

SECTION 1

Decentralisation and Delegation

Introduction

Over recent years there has been a world-wide trend to move the management of education systems within a country away from the centre, which is remote from the action, to regions and districts. This process of decentralisation allows a balance to be struck between the strategic control of the education system by the Ministry of Education against the operational management of the service at a more local level.

This development has a number of advantages:

- decentralisation guarantees that the Ministry of Education must publish clear and unambiguous policy statements;
- local control ensures that local conditions can influence decision-making thereby yielding outcomes more acceptable to students, parents and teachers;
- local control also overcomes the inertia of the education system which is caused by its sheer size;
- decentralisation offers the opportunity to have rapid response to the great majority of problems arising at school level;
- Regional and District Education Officers are given the opportunity to make decisions and set standards of accountability which increase their management potential and, at the same time, improve teacher morale.

If the process of decentralisation is to prove effective in practice it must be accompanied by a clear definition of the functions and powers of the officers in charge at each level of management. This is best provided by a Scheme of Delegation.

Checklist

- (1) Are there clearly defined policy statements outlining the personnel policies of the Ministry of Education and/or the Teaching Service Commission?
- (2) Do they cover all aspects of teacher management?
- (3) Is there a Scheme of Delegation which defines the roles and powers of officers at different levels and locations?
- (4) Have Headteachers been given appropriate delegated authority?
- (5) Have arrangements been put in place to monitor the policy in action?
- (6) Has training on decentralisation and delegation been provided for officers and administration staff at headquarters and at regional, district and school level?

Policy Suggestions

The responsibility of the Ministry of Education or Teaching Service Commission is to provide clear statements on all matters relating, in this context, to the management of teachers, together with a lucid indication of what the Ministry of Education wishes to achieve by its policies. This should articulate the thresholds of power of officers at

each level including minimum acceptable standards, the approved budget for each element of the delegated authority and a statement of what should be reported and to whom.

These statements must be complemented by a Scheme of Delegation and a specification of the appropriate job description for professional officers at all levels in the decentralisation process. This will have implications for staffing levels and salary gradings.

A monitoring scheme must be established to ensure that the processes work in practice and that the policies of the Ministry of Education are being carried out successfully at all levels of management.

The process of decentralisation involves the transfer of staff from the centre to the regions and districts. This raises significant personnel issues and requires careful planning and discussion with everyone involved.

Procedures for Consideration

If effective decentralisation and delegation of teacher management are to be achieved the following action must be taken:

- ensure that legal authority exists for what is proposed;
- establish the objectives for the policies which are to be implemented;
- discuss the proposals with other government departments which impinge on the policy and its operation in practice;
- fix the powers to be delegated to each level of authority both in the field and within the Ministry of Education;
- set, where necessary, thresholds of responsibility for matters of a similar nature but of differing importance;
- ensure that there is a clear line of responsibility with no duplication or overlaps;
- review gradings and salaries of the responsible officers to ensure they reflect the responsibility being placed upon them;
- train everyone involved in decentralisation of personnel matters, including the administrative staff in offices in regions and districts;
- produce a handbook outlining the powers, procedures and monitoring process involved in the decentralisation and delegation processes;

The appendix on page 3 provides a grid which may be of assistance in devising a Scheme of Delegation relating to many of the management functions involved in planning the teacher staffing requirements for a new session. Grids such as this are useful tools in such a process.

References:

Turning the Tables on Teacher Management

Chapters 1, pages 6-10

5, pages 24-27

11, pages 48-51

16, pages 69-71

Why Delegate?

Decentralising the Education System

Teacher Morale and Motivation in Sub-Saharan Africa: Making Practical Improvements

pages 14-15

Appendix 1

PLANNING A SCHEME OF DELEGATION

(By using * indicate where responsibility should lie for each task shown)

Activities	M of E	TSC/ TSM/ Other	Region/ District	School	Ministry of Finance	Other
Setting staffing standards						
Estimation of: - school rolls - number of classes						
Number of teachers required for next year						
Number of teachers at present						
Estimate of number leaving by: resignation death other reasons						
Number to be offered study leave						
Number returning from study leave other reasons						
Number of teachers to be declared surplus						
Estimated number of vacancies						
Output from TTIs						
Recruitment from abroad						
Estimated number of other returners to teaching						
Recruitment from other sources						
Estimated shortfall in teacher establishment						
Appointment procedures: letter of appointment posting arrangements assessment of salary payment of salary						