



Education International  
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# LEARNING HOW TO TEACH

## The upgrading of unqualified primary teachers in sub-Saharan Africa

*Lessons from Tanzania, Malawi, and Nigeria*



Herman Kruijer  
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Herman Kruijer is an educational scientist and coordinator of the Educaids network (aiming for HIV/AIDS prevention through education) in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda and the Netherlands. His research work is mainly focused on teacher education and the professional working conditions of teachers in developing countries.

## FOREWORD

Worldwide, there are millions of motivated men and women working as teachers in schools and other education settings, who do their best to provide children and adults of all ages and backgrounds with an education. The endorsement of the Education For All (EFA) goals in 1990 in Dakar, widely increased governmental support for free public primary education in Sub-Saharan Africa. In recent years, significant progress has been made in terms of access to primary education in Sub-Saharan Africa.

As education systems have expanded considerably, so have the challenges facing them. One of these challenges is the urgent need to meet the demand for additional primary teachers. In many developing countries, the increased enrolment of pupils in recent years has not been met by an increase in qualified teachers. Rather, to meet rapid expansions of student populations, large numbers of un- and under-qualified teachers have been recruited in recent years by governments in Sub-Saharan Africa. These teachers often face overcrowded classrooms, under-resourced schools lacking appropriate facilities, and poor pay and working conditions, which combined not only negatively influence teachers' motivation and status but, in the long run, seriously undermine the quality of education provided.

Education International (EI) strongly believes that the delivery of quality education requires qualified teachers. Although, ideally, all primary teachers should start their professional careers well-qualified, we face a reality in which a lot of teachers are not well-equipped for their duties. This situation brings about an urgent need to find ways in which to provide a large number of unqualified primary teachers with additional training to improve the quality of primary education. EI strongly believes that the EFA goals cannot be realized without sufficient numbers of appropriately trained, qualified and motivated teachers.

The need to find pragmatic solutions for an efficient and effective teacher training was the main prompt for this research, which focuses on recent teacher training initiatives in three case countries – Tanzania, Malawi and Nigeria - to upgrade the training of un- and under-qualified primary teachers to a higher quality standard. It is part of a series of similar research projects that EI is undertaking in other regions facing similar challenges, including Latin America and Asia Pacific.

The research highlights the importance of in-service training of teachers in upgrading programmes. It argues that their success depends strongly on student-teachers receiving sufficient mentoring, as well as the adequate provisions of teaching and learning materials and capacity building. Upgrading programmes can be more effective with the appropriate involvement of



mentors and teachers in their development and the continuous evaluation of their impact.

We hope the results of the research will be used as an example by EI and its member organizations, as well as other partner organizations, to highlight the importance of training and upgrading programmes for education quality.



Fred van Leeuwen  
General Secretary

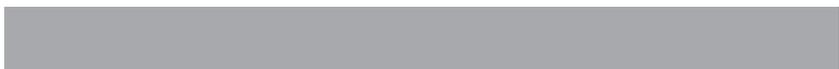
## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Let me express my sincere gratitude to the many people who have contributed to this study. An important part of the research was done in the field, where I received intensive support from officials from the Tanzania Teachers' Union (Anthony Mtavangu), the Teachers' Union of Malawi (Denis Kalekeni and Melina Kaphaizi,) and the Nigeria Union of Teachers (Obong Patrick William Umoh). Enea Mhando, national coordinator in Tanzania for the Teacher Training Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa, facilitated the fieldwork in Morogoro and was for a few days my knowledgeable conversation partner in fertile discussions.

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Richard Etonu Eringu, coordinator at the EI Africa Regional Office, arranged the extensive contacts in the field. Two Dutch NGOs, ICCO and Edukans, helped me select the cases to be studied.

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## ABSTRACT

International government support for free primary education in sub-Saharan Africa has massively increased enrolment in primary schools. One result has been soaring demand for additional primary teachers. To meet this need, a large number of unqualified or underqualified people have been recruited as primary teachers in recent years.

Because the quality of primary education is threatened by teachers' poor qualifications, governments and teachers' unions alike emphasise the importance of teacher-upgrading programmes. Furthermore, a rise in national teaching standards has rendered many formerly qualified teachers underqualified in the new circumstances.

The present study combines a theoretical review with empirical field investigations to identify the lessons learned from teacher-upgrading programmes in Tanzania, Malawi, and Nigeria.

The main conclusions are as follows. In-service training is vital to upgrading programmes, both for practical reasons and to enhance contextualised learning and practising. Additional face-to-face contact between student-teachers and their mentors, preferably in teacher development centres close to the teachers' schools, can provide a professional learning environment for interactive learning. Involvement of both teachers and mentors in the curriculum design is essential to make the upgrading programme effectual in adapting to local circumstances. Special attention must be given to the adaptation of child-centred, participatory teaching methods in classrooms where teaching materials are scarce and pupil/teacher ratios are very high.

Success in upgrading depends on sufficient mentoring, the provision of materials for teaching and learning, and capacity building of educational stakeholders at various levels. Continuous in-school evaluation and research, with active participation of mentors and student teachers, can greatly improve the efficacy and ownership of upgrading programmes.

### **Muhtasari - Kiswahili**

Ahadi za serikali kwa ajenda za sera za kimataifa kwa elimu bure kwa shule ya msingi zinasababisha ongezeko kubwa sana la uandikishaji wa shule za msingi pamoja na mahitaji ya walimu wa ziada wa shule za msingi. Kuitika kwa mahitaji hayo idadi kubwa ya watu wasiokuwa na uwezo au watu wasiokuwa na uwezo wa kutosha walijiriwa kama mwalimu wa shule ya msingi miaka ya karibuni.

Kwa kuwa uwezo mbaya wa walimu ni tishio la utoaji wa elimu ya shule ya msingi yenye ubora wa juu, serikali pamoja na vyama vya walimu vinasisitiza



umuhimu kuwapatia walimu hao uwezo kwa njia ya miradi inayoboresha uwezo. Zaidi ya hayo mahitaji ya sifa za taifa za kufundisha yameongezwa yaliyosababisha kwamba walimu waliokuwa na uwezo hawana uwezo wa kutosha katika hali ya sasa.

Utafiti huu ulio mchanganyiko wa utafiti wa kinadharia na utafiti wa uwan-dani unalenga kupata taarifa kutokana na miradi inayoboresha uwezo nchini Tanzania, Malawi na Nigeria.

Maamuzi makuu yanayofuata yamefikwiwa. Mafunzo kazini ni muhimu sana kwa miradi inayoboresha uwezo; kwa sababu za kimatendo pamoja na kuimarisha masomo yanayowekwa katika muktadha na masomo yanayofanywa na mazoezi. Mawasiliano ya ziada ya ana kwa ana bora zaidi kwenye vyuo vya ualimu vilivyo karibu na shule za walimu yanaweza kutoa hali ya kusoma kwa ujuzi, kwa kusoma kwa mwingiliano.

Kuhusika kwa walimu na washauri kuhusu kutengeneza mtaala ni muhimu sana kuonyesha umuhimu wa mradi unaoboresha uwezo. Kutumika kwa njia zinazoshiriki pamoja na kutumia kwa njia hizo katika hali mbaya kuangaliwe na usikivu maalum.

Kushauri kwa kutosha, utoaji wa vifaa vya kufundisha na vya kusoma na kuongeza uwezo wa wadau wa elimu kwa viwango mbalimbali ni muhimu sana kufaulu.

Utathmini unaoendelea shuleni na utafiti pamoja na ushirikiano wa kiutendaji wa washauri na walimu wanafunzi zinaweza kuchanga kwa wingi kuboresha uwezo na umiliki wa miradi inayoboresha uwezo.

### **Chidule - Chichewa**

Malonjezo a boma oti ndondomeko za mfundo za maiko ena okhudzana ndi maphunziro oyambirira aulere anayambitsa chiwonjezero chachikulu cha pulayimale sukulu ndi chofunika cha aphunzitsi owonjezera a pulayimale. Kuyankha kwa chofunikacho chiwerengero chachikulu cha anthu osakwanira pa ntchito kapena anthu osakwanira kwambiri analembedwa ntchito moga mphunzitsi wa pulayimale zaka za m'mbuyomu.

Pamene choyenereza choipa cha aphunzitsi chimaopsa kupezeka kwa maphunziro oyambirira okhala ndi ubwinodi maboma pamodzi ndi migwirizano ya aphunzitsi zimatsindikiza kufunikira kukweza luso la aphunzitsiwo kudzera ndondomeko zokweza luso. Komanso chofunika cha zoyenereza za dziko zokhudzana ndi kuphunzitsa chinawonjezeredwa chimene chimabwezera kuti aphunzitsi amene anali ndi choyenereza chokwanira alibe choyenereza chokwanira makono.

Maphunzirowa amene amalumikiza maphunziro a maganizo ndi maphunziro amene anachitika kumalo amalinga kudziwitsidwa ndi ndondomeko zokweza luso m'maiko a Tanzania, Malawi ndi Nigeria.

Mathedwe aakulu otsatira angamalizidwe. Kuphunzira m'sukulu ndi kofunikira kwambiri kwa ndondomeko zokweza luso; pazifukwa zochitika ndipo kupititsa maphunziro mmene amachitikira ndipo kubwereza.

Powonjezerapo kukumana maso ndi maso makamaka m'malo ophunzitsa aphunzitsi amene ali pafupi ndi sukulu za aphunzitsi kumakhoza kubweretsa malo ophunzira a katswiri kuti aphunzire mogwirizana.

Kukhudzidwa kwa aphunzitsi ndi alangizi kupanga ndondomeko ndi kofunikira kwambiri kuonetsa kufunikira kwa ndondomeko zokweza luso. Kuwonjezereka kwa njira zogwirizana ndi kugwiritsa ntchito kwa njirazi m'kakhaliidwe koipa kumayenera kuyang'aniridwa bwino bwino.

Kulangiza kokwanira, kupereka zipangizo zophunzitsira ndi zophunzirira ndi kukhweza luso la olonda maphunziro paudio wosiyanasiyana ndi kofunikira kupambana.

Kuwerengetsera mobwerezabwereza m'sukulu ndi kafukufuku pamodzi ndi kugwirizana kwa alangizi ndi aphunzitsi ophunzira kungathandize chomene kukhweza luso ndi umwini wa ndondomeko zokweza.



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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, remarkable progress has been made in broadening access to primary education in sub-Saharan Africa. The net enrolment rate in this region increased with about 25% in the first six years of the 21st century. However, there is still a long way to go to achieve universal primary enrolment: nearly half of the 75 million children worldwide who are out of primary school in 2006 are living in sub-Saharan Africa, and 55% of them are girls.<sup>1</sup>

The recent increase of the enrolment of pupils in primary schools, resulting from the campaign for Universal Primary Education, has created a need for 1.6 million additional primary teachers in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in the period up until 2015.<sup>2</sup> This figure is expected to rise to 3.8 million to include the replacement of teachers leaving the profession due to retirement or migration to other jobs or as a result of debilitating diseases such as HIV/AIDS.<sup>3</sup> Governments in SSA therefore face the challenge of developing policies to increase the supply of primary teachers. The urgent shortage of teachers has evoked pragmatic improvisations such as offering young people “crash courses” in how to teach. Especially in SSA, these practices have resulted in a high proportion of primary teachers being unqualified or underqualified for their teaching responsibilities.\*

Education International (EI) and its member unions want to address this predicament in order to improve the quality of primary education in SSA. Facing an over-supply of ill-trained teachers, EI wants to develop initiatives that can efficiently help untrained teachers qualify for their jobs. Accordingly, this study examines the experiences with upgrading activities that are actually under way by describing several teacher-education initiatives for unqualified primary teachers in sub-Saharan Africa. The study also gathers local stakeholders' reflections and opinions on the various programmes. The aim is to draw lessons applicable to other and future upgrading programmes.

*The study will highlight a selection of cases of the upgrading of unqualified teachers who are working in primary education, especially focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of upgrading initiatives in a specific context. Therefore, this study aims to provide support to the affiliated unions of EI participating in policy making processes for a qualitative design, planning and implementation of upgrading initiatives for unqualified and underqualified primary teachers.*

Copying “good practices” entails a risk. A good practice is in constant development.<sup>4</sup> A “static good practice” cannot exist. Furthermore, learning objectives and teacher-pupil interactions are always adapted to the local context and therefore change along with it.<sup>5</sup> A selective transfer of successful practices of teacher education to other situations can only be effective when taking into account the

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\* For instance, in 2005 about half the teachers in the primary educational system in Nigeria were unqualified (UNESCO, 2008).



differences and similarities in the contextual conditions of the various programmes at a specific moment.<sup>6</sup> To encompass these conditions, this study has largely been carried out in the field.

The study starts with an overview of current issues in teacher education, which serve as the theoretical background for the field visits. Then the field visit descriptions aim to provide an overview of how unqualified teachers are upgraded in four specific programmes:

**Tanzania** 'Upgrading Programme for Grade B and C Teachers to Grade A' (MUKA)

**Malawi** Link Community Development programme (LINK) and the Open and Distance Learning programme (ODL)

**Nigeria** Special Teacher Upgrading Programme (STUP)

The brief time available to visit the various programmes in the field limited the number of stakeholders that could be selected for interviews. Considering that education is a process that first of all takes place during the interaction between teacher and learner, emphasis was given to the experiences and reflections of teachers and their tutors in assessing the upgrading programme. Field visit activities consisted of semi-structured interviews with individuals and focus groups with teachers and tutors. Additional background information was provided by representatives of the Ministry of Education, governmental institutions, and the national teachers' unions. Academic articles, research reports, and national policy documents served as secondary sources.

This report is organised as follows:

Chapter 1. *Major Issues*. This chapter presents the broad context of education in developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. It describes current educational processes and policies and the distribution of teachers, thereby describing the context of the research.

Chapter 2. *Teacher Education*. Based on this broader framework, the focus narrows to issues directly related to teacher education, and especially the characteristics of teacher-upgrading programmes.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5. *Field Studies*. These chapters present the three field studies in Tanzania, Malawi, and Nigeria. Each case starts with a description of the upgrading programme based on national documents and on the field interviews and is followed by a presentation of the local stakeholders' views of the initiative.

Chapter 6. *Analysis*. This chapter combines the findings of the field studies with the issues and theoretical perspectives raised in Chapters 1 and 2. Its findings are intended to support the design of future teacher upgrading programmes for

unqualified teachers. Attention is paid to such aspects as the model and content, management, quality, and the context of teacher upgrading.

Chapter 7. *Conclusions and recommendations.* This chapter transforms the findings into general conclusions and offers recommendations for quality improvement of future upgrading programmes.

Most chapters conclude with a short summary in a text box. These summaries are intended to offer an overview for the quick scanner or a reminder for the careful reader.



## CHAPTER 1: MAJOR ISSUES

This chapter describes primary education in developing countries, supplemented by a special focus on the situation in sub-Saharan Africa. International educational policies and processes have substantial regional and local effects.

### International educational policies

The international Education For All (EFA) policy framework for international commitment to education was first set in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990. This commitment was renewed ten years later in Dakar, Senegal (April 2000), with the pledge to achieve six EFA Goals by 2015. Of special interest for the present study are universal primary education (Goal 2), gender equality with a special focus on girls in primary education (Goal 5), and the improvement of all aspects of the quality of education (Goal 6).

Five months after the Dakar conference, only Goals 2 and 5 were adopted in the declaration of the Millennium Development Goals to be achieved by 2015. The latter are less ambitious and more restrictive than the EFA Goals<sup>7</sup> because the focus is mainly on universal primary education and the elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the results of the policies that focus on universal primary education are mixed. On one hand, the average primary net enrolment in SSA increased from 56% to 70% between 1999 and 2006,<sup>8</sup> with some East African countries – Tanzania, Zambia, and Ethiopia – being very successful in this respect. Successful strategies included school construction programmes, the abolition of school fees, and the targeting of disadvantaged groups. On the other hand, in some West African countries the results were less positive, especially for girls. In 2005 Nigeria, for instance, despite some progress since 1999, showed a net enrolment rate of a poor 63%, with a gender parity index of 0.83, which together signify that 48% of girls in the primary school age are out of school.<sup>9</sup> Enrolment disparities within countries are sometimes even greater than between countries. “Disparities within the countries based on wealth, gender, race, language or ethnic group hinder progress towards [Universal Primary Education]. In Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, Mali and the Niger, children from the richest 20% are from three to about four times more likely to attend school than children from the poorest quintile.”<sup>10</sup>

The increasing numbers of pupils require additional primary teachers. Although some figures showing improving national pupil/teacher ratios (PTR) are encouraging, the general trend in SSA between 1999 and 2006 was an increase from 41 up to 45 pupils per teacher.<sup>11</sup> Apart from that, there is a strong inequality of PTRs



within a country, influenced by rural or urban location, socioeconomic context, and type of school. “Public sector school teachers in Rwanda work in classes that on average are more than two and a half times the size of classes in private schools.”<sup>12</sup> In Tanzania, with a success story of primary net enrolment increasing from 50% up to 98% between 1999 and 2006, the PTR increased by nearly one-third, from 40% up to 53% in the same period.<sup>\*</sup> This increase is largely due to a shortage of teachers.<sup>13</sup> There is a consensus that a PTR of 40:1 is an approximate ceiling for a good quality learning environment in primary schools.<sup>14</sup> Countries that aim to reach universal primary education with this desirable PTR of 40 have to educate a sufficient number of qualified teachers to maintain good quality primary education. Conversely, the implementation of free primary education without sufficient resources and thorough planning can undermine the quality of the education system and result in poor education outcomes.<sup>15</sup>

During the 1980s and 1990s, the provision of education in developing countries was confronted with neo-liberal policies set by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In the 1980s, under pressure of worldwide financial crises, these institutions imposed structural adjustment programmes to increase the fiscal stability of developing countries. These programmes limited the provision of basic social services such as health care and education. Financial development assistance for education became tied to conditions that limited the budget for social expenditures, and governments were thus forced to make choices that restricted public education.<sup>16</sup> In this way, international financial institutions directly curtailed the self-determination of governments in educational policy-making.<sup>17</sup>

Governments in developing countries were forced to reduce the public spending per pupil in primary and secondary education through freezing teachers' salaries, increasing class size, and reintroducing school fees.<sup>18</sup> Cost-sharing measures like school fees particularly harm children from poor socioeconomic backgrounds who thereby cannot afford to enter or stay in school. This outcome flatly contradicted the international commitments made towards in the Education for All agenda in Jomtien in 1990. In developing countries like Tanzania, these devastating choices were the main reason for the impoverishment of people.<sup>19</sup>

The internationally imposed cap on public sector wage bills induced national governments to employ unqualified, volunteer or contract teachers.<sup>20</sup> Freezing the salaries of qualified teachers and the employment of unqualified teachers damaged the quality of education. At a national level, the position of teachers was regularly undermined through policies that deregulated the labour market and contested the role of teachers' unions.<sup>21</sup>

With the 1990s came a change: the World Bank and the International Monetary

\* PTR figures can be highly misleading. The PTR indicates the total number of pupils divided by the headcount of teachers in a country. This figure does not provide the average number of pupils in class. For example in developed countries, though the PTR averages 14, there are normally 25 to 30 pupils in a classroom. Applying this ratio to the PTR of developing countries, such as Tanzania, the average number of pupils in classroom would be at least 100.

Fund called for “adjustment with a human face,” good governance, and the important role of national governments in the formulation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP). Policy choices were no longer limited by externally imposed conditions like cuts in social expenditures but became subject to negotiation between international donor and national government. This new practice emphasised the participation of the government, but the agenda of international financial institutions still dominated.<sup>22</sup> Nowadays, national governments have to rely on their marketing skills, balancing between their own preferences and those of international donors.

From the mid 1990s onwards, national governments like Malawi and Uganda began once again the process of abolishing school fees, often because of promises made during election campaigns. In a recent publication,<sup>23</sup> the World Bank emphasises that fee abolition must not be seen as an isolated measure, but should be combined with other measures that require sustainable financial support through major public investments. Good quality fee-free primary education is stated to be the “cornerstone in any government’s poverty-reduction strategy,”<sup>24</sup> with the political commitment of countries and international institutions asserted as crucial. Additional teachers and materials are essential to avoid a decrease of enrolment rates, especially among vulnerable populations. The report acknowledges that in developing countries parents still pay a major share of the schooling costs, especially in community schools. The question remains whether the position taken in this official World Bank publication will result in a financial pledge from international financial institutions, enabling a comprehensive approach that promotes the provision of fee-free, quality primary education. There are doubts whether such pledges can be fulfilled in the present financial crisis. It remains uncertain to what extent national governments and civil society organisations will be supported in making their own decisions on educational policy.

## Decentralisation

Many sub-Saharan African governments are promoting decentralised management of education. The stated rationale is to bring decision-making closer to the people, to make the educational system more accountable and responsive to the needs of each community.<sup>25</sup> This policy assumes that all members of the community are able to represent themselves in a democratic process. In fact, power relations within the community are often imbalanced. For instance, when a powerful elite dominates decision-making, educational efforts tend to favour elite children. In these circumstances, decentralisation is likely to perpetuate local inequality and unfairness in the community.

Measures to “give authority” to lower levels in the educational system are usually limited to transferring budgets to local authorities. It is rare to find a simultaneous and desirable decentralisation in other aspects of education, such as pedagogical autonomy and the involvement of teachers to create a richer and more relevant syllabus.<sup>26</sup>



Furthermore, financial decentralisation is quite often a way for governments to withdraw from their responsibilities. Under pressure of international financial institutions, national governments promote “a sharing of costs” that amounts to increasing the financial burden on local providers and communities to bridge budget shortfalls. Since the most vulnerable members of the community will be unable to contribute their “share,” decentralisation threatens the equitable provision of education. Decentralisation can also be a government’s tool to deformalise the provision of education, in order to reduce the influence of civil society actors like teachers’ unions in the policy-making process.<sup>27</sup>

A special example of decentralisation is the emergence of low-fee private primary schools replacing public primary schools. Outsourcing primary education to private organisations quite often starts unnoticed, without any democratic debate and with little advocacy for the position of teachers and students.<sup>28</sup> Official government statements welcome the availability of “choice” between a public and a private school on the ground that competition will improve the quality of education. However, in most cases privatisation is not complementary to an effective public system but instead pushes aside a public education system that fails to provide quality primary education for all. In some places, public primary education is completely absent. Privatisation entails a real danger of widening inequalities because it allows the public education system to enter a downward spiral of poor quality.<sup>29</sup> Being dependent on the public provision of education, the poorest people suffer most.

Governments normally try to regulate the quality of low-fee private primary schools by setting examination standards. This practice reduces primary education, from a process assessed by the quality of teaching and learning that occurs with individuals, to a commodity whose uniform output can be measured in standardised tests.

There is a widespread consensus that an uncontrolled move from public towards private provision of education, because of government withdrawal, undermines an equitable pro-poor availability of education.<sup>30</sup> Civil society organisations, such as teachers’ unions, have to defend education as a public service.<sup>31</sup> Governments are first and foremost responsible to repair their failing educational systems.<sup>32</sup> When undertaking decentralisation, they have also to distribute capacities that level local imbalances and ensure equity, accessibility, and the professional freedom of teachers.<sup>33</sup>

## Unqualified and contract teachers

With increasing enrolment in primary education, governments must now recruit additional primary teachers. In SSA, 1.6 million additional teachers will be needed by 2015. But how can all these new teachers themselves be trained when resources are so scarce? On average across SSA, 85% of existing teachers are trained. But in countries like Chad, Madagascar, and Togo, fewer than 40% of teachers have been trained. Especially in West Africa, governments have decided to recruit contract teachers to work outside the civil service structure.<sup>34</sup> The contracting of teachers allows speedy reduction in pupil/teacher ratios through a quick increase of teaching staff. The cost of contract teachers is much lower, and the length of their education is much shorter than that for civil servant teachers.<sup>35</sup> Contract teachers can be hired with emphasis on rural areas to reduce the PTR where it is highest. Also, education authorities gain flexibility to adjust the teaching force changing demand, because contract teachers can easily be hired and fired.<sup>36</sup>

Policies in support of contracting implicitly build on a subtly created picture among international financial donors portraying qualified public schoolteachers as an obstacle to the sound finance of education. After all, wages of qualified teachers form the largest part of the educational budget. It is tempting to diminish the importance of well-trained professional teachers for the provision of quality primary education and emphasise instead the availability of cheaper, more flexible teaching resources whose qualifications are a secondary consideration.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, contract teachers are typically not members of teachers' unions, neither receiving support from nor giving support to such unions. Therefore, the contracting of teachers pushes the unions to the sidelines in the recruitment of teachers and the assurance of quality in education.<sup>38</sup>

However, the use of unqualified teachers brings severe deficiencies that outweigh the superficial financial advantages. First, unqualified teachers who have received limited professional education are likely to provide lower-quality education. A study<sup>39</sup> in Togo found that students in classes taught by contract teachers performed worse than those taught by civil service teachers. It is not surprising to find that poorly educated teachers produce poorly educated students.<sup>40</sup> Secondly, unqualified teachers tend to go to understaffed schools in rural areas to reduce the pupil/teacher ratio to levels prevailing in urban areas. Therefore rural children receive the less-educated contract teachers, while urban children receive the better-educated civil servant teachers. This outcome exacerbates urban-rural inequalities. Thirdly, unqualified teachers encounter poor working conditions and low job security. They receive lower salaries, lack a clear career perspective, and will not receive any retirement pay. And yet they are asked to do the same job as civil servant teachers in the school team. This discrepancy harms not only individual motivation and self-esteem but also team commitment, the capacity of the school organisation, and the effectiveness of the teaching process. Finally, the poor working conditions and barriers facing unqualified teachers result in frequent absenteeism and high attrition rates, which again increase the PTR in schools.<sup>41</sup>



In sum, therefore, while the use of unqualified teachers allows a higher proportion of children to enrol in primary education, the result is a severe threat to learning experiences once enrolment has occurred. Higher enrolments do not themselves amount to an *Education for All*.

In November 2004, a conference on contract teachers in 12 francophone countries was organised in Bamako (Mali) by the World Bank, Education International, and the Association pour le Développement de l'Éducation en Afrique (ADEA). Addressing the problems related to the contracting of teachers, such as high staff turnover and low quality in teaching performance, the conference highlighted several recommendations on recruitment, education, working conditions, and future prospects for this group of teachers. The assembly recommended an initial education of at least six months followed by continuous professional education, aiming to increase and maintain the quality of performance of contract teachers. The assembly advocated moves towards fair salaries, permanent contracts, and career planning and promotion opportunities, in order to reduce disparities between contract teachers and civil servant teachers.

These recommendations reflect the desire to promote the *quality of education* by improving teachers' professionalism through teacher education, as well as the desire to promote *Education for All* by preserving teachers for the profession, through improvement of teachers' employment conditions.

## Summary

*Primary net enrolment is increasing unequally between countries. Even greater geographical disparities can sometimes be seen within a single country. Girls and children from poor backgrounds are most vulnerable.*

*In the 1980s and 1990s, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund imposed caps on social expenditures, which had a devastating effect on the quality of education. School fees were reintroduced in primary education.*

*From the mid-1990s, successful policies for Universal Primary Education brought increased school enrolments, creating an urgent shortage of qualified teachers. National governments had to employ unqualified and underqualified teachers in order to meet increased demand. Until 2015, sub-Saharan Africa will be in need of a total of 3.8 million new primary teachers to provide for education of good quality.*

*Processes of decentralisation to make the provision of education more responsive to local needs entail the danger of promoting inequality and unfairness when governments do not have the capacity to compensate for local imbalances in power structures.*

*Financial decentralisation of education can perpetuate inequality and overburden local providers and communities, especially when governments use this policy to withdraw from their financial responsibility to maintain the educational system.*

*The emergence of private schools charging enrolment fees is likely to create inequalities in the provision of quality education between poor and more advantaged groups. Low-fee private primary schools quite often substitute for a public system that fails to provide primary education for all.*

*If government regulation of private schools is limited to setting standards for final examinations, the content and relevance of the curriculum may be eroded.*

*Teachers' unions must hold governments responsible to maintain the public system to provide education for the poor.*

*The use of unqualified and contract teachers is a threat to the quality of education. Appointing these teachers is – in some countries – a government strategy to push teachers' unions to the sidelines.*

*Since poorly trained unqualified and contract teachers are serving disproportionately in rural areas, their appointment increases inequality within the country and threatens equal access to primary education.*

*Upgrading programmes can improve the professional standard of unqualified and contract teachers, contributing to the public provision of quality education for all.*



## CHAPTER 2: TEACHER EDUCATION

Teacher education will play a central role in achieving quality education for all. However, the preparation of teachers received little attention in the World Declaration on Education For All in 1990. A decade later, in 2000, the Dakar Framework for Action acknowledged that teacher education and professional enhancement were still being neglected.<sup>42</sup> Since then, the problem of teacher training has become a focus of concern, as shown, for instance, in the publication of the MUSTER research<sup>43</sup> on teacher education in 2003.

This chapter examines the background of the unqualified and underqualified teachers, the upgrading model, the upgrading curriculum, the teachers' mentors, the costs, and the context of teacher education. The final question studied is the criteria on which to judge the effectiveness of a specific upgrading initiative.

### Situation of unqualified teachers

Although many teachers might enter an upgrading programme with a minimum of qualifications, a blanket designation of them as "unqualified" may be misleading. Some of them will already have worked in primary education for years and have gained a considerable amount of practical teaching experience. An upgrading programme must therefore recognise trainees' previous teaching experience.<sup>44</sup> These teaching experiences can be drawn on as examples to link theory with practice. Furthermore, the ability to build on experiences of teaching practice will favour a more school-based training model, despite the challenges that such a choice may entail, as discussed below.

The upgrading course should be designed with particular students in mind. All too often, courses are based on mistaken assumptions about the motivations of students. Tutors and mentors should try to identify and consider the aspirations, perceptions, and expectations of the students who enrol and take these as a starting point for the training programme.<sup>45</sup> Not all students are "born" teachers who chose to make it their profession. For most applicants, the choice of teaching is a way to get a formal job and a salary, and serves as a "stepping stone" to a career.<sup>46</sup> Therefore socio-economic background and work expectations are important influences in seeking upgrading of qualifications.

Improvement in teaching methods fosters improved student performance. Previous research in francophone SSA reports that the effect of teaching accounts for 27% of student achievement.<sup>47</sup> "This finding is most probably valid for the majority of the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, and in fact would not come as a surprise given that in the African context school (the teacher in particular) is the primary source for learning academic contents."<sup>48</sup>



The unanswered question is whether participation in an upgrading programme actually leads to the improvement of classroom practices. In a research report on in-service education in Namibia, more than three-quarters of a sample of teachers did not demonstrate the desired teaching approaches.<sup>49</sup> Two instructive explanations are given for these disappointing results.

First, teachers were faced with very poor teaching conditions (physically inadequate classrooms, a lack of furniture and teaching materials, high pupil/teacher ratios, etc.), which made it impossible to apply the curriculum and teaching practices they had learned during their course.<sup>50</sup> This shows the importance of physical context to the effectiveness of teacher education.

Secondly, teachers in a poor context are likely to fall back on their previous schooling practices. The result is traditional pedagogical styles, such as lecturing and factual information drills. Resorting to traditional methods is based on the remembrance of their own school experiences in childhood, which dominate the teachers' images and concepts of what it means to be a "good" teacher.<sup>51</sup>

In conclusion, "unqualified" teachers who enter upgrading programmes bring with them their own background and experiences. A student-teacher is not an "empty vessel into which knowledge must be poured."<sup>52</sup> They bring along their previously acquired knowledge and their image of teaching, moulded by childhood and by their previous teaching experiences. They also bring their specific socioeconomic and academic backgrounds, their study skills, and their abilities for reflection, which should be allowed to influence course design. Ideally, a participatory approach to teacher education evokes student involvement and ownership of the upgrading curriculum.

Moreover, new teaching methods acquired must be adaptable to the physical school and classroom conditions the teachers will face. Otherwise, they will give way before the traditional methods previously employed.

## The model of teacher education

How can we get through to these teachers? How can we educate them effectively? These questions bring us to the topic of this section: what kind of educational model will be appropriate for upgrading unqualified teachers? These are not new teachers but experienced teachers already working in primary schools, often widely separated across vast rural areas. Their immersion in an ongoing practice limits the options for a model of education.

Traditionally, teacher education overall is provided in pre-service or in-service models or a combination of the two. These two models of isolated, shorter-term teacher education fail to cover current thinking about the learning process of individual teachers as a continuum<sup>53</sup> from childhood onward to the end of the

teaching career. This continuum already starts with the *learning of teachers during their own childhood*, by observing their own teachers, their parents, and leaders in their community. These early observations can mould strong ideas about teaching practice and the role of the teacher which become difficult to change during later stages of teacher education.<sup>54</sup>

In discussions of formal teacher education, the basic principle is that training starts with a period of pre-service education, which may vary considerably in length between different countries.<sup>55</sup> The Bamako Declaration established that the pre-service teaching period should be at least six months, and preferably one year.<sup>56</sup> Completed pre-service education is then followed by in-service education during a period of induction in the first year or years of teaching. This introduction into the teaching profession is ideally the start of a career-long period of continuous professional development, although this continuing part of education is rather marginal in most developing countries.<sup>57</sup>

The trend is to shorten pre-service in favour of in-service education.<sup>58</sup> This shift to in-service teacher education seems especially attractive for the upgrading of unqualified teachers in developing countries, in view of the practical obstacles to taking unqualified teachers out of their work and educating them in a residential pre-service programme. Also, the costs of in-service education are much lower than full-time pre-service education. When unqualified teachers are upgraded through in-service education models, we can state the following four findings:

- First, effective in-service upgrading will depend on the availability of support at the school level. On a regular basis, tutors should visit the school for classroom observations, education, and joint reflection with the student-teachers.<sup>59</sup> In reality, constraints caused by poor infrastructure, a weak organisational capacity of education institutes, and a lack of tutors make the regular supervision of students impossible.<sup>60</sup> Anticipating these impediments, in-service upgrading models expect the involvement of colleagues on the school team to provide professional support. However, where the proportion of unqualified teachers is high, as well as the pupil/teacher ratio, colleagues are usually not able to deliver sufficient support. In rural areas, where the pupil-to-qualified-teacher ratio is low effective in-service education will be especially difficult to organise.
- Secondly, the average academic level of unqualified teachers is low. Because of the urgent need for teachers, recruitment based on rigorous criteria of subject knowledge has been impossible. Therefore, the improvement of subject knowledge, as well as the mastering of the language of instruction, has to be an essential element of the teacher education in upgrading programmes. Under adverse conditions, in-service education alone will fail to provide these elements of teacher education.<sup>61</sup>
- Thirdly, teachers working under difficult conditions and with little or no pre-service education are likely to build solely on their remembered observations of teachers during their own primary and secondary education and will



copy this behaviour in their own teaching practice. In most cases, this will lead to the application of traditional pedagogical modes like lecturing, rote learning, and simple forms of “question and answer.” Only when supported from outside by tutors or mentors can in-service education under adverse conditions counteract these pedagogical practices and introduce more child-centred or adaptive teaching techniques.

- Finally, when novice teachers bring to school a desirable new way of thinking about teaching and introduce new methods from their pre-service education, they contribute to the innovation and improvement of education. However, with only in-service upgrading under difficult conditions, external stimuli for innovation in the long term predictably fade away and the school starts to feed on itself.

In conclusion, the in-service component of teacher upgrading makes it possible to build on their daily teaching work as a learning environment for student-teachers. Success will depend largely on the availability of sufficient support from mentors and colleagues at the school level, as well as on the physical school and classroom conditions. Without this mentoring support and an adequate school environment, the in-service component of upgrading programmes is in danger of leading to no more than learning by trial and error.<sup>62</sup> This is especially the case when student teachers have a rudimentary academic background and receive no guidance even on their mastering of subject-based teaching methods.

In this light, a non-school-based component in upgrading programmes for unqualified teachers can balance imperfections in the in-service part of the programme. A non-school-based element in the programme may also increase the time of face-to-face contact with tutors and peer students, providing time for interactive learning.

Formal pre-service education outside school, as provided in institutions such as teacher training colleges, tends to have a stronger focus on theory, such as subject knowledge and pedagogical foundation, than does in-service education. The accent on theory in long-term, non-school-based education runs the risk of a loss of integration of theory with practice. When the theoretical pre-service part of education is not adjusted to the actual situation in classrooms, there will be little transfer to practice, and student teachers will be disappointed in their expectations of the benefits of upgrading.

For more practical reasons, it is not likely that completely non-school-based education will serve as a way to educate a large number of unqualified teachers. Apart from the costs of such full-time education,<sup>63</sup> it will be difficult to take a sufficient number of unqualified teachers out of their jobs and relocate them to education institutes for a long period. Quite often, a compromise is found in a model that combines a type of in-service school-based education with brief courses outside the school.<sup>64</sup>

The formation of a teaching community can be based on a cluster of schools, working together in an education programme, in which feeding schools and core schools are linked together in a community of professionals. Such school clusters are quite often supported by teacher resource centres (TRC).<sup>65</sup> "TRCs are often housed in a larger school at the nucleus of a school zone or a cluster of smaller neighbouring schools, sometimes enabling the cluster to pool and share resources, experience and expertise among staff, and to facilitate in-service activities."<sup>66</sup> For instance, groups of teachers can learn cooperatively in workshops of one or two days that are held in these centres every month or six weeks.<sup>67</sup> Ideally, this model of education encourages adjustment to the needs that emerge from daily practice and enhances an interactive learning process. However, when groups of student teachers are too large, so that interactivity between students ceases to be feasible, the disconnection between TRC education and real classroom experiences can be as large as in mainstream pre-service teacher education.<sup>67</sup> Other disadvantages of such a model can be that the various workshops start functioning as separate modules with little coherence, tempting teachers to participate only selectively in the workshops.

Models of education that make use of distance education may provide an attractive alternative. Communications with and among teachers can, for instance, take place through printed materials, radio, television, internet or mobile phones. In this model teachers are educated while staying in school, and their education does not create an additional workload for colleagues that need to replace them.<sup>68</sup> Distance education can be of great use in rural areas, where long distances and scanty infrastructure limit externally supported models of mentoring.

However, distance education can only provide a supportive *addition* in teacher education. Though it can be integrated with other models of education,<sup>69</sup> distance education is not on its own sufficient for the entire education of unqualified teachers. Distance education in the form of printed materials and modules is best regarded as a "carrier" between the non-school-based and in-service components of an upgrading programme.

Ultimately, personal support, such as observation of classroom practice and the offering of feedback, remains an essential element in teacher education.<sup>70</sup> Feedback is also essential to distance education. Far too often, distance education is reduced to the one-way provision of instructional material, without any interaction on assignments. Despite being "at a distance," the challenge in the design of distance education is to develop materials with a relevant and locally produced content<sup>71</sup> and "with a particular focus on classroom relevance, learner achievement, and community need."<sup>72</sup> This is especially the case with internet applications that can be easily overloaded with materials originating in donor countries. Information and communication technologies in education can only be effectively used where the perception of education has shifted from "education for ICT"

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\* This schedule is used in the USAID Basic Education System Overhaul in Ethiopia.



to “ICT for education,”<sup>73</sup> subordinating techniques to the learning of teachers. Although ICT seems to have a strong potential role for teacher education, the use of information technologies to educate large groups of unqualified teachers in SSA has until now not been realised. Quite simply, in most places, the necessary technology will not be available for teachers any time soon.<sup>74</sup> Besides that, the weak political will for improving the technical infrastructure, teachers’ poor background in electronic media, as well as their sheer conservatism, are conditions that have so far hindered the application of ICT to distance education.<sup>75</sup>

Distance education brings the promise of reaching out to large groups at low costs. This idea may be misleading on various points. First, distance education cannot create a substitute for face-to-face education and in-service mentoring models; it can only provide a useful addition to these programmes. Because teacher learning under the guidance of tutors or mentors remains the pivot of education, the costs related to this part of the education must be included in total costs. Second, technical investments to reach out to large groups of teachers, especially by means of electronic technologies, will be costly. Most schools in SSA lack access to any form of computerisation.<sup>76</sup> Finally, we have to consider that distance education builds on the time investment of teachers during and beyond working hours. Even if distance education became a cost-effective model for the provision of upgrading, the student-teachers are likely to pay the opportunity costs.<sup>77</sup>

## The curriculum

What do unqualified teachers need to learn? Britton et al.<sup>78</sup> describe the activities of (novice) teachers during their induction period as: “effective subject matter teaching, understanding and meeting pupils’ needs, assessing pupils’ work and learning, reflective and inquiry-oriented practice, dealing with parents, understanding school organisation and participating in the school community, understanding self and current status in one’s own career.” Teacher education aims to prepare teachers for this broad spectrum of activities.

Just as in many donor countries, in sub-Saharan Africa the focus in thinking about teaching has shifted from “teaching a subject” to “being a teacher,” away from subject matter towards pedagogy. This shift has produced two practical consequences in the curriculum of teacher education: less attention to the student-teacher’s grasp of subject knowledge, and a strong focus on learner-centred teaching principles.

The shift away from subject knowledge is motivated by the idea, widespread in teacher training colleges, that student-teachers have already achieved a sufficient level of subject knowledge during their secondary education to be able to teach in primary schools. However, even among secondary school graduates who follow the official route to teaching, the understanding of mathematics, science, and languages is already criticised as inadequate. We can therefore strongly doubt the

adequacy of subject knowledge among unqualified teachers recruited from lower levels of secondary education, or even among primary school leavers. Furthermore, teachers nowadays need to have subject knowledge on a number of more general themes: HIV/AIDS education, gender issues, conflict prevention, active citizenship, and environmental issues. This increasing and broadening demand for new kinds of subject knowledge is of great significance for the desired content of the education of unqualified teachers.

The shift to learner-centred methods in primary education makes the individual child the focus of a more participatory and interactive classroom practice.<sup>79</sup> Teachers are expected to recognise and adapt to the prior knowledge and understanding of the individual pupil, to employ new teaching techniques that stimulate group discussions, debate, drama, etc. in order to foster conceptual understanding, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.<sup>80</sup> The introduction of these participatory methods to replace traditional lecture and “talk and chalk” methods promises a great step forward, especially in addressing the new kinds of subject knowledge.

However, the actual situation in the classrooms where unqualified teachers work is far from facilitative for child-centred teaching techniques. Large class sizes, shortages of teaching and learning materials, and a lack of professional support result in a considerably lower learning achievement.<sup>81</sup> A teacher upgrading programme that neglects actual classroom situations will be of little enduring value. When tutors, mentors, and qualified teachers are involved in curriculum development and renewal, upgrading programmes can be made more relevant and better suited to the actual classroom situation. It is precisely this pedagogical renewal in schools that is essential to foster the achievement of fair and effective primary education in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>82</sup>

## The mentoring process

Tutors and mentors play a crucial role in the success of education programmes for unqualified and underqualified teachers. These mentors (as we will call them in this section) provide theoretical knowledge, supervise classroom practices, give feedback to enable the necessary reflection on practice, and assess the progress of trainees.<sup>83</sup> Therefore, it is essential to emphasise the recruitment, instruction, assignment, and payment of the teachers’ mentors; unfortunately, this is often a neglected element in educational policies for teacher education.

Mentors themselves have to learn how to fulfil their tasks. Being a “good teacher” is necessary, but not sufficient, to be a good mentor.<sup>84</sup> Mentors must have a clear vision of the teaching process and the role of the teacher, and must have experience with the job, especially with the difficult conditions under which their student teachers are working.<sup>85</sup>

The present emphasis on new participatory techniques requires that mentors dem-



onstrate these techniques themselves during the interaction with student teachers. They have to “teach what they preach” in order to convince teachers of the validity of these practices and show how to apply them in the classroom.<sup>86</sup> In practice, however, “most teacher education programmes are taught in a traditional way.”<sup>87</sup> Although mentors are aware of the paradigm shift to participatory and active learning methods, lecturing is the most common practice in teacher education in countries like Niger, Senegal, and Burkina Faso.<sup>88</sup>

In schools that have already been forced to hire untrained personnel, the organisation of in-service mentoring of teachers is extremely difficult.<sup>89</sup> Especially in vast rural areas, mentors are unable to visit their students on a regular basis, so that the in-service part of the programme shrinks to a “sink or swim” model. It also makes the upgrading programme strongly dependent on support from colleagues within school, in a kind of apprenticeship model. The question is to what extent such collegial support can be counted on. Under difficult working conditions with large class sizes and double shifts, it is far from realistic to rely on the supervisory capabilities and inclinations of a few qualified colleagues. Moreover, to induce collegial participation it would be necessary to provide the mentoring teachers themselves with training courses and financial incentives.

These aspects show the need for a carefully designed instruction programme for mentors, including qualified sympathetic colleagues in school, to prepare them to educate the unqualified teachers.<sup>90</sup> Potential mentors would have to have sufficient academic background and teaching experience to be able to acquire mentoring skills. Furthermore, such mentors will expect to be paid for this assignment.<sup>91</sup>

## Cost-effectiveness

With so many unqualified teachers, it is necessary to select a model that can simultaneously educate many teachers at low cost. But however promising the model, if it cannot be sustainably funded it will be of little use. “Little information is publicly available about the cost-effectiveness of different training pathways.”<sup>92</sup> But we can consider the following issues:

When comparing alternative models, the payment of student-teachers’ salaries during the out-of-school part of their upgrading must be classed as costs. There will consequently be a preference for alternatives that produce a large number of teachers without pulling them away from their schools for a too long period.

An efficient solution could combine effective support from mentors while students are teaching in schools, alternated by short periods of residential education not far from the workplace. In this model, the larger part of costs lies in the financing of organisation, learning materials, and the salary payment for support and mentoring. A complementary use of distance education, by means of written course

materials, can reduce the residential part of training and lower costs even further.

The remaining question is: "Who is paying for these savings on costs of teacher education? Are the student-teachers paying the bill?" As discussed above, distance education may impose significant opportunity costs for teachers who must study in their spare time rather than find additional work for supplementary income.<sup>93</sup> Also, in some upgrading initiatives teachers are not paid during residential courses, or such courses are organised during official school holidays, again taking time that the student-teachers could otherwise be working at a second job. In such situations, measures to increase the cost-effectiveness of the upgrading programme can shift the financial burden to the student-teachers.

Ultimately, we have to address the question how far we can go with neglecting or underfunding teacher education without endangering quality. With a minimal model of education, it is unlikely that goals for quality education for all will be met.

## The context of teacher education

The supply of teachers is governed by a country's socioeconomic environment. Although some "born" teachers are attracted and held by the process of teaching itself, the main motivation for a large proportion of applicants will be to have a job and a regular salary.<sup>94</sup> In the best case, the attractiveness of teaching lies in both the professional content and the conditions of employment. If these two components are ensured, the education system is likely to attract more applicants with a higher level of preparatory education, and they will be more likely to remain in the profession.<sup>95</sup> The education of unqualified teachers will be more attractive if it answers their professional needs and gives them the prospect of future certification, salary increase, and new career perspectives. Therefore, the success of any upgrading initiative for unqualified teachers also depends on the socioeconomic environment of teachers. National governments must show the political will to end the deployment of unqualified teachers, and governments must be able and ready to provide sufficient financial resources to improve the teachers' working conditions after graduation and certification.<sup>96</sup>

Both teaching materials and the infrastructure of schools and classrooms are important conditions that determine the effects of teacher upgrading. When these conditions are deficient, teachers will likely not be able to apply participative teaching methodologies in their daily classroom practice.<sup>97</sup> Unqualified teachers usually work with high pupil/teacher ratios, physically inadequate classrooms, a lack of teaching materials and furniture, and so on. The challenge in the design of teacher education will be to find the balance between setting high standards for teaching and adapting to impoverished conditions.

Another factor is the organisational structure and management of teacher educa-



tion. Many governments in developing countries have moved to a decentralised provision of education. This downward delegation of authority is supposed to give teacher institutes the chance to deliver services that are more adjusted and responsive to the local needs.<sup>98</sup> Shifting authority to lower levels also implies the promise that teachers themselves can influence decisions on course content and methods. But when it comes to upgrading programmes, those decisions will remain highly dependent on simultaneous financial, organisational, and management support, which may not be locally available.

Sometimes decentralisation is merely a way to conceal governmental failure to provide teacher education by ceding that task to private service providers – who regard teacher upgrading as a commodity rather than a duty. Such circumstances threaten any fair and accessible provision of upgrading programmes for unqualified teachers, especially in rural areas. As long as it is government's duty to ensure that education is available for all, the government remains ultimately responsible for the provision, financing, management, capacity-building, and policy framework of teacher education.

## Assessment criteria

Teacher upgrading strives to improve the quality of education. More than forty years ago, Beeby<sup>99</sup> stated that “if attempts to change the quality of learning in schools were to be effective, they had to be linked to improvements in the education of teachers.” Teacher education is the strongest school-level determinant of pupils’ achievement, and the effect of teaching on education is even stronger in sub-Saharan Africa than in high-income countries.<sup>100</sup>

In order to assess the success of a teacher upgrading programme, it is necessary to define the qualities or characteristics that make up the desired programme goal. The quality of a programme is revealed at three different stages. From an *input* perspective the programme can be assessed on its model and its curriculum. From a *process* perspective it can be assessed on teacher demonstrations of improved classroom practices, such as more learner-centred methods. Finally, from an *output* perspective it can be assessed by measuring improvements in the learning of the schoolchildren they teach. The assessment perspective selected will have a strong influence on the design of the upgrading programme.

It seems reasonable to assess the success of teacher education in terms of the improvement of pupils’ learning achievement. The question is how to measure these achievements. Pupils’ scores on national examinations fall short of reflecting the full aspect of their learning achievements,<sup>101</sup> or will at least miss a large part of these attainments. Examinations are not effective tools for the measurement of pupils’ ability to resolve problems and other non-cognitive dimensions of learning, such as, for example, their attitudes as critical citizens. That might be the reason for the weak correlation between improved examination results and the level of

resource allocations for classroom processes that increase critical citizenship.<sup>102</sup>

Whereas pupils' scores on examinations are not a comprehensive indicator of quality, especially not of the success of teacher education in preparing for participatory classroom processes, the proper way to assess the effectiveness of upgrading programmes is to focus on the process of teaching *inside the classroom*. Content and teaching methods must be in constant development in an innovative process of negotiation and adaptation to the changing needs of learners.<sup>103</sup> In this approach of in-class quality assessment, such questions emerge as the following: Can we notice a direct interactive relation between teacher and pupils? Do pupils feel safe in school and in the classroom? Is there a sense of respect for pupils' autonomy? Are pupils challenged and confronted with high expectations? This focus on classroom practice will enrich the picture of the quality and effectiveness of teacher upgrading programmes, in contrast to a focus on results in standardised national examinations. We must remember that the supervision and assessment of these classroom practices remain extremely difficult in the context of an understaffed educational management system.<sup>104</sup>

Of course, the quality of the teaching process also depends on *input* conditions, such as the provision of teaching materials, the availability of classrooms, and the number of teachers, especially because these conditions determine the effective instructional time. The danger in this approach is that the role of teachers may be reduced to a merely input-related commodity condition for quality. Teachers, with their knowledge, motivation, experience, and social commitment first of all have an effect on the quality of education because their professionalism is essential for the teaching and learning process inside the classroom. In this process, the direct interaction between teachers and learners stays at the centre and is aimed at pupils' ability to organise information and solve problems. National examinations fail to measure this quality aspect of the primary teachers' profession.<sup>105</sup>

## Summary

*The curriculum of upgrading programmes for unqualified teachers must start from their academic background. It has to link up with their current working experience and the actual situation in their classrooms. A poor teaching environment threatens the effectiveness of an upgrading programme.*

*Teacher education is a continuum that starts with observation during childhood, followed by pre-service education, a period of induction, then continuous professional development. The effectiveness of an in-service upgrading programme for unqualified teachers depends on management support at school level and the availability of support from qualified mentors and colleagues.*



*A non-school-based component in the upgrading of unqualified teachers can improve the balance between theoretical and practical learning and can provide an environment for interactive learning.*

*It is likely that the upgrading of unqualified teachers has to combine a model of in-service, school-based mentoring with short periods outside school, possibly supported with forms of distance education.*

*Distance education can be of great use, especially in remote areas, provided that regular personal support is available for instruction, observation, and feedback. Distance education must be seen as complementary to other parts of the upgrading programme.*

*Distance education compels teachers to invest much unpaid time, in which they normally could generate additional income.*

*The mentors of the unqualified teachers play a crucial role. It is essential to consider their recruitment, instruction, and payment. Mentors must be able to visit their students' schools on regular basis, to ensure the adoption of knowledge and skills in the working environment. Experienced colleagues in schools play an important role in the in-service part of the upgrading programme. Their role should not be underestimated and must be enabled through training and proper payment for their additional tasks.*

*The upgrading of unqualified teachers must be free of fee-charging, and teachers must receive continuous payments of salaries while participating in residential courses.*

*The success of the upgrading programme in terms of enrolment numbers will largely depend on the government's commitment to offer the programme's graduates a civil servant position with the corresponding conditions of employment.*

*The improvement of pupils' learning achievement is the yardstick that should measure the effectiveness of the upgrading programme. It is essential to assess these achievements not only by results in national examinations but also by focusing on improvements in the process of teaching and learning inside the classroom.*





### **Note on field research methodology and limitations**

As with most field research work, the present study was confronted with several limitations. There was limited time available for the field visits: each of the cases and countries was visited for only one or two weeks. The research had to be focused. Since the goal was to learn how far, and in what ways, an upgrading initiative has been successful in educating unqualified teachers, it was decided to concentrate on the opinions of students and mentors. Additional information was then obtained from donors, unions, the Ministry of Education, and other stakeholders in the educational system.

The research is qualitative rather than quantitative. Information was obtained by semi-structured interviews in which individuals or groups reacted to questions or statements from the interviewer. The limited number of respondents prevented the study from being more than an overview impression of the opinions of a variety of individuals involved in a specific teacher-upgrading initiative. However, the qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth and nuanced discussion of each programme, painting a rich picture of its positive and negative sides.

The selection of countries to be visited was mainly based on the following factors: their practice of appointing unqualified teachers, the existence of interesting upgrading initiatives, and the willingness of local teacher unions to facilitate and participate in the research. In consultation with the local unions, and guided by practical and geographical circumstances, a selection was made of the areas to be researched within the country. The only condition was to focus on disadvantaged, rural areas.

A final limitation: the author, being a non-resident and therefore unable to speak the local language, is at a disadvantage when performing field research in developing countries, especially in rural districts. The only way to compensate for this was by being aware of the potential problems for respondents while using English during the interviews, and being very clear to all about the cause and aim of the research and the position of the researcher.

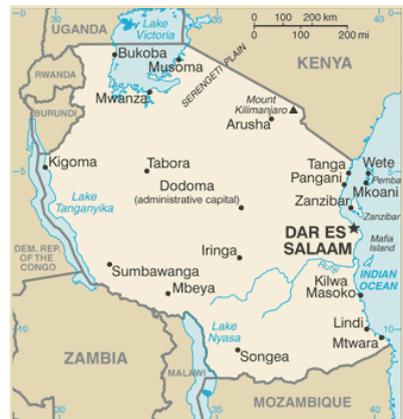


Plate 3: Makalanga Primary School, Malawi





Plate 4: Boma Primary School, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania



## CHAPTER 3: TANZANIA – THE MUKA PROGRAMME

### Education system information

The Tanzanian formal educational system can be characterised as 2-7-4-2-3+. The first two years of pre-primary education are followed by seven years of primary education. The official school attending age for primary education is 7-13 years, covering Standards 1 to 7 of primary schools. This is also the period of free and compulsory education. At the end of Standard 7 pupils take the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE).

Secondary education is divided into four years of Ordinary level, followed by two years of Advanced level. Graduation from Ordinary level gives entrance to teacher training colleges to obtain the Grade A certificate for teaching in primary schools. The Advanced level of secondary school gives entrance to tertiary education and to the Diploma Course in teaching, which is also provided by teacher training colleges and prepares for teaching in secondary schools. The number of non-governmental teacher training colleges is rapidly growing from 23 in 2007 to 34 in 2008, which is half of the total number of 67 teacher-training colleges in the country. By now, private colleges (smaller on average than government colleges) are educating 23.7% of all student-teachers.

Table 1: Primary education in Tanzania

Total enrolment	8,410,094 pupils
Number of PS teachers	154,895
Percentage of qualified teachers	82.2% (Grade "A")
Net Enrolment Ratio	97.2%
Pupil-Teacher Ratio	54
Gender Parity Index	0.99
PSLE 2006, candidates passed	70.5%
PSLE 2007, candidates passed	54.2% (62.5% male, 45.4% female candidates)
Transition to Form 1, sec. school	94.5% (51.2% of all PSLE candidates)

Note: All figures are based on 2008. Source: BEST 2008<sup>106</sup>)



## Teacher education and background

The provision of primary education in Tanzania has seen two initiatives for Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1974 and in 2002. The introduction of UPE in 1974 created an enormous increase in enrolment and a serious shortage of primary teachers. In order to meet this large demand for teachers, those Standard 7 primary school leavers who chose to train as teachers were given either a two-year teacher education course and assigned as Grade C teachers, or they received a three-year course with a combination of secondary and teacher education before being assigned as Grade B primary teachers. These alternative routes to the primary teaching profession remained in practice until 1996. Some primary school teachers did not go to any college but were trained through distance education or weekend courses.

The current mainstream route to teaching starts after four years of secondary education and graduation at Ordinary level and is provided by teacher training colleges in a two-year course, leading to the Grade A certificate. The first year is mainly residential; the second year has an in-service character, because students are already working as teachers in primary schools.

In 1996, the Tanzanian government started a course with the intention to upgrade 55,000 Grades B and C teachers who were "Standard 7 leavers" to the Grade A teaching certificate. In that programme, teachers were supposed to prepare for and take the regular Ordinary level secondary school examination, then continue with courses in order to obtain the Grade A certificate. This route had its difficulties:

*The government only thought of the traditional way of going to secondary examinations and then up to teacher education ... But, we knew that was impossible, because you can't rush the teachers through and ask them to sit for the normal Form 4 secondary examination.* (13: Tanzania UNESCO/TTISSA Coordinator)\*

*One of the problems was the language barrier. The teachers were supposed to learn all courses, except the Kiswahili course, in English.* (12: 3 tutors, MUKA, Morogoro)

*But also, it does not make sense to a teacher who has been teaching in a primary school for years, to subject him or her to a secondary school curriculum. The content does not relate to what he or she needs ... [We said:] Why don't you frame the academic content within the area of working of the teacher?... But the government said: "No, we are systematic, we go by the system." So, that is why when the first batch came to an end, they all failed.* (13: Tanzania UNESCO/TTISSA Coordinator)

*The teachers failed not because of the subject, but because of the instruction language.* (1: Principal Education Officer, MEVT)

\* See Appendix A for the list of field interviewees.

The renewed introduction of Universal Primary Education in 2002 and the failure of the previous upgrading programme was the immediate reason for the MUKA programme, the "Upgrading Programme for Grade B and C Teachers to Grade A" (Mafunzu ya Ualimu Kazini Kufikia Daraja 'A').

In Tanzania, our study focused on the MUKA programme, which has targeted more than half of the primary teaching force.

## The MUKA programme – a description

MUKA is a distance education programme parallel to the regular Grade A teaching certificate programme provided by the teacher training colleges. It consists of three important elements: face-to-face sessions, course materials in modules for self-study, and support from tutors in the classroom.

The aim of the MUKA programme is to improve the quality of teaching in primary schools. The three-year MUKA course was compulsory for all Grades B and C teachers, even for those that started in the teaching profession during the 1970s and were approaching retirement. When the programme started in 2003, teachers with Grades B and C constituted about half the teaching force, so there were more than 50,000 teachers eligible for the programme. In the first year, the course started with 5,000 students; in the second year it enrolled 10,000 students. The third and last batch sat for examinations in May 2009, by which time all primary teachers are supposed to be at the Grade A level. (1, Principal Education Officer, MEVT)

The MUKA course starts with a one-week face-to-face session, for instance at a teacher training college or teacher resource centre. The week starts with the tutors explaining the importance of MUKA, emphasising that the government wants all teachers to be upgraded to Grade A. Next, teachers meet their facilitators and receive a guide on how to study independently, which also asks about time available for studying, about timetables, and about aspirations for starting these studies. Then, the teachers are split into groups of about 40 to study the content of the course materials.

Twice a year, during the June and December holidays, there is a one-week face-to-face contact with the tutors in the teacher training colleges. (The original idea was to organise sessions of two weeks face-to-face, but funding was unavailable.) During this residential part of the training, the teachers can raise questions about areas that created difficulties in their work.

The course material consists of 25 modules, developed for MUKA by the Tanzanian Institute of Education, to be studied at home over a period of three years. These modules introduce the content that is necessary as academic background to teach in primary schools, then they combine this content with appropriate participatory methodologies. The instruction language is Kiswahili, the Tanzanian *lingua franca*.



The modules also incorporate more general themes: Children's Rights, Environment, HIV/AIDS education, Citizenship and Democracy. The aim of this broad curriculum is that every teacher should learn to teach all subjects in the primary curriculum.

Each module includes several compulsory assignments, which on completion are sent to the course facilitators for marking and feedback.

Tutors visit the teachers in their classrooms twice a year. During these visits, the tutors assess whether the teacher is really following the programme. The assessment of the work in school is part of the final examination, together with a theoretical MUKA examination.

Most MUKA tutors are normally employees of teacher training colleges and are Diploma holders or graduates. Their work for MUKA is an additional job, earning additional payment according to government regulations. The basis for selecting of tutors is their content specialisation, their knowledge of a specific subject. UNESCO provided the initial funding for the training of tutors throughout the country, which was done by means of a cascade model. For many of the tutors, the work in MUKA is just a continuation of their work as a tutor in the previous teacher upgrading programme.

After passing the MUKA examination, the graduates become equivalent to the Grade A teacher, with salaries (and retirement pay) increased to that level. Teachers have improved career possibilities with a Grade A certificate. They are allowed to become principals and have broadened possibilities to continue their studies.

MUKA is an initiative from the Tanzanian government within the framework of the Primary Education Development Plan 1 (PEDP1) for the years 2003-07. Because the Tanzanian government had set Grade A certification as a minimum standard for teaching in primary schools, all teachers below this standard (Grades B and C teachers) were forced to upgrade through MUKA. Programme funding comes from UNESCO through the government budget for education. The Tanzanian government provides the "non-liquid financial contribution": classrooms, boarding, etc. The upgrading teachers are not charged any enrolment fees.

The government coordinated the development of the programme, and UNESCO called for technical support on the International Reading Association, which proposed the introduction of "diagnostic teaching methods," that is, participatory teaching techniques. In this way the MUKA curriculum built upon the already existing interest in Tanzania for learner-centred teaching methods.

(Sources for this description: 1: Principal Education Officer, MEVT; 13: National UNESCO/TTISSA Coordinator, Tanzania)

## Reflections on the MUKA programme

The participating teachers have a positive general reaction to MUKA, chiefly because it gave them an opportunity to upgrade in their profession. As they said:

*Through MUKA we have knowledge of the environment. The community also benefited from our training, because we learnt how to discuss the problem of AIDS. (7: 3 student-teachers, MUKA, Morogoro District)*

*Before MUKA we had difficulties with some of the subjects; MUKA gave us subject knowledge, also on general themes. Before MUKA we used to teach in an old-fashioned style; now we use participatory methods. We prepare teaching aids, and this will lead the pupils to learn something. The performance of the pupils is now better. They perform very well. (8: 3 other student-teachers, MUKA, Morogoro District)*

Other stakeholders in the educational system express the positive side of MUKA as follows:

*MUKA answered the professional need of teachers, our members, because if you go to the modules you see professional content. It is a good initiative for development, because it is more updated and makes teachers qualified for the profession. (3: General Secretary and EFAIDS coordinator, TTU)*

*The success factor of MUKA, when you compare before and after, is that MUKA has contributed to the improvement of teaching and learning in the classroom. The pupils are really benefiting from that, creating now better knowledge than before. (9: Principal, Morogoro TTC)*

*The better side of the MUKA programme is that it motivated 55,000 teachers. They despaired; they felt treated as Standard 7 leavers. After completing MUKA, they were much motivated. (12: 3 tutors, MUKA, Morogoro TTC)*

## Teachers' reasons for enrolling in the programme

The main reason for Grades B and C teachers to join MUKA was that they were afraid of losing their jobs, because the Tanzanian government had set Grade A as the minimum standard for teaching in primary schools. "They were obliged, it was enforced." (3: General Secretary and EFAIDS coordinator, TTU)

*But we said, once you are qualified you will take your benefits. You get the Grade A salaries and increments. Also, you can be appointed as a headmaster. I think now the former Grades B and C teachers are very motivated. Because before, they were segregated within school; they felt inferior, but now they are certificated just like anybody else. (1: Principal Education Officer, MEVT)*



*We received a public announcement that we had to follow a programme to develop our knowledge. We felt good to receive this announcement, to be better in teaching. Before we were found not good, we were below standard. We were afraid in our work, but we thought now we will be a professional teacher, at the same level as our colleagues with Grade A. (7: 3 student-teachers, MUKA, Morogoro)*

Because MUKA did not lead to the top level of secondary education, regular Grade A teachers sometimes still treat their MUKA colleagues as less qualified to have Grade A. (3: General Secretary and EFAIDS coordinator, TTU)

Several teachers mentioned that they faced costs for the training. They had to spend money out of their own pockets for the fare to attend the face-to-face meetings, and they had to pay an examination fee of 30,000 Tshs. (about €17).

Moreover, MUKA graduates point out that they have not gained any financial benefit from their efforts.

*I graduated in 2006, but I still do not yet have the Grade A salary. We made that claim. I never got the letter that states that I completed the MUKA programme. A lot of teachers do not have that letter ... The children benefit from MUKA, but I spent a lot of time and did not gain anything from it. When they start such a programme again I would not enrol. I first want to see the personal benefits. (6: Student-teacher, MUKA, Morogoro)*

*The Ministry has not given them higher remuneration, which is demoralising for the rest. MUKA actually stopped, partly because of that reason. (3: General Secretary and EFAIDS coordinator, TTU)*

### *The curriculum*

The above respondents are positive about the content of MUKA, pointing out the rich subject knowledge and the introduction of new teaching methods. However, other stakeholders argue that the design of the MUKA materials missed the opportunity to do things in a different way.

*When you read the MUKA modules, you sit down and cry. But very few people think it is wrong, because they are used to the spoon-feeding of education: imparting knowledge, and not really making meaning. MUKA was very much largely imparting ... I believe, teachers are intelligent people, grown up, ambitious ... The learner should make the knowledge, the meanings, and then they can reflect on their lives. But we still don't have that; we are haunted by a focus on facts and by the spirit of factual examinations. (13: Tanzania UNESCO/TTISSA coordinator)*

This position is reflected in the opinion of some teachers, who say that MUKA was



shallow, not thorough enough. They argue that it should be sensitive to the need of teachers and that teachers should have been asked to participate in developing it.

*We could not influence the content of the syllabus, we had to follow it.* (6: Student-teacher, MUKA, Morogoro)

*If you contemplate the way we develop curriculum here, it leaves a lot to be desired because the teachers are not involved. The curriculum developers limit the role of teachers to implementers. It is ridiculous.* (3: General Secretary and EFAIDS coordinator, TTU)

The MUKA programme in itself did exemplify a top-down approach in curriculum development. The MUKA developers at the Tanzanian Institute of Education made an analysis of the knowledge of teachers and selected tutors to develop the content of the 25 modules, all without any teacher participation.

The methodological aspects of MUKA emphasised the introduction of participatory, child-centred principles. As suggested in the quotes above, teachers are positive about these new teaching methods and say that it improves the process of pupils' learning.

Discussing the applicability of participatory methods, various stakeholders take opposite stands. At the Ministry level, the opinion on pupils' participation is that "students should play a big role in the teaching and learning process. This can even be done in a big classroom." Teachers also argue that they really can apply participatory methods in the classroom, but when they are asked to give examples of their teaching practice, they only mention "teaching in groups."

*When focusing on group work, participatory methods fail because you did not get the real purpose of the method. People are just thinking about the teaching methods, but not about the philosophy behind these methods.* (13: Tanzania UNESCO/TTISSA coordinator)

Various stakeholders are positive about the philosophy behind the concept of child-centred methods as a way to invite the pupil to active participation, creating meaningful and contextualised knowledge themselves. However, different opinions can be heard about the applicability of these methods in classes with a large number of pupils. Respondents of the Teacher Educators Programme are positive:

*The planning of the lesson should already simplify the participatory approach in class. You have to look for prior knowledge from your pupils. You can't talk to one hundred pupils at once, but you ask them to share in groups. Then you ask group by group what their idea about the topic is. In that way you can know their level in ten, twenty minutes. It is just planning.* (10: TEP coordinators, Morogoro TTC)

Others disagree and stress that an individual approach to active learning is impossible in such an environment:



*Participatory methods are very good, but we see our members having a problem with that. In an overcrowded class with short sessions, they can't do anything more than lecturing. As a Tanzanian, we don't tell this truth.* (3: General Secretary and EFAIDS coordinator, TTU)

*When you have a classroom of 100 pupils and then you say you are working in a participatory way? That is just a joke.* (9: Principal, Morogoro TTC)

The opinions vary whether MUKA's main point lies in the improvement of subject knowledge or the introduction of new, participatory teaching techniques. Some respondents point at the poor academic background of Grades B and C teachers, and first of all see MUKA as aimed at removing the deficits in subject knowledge. Other respondents agree that MUKA has a role in improving teachers' academic background, but they emphasise that the main aim of MUKA is to instruct teachers on how to use this knowledge in a new system of teaching.

### *The model*

The general opinion is that the model of MUKA as a teacher-training programme is appropriate, given the large number of more than 50,000 Grades B and C teachers to be upgraded in a relatively short time. For instance, for financial and practical reasons, it was not possible to take teachers to a centre for residential training for a longer period. The teachers could enrol in MUKA because they were not obliged to leave their work in schools and homes.

*Because 60-70% of the teachers had Grade B or C, you couldn't possibly take all of them for a longer period to residential training. However, the best model is a sandwich of in-service and a substantial part of residential training, as in the college we can fill the gaps in the academic background.* (3: General Secretary and EFAIDS coordinator, TTU)

The most frequent suggestion for improvement is an extension of the residential, face-to-face part of the training, especially because the net effective time of contact was only three days.

*Many questions were arising, but we had no time. We said: "Stop about that, we don't have enough time. Let us continue." That was our normal language during the face-to-face session.* (12: 3 tutors, MUKA, Morogoro TTC)

The MUKA tutors note that feedback during face-to-face contact is very important for adult learners. And since almost all Grades B and C teachers had very poor academic backgrounds, a longer residential period could serve the demand for feedback, thus bridging the academic gaps.

A suggestion for improvement from the teachers' union is to base the selection of

the content of the residential weeks on the observation of the difficulties teachers meet during their work in schools. And vice versa: to improve the transfer from the face-to-face sessions to the classroom by grouping teachers from different schools in study clusters during residential training.

Such an expansion of the programme could benefit from, and make use of, the Teacher Resource Centres in the country. In some places new TRCs should be opened to get close to the teachers:

*We should stay closer to the teacher. It is very expensive and time-consuming for the teachers to come to a teacher training college. If we could use the TRCs so that they can go there for face-to-face training during the daytime, probably for two weeks twice a year, that would be much better.* (12: 3 tutors, MUKA, Morogoro TTC)

Surprisingly, the student-teachers themselves would prefer to stay in the college for residential training for three or six months. These teachers (all women with grown-up children and approaching the age of retirement) expect that other family members will fulfil the duties at home.

*The issue is not to be away from our homes. The issue is to have education. Being at the college we can concentrate on our studies and discuss more than at home.* (8: 3 other student-teachers, MUKA, Morogoro)

An explanation for this strong preference for a shift to residential models of learning could be the following:

*Tutors and teachers in MUKA want to have more residential training, because "schooling and learning" are not integrated in Tanzanian daily life. They believe that learning only takes place in schools, and that better learning occurs during boarding. I am convinced that rich contextualised learning takes place when you live your normal daily life.*" (13: Tanzania UNESCO/TTISSA Coordinator)

Respondents who see MUKA as a programme to upgrade the academic level of teachers tend to stress the importance of residential training; those who see MUKA as a means to improve teaching techniques emphasise the importance of in-service training and classroom support.

### *The mentoring process*

An important element in the design of MUKA is the support given to participants by other teachers at their own workplace. Moreover, tutors are supposed to visit the teachers for classroom observation and the provision of feedback.

*The tutors came twice a year, to look how we teach. They showed us the good and positive things. Then we discussed the problems and how to solve them. We*



*liked their visits, when they came in the class. (7: 3 student-teachers, MUKA, Morogoro)*

Yet, several respondents state this support in classroom was very minimal. They indicate that two visits a year, each less than one hour, is insignificant and only a formality:

*There was no time for us tutors to really help the teachers in the classroom. The visiting was no longer for observational purposes, but was used for an assessment, part of the examination ... Tutors were supposed to go to the classroom one or two months before the assessment, to make an observation to help the teachers. But, that was not done, because of poor organisation and a lack of human and financial resources. (12: 3 tutors, MUKA, Morogoro TTC)*

*The tutors had very little time. We even gave them money to come to us, because we wanted a teacher for something that is difficult to us. The tutors were not special for MUKA; they had many other responsibilities apart from MUKA. They were all the time in a hurry. (7: 3 student-teachers, MUKA, Morogoro)*

Another point of concern is the training of the MUKA tutors:

*The training of tutors was done by a cascading model, down from the national level. In general, this is not a good approach, because people often do not understand the message ... At the national level such a workshop takes two weeks, but going down to the ones the project is intended for, the time provided for this workshop is reduced to only a few days. (9: Principal, Morogoro TTC)*

MUKA undertook no structured assessment of the quality of the tutors' work. And yet the Tanzanian Teachers' Union emphasises that the most important aspect of teacher education is the quality of tutors. Tutors must have reached a significantly higher level of knowledge and mastery of teaching skills than their trainees.

### *The quality*

*Several respondents mention that the MUKA examination results are not a proper indicator of the effectiveness of the programme because they were not really discriminative. For instance, candidates in the 2006 MUKA examinations with failures in three or four of the nine examined subjects still "passed" the exam. (11: Tutor, Morogoro TTC)*

Until now, no study has been done to assess the effectiveness of MUKA in terms of the pupils' learning achievements. The Ministry regards it as very important to find ways to examine the quality of the programme. Teachers' ability in "organising group work" is mentioned once again as the main yardstick for measurement.

*The [International Reading Association] came down with some standards that*

*could prove that a specific teacher has reached the appropriate level. For instance, a Grade A teacher is able to organise and guide groups, allowing a participatory class.* (1: Principal Education Officer, MEVT)

To really know the effect of the programme, theoretical exams are insufficient. Classroom observation is indispensable:

*If teachers do well in the classroom in the ways you expect, then you may say the programme has been successful, and then there must be a logical consequence in the pupils' achievement.* (3: General Secretary and EFAIDS coordinator, TTU)

To increase the quality of a teacher education programme, it is essential to have some kind of pilot before rolling out. (Ibid.)

*While expanding the programme, we could think about the development and supply of materials, the face-to-face sessions and examinations. We started with 5,000 trainees, very few [compared] to the total number of Grade B and C teachers we had."* (1: Principal Education Officer, MEVT)

*Another quality aspect is sustainability. The outcome of the MUKA programme is not sustainable, because MUKA is not followed up by a plan for continuous professional development.* (9: Principal, Morogoro TTC)

*Teaching is updated every day. The curriculum and syllabus keep changing, because our world is changing. So, MUKA is not an end in itself. It has to be followed up with continuous in-service refresher courses.* (3: Tanzanian Teachers' Union)

The Ministry of Education affirms the current absence of a systematic in-service training for all teachers.

*We are developing the actual start of an inset [in-service] programme together with UNICEF. A teacher should participate in inset training once a year, something like that. We try to reach every teacher in a school-based approach. But to do this with the right modules in a large country is difficult. We are still looking for a strategy that is cost-effective."* (1: Principal Education Officer, MEVT)

*To find these cost-effective ways, several respondents point to the possibility of reviving the Teacher Resource Centres. These centres could play an important role. Not only in upgrading programmes like MUKA, but also in a continuous in-service programme for ongoing professional development.* (9: Principal, Morogoro TTC)



## Summary

*MUKA is a three-year upgrading programme for primary teachers with Grade B or C to obtain the Grade A certificate of teaching. The programme is mainly based on self-study of 25 modules, guided by textbooks. Face-to-face one-week sessions were held only twice a year; in addition, tutors were supposed to visit teachers at their workplace for observation and assessment twice a year.*

*Grades B and C teachers are forced to enrol in the programme because the Tanzanian government has set Grade A as a minimum standard for teaching in primary schools. Teachers are positive about MUKA because the programme enabled them to upgrade themselves professionally to the Grade A level, which would keep them from being dismissed in future.*

*Through MUKA, teachers were able to improve their subject knowledge as well as their teaching methods. The general impression is that the pupils' achievement is now better than before, but until now there has been no assessment of the effectiveness of the programme.*

*The "sandwich" of self-study and face-to-face contact is mentioned as essential to the programme. However, the frequency of face-to-face residential training, one week twice a year, has almost unanimously been considered insignificant and too short. Asked about improvements, respondents argue that practical or financial reasons do not necessarily need to prevent an increase of residential time, especially when Teacher Resource Centres are used for face-to-face training, thus getting closer to the homes and workplaces of the teachers. The use of these centres could also enhance the formation of self-study groups. Those respondents who emphasise the aim of MUKA to improve teachers' subject knowledge are especially in favour of a longer residential contact.*

*Student-teachers first of all mention the importance of tutors' visits to their classrooms, and they believe that two visits per academic year will be insufficient. This frequency is far too low to give practical support in the improvement of teaching practices. Due to lack of time, the focus during mentors' classroom visits necessarily shifts from observation and feedback to assessment and examination. This tendency might be symptomatic of an undervaluing of the importance of mentoring in in-service education programmes like MUKA. Insufficient financial support from government and imperfections in the organisational capacity needed for the mentoring process seem to be the most important reasons for the minimal support of teachers in the classroom.*

Several respondents said that MUKA could benefit from an improvement of the coherence of its three elements (face-to-face residential training, self-study, and tutors' classroom visits to enhance learning while working). Classroom observations could provide input for the face-to-face sessions, which in turn could be the starting point for the tutors' classroom visits and teachers' group work in clusters. Such an approach calls for more frequent tutors' classroom visits. TRCs could also be used more effectively to increase the number of face-to-face contacts for interactive learning, without an additional burden for student teachers in travel time and costs.

Participant remarks on the content of the programme are twofold. First, the student-teachers did not actively participate in the development of the curriculum but were merely seen as performers and implementers. Possibly, this omission leads to a rather traditional "imparting" approach in the face-to-face teaching and learning process and in the design of course materials. Secondly, advocates of participatory teaching methods seem to ignore the actual situation in overcrowded classrooms with a lack of teaching materials. In such a classroom it is difficult, or impossible, to provide "an environment in which the child has the opportunity to create meaningful, contextualised knowledge." Respondents urge that the methodological content of MUKA be adapted to actual school situations.

Student-teachers observed an improvement in their pupils' achievement, but they object to getting no personal benefit from their upgrading efforts. A large number of MUKA graduates have not received confirmation of even their successful completion of the programme, let alone an official Grade A certificate with the matching increase in salary, career possibilities, and opportunities for further studies. This situation is extremely discouraging and persuaded some teachers not to enrol in MUKA. The Tanzanian Teachers' Union is fighting for the rights of the MUKA graduates.

Various respondents point out the importance of a follow-up of MUKA to provide continuous professional development. As long as a regular in-service programme is not available, the long-term benefits of MUKA are threatened.



Plate 5: Mlambe 1 Primary School, Malawi



## CHAPTER 4: MALAWI – THE LINK AND ODL PROGRAMMES

### Education system information

The Malawian formal educational system can be characterised as 8-4-4: eight years primary, four years secondary, and four years tertiary education. Primary education is divided into two years of infant education (Standards 1 and 2), three years of junior education (Standards 3, 4, and 5), and three years of senior education (Standards 6, 7, and 8). This eight-year cycle of primary education culminates in the Primary School Leaving Certificate of Examination (PSLCE). Compulsory education lasts eight years, starting at age 6, which is also the normal age to enter Standard 1. The government introduced Free Primary Education (FPE) in the academic year 1994-95 to meet with the goals of Education For All. The relatively high rate of net enrolment (91%)<sup>107</sup> with a high gender parity index (1.06)<sup>108</sup> conceals a high dropout rate during the course of primary education, especially among girls.

Secondary education consists of four years: the first two years prepare for the Junior Certificate of Education (JCE); the second two years lead to the Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE).

The MSCE gives entrance to formal teacher training for primary education, which is a two- year course. At the moment, there are six public and three private teacher training colleges.

Table 2. Primary education in Malawi

Total Enrolment primary population 2009	3,187,064 <sup>109</sup>
Number of qualified PS teachers	39,000 (17, Ministry of Education)
NER (Note: Standard 1)	88% (boys); 94% (girls) <sup>110</sup>
GPI (Note: Standard 1)	1.06 <sup>111</sup>
Average PTR	97 <sup>112</sup>
Lowest PTR in urban zones	30 <sup>113</sup>
Highest PTR in rural zones	216 <sup>114</sup>
Survival Rate Standard 8 (2006)	31.9% (boys); 27.2% (girls) <sup>115</sup>
PSLCE 2006, candidates passed (2006)	78.5% (boys); 68.8% (girls) <sup>116</sup>



## Teacher education and background

The declaration of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 1994 brought forward huge numbers of pupils. To meet the resulting high demand for teachers, the government decided to provide 20,000 secondary school leavers with a training of only 2.5 weeks. The initial plan was to continue teacher training for these new teachers during the school year through school-based supervision and professional support. This was not possible, however, as the necessary structures and systems were not in place. Looking back on the introduction of FPE in 1994, we can say that its hasty implementation depended on the subsequent creation of teacher resources.<sup>117</sup> Three years after the introduction of FPE, the Malawi government introduced a new model of teacher education called the Malawi Integrated In-service Teacher Education Programme (MIITEP) in an effort to train the untrained teachers in the shortest possible period. In this programme, the previous teacher education curricula were suspended in all Teacher Training Colleges to give way to a new training model, which combined distance education and residential college-based education. During the residential period, student-teachers were given basic introductory lectures in teaching. The distance education component consisted of reading materials and assignments for self-study,<sup>118</sup> with head teachers and experienced teachers supposed to play a supervising role. However, the latter often lacked mentoring skills, and in some schools the trained teachers were greatly outnumbered by untrained teachers.<sup>119</sup>

After MIITEP was phased out in 2005, the government adopted the current model of training primary school teachers, called Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE). This model comprises two one-year stages: the first year is college-based, the second year is school-based. In college the student-teachers acquire teaching skills in all the subjects offered at primary school. Next year, in school, the trainees, supported by mentors, practise the skills they learnt in college. Yet, too few teachers graduate from IPTE to serve the primary system, so the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology has now introduced a distance education version of IPTE, called the ODL programme.<sup>120</sup>

Officially there are 315 Teacher Development Centres (TDCs) nationwide, one for each educational zone, though the actual number of TDCs now approaches 400. An educational zone is a cluster of about 10 to 15 primary schools associated with a TDC and a Primary Education Advisor. TDCs play an important role in the continuous professional development of primary teachers.

The Education Ministry gives 39,000 as the available number of qualified teachers in primary schools. In addition, the Ministry says, an estimated 5,000 unqualified volunteers also work as primary teachers. These volunteers are appointed and paid by communities or school boards and receive very low allowances. There seems to be some uncertainty about the exact number of unqualified teachers. Not all formally qualified teachers completed the MIITEP cycle properly; they must

be considered as unqualified too, along with the unqualified volunteers hired by local communities.

Because of Malawi's growing population and the wish to lower the PTR from 97 to 60, the teaching force in primary education must be increased to 58,000 in 2017. This means that, apart from the necessary replacement of teachers that will leave the profession up until 2017, an additional 19,000 teachers are required.

The IPTE programme in the six teacher education colleges delivers a little over 3,800 new primary teachers a year. This number falls short of the 2017 requirement. Hence the government in August 2009 launched the 2.5-year ODL (Open and Distance Learning) programme, which will deliver an additional 12,000 teachers (in annual batches of 4,000). An entrance qualification for ODL is graduation at the MSCE level (full secondary education).

School committees of rural primary schools having an extremely high PTR hire volunteer teachers from the local community. Link Community Development Malawi introduced – on a small scale – an improved model of recruiting and training those teachers, and this model (LINK) could possibly be scaled up to other parts of Malawi.

In Malawi, our focus will be on the LINK and ODL programmes, which seem potentially complementary.

## The LINK programme – a description

The LINK programme for the recruitment and training of auxiliary teachers is a governmental initiative, co-facilitated by the Link Community Development (LCD) organisation and the District Educational Manager. It started in June 2008 in 22 schools in the Dedza district, a regional town between Blantyre and the capital, Lilongwe. These schools received funding, about €2,900 each, within the framework of the Direct Support to Schools programme. This support was given to implement school improvement plans, especially focusing on Standards 1 to 3, responding to problems such as the high PTR, repetition rates, and dropouts. Through this support, schools were able not only to recruit so-called auxiliary teachers, but also to pay the existing teachers to teach in double shifts and work on maintenance and rehabilitation of the school buildings.

In total, 75 auxiliary teachers have been appointed in the 22 schools of two full zones, a “peri-urban” zone and a “deep rural” zone. The process of teacher recruitment was participatory, with community members and the headmaster proposing candidates to a school committee. All candidates had completed their full secondary education and had their MSCE, with balanced results in the various subjects but a focus on English and science. Part of the selection procedure was an interview with the headmaster, the school committee, and the parent-teacher



association. Furthermore, a demonstration of teaching skills in a real-life school situation was required, without any previous training. The average age of the selected candidates was 23, and almost 40% of them were female.

After selection, the future auxiliary teachers followed a five-day preparatory course in a local Teacher Development Centre, where they received an introduction to topics such as the learning process of children, lesson planning, and teaching strategies and skills. On the fourth day, they had some peer teaching experience and were given feedback. Also, a qualified teacher from each school participated in the course. This teacher would later on be the lead mentor in the school. Each auxiliary teacher paired up with an experienced colleague. Directly after the introductory course, the auxiliary teacher started his or her task as a full teacher in a primary school, in most cases in Standard 3 or 4.

One month before the introductory course, the headmaster and deputy headmaster of the participating schools had attended a two-day training session of their own, focusing on the recruitment of teachers, the way the programme should work, and how much remuneration should be given to the auxiliary teacher.

After the introduction, the involvement of LCD in the LINK programme is strictly financial. The local community is funded through the programme so that they can pay the auxiliary teacher a monthly salary of 5,000 Kwacha, approximately €25. This arrangement emphasises the ownership and responsibility of the local community for the auxiliary teacher and the school. LCD receives external funding for the LINK project from the Scottish government, the UK Department for International Development, and UNESCO.

Although LINK is not meant to be an upgrading programme for primary teachers, 20 of the selected 75 auxiliary teachers had previously worked as a volunteer or unqualified teacher, so for these participants the programme provided a form of professional development. During 2009 the programme has expanded to another 30 schools, bringing the total number up to 52.

In 2008, LINK was assessed through a school performance review.<sup>121</sup> This assessment showed that, in comparison to other schools, the training and support of auxiliary teachers resulted in the improvement of various aspects of the teaching and learning process as well as teachers' preparation and planning.

The impact of auxiliary teachers on pupils' attainment level was to be assessed during 2009. Evidence to date suggests that the recruitment of auxiliary teachers has lowered the pupil/teacher ratio and increased the contact time with pupils. The future of the programme is uncertain. In June 2009, the decision about a continuation of the programme after December 2009 had not yet been made.

(Sources for this description: 24: District Educational Manager and LINK Programme Director, Dedza; also LCD Malawi Annual Report 2008)

## The ODL programme – a description

The ODL programme aims to train 12,000 teachers in three consecutive annual batches of 4,000, starting in August 2009. It is an additional boost to the formal teacher training in the six public teacher training colleges. ODL is an initial-teacher training programme: it targets not only unqualified volunteers who have their MSCE certificate and are working as unqualified teachers but also MSCE graduates who wish to make a new start in the teaching profession. Funding for the programme is provided by a group of external donors under a government sector wide approach arrangement. ODL is free of charge for student-teachers.

The ODL student teachers start teaching immediately after an initial orientation of three or four weeks during the long-term holiday. This residential orientation, delivered for instance in TDCs, informs students on how to study on their own and how to respond to assignments, and it gives them some educational foundation. The next part of the programme consists of three modules for self-study, each taking six months. The total length of the programme is 2.5 years, in order to provide enough time for the combination of work and study. Students are to send back their completed assignments to field supervisors, who will then give them feedback and support. The TDCs are the main assembly points for ODL during the period of self-study. Support in schools will be given by the field supervisors who travel by motorbike. Retired educational officers, retired secondary school teachers, and retired primary teachers will be asked to restart working as supervisors and observe the students' work in schools.

The content of the ODL curriculum is the same as the IPTE curriculum delivered in TDCs; the only difference is that the materials are to be adapted to the distance education aspect of the course, "talking to the students" and inviting them to interact and reflect. Teachers themselves will not have any influence on the design and content of the programme.

The entrance qualification for ODL is a full MSCE with passes in English, mathematics, and at least one science subject. These qualifications are lower than the entrance requirements for IPTE, where a higher credit in English is required. This cutback of requirements was introduced in order to increase the number of possible applicants. Teachers with only the junior certificate of education (two years of secondary school) are not admitted to ODL.

The ODL programme recruits teachers "depending on need." Candidates apply to the Primary Education Advisor of the local TDC, who knows where there is a shortage of qualified teachers. An applicant selected for ODL will remain in the same school during the 2.5-year course and for the subsequent five years. In this way the government tries to prevent the migration of teachers to urban areas. During the programme, the student teachers immediately are to be paid about 90% of the normal teaching salary as temporary teachers. As civil servants, they are to



receive all allowances related to the teaching profession, which also entitles them to a retirement pension. After finishing the programme, the students will have the same teaching qualification as graduates of the regular IPTE programme. It is official governmental policy that all primary teachers must have this qualification.

(Sources for this description: 16: Coordinator, DTED; 17: Director of Basic Education, MOEST; 18: Controller of Human Resources, MOEST)

## The academic upgrading of volunteer teachers

The Makalanga Primary School illustrates the position of volunteer teachers, appointed and paid by the local community. The school is situated northwest of Blantyre in a rural district where 30% of the primary teachers are unqualified volunteers. The Makalanga School has 509 pupils, three qualified teachers, and seven unqualified volunteer teachers.

The local community asked the volunteers to assist the qualified teachers. During an interview with three of the volunteer teachers, they reveal:

*We decided to work as teachers five years ago, because we wanted to help the children. We thought it better than having just three teachers in three classes, leaving five classes unattended. When starting, we met with the headmaster for an orientation on how we can write a lesson scheme. Then, we went to the TDC for a training of one week. We went there every day by bike, which is 30 kilometres away from here.*

*Thereafter we started teaching. When we had problems, we asked our headmaster or our fellow teachers. Once a year or so, we have workshops in the TDC. We learned how to write a lesson plan, how to handle the class, to improve our teaching skills, and to handle hearing impaired pupils. Our general support is coming from the PEA and the headmaster. The PEA comes to our classroom and tells us how to improve.*

*We have our JCE (Junior Certificate of Education). In the future, we want to sit for our MSCE and continue teacher training. We could do this in the evening hours, but we do not have the money. The MSCE course will take two years, charging a yearly fee of 7,500 Kwacha. We only receive 800 Kwacha a month [€4], that is collected from the community, but we stayed without salary for three months now. We can't afford anything. We are all married and have kids, but are depending on our parents and our own garden for food.*

*We have been working as volunteers for many years, but the money remains little. We will not slide back, but can we be given something so that we can work comfortably? To qualify as a teacher...?*

(Source: 22: 3 unqualified volunteer teachers, headmaster, rural Lirangwe)

The two Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) of the Blantyre rural respond:

*At our TDC, we used to have a programme for upgrading these volunteer teachers with only JCE to the MSCE level. We arranged for five secondary school teachers to come to teach the volunteers academically. The programme was good, Mondays to Fridays from 2 to 5 pm, the materials were provided to the students. But the funding stopped, and that made us to focus on the qualified and no longer on the unqualified. Even classroom supervision can't be done regularly anymore, because we are supposed to work on the other programmes for the qualified teachers.*

*We have a lot of material in the TDCs for upgrading JCE holders to the MSCE level. As PEAs, we have the skills and knowledge to train these volunteers who have too low qualifications to go for ODL. But although they are unqualified, they are assisting the schools! Without them, the Makalanga School would have three teachers for 500 pupils. Why don't we train them in the TDCs? So that they can keep working and have enough money to sustain life.*

*ODL is a good programme, but they should consider the teachers with a JCE, including the academic upgrading in the training package. That would help to do away with understaffing in the schools. You see, most volunteers have the JCE; they must be noticed by the government. The government should allocate funds for training unqualified teachers – not giving them allowances, but funding the TDCs on regular basis to provide academic upgrading for the unqualified. (Source: 19: 2 unqualified volunteer teachers, 2 PEAs, headmaster, Lirangwe Zone; 20: Headmaster, Lirangwe Zone; 22: 3 unqualified volunteer teachers, headmaster, rural Lirangwe Zone)*

Because ODL takes only candidates with a pass at the MSCE level, the volunteer teachers with only the JCE will not be admitted. Their future position is uncertain, though the government is aware of the important role of these volunteer teachers.

*Those that do not meet the entry requirement [for ODL], we should offer them a programme to upgrade their academic knowledge, so that they can qualify later on. We must be sensitive to the needs of these teachers. We have schools with more than 800 pupils with only one qualified teacher, supported by volunteers. The community is doing their part, but are we as a Ministry doing our part in terms of imparting the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to help the children? ... We asked our colleagues of the Teachers Union of Malawi to help them upgrade to senior secondary level. (17: Director of Basic Education, MOEST)*

*We realise that there are volunteers that are below standards. Probably, they will be class assistants in future. But we have to discuss with the TUM, when we bring in a class assistant, are we diluting the profession? (18: Controller of Human Resources, MOEST)*

*As a union, we advocate that a teacher must have undergone two years of full teacher training before he or she stands in front of the class. I think of profes-*



*sional and academic training. To take them from the street, whatever the reasons we may have, is a mockery of the teaching profession. If the standard of our profession will be diluted, this comes from the poor influx of untrained teachers.*  
(26: President, TUM)

The Teachers Union of Malawi (TUM) persuaded the government that it would be unfair to abandon untrained teachers, neglecting their important contribution in the schools. Instead, though communities must be barred from appointing untrained teachers, those who are already in the system must be upgraded to MSCE level and follow a regular teacher training course.

TUM provides an upgrading programme from the JCE to the full MSCE for teachers. This upgrading programme is not a form of teacher education but roughly equivalent to the third and fourth year of secondary education. In 2003, the programme was launched and funded by the Canadian Teachers Federation (CTF), and it admits about 400 students every year. Students follow residential training for 21 successive days during the long holiday, followed by a semester of self-study, preparing for the MSCE exam, so that they can profit from ODL. Unfortunately, the CTF has decided to stop their support, which compelled TUM to charge an annual course fee of 7,500 Kwacha. As can be concluded from the above case description of the Makalanga Primary School, this is an obstacle preventing enrolment for a large number of less qualified teachers.

## Reflections on LINK

To address the urgent shortage of teachers, LINK recruits and employs volunteer teachers. But, unlike a local community recruiting inexpensive JCE holders, LINK uses an intensive selection procedure and only recruits volunteers with a pass at the MSCE level. The LINK selection criteria admit those who are potential candidates for ODL upgrading but exclude those with only Junior Certificates.

At the outset of the LINK programme, before the ODL scheme was in place, LINK could have been questioned as just another crash programme that ends up increasing the number of unqualified teachers in primary schools. However, in connection with ODL, the hiring of auxiliary teachers under LINK can be seen as complementary to ODL. LINK is therefore a pragmatic first step to relieve the shortage of teachers, in the expectation that auxiliary teachers will be integrated into the formal system through ODL upgrading.

LINK, in choosing to refrain from using "cheap Junior Certificate labour," has proven that enough qualitative MSCE graduates can be found in the community for teaching in the nearby schools. This increased the involvement of community in the school and also raised the status of the teacher as a role model for the community.

The LINK point of view on teacher training contrasts with that of the Teachers Union of Malawi cited above:

*My opinion is that a 23-year-old teacher who just comes out of their own formal education, may probably provide better quality lessons with more motivation and enthusiasm than somebody that has been in the system for 20 years. It is not necessarily the case that just because they have only five days of education they would compromise the quality of education.* (24: LINK Programme Director, Dedza)

And indeed, an auxiliary teacher's lesson on HIV/AIDS observed in Standard 7 was impressive, and probably not distinguishable from the work of a qualified teacher. He was very much at ease raising sensitive subjects related to sexual and reproductive health by distributing and provoking questions among girls and boys. All students were actively interested. The auxiliary teacher was not afraid to admit to having no answers to all questions about the topic, and in a personal story he introduced his own view on this topic. Such competence may largely depend on the knowledge and skills of the particular teacher, but the observation shows that auxiliary teachers can play an important role in a providing quality primary education.

But auxiliary teachers themselves express some doubts about the programme:

*The five day workshop [at the start of LINK] is supposed to be ongoing, because five days were not sufficient. In five days you cannot make teachers. Even the teachers themselves said the time was not sufficient.* (24: District Educational Manager, Dedza)

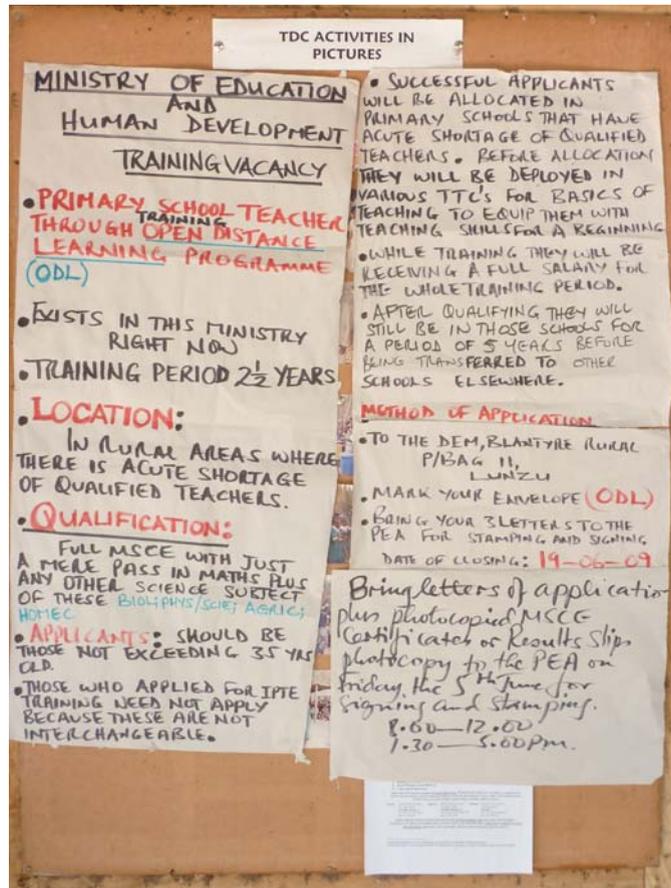
*In the orientation we learnt how to scheme, to make a lesson plan. And we got a little bit of skills there, but it was not enough for one to become a full teacher. To be a professional, a real teacher, I need more skills. Teachers who go through normal training know much about lesson presentation. We did not go that far in our training. When I go to college, I will acquire the practical skills, the presentation of the lessons in class. Because the five-day training concentrated on theory.* (25: Auxiliary teacher, Dedza)

Unfortunately, LCD's involvement in the LINK programme stops after the initial week.

*LINK is not a complete teacher training. They simply help these teaching assistants to find their way into teaching ... They go through a short induction programme; thereafter they should have strong mentorship. LINK does not provide that.* (17: Director of Basic Education, MOEST)

The quality of the upgrading depends heavily on mentoring in schools by the headmaster, deputy headmaster, and a qualified teacher peer. Auxiliary teachers are indeed supported by the (deputy) headmaster in the preparation of lessons, but Link Community Development doubts whether colleagues are really pairing up with the auxiliary teachers to give them support. Yet, this mentoring of auxiliary teachers is essential to assure quality.

Plate 6:  
Announcement of the ODL  
Programme, rural Blantyre, Malawi



The auxiliary teachers prepare well. Every morning, I check their lesson plan and scheme of work. I observe the lessons of the auxiliary teachers. I observe whether the message reaches the pupils, whether teaching and learning materials are used. Also, I assess the relation between teacher and children, their behaviour. After the lesson, I discuss with the teacher and give suggestions to improve. (30: Headmaster, rural Lilongwe)

Although this headmaster claims that qualified and auxiliary teachers form a homogeneous team, the auxiliary teachers feel that if they are to improve themselves to be "as bright as their professional colleagues" more financial support is necessary.

But then, when they compare the 5,000 Kwacha with the salaries of qualified teachers [the starting salary of a qualified teacher is 15,000 Kwacha], they see themselves as a lower category. (24: District Educational Manager, Dedza)

*What I am trying to be, is a qualified teacher. The 5,000 Kwacha is not enough.*  
(28: Auxiliary teacher, rural Lilongwe)

Another reason to upgrade is that auxiliary teachers feel they are too dependent on LINK, which supports the local community in paying the auxiliary teachers. And they have some doubts about the sustainability of the programme.

*If the programme ended today, it means we don't have anything, we don't have even a future. It will end up here. But, if the programme could continue and bring us to college, our future can be brighter.* (25: Auxiliary teacher, Dedza)

Finally, the sponsoring LCD organisation recognises that it is essential for LINK to give guidance to schools and communities in preparing for the recruitment of auxiliary teachers. Furthermore, it emphasises the importance of mentors supporting the auxiliary teachers in their professional development in schools.

## Reflections on ODL

ODL had not yet started while this report was being written. Nonetheless, several respondents expressed their expectations of the programme and mentioned possible success factors and pitfalls.

As an alternative to the normal initial training programme, IPTE, ODL provides distance teacher education for an additional 12,000 teachers. The recruitment of teachers is organised in a decentralised way (see Plate 6).

*In this way we expect to answer [to] the needs, especially in rural areas, where teachers run away to urban areas. If we could train them in rural areas, it is likely that they would stay there.* (16: Coordinator, DTED)

ODL comes to the student-teacher, and especially to the volunteer teacher at the MSCE level. For them, ODL is an opportunity to upgrade and become independent of support from the community. When starting ODL, the participants receive a salary from the government; after graduation, students will stay in the same school for at least five years.

*With ODL, we train students in their own area ... The people we recruit are from underserved areas and remain there and reduce the PTR. We see it as a positive programme.* (26: President, TUM)

It became apparent during the interviews with various stakeholders that the practical organisation of the training had not yet been clearly defined, even though the training had to start in three months. It seemed as if the programme had been hastily improvised to increase the number of teachers.



*There is a potential in the ODL programme. But in view of how it is managed and implemented, I doubt it ... In terms of how teachers will be clustered and receive in-service mentoring support. I can see how the holiday time using Teacher Training College (TRC) space could work, because the infrastructure is there. But I don't know how the in-service mentoring support is going to work when you have 4,000 teachers across the country.* (24: LINK Programme Director, Dedza)

This comment is echoed by other stakeholders:

*With MIITEP the major challenge was to find enough expert colleagues available. This time we must get it right, otherwise it will be a failure. The schools that attract ODL learners have a lot of volunteer teachers and are critically short of qualified teachers. So who will be their mentor?* (17: Director of Basic Education, MOEST)

*Difficulties may arise because the students need mentorship. I foresee that for mentoring we are very dependent on the headmasters, but they are not oriented and trained for that.* (26: President, TUM)

There are also questions about ODL funding, especially on the payment for mentors and the provision of teaching and learning materials.

*We have to find out how we can pay the mentors, the colleagues in the school. If you don't do this, it will be a threat to ODL ... Normally, 70% of our costs are salaries, and only 15% infrastructure and 15% teaching and learning materials. For the ODL programme this could be even worse.*" (18: Controller of Human Resources, MOEST)

*A problem with ODL could be when teaching and learning materials are not provided.*" (26: President, TUM)

Because the availability of teaching and learning materials is indispensable for the improvement of in-class teaching practice, it is an essential condition for the effectiveness of any upgrading programme. This seems to be a recurring problem: in 1997, at the introduction of the MIITEP programme, only 6 percent of funding was spent on teaching and learning materials.<sup>122</sup>

Two months before the kickoff of ODL, some uncertainties remain. The general feeling about the aim and design of the programme is positive, but some essential factors are distinguished as possible stumbling blocks.

## Summary

Link Community Development (LCD) tries to answer to the urgent need for primary teachers by selecting candidates with a Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) and by providing them with an initial training of one week through the LINK programme. Thereafter, they start working independently as an “auxiliary” teacher, with mentoring support from a colleague at the school.

The positive side of LINK is that it maintains the entry qualification of MSCE, which is a sort of advanced level of secondary education. Furthermore, LINK introduces an improved selection procedure and provides an initial training of five days. On the negative side, LINK again launches into the educational system auxiliary teachers who are only slightly better qualified than volunteers with the Junior Certificate of Education (JCE); auxiliary teachers are still far below the standards as set by the Malawi government and the Teachers Union of Malawi. From the moment that teachers start working following their introductory week, LINK is no longer active in supervising or mentoring. LCD management is rather positive about the quality of the auxiliary teachers, but the teachers themselves see their orientation to teaching as insufficient; they do not feel they are “full teachers” compared to their qualified colleagues. Apart from that, they fear for their position after completing LINK.

LINK and the government’s Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programme can possibly be seen as complementary, the latter providing the possibility for auxiliary teachers from LINK to upgrade to an appropriate level with corresponding certification. The introduction of ODL training justified the already existing LINK programme as a short-term solution for the urgent need of teachers. However, both programmes neglect and exclude the largest proportion of unqualified teachers who are already in the profession and contributing to the provision of primary education: the volunteer teachers with a JCE certificate.

The government is aware of the indispensable contribution of volunteer teachers in primary education and realises that those with JCE level should also be offered an opportunity to improve themselves, as is currently offered to MSCE graduates by ODL. Nevertheless, the first step in upgrading these JCE holders to MSCE level in Teacher Development Centres (TDC) is no longer (financially) supported by the government or by external donors like the Canadian Teachers’ Federation. This task has been left to the Teachers’ Union of Malawi, which tries to compensate for shortcomings in government policies on teacher education.

The Malawi government seems to underestimate the advantages of the use of TDCs for the academic and professional upgrading of (volunteer) teachers. TDCs are not used to the fullest possible extent. The centres could



extend their function to residential courses for JCE teachers, and the Primary Education Advisors who now work in the TDCs could broaden their mentoring and support activities. But these enhancements would require organisational and financial support from government.

The government is considering whether the JCE volunteers who have failed to upgrade might be appointed in future as class assistants, a role which would be a step down their current work as a teacher. Then the question remains: Will these classroom assistants really be working as assistants, or will they actually keep working as primary teachers? In that case the introduction of "classroom assistants" would be merely a new label for unqualified personnel: a cheap and easy way to answer to the need for teachers, resulting in the dilution of the professional standards of teaching.

Appointing class assistants could be seen as an abuse of the poor: having no alternatives, they give their time to teach for a very small compensation. This also applies to the present volunteers and the auxiliary teachers in LINK. Auxiliary teachers state that their reimbursements are far too low to reach the end of the month.

The prospects of ODL, which will start in August 2009, are as follows. At least the ODL programme will "come to the field," extending to the rural areas that most need teachers. Also, ODL assures that teachers will remain in their schools during the programme and for the following five years.

The ODL model of training seems to be appropriate, starting with a residential introduction followed by an in-service course of self-study and mentoring. However, two months before the outset of the programme, there were still some questions in government and among other educational stakeholders about the practical organisation of the programme, such as the exact length of the initial training, the recruitment and payment of mentors, and the practical arrangements for mentoring and assessment. The assumption

that experienced colleagues would be available in schools for supervision and professional support may be mistaken. This was one of the lessons that already could have been learnt from previous initiatives for upgrading, like the MIITEP programme in the 1990s. These weaknesses in practical organisation endanger the success of ODL.

Another factor interfering with ODL is the lack of practical management input for the design of the course. There is still vagueness about the exact number of volunteer teachers eligible to enrol in the programme. This can possibly be addressed in the decentralised approach that is taken to implement the programme: the Primary Education Advisors determine the local

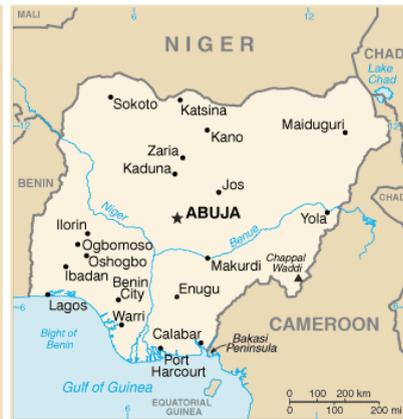
demand for teachers and play an important role in the selection of candidates for the ODL course.

There is no information on the content of ODL, except that it will be served by adaptations of the regular teacher training course materials. Teachers themselves, the users of the materials, were not consulted in the development of course materials.

A more general criticism is the danger of focusing merely on teacher education. An accompanying, substantial investment in infrastructure and in teaching and learning materials for pupils is mentioned by almost all stakeholders as an essential condition for any teacher education programme that is to have a positive effect on pupils' achievements.



Plate 7: STUP tutors, Zaria, Nigeria



## CHAPTER 5: NIGERIA – THE STUP PROGRAMME

### Education system information

The Nigerian education system can be characterised as 9-3-4, representing the number of years of primary, secondary, and tertiary education. In 2006, the six-year primary school course was combined with the three-year junior secondary school (JSS) to make a nine-year course of primary education providing a complete transition from primary to junior secondary level. The official free and compulsory school attending age is 6-14, covering the whole nine-year period of primary education. The nine-year primary course is followed by three years of senior secondary education, which allows entrance to tertiary education for a period of three or four years.

Pre-primary education is still in its infancy: the GER in 2005 was 2.65% and enrolment is only affordable for children whose parents can afford the services.<sup>123</sup>

Table 3. Primary education in Nigeria

Total Enrolment	23,738,647
Total number of primary teachers	555,937
Number of unqualified teachers	249,450
Net Enrolment Ratio	63%
Gender Parity Index	0.83
Pupil-Teacher Ratio	42.7
Pupil-Qualified Teacher Ratio	74.8
Transition to JSS ("Standard 7")	94.5%
PSSLCE 2006, candidates passed (2006)	78.5% (boys); 68.8% (girls)

(Figures: Census for 2005. Source: Basic Education Key Indicator Report)

In Nigeria educational data are spotty and unreliable. There is serious concern about the quality of data on which policy choices in the educational system are built.<sup>124</sup> Thus Table 3 seems more precise than warranted by the data. For example, the number of unqualified teachers in public schools in 2005, given as 249,450, has been estimated as 282,000 by the Education Sector Situation Analysis and even as 300,000 in the statistics of the National Commission for Colleges of Education. Despite this inaccuracy, the numbers for 2005 suggest



that about half of all primary teachers are unqualified.<sup>125</sup> Rural states in northern Nigeria suffer especially from a lack of qualified teachers.

## Teacher education and background

Senior secondary school graduation gives entrance to the College of Education to obtain the National Certificate of Education (NCE) for teaching in primary schools up to and including the level of junior secondary. The NCE course, provided at the colleges of education, lasts three years with six weeks of teaching practice in both the second and third years. Alternatively, the NCE course is offered in the form of a four-year distance education programme.

Starting in 2010, only teachers graduated with the NCE will be allowed to teach in primary schools. Therefore, all teachers without the NCE currently working in primary schools are listed as unqualified or underqualified. Most of them are primary school leavers (Standard 6), who enrolled in a five-year course to obtain the Grade 2 teaching certificate (TC2). The TC2 course originally included four years of theory with some practice, followed by one year of full-time practice with a lot of observation and feedback. Later on, the TC2 programme was offered as a distance education model until 2006.

Although the Nigerian federal government demands the NCE as the minimum primary teaching qualification, some state governments still recruit people below these standards in an attempt to save money on salaries. There are even teachers who have not completed their teacher training and lack the TC2. (31, Secretary General Nigerian Union of Teachers). No less than an estimated 88,000 teachers have insufficient academic qualifications to realistically be considered capable of upgrading in future.<sup>126</sup> Because the use of unqualified teachers is not accepted by the federal government, the states simply do not gather information on their teachers' qualifications, so that unqualified teachers are not listed in the statistics of primary education at the State level.<sup>127</sup> This omission is one of the sources of inaccuracy of the data presented in official policy documents.

In 2003, the National Council on Education set 2006 as the deadline for all unqualified teachers either to be upgraded to the NCE or to have left the primary school system. The National Council assigned the Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria to track all unqualified teachers and filter them out of the system by the end of 2006. Nevertheless, approaching that date a large number of primary school teachers remained unqualified: more than 100,000 of them still only had their TC2 (35: STUP coordinator and assistant coordinator, NTI). \* \* This situation was perpetuated as some states continued to deploy TC2 teachers and did not encourage them to upgrade. It was impossible to get these TC2 teachers out of the system,

\* In a strategy for STUP, drafted in 2007, the federal Ministry of Education gives a much higher figure of 166,584 TC2 teachers as the most likely number of candidates eligible for STUP in 2006.

because they could not be replaced. The federal government decided to offer a fast-track programme to ensure that all teachers with TC2 were upgraded to NCE level within two years. This was the Special Teacher Upgrading Programme (STUP). Without this external governmental pressure and support, many TC2 teachers would not have been interested in upgrading themselves. (35: STUP coordinator and assistant coordinator, NTI)

## The STUP programme – a description

STUP is a two-year intensive government programme for public primary schools coordinated by the National Teachers' Institute. It aims to upgrade holders of TC2 to the required NCE standard and to eventually remove the teachers who do not have the NCE qualification. The understanding is that, with the introduction of STUP, the federal and state governments would stop recruiting new teachers below NCE level.

The STUP model is a combination of three components: face-to-face sessions, instructional modules, and integrated school experiences.<sup>128</sup> Face-to-face sessions are held in the 188 special STUP training centres (with boarding facilities). These are weekly sessions on Fridays and Saturdays, as well as sessions during each school break and long vacation. The course facilitators for the face-to-face sessions are selected from tertiary educational institutions based on their area of specialisation.

Furthermore, students receive instructional modules for self-study at home; two hours daily of self-study are expected in addition to the study time in the face-to-face sessions. The content is based on the regular training curriculum for the NCE certificate and exemplifies "constructivist principles aimed at promoting mastery of content and improved learning outcomes."<sup>129</sup> Apart from various subjects focusing on (primary) education, each student chooses one teaching subject for specialisation. Within this selected teaching subject, students have to do a written assignment, for instance on curriculum development in the subject chosen for specialisation.

The third component, the "integrated school experience," focuses on the students' normal teaching work, which is considered adequate and sufficient to attain the NCE level. Mentors visiting the students' schools provide individual support to students at their workplace, establishing an "organic link between the theoretical component of the course and what happens at school and classroom level."<sup>130</sup> The classroom visits are scheduled in two six-week periods every year.

The complete STUP programme enrolled two batches of students, starting in 2007 and 2008. Participants were TC2 teachers who passed a screening selection. The first batch (2007-09) contained 26,760 students; the second batch (2008-10) counted 25,938 students. By the end of 2010 the second batch will be finished and STUP will come to an end.



STUP is funded by the federal government, and student-teachers are not charged any fees. But they have to pay for their own weekly transport to the local STUP training centre. After completing STUP, graduates will have gained the required NCE level, which gives a payment increase of two salary scales.

(Sources for this description: FME (2007) National Strategy for Teacher Quality and Development, prepared by the Teacher Quality Task Team; Annual Report, NTI, Kaduna)

## Reflections on STUP

The main reason for teachers to enrol in STUP is compulsion: they have no other option if they want to keep their jobs. Either they enrol in STUP to get their NCE or they have to leave the profession by 2010. Even the Nigerian Union of Teachers, which still admits all teachers in primary schools as union members, is clear about the future position of TC2 teachers within the union:

*Once the period of STUP is over, and government says: "No more, you are out," the union will do nothing for them. Because in the first instance, the union had been fighting for raising the standards of teaching. And since we created this kind of soft landing through the STUP programme and you have not embraced it, then you have to face the consequences. STUP is a kind of mopping up.* (31: Secretary General, NUT)

The threat of being dismissed by 2010 makes TC2 teachers eager to enrol in STUP and to work seriously at their assignments.

The STUP model, with a combination of in-service and face-to-face training, is seen as quite appropriate for Nigeria, where teachers are not expected to leave their posts for two or three years.

*So we thought the best way to do it is to allow them to remain on their jobs. Teaching in their schools, but at the same time pursuing the upgrading programme. And the internship component of STUP is meant to compensate for the short-track character of the programme and to ensure the quality.* (35: STUP coordinator and assistant coordinator, NTI)

Furthermore, the training of teachers in their schools and within their communities increases the chance that they will stay there after completing the programme, being regarded as an effective strategy to avoid teacher attrition in rural areas.

*When you take somebody from the rural area and send him or her to a conventional College of Education in an urban centre with electricity, water, and good roads, they become a town boy or lady. They will resist going back to where there is nothing.* (35: STUP coordinator and assistant coordinator, NTI)

## *The curriculum*

Though STUP was intended to upgrade all TC2 teachers, there was an intense debate whether or not the course should admit all of them. Preceding the start of STUP in 2007, the majority of the members of the National Council on Education, including the Nigerian Union of Teachers, decided that applicants had to take a screening test for selection. TRCN and NTI organised the entry test, but only 45,000 of the more than 100,000 TC2 teachers took the test, and of those who took the test, only one-third passed it with good results.

*The quality of TC2 teachers was far too low ... But the government had already released the money, in order to show political will and commitment. Then we cut off the marks and enrolled more than 29,000 for the first batch. The second batch, in 2008, was a similar scenario.* (33: Director, Professional Operations, TRCN)

STUP broadly assumed that TC2 applicants would have a lot of experience in teaching and have mastered the methodology of teaching, but they would be deficient in the subject's content (31: Secretary General and Senior Assistant Secretary General, NUT). Consequently, the STUP curriculum stresses the improvement of students' subject knowledge: "The STUP curriculum is built on the long experience of the students that are already teaching. We concentrate more on the content, and then we supervise the teaching in the school" (35: STUP Assistant Coordinator, NTI). "TC2 teachers are avoiding, skipping some topics in the syllabus, the things they are not comfortable with. But, the STUP teachers are more comfortable with the [content of] the syllabus" (31: Secretary General and Senior Assistant Secretary General, NUT).

This is confirmed by STUP participants:

*We have learnt the content here, the subjects; we knew ourselves how to do the group work in schools.* (37: 7 student-teachers, STUP, Zaria)

However, the NTI highlights the importance of adding (new) teaching methods to the STUP course, stating that STUP graduates "now should be able to vary techniques in the classroom, to introduce more learning centred activities, to inculcate some values that we think are functional: help children that want to find out the how and the why of many things." (35, NTI)

Various respondents emphasise the importance of introducing new teaching methods to the TC2 teachers in STUP and say:

*In the past teachers only were talking. When you now ask the [STUP] students to present something, you see radical thinking, seeking questions. They activate their students.* (39: 3 tutors, STUP, Zaria)



*Now we have nine years of basic education, but there are still Grade 2 teachers teaching that already left the school for quite a long time. Since then the concepts of methodology are modified.* (38: STUP coordinator, Zaria)

Therefore the assumption that TC2 teachers had already mastered the necessary teaching methods was often incorrect. Consequently STUP had to improve not only the subject knowledge of participants but also their teaching techniques. This double responsibility becomes a challenge in a fast-tracked two-year model.

In this light, the National Commission for the Colleges of Education emphasised the importance of compensating for the weakness in teaching methods with an adequate mentoring component within STUP:

*What is supposed to be done in three years full time in the Colleges of Education is now going to be done in two years through in-service training. But we have incorporated other measures like a mentoring system to take care of the loss of number of years.* (34: Executive Secretary, NCCE)

### *The mentoring process*

Mentors, also called course facilitators, teach in the face-to-face sessions as well as visit the students' classroom for observation during two "teaching practice periods" of six weeks each year. One facilitator should not have more than twenty students. He or she travels around, observes and comments on the teaching, assesses the lesson, and awards grades. The facilitator emphasises and checks the application of the new participatory methods that are introduced in the STUP curriculum. This teaching practice period resembles a practical examination; students must have passed the practical part successfully before taking the final STUP examination. (35: STUP coordinator and assistant coordinator, NTI)

The quality of facilitators must be high because they are guiding students towards an appropriate level for teaching in junior secondary schools. (38: STUP coordinator, Zaria)

The facilitators appear to have a strong internal motivation:

*Yes, we have some additional allowances, but if it is because of the money, we will not teach. We are lecturers, associate professors. We are doing it, because we want to improve the quality of the students and the quality of education ... We want to have special primary teachers, and we have the interest to do the work.* (39: 3 tutors, STUP, Zaria)

activities. Only after approval of the programme did the NTI discover that there was no provision in the budget to pay the course facilitators:

*We budgeted 500 Naira [Euro 2.50] per hour for facilitation. But as the budget came it was not there. So we scratched from everywhere to take care of that aspect. Everything should have been included in the budget.* (35: STUP coordinator and assistant coordinator, NTI)

The effects of this incomplete budget can be heard in the field:

*The remuneration of the facilitators must be better. Sometimes we cannot go to schools because our salaries are not paid. That is not encouraging.* (39: 3 tutors, STUP, Zaria)

*Only in the second year had we teaching practice. In the first year the course facilitators did not come. Their allowances are not paid at the right time, and they don't have the money for transport. We receive support from colleagues; they help us and explain the assignments to us.* (37: 7 student-teachers, STUP, Zaria)

This problem might have been caused by the overhasty introduction of STUP, under government pressure to upgrade the TC2 teachers to the NCE minimum standard:

*We were given an ultimatum that by such and such date any teacher that had not obtained this [NCE] will be flushed out. But flushing all of them out would have meant empty schools without teachers, so we made an effort to qualify them ... We didn't perform a structural analysis to see whether we have enough mentors on the schools where the students are. We didn't foresee that obstacle. We should have done that, because without an effective mentoring system STUP will not be a success.*

*The internship with mentoring is good in itself, because teachers remain in their schools teaching, meanwhile upgrading. But then, a good system of mentoring is essential.*

*As a result, the programme also builds on senior qualified teachers within the school, attending the lessons and serving as mentors for the STUP students. This will be a problem in schools where the majority of the teachers follow the STUP, and where you can find only a few qualified teachers to mentor them.* (34: Executive Secretary, NCCE)

Colleagues in school do not receive any additional payment for their mentoring activities in STUP. In future, the NTI wants to provide an incentive for this extra work, for instance by offering these colleagues training in mentoring, which will also contribute to the quality of the internship.

To sum it up: frequent mentoring is essential for internship and should go hand in hand with a budget for remunerating course facilitators and allowances for transport to schools. When depending on colleagues in school for mentoring activities,



the balance between unqualified and qualified teachers determines success. Colleagues must be compensated for their additional tasks as mentor.

*What I can tell you to do different the next time is to think thoroughly about the mentoring system. Because it may not even be taking place, as it is now. The paper is talking about the idea, but the reality may be different." (35: STUP coordinator and assistant coordinator, NTI)*

### *The instructional modules and face-to-face sessions*

The STUP instructional modules, presented in special manuals, comprise versions of the normal NCE course but with a more student-centred character. They are instructional, so a student can independently use them for self-study. The manuals contain many assignments to perform at school, such as class activities and projects. Student-teachers bring their assignments to the training centre and receive their mark with feedback the next weekend.

The workload is very high; students have to do a lot within a short space of time.

*There will be a total of 2,176 hours of face-to-face contact spread across four semesters and made up of: 832 hours of weekend contact sessions and 1,344 hours of intensive contact sessions. (Students' Handbook STUP)*

Apart from these face-to-face contact hours, students are expected to study for a minimum of two hours a day every week for two years, resulting in another specified 1,456 hours of workload. The overall study load of more than 3,600 hours in two years is clearly unrealistic and unfeasible.

*It is not easy to do the study. We are from Monday to Thursday teaching; we receive our lectures on Friday and Saturday. We come to this school from various places and are sleeping here when we come from far away. We have to do a lot of work, doing the assignments. But we also have to do other things to earn a living. (37: 7 student-teachers, STUP, Zaria)*

It is not surprising that almost all respondents suggest improving STUP by extending the length of the course to two years.

*Doing the course in two years, the students are overloaded. We give them too much workload. Apart from their work in schools, the self-study, the assignments, and two days in training, they have only one hour break from morning to night. It must be three years. When the course in the colleges is three years, why not in STUP? (39: 3 tutors, STUP, Zaria)*

*I wonder whether two years will be enough to raise somebody to NCE level? (35: STUP coordinator and assistant coordinator, NTI)*

In the STUP training centre visited for the present study, the first-year students are in a group of 100; the second year group consists of 67 students. The only conceivable way of teaching so many students with so little time to treat the subject matter is by lecturing while using the students' answers on assignments in the course materials as an illustration. During these sessions, there is no time for questions about the students' individual work. Although facilitators try to apply participatory methods in their own teaching during the face-to-face sessions, they have to lecture due to a lack of time. (37: 7 student-teachers, STUP, Zaria)

Considering this situation, several respondents say that there should be more training centres: to improve the situation of overcrowded classrooms during the face-to-face sessions and to reduce the travel distance between home and training centre. The main obstacle preventing some TC2 teachers from enrolling in STUP is poverty. Although STUP charges no fees, the weekly cost of transport is insurmountable for a large number of possible applicants. (36: Coordinator, NTI, Kaduna)

STUP is important for the status of women. In northern Nigeria STUP has a large number of female students because this is the only way for them to get some form of education. A conventional full-time education is not available to them because of cultural values that deny women access to education. Because STUP is compulsory, part-time, and free of fees, it is acceptable for women (and their family and community members) to enrol. They see the programme as a stepping stone to improving their lives. However, the costs of transport to the training centre can still pose a barrier to starting the programme. (36: Coordinator, NTI, Kaduna)

The language of instruction used in the face-to-face sessions and instructional modules is English. Since the student-teachers in STUP have been exposed to English since their fourth year in primary school, this should not be a problem. However, what made it a problem was that the students' mastery of English is very poor. They use a kind of Pidgin English, alternating with vernacular languages. (34: Executive Secretary, NCCE)

### *The quality*

How effective is STUP? According to the NTI, STUP teachers should be able to introduce more learner-centred teaching techniques in the classroom that motivate children to learn.

*In the past they used a teacher-centred approach; now they interact more with pupils. During the STUP course, we have seen a lot of radical changes. Now the majority poses questions; they have improved their English, their area of specialisation, and methodology.* (39: 3 tutors, STUP, Zaria)



*We learned how to manage our time. How to make a lesson plan and lesson notes. We used to do that before, but now we do it better and know how to use it.* (37: 7 student-teachers, STUP, Zaria)

Teachers mention another outcome of STUP; they now know how to make teaching aids: "For instance how to mould things to make a teaching aid that could be used in the lesson." Such responses justify the STUP approach:

*The teachers themselves must make their materials. That is what we call "improvisation of instructional materials."* (39: 3 tutors, STUP, Zaria)

Unfortunately, these useful improvisational skills are needed because of inadequate government funding of teaching aids and materials.

*Teachers are enthusiastic about participatory methods; they are eager to use it. The infrastructure however is not adequate. So, we encourage teachers to improvise, according to the environment.* (40: Director, Academic Services, UBEC)

Teachers are proud of producing teaching aids themselves, but they have to do it with their own money. They urgently ask the government to provide such aids.

### *Looking forward*

The STUP programme will come to an end in 2010 when the second batch of students has finished the course. It is not quite clear what will then happen to the large number of TC2 teachers who will still be working in primary schools and have not had the chance, or taken the opportunity, to upgrade. The data, though inadequate, suggest that there may be 100,000 of these still unqualified teachers. NTI suggests that some of them may be currently being upgraded through other programmes, such as the NCE distance education course. However, exact enrolment figures related to the student-teachers' academic background are not available.

*Only at the end of 2010, when STUP comes to an end, will we be able to determine the exact number of qualified and unqualified teachers, because the TRCN will insist that there shouldn't be any unqualified teachers in the primary school system.* (35: STUP coordinator and assistant coordinator, NTI)

Then, at the end of 2010, educational policy-makers will be confronted with the exact number of teachers who were successful in upgrading to the NCE level and the number of teachers who are still unqualified and thus have to leave the primary school system. This may create once again an urgent need for replacement.

*Student-teachers in STUP admit knowing unqualified colleagues in their schools who are not enrolled in an upgrading programme – for instance because the*

*second batch of the STUP course could not take all applicants. They advocate extending STUP to provide further opportunities for upgrading. (37: 7 student-teachers, STUP, Zaria)*

Shortages of teachers are directly linked to the relative unattractiveness of the profession. In fact, every student leaving senior secondary school in Nigeria wants to go to university; the second-best option is the polytechnic college. The College of Education is the last option.

*The rate at which teachers leave the profession, or even not enter, is quite high. Teachers don't get what they want and as soon as the window of opportunity opens, they will leave. That is why many teachers have not chosen to be upgraded. (35: STUP coordinator and assistant coordinator, NTI)*

Several suggestions have been made how to attract more people into the teaching profession and to make them stay:

*Provide them scholarship, having free education at all levels of teacher training; provide a special salary structure which is attractive ... As a matter of fact, 14,000 Naira is a very low salary, especially in urban areas. (35: STUP coordinator and assistant coordinator, NTI)*

It is essential to follow up the STUP course with continuing professional development of qualified teachers, for which TRCN expects STUP will provide a good foundation.

*After STUP, there should be workshops, seminars. Follow-up is very important. That is what we need: on-the-job training. Otherwise, the qualified teachers will become underqualified again. (39: 3 tutors, STUP, Zaria)*

NTI notes that new information and communications technologies (ICT) could be valuable contributors to future upgrading programmes. Referring to the easy adoption of mobile phones in Nigeria, even for illiterate persons, NTI expects that it is relatively easy to make teachers skilled in ICT. With the ongoing introduction of wireless Internet connections, the use of computers for communication and exchange of materials is widely attainable. Already teachers download materials developed by Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA). NTI sees this as an option for teacher upgrading, which will call not only for a large investment in computers but also for the improvement of ICT skills and the development of relevant materials.



## Summary

The Special Teacher Upgrading Programme (STUP) is a fast-track two-year programme to upgrade large numbers of underqualified Grade 2 certificate (TC2) teachers to the present minimum standard of the Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE). The training model combines intensive face-to-face sessions with instructional modules for self-study and mentoring in the workplace. STUP has enrolled two batches totalling more than 50,000 students in 2007 and 2008.

Teachers without the minimum NCE level will be taken out of their jobs by 2010, and STUP is the final possibility to upgrade to that level. In short, teachers are pushed to enrol in the STUP programme.

STUP has deliberately chosen to train teachers close to their schools and to use their daily work as in-service experience. This will encourage teachers to remain in their schools after completing the programme.

Because of urgent demand for upgrading, STUP was hurriedly introduced in 2007. Little attention was given to explaining the programme and inviting enrolment. The enrolment rate might have been higher if more time had been allocated to effective publicity and promotion.

Presumably due to the hasty introduction, the course budget did not cover paying the facilitators. The National Teachers Institute (NTI), coordinator of the programme, had to relocate budgets within the programme, but today facilitators' allowances are still too low and are often not paid on time. This obstructs the frequent and effective mentoring of STUP students in their classroom. As a result, colleagues within schools are asked to assist as mentors, but they are not prepared for the job.

Insufficient mentoring endangers the results of the programme, because mentoring is essential for increasing knowledge and improving teaching techniques within the classroom context.

With too little time for in-class mentoring, the content of the facilitators' visits shifts from observation and provision of feedback to assessment and examination. This shift reinforces an exam-oriented attitude among students.

Face-to-face sessions focus mainly on the improvement of subject knowledge. Course facilitators, when meeting with classes of 65 up to 100 students, are forced to fall back on lecturing. When explaining participatory teaching methodologies, course facilitators are unable to “teach as they preach.” Several respondents ask for an increased number of STUP training centres: both to improve the PTR and to diminish the travel distance and travel costs for students.

STUP has a positive effect on the position of women. Since the programme is mandatory to retain employment in the teaching profession, it provides a justified way for women to receive more education. Besides, it is free and part-time. These qualities make it socioculturally acceptable for women to enrol.

The total study load is more than 3,600 hours in two years, which is unrealistic. Students, facilitators, and the coordinating NTI question whether the programme can be completed in two years with the desired outcome.

In STUP the language of instruction is English. This becomes problematic among student-teachers who are used to speaking Pidgin English and have little grasp of standard English.

With a focus restricted to the upgrading of teachers, other essential conditions for improvement are missed: for example, the provision of teaching materials is crucial for the adoption of participatory teaching methodologies.

STUP must be part of a continuum of training. After STUP, teachers must have the chance to develop further in workshops and seminars. Almost all respondents advocate a focus on teachers’ continuing professional development, to have teachers remain knowledgeable and skilled. This will also fulfil the dream of the Nigerian Union of Teachers, in which the teaching profession is of a high standard and teaching is a highly respected and desired profession.

The National Teachers’ Institute mentions the advantage of new communication technologies, such as the opportunity to exchange upgrading materials through mobile telephones. The quick development of wireless Internet creates additional possibilities. The introduction of these technologies must go along with an improvement of teachers’ technological skills and the development of relevant instruction material.



In Nigeria, the development of effective educational policies remains impaired by a lack of reliable data. States avoid providing accurate information in order to mask practices deployed or prohibited by the federal government. Data are made inconsistent by the fragmentation of responsibilities over various semi-governmental institutions. For instance, the relatively few applicants for the STUP entrance test and the even fewer candidates who passed this test successfully are hard to understand without a view of the total number of unqualified teachers and their academic background.

Exactly these data are lacking, which increases the risk that, just as in 2006, policy-makers will once again be faced with an unexpectedly high proportion of unqualified teachers in 2010.

Some respondents, knowing that there are still many TC2 teachers working in the system, advocate giving this group the same opportunity to upgrade by continuing STUP beyond 2010.

Respondents' reflections on STUP are varied. Students and facilitators are quite positive about it, and illustrate their stand with examples of innovations in classroom practices and improvements in pupils' achievements. Of course, they also stress needed improvements in the programme. The coordinating semi-governmental, as well as the Nigerian Union of Teachers, are less positive about the programme. Pointing to the various imperfections of STUP, they do not see it as much different from other earlier "crash" upgrading programmes.





*Plate 8: Interview at Makalanga Primary School, Malawi*



## CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS

The analysis in this chapter builds on the theoretical perspective of Chapters 1 and 2 and the information obtained in the field. The latter was based on relatively short field visits, so the conclusions must be cautious. Nevertheless, the total of 40 intensive field interviews with a variety of stakeholders provides a clear direction for the debate about teacher upgrading programmes.

Attention will be paid to several issues; the local context in which upgrading programmes are initiated, the management, the model and content of the programme, and the quality.

### Context

#### *Student-teacher recruitment and personal investment*

International campaigns promoting free primary education have placed tremendous pressure on the national education systems in the three countries being reviewed: Tanzania, Malawi, and Nigeria. The result was a massive increase of pupils in the primary school systems of these developing countries. In turn this created an urgent demand for teachers, which was substantially met by the appointment of unqualified or underqualified new teachers in primary schools.

To improve the quality of education, the national governments of Tanzania, Malawi, and Nigeria have now raised the minimum standards of qualification for teaching in primary schools. These minimum standards oblige unqualified and underqualified teachers to upgrade themselves within a relatively short time frame. This urgency helps explain the success of upgrading programmes in recruiting trainees. The MUKA programme in Tanzania and the STUP programme in Nigeria both succeeded in attracting more than 50,000 student-teachers; the ODL programme in Malawi, starting just now, will certainly register the required 12,000 applicants. These strong enrolments in the upgrading programmes arise from the desire of unqualified teachers to keep their jobs.

The participating student-teachers are positive about the upgrading programmes, citing especially the enhancement of their subject knowledge and the improvement of their teaching methods. They express their expectation that the upgrading will make them better teachers and will give them the required level of certification to keep their jobs.

As to the latter, some graduates of MUKA in Tanzania are rather disappointed. Having participated successfully in upgrading and having proved themselves bet-



ter teachers, some of them have still not received the upgraded teaching certificate from the Tanzanian government, a prerequisite of the promised increase of salary, retirement pay, and better career opportunities. This failure, which is disappointing at the individual level, also threatens the credibility and success of the upgrading programme as a whole.

Enforcement of higher standards, which drove unqualified teachers into the upgrading programmes, creates an obligation for the government to deliver the promised benefits for the graduates who are now able to meet those standards.

### *The position of national teachers' unions*

National teachers' unions endorse the raising of minimum standards of primary teaching. They see standardisation as a way to prevent the erosion of the teaching profession, to make the teaching profession attractive, and to cause teachers to be regarded as highly respected and knowledgeable workers. Teachers' unions are also concerned about the quality of training in the formal teacher training colleges. They regard the shortening of training courses and the reduction or elimination of curriculum elements such as "developmental psychology of the child" as a serious threat to the quality of the teaching and learning process. Therefore, teachers' unions in Tanzania, Malawi, and Nigeria argue that they have a role to play in developing policy for teacher training and curriculum development, but they emphasise that the national government remains responsible for the organisation and provision of the training. The unions invariably defend education as a public service.

In the three countries, teachers' unions are involved in the discussions about teacher training, but their contribution tends to be designated as consultative in the policy-making process. In Nigeria, for example, the union is frequently consulted in the preparation of policy but the final decision is made at political level and can be very different from the unions' position. In the worst cases, governments completely neglect the role and input of teachers' unions, thus reducing teachers to "implementers of policies." Possibly the effectiveness of teachers' unions in advocacy for quality of education could be improved through capacity-building in the unions themselves.

In cases where government teacher training is inadequate, teachers' unions try to fill the gap. For instance, the Teachers' Union of Malawi provides academic teacher training beyond the secondary school curriculum. This could be seen as a complementary initiative, academically preparing underqualified teachers who could otherwise never enrol in the national teacher training colleges. But it reflects a lack of political will for government to deliver this training. Because training programmes happen also to be a means of recruiting new union members, critics argue that the union training initiative is a spurious motive using teachers' professionalism as a pretext to strengthen the union's position.

All the unions oppose the practice of “taking people off the street to teach” and see it as a dilution of the professional standards for teaching, which also brings the profession into disrepute. And yet, the unions recognise that these newly hired teachers are working in and contributing to the primary system and reducing the PTR. Confronted with this dilemma, the teachers’ unions have chosen to improve the quality of education by putting effort into the upgrading of these underqualified teachers.

In Malawi as well as Nigeria, the teachers’ unions consider a large proportion of the underqualified teachers to have too scanty an academic background to be eligible for training as a teacher. However, local union members in Malawi do not agree on this point. They still see possibilities to upgrade virtually all teachers by using the facilities of teacher development centres, provided that the government offers sufficient financial resources. The minimum (academic) level to be eligible for upgrading is subject to an intense debate not only between educational institutions but also within the union.

Representatives of the teachers’ unions stress the workplace context of scarcity. This scarcity not only hinders the provision of teacher training of professional quality but also explains the delays in the salary increase for upgraded teachers after graduation. This is especially the case in Tanzania, where the union constantly has to fight for salary payment according to previously made agreements. Unfortunately, this situation distracts the union from issues of educational quality during the day-to-day struggles for the rights of the members.

## Management

### *Too much pressure of time*

A common characteristic of the studied upgrading programmes is their hurried introduction. In an effort to upgrade a large number of teachers before a set date, too little time is devoted to design, piloting, and introduction of the upgrading programme. In Nigeria, STUP could have had more entrants if given more promotion, thus making people aware of the importance STUP as an opportunity for upgrading.

Overhastiness also limits the time available for reassessing and adjusting the conditions for success of the programme. For instance, two months before the start of the ODL programme in Malawi, there was not yet any development and description of the mentoring system; in Nigeria, the absence of a budget for payment of mentors was overlooked in the design and implementation of STUP.



### *Lack of management information and management capacity*

The effective coverage of all eligible applicants for upgrading can be impaired by insufficient and weak educational management information. In Nigeria there is great uncertainty about the number of teachers who should be offered possibilities for upgrading. This makes it more likely that there will be further upgrading programmes in future, because there still will be unqualified or underqualified teachers working in primary education after STUP ends.

Especially in Malawi and Nigeria, a substantial proportion of unqualified teachers were not admitted to the upgrading programmes but are still teaching in primary schools. One may doubt the government's sincerity in announcing that underqualified teachers would be eliminated by a certain date. After all, even unqualified teachers reduce the PTR and look after classes of children. If they were dismissed, they would have to be replaced. And the replacements would either be no improvement or would themselves have to be given time to upgrade academically and professionally to become qualified for primary teaching.

Data on private initiatives in teacher training are inadequate or altogether missing. This situation may signal a government's withdrawal from responsibility of providing teacher education, a responsibility constantly emphasised by the national teachers' unions as indispensable to the fairness and quality of teacher training.

Governments attempt to regulate the quality of education mainly by setting national examination standards. But these examinations fail to measure the quality of teaching and learning. Essential skills like contextualization of facts, problem-solving, and citizenship preparation can only be assessed through classroom observation. In all three countries, the school inspectorates seem to be poorly staffed and unable to visit a representative sample of schools on a regular basis. Or, as in Malawi, educational officers are charged with professional support for schools and teachers, but have to combine these tasks with their duties as inspector. As a result of understaffing of the inspectorates, proper management information is not available, so that policy decisions on teacher professionalisation cannot be built on assessments of the actual situations in schools. Moreover, information is missing not only about the teaching and learning process but also about related important issues such as safety for learners and the condition of classrooms.

### **Model and content**

#### *In-service versus face-to-face (residential) sessions*



The strength of any upgrading programme depends on an appropriate combination of in-service mentoring and face-to-face tutoring sessions.

In upgrading programmes for unqualified or underqualified teachers, the main building block must be mentoring in the day-to-day teaching practice. In-service mentoring has two practical advantages: in-service training is more relevant for the student-teacher because it arises from daily teaching issues, and it facilitates the immediate practising and classroom testing of newly acquired teaching methods.

But in-service training depends on an adequate mentoring system. During their classroom visits, mentors have to support, provide feedback, assess, and examine.

Regular face-to-face sessions find their place as a valuable supplement to the in-service component. They are suitable for the introduction and kick-off of the training, and they allow students to learn interactively with peers during the course. Obviously, this is only possible in smaller groups that enable individual contributions. The frequency of face-to-face or residential sessions in training centres is a subject of discussion. These sessions are favoured by those respondents who stress the improvement of teachers' subject knowledge. Moreover, these sessions enable the use of teaching materials such as "written modules."

The frequency and length of face-to-face sessions mainly depend on the distance from the workplace to the training centre and the opportunity costs for the student teachers. Quite often short (weekend) sessions alternate with longer holiday sessions. Respondents criticise the residential introduction of one week in MUKA and LINK as far too short; they observe that the more than 3,000 face-to-face contact hours in the two-year STUP programme creates too heavy a study load. The recommendation made in the Bamako conference that initial education for unqualified teachers should be at least six months long is unrealistic, especially for a residential face-to-face training.

Face-to-face sessions in training centres tend to be overcrowded, which forces mentors and tutors to use lectures and take little time for interaction with their students. In these circumstances, mentors are prevented from "teaching as they preach" and from demonstrating interactive participatory teaching techniques.

Another, more flexible approach to answer to the need for peer interaction during training can be found by using teacher development or resource centres for afternoon or evening meetings. Being closer to the students, sessions can be held more frequently because the transport time and transport costs will be lower. Whereas groups can be smaller, the sessions can be organised in a more flexible way, responding to the individual needs of students. This choice will also enhance the formation of self-study groups. This more decentralised approach calls for both more management support and more attention paid to practical circumstances.



### *Written course materials*

The main information vehicle in most upgrading programmes is the written module for self-study. These modules contain the course information and deal with various subjects; they cover the subjects to be taught as well as teaching techniques. Since governments want to educate all teachers to reach the same standard, the content of these modules is taken from the curriculum of the regular national teacher training course. However, this content is often inappropriate for teachers who have already been working in the teaching profession for a long time. Unqualified and underqualified teachers tend to have specific deficiencies in their knowledge and skills. A relevant upgrading curriculum should instead be tailored to identify and target these deficiencies.

To make the content more challenging and relevant, student-teachers and mentors should be involved in the design of the curriculum material. Unfortunately, this was not the case in the field observations of this study. Student-teachers were regarded as “objects” and mentors as implementers of the programme.

### *Content of upgrading programmes*

Any upgrading curriculum must combine subject matter with teaching methodology. Which of these is emphasised will depend on the background of students and the aim of the programme, but both elements have to be delivered together.

In some cases observed, academic background was emphasised, with students expected to improve their knowledge of subject matter up to the level of senior secondary education. We share the respondents' doubts about the relevance of this for daily teaching practice in primary schools. If these requirements are difficult to achieve, they will discourage potentially valuable teachers from enrolling to upgrade. The degree of academic content appropriate should be based on an assessment of the actual needs of the teachers in their classrooms.

Similarly, the teaching methods presented in the upgrading programme must have relevance to the actual situation in schools. Most respondents highlighted that they considered the actual classroom situations in primary schools when exploring new teaching techniques in upgrading programmes.

Often the new methods are highly participatory. But techniques more individualised than the facilitation of “group work” are not realistically applicable in classrooms of 80 or 100 students. It is advisable for participants to discuss the extent to which participatory teaching methods can be adapted to actual classroom situations. An insistence on participatory teaching techniques in classrooms of over 100 pupils may threaten rather than improve the quality of education. Ruthless advocacy of participatory methods may obstruct discussion of other pos-

sible improvements in teaching technique, and may even diminish the apparent necessity of improving the physical teaching and learning environment.

### *Teaching materials*

Student-teachers' increased knowledge and improved mastery of teaching techniques can only be effectively adopted in classrooms with adequate infrastructure: classrooms, desks, toilets, and especially teaching materials. A sufficient supply of teaching materials is commonly raised as the most important prerequisite for teachers to improve their teaching practice. It is unfair to misuse the time and money of poorly paid teachers by forcing them to make do with self-improvised materials when this is a compensation for government failure and lack of political will to give sufficient funding for teaching materials.

### *Mentoring*

The mentoring part of the upgrading programmes is not taken seriously. In the three countries the budget for mentoring is low or non-existent. Nor is mentoring supported by properly organised school visits. Two mentoring visits a year are scarcely enough. In Malawi, the organisation of the mentoring aspect of ODL remains unclear, and yet LINK has no control over mentoring, which has been handed over to the schools. In fact, student-teachers tend to be visited even less frequently than scheduled, either because the budget fails to pay the mentors' time or transportation costs, or because management simply fails to organise the visits.

Since mentors' visits have to serve in addition as assessments, the classroom visits that do occur have the characteristics of an examination, further decreasing the time for discussion, support, and feedback.

The damage caused by a poor mentoring system should not be underestimated. Teacher upgrading programmes aim to introduce new teaching methods, which must be introduced and practised daily in the classroom. In-service observation and correction of teachers' work by mentors is essential to the effectual adoption of these new methods.

The shortage of available mentoring time makes the upgrading of teachers dependent on the support of their qualified colleagues. All the upgrading programmes studied here make the assumption that this collegial assistance is available and will be provided. Quite apart from whether it can actually be counted on to occur in favourable circumstances, it cannot be realistically expected in a school where more than half the teachers are unqualified, as is the case in a large number of schools in Malawi and Nigeria.



Mentors for upgrading programmes are usually recruited among the tutors of teacher training colleges or retired educational officers and teachers. Being a professional teacher is a necessary condition, but it is not sufficient for effective mentoring; mentors need additional professional preparation in order to do mentoring work properly. In none of the programmes have mentors received any additional introduction to the specific upgrading programme. Only LINK invites a future colleague to participate in the one-week introduction course that is organised for the auxiliary teachers. None of the studied upgrading programmes envisaged quality control of the mentors' performance.

### *Instruction language*

The choice of a proper language of instruction in upgrading programmes is essential. Student teachers are expected to master English, but in daily practice they are quite often only familiar and at ease in their vernacular language. In Tanzania, the upgrading programme before MUKA failed completely because it used English for instruction. In Nigeria, the mastery of English tends to be poor when students speak a mixture of English and the vernacular language.

### *Quality*

Upgrading initiatives are based on the expectation that successful completion of the upgrading programme will lead to improved teaching practice, followed in turn by the improvement of pupils' achievements. The question is whether the programmes include assessments of the extent to which the expectation has been met. STUP includes a kind of sampled assessment of upgrading effects in classrooms; LINK has been conducting research on pupils' learning processes in 2009. A quality assessment that neglects in-class observation of upgrading effects will be restricted to a focus on pupils' results in standardised examinations. The latter cannot measure effects on non-examined qualities, such as critical thinking and problem-solving strategies. Furthermore, an assessment restricted to final examinations may compel teachers to adopt an exam-oriented teaching style. By contrast, a proper assessment of outcomes is essential to evaluate and improve the design and implementation of upgrading programmes.

### *Cost-effectiveness*

The cost-effectiveness of upgrading can be most improved by avoiding taking teachers out of their classroom in order to avoid the cost of their replacement in school. A cost-effective option could be to alternate sufficient mentoring of in-school teaching practice with relatively short periods of face-to-face training in training centres close to the workplace. However, it is self-defeating to try to save

on the cost of mentoring, which is essential to the in-class learning of teachers that is the key to an improvement of teaching techniques.

Bringing the training to the upgrading teachers by using teacher development centres will improve the effectiveness of the training through increased flexibility and interactive learning; the use of teacher development centres will also decrease teachers' transportation costs and loss of time due to long travel distances.

Charging of fees for upgrading programmes will threaten the coverage of the upgrading programmes, because fees are a huge stumbling block for the enrolment of vulnerable groups and individuals. The introduction of fees for upgrading programmes will also exacerbate gender inequality.

The effectiveness of an upgrading programme can be increased by balanced budgeting, in which all elements of the programme must be covered, notably the frequently neglected budgeting for mentors' salaries, management support, and teaching materials.

### *Gender aspects*

Upgrading programmes can play an important role in the improvement of the position of female teachers. As an (almost) compulsory part-time course that does not charge fees, an upgrade programme provides women a sociocultural justification to be educated and to take a next step in their career. It is therefore important to especially invite female unqualified teachers to upgrade. The result will be beneficial not only for the improvement of the individual positions of women but also for the proportion of female teachers in primary schools. The position of professional teacher will become a positive model for girls to enrol and remain in the field of primary education.

None of the programmes studied here gave special attention to persuading female teachers to enrol.

### **Disabled children**

Several student teachers in Tanzania and Nigeria observed that it was the upgrading programme that first made them aware of the plight of disabled children in their classroom. Teachers also say they learned how to deal with children with hearing impairments and other physical disabilities. This is evidence that teacher upgrading programmes can make a difference in the development of teaching skills for children with special needs.



## Promotion of quality in rural areas

Upgrading programmes give preferential advantage to rural areas simply because it is there that unqualified teachers are more often appointed. A second advantage given to the quality of rural education appears when enrolment in the programme is accompanied by the obligation for teachers to remain working in their (rural) school afterwards. Remarkably, there is little discussion about the justice of such governmental regulations.

Rural teacher retention could also be promoted by bringing the upgrading programme to the countryside through a decentralised strategy. By keeping participants near home, this outreach would make it less likely that they will seek a more urban position after graduation. Rural teacher development centres could play an important role in this strategy.

## Continuous Professional Development

Completion and graduation in any upgrading programme should be regarded and incorporated as a step towards continuing professional development throughout a teaching career. In almost all the pedagogical literature, as well as in the field interviews, emphasis is put on the provision of ongoing in-service teacher training. Without the provision of continuous professional development, the upgraded teacher will soon be underqualified again.

## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study highlights the upgrading of unqualified teachers who are working in primary education. It identifies the success factors and shortcomings of upgrading programmes both from a theoretical perspective and in practice from interviews with a wide range of stakeholders in Tanzania, Malawi, and Nigeria.

1. Because upgrading involves changing current practices, the starting point in the design of an upgrading curriculum must be the student-teachers' daily practice. In-service training must form a considerable part of the upgrading model. Building the curriculum for upgrading around daily teaching practice enhances the relevance of the training and enables the introduction of new teaching methods and subject areas in the classroom. To count as a training process, this in-service component of upgrading requires sufficient mentoring both by outside mentors and by qualified colleagues.
2. Face-to-face contact sessions add benefits to in-service training. In most programmes studied these sessions were clustered in residential periods of several days or a week. These contacts can be designed as a professional learning environment. Ideally, it is a moment for reflection and interaction with tutors and/or peer students, with time for practical exercises and discussion about teaching methodologies and the role and position of a primary teacher within school and community. This function demands a relatively small group size that encourages individual participation. When funds are scarce, this requirement can be met by using networks of teacher development and resource centres.
3. It is inappropriate to use valuable face-to-face contact sessions for lecturing on subject content, for which cheaper and more practical options are available. As shown by the programme in Tanzania, students can acquire sufficient subject knowledge through self-study when supported by written course modules with assignments.
4. Child-centred teaching methods promote active participation of all pupils in the process of acquiring meaningful, contextualised knowledge and skills. These methods are hampered in many schools by a poor teaching environment. Therefore the curriculum of an upgrading programme, while focusing on the application of child-centred participatory methods, must be responsive to the needs of teachers in light of the limitations of their school environments. To ensure this sensitivity, teacher training colleges, tutors, and qualified teachers should be involved in the design of the upgrading programme.



5. Any upgrading initiative will be ineffective in improving the quality of education in primary schools if teaching and learning materials are inadequate.
6. Supervision is of paramount importance in any teacher upgrading programme to provide observation and feedback in the classroom. In understaffed schools such supervision, not being available from qualified colleagues, will crucially depend on visits from external mentors. These visits should be made at least three or four times a year and should not be limited to the examination of student-teachers.  
Unfortunately, mentoring tended to be inadequate in all the programmes observed in this study. Even where the original design of the programme entailed sufficient school visits, in practice no mentors became available, mostly because of lack of funds or disorganisation. This severe weakness threatened the success of the programmes.
7. In the three observed programmes, high enrolment rates were the result of compulsion. Governments stated that teachers lacking the required qualifications would be dismissed.
8. In a short-term rush to meet an urgent upgrading requirement, the pitfall is to improvise a programme too hastily. Time must be taken to assess needs accurately, in light of the number and characteristics of the student-teachers. The education management information system should be prepared to deliver the necessary information for effective educational policies on teacher upgrading. An upgrading programme also depends for success on improvements in the management capacity of educational partners at various levels. The whole system is being upgraded, not only a set of student-teachers.
9. Monitoring and evaluation in order to check programme quality and make adjustments is inadequate in the observed programmes. This deficiency not only impairs a specific programme but also impedes the creation of a knowledge base to support further quality improvement though future programmes and continuing professional development.
10. Research competence is needed to assess the quality of upgrading programmes and to identify the “lessons learned.” While upgrading programmes focus pragmatically on changing teaching and learning processes in the school and classroom, it takes research on the outcomes of upgrading to identify and measure the improvements realised among the pupils. The active participation of teachers and tutors conducting this field research will help establish a culture of continuing learning and improvement, and will increase the usefulness of the research outcomes to make improvements in the upgrading programme.
11. It is hoped that this study may show educators the value of such research efforts and encourage governments, teachers’ unions, and other stakeholders in the primary education system to help provide upgrading programmes of good quality.





Plate 10: Library at Teacher Development Centre, Lirangwe, Malawi

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*Plate 9: Interview at Magomero Primary School, rural Dedza, Malawi*



## APPENDIX A: FIELD RESEARCH AND INTERVIEWEES

Note: for abbreviations, see Appendix B.

### *Tanzania, 17 May – 28 May 2009*

Interview	Position
1	Principal Education Officer, MEVT
2	Headmaster Primary School, Dar es Salaam
3	General Secretary and EFAIDS coordinator, TTU
4	Programme Officer, TRC coalition
5	Student-teacher, MUKA, Morogoro
6	Student-teacher, MUKA, Morogoro
7	3 student-teachers, MUKA, Morogoro
8	3 student-teachers, MUKA, Morogoro
9	Principal, Morogoro TTC
10	TEP Coordinators, Morogoro TTC
11	Tutor, Morogoro TTC
12	3 tutors, MUKA, Morogoro TTC
13	Tanzania UNESCO/TTISSA coordinator
14	Tanzania UNESCO/TTISSA coordinator

### *Malawi, 29 May – 12 June 2009*

Interview	Position
15	General Secretary, TUM
16	Coordinator, DTED
17	Director of Basic Education, MOEST
18	Controller of Human Resources, MOEST
19	2 unqualified volunteer teachers, 2 primary education advisors, headmaster, Lirangwe Zone
20	Headmaster, Lirangwe Zone
21	General Secretary, TUM



- 22 3 unqualified volunteer teachers, headmaster, rural Lirangwe
- 23 Tutor, Blantyre TTC
- 24 District Educational Manager and LINK Programme Director, Dedza
- 25 Auxiliary teacher, Dedza
- 26 President, TUM
- 27 Volunteer teacher, rural Lilongwe
- 28 Auxiliary teacher, rural Lilongwe
- 29 Project Manager, TUM
- 30 Headmaster, Rural Lilongwe

*Nigeria, 13 June – 21 June 2009*

Interview	Position
31	Secretary General and Senior Assistant Secretary General, NUT
32	Senior Assistant Secretary General, NUT
33	Director, Professional Operations, TRCN
34	Executive Secretary, NCCE
35	STUP coordinator and assistant coordinator, NTI
36	Coordinator, NTI, Kaduna
37	7 student-teachers, STUP, Zaria
38	STUP coordinator, Zaria
39	3 tutors, STUP, Zaria
40	Director, Academic Services, UBEC

## APPENDIX B: LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

### *General*

ADEA	Association pour le Développement de l'Éducation en Afrique
EI	Education International
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
PTR	Pupil/Teacher Ratio
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TTISSA	Teacher Training Initiative for sub-Saharan Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education

### *Tanzania*

MEVT	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training
MUKA	Mafunzu ya Ualimu Kazini Kufikia Daraja 'A' (‘Upgrading programme for Grade B and C Teachers to Grade A’)
PSLE	Primary School Leaving Examination
TEP	Teacher Educators' Programme
TRC	Teacher Resource Centre
TTC	Teacher Training College
TTU	Tanzanian Teachers' Union

### *Malawi*

CTF	Canadian Teachers Federation
DTED	Department of Teacher Education and Development
FPE	Free Primary Education
IPTe	Initial Primary Teacher Education
JCE	Junior Certificate of Education



LCD	Link Community Development
LINK	Link Community Development upgrading programme
MIITEP	Malawi Integrated In-service Teacher Education Programme
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MSCE	Malawi School Certificate of Education
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
PSLCE	Primary School Leaving Certificate of Examination
TDC	Teacher Development Centre
TTC	Teacher Training College
TUM	Teachers' Union of Malawi

*Nigeria*

JSS	Junior Secondary School
NCCE	National Commission for Colleges of Education
NCE	Nigerian Certificate of Education
NCE	National Council on Education
NTI	National Teachers' Institute
NUT	Nigeria Union of Teachers
TC2	Teaching Certificate Two (Grade 2 teachers)
TRCN	Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria
STUP	Special Teacher Upgrading Programme
UBEC	Universal Basic Education Commission



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*Lessons from Tanzania, Malawi, and Nigeria*



**Education International**

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*Cover picture: Teacher in Standard 1 with 300 pupils, Magomero Primary School, Malawi*