

# SCHOOL REPORT CARD PROJECT REVIEW - JUNE 2017



## THE SCHOOL REPORT CARD PROJECT

'Empowering school communities through Capacity Building and Behavior Change  
Communication Modelling'



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Communication Modelling'

# HARORESA PR. SCH. AC 2016/17 DISBURSEME

SN	VOTE HEAD	ALLOCATION PER PUPIL (KSHS)
1	SUPPORT STAFF WAGES	96.90
2	REPAIRS, MAINTAINANCE AND IMPROVEMENT OF PHYSICAL FACILITIES	53.10
3	ACTIVITY	39.31
4	LOCAL TRANSPORT AND TRAVELLING	19.80
5	ELECTRICITY, WATER AND CONSERVANCY	32.27
6	TELEPHONE/BOX RENTAL/POSTAGE AND E-MAILS	5.05
7	ENVIRONMENT & SANITATION	28.27
8	CAPACITY BUILDING & MEETINGS (BOM)	44.12
9	CONTIGENCIES	8.36
10	SCIENCE & APPLIED TECHNOLOGY	9.16
11	ICT/INFRASTRUCTURE MATERIALS	8.14
	TOTAL	344.50

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

The School Report Card Project was introduced in 2009 by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) together with the National Taxpayers Association with the overarching objective of creating enabling school environments and consequently improve the quality of education for both girls and boys in public primary schools to foster Better Outcomes and Brighter Futures. Community Mobilization and Empowerment, Capacity Building and Behavior Change Techniques are employed to catalyze the desired change – an active community of parents who are empowered to demand for accountability from school administrators.

The School Report Card Project banks on Parents and Communities to successfully deliver on its mandate. Thus, this report attempts to unearth some of the positive aspects of the project and establish the extent to which communities are involved in the SRC project and in the education of our children as envisioned and especially in the following core areas:

1. Ability to mobilize an active community that can work with schools and MoEST in improving quality of education service; and,
2. Ability to synchronize key education stakeholders (Parents, Teachers, MoEST)

### Introduction

The demand for “assessment everywhere” is considered in the modern world as one of the most frequently social requirements. This demand has a particular importance when it is connected with the area of education which is sensitive and important for the future progress of societies. The need to understand and evaluate the SRC Project ‘experience as unified’ was identified and consequently Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were carried out with SRC committees from 23 schools in Marsabit, Tana River and Taita County as shown in Table 1.

Gender balance was observed while recruiting participants for the FGDs. In terms of age, majority of participants were aged between 30-50 years old while a few were from between 20-29 years. The FGDs were conducted inside the school compounds and other qualitative data collection approaches were also used such as: observation and use of photography and videography.

Additional, head teachers from 45 schools completed self-administered semi-structured questionnaires to gauge their perceptions on the SRC project to corroborate FGD reports.

Table 1: Number of FGDs by county

County	Head Teachers Self-Administered Surveys	Conducted FGDs with SRC Committees
Marsabit	5	5
Taita Taveta	26	8
Tana River	14	10
<b>Total schools sampled</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>23</b>

The FGDs were also conducted to explore the various factors affecting community participation, linkages among the factors, and the conditions under which those linkages occur.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Community:** A collection of households who live in close geographical proximity such as a ward and commune with one another.

**Community participation:** is the process by which individuals, families, or communities assume responsibility for their own welfare and develop a capacity to contribute to their own and the community's development by being involved in the decision-making processes in determining goals and pursuing issues of importance to them for example, the direction of services and the allocation of funds.

**Community empowerment** refers to the process of enabling communities to increase control over their lives. "Communities" are groups of people that may or may not be spatially connected, but who share common interests, concerns or identities. These communities could be local, national or international, with specific or broad interests. 'Empowerment' refers to the process by which people gain control over the factors and decisions that shape their lives. It is the process by which they increase their assets and attributes and build capacities to gain access, partners, networks and/or a voice, in order to gain control. "Enabling" implies that people cannot "be empowered" by others; they can only empower themselves by acquiring more of power's different forms (Laverack, 2008). It assumes that people are their own assets, and the role of the external agent is to catalyze, facilitate or "accompany" the community in acquiring power.

Community empowerment, therefore, is more than the involvement, participation or engagement of communities. It implies community ownership and action that explicitly aims at social and political change. Community empowerment is a process of re-negotiating power in order to gain more control. It recognizes that if some people are going to be empowered, then others will be sharing their existing power and giving some of it up (Baum, 2008).

**Development:** Accumulation of goods and capabilities that impact positively on the sustenance, freedom from servitude and self-esteem of members of a household.

**Sustainability:** is the ability of an implemented project of any kind to endure and be healthy beyond the project period.

**Sustainable development:** is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Accountability** is about being responsible to someone for actions taken; about being able to explain, clarify and justify actions. It implies that someone has a right to know and hold an organization to account; and that the organization has a duty to explain and account for its actions. Charities have this duty as they have a privileged status because their purposes must be for the benefit of the public.

**Transparency** is about being easy to understand, and being open, frank and honest in all communications, transactions and operations. It is possible to be accountable by providing a lengthy and technical explanation of every detail, but if this information is not easily understood by the audience, and if key facts are hidden by the sheer volume of information then the information is not presented in a transparent form. Accountability and transparency go hand-in-hand, and involve being aware of who charities are accountable to, what the important pieces of information are, and how they can be communicated most effectively.



## KEY FINDINGS

### 1. SRC Participation, Community Ownership and Levels of Community Empowerment

Community Ownership is essential for the success of Social Programs such as the SRC Project. The SRC Project first and foremost counts on parents and communities to catalyze desired theorized change. I.e. an engaged community is KEY to realizing SRC Project Outcomes. Participation of the community in development projects such as the SRC Project leads to capacity building which enables the community to be more effective and efficient in the process of identifying, implementing, monitoring and evaluating of developmental projects (Davids et al., 2009). According to De Beer, (1998), by continuously fulfilling their needs, people learn to realize their objectives more easily. It is a mechanism that enables local people to determine their own values and priorities and act on their own decisions. Full potential of individuals is realized after they have been made aware; then, depending on their capabilities, they act in order to achieve their goals and objectives (Freire, 1993).

The SRC committees involved in the FGDs acknowledged certain improvements in community participation but then again opined that communities were not satisfactorily capacitated by the training provided, and are ill-equipped to positively engage with schools; thus both community involvement and ownership received low reviews from SRC committees. Further, some SRC committees especially in Marsabit County alleged that they had never been trained or even participated in filling out SRC forms. It was further reported that NTA typically does not provide feedback to schools or parents once SRC forms are submitted. This, (not seeing the fruits of their labor) has left parents dejected since they cannot see the significance of their contributions. An output of their endeavors in form of the SRC report would go a long way in bridging-the-gap cited in SRC training and community capacity. On the other hand, head teachers were somewhat optimistic in this regard especially in Taita Taveta and Tana River counties where school administrators perceived that community engagement was increasing. As shown in table 2, majority (40) of the school heads sampled had witnessed increased community engagement with schools.

Table 2: Head teachers’ assessment on Community Engagement with Schools

		County			Total
		Marsabit	Taita Taveta	Tana River	
<b>Question:</b> <i>Have you witnessed increased community engagement with schools</i>	Yes	3	24	13	40
	No	2	2	1	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>45</b>

## 2. Impact and Magnitude of SRC Project

SRC committees acknowledged the importance of the SRC project in synchronizing stakeholders towards a common goal. The project was also much-admired for empowering parents;

*"SRC Project has strengthened parents and given them a platform to which they can interrogate the school administration (Head teachers, teachers, BoM) with facts"* – **SRC Committee.**

*"The SRC project has opened up parents eyes"* – **SRC Committees**

One of the key success areas cited by SRC committees was the availability of reliable data showing strengths and weakness of the school. It was supposed that the available data which reflects on the position of the school has also helped identify performance gaps, needs and enabled schools to prioritize and develop immediate, midterm and long-term plans to improve the school.

*"SRC Project has identified shortfalls of the school and identified avenues to address them"* – **SRC Committee**

*"We now know where the school is and where it ought to be and the heights the school can reach".* – **SRC Committee**

The SRC project was also believed to have put structures in place (a blueprint if you may) that can be followed to create improvements in school.

*"When the areas of needs are identified and recommendations implemented the results is improved school environment"* – **SRC Committee**

Overall, SRC committees itemized several positives of the SRC project and on the whole electioneered for continuance of the project. When asked whether the SRC project should continue or ended, – all head teachers said project should continue. Some of the improvements credited to the SRC project included:

- » Increased access to clean drinking water
- » Improved textbook : pupil ratio  
*"More books have since been purchased and also books lost by pupils were replaced by parents"* – **SRC committee**
- » Improved maintenance of textbooks (parents especially credited for monitoring textbooks issued to pupils and ensuring they are properly and neatly covered).
- » Improved quality of CDF Projects in line with trade standards
- » Implementation of homework assignment and marking policy
- » Improved parents – teacher relations *"Parents now know their children's class teachers"* – **SRC Committee**

*"The SRC Project gives us a clear picture of the school status and hence enables us to establish immediate / priority school needs".* – **Head Teacher**

### 3. Following up on SRC Recommendations

Research action is all but useless if recommendations provided are not implemented. Following up on recommendations will also increase project ownership since participating communities will see the fruits of their labor (the results of their industry).

It was revealed that SRC Committees identify 5 recommendation each year and on average by end of 2016, schools had implemented at least 3 of the identified recommendations in 2015. Some of these included: purchasing soaps and erecting hand washing units outside latrines to improve sanitation and reduce illnesses, covering textbooks to improve textbook shelf-life, erecting temporary fence to improve school security, building latrines to improve pupil: toilet ratio, purchasing water tanks to harvest rain water and consequently ensure all year round access to water.

### 4. Local Leaders

Local leaders have traditionally held broad responsibilities in primary schools: These include; ensuring fair access to education and training opportunities, as well as other social goals such as reducing the inequalities that result from socio-economic disadvantage. Thus the enormosity of local leaders in grassroots innovations cannot be overemphasized. They also act as role models for students who have leadership ambitions. Even though local area chiefs’ were applauded for their active involvement in schools the general perception on local leaders especial MCA, MP, Women’s Rep, Senator and Governor was not positive as they were thought to be undaunted and unsupportive.

### 5. Quality of school buildings

The relationship between student achievement and buildings condition has been perfectly expressed in the phrase of Prof. Berner “Good infrastructure is truly at the base of quality education” (see Glen I Earthman references). Quality of buildings is also one of the key priority areas included by the SRC project. Head teachers’ outlook on the quality of school buildings is not wholly positive. More than half of head teachers participating in this evaluation saw no improvements in the quality of school buildings (Table 3).

Table 3: Head teachers’ outlook on school buildings

		County			Total
		Marsabit	Taita Taveta	Tana River	
<b>Question:</b> <i>Improvements in school building quality against trade standards and contracts.</i>	Yes	2	11	7	20
	No	3	15	7	25
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>45</b>

## 6. Transparency and accountability

A 2009 report by DFID (Experiences of providing textbooks, Goldsworthy, 2009) purported Sh1.3billion meant for FPE could not be traced. The report also suggested that many schools might have paid a much higher average price for their textbooks than is assumed. A lack of transparency and accountability was blamed for the mammoth losses of FPE money. And, even though parents are now well-versed about existence FPE grants in general; majority of schools still do not display FPE grants as directed by MoEST, especially in Tana River County; and, for good reasons – insecurity. According to head teachers, public display of FPE funds would be a direct invitation to thieving gangs. Head teachers concerns are sincere since most of these schools lack perimeter fences and are rather insecure and vulnerable to thieves.

Table 4: Number of schools public displaying FPE grants

		County			Total
		Marsabit	Taita Taveta	Tana River	
<b>Question:</b> Does your school display FPE grants information?	Yes	3	14	4	21
	No	2	12	10	24
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>45</b>

However, some head teachers' offered inexcusable reasons such as: lack of notice boards, lack of funds to put up a notice board.

It was further suggested that Head teachers can take advantage of available technological tools such as WhatsApp to communicate to parents about matters pertaining FPE to improve transparency. (SRC Committees)

## 7. Accuracy in FPE grants

Nearly a third of head teachers' lamented about the accuracy of FPE grants alleging disparity between the actual amount received and their expectation based on enrolment data. Others felt that FPE grant capitation was inadequate and called for improvement directly from government and or parents to top up. It was also clear that some schools utilized FPE money to pay employee (support staff) salaries which is not what the funds are meant for.

School heads also complained about the habitual delay in FPE disbursements saying that the funds never reach the school on time.

Table 5: Head Teachers observation on accuracy of FPE grants

	County			Total
	Marsabit	Taita Taveta	Tana River	
Yes	2	14	14	30
No	2	11	0	13
Not Habitually	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>44</b>

### 8. BoM Functionality

When the BoM is not privy to the FPE amount her school has received, then, the body is not empowered and not fully functional. BoM are the Managers of primary schools in Kenya; it is their mandate to provide strategic guidance and to effectively oversee and review the school's management.





## SWOT ANALYSIS

	HELPFUL	HARMFUL
INTERNAL	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
	Positive Impact – Project seen as important/ helpful project by School Communities	1. Inadequate training 2. Little or no follow-up
EXTERNAL	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
	Community resolve to realize success of project	1. Increasing poverty levels distracting communities 2. Migrating communities 3. Community fatigue due to lack of feedback

### Factors impeding success of SRC project

#### 1. Snowballing Poverty levels

High levels of poverty mean that communities have other life-threatening priorities that need immediate attention. It is difficult for any parent to attend such forums on an empty stomach or unsure whether their children will have a meal when they get home from school.

#### 2. Materialistic communities

Parents petition for sitting allowances and transport reimbursements. This is perhaps because most parents are typically reimbursed when invited to participate in research-oriented endeavors that involve filling out questionnaires.

#### 3. Migration

This is again tied to poverty as communities are now moving a lot more looking for pastures green.

#### 4. Inadequate training

A certain level of training is required to fill out the SRC form accurately irrespective of one’s education level. The low education level of most of the communities makes continuous training imperative. SRC committees felt that parents training was inadequate; while, some could not recall ever being trained.

#### 5. Lack of feedback

Parents do not know the outcome of their activities during the SRC meetings especially when filling out the SRC forms. It was alleged that NTA had never reported back to SRC committees or shared any SRC report with parents.

## **Recommendations / SRC Improvement Opportunity**

1. Model SRC project based on parents / community needs – This can be accomplished by carrying out household surveys and FGDs with parents.
2. Carry out training / capacity building
3. To foster community ownership habitually present SRC finding and disseminate SRC reports
4. Revise SRC tool - current booklet perceived too long and time consuming; consider reducing text or separating / diving / segmenting the booklet





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**pesa zetu, haki yetu**

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