

Parents' Participation in the Management of Schools

- A study of school boards in the Oshana Region -

A contribution to the Government/UNICEF Education
and
Early Childhood Development Programme



Government
of the
Republic of Namibia



Parents' participation in the management of schools

— A study of school boards in the Oshana Region —

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INTRODUCTION

Parental and other local interest and support for education in Namibia should be fostered for a number of reasons:

- Local communities need to be interested in education if the current high demand for education is to be sustained.
- The more interested parents are in schools, the more seriously their children are likely to take their schooling.
- The government is unable to cover all the costs of schooling, and schools will need to increasingly rely on contributions from parents and other stakeholders to finance education.
- The government is also unable to manage all aspects of school administration and needs to use local structures to support the management of schools.

One effective way of ensuring local support for schools is through the establishment of school committees or boards. These bodies have operated in many schools for many years, and in 1990, the then Ministry of Education & Culture sought to promote the establishment of boards in all schools, and their active involvement in school affairs. Directives were issued by the Ministry in a booklet "*Namibian educational code of conduct for schools*". The booklet states that school boards must be established at all schools, that members are to be elected democratically, that boards should have decision-making and advisory powers, and that school boards should initiate and promote parental support for schools. Decision-making powers are given to school boards in matters concerning teacher appointments, disciplinary actions concerning teachers and learners, fund-raising, school budgets and expenditure, and extra-mural activities. School boards are also expected to play a strong role in the formulation of school rules covering, amongst others, the behaviour of learners, use of school facilities, fees, and extra-mural activities. Finally, school boards are expected to provide advice on the growth and development of schools and their communities, planning and erection of buildings, and personnel problems.

It is clear that directives provided in the booklet provide school boards with wide-ranging powers and areas of jurisdiction. However, rather little has been done in recent years to promote and support the activities of school boards. The booklet is also no longer well-known or readily available, and no other information has been produced and distributed on the functions, activities and responsibilities of school boards. Major uncertainties therefore exist on the precise role and powers of school boards, their methods of operation and how they should maximize their effectiveness.

There are thus a number of challenges concerning the development of local governance for schools in general and the role of school boards in particular. Accordingly, UNICEF commissioned this study to document attitudes to boards, their composition and activities. This information has been collected in the hope that it would be useful in the formulation of various training and development materials in an accelerated effort to develop school boards.

The study aimed to establish the status of parents' involvement in school affairs by looking at the composition of schools boards, by documenting the issues important to these boards, by gauging their knowledge of school matters, by assessing their level of satisfaction with the ways in which their schools operate, and by looking at the role school boards play in the management of schools.

METHODS

The study was conducted in one circuit in the Oshana region of the Ondangwa West educational administrative region. The decision to focus on a relatively homogeneous group in one circuit was based on the assumption that variation in parental responses to schools in one area is as important as variation between areas. Complicating and confounding effects of possible regional differences can therefore be dismissed by focusing on the variation within one area. An understanding of local variation also provides more information on what improvements can be made most readily.

The circuit selected was the Oluno circuit. The great majority of schools in the circuit are situated in a rural setting north of Ondangwa and north-east of Oshakati. Of the 49 schools in the circuit, two were excluded from the survey. One was the only senior secondary school in the circuit, while the second was established so recently that it had yet to have a school board in place. A draft questionnaire was translated into Oshiwambo and then tested at three schools in an area adjacent to Oluno circuit. The questionnaire was tested on the principals of these schools and five parent school board members. Several changes were introduced as a result of the testing and the translation was improved. Although all interviews were conducted using the Oshiwambo questionnaire, an English version of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix A.

The sample of people interviewed consisted of the principal of each school and two, randomly selected, parent board members. A list of parent board members was obtained from the Circuit Inspector's office and the names of two parents were randomly selected. A third name was also selected in reserve if one of the two parents was not available. A schedule of visits to schools was prepared and all schools were informed of the date and time that they would be visited. Of the 47 schools, principals were interviewed at 46 and, in the absence of the principal, a Head of Department at one school. A total of 82 parent board members were interviewed, two parents being interviewed at 37 schools, one parent being interviewed at eight schools, while neither parents arrived for the interview at two schools. The circumstances relating to the absence of one or both parents at these ten schools were not considered as having any special influence on the sample. All interviews were conducted during November 1996.

Interviews were conducted in private. The purpose of the survey was explained, and interviewees were assured that their individual responses would be treated in confidence. Each interview lasted 40 to 50 minutes. Responses to each question were noted. For three questions, respondents were asked to name three issues or points in order of priority. The interviewer listened to their responses and then scored those options on the questionnaire that coincided with their responses. In cases where respondents described issues which differed from those listed on the questionnaire, the interviewer wrote these down and they were later coded accordingly.

Respondents sometimes did not know the answer to certain questions and their response was then noted as "don't know". In several other cases, a question could not be answered because the board member was not in a position to know the answer, having just been appointed to the board, for example. Answers in these cases were noted as "not applicable".

A question on page 3 of the questionnaire was originally designed to assess parents' involvement and contributions to schools. However, this question was mistakenly translated during the survey into one that rather asked what was discussed during parents' meetings.

All interviews were conducted by the same person, Mr M. Hamutumua. Over and above training provided during the field testing of the questionnaire, guidelines were drawn up for his use (see Appendix B). Mr Hamutumua is a retired inspector of schools from the same area, and there was a concern that respondents may not answer the questions as freely as they might have done to someone else. This concern was discussed repeatedly with Mr Hamutumua, and it is thought that his previous role in the education system had few negative consequences. Indeed, his experience and knowledge of schools in the area contributed several valuable benefits to the study.

All questionnaires were coded and the data entered into a statistical processing package (SAS). The data are thus available in digital format for further processing.

RESULTS

Parent board members

In concentrating on the role of parents in school boards, it was first important to gain a picture of what people served as parent board members. The majority were between the ages of 40 and 60 (Figure 1), although a substantial proportion (23 out of 82) were 60 and older, and could therefore be considered elderly. Levels of education amongst parents were generally low, only 10 people (12%) having a Grade 10 or higher qualification. Forty-one people (50%) had only a primary or no schooling, and the general trend was for older school board members to have had less schooling (Figure 2). This trend is a general one for the whole Namibian population as shown by the results of the 1991 Population and Housing Census. Most parents had served as members for a number of years: three people had served for 10 or more years, 18 had been on the board for three or four years, 19 had served for two years, and 30 only for one year. Of the 82 parents interviewed, 42 were females and 40 males. This almost equal number of men and women should be seen against a population sex ratio of about 7 adult males to 10 adult females in the area, as recorded during the 1991 Population and Housing Census. Of the 82 parents, 32 were formally employed and 50 were not employed in a formal occupation.

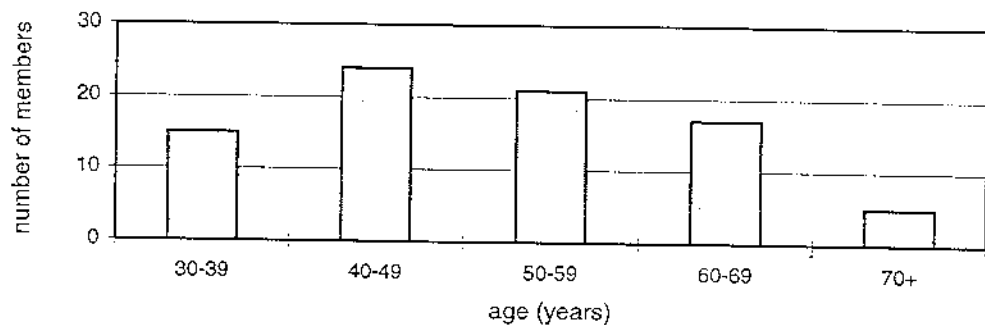


Figure 1 Age of parent board members

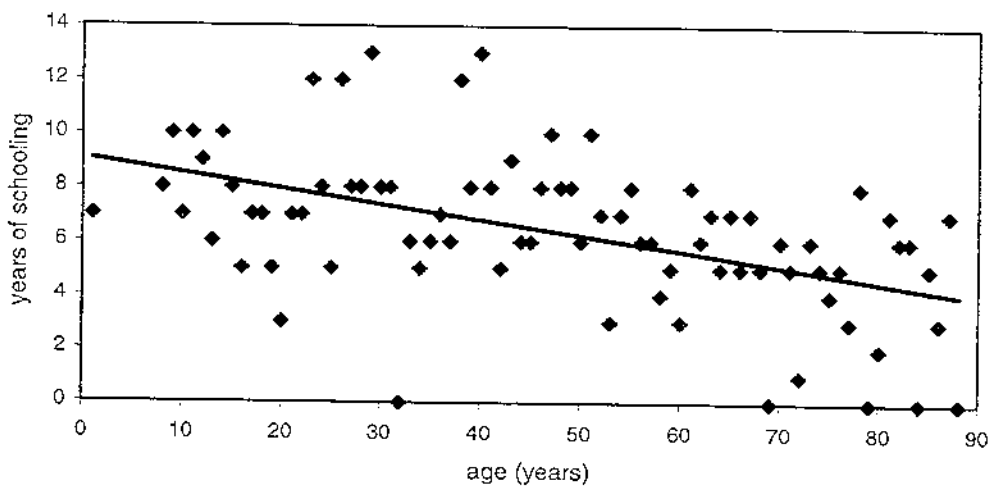


Figure 2 Years of completed schooling by parents of various ages

In the great majority of cases, parent members are elected by the parent community (Table 1), but at two schools it was reported that teachers elect the parent members. Table 2 presents information on the qualities thought by interviewees to be important in the selection and election of parent board members. Two broad categories of values emerged: community relationships and representation, and knowledge and interest in school affairs. A substantial number of other reasons were offered in addition to those listed on the questionnaire. Most of these concerned personal qualities (dedication, reliability, health, being a Christian, etc.). However, one interesting response given by four people concerned the need for parents to be from communities situated in different directions around the school, such that these parents could help ensure that learners living in different areas attended school each day.

Table 1 Responses to the question on who elects parent board members

	Parents	Principals
elected by teachers	1.2	4.3
elected by parents	98.8	95.7
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

Numbers are the percentage of responses by parents and principals

Table 2 Criteria important in the election of parents to the school board

	Parents	Principals
have healthy relationships in the community	24.5	16.3
know (and represent) many parents	19.8	17.7
have commitment and interest in the school	24.5	19.1
knowledge on school matters	21.1	22.7
other	10.1	24.2
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

Numbers are the percentage of responses to the reasons given.

Reasons given here are those scoring 5% or more responses.

"Other" represents a number of other, minor reasons.

Knowledge of parent board members

For school boards to be effective, we would expect parent members to have a useful knowledge of affairs in their schools. Several questions sought to test these levels of knowledge. Of the 82 parent members, 48 could provide an answer on how many teachers were at their schools, while 34 (41%) could not give such an answer. Most parents (88%) correctly knew the grades offered at their schools. The majority also knew the name of the local school inspector. However, this may reflect the fact that many members had attended a meeting in her office. Fifty-five parents (67%) could not offer an answer as to when the school was established, although this is probably a fact not known to many people anywhere.

Of greater concern was the result that 42 of the parents (50%) had no information on what school funds had been used for. Most parents (57%) were also unable to provide a rough idea of what proportion of learners had paid their school fees in 1996.

There is evidently a diversity of opinion on how and who sets the amounts to be paid for school funds (Table 3). Most principals (72%) said they were set by the parent community, but high proportions of parent board members reported that they were variously set by the school board, the principal and by the parent community. Also, a substantial percentage (30%) of parent board members did not know who sets these amounts.

Table 3 Responses on who sets amounts to be paid to the school fund

	Parents	Principals
set by school board	23.2	19.1
set by parents	26.8	72.3
set by principal	17.1	0.0
set by teachers	2.4	4.3
don't know who sets the amount	30.5	4.3
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

Numbers are the percentage of responses by parents and principals.

Thirty-eight parents said that additional funds had been raised during the year, but only four could report how much money was involved. By contrast, 19 of the 25 principals saying that additional funds had been raised also gave the amounts.

School boards

Twenty-six (55%) of the school boards consisted of five parents and five teachers. There were also equal numbers of parents and teachers at five other schools, these boards having boards ranging from between two parents and teachers and six parents and teachers. Among boards where numbers of parents and teachers were not equal, there were usually more parents than teachers, and in most cases these were in small schools.

Meetings were almost always held at the school, and were generally announced by sending members a letter, as reported by 98% of respondents. Most schools had met two, three or four times during the 1996 (Figure 3), although principals reported more meetings than parents.

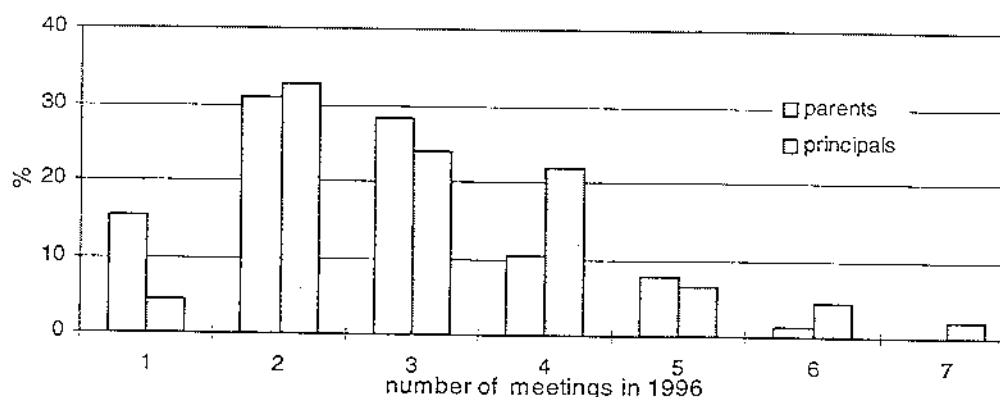


Figure 3 Percentage responses on how many meetings were held in 1996

Both principals and parents reported that meetings were attended by most members (Figure 4), although parents more often reported attendance by all members than principals. The agenda for meetings was usually set by principals, who also chaired the meetings. However, agendas were also set by teachers at a substantial number of schools, as reported by 21% of principals and 16% of parents.

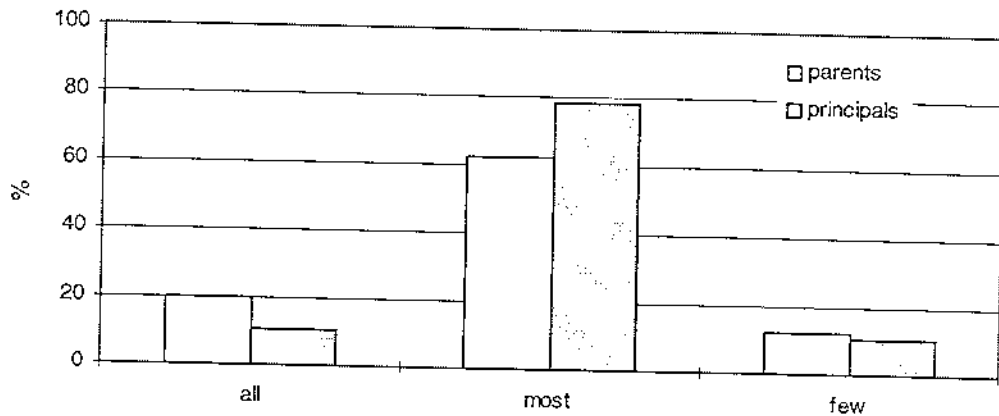


Figure 4 Percentage responses on how many members attend meetings

Minutes were taken at most board meetings. Only 6% of principals reported that minutes were not taken, while about double that proportion of parents (16%) said that minutes were not taken. Minutes from previous meetings were generally read at the start of each meeting, but again this was reported more often by principals (74%) than parents (60%). Principals also reported back to most meetings, this being said by 93% of principals and 82% of parents.

In response to a question on how decisions were made, 79% of principals and 83% of parents reported that votes were taken. No one indicated that decisions were made by the chair, but 21% of principals and 16% of parents said that no decisions were made!

Both principals and parents were satisfied with the duration of school board meetings. No one reported that meetings were too short and only 4% of all interviewees said that meetings lasted too long.

Issues and attitudes

Several questions sought to discover what issues were of greatest interest and concern, or were discussed most often, both at board meetings and at meetings of the parent community. During school board meetings issues of learner discipline, the development and need of physical facilities (mainly classrooms), the appointment of teachers, teacher discipline, the school budget, fund-raising and good relations between teachers were, in rank order, discussed most frequently. There was also close agreement between principals and parents on the frequency with which these issues were discussed (Table 4).

Table 4 Issues discussed most frequently at school board meetings

	Parents	Principals
learner discipline	25.4	25.5
physical facilities	21.9	22.0
appointment of teachers	11.0	10.6
teacher discipline	7.0	6.4
school budget	8.3	8.5
fund-raising	7.5	4.3
good relations between teachers	4.8	6.4
other	14.1	16.3
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

Numbers are the percentage of responses to the issues given.

Issues given here are those scoring 5% or more responses.

"Other" represents a number of other, minor issues.

Perhaps of equal interest are those issues which seldom emerged as points of discussion. The performance of learners, planning for the year, duration and starting time of the school day, approval of expenditure, medium of instruction and languages offered, and sports and extra-mural activities were all seldom reported.

Issues similar to those for school boards emerged as the main discussion points at meetings of parents (Table 5). Here discipline, school fees, homework, physical facilities, planning activities and fund-raising (again, in rank order) were reported most often as the issues for discussion. The only slight differences in perceptions of these discussions between principals and parents involved school fees and physical facilities (which parents rated more often) and homework (which principals rated more often).

Table 5 Issues discussed most frequently at parent meetings

	Parents	Principals
discipline	24.7	23.4
school fees	23.0	17.5
homework	10.9	18.2
physical facilities	15.5	9.5
planning activities	6.3	8.8
fund-raising	4.2	6.6
other	15.4	16.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

Numbers are the percentage of responses to the issues given.

Issues given here are those scoring 5% or more responses.

"Other" encompasses a number of other, minor issues.

Several questions directly asked parents whether they were happy or satisfied with aspects of the school (Table 6). Seventy-seven percent of people were not happy with the physical condition of their schools and 35% were not satisfied with school discipline. However, only 17% and 15% of parents were not satisfied with the management of school funds and school staff, respectively. Fifty-six parents said they would raise any problems they had with the school principal, while 16 said they would raise the matter at a board meeting. Only three parents said they would keep quiet, while no-one said they would raise problems with the school inspector.

Parents were also asked to describe the three biggest problems they had with the school. Nearly half (47%) of the parents said that they did not have any problems. For those

that did report problems, most were concerned about needs, especially for classrooms, at their schools. Another prominent problem concerned difficulties encountered in the appointment of teachers, with school boards being concerned about their recommendations not being implemented.

Table 6 Responses by parents on whether they are satisfied with the management of discipline, school funds, staff and facilities

	Satisfied	Not satisfied
school discipline	64.6	35.4
school funds	82.9	17.1
school staff	85.4	14.6
physical conditions of the school	23.2	76.8

Numbers are the percentage of responses to the issues given.

Role of school size and quality

This study was not designed to investigate factors which lead to variation in the operations of school boards and attitudes of members. However, some information is available to consider the effects of the sizes and overall qualities of schools, and the age and education of parents (see below).

The sample of schools was divided into two groups — "small" schools with less than 500 learners and "big" schools having more than 500 learners. In general few differences were found between the two groups. The issue of teachers' appointments was reported as being discussed slightly more often at board meetings in large schools, while the promotion of good relations between teachers was reported slightly more often in small schools. There was no difference in the ages or levels of education of parent members in the two groups. Boards in the two groups had similar numbers of meetings in 1996. The same proportions of parents in the two groups did not know how school funds are used, but more parents at small schools reported problems in their schools. By contrast, parents in bigger schools were generally more dissatisfied with the management of school discipline, funds, staff and physical conditions.

Some schools are obviously better managed and in better condition than others. These qualities can be assessed from such aspects as the conditions of school grounds and the general organisation of staff and learners. Accordingly, Mr Hamutumua was asked to rate each school in the sample as a "good" school or a "poorer" school, thus providing two groups for comparative purposes. Sixty-six parents' responses were from "good" and 16 from "poorer" schools. There were no differences between the two groups in frequency of topics reported as being discussed during school board meetings. There were also no differences in the ages or levels of education of parent members, or the proportions of parents reporting problems at their schools. Parents at "poorer" schools were less satisfied with the management of school discipline and staff, while parents in "good" schools were less satisfied with the management of school funds and physical conditions. In "poorer" schools, more parents thought that amounts to be paid as school funds were determined by principals than in bigger schools. School boards in "good" schools met slightly more often than those in "poorer" schools.

Parents' ages and levels of education

It is difficult to separate possible effects of parents' ages and levels of education because the two issues vary with each other, younger parents being generally better schooled than older parents (Figure 2). The few differences found in the sample may thus be as much a reflection of age differences as educational differences. Parents were divided into three age groups: those younger than 45 ("young"), those 45 to 54 years of age ("medium") and those older than 54 ("old"). For levels of education, 41 parents who had completed Grade 7 or higher levels were placed in a "high" group, while the remaining 41 parents had left school with less than Grade 7 were in a "low" group.

Younger and better educated parents generally more often reported various problems at the school. Older parents may have been more reticent about reporting problems. Younger and better educated parents also had a much better idea of how school funds had been used than older and less educated parents. Better educated parents more often reported that the performance of learners was discussed during board meetings than parents with lower levels of schooling. Finally, parents in the "high" group more often reported that the school board had determined amounts to be paid to the school fund, while those in the "low" group more often said that it was the principal who had determined the school fund.

DISCUSSION

A number of interesting results emerged from this study. Parent board members are generally elected as representatives of the wider parent community, and their election is based largely on their social qualities in the community and their involvement in school affairs. Levels of education of parents are apparently not that important to their role as board members, since many parents had received rather little schooling themselves. The knowledge of parents about school matters was varied, for some issues being of a high quality while a greater level of knowledge might be expected for other issues.

Most school board meetings probably operate smoothly with members being informed by letter, agendas being set, minutes being taken and read from previous meetings, and the principals reporting back. In general, there seem to be few procedural problems with school boards. The fact that principals generally reported slightly more favourably on the affairs and activities of boards than parents is probably to be expected.

However, improvements need to be made to the content and level of discussion at meetings. Clearly, decisions are not made at some meetings, and perhaps too much discussion focuses on issues which could or should be dealt with largely by the school management itself, for example discipline and physical facilities. This is not to say that these issues are not important, and it is indeed admirable that parents are prepared to involve themselves in these problems.

Two areas which school boards should address more often and thoroughly are those concerning the curriculum and school funds. While members cannot be expected to be educationalists and experts on curriculum content, we could expect that they should be interested in the comparative performance and progress of learners, the amount of time that teachers actually spend teaching, the length of the school day, and the provision of homework. In short, school boards should be concerned about how well their school and the learners are doing.

On school funds, parents clearly knew rather little about what these funds were used for, who sets the amounts to be paid, how many learners had paid, and what additional funds had been raised. Discussions on school funds also appear to be limited during school board meetings, although there is much discussion on school fees during parents meetings. A number of parents also expressed dissatisfaction with the management of funds. It is thus clear that school boards must increase their involvement in determining the amounts to be paid, being aware of amounts coming into the fund and amounts being spent, the types of expenditures, and the general development of funds through fund-raising and proper management of the funds.

It is also clear that school boards are often not certain about how far their responsibilities and powers extend. This leads to concern about the appointment of teachers and also means that principals could steer discussions away from issues which boards should rightfully be addressing.

The booklet *Namibian educational code of conduct for schools* places strong emphasis on the need for school boards to be involved in the development of school rules. However, results in this study suggests that boards spend little time discussing such

matters. Perhaps many boards are not aware of their responsibilities in this respect. Given the many disciplinary problems that schools encounter, every effort should be made to strengthen the role of boards in establishing and supporting school rules.

This study has shown that school boards are composed of people of quite different ages, occupations and levels of education. The only requirement for a person to be a school board member is that he or she should be a parent, and it would be unwise to place any other limits on membership. However, efforts should be made to encourage more formally employed, educated and perhaps younger parents to become members. Such parents are more likely to provide constructive criticism and contributions to the benefit of the school.

Perhaps the best way of improving the overall effectiveness of school boards is for the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, UNICEF and other organisations to launch a campaign to inform school boards about their responsibilities and roles. What is most necessary are clear guidelines on these issues, especially since such information is not widely available and school boards are often confused about their responsibilities. Efforts must thus be made to compile and a booklet which first makes clear how school boards are to be constituted and how they should meet, and second and most importantly, their roles and responsibilities. This information must also be provided through other media, such as the radio, newspapers and training workshops.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Questionnaire

School's name	
Year in which the school was established	

Principal (PRINCIPALS ONLY)

Years of experience	As principal:	As teacher:	Age (years)	
Academic qualifications			Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
Teaching qualifications				

Board member (PARENTS ONLY)

Occupation		Age (years)			
Academic qualifications		Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F		
In what year did you become a member of the school board?					
Name of Inspector					
Grades offered (Tick the appropriate box)	<input type="checkbox"/> Gd 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Gd 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Gd 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Gd 10	<input type="checkbox"/> other grades (specify)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Gd 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Gd 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Gd 8	<input type="checkbox"/> Gd 11	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Gd 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Gd 6	<input type="checkbox"/> Gd 9	<input type="checkbox"/> Gd 12	
School hours	Starting time:	Closing time:			
Number of teachers					

School Board

In what year was the School Board first established?				
Number of Board members	Parents:	Males:	Teachers:	Males:
		Females:		Females:
Who elects parent board members?	<input type="checkbox"/> Principal	<input type="checkbox"/> Teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Learners
Who elects teacher board members?	<input type="checkbox"/> Principal	<input type="checkbox"/> Teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Learners

<p>What criteria/qualities are used when selecting members? Give and rank the three most important reasons.</p>	<p>_____ knowledge on school matters</p> <p>_____ have many children at the school</p> <p>_____ understand the official language</p> <p>_____ were teachers before</p> <p>_____ are community leaders</p> <p>_____ know (and represent) many parents</p> <p>_____ have healthy relationships in the community</p>	<p>_____ have commitment and interest in the school</p> <p>_____ other (please specify)</p>
<p>How many meetings were held in 1996?</p>		
<p>How many members attend meetings?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> all <input type="checkbox"/> most <input type="checkbox"/> few	
<p>How are members informed about the next meeting?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> word of mouth <input type="checkbox"/> by letter <input type="checkbox"/> by telephone <input type="checkbox"/> determined at last meeting	
<p>PARENTS ONLY How many meetings did you attend in 1996?</p>		
<p>Who sets the agenda?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> principal <input type="checkbox"/> teachers <input type="checkbox"/> parents <input type="checkbox"/> other	
<p>Does anyone take minutes?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes	
<p>Are minutes of the last meeting read at the start of every meeting?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes	
<p>What issues are most discussed at board meetings. Give and rank the three most important issues.</p>	<p>_____ performance of learners _____ teacher discipline</p> <p>_____ planning for the year _____ learner discipline</p> <p>_____ medium of instruction _____ appointment of teachers</p> <p>_____ languages offered _____ school budget</p> <p>_____ duration of the school day _____ fund raising</p> <p>_____ starting time _____ approval of expenditure</p> <p>_____ physical facilities _____ good relations between teachers</p> <p>_____ development of sport activities _____ other (specify)</p> <p>_____ development of extra-mural cultural activities</p>	
<p>How does the school board reach a decision?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> by voting <input type="checkbox"/> the chairperson decides <input type="checkbox"/> no decisions are made	
<p>Does the principal report back on the implementation of decisions?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes	

Are board members ever asked to help implement decisions?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> sometimes
Are meetings:	<input type="checkbox"/> too long?	<input type="checkbox"/> too short?	<input type="checkbox"/> the right length?

Parents

How many parents meeting were held in 1996?																
What types of involvement do parents have in the school. Give and rank the three most important kinds of involvement.	<table> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> payment of school fees</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> advise principal</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> fund-raising activities</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> advise teachers</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> cash donations</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> assist with discipline</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> provision of materials</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> assist with learners' homework</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> clean school grounds</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> help plan activities</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> help build school facilities</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> payment of school fees	<input type="checkbox"/> advise principal	<input type="checkbox"/> fund-raising activities	<input type="checkbox"/> advise teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> cash donations	<input type="checkbox"/> assist with discipline	<input type="checkbox"/> provision of materials	<input type="checkbox"/> assist with learners' homework	<input type="checkbox"/> clean school grounds	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> help plan activities		<input type="checkbox"/> help build school facilities		
<input type="checkbox"/> payment of school fees	<input type="checkbox"/> advise principal															
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<input type="checkbox"/> provision of materials	<input type="checkbox"/> assist with learners' homework															
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<input type="checkbox"/> help plan activities																
<input type="checkbox"/> help build school facilities																
Are you satisfied with parents':	<table> <tr> <td>interest in their children's performance?</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> no</td> </tr> <tr> <td>willingness to pay school fees?</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> no</td> </tr> <tr> <td>willingness to build new classrooms?</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> no</td> </tr> <tr> <td>willingness to join the school board?</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> no</td> </tr> <tr> <td>interest in school board affairs?</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> no</td> </tr> </table>	interest in their children's performance?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	willingness to pay school fees?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	willingness to build new classrooms?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	willingness to join the school board?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	interest in school board affairs?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
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interest in school board affairs?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no														

School fees and other funds

How much are the school fees per year?							
Who determines how much is paid?	<table> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> school board</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> parents</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> don't know</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> principal</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> teachers</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> school board	<input type="checkbox"/> parents	<input type="checkbox"/> don't know	<input type="checkbox"/> principal	<input type="checkbox"/> teachers	
<input type="checkbox"/> school board	<input type="checkbox"/> parents	<input type="checkbox"/> don't know					
<input type="checkbox"/> principal	<input type="checkbox"/> teachers						
How many learners paid school fees this year?	<table> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> few</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> most</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> don't know</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> half</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> all</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> few	<input type="checkbox"/> most	<input type="checkbox"/> don't know	<input type="checkbox"/> half	<input type="checkbox"/> all	
<input type="checkbox"/> few	<input type="checkbox"/> most	<input type="checkbox"/> don't know					
<input type="checkbox"/> half	<input type="checkbox"/> all						

Were other funds raised this year	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	If yes, how much?	
What have school funds been used to pay for this year?	<input type="checkbox"/> teaching equipment and materials <input type="checkbox"/> sports events and equipment <input type="checkbox"/> building materials <input type="checkbox"/> office equipment and materials	<input type="checkbox"/> transport payments <input type="checkbox"/> food and drink <input type="checkbox"/> extra books <input type="checkbox"/> don't know	

General (PARENTS ONLY)

If you were unhappy about the way the school was being run, what would you do?	<input type="checkbox"/> raise the matter in a school board meeting <input type="checkbox"/> consult the principal <input type="checkbox"/> talk to the circuit inspector <input type="checkbox"/> keep quiet												
List the three biggest problems that this school has:	1. 2. 3.												
Are you satisfied with the management of:	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>school discipline?</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> no</td> </tr> <tr> <td>school funds?</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> no</td> </tr> <tr> <td>school staff?</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> no</td> </tr> <tr> <td>the physical conditions of the school?</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> yes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> no</td> </tr> </table>	school discipline?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	school funds?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	school staff?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	the physical conditions of the school?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
school discipline?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no											
school funds?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no											
school staff?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no											
the physical conditions of the school?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no											

PLEASE CHECK THAT ALL QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED

UNICEF sample survey - Parents' participation in school boards

Guidelines for the Survey

1. The survey will be carried out in all schools in the Oluno circuit, with the exception of Oluno Senior Secondary School. This is the only senior secondary school in the circuit and results obtained from that school cannot be compared or interpreted in any useful way.
2. The overall purpose of the study should be explained clearly to all people interviewed. In summary, this is a study of school boards and the participation of parents in these boards. The results of the study will be used to help in the preparation of training materials which will be circulated and delivered to parent members of school boards. It is hoped that the provision of these training materials will help to improve the functioning of school boards.
3. Most questions will be answered by both parents and principals. Some questions, however are for parents or principals only and are clearly marked as PARENTS ONLY or PRINCIPALS ONLY.
4. To select the random sample of parents to be interviewed, the Interviewer will obtain a list of parent board members from Mrs Maria Hamata. Each list of parents will be numbered 1, 2, 3, 4 and so on. Using numbered cards, each with a number on it, the interviewer will turn over a card and mark the parent having the corresponding number. A second parent should be selected in the same way, and these two parents are the ones that should be interviewed. The interviewer should then also select a third parent, using the same random number procedure. This third parent will be marked as a third person and will be only interviewed if one of the other two parents is not available.
5. The fifth page of the questionnaire is for notes that the Interviewer can make at schools and while interviewing parents. A list of the names of parent board members should also be made on that page. This list should be obtained from the Principal, and not from Mrs Hamata. The list on page 5 will enable the Interviewer to compare and check names obtained previously from Mrs Hamata. It will also enable the Interviewer to assess whether the Principal indeed has a list of parents, and how easy it is for the Principal to provide that information. The Interviewer should note comments on whether the Principal had this list readily available or not.
6. The list of parents on page 5 can also be used to randomly select two parents (and a third in case one of the two is not available) for those schools where lists of parents are not available from Mrs Hamata's office.
7. The following kinds of notes should be recorded on page 5:
 - If the Principal was particularly nervous or unsure during the interview, suggesting that he or she may have not always given correct answers
 - Any circumstances which might suggest that the school board operates in a way different from that indicated in the School Code of Conduct. This would include matters such as the length of time that board

members serve, the chairperson being someone different from the Principal, elections etc.

- Any general observations that concern how the school board operates and how these observations may affect some of the answers given.
 - Any observations which suggest that the board operates in a particularly effective and positive way. These observations would be of value in the training materials to be developed later.
 - Any observations that suggest that the person being interviewed has been influenced by the Principal or another person to say certain things.
8. In completing the questionnaire while interviewing a principal or parent, the Interviewer should make sure that an answer to every question has been provided. When a person does not know the answer or cannot understand the question, the Interviewer should record a question mark (?) as the answer.
 9. The Interviewer should keep a list of schools and parents to tick-off those he has interviewed. This will help to ensure that all schools and parents have been interviewed and that none have been overlooked by mistake. Completed questionnaires should be kept separately and safely in a file before being sent to John Mendelsohn in Windhoek.
 10. A problem in this kind of work is that interviewers often develop what is called "interviewer fatigue". This is because they have to do so many of the same interviews, asking the same questions over and over again. In these cases, interviewers may seem to lack interest. Questions are posed in a dull voice, the interviewer does not pay attention to the person being interviewed, often looking out of the window or thinking of other things. Interviewers often then try to speed-up the interviews to get them finished. Under these conditions, principals and parents may not take the questions seriously. Every effort must be made by the Interviewer to guard against these situations.
 11. Care should be taken against influencing or suggesting an answer. This may seem obvious, but one may often be keen to help someone answer a question. The Interviewer should also take special care that people are not intimidated by the fact that he was an Inspector of schools in the area. He should thus ensure that people freely speak their minds and are not afraid of saying something that an Inspector may not wish to hear.
 12. Everyone being interviewed should be told that all the information they provide will be kept strictly in confidence and will not be shared with anyone.
 13. For those questions where people provide answers in the form of three options which are ranked as first, second and third reasons, the Interviewer should listen carefully and mark off the printed options when they fit the reasons given by the person being interviewed. If one or more of the answers really differs from a printed answer, it should be noted under "Other" and written down.
 14. It is expected that each interview will take between 30 and 60 minutes. Care should be taken not to rush the interview. Allow principals and parents enough time to think about what they want to say and to then give their answers.

Good luck with this important work!