

Community participation in the development of community based secondary schools in Tanzania

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The purpose of this study was to examine the nature and extent of community participation in the development of secondary schools (CBSSs) established in 2000's in Tanzania, focusing on perceptions, practices and challenges. Four research objectives guided the inquiry, namely; To assess the views of local community members in respect to their participation in the development of CBSSs; To examine the scope and levels of participation among community members at different stages of CBSS development; To establish the reasons for participation or non-participation in CBSSs; and to identify the challenges arising from the establishment of CBSSs in relation to local community involvement. The study principally used a qualitative approach supplemented by selected quantitative techniques. The multiple case study design was employed in which a total of 213 respondents were chosen through purposive and convenient techniques from fourteen CBSSs obtained through simple random in two districts (Sumbawanga and Bariadi). Data collected through interviews, observations and documentary reviews were subjected to content analysis in which qualitative data analysis software, ATLAS. ti was employed for efficient data management. Data obtained through questionnaires were processed by the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for descriptive analysis. On the whole, the findings indicated that community members had a limited view of participation and involvement in the development of community schools. A limited scope with varying views of school ownership resulted in varying levels of commitment to school development. Most of community members in Bariadi district believed in owning schools and felt responsible to

develop them, while their counterparts in Sumbawanga district held traditional views that schools belonged to the central government which was therefore accountable for their development. Findings indicated a variation in terms of scope and levels of participation with Bariadi district ranking higher in comparison with Sumbawanga. Findings also suggest that community member motivation varied with educational outcomes in terms of student and school academic performance. The study also disclosed that effective leadership was fundamentally important in determining students' performance and general school development and success. It was also found out that CBSSs faced similar challenges ranging from school design and development to governance. These challenges were associated with limited harmonisation of key stakeholders' efforts for ensuring consistent involvement of stakeholders in processes of school development. The study recommends a need for awareness-raising and advocacy to community members in order to strengthen their involvement and participation in developing CBSSs. In view of this, more sensitisation of community members in participatory projects and mobilisation of community resources are imperative for effective and sustainable development of community-based secondary schools.