.2.1)

The inextricable link between education and politics has been acknowledged throughout history, albeit with some misgivings in some quarters. As the previous paragraphs suggest, education systems are essentially political agents. The World Development Report (World Bank, 2004b) makes the point that politics play a key role in establishing objectives for education, its quality and distribution and the mobilisation of resources for its provision. The report however goes further to indicate that those in control of the state use schooling to promote beliefs they consider desirable.

According to Morrow (1989), accountability cannot be divorced from the framework of political structures within which it operates. The political framework must therefore be conducive for the implementation of accountability systems. According to Guthrie and

Schuermann (2010), politics and education cannot be separated because of the vast amounts of funds expended annually in the education system. Education, according to the two authors, impacts directly on people in general and an individual in particular. It is for this reason that it will always be under the scrutiny and involvement of the political system. The following are generally accepted as the political goals of education.

3.5.1 Expanding Access to Education

Educational reform in many countries focus mainly on expanding access to education by making it available to all citizens, young and old. Education is expected to play a key role in enabling the citizenry to participate fully in the political processes of their countries (Weil, 2005).

It is argued that extending educational opportunities to all members of society will provide them with a chance to compete for the limited number of positions of privilege in society. Education provides the only fair way of allocating privileges on the basis of merit. Social justice and political stability could therefore be achieved through providing educational opportunities to all. This allocative function of education is politically defensible in that it is based on merit as a basis for extending privileges to those who have worked hard and obtained their certificates. Thorpe (1985) sees the role of education as twofold: as a distributor of life chances and also partly as a transmitter of cultural values. Steyn *et al* (2003) also see the role of education in terms of cultural transmission, selection and allocative functions and the development of responsible citizens who should contribute to the welfare of the country. According to the World Bank Development Report (World Bank, 2004b), the expansion of schooling facilities is often uneven and dependent on other factors such as the geographic position and the demographic characteristics of communities. Some communities enthusiastically embrace schooling whilst others resist schooling of a western type. The disparities in the distribution of educational opportunities have the potential to sharpen differences between groups, bringing ethnic and religious differences to the surface.

This is where the essential differences between the traditional patterns of socialization, aimed primarily at maintaining the integrity of the society, as opposed to modern schooling that places more emphasis on an individual, unwittingly create conflict between individuals and their communities.

The differentiating and allocative function of schools has to some extent made modern schooling more divisive. It has also increased disparities of wealth between individuals and groups. Todaro and Smith (2003) further argue that the educational systems of many third world countries sometimes act to increase rather than decrease inequalities and are therefore inherently inequalitarian.

Despite the concerns raised above, education remains the only valid instrument by which to distribute opportunities, wealth and status in a rational and politically defensible manner. However, it must be noted that commitment to egalitarianism and social justice remains the goal of most countries.

3.5.2. Promoting national unity

Many nations are constituted by peoples of different languages and backgrounds. In many instances these differences are so fundamental that, if not well managed, they could become causes of disunity and a serious threat to coherent national development.

Feelings of unfair treatment, unequal opportunities or some form of marginalisation, could lead a group of people to fall back into their ethnic and cultural identities as a way of preserving themselves and to collectively challenge a system they may consider unfair. When this happens, national peace and stability gets compromised. According to Claasen (2000), education has been used as a tool by many states to, among others, develop a common culture and to give citizens, a shared national identity. Indeed the differences between groups within a single nation state could be so great and so fundamental that policies seeking to promote national integration and cohesion are often consciously pursued. The burning desire to bring people speaking different languages and having different traditional cultures into one nation state is particularly pressing in many

countries (Pandor, 2005; World Bank, 2004b). Concomitant with other strategies aimed at nation building, education has been seen as a major instrument for achieving goals of national unity, political stability, and equality of opportunity, and for circumventing situations that might give rise to conflict. It is often believed that schools are best placed to inculcate strong national values and identities that transcend linguistic and cultural barriers. Whether education is succeeding in this mandate is not the focus of this work. Suffice to say that the critical role of education in nation building cannot be over-emphasised.

3.6 THE ECONOMICS OF EDUCATION

The rapid and worldwide growth of education economics as a discipline was largely due to the interest of international agencies and of governments in both developed and developing countries. The concept of human capital in particular generated a lot of interest. According to human capital theory, education enhances productivity and therefore education expenditure must be seen as a form of investment for both the individual and the society (Bray, 1990).

The growth of any economy is largely dependent on the quality of its labour force. Labour quality can vary considerably and can therefore be one of the factors that explain differences in individual income and also account for differences in income among countries (Weil, 2005). It is therefore the quality of education and not its quantity that best explains earning and productivity. The implication here is that governments should improve the quality of provisioning rather than expanding the number of schools and places, starting with quality primary education rather than expanding secondary education. The notion of human capital is essentially about labour quality. This is so because human capital share similar attributes with physical capital. Human capital focuses on people who are productive (Todaro & Smith, 2003). Weil (2005) also makes the point that investment in human capital is a major expense for any economy, but he also concedes that just like physical capital, human capital earns a return and also depreciates in value.

Economic development in a country is dependent on two things: the health and the education of its population. If people are healthy, they work harder and longer, think more clearly and students can learn better. Therefore better health for a population in a country will raise its level of income. Given its productive side, health is also a form of human capital. According to Todaro and Smith (2003), both education and health can be seen as critical components of growth and development. According to Weil (2005), intellectual ability in developed economies is far more important than physical ability in determining a person's wages. It is for this reason that investment that improves a person's intellect, i.e. education, has become the most important form of investment in human capital. Human capital theory best explains differences between rich and poor countries. The differences in access to education explain why some countries advance whilst others still lack behind in terms of development. In 2000 for instance, according to Weil (2005), 34 % of adult population in the developing world had no education at all compared to 0.8 % in the United States and 3.7 % in other developed countries. Education is an investment in human capital, and like investment in physical capital, it is very costly. Hence the inability of many developing countries to fund education adequately.

The belief in the power of education to perform the functions listed under 3.1.3 above led to massive investments in education. According to Thompson (1981), the cost of providing education in developing countries is generally higher, relative to their national income, than in more developed countries. Investment in education is considered an essential feature of national development and must therefore be part and parcel of national development strategy.

The massive investments by some African countries in education post the Addis Ababa conference led to expanded schooling systems which in turn did not necessarily lead to economic development. Instead, according to Thompson (1981), national economies stagnated because school graduates were unable to find jobs after scarce public resources had been expended on their education. Other related challenges stemmed from the fact

that school graduates often emerged from the system with wrong kinds of skills because schools cannot readily adjust to the needs of the economy. Consequently, education failed to ignite economic development as anticipated.

Some of the reasons for the failure of education to promote economic development in most developing countries relate to low internal efficiencies of the schooling system. These manifest themselves in the high dropout rates and high repetition and failure rates which result from poor quality of instruction. According to Todaro (1985, p. 342): *'Private perception of the value of education exceeds its social value.'*

According to the World Bank Development Report (World Bank, 2004b) there are a myriad of reasons as to why education systems have not been very successful in making the desirable contribution to the economic development of developing nations. These would range from the unrealistic expectations of the system to the inability of governments to fund education adequately so as to improve quality of provisioning.

It is precisely because of the limited resources and the fact that education generally gets the lion's share of these that education has to carry the greatest psychological burden for development. Despite the documented weaknesses of education systems, it is generally accepted that education and development go hand in glove. It is also recognized that the contribution education may make to economic development will vary from country to country depending on the stage of its development and the developmental strategies pursued. However, as Kogan *et al* (1985, pp. 19-20) puts it: *'Lack of trust in schools to meet the needs of society led to more demand for accountability.'* The following section will focus briefly on key issues relating to education accountability.

3.7 EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY: Some Perspectives

McEwan (1995) makes the point that education is a social enterprise and does not therefore exist in a vacuum. He asserts that tremendous pressure has been placed on public services such as education to cope with changing social, economic, political and

cultural forces. In his view, the educational reform movement that began in the 1980s was a reaction to perceived shortcomings in education and international competitiveness. According to Kogan *et al* (1985), the notion and origin of education accountability in the United States was tied to value for money debates and the inputs /outputs considerations. He further argues that the lack of confidence in schools to meet the needs of society is a justification for the demand for accountability in education. The clarion call for more accountability in the public sector in general has also placed education systems, particularly those in developing countries, under intense public scrutiny because effective schooling, it is argued, is an imperative for a democratic society. McEwan (1995) adds that expectations for greater accountability led to increased monitoring and evaluation of the schooling system through the development of indicator systems.

Caldwell (1993) takes this point further by reporting that governments in many countries responded to accountability pressures by taking the lead in setting goals, establishing priorities and building frameworks for accountability while at the same time shifting authority and responsibility for key functions to school level. He aptly refers to this trend as `... a decentralising trend in decentralisation or a decentralisation continuum' (Caldwell, 1993, p. 159).

Some educationalists (Dorn, 1998; Giroux, 1988) have, however, raised concerns about the applicability of accountability schemes to education. They argue that education reforms have redefined the purpose of education so as to eliminate its citizenship function in favour of narrowly defined market perspectives. Giroux (1988) argues that the pre-occupation with accountability schemes i.e. testing, accreditation and credentialising, has turned schools into 'company stores'. He holds the view that schools should not be defined in economic terms and that the purpose of schools should primarily be about enhancing civic life, promoting morality and social compassion. Dorn (1998) also argues that school accountability systems revolve around statistical results of high status tests and are about politics. He contends that statistical accountability systems narrow the purpose for schools and suggests some impatience with educational reform.

The *school effectiveness research* that has gained prominence in the early 1990's is a direct response to pressures brought to bear by the growing global demands for accountability. Wiggly (2003) however argues that research into school effectiveness has tended to be reductionist in that it attempts to mimic traditional models of natural science in establishing linear inputs/outputs relationships. He contends that schooling has many outcomes that are not necessarily measurable, and that test results alone cannot be taken as the prime outcome. Hopkins (2001) also makes the point that school effectiveness movement shows a commitment to quantitative methods because it attempts to respond directly to policy initiatives (*or accountability demands*). On the other hand, he sees more value in the efforts made by the school improvement researchers because the *school improvement tradition* provides a broader perspective on educational outcomes. Both Wiggly and Hopkins tend to agree that the school improvement research has the potential to provide a richer understanding of schooling outcomes than research steeped in the school effectiveness tradition.

Other education commentators (Christie, 1998; Claasen, 2000; Hopkins, 2001; Young, 2001) acknowledge that global realities have a direct impact on education delivery systems across the globe (cf. 2.13.2 and 3.2.3). They point out that the unfolding international landscape holds direct implications for schooling and the curriculum. Schools, it is argued, are forced to provide global education. According to Claasen (2000), global education requires an understanding of the values and priorities of the many cultures of the world. A school is therefore expected to prepare its learners for a role in the global economy.

If participation in the global economy leads to competitiveness among nation states, it goes without saying that schools will be called upon to prepare their learners for a role in the global economy. To that extent, education systems will be called upon to account for what they are doing especially because they are often allocated the biggest slice of the national budget.

It can rightly be argued that notions of accountability when applied to education can be very complex and at times controversial. Wriggley (2003) laments the fact that schools in England are subjected to extraordinary control from above in the name of accountability. He sees accountability as the language and mechanism used to control schools. In his view, accountability corrodes the educational process and affects teachers and learners alike. This high surveillance on schools is the result of the low trust placed in schools and according to Mahoney and Hextall (2000) this cannot lead to sustainable development because it demotivates teachers and contributes to teacher shortages because teachers leave the profession (Sergiovanni, Kelleher, McCarthy, & Fowler, 2009). Accountability tends to operate in hierarchical regimes and motivation tends to be extrinsic to the task of teaching; that accountability has more to do with the threat of penalties than the fulfilment of internal satisfaction or moral obligation. In his opinion accountability undermines teacher professionalism by placing them in a position of deficit to externally set targets. Marks and Printy (2002) also argue that accountability strategies tend to impede professional development and collective responsibility for school improvement. They contend that demand for accountability reinforces unproductive relationships between teachers and students. Jamison and Wickly (2001) make the point that the models of accountability that undermine teacher professionalism are derived from the world of mass production used in American car plants and is therefore not suited to educational environments.

Despite the concerns raised above, the call for education accountability will continue to grow louder in the coming years (Marx, 2006). As Thorp (1985, p. 426) puts it: *"Accountability is a legitimate demand in a democratic society..."*

Sergiovanni *et al* (2009) state that the third wave of education reform focused on standards and accountability, and that once defined, standards become the benchmark for education accountability. They further make the point that many governments have embraced the notion of standards and accountability in developing educational policies.

Guthrie and Schuermann (2010) have also observed that during the past decades, standards, assessments and accountability have emerged as important levers for education improvement. According to Sergiovanni *et al* (2009), research on education standards and accountability has, however, confirmed both positive and negative impacts on both teachers and students. These research findings led the recommendation that accountability systems must be revamped so that standardized testing should constitute only one element in assessing a school's performance. Multiple measures of testing student performance must be part of any accountability system.

The following paragraphs provide an overview of the key challenges confronting many education systems, especially in developing countries. It is on the strength of these challenges that the call for more accountability and value for money will continue to gain momentum in education provisioning.

3.8 COMMON CHALLENGES FACING EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Education systems worldwide face common problems in the provisioning of quality education to their communities. These problems often revolve around the financing and resourcing of education programmes. One of the principles of accountability, as discussed in par.2.4, is that the balance between authority, skill and resources must be considered if effective accountability is to be achieved.

The magnitude and extent of these challenges would differ from country to country and from one context to the other. In the main, most developing countries generally bear the brunt of the following challenges (World Bank, 2004b). Given the complex contexts within which education is provided, notions of accountability become more complex when attempted to apply uniformly across the globe.

3.8.1 Unaffordable access

Successful countries have generally ensured that educational benefits are spread broadly across all sectors of the community; the poor, the rich, in the urban and rural areas.

Many poorer countries however face serious deficits in affordable access. Poor people have less access, lower attainment and lower quality than those who can afford. Todaro and Smith (2003) also make the point that poor students have smaller chances of completing any given educational cycle than the more affluent students because the opportunity costs for them are higher and the expected benefits are lower. And thus, the higher costs and the expected lower benefits mean that a poor family's rate of return from investment in the education of their child is lower than it is for other families.

3.8.2 Dysfunctional schools

In many countries, public education provisioning (generally for the poor) is often dysfunctional and corruption ridden, ranging from teacher absenteeism, poor resourcing to inept management.

3.8.3 Low technical quality

The technical quality of instruction and learning outcomes are often very low due to poor quality of instruction. This inevitably leads to high dropout rates and low absorptive capacity of the system. Children who never enrol for schooling, those who do not progress and those who drop out provide a clear indication of a failing education system.

3.8.4 Low client responsiveness

Many schools remain alien to the communities they are intended to serve mainly due to the poor involvement of communities in establishing, supporting and overseeing their schools. There are instances where communities have lost confidence in what they would

commonly refer to as 'government schools'. In some extreme cases communities take complete responsibility for the schooling of their children.

Kirst (1990) states that school level accountability can be achieved through six broad approaches: performance reporting, monitoring and compliance with standards or regulations, incentive systems, reliance on the market, changing the locus of authority or control of schools and changing professional roles. In an attempt to mediate some of the challenges mentioned above, different approaches were adopted by different education systems. Many systems tended to gravitate towards a decentralised model as a strategy to meet their varied schooling needs and challenges. The following paragraphs will discuss the decentralisation of decision making and authority as one of several other ways of enhancing accountability and promoting service delivery in the public sector.

3.9 DECENTRALIZATION AS A STRATEGY FOR ENHANCING ACCOUNTABILITY

One of the most effective ways to enhance accountability is to decentralise decision making and authority to lower levels of the system. It has been cogently argued that one of the major obstacles to the effective performance of public bureaucracies in most developing countries is the excessive concentration of decision making and authority within central government. However, the World Bank Development Report (World Bank, 2004b) warns that unless decentralisation is properly designed and well managed, it could diminish accountability and undermine its intended benefits.

Luaglo (1996) states that decentralisation refers to a variety of organizational forms which may differ from context to context depending on the rationales for their creation and the extent to which an organization would like to distribute authority to different levels or stakeholder groupings. Turner and Hulme (1997) relate decentralisation to decision making. They argue that a more centralized organization would suggest that the top management makes all the decisions and when decision making processes have been widely dispersed through the organization, then decentralisation shall have happened.

Modern democratic states have tended to pursue policies of decentralisation in order to promote good governance and to provide public services as efficiently as possible. In this way they would bolster their political legitimacy. Smith (1985) identifies the following benefits of democratic decentralisation: Firstly, decentralisation provides scope for political education in general and the training of political leaders in particular. Secondly, it promotes political stability through the process of voting, thereby giving the populace a stake in the running of the country. Thirdly, it ensures political equality in that political power will be more broadly distributed. Fourthly, it enhances accountability because locally elected representatives will be accessible to the populace and can therefore be held directly responsible for their policies and actions. Finally, responsiveness of government is improved because local representatives understand local needs better and would know how best they can be addressed.

Sobe (2006) sees a direct link between accountability and the dispersal or decentralisation of public administrations. Heim (1995) points out that increased accountability follows the decentralisation of authority. He further argues that where authority is not delegated, accountability cannot be expected. In his view, decentralisation is seen as transfer of accountability.

The flip side of decentralisation, according to Turner and Hulme (1997) is that it could promote regional identities and undermine national cohesion by pursuing narrow local interests.

Despite the observations made above, the World Bank Development Report (World Bank, 2004b) maintains that decentralisation has been used in its various forms as a strategy to close the gap between central decision making processes and local participation. It is generally associated with positive concepts such as proximity, relevance, autonomy, participation, accountability and democracy. Given its appeal, almost all governments have tended to declare their commitment to promote decentralisation. It is generally accepted that total centralization cannot be feasible in the

context of a modern state that has to provide varied services to varying communities in different settings and contexts. Sergiovanni *et al* (2009) have observed a growing trend in the American system to consolidate power and authority at the state and federal levels away from the influence of school boards, local superintendents and local administrations. This shift, in their view marked a move away from equity considerations to a focus on accountability.

According to the World Bank Development Report (World Bank, 2002a) successful education systems vary widely, some are centralized and others decentralised. The following paragraphs will discuss some of the measures undertaken by education systems to respond to accountability challenges.

3.10 STRENGTHENING EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY

The imperative for a literate electorate to advance and strengthen democracy remains central to achievement of a healthy political development. However, as the World Bank Development Report (World Bank, 2004b) observed, uneven access to educational opportunities by the majority of people undermines the realization of this objective. The limited ability of the masses to participate in decisions affecting their lives remains a serious drawback in the advancement of democracy in many developing countries.

The Framework of Accountability Relationships (fig.2.2) is intended to bridge the gap between government and citizens as far as service delivery is concerned. Sobe (2006) as quoted earlier (cf.2.7) sees accountability as one component of democratic governance and a pattern of relations between '*the elected and the people*'. Other authors like Ahrens (2002) and the World Bank Development Report (World Bank, 2004b) acknowledge that the structure of the state is the key determinant of its capacity to deliver the services expected of it. Decentralised systems tend to enhance participation and participatory mechanisms can reinforce accountability at the micro level. Effective accountability will therefore necessitate the creation of institutional arrangements and administrative structures which will support policy formulation and implementation.

The three levels of accountability (cf, 2.2.2.5), i.e. macro, meso and micro, will be discussed below as they apply to education. This approach will assist greatly in delineating the different levels of responsibility and accountability.

3.10.1 Accountability at Macro/ Central Level

Recent developments in education accountability point to a move away from the micro level accountability schemes to macro/ systemic levels. The focus over the past few decades has shifted more towards external demands for school accountability ‘... *and one way to strengthen measure of accountability is to reinforce patterns of hierarchy*’ (Thorpe, 1985, p. 422). This marks a decisive departure from micro level accountability to a situation where central education authorities strengthen their capacity to initiate and force change. Attempts at greater centralized control or increased bureaucratization are one way of responding to growing demands for accountability pressures faced by many education systems.

Thorpe (1985) contends that one way of legitimizing increased demands for education accountability is to make these demands appear as the natural response to popular unease about education. In South Africa in particular, there is general acknowledgement that some sectors of the school system are dysfunctional and this observation has triggered the need for centralized control of the system to enhance accountability (Business Day, 2007).

The move towards macro level accountability has to do with the role of the education system as a whole; what the system is producing, given the massive investments and resources pumped into education. In this way notions of accountability infer that teaching as a profession is responsible to society as a whole. The responsibility of educators is no longer limited to their institutions only; it becomes universal in the context of the national system.

In an effort to mediate challenges of equal access to education and to promote legitimacy and accountability (cf. 2.8), many countries have decentralised education provisioning. The reasons for decentralising education provisioning are varied and country specific. The following paragraphs give a brief description of the three levels (macro, meso and micro) of accountability.

3.10.2 Accountability at Meso Level

Many national constitutions assign responsibility for education to different levels of government: federal/national; provincial/state; local/district. Meso level accountability in the context of this work will refer to provincial administrations with specific reference to their districts or regions as their delivery arms. The extent to which powers are assigned to districts/ regions will determine the extent to which this tier of administration can be held accountable in rendering services to schools. According to Evan-Adrio (2010), schools are more likely to sustain improvement efforts if they enjoy active district support. The strategic support from the district entails, among others, providing technical expertise and opportunities for networking and information sharing.

One of the key ingredients of school restructuring is the redefinition of the roles and responsibilities of professional staff in the education delivery chain. The work relationship between the district office and the school with all its stakeholders has to be redesigned if accountability relationships (fig. 2.8) are to be effective. This redefinition of roles and relationships entails a shift from controlling and directing what goes on at the next lower level to guiding and facilitating professionals to be more effective in creating and enhancing opportunities for learning in the classroom. Since the restructuring of schools is directly impacted upon by its relationship with the district office, the following paragraphs will focus on the role of the district office in supporting a restructured school.

The extent to which schools can transform is largely dependent on its relationship with the district office. The district office must therefore see itself as a service provider rather than a regulator or initiator. According to Murphy (1991), even if schools enjoy greater

autonomy, they are still accountable to administrative authorities at local, regional and national levels. Among others, the redesigned roles and responsibilities of districts would include the following:

- Policy formulation and priority setting.
- Setting of quality targets and providing means of attaining them.
- Monitoring the implementation of appropriate strategies.
- Allocating resources to schools equitably.
- Providing support to schools and monitoring education quality.
- Establishing frameworks for accountability.

As eluded in the previous paragraph, effective accountability in education is dependent on the school/district interface. The following paragraphs will provide a description of school/micro level accountability.

3.10.3 Accountability at Micro Level

According to Beare and Boyd (1993), public schools are governed, regulated and held accountable as part of the democratic political process. All social institutions have to make appropriate adjustments to respond to current social, economic, political and technological pressures. Education institutions are not immune to these pressures.

An analysis of education reform and restructuring movements in many countries pointed to the need for decentralisation in the control and management of schools. Among others, this decentralisation entailed the altering of governance patterns to allow for School Based Management (SBM). This meant that schools had to be freed from centrally imposed regulations which stood in the way of school improvement initiatives. Wohlstetter and Sebring (2000) make the point that increased autonomy calls for increased accountability on the part of the school. Bush and Bell (2008) further argue that devolution of authority must be accompanied by effective support systems and development opportunities.

The School Reform Movement (SRM) or education restructuring that gained impetus during the 1980s and 1990s was a direct response to these pressures. The SRM originated in the United States but soon spread to other developed countries to assume international dimensions. Several factors led to the concern to improve schooling outcomes and school performance. Murphy (1991) argues that the impetus for school reform in the United States was primarily economic (cf. 3.5) and fuelled by the belief that the United States was falling behind other industrial nations in development, productivity and quality.

The SRM or restructuring of the eighties and nineties was different from earlier reforms in that it shifted the focus from curriculum delivery issues to the control on both schools and school systems. According to Murphy (1991), school based pressures for the restructuring of education were essentially about the prevailing model of governance, organization, programme delivery and management of schools. Murphy (1991) stresses that the bureaucratic infrastructure of schools has come under severe criticism. It was strongly argued that bureaucracy paralysed initiative, creativity and professional judgement – that bureaucratic management practices proved counter-productive to the needs and interests of educators within schools.

Other factors that gave impetus to the school reform movement included the need to professionalise teaching and to change the working conditions of teachers so as to retain them in schools. Research on school effectiveness and improvement also contributed to the pressure to transform the schooling system. This research consistently supported the view that schools should be given substantial autonomy if they are to become effective (Murphy, 1991) and therefore more accountable. It was from these studies and other reform reports that a conclusion was drawn that devolution of control must be at the heart of all efforts to restructure schools.

Some of the lessons learned from the corporate world also informed the restructuring of the schooling system. Faced with diminished product quality, low employee morale and unhappy consumers, most effective corporations transformed their businesses by

decentralising operations, by devolving decision making to the level of the organization that is in close contact with the customer. In a nutshell, these businesses restructured themselves from more hierarchically organized units to more fluid and organic systems. These lessons remain valid for the schooling system. The following section will highlight the approaches adopted by four countries to promote education accountability.

3.11 COUNTRY SPECIFIC APPROACHES TO STRENGTHEN EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY

3.11.1 Introduction.

Steyn *et al* (2003) define an education system as a framework for the effective provisioning of educational needs to a given target group. They further make the point that education systems are influenced by many factors (determinants) that help us understand their nature, structure and functioning. These determinants can be *internal* to the system in the sense that they can either inhibit or promote the further development of the system or those that are *external* but have a direct influence on the system.

Accepting that there are many variables impacting on and influencing education systems worldwide, the following section will focus on country specific attempts at creating governance frameworks to achieve and sustain responsive locally driven education administrations. As discussed previously in paragraph 3.8, there is a strong link between the decentralisation of authority and accountability. Decentralisation or dispersal of administration is seen as transfer of accountability (Sobe, 2006). It is used in its various forms as a strategy to close the gap between central decision making processes and local participation, as will be explained in the following section.

The four countries selected below have been chosen to provide a broader representation of education systems from both the developing (Chile and Uganda) and developed (Canada and England) countries. Other unique features of these countries will be

highlighted under each one of them. For the purposes of this work, the selected countries will be discussed under the following broad categories:

- Introduction
- Background and Orientation
- Governance and Accountability Issues
- Distinguishing Features of the System

The above approach allows for comparisons to be drawn between the countries without undermining their uniqueness.

3.11.2 Education Governance and Accountability in Chile

3.11.2.1 Introduction

Of all the countries selected in this study, Chile is probably the best example of a developing country that has made great strides in repositioning its education system to achieve the 2015 education goals agreed to at the Dakar Conference, and to meet the global challenges of competitiveness. Some of the following noteworthy achievements (Bitar, 2005; Chilean Embassy, 2002; Santiago Times, 2004) which are consistent with the principle of accountability, are worth mentioning:

- Increased resources to education.
- Decentralisation of basic and secondary education to local level.
- Promotion of private education (43% of high school enrolment and 50% of higher education enrolment).
- Commitment to increased access (98% for primary and 93% of secondary enrolment).
- A relatively high ranking standing (38th out of 160 countries).

The following paragraphs provide a more detailed description of the system:

3.11.2.2 Background and Orientation

Chile is one of the few developing countries that have embraced the privatization movement. It has a strong market based economy in which the government plays a positive role in areas where it is most needed. According to Todaro and Smith (2003), Chile has changed from an economy with pervasive government intervention in the early 1970s to become one of the most market oriented economies of Latin America.

According to Hoffman (1996), two distinct periods characterize the decentralisation of education in Chile. Each period represents the interest of the government that was power at the time. The first period of education devolution, commonly referred to as *Financial Decentralisation*, took place during the period of military rule (i.e. 1973-1979).

This period is characterized by a strong emphasis on organizational aspects of the educational system, weakened autonomy of the Ministry of Education and the promotion of the private sector which was considered more efficient than the state in the provision of education. The decentralisation during this period was largely top down, authoritarian and with virtually no participation from key education stakeholders. The regulation and distribution of schooling during this period was dominated by private provisioning and the replacement of centralised form of control by indirect form of control through supervision, reporting, parental choice, and to some extent, limited community participation.

The second period, which coincided with the election of a democratic government after 17 years of authoritarian rule, is referred to as *Pedagogic Decentralisation* (1990-1995). This period focused on the effective delivery of the curriculum content, placing more emphasis on inputs/outputs issues. To that effect, the position and status of the teacher was also foreground during this period. In contrast to the first period, the role of education stakeholders i.e. teachers, parents and the general public became prominent. The following paragraphs will highlight the characteristic features of the education system under the democratic government (i.e. the Pedagogic Decentralisation Era).

3.11.2.3 Some Key Features of the Pedagogic Decentralisation Era

The new democratic government embraced decentralisation of education provisioning despite some misgivings from the education fraternity that tended to favour a centralized system of education. The government argued that decentralisation would enhance the integration of the system, improve its efficiency and help overcome inequities in education provisioning as well as improve access and performance (Chilean Embassy, 2002).

As opposed to the first phase, the second phase focused less on the institutional organisation of the system and more on curriculum delivery issues at school level.

Hoffman (1996) states that the second phase provided more autonomy to schools in terms of curriculum design and delivery, extra funding for the implementation of projects aimed at improving school performance, and enhanced involvement of teachers in decision making processes.

The section that follows will examine in detail the second decentralisation process during which education policies were directed largely at solving the most pressing problems: low subsidies, curriculum delivery issues, conditions of service for teachers and poor performance of the system. The central role of the Ministry of Education also became critical during this period.

The democratic government's education policy was aimed at achieving both the quality and equitable distribution of educational provisioning. The strategies embarked upon to achieve these objectives included the enhancement and support for learning processes, improvement of conditions of service for teachers and increased allocation of resources to schools (Chilean Embassy, 2002). The second level of input was to strengthen the capacities of municipalities and private schools by allowing more autonomy and flexibility in the administration of education.

In addition, the Ministry of Education provided professional support and resources towards improving learning outcomes in the classroom and also sought to enhance managerial capacities in the municipalities and subsidized private schools. The Ministries of Interior and of planning allocated additional resources to municipalities and also cleared their deficits. The following policies were vigorously pursued during this period.

3.11.2.4. Quality Promotion and Access

It is generally accepted that increased enrolments in schools must go hand in hand with increased educational quality and relevance. There is therefore sustained pressure to link increased access to quality promotion in many education systems.

In order to inform intervention priorities, an evaluation of the education system was conducted in 1990. Three priority areas were identified for intervention, namely: low quality of education, particularly for the lower income groups and rural schools; the centrally designed curriculum failed to respond to the technological and scientific needs of a modern society, and did not allow for local variations (Bitar, 2005). Furthermore, classroom practices tended to promote rote learning and reproduction of information.

It is against this backdrop that education policies focused on quality improvement programmes (MECE) that aimed specifically at enhancing efficiency, quality and equitable provisioning in selected urban and rural schools. These intervention programmes were partly funded through a World Bank loan and from the Chilean government coffers (Hoffman, 1996). It was anticipated that beyond the initial six year period of this intervention, it would be institutionalized within the Ministry of Education and funded by government.

The MECE programme for both municipal and subsidized private schools aimed at enhancing quality teaching and learning outcomes at primary schools and to ensure equitable distribution of educational opportunities at this level. In allocating resources,

75% of the MECE budget was allocated to primary schools, 17% to preschools, 7% towards the strengthening of the Ministry of Education and only one percent went to secondary education (Hoffman, 1996).

The funds allocated to primary schools were intended to support curriculum delivery by purchasing classroom focused resources, improvement and repairs to school buildings and facilities, and teacher development programmes.

Intervention at secondary school level was affected through a programme which was implemented in 1995 in all secondary schools to provide resources and technical support to teachers, principals and students. It provided for the same resources as for primary schools, including the introduction of computer programmes and equipment as well as health care programmes for students.

In order to encourage *greater pedagogic autonomy* at the level of the school, the MECE programme introduced incentives aimed at enhancing school based curriculum design. This was to be achieved through the Proyectos de Mejoramiento Educativo (PME) project (Bitar, 2005; Hoffman, 1996). To access PME funding, school communities were expected to develop projects aimed at fostering local initiatives to improve education quality particularly in the areas of Spanish, Maths, Natural and Social Sciences. Approval for funding was based on the following:

- The project must address improvement of learning in key subjects
- It must take into account regional priorities
- It must focus on high to medium risk schools.

Schools at risk are defined in terms of achievement scores, number of grades, degree of rurality, school enrolment and the socio-economic status of the student population. All PME projects targeted schools at risk, i.e. schools from high risk to low risk. Amongst the many interventions aimed at uplifting education provisioning in Chile (Hoffman, 1996) lists the following:

Conditions of Service for Teachers

The revised conditions of service for teachers are contained in the Teachers' Statutes (TS) which were approved by the Chilean Congress in 1991. Among others the TS makes provision for increased teacher salaries, job stability, participation in decision making processes, minimum basic national wage and other special incentives including incentives for those teachers working in remote areas (Hoffman, 1996). TS centralized the conditions of educators for teachers and enhanced the status of the teaching profession in Chile because it was argued in Chile that quality improvement in education was dependent on teachers recovering their historic motivation and enthusiasm for their work. Wage policies provided for a 26 % salary increase between 1991 and 1993, and a 33 % increase in 1994. Furthermore, a Complementary Resource Fund (CRF) was established to cover the costs of permanent salary increase. Job stability was guaranteed by the TS only for municipal teachers who could only be dismissed if they contravened Labour Laws.

More Resources for Schools

In responding to the 1993 findings that indicated that lack of resources in schools and inadequate funding were serious impediments to school performance, financial resources allocated to schools were increased. This was effected in three ways: higher allocations per pupil; extraordinary funding for municipalities and private funding for subsidized schools. The per pupil subsidy was increased by adjusting it to above inflation Subsidies for adult education, technical secondary education and special education were significantly increased.

- **Extraordinary Funding for Municipalities**

Funding to municipalities is legislated for in terms of the Municipal Revenues Law and the Common Municipal Fund (Republic of South Africa, 1979). The budget for municipalities was largely consumed by social services i.e. education and health. By 1990, the budget for social services had escalated beyond control with the highest percentage going towards servicing salaries. The salary bill actually doubled between 1979 and 1989. Greater spending on personnel was due to the fact that more people with higher qualifications were hired.

During the first years of pedagogic decentralisation deficit coverage policies implemented during the previous period were continued and intensified. More resources were transferred to municipalities and poured into education. The transfer of funding to municipal education increased in real terms to 32 % between 1990 and 1993.

Three ministries have been responsible for resource allocation policies: Ministry of education for teacher salary increases and subsidies to schools; the Ministry of Interior that is responsible for municipalities and school infrastructure, and the Ministry of Planning that is responsible for poverty alleviation strategies and also provides funding for life skill projects aimed at supporting secondary school learners.

- **Private Funding for Subsidised Schools**

When the prohibition to charge fees for children in subsidised schools was lifted in 1993, 67 % of families that patronized this sector of schools ended up paying fees. This restriction did not apply with regard to municipal primary schools since the intention of government was to ensure unlimited access to primary schooling.

By the end of 1993 academic year, 33 % of private Subsidised schools were charging fees as opposed to 12 % of municipal secondary schools. Government subsidies to fee charging institution was linked to the school's fee income, i.e. the more the school

charged fees the less the government subsidy. In order to encourage private sector support to schools, all donations from the private sector to schools was tax- deductible (Turner & Hulme, 1997).

3.11.2.5 Impact of Quality and Equity Interventions

The following table shows improvements in results as measured against the national assessment system (SIMCE) Table 3.1 reflects the Spanish and Mathematics results whilst table 4 shows the performance of P-900 schools compared to all subsidised schools

Table 3.1: Average Spanish and Mathematics Results (Fourth Grade) 1990-1992

School Category	1990	1992	Variation	Percentage
Municipal	56.7	63.8	+7.1	12.5
Private Subsidised	53.8	70.1	+ 6.3	9.9
Private Paid	79.9	86.0	+6.1	7.6
TOTAL	66.6	73.3	+6.5	10.0

Table 3.2: Comparison between Subsidised Schools and P-900 Schools, 1990-1992

School Category	1990	1992	Variation	Percentage
All Subsidised	60.2	66.9	+6.7	11.1
P900	52.1	61.4	+ 9.3	17.8

3.11.2.6 Distinguishing Features of the Chilean Education System

The Chilean education system is a good example of some of the issues highlighted under paragraphs 3.3 and 3.3.1 above. There is a strong political commitment to notions of liberalism and participatory democracy particularly during the second period of democratic rule. The strong focus on quality promotion, efficiency and redress is demonstrated by high levels support given to schools (Bitar, 2005). Education transformation is driven from the centre through decentralised provisioning. The role of central government is particularly important in promoting quality and equitable distribution of resources to schools. This was achieved through targeted interventions and programmes as described above.

Education decentralisation in Chile is also effected through private provisioning. The role played by the private sector is particularly huge (43% of secondary education and 50% of higher education). In a way, the responsibility for education is shared almost equal between public and private institutions (Bitar, 2005).

One of the most outstanding features of the Chilean system is how the responsibility for education funding is shared by the departments of Education, Interior and Planning. This shared funding responsibility ensures that education is adequately funded. The introduction of a national assessment system assisted in promoting educational quality. Education transformation in Chile has been comprehensive in that the schools were resourced and educators' conditions of service improved.

Their redress strategies, particularly with regard to schools at risk, hold invaluable lessons for many developing countries. Overall, the efforts made by the Chilean government to improve education provisioning during the period under review are commendable. The focus on decentralised public and private education provisioning demonstrates a clear commitment on the part of the Chilean government to provide an accountable education system.

3.12 EDUCATION GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN CANADA

3.12.1 Introduction

The education system of Canada displays a unique feature because it is mainly provided by federal states in the absence of a national ministry. This governance of education is completely different from what obtains in the other developed countries. Again the dominant influence of religious and linguistic considerations in shaping education governance in Canada brings an interesting dynamic to this study.

Given that there is no national ministry of education in Canada, Quebec was chosen as a representation of the Canadian education system even though the different federal states in Canada would reflect features unique to each in addressing the educational needs of their respective provinces. The following paragraphs will provide an overview of the Canadian education system with a view to gaining a broader perspective on education governance in Canada. Specific attention will be given to education governance in Quebec in order to gain some insight into the provision of education at a provincial level.

3.12.2 Background and Orientation

The *Council of Ministers of Education in Canada (CMEC)* (Day, 2003), is a confederation of ten provinces and three territories. The responsibility for elementary, secondary and post secondary education in Canada rests with provinces and territories. There is consequently no federal or national department of education in Canada.

Although there are many similarities between the thirteen education systems across Canada, each region reflects its own religious, cultural, historical and geographic differences. The CMEC was founded in 1967. It comprises provinces, territories, national education organisations and the federal government. It acts as the national voice of education in Canada.

Education restructuring in Canada primarily revolves around two issues: the promotion of meaningful educational change that would impact on teaching and learning in the classroom and educational governance or restructuring. Addressing these twin challenges, it is argued, would effect school improvement (Murphy, 1991; Smith, 1985).

The Constitution Act of 1997, among others, sets out the distribution of power between the federal and provincial governments. According to the Constitution, the federal government's authority over education *'is limited to residents of the territories and to specific fields (military bases, Indian reserves and federal penal institutions) Beyond these provisions, the provinces are granted exclusive authority to make laws relating to education'* (Smith, Mac Lennan, & Bordonaro, 1996, pp. 86-87). In effect, the Federal Government is without constitutional authority to act in the area of education because it has no direct vote or voice in the provincial systems. Education accountability in Canada therefore rests largely with the provinces.

The limited role of federal government in the Canadian educational system continues to be a matter of serious concern among education commentators in Canada. In fact it is regarded as a serious flaw in the Canadian education system. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is applicable to both federal and provincial legislatures and governments. This charter guarantees freedom of conscience and religion, and equality of rights and other freedom as enunciated in the charter. The Charter however, does not alter the division of powers between the federal and provincial governments (Smith, Mac Lennan, & Bordonaro, 1996). The following section will give a description of the Quebec education system as a representative example of the Canadian education system with particular reference to its educational governance.

3.12.3 Education Governance in Quebec

The Quebec system of education has been largely influenced by the British and French education systems which both displayed a strong Christian influence: Catholic and Protestant in France and Britain respectively. These cultural and religious differences also manifested themselves in different languages, leading to the development of a dualistic system, one catholic and predominantly French and the other English and predominantly protestant (Canadian Council of Education Ministers, 2006). This system remained relatively intact until the 'Quiet Revolution' of the 1960s when Quebec moved from a repressive and conservative climate to a more politically active one. The state took control of the education system and transformed it. State control remains the defining feature of the Quebec education system to date. There is, however, a growing pressure to decentralise education provisioning.

3.12.4 Governance and Accountability Issues

According to Smith (1985) the system of governance and accountability for the Quebec education system begins with the Ministry of Education (MEQ) and also involves delegated authority and voice to key stakeholder groups in the province. It follows a three tier system: Central authority vested in the Ministry of Education; School Boards tasked with the responsibility of administering education service and the schools that have to provide the service itself.

The distinguishing features of the Quebec education system are the division of schools along denominational lines. As indicated earlier on, the history of education in this province is greatly influenced by Christianity along Catholic and Protestant lines (Wikipedia, 2010). The other feature relates to the provision for the establishment of formal advisory bodies at every level of the system. This approach is intended to allow stakeholders a say in education matters and thereby promote education accountability.

School boards in Quebec are divided along denominational lines and are controlled by locally elected commissioners or trustees (Smith *et al.*, 1996; Wikipedia, 2010). The administration of schools is effected through the appointment of permanent staff under the supervision of the board's Chief Executive Officer, the Director General. Admittedly there are school boards for Catholics and for Protestants. Persons not belonging to any of the two denominations are at liberty to attend either of the schools administered by these boards.

Accountability for education is the responsibility for the provincial Minister for education who in turn is accountable to the Premier, the cabinet and the national assembly of the Province and ultimately to the general public. The minister also accounts for the monies allocated to education and for administering the entire education service in terms of the Quebec Education Act (Canadian Department of Education, 1988).

School boards are generally accountable to their electorates to provide services to their clients. The board is expected to inform the electorate about the education services it provides and must also account to the Minister financially and administratively.

Schools are accountable on two levels: to the school board and to its clientele. The principal is responsible for the provisioning of quality educational programmes as well as the administration of the school through the school based management system (SBM). The purpose of the SBM is to provide the school, under the leadership of the principal, with maximum flexibility to manage its own affairs, and maximum accountability to ensure that it provides quality programmes and instruction for each learner. Under the SBM system, schools are expected to develop school based plans to ensure that it meets the requirements. It is the primary mission of delivering quality programmes and instruction to each learner.

Teacher obligations are encapsulated in the teachers' *Entente* which, among others, stipulates that teachers have to evaluate the performance and progress of their learners and to report to the school and the parents. The formal accountability of the parents is to

ensure that learners attend school in line with the provisions of the Education Act. There has also been raging debates around the rights of parents in relation to their demands regarding choice of school and related governance issues. Accountability on the part of students generally relates to the expectation that they should attend school and take of the school property entrusted to their care (Canadian Department of Education, 1988).

3.12.5 Distinguishing Features of the Quebec Education System

The Canadian education system provides a good example of federalism as described under paragraph 3.3.1. Quebec has been used as an example to illustrate the dominant features of the Canadian system of education. Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of the Canadian system is the virtual absence of the federal government in the education system. In contrast with other countries studied, the federal government in Canada is generally without any constitutional autonomy over education. This arrangement is generally perceived as a serious weakness in the education system of Canada (Hoffman, 1996; Smith et al., 1996).

The responsibility for education in Quebec is vested in the minister in terms of the Quebec Education Act. The concept of ministerial accountability as described in this work therefore applies in this instance. Accountability lines are very clear from the ministerial level up to the responsibility of the learner. Schools are responsible to both the board and the parents.

Another distinguishing feature of the Quebec System is the division of school boards along denominational lines, viz. Catholic and Protestant, because of the strong historical links with England and France. The need to promote educational quality is encouraged by granting schools greater autonomy in curriculum delivery and maximum flexibility to manage their own affairs.

The mixed funding model of the Canadian education system ensures that education is adequately resourced. Education is funded at local, provincial and federal levels.

Equalisation grants ensure that poorer districts get more funding. Central control of education resourcing has the advantage that it addresses redress and equity issues.

3.13 EDUCATION GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN UGANDA

3.13.1 Introduction

Uganda was selected to represent developing countries that had been formerly colonized. The rationale behind its selection was to determine the extent to which its colonial history influenced the governance of its education system. Again, like all developing countries, Uganda faces challenges on many fronts and as a consequence, education funding would be limited and the response to global challenges restricted. The common challenges facing education systems as highlighted in paragraph 3.7 are particularly relevant to the Ugandan system. The following paragraphs will provide a brief description of the Ugandan education system with a particular focus on its governance structure.

3.13.2 Background and Orientation

Uganda is an African country that was formerly under the British Colonial rule and gained its independence in 1962. The existing structure of the Ugandan education system has not changed since the early 1960s. It consists of seven years of primary education, four years of lower secondary cycle, two years of upper secondary cycle and thereafter three to five years of university education (My Uganda Country Portal, 2007). Like many African countries, the post independence era was characterized by high levels of poverty, high illiteracy levels, high infant mortality and low per capita income. As a result of these challenges, education provision experienced serious shortfalls and the system's capacity to accommodate school going age learners was severely limited. From the early 1990s, however, the absorptive capacity of the system has been improved. According to the World Bank Development Report (World Bank, 2004b), education resourcing improved markedly after the first presidential elections in May 1996. President Museveni had made education a key rallying point in his election manifesto. Soon after his landslide victory, he announced the abolition of school fees. Since then

there has been a sustained shift in favour of increased funding for education. For instance, according to the Ministry of Education and Sport (South African Department of Education, 2005), in 2005 the net intake increased with 60% in primary schooling. The post primary sector also experienced a growth rate of 14.8%.

Beyond increased enrolments however, the system had to contend with high dropout rates at both primary and secondary levels because of relatively high fees and poor quality education. A high proportion (estimated at 39%) of Ugandan primary teachers are untrained. Teachers are among the worst paid occupational groups in Uganda and as a consequence, most of them have second jobs, despite the great strides made in increasing enrolments and in enhancing quality and equity, the Ugandan education system (Uganda Ministry of Education and Sport, 2005; World Bank, 1993) is still faced with serious challenges in the following areas, among others:

- Weak capacity for inspection of schools at local government level
- Slow appointment and deployment of staff
- Implementation of performance management system at both primary and post primary sectors.

3.13.3 Governance and Accountability Issues

According to Luyonga-Nkata and Thody (1996), when the National Resistance Movement came into power in 1986, emphasis was placed on popular democracy that brings a democratic voice to all levels of the system. This commitment to democracy was underlined by the establishment and existence of management committees that control individual schools and the continued importance attached to Parent Teachers Associations as well as commitment to make Resistance Councils (Local government units) relevant in the educational provision and policy.

Uganda's education system is legally centralised under the Ministry of Education that is tasked with the responsibility for administering, monitoring, managing and planning education provisioning. In effect, however, the system is decentralised because of the

ministry's inability to fully discharge all its responsibilities, due to lack of finance and poor communication infrastructure to link up with districts and local staff. At the district level, staff are unable to visit schools and to interact with local stakeholders because of lack of resources (Luyonga-Nkata & Thody, 1996).

The education ministry (Uganda Ministry of Education and Sport, 2005) has, however, in recent times embarked on a national review process (sector review) to mobilise the private sector, development agencies, different government ministries and other stakeholders to participate in the development and implementation of education policies. These partnerships also go a long way towards securing resources for education as well as ensuring broader participation and accountability in education matters. Community involvement in school management occurs in the following three ways.

3.13.3.1 Local Resistance Councils

Resistance Councils exist at all levels from village to districts or town in urban areas. Their main responsibility is to establish democratic forums across the country in order to enhance democratic participation and accountability.

Through Local Education Committees, Resistance Councils provide, oversee and monitor the operations of primary and secondary schools. These committees are not linked to other organs of local government, and their members are elected by the people and are accountable to them regarding the running and performance of schools in their respective areas (Uganda Ministry of Education and Sport, 2005). The major role of these committees is to ensure the implementation of central government policies and to monitor the implementation of local policies for schooling. They also ensure proper management of schools through their area education officers whose tasks also include receiving financial and performance reports from head- teachers. The administrative and overheads costs for the operations of these committees are met through the ten percent levied from school fees. It is also from these funds that costs towards professional development of teachers are met. Within each Resistance Council Executive Committee at village level,

there is a Secretary for Mass Mobilisation and Education who has a seat within the school management committee.

3.13.3.2 School Management Committees / Boards of Governors

School Management Committees (primary schools) are the longest established governance structures in the Ugandan schooling system and are composed of local residents. They are constituted by nine members: two are elected by parents, three are selected by the local Resistance Council from amongst community leaders and the remaining four are appointed by the Commissioner for Education on the advice of the Local Resistance Council (Hoffman, 1996; Smith *et al.*, 1996; Uganda Ministry of Education and Sport, 2005; World Bank, 1993).

Boards of Governors at secondary schools consist of thirteen members: five elected by the Ministry of Education, four by the school's founding body and the remaining four are co-opted by the first nine members. The chairpersons of both these bodies are appointed by the District Education Officers acting on behalf of the Minister of education. The role of school management committees is to oversee school policy development and implementation and their activities include, among others, overseeing school budgets, monitor school academic performance as well as pupil and staff discipline. They also attend to the infrastructure and maintenance needs of the school, school staffing needs and fundraising activities through their PTAs (Hoffman, 1996; Smith *et al.*, 1996; Uganda Ministry of Education and Sport, 2005; World Bank, 1993).

3.13.3.3 Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs)

Parent Teachers Associations exert a very strong influence outside the formal education system in Uganda. Over the 25 years of their existence, they have evolved from fostering good relations between parents and teachers to becoming fundraising agents of their respective schools. Membership to PTAs is open to all parents. They rise up to 70% of the running costs of the school. The funds that they raise are often used to supplement

teachers' salaries. This often leads to disparities owing to the different poverty levels of communities. Ugandan parental commitment to their children's education is very strong and families make great financial sacrifices to keep their children at school (Furley, 1988; Kajubi, 1991). Because of the great influence of PTAs in the Ugandan schooling system, consideration is being given to incorporating them into the formal system of school governance.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE UGANDAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Ugandan education system displays all the features of a third world country that is faced with serious budget shortfalls to adequately fund education. It is confronted by poor resourcing of the schools leading to internal inefficiencies of the schooling system. Due to the state's incapacity to fund education adequately, the role of the parent teacher association has become critical in mobilizing resources for education. Ugandan parents carry the heaviest load of education costs.

While it is true that the education system of Uganda is centralized, it is in effect decentralised because the central government does not have the resources to visit and monitor schools. To that extent, it would thus appear that schools enjoy greater responsibility for curriculum delivery and the overall management and governance of their institutions.

Community involvement in the education system is praiseworthy because this involvement not only closes the gap in terms of resource provisioning; it also makes the schools more accountable. Commitment to democratic participation is also very high in the Ugandan education system.

There is a definite commitment on the part of the education ministry to account to the various stakeholder groupings in the delivery of education programmes in Uganda. Again, the country seems to be on track to addressing the Millennium Development

Goals (MDG's) and the Education for All (EFA) targets (Uganda Ministry of Education and Sport, 2005).

3.14 EDUCATION GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN ENGLAND

3.14.1 Introduction

Given the closer historical ties between South Africa and England, it was reasonable to include the English model of education governance and accountability. The South African education system has a lot in common with the British system despite the fact that England is a developed country. Much of the education transformation that has occurred in this country has been largely influenced by developments in England. Specifically, many of the debates on education accountability had their roots in England and the USA. The paragraphs that follow will provide a description of approaches to education governance and accountability in England with a view to identifying its key characteristic features.

3.14.2 Background and Orientation

England is a European country with a long history of democracy. The turning point in democratic education governance is encapsulated in the Education Reform Act of 1988 which introduced major changes in four areas: national curriculum, national student assessment, and parental choice linked to market forces and local management of schools (McAdams, 1993).

The education system of England has undergone radical changes following the 1998 Education Reform Act. This Act marked a fundamental departure from the Education Act of 1944 that set up a national system which was locally administered through elected local councils. In terms of the 1944 Act, the government, through the education department, had overall responsibility for education policies, but the local authorities

(LEAs) had control over most strategic decisions which informed the day to day operations of schools, further education and higher education other than that which falls under the purview of universities (Welton & Rashid, 1996).

The 1988 Act, however, took away most of the powers of the LEAs and shared these between the national department and the school governing bodies. Other unique features of the this Act were the introduction of the parental choice concept and the option of grant maintained schools which allowed schools to opt out of LEAs control to be funded directly by the government through the Funding Agency for Schools (FAS). These grant maintained schools have control over pupil admission policies and procedures; they own and are responsible for their buildings and are at liberty to buy services from any LEA or any other service provider (Welton & Rashid, 1996).

The 1993 Education Act further eroded the powers of the LEA by stipulating that LEAs could transfer some of their functions to schools once 10 % of the schools had opted out, and all its functions once 75 % of its schools have opted out (Welton & Rashid, 1996). Undoubtedly, these provisions put tremendous pressure on the LEA to respond to the needs of their schools.

The rationale behind strengthening school governance, it was argued, was to make schools more relevant to the needs of society and to increase both accountability and community commitment to education.

3.14.3 Governance and Accountability Issues

The education system of England is officially both centralized and decentralized. There are three principal levels of governance:

3.14.3.1 The National Level

According to Welton and Rashid (1996), the National Department of Education is responsible for monitoring through inspection, for planning, for setting teacher standards

and for establishing the national curriculum. It discharges these responsibilities through a network of national agencies and councils for further education, higher education, schools, the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) and Teacher Training Agencies. In addition, government has sought to maintain control over education through the market mechanism: parents have the right over the choice of school for their children and also have access to school performance to exercise that choice. The powers and duties of the National Department for Education can therefore be summarised as follows:

- Policy development
- Provide support grants to schools, further education and higher education
- Institutional inspection through the OFSTED
- Teacher training and supply
- Serves as a point of appeal in disputes between parents and LEAs
- Infrastructure provisioning
- Determining the national curriculum (Welton & Rashid, 1996).

3.14.3.2 The Local Education Authorities (LEAs)

The need for universal public education at the turn of the nineteenth century also necessitated the search for a democratically accountable system of management. The Local Government Act of 1888 created county and county borough councils whilst the Education Act of 1902 abolished school boards and established LEAs in their place (Welton & Rashid, 1996).

Goodey (1990) states that the Education Act of 1944 set up a national system of education which was locally administered through elected councils. The central department of education had overall responsibility for education and provided the necessary policy framework. The LEA on the other hand controlled schools, further education and all education that did not fall under the university sector. The LEAs consist of locally elected councillors who in turn appoint a Chief Education Officer or Director

of Education and assistant administrators who are responsible to the LEAs. An Education Committee and its sub-committees are selected from among councillors. This committee together with the Chief Education Officer determines policy and funding, and also provides professional services for the schooling sector.

Since the late 1980's the powers of the LEAs have been systematically reduced through the 1988, 1992 and 1993 Education Acts. There are indications that the control of LEAs over schools will further diminish if the number of schools opting out reaches 75 %. Currently the powers and duties of LEAs are restricted to the following areas (Welton & Rashid, 1996):

- Provision of 'adequate and efficient' education at primary and secondary school levels.
- Establishment, alteration and closure of schools after due public notice.
- Financing schools other than grant maintained ones.
- Provision of education support services and student grants and career guidance.
- Enforcing school attendance and ensuring equal rights opportunities for the diverse range of learners.
- Provide for the special education needs and health and safety matters.

3.14.3.3 The School Governance Level

The principal means whereby the English government has encouraged community involvement in school governance has been through the redevelopment of School Governing Bodies (SGB's) which assumed many powers that were previously held by the LEA's. Almost all schools in England have governing bodies constituted as follows: Two to five elected parent governors; one or two elected teacher governors (determined by school size); nominees of political parties in the area and co-opted members representing local community interests or anyone with an interest in the school- preference is given to the co-option of at least one representative of the local business. Parent governors, local authority governors and those co-opted make up 75 % of the governing body. The remaining 25 % would come from teachers, those representing lower tier local

government bodies, charitable trusts that funded schools and non teaching staff. The average term of office for school governing bodies is four years. The powers of governing bodies include ensuring that the school is run in accordance with relevant legislation and policies; preparing the school's annual budget and also deciding how the school funds are to be utilized and managed; appointing and dismissing staff; determining admission policies; appointing heads and determining their salaries (Welton & Rashid, 1996).

School governing bodies in England are considered accountable to central government for the successful running of their schools. Inspection is conducted after every four years. Those governors whose schools are deemed to have failed the inspection can be dismissed. Some governors can be considered to be accountable to those parents who appointed them, and the same could be said about those who were appointed by the LEA and could be removed if the LEA feels they do not represent their views.

Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs)

Establishment of PTAs in the English schooling system is not compulsory. Schools can choose whether or not to have these associations; however the majority of schools do have PTAs. Membership to the PTA is open to parents and teachers. Some members of the PTAs could also be governors. The PTAs involve themselves in fundraising activities but are averse to raising more funds because they hold the view that education funding is the responsibility of central and local governments. PTAs are not dominant players in the politics of schools but they continue to play a pivotal role in promoting links between homes and the school and also encourage social interaction.

3.15 DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE ENGLISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

Four key features stand out with regard to the English education system. These are the nationally determined curriculum and assessment processes and procedures and parental choice in terms of which schools they want their children to attend. School choice is linked to market forces. To enable the parents to make informed decisions, information relating to the performance of schools is readily available. The support for grant maintained schools also provides parents with a further option to exercise their choice. Local management of schools is another way of ensuring that education delivery and management is democratically accountable. The extensive powers given to the SGBs are a clear indication that parental participation is regarded highly in England.

The use of a network of national agencies and councils to execute some of the responsibilities assigned to the national department remains a distinguishing feature of the English system. The functions of the LEAs have been drastically reduced by a series of legislation. Some of those functions that were previously performed by the LEAs have been shared between the national government and the SGBs. The merits and demerits of this development cannot be discussed here. Suffice to say that the English system of education is centrally determined and managed by various stakeholders as a way of holding the system democratically accountable.

The granting of more powers to SGBs suggests a move towards enforcing accountability at the level of the school (micro accountability). Also the involvement of multiple stakeholders in the delivery of education means that education delivery in England is a joint or collaborative effort (Welton & Rashid, 1996).

3.16 SUMMARY

The countries discussed above have adopted different approaches to education decentralization to enhance education accountability. The approaches were largely

influenced by each country's social, political and economic contexts and other considerations. The following section discusses the different models of education accountability.

3.17 MODELS OF EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY

3.17.1 Introduction

Democratisation of education is an entrenched principle in many education systems. In an effort to strengthen democratic processes and to enhance education accountability, decentralisation of decision making powers to where service has to be rendered is accepted as one of the better ways of democratising education provisioning.

According to Beare and Boyd (1993), discussions and writings in education reform movements in many countries point to a decentralised provisioning of education at the level of school and the district. Fiddler (2002) cites decentralisation as one of the strategies employed by many education systems to enhance accountability.

The World Bank Development Report (World Bank, 2004b) quoted earlier in this study (cf.2.14.1) makes the point that successful education systems vary widely, some are centralized whilst others opt for varied forms of decentralisation. The thrust of this study is premised on the view that decentralisation is one of the key strategies employed by many education systems to enhance accountability at micro or school level (cf. 2.12). Heim (1995) quoted earlier (cf. 3.7) argues that increased accountability follows the decentralisation of authority. Sobe (2006) also sees a distinct link between accountability and the decentralisation of public administrations. The inextricable link between good governance and accountability has often been acknowledged (cf. 2.7). Participatory mechanisms reinforce accountability at the micro level because they provide the means by which citizens hold their public officials accountable for their decisions and actions. Kinsler and Gamble (2000) make the point that policy makers are increasingly shifting

authority for the governance of schools to schools themselves in order to encourage greater ownership of the schooling process and its outcomes. Ahrens (2002) also points out that the effectiveness, quality and extent of accountability will vary in relation to the level of responsibility. He further makes the point that mechanisms that strengthen micro level accountability become more important in enhancing political accountability (Ahrens, 2002).

For the purposes of this study, particular attention will be paid to two levels of accountability, i.e. the meso and micro levels as discussed briefly in paragraphs 4.4.2 and 4.4.3. This translates into districts (or related structures) and schools. The focus on these two levels is supported by the fact that education/school districts are tasked with the responsibility of monitoring and supporting policy implementation at school level. In addition, much of the literature on the restructuring of schools focuses largely on the relationship between districts and schools (Beare & Boyd, 1993; Caldwell, 1993; 2002; Murphy, 1991). These two levels are critical in promoting school improvement initiatives. Again, current policy directions in education accountability in South Africa point to a sharper ministerial focus on these two levels.

The decentralisation models presented below should only serve as guidelines for evaluating forms of decentralisation. It is obvious from the country specific examples given above that the rationales for decentralisation as a means of enhancing education accountability will differ from one country to the other and from context to context. Equally, the distinction between the different models is often blurred as they would invariably overlap in practice. In evaluating forms of decentralisation, these models only become useful in so far as they reflect the dominant tendencies in a given country and /or context. For the purposes of this study, the following models of education decentralisation will be based on the work of Luaglo (1996).

3.17.2 Political Models of Decentralisation

According to Luaglo (1996) political rationales for decentralisation are often characterized by the following features.

The first relates to *the notion of liberalism* that militates against the concentration of political power. Liberalism emphasizes individual liberties and freedoms and views education as a means of social mobility of individuals in a society that is more fluid and less culturally segmented (Miller, 2003). Liberal traditions would therefore advocate for strong local governments, application of market forces, strong professions and private provision of education. The notion of liberalism seem to predominate in the Chilean and English education systems as discussed above (cf. 3.3.1 and 3.3.4).

The second feature relates to the *notion of federalism* which tends to share the same values as the liberal tradition in that it provides for checks and balances against excessive concentration of power. In many federal states, education is usually the preserve for each state without direct federal control (Kinsler & Gamble, 2000). The Canadian education system as discussed under Quebec is a good example of federalism (cf. 3.3.2)

The third feature is the *populist localism* that often advocates strongly for the development of local democracy. It places much value on the empowerment of ordinary people in their local communities. In a way, it is a reaction against the dominance of established elitism. A populist view of education emphasises the importance of learning arenas other than schools: the home, the community, the work place. It therefore emphasizes the importance of learning from experience. It stresses the acquisition of skills that can be applied to solving problems outside of the school. The populism philosophy means that schools should be local, community based institutions, run by local government. Except for commitment to community participation in education provisioning, none of the countries studied showed an inclination towards the notion of populist localism in its pure form.

The fourth feature is the notion of *participatory democracy* which asserts that those who work in institutions should have equal rights in taking decisions affecting the operations of their institutions (Marks & Printy, 2002). It maintains that institutions must have great freedom from outside control. It calls for minimized internal hierarchy and a flat organizational structure. This anti-bureaucratic stance gained a lot of favour with student movements in the main. Almost all the countries studied demonstrated a commitment to institutional autonomy. However, the extreme elements of participatory democracy, such as anti-bureaucracy, do not seem to be accommodated. The very notion of accountability could be at odds with the notion of participatory democracy in its extreme form.

To conclude, it is apparent from the above discussions that the dominant feature of political models of education decentralisation is the notion of empowerment, either at school or local levels. The perception underlying this model, according to Bush and Bell (2008) might be either or both political and managerial. At a practical level, it would be characterized by the devolution of powers to school governance or local education structures and a strong commitment to participatory democracy in the sense that institutions are expected to be more responsive to the needs of their communities.

3.17.3 Quality and or Efficiency Models

Quality and efficiency concepts tend to overlap. According to Coleman (2003) efficiency has to do with the optimal utilization of available resources and quality and quality talks to the services being rendered to the recipients of the services. Quality and efficiency rationales are characterized by the following features.

The first has to do with *pedagogic professionalism* which stresses autonomy for a profession based on its claim for esoteric expertise. Clients are assumed not to know what is in their own best interest when receiving the services that the professional provides. According to Marks and Printy (2002) when applied to education, the rationale for professionalism accords greater autonomy to teachers whose work must be regulated by their peers. The claim to professionalism must however be based on esoteric expertise.

The less strongly based the teachers claim to esoteric expertise is, the more they will be directed and supervised by institutional managers and other education stakeholders. Some degree of pedagogic professionalism is allowed in varying degrees in the countries under discussion. Again extreme versions of pedagogic professionalism are not observable in practice. The Chilean system seems to be more accommodating than the others.

The second feature relates to *management by objectives* as a means to promote effectiveness and efficiency. It has been presented by its proponents as an alternative to management by rules and regulations, giving lower levels in an organization more freedom in the choice of means and in allocating resources. Management by objectives includes the establishment of performance indicators to render persons, units and organisations more externally accountable (Turner & Hulme, 1997). Even though this technique was initially developed for business and industrial firms, it has in recent times been adopted in the public service domain - education included - in many countries.

Given the demand for efficiency measures and the budgetary constraints in education, management by objectives will continue to influence the running of educational institutions in different countries. There is a general trend towards this technique in the public sector in general. The English system shows a strong bias towards this notion whilst Uganda seems to be grappling with the introduction of performance management at both primary and post primary levels of their schooling sector (cf. 3.3.3).

The third feature concerns itself with the use of *market mechanisms* in education as a form of decentralization. The assumption here is that good quality and efficient use of resources are best achieved by competition (Glatter, 2002). Educational institutions will have to compete for customers who are free to choose from the different educational services offered on the market (Kinsler and Gamble, 2000). The 'voucher system' provides a useful example of how publically financed education market might operate (Turner and Hulme, 1997). Even though this system was not introduced as proposed, a number of countries tied public finance to learner enrolments or to the number of learners who successfully complete their courses 'on time.' To ensure continued efficiencies and

quality services, the market mechanisms rely on survival and expansion of the most competitive providers and the 'shaping up' or dwindling of those who fail to deliver the goods. The English and the Chilean education systems represent a good example of the notion of education market.

The fourth feature relates to the *deconcentration of bureaucratic centralism*, i.e. greater geographical deconcentration of state authority by transferring more authority to regional and local officials. According to Turner and Hulme (1997), deconcentration requires change in legislative frameworks. Contrasted to other forms of decentralisation, deconcentrated authority remains state authority with lines of accountability extending only upwards to the central government, even if non-officials are co-opted into local advisory councils.

Deconcentration involves a relaxation of a network of rules which govern decisions at regional or local levels of officialdom. In this respect, it resembles both management by objectives and professionalism- gravitating towards professional training for intermediate administrators and by introducing performance indicators in return for slacker constraint on rules and on budget allocations. For schools, deconcentration means more accountability to bureaucratic levels above the school. This may imply more responsive and speedier decisions at the level above the schools if the intermediate officials develop the competences required to discharge their increased responsibilities.

The decentralisation of education decision making in its various forms has been used as a strategy to enhance education governance and to promote accountability (Sobe, 2006; World Bank, 2004b). The rationales for decentralising decision making processes are varied depending on the overall strategy of a particular country. The countries studied above have decentralised their systems for different reasons and the extent and the impact differ from country to country and context to context.

To summarise, quality and efficiency models in education are, according to Bush and Bell (2008), characterised by learner driven funding; published data on school

performance; regular and systematic inspection and monitoring; detailed performance targets; mandatory curriculum and assessment requirements and contractual and hierarchical forms of accountability.

3.18 CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY AND EMERGING TRENDS

It is apparent from the previous paragraphs in this chapter that the role of education systems has evolved over the years. This evolution was dictated by several factors that impacted differently on the systems at different times. Even though the fundamental goals of education in various societies have not altered drastically as a result of these changes, questions about the relevance, quality of outcomes and the overall performance of education systems have remained critical. The call for education accountability has reached a fever pitch over the past few decades as a result of diminishing budgets, increasing demands on the budget and the increasing demand for quality education and the notion of value for money

It is against this backdrop that governments across the globe were forced to interrogate their education systems with a view to raising quality and expanding provision on the one hand and to meet and address the changing needs of their societies on the other.

Education accountability is in effect about raising quality of provisioning, expanding access and providing relevant programmes that meet the changing needs of society. In many instances, countries designed education systems that are specifically geared to meet their varied contexts and demands. One of the strategies adopted by countries to meet accountability challenges is through a decentralised system of education provisioning as discussed above. What follows are some of the features that characterize education accountability in many countries, including those discussed above.

3.18.1 Administration Structures and governance

Most countries' constitutions reflect clearly the governance arrangements for education. In most democracies, the ministerial accountability model as defined under paragraph 2.2 predominates. In some instances, national education ministries form a strong central policy and legislative base through decentralized channels of professional and administrative responsibility. The role of education ministries is central in developing policies that promote equal opportunity approaches to education provisioning. These would range from per capita financial allocations to targeted budgetary provision at all levels of the system to deal with issues of equity and redress.

3.18.2 Community Participation/ Involvement

Community participation is often supported by specific policies, procedures and guidelines relating to functions and responsibilities. Most democratic governments place a high premium on community participation in education as a way of enhancing education accountability. The enhanced status of school governance structures (formal and non formal) in many countries reflect the commitment of education systems to parental inputs in the education of their children.

3.18.3 Statistical reporting

One of the key requirements for an accountable education system is regular and accurate reporting. Data credibility is therefore imperative. An accountable education system would therefore invest resources in developing good information management systems to report accurately and provide the kind of information that would enable decision makers to take informed decisions and enhance service delivery. As indicated elsewhere in this work, statistical information must be supported by other sources and also be utilised and interpreted accurately if it is to serve the purpose for which it is intended.

3.18.4 Outsourcing and Partnerships

Partnerships are important in ensuring that the varied needs of citizens are addressed effectively and efficiently. Where government does not have the requisite skills and

competencies, outsourcing is often considered. Some programmes are better delivered jointly with other partners. The English system is a good example of this approach.

3.18.5 Clear role and functions of education stakeholders

The sheer magnitude of the education enterprise tends to attract many interest groups and stakeholders. Unless there are clear guidelines to manage the involvement of stakeholders, chaos will ensue and the purpose for their involvement will be lost. Specific policies and procedures relating to functions and responsibilities and responsibilities of the various interest groups in education must therefore be developed.

3.18.6 Training of stakeholders at all levels of the system (2.2.2.6 and 2.5.11)

In order to derive maximum benefits out of stakeholders, their training becomes critical. This training should also include officials at all levels of the system. Training has become standard in many systems. A misinformed stakeholder can derail the cause of education and instead use the opportunity to pursue narrow and parochial interests.

3.18.7 Private provisioning of education (2.2.2.3)

Many education systems tend to support the involvement of private providers as a way of promoting the principle of parental choice, encouraging competition and sharing the costs of responding to their educational mandate. The more schools there are, the greater the options for parents to choose from. Where public education proves to be inadequate, private provisioning tends to fill the gap. Private provisioning also places pressure on public systems to improve provisioning and to be more accountable to its clients.

3.18.8 Equal opportunities approach to extend access to all (cf.3.3.1and 3.3.3)

As discussed previously in this work, an accountable education system must be seen as one treating all learners equally. To that extent, many systems make conscious efforts to put more resources in schools to bring them up to acceptable levels of performance. In many instances, redress and equity issues are often driven by central national departments even when education control is decentralised. National departments often dedicate resources to address redress and equity challenges.

3.18.9 Role of local government or education districts (cf.2.2.2.5)

In some countries local government structures make provision for dedicated education units as part of local governance, while in others national education ministries create districts to deliver education programmes as a form of decentralisation. In the latter instance, these districts could become sites of governance. As a site of governance, the district authority is fully accountable for the services it renders to schools. It is not yet clear whether education programmes at local level are better served by a single purpose authority or within a multi-purpose local authority. Education districts have in recent times become critical in enhancing and supporting education quality at school level.

3.18.10 Focus on accountability at school level (cf. 3.3.4)

Strengthening of school based governance structures (England) and the decentralisation of curriculum management to schools (Chile) suggest that education systems could be better served if accountability is focused on the institution itself. The involvement of teachers in decision making, particularly as they relate to curriculum implementation, has been identified as critical in securing qualitative learning outcomes. The general trend is to devolve authority to schools to secure educational quality. This will however be dependent on a variety of factors, including the political goals of education in a given country or context. According to Wohlstetter and Sebring (2000), increased autonomy calls for increased accountability on the part of the school (cf.3.8.3).

3.18.11. Central Control to initiate or force change at local level

Caldwell (1993) and MacEwan (1995) make the point that expectations for greater accountability have led to increased monitoring and evaluation of the schooling system through the development indicator systems, e.g setting goals, establishing priorities and building frame works for accountability, while at the same time shifting responsibility for key functions to the level of the school.

Bush and Bell (2008) further state that education accountability is characterized by learner driven funding, published data on school performance, regular and systemic

inspection and monitoring, detailed performance targets, mandatory performance and assessment requirements and hierarchical forms of accountability.

3.18.12 Commitment to Quality Promotion

Education change in all the countries studied is primarily focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. As in the case of Canada, the role of School Based Management (SBM) is to ensure that schools meet their primary responsibility of delivering quality programmes and instruction to each learner. The introduction of national assessment systems is seen as one of the strategies aimed at promoting educational quality.

3.19 SUMMARY

This chapter made a case for education accountability by tracing the historical origins and rationale behind the development of education systems generally. The evolution of education systems had to keep pace with the changing needs of the societies they were intended to serve. The inextricable link between education and politics was briefly discussed with a view to emphasizing how politics impact on and influence education provisioning in many countries. Reference was also made to the human capital theory to highlight the complex relationship between education and economic development.

Education systems of four countries were briefly discussed to lift key accountability and governance issues and challenges. All countries studied used decentralisation in its varied forms as a strategy to improve education provisioning and to meet education accountability challenges. Models of education decentralisation were also discussed and an attempt was made to link these models to the countries studied. The final part of this chapter focused on isolating generic characteristic features of an accountable education system with a view to benchmark against the South African system that will be the focus of the next chapter.