

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN KENYA: POLICIES, TRENDS AND PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to explore and analyze the policies, trends and practices that influence secondary school teachers' participation in Continuing Professional Development (CPD). It adopted a vertical case mixed approach which involved analysis of macro and micro aspects that were dealt with the qualitative data. Desk review of documents that dealt with the national policies on CPD in Kenya and the channels that were used was explored. Out of the twelve schools in Kirinyaga district involved in the survey, six secondary schools were subjected to in-depth case study. The data collected were analyzed qualitatively. The study found that there were government policies that supported CPD in Kenya; and revealed a variety of providers and channels that were used in CPD programmes. In the light of the findings, provision of support at the secondary school levels so that teachers would participate and complete CPD programmes were admist others recommended.

Keywords: Professional development, secondary school teachers, polices, trends practices

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, education has become a competitive human enterprise. Like all other investments, people spend money, effort and time in education and expect good returns. The outcomes calculated in terms of economic, social and at times political gains was what motivated people to invest heavily in education. According to Darling-Hamond (1998) each dollar spent on improving teacher's qualification nets greater gains in student learning than any other use of an educational dollar. However, these gains are dependent on the quality of the teachers and yet it takes time for one to become an effective teacher. Highly qualified and committed teachers do more than teach curriculum content: they inspire and enthuse their pupils and serve as role models in terms of attitude and social relationships. If schools are to achieve their educational aims, there must be effective systems to select, prepare, deploy, manage and support teachers and help them develop their professional skills over a working lifetime.

Teacher professional developments are the tools that policy makers use to convey broad visions, disseminate critical information, and provide guidance to teachers. It has many facets as evidenced by numerous terms used to refer to the process. Some call it professional growth, in-service education, on the job training,

continuing education, recurrent education, staff improvement or renewal. Hassel (1999) considered professional development as the process of improving staff skills and competencies needed to produce outstanding educational results for students. According to Olivia and Pawlas (1997), professional developments programmes are activities planned and carried out to promote the personal and professional growth of teachers.

From what has been observed, initial and one shot professional development programmes that teachers are exposed to are inadequate for teachers to be able to handle their teaching roles effectively and efficiently. The goal that the current study is pursuing is to find out the type of programmes that teachers were involved in relation to what the policies in the country stipulate, the channels and providers and the reality on ground by using Kirinyaga district as an example. Particular attention was paid to the in-school and out-of-school aspects that influence teachers' participation in CPD in Kenya. Therefore, it was imperative to find out how secondary school teachers were using CPD as a means of improving their professional and academic status. Moreover, was it geared to the improvement of classroom practices thus leading to improved student achievements as articulated in the national policies?

The problem of the study therefore was how to establish trends and practices related to teacher CPD in Kenyan secondary schools. Undergoing the study was critical because in the last five years the education sector has undergone accelerated reforms in order to address the overall goals of the National Economic and Recovery Strategy for Employment and Wealth Creation. The reforms were aimed at meeting the International Development Commitments, including the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs), Education for All (EFA) and Vision 2030. To achieve these goals, education and training are to play a key role in their attainment putting into consideration that Kenya has a rich pool of trained teachers. If we want secondary schools to produce more quality learning on the part of students, we have to offer more powerful learning opportunities to teachers. Unless teachers have access to serious and sustained learning opportunities at every stage in their career, they are unlikely to teach in ways that meet demanding new standards for students learning. The rapidly changing world has made it necessary that teachers have to maintain up-to-date skills, knowledge and attitudes through CPD.

The lack of focus on CPD vis-à-vis the popularized traditional models of teacher preparation in Kenya seem to have problematised the effective teacher CPD, particularly in secondary schools. This study makes the point of departure from the traditional teacher professional development research in Kenya by focusing on the problematisation of teacher CPD in secondary schools. The apparent sidelining of secondary school teachers in the provision of CPD is seen as potentially threatening the attainment of the well-intentioned international goals and targets of EFA and MDGs together with the national targets of providing quality education through the free day tuition secondary education. One of the failures was the decline in quality of education that has raised great concerns in the global and national scene.

This calls for the formulation of other policies that would improve on teacher professional development. Despite various efforts been instituted to provide teacher professional development, a gap still exists in the education system when national policies and trends are compared with practices in secondary schools in Kenya. This is because most teachers wish to see their field as a profession, where ongoing training should necessarily be part of their lives. Not only is ongoing training key to producing competent professionals, it is one of the cornerstones of motivation. If a professional such as a teacher has the opportunity to learn about new teaching methods, learning theories, and techniques for making work more efficient, effective and rewarding, he/she is not only becoming a more competent professional, but is also motivated to continue to learn and grow more of what he/she sets out to do when decision to be involved in CPD are made. The study intends to achieve the following objectives.

First, to explore and explain the policies that had regulated teacher CPD in Kenya's secondary schools. Second, to establish the channels and providers of CPD in Kenya. Third, to establish the salient features that are influencing teachers to seek CPD in Kirinyaga district and its' impact in the quality of secondary schooling. Lastly, to recommend policy areas that would provide alternative practices that could facilitate teacher CPD in Kenya's secondary schools.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN KENYA

The term Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as used in this work refers to all kinds of learning opportunities that help teachers to strengthen their professional practices, attain higher professional competence and expand their understanding of self, role, context, career and sharing of activities taking place within and across schools. It refers to any experience that teachers engage in to widen their knowledge, skills and understanding of their work in line with goals, values of the schools and the interests and needs of teachers (Duke& Stiggins, 1990; Beerens, 2000; Norton, 2008).

There has been a strong tradition of teacher training that emphasizes obtaining the required pedagogical skills, instructional technology, and practical experience for teachers. Hallinan and Khmelkov (2001) mentioned that as the result of the new trends, educators and policy makers had shifted their attention from improving schools to improving teaching. This had been indicated by the growing body of educational research that highlighted the critical role of the teacher in the learning process. Greene (1995) stated that teachers were expected to be the agents for educational reform; they need to be empowered to think about what they are doing and to perceive different alternatives of educational issues. Moreover, teachers should be aware of the importance of developing themselves strategically in order to achieve their personal goals and school mission and be able to formulate their own professional development plan. Therefore, the traditional models of teacher CPD may be inadequate to satisfy

the expectations and challenges to teacher preparation, as some programs lacked the necessary coordination with the existing curriculum and the realities of the classroom. In fact, teachers need a wide variety of ongoing opportunities to improve their skills. Effective professional development of teachers begins with an understanding of teachers' needs and their work environments (Gaible & Burns, 2005). It is believed that the main step in any training programme is to determine whether training was needed and, if so, to specify what that training should provide. Although the majority of teachers consider themselves to be knowledgeable and confident, at the same time, due to the new expectations and challenges, they had a perception of a gap between their current knowledge and what they need to know to become an expert teacher. If in-service teacher training programs were established with the involvement of participants, Butler (1989) argued that they would meet participants' needs, level of awareness, mastery, and concerns. According to Wanzare and Ward (2000), staff development for the twenty first century should give teachers an opportunity to contribute to programs, which address their own training needs.

Teacher professional development is increasingly considered a continuum of learning, with teachers located at various places (Dembele, 2005; Villegas -Reimer, 2003). Along this continuum three major phases appear consensual: preparation, induction and Continuous Professional Development (CPD). The three phases vary in length depending on context and are distinct yet interrelated. The new shift has been so dramatic that many had referred to it as new image of teacher learning, a new model of teacher education and even a new paradigm of professional development (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 2001; Walling and Lewis 2000).

In addition, the teachers' job has become more complex and stressful in the face of new expectations of schools and of social changes. Many countries in the world are confronted with formidable challenge of how to expand the size of their teaching force while improving professional quality. A good CPD programmes was expected to fill this gap. Again, the issue here would be that even with systems with quality pre-service training packages, the reality of the schools was whether teachers need to refresh their skills from time to time to meet the challenges. However, policy on CPD for secondary school teachers has been fragmented, incomplete and more often than not simply non-existent. The development of coherent, medium term, financially sustainable teacher policy, tailored to meet the demand for new and existing teachers, has been widely neglected, despite internationally agreed goals in education.

Teachers' policy on CPD has often been an afterthought to Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) targets receiving less attention than universal schooling. The authority line within the Ministry of Education has not been clear and sufficiently prioritized, resources are not compatible with needs, and responsiveness of the teacher education system to the changing environment in the field has been slow, as has been engagement and contributions from the private sector and general public. Despite that the policy documents (Kenya Republic 1964, Kenya Republic 1977, Kenya Republic 1999) had highlighted the need for teacher CPD; implementation had been hampered by lack of funds and lack of follow up.

In recent years, teachers have been enrolling in all types of programmes that could be classified as continuing and career progression, but their contribution to professional growth yet to be established. A recent report by the Teacher Service Commission highlighted the fact that the programmes are making little contributions to professional development (Otieno 2009). To some, increasing chances of promotion, more money, marketability of the courses they pursue, working near towns and even in higher institutions had motivated them to engage in these programmes. What was apparent in most of the recent policy initiatives in education was an attempt to re-think the teaching profession by introducing significant changes in the way that teachers were trained.

METHODOLOGY

The vertical case mixed study approach research design was adopted for the study. In the vertical case design the researcher situates the micro aspects into the macro situation prevalent in the country. Understanding of the micro level was viewed to be a part and parcel of the larger (Macro) structure, forces and policies about which the researcher has to develop a full and thorough knowledge. The mixed approach involved collecting and analyzing data both quantitatively and qualitatively in a single study. However, this study was only analysed qualitatively.

At the national level educational officials were purposively sampled so as to include officials that dealt with teacher CPD. Three officials were interviewed to give their comments at the national scene. This was followed by getting a research assistant at Ministry of Education (MOE) headquarters in order to collect statistics of teachers that had been involved in CPD in the country. In the TSC, one research assistant was assigned the work of collecting statistics that deal with teacher CPD so that the trends could be established on how teachers had reported back after completing their courses. Secondly, given that mixed approach research design was used; twelve schools were selected from Kirinyaga district from the targeted population. In this case, purposive sampling was used to get four provincial boarding schools, four district boarding schools and four district day schools.

A total of twelve secondary schools were involved in this study. The purposive sampling of schools was guided by the criteria of whether the classification of schools does determine secondary school teachers' involvement in CPD. From the percentage determined by the researcher in each school, purposive sampling was used to select teachers from each school sampled using the teachers' register. The researcher selected teachers who had never participated, those currently participating and those who had completed their CPD. All the head teachers of the sampled schools were purposively sampled in line with the case study procedures that encourage the concentration on samples with almost similar characteristics to gain in-depth information by use of different sources and methods.

The study utilized five research instruments namely questionnaires, interviews schedules, focused group discussions, observation schedules and document analysis

for data collection. The questionnaires were administered personally to the teachers in the sampled schools. Another questionnaire was given to a research assistant at the TSC and at the MOE headquarters in order to provide statistics of teachers involved in CPD and had completed over a particular period. The questionnaires helped in getting the opinion of the teachers towards the programmes they were involved in together with the statistics of those who had been involved in various programmes. Focused group discussions were held with teachers in schools so that they could give information geared to CPD. This method was preferred because teachers were in a position to give a group consensus on the issues that they discussed and were able to probe further the aspects required in this study. Interviews were conducted with teachers and head teachers in the sampled schools together with education officers in the district, at the MOE headquarters and those in TSC at district level. This instrument was important in verifying the information obtained from the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and in the questionnaires. Lastly, an observation schedule was used to collect information from teachers both in class and in the general school set up. This method was important in understanding the data that could not be obtained using other methods like interviews and FGDs. This was necessary, since the use of a single method or instrument in collection of data would have provided a limited view of the complexity of the social phenomena under study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The policy documents examined indicated the necessity of all the teachers being involved in CPD in order to improve quality of education at the classroom level. Teachers were strongly discouraged from leaving the classroom to go and pursue CPD. The courses that they were expected to be involved in were those that bring teachers abreast of new knowledge and practices and at the same time implement it in their classroom teaching. Mentoring of teachers was highly recommended. The method was viewed to be more cost effective in enhancing inspectorate work. The use of resource centers has further been highlighted as an important component of teachers CPD in secondary schools.

There is a mis-match prevalent between the teachers that are produced by the institutions and what the policies indicate as the priority areas. They recommend development of science-based and language based teachers through the pre-service programmes but the institutions produce art-based teachers. The policy further underscores the need for teachers to improve their academic qualifications through further education. In spite of this articulation, the policy cautions that the studies should not adversely affect the performance of official duties by the teacher.

Trends: The Ministry of Education has been providing short CPD courses to secondary school teachers in the country. The trends as analysed from data collected indicated an upward trend since 2003 up to 2008. The year 2005 marked a turning point where the government placed much emphasis on teachers' CPD after the implementation of Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP). All in

all, male teachers predominated the courses that were attended. The courses attended involved short courses such as workshops, seminars and conferences. The numbers of teachers that were involved and completed the long-term CPD courses in various institutions in the country had been increasing over the study period between 2003 and 2008. Teachers that submitted diploma certificates had dominated the period between 2003 and 2008. They were followed by those who attained first degree and later those with masters. Those promoted to various positions were the least and had gone on decreasing over the study period apart from 2007 when there was a substantial increase.

Sources of Information: Teachers indicated that they rarely get information from the Head teachers and deputies in their institutions. This information, which sought to know the kind of support that teachers were given when looking for information concerning CPD. The scenario changes when teachers were asked about their colleagues who were a major source of information and motivation. The District Education Officers and Trade Union Officials were not providing information to teachers. On the other hand, teachers had indicated that they had not been searching for information from principals and their deputies. This indicates that there was a breakdown in communication between teachers and principals on matters of CPD in this district despite policies indicating the smooth flow of information.

Selection Criteria: Schools lacked clear guidelines that could facilitate teachers' involvement in CPD through workshops and seminars. This information was gotten through interviews and Focus Group Discussions. This has made the selection of teachers to be involved haphazardly and ready for abuse by teachers and principals. Teachers were discouraged from participating in programmes that they were to fund. This has further complicated the issue of support that teachers are received in their schools by the principals.

Provision of Professional Advice: Professional advice was given to teachers in Kirinyaga district by their principals and heads of department (HOD). Data analysis indicated that teachers are provided with professional advice through staff meetings, briefings after a seminar, conference and workshops. Discussion groups according to areas of specialization are other forums used by teachers. Departments are well formed in provincial schools. They comprised many teachers compared to district day schools where only one teacher was involved. This questions the authenticity of the professional advice that was given to teachers in these schools. Those in provincial schools indicated that they received advice compared to those in district boarding and day schools that indicated that they don't get the professional advice as required from the Heads of Department as stipulated by the policies. Mentoring of teachers in all the sampled schools was done informally and there were no procedures on how it should be done. As revealed by the study, the role of mentoring was the responsibility of the Heads of departments. In provincial schools, departmental and subject meetings were important in mentoring teachers. In the day schools mentoring was said to be unavailable.

Reasons for being involved in the current courses: When teachers were asked the reasons for engaging in the current courses they expressed that their interest in pursuing degree courses was prominently the main reason that propelled them to be involved in CPD. In order to be more competitive in the job market teachers were motivated to enroll in degree and masters programme. Secondly, career development and salary increments featured prominently. Other reasons cited involved starting personal business. Lastly, deployment from secondary schools to primary schools has acted as a motivation for the diploma teachers. This indicated a disparity between what the policies articulate as the goals for CPD as that of improving student performance and needs of teachers.

Programmes meeting Professional Needs: Teachers involved in CPD had indicated that the programmes helped them to improve their competence in their classroom work. To some, the courses were acting as refresher courses in aspects of methodology, management and even in psychology. They viewed the knowledge to be more than enough in their teaching profession.

Nature of Courses Taken: All the teachers in the sampled schools were involved in accredited courses. Only those involved in seminars and workshops received participation certificate at the end of the courses. The table also revealed those that sought to know the type of incentives that were given to teachers involved in the short courses. The accreditation has acted as a major factor that has influenced teachers to be involved in CPD in Kirinyaga district.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the foregoing CPD is important in teachers development. In Kenya there is a gap between what the policies stipulate and what was practised in Kirinyaga district. The policies indicate the students as the benchmark for any teacher CPD while the reality is that teachers are interested with their personal development with minimal consideration of students. The problems that are faced by teachers need to be addressed by the government through the introduction of schemes that favour CPD at the secondary school level. This should be combined with the long-term courses that are accredited and appraisals of teachers need to be improved in order to motivate them. First, it was noted that at the National level, Ministry of Education (MOE) does not have a section/department that deals with secondary school teacher CPD. This study highly recommends that such a section need to be established at the national level so that it could deal with secondary school teacher professional development in liaison with the TSC. Secondly, the MOE in conjunction with TSC should revise the conditions and terms of service for teachers. This was important so that they could be able to retain the highly qualified staff that has done their masters and some are enrolled for doctorate courses.

Thirdly, to ensure that the government was able to support such teachers, a training levy needs to be put in place. This levy should be used in supporting those

who are involved in CPD programmes. The government could also develop a voucher system that would help in financing of CPD for teachers. Any teachers who had worked for a particular number of years set by the MOE should be eligible for the voucher. Apart from the long-term courses, in-house in-service courses should be developed in all the schools so that newly employed teachers are mentored by the older and more experienced teachers. To make it more successful the mentor teachers should be given allowances for the work done in order to be motivated and perform their duties satisfactorily. The information on the available scholarships and the condition attached to each should be made available to all the schools so that teachers could be aware of the conditions.

This would enlighten the teachers and make it possible for them to compete equally with those in urban areas. At the school level, teachers should be provided with the relevant information concerning the study leaves, courses they should enroll and even what they should expect after completing the courses. The school principals should support the teachers by providing them with the relevant information so that they would be granted study leaves with pay. Lastly, apart from relying on teacher's salaries as the main source of funding, other avenues such as Constituency development fund (CDF), Local Authority Development Fund (LATF) and Teachers Unions should come in and support funding for CPD. The teachers' union should also provide the information to teachers other than only concentrating on wages and salaries improvement.

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