

COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION BRIEFING NOTES

Prepared by the Commonwealth Consortium for Education

A grouping of voluntary and professional bodies committed to education development in the Commonwealth

NO. 11. TEACHER DEVELOPMENT & MOBILITY IN THE COMMONWEALTH

Introduction

The teacher's role in education is central. After the learners, teachers are the most important actors in the education process. Excellent teachers do more than teach curriculum content: they inspire and enthuse their pupils and serve as role models in terms of attitudes and social relationships. If schools, colleges and universities - and non-formal learning programmes - are to achieve their educational aims, there must be effective systems to select, prepare, deploy, manage and support teachers, and to help them develop their professional skills over a working lifetime.

The Education for All targets adopted at Dakar in 2000 recognise that enrolment in school does not itself ensure good education. There must be adequate quality of provision, for effective learning to occur. This requires measures to increase teacher supply and improve the quality and status of the teaching force. The Commonwealth Secretariat's recommendations to Ministers at 16CCEM on its future work programme include the proposal that work on the teaching profession should be central to its activity on the Millennium Development Goals in education.

Teachers have a high profile in Commonwealth activity. Recent highlights are the adoption of the *Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol* in 2004, the inclusion of a *Teachers' Forum* at the 16CCEM in Cape Town in December 2006, and the formal launch of the *Commonwealth Teachers' Group* on the same occasion.

The Commonwealth's focus on teachers reflects a conscious decision to make teacher development and the mobility of teachers the centrepiece of its work on improving education quality. There are two main thrusts:

- support for strengthening the teacher profession at national level, addressed in the next three sections of this Briefing Note. Here the Commonwealth Secretariat, especially as convenor of the ADEA Working Group on the Teaching Profession in Africa, and the Commonwealth of Learning have focused on measures for development and support of teachers. At tertiary level the Association of Commonwealth Universities is particularly active.
- international mobility of teachers and the opportunities and challenges that this presents, the subject matter of later sections of this Note. The Secretariat's work on the Teacher Recruitment Protocol and international recognition of teacher qualifications, and the activities of civil society bodies, have been prominent in this regard.

The Commonwealth has a long record of activity in this area. Teacher exchanges among Commonwealth countries through the League for Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers have been taking place for a century. Staff development for universities was one of the main components of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP), launched in 1959. For twenty years after the first Commonwealth Education Conference in Oxford in 1959, there was a Commonwealth Bursary Scheme, funded by Britain, for education of teachers: and the number of awards under this peaked at 500 annually. One of the first of the Commonwealth specialist education conferences held in the 1960s and 1970s was on the theme of Teacher Education in a Changing Society (Nairobi, 1968).

The Commonwealth has certain natural advantages in serving as a forum to address international issues affecting teachers, to facilitate productive exchanges of experience, and to launch co-operative activity. The shared use of English and the many commonalities in member countries' education systems make dialogue especially easy and provide a strong basis for fruitful exchange of experience and sharing of good practice. Common features include, for example, similarities in school organisation and curriculum, structures of teacher employment, qualifications and examination systems, boards of governors and school committees, and the role of inspectorates.

Teacher development, support and management

The last half-century has seen impressive growth in education enrolment in Commonwealth countries and the teacher force has had to expand to keep pace. In some member states class sizes have fallen, made possible by prospering economies. Elsewhere, however, the teacher-pupil ratio has worsened considerably: output from the training colleges has lagged behind growing requirements and there has been heavy wastage of serving teachers, reflecting a response to poor working conditions and the incidence of life-threatening diseases like HIV/AIDS.

The educational qualifications of teachers have markedly improved in this 50-year period, reflecting the expanded provision of secondary and tertiary education. Yet the average quality of teachers has not always risen commensurately. Periods of professional preparation have reduced in some countries in response to budget cuts. It has become more difficult to recruit 'the brightest and best' to teaching careers, reflecting a fall in the status and remuneration of teachers relative to that of other professionals. Another factor is that the teacher's job has become more complex and stressful in the face of new expectations of schools and of social change.

The Secretariat responded to these critical circumstances by embarking twenty years ago, in partnership with Southern African countries, on a pioneering programme to address issues of teacher management and support, starting with the reform of teacher record systems operated by ministries of education and their staffing sections, their regional and district offices, teaching service commissions, and the payroll authorities. A series of country-led workshops, study visits and collaborative activity to produce training materials took place and the range of countries participating gradually expanded.

In the light of this it was natural that when the Association for the Development of Education in Africa was formed, it should fall to the Secretariat to take on in 1993 the role of convener of the ADEA Working Group on the Teaching Profession, a responsibility it has continued to perform for the past 13 years. The range of issues tackled by the working group has grown to include for example questions of gender, coping with HIV/AIDS, and questions of teacher supply and training. The geographical coverage has also broadened out to include many more Sub-Saharan African countries, in the East and West as well as the South; and the Secretariat has on its own initiative been able to share the fruits of this work with ministries in Commonwealth regions such as Asia and the Caribbean.

The essence of the ADEA Working Group activities is that they are country-led and highly participatory. This involves convening working groups, normally at sub-regional level, for the exchange of experience about the policies and procedures of member countries in key areas affecting teachers, and for consideration of practical measures of improvement and reform. Topics addressed include management of the teaching profession, staffing of schools and teacher deployment, teachers working conditions, teacher training and opportunities for continuing professional development, support services for teachers. In addition to seminars, training workshops and observation visits there have been writing workshops to produce practically-oriented resource materials.

Outcomes of this ADEA work have been heightened awareness of the central role of teachers in education development and of the need to nurture and support teachers, and an increase in the capacity and confidence of ministry professionals dealing with them. Specific outputs have included a series of well regarded published resource books and manuals on training of head teachers, inspection and, more recently, training for multi-grade teaching.

Separately from its ADEA work, the Commonwealth Secretariat commissioned, in time for 16CCEM, a study of teacher deployment practices and policies in Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and Tanzania.

New approaches in teacher training and CPD
Meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) targets in education will require a massive expansion of enrolments, both to keep up with population growth and to raise enrolment rates to 100% of the primary school-age population. It is reckoned that Africa alone will require 1.6 million more teachers by 2015. The prospects of conventional training colleges being able to meet this requirement for newly trained teachers, as well as the

continuing professional development (CPD) needs of those in service, seem remote.

One approach to solving this crisis is to increase the use of distance learning in training teachers. If programmes operated wholly or partially through the learning-at-a-distance mode, this could contribute to alleviating shortages in two ways: first by eliminating or reducing the time and expense invested in attendance on conventional college-based courses, and second by making trainee teachers available earlier for service in school classrooms. Where distance learning uses high-quality self-instructional materials and incorporates well-designed systems of learner support it can potentially make an important contribution to reducing the deficit. Its learner-friendliness is one of its most attractive features. Trainees can complete most of the programme at a time, place and pace chosen by themselves to suit their personal circumstances and to fit in with their particular responsibilities. The systematic approach to teacher and learning so necessary in distance education, provides teachers with an example of good practice

Teacher education at a distance is now a vibrant activity. The numbers being trained are impressive: hundreds of thousands in Africa and over 1 million in India. COL has contributed substantially to this trend.

Learning for development. COL Three-year Plan 2006-2009, page 13.

The *Commonwealth of Learning (COL)*, the Commonwealth agency for distance education co-operation, has been active in assisting development of such approaches. Capacity-building in distance learning has been undertaken in The Gambia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, India, Lesotho, Nigeria and Sri Lanka. Working with experts and practitioners from Commonwealth countries in Africa and Asia, COL has produced a package of Commonwealth quality indicators and quality-assurance materials for teacher education. It also engages with Commonwealth member states in devising strategies and policies for using distance education in teacher training systems, and helping them to incorporate the use of ICTs in their programmes. Each year it sponsors a workshop in Singapore for teacher education administrators from Sub-Saharan African countries.

Staff development at tertiary level

The *Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP)*, launched in 1959, has provided opportunities to younger men and women to pursue advance-level studies, normally leading to a higher degree. It was always expected that some of the main beneficiaries would be the newly developing universities and tertiary colleges in Commonwealth developing countries that were in urgent need of academic staff. A relatively high proportion of those award holders who have pursued research degrees have gone on to take up academic careers. CSFP is treated more fully in Briefing Note 3 in this series.

As well as hosting the UK Commonwealth Scholarship Commission, and administering other awards programmes, the *Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU)* runs a number of staff development programmes. These include leadership workshops for university vice-chancellors and gender capacity-building training workshops to assist women academics to advance

their careers (see also Briefing Note 6 on Gender). The ACU also runs a staff recruitment service for its 500 member institutions. In 2006 it has published a research report, based on a 2005 survey of nearly 130 Commonwealth universities, on trends in academic recruitment and retention.

The *Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa (CAPA)*, based in Nairobi has its own staff development programme. Recent workshop themes have included Prevention of HIV/AIDS, and Increasing Women's Participation in TVET Activities.

Teacher mobility in the Commonwealth

International teacher mobility has great value. It can benefit individual teachers and the education systems to which mobile teachers bring international experience. Teacher interchange helps to strengthen the bonds between Commonwealth countries. There is the potential to plan it in a better and more purposeful way, as a form of professional development for teachers and as a means of strengthening and enriching education systems. It is also important to ensure that teachers who take assignments in another country are treated fairly. This applies to all teachers but especially those who have been induced to serve abroad through active recruitment campaigns.

Teachers seek work abroad for a variety of reasons. These include a desire to travel, a quest for professional experience, and the search for higher salaries or better conditions of service. However 'push' and 'pull' factors are also at work between different education systems. Large-scale out-migration of teachers often reflects poor morale in the teaching force. Teachers may perceive terms and conditions of service as unfavourable, both absolutely and relatively to what exists abroad. Countries that are concerned about large-scale teacher emigration have a responsibility to review their own domestic arrangements for recruiting, retaining and remunerating teachers and offering them a satisfying professional life.

The strong family and other ties between Commonwealth countries, and long traditions of professional migration, tend to encourage mobility. Information on teacher mobility within the Commonwealth is however deficient and most Commonwealth countries have poor data on the composition of their teaching force by nationality and on international inflow and outflow. They should consider taking steps to collect, analyse and disseminate such data.

Commonwealth teacher mobility is of course multi-directional

- between developing countries, say from India to Eastern and Southern Africa, or Guyana to Trinidad and Tobago.
- between industrialised countries, e.g. Australia to Britain.
- from industrialised to developing countries via voluntary organisations and technical co-operation arrangements, e.g. from Canada to West Africa.
- and from developing countries to industrialised ones, e.g. Tongans to New Zealand or Jamaicans to UK.

National circumstances differ. In a few countries, Fiji for example, there is a surplus of teachers and the authorities may look benignly on efforts to offer them employment abroad, especially if emigrant teachers remit part of their

salaries back home. Even here pockets of specific shortage may exist within an overall situation of surplus. Elsewhere, however, teacher emigration may exacerbate an already existing shortage and so intensify the threat of missing national and international targets like the MDGs. It is this situation that prompted the drawing up of the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol.

Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol (CTRP)

The Protocol was signed in 2004, following a lengthy process of discussion and negotiation. It was triggered by a dual set of concerns. First, some developing countries were being deliberately targeted by industrialised countries, to make good their own teacher shortages. This caused 'brain drain' of teachers, often in specialised science and mathematics subjects, who had been expensively trained at local taxpayers' expense. Small island states in particular found it hard to make good the loss suffered. Second, there was real concern that some of those employed abroad through specialised recruitment agencies experienced unfair or discriminatory treatment.

Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol

This Protocol aims to balance the rights of teachers to migrate internationally, on a temporary or permanent basis, against the need to protect the integrity of national education systems, and to prevent the exploitation of poor countries. The Protocol also seeks to safeguard the rights of recruited teachers and the conditions relating to their service in the recruiting country.

Paragraph 2.3.1 of the Protocol.

The Protocol is a voluntary agreement, but has a certain moral force. It addresses 'organised' recruitment by countries and agencies, not the 'informal' flows of teachers who make individual arrangements to work abroad. It provides that recruiting and source countries should consult together about intentions to recruit and agree on mutually acceptable measure to avoid harmful impact on the source country. Principles for an acceptable recruitment process are laid down (full consultation, avoiding recruitment in the middle of the school year etc.) and those recruiting countries using the services of recruiting agencies are enjoined to maintain a list of approved agencies and a formal recognition system to ensure they conform with good practice.

The Protocol also sets out the responsibilities and rights of source countries. It is their duty to devise strategies that will make teaching attractive in their country and to ensure an adequate supply of teachers in areas of strategic importance. They should make known the categories of teachers whose recruitment they will not support. The Protocol recognises that in the last resort, when avenues of discussion and negotiation have been exhausted, source countries can withhold permission for organised teacher recruitment by international recruiters to take place in its country.

Early indications are that the Protocol has been successful in drawing international attention to the issue and in mitigating the problem for small Commonwealth states somewhat. It has been widely welcomed in the international community as a model instrument, which could usefully be adapted and adopted for use elsewhere.

Recognition for Migrant Teachers

A problem faced by migrant teachers, and by education systems wishing to employ them, is the difficulty of establishing the 'value' of the qualification they hold in comparative terms. In a globalising world this issue is encountered in almost every sphere of the international employment market for professionals. It has to be recognised that to the extent the problem can be solved for Commonwealth teachers, the easier migration becomes and the greater is the danger of 'brain drain' of qualified teachers. This would make the Protocol described above even more important - even accepting that its provisions are confined to the 'managed' element of Commonwealth teacher mobility.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has been addressing this issue with the help of the South African Qualifications Authority which commissioned a report for consideration by Ministers in Cape Town *'The recognition of teacher qualifications and professional registration status across Commonwealth member states'*. The report makes a key distinction between the comparability of qualifications and their formal equivalence, and recommends that the Commonwealth should focus initially on trying to improve the recognition and transferability of teacher qualifications through establishing international comparability. It also distinguishes between academic recognition of qualifications for entry into university courses etc and professional recognition giving legal employment status.

The SAQA report suggests that mechanisms in the form of 'competent recognition authorities' are needed at national level in each of these domains. It recommends that an Association of Commonwealth Qualifications Authorities, and a Commonwealth Forum of Professional

which it is the convenor. The CTG played a major role in bringing the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol to fruition and one of its member associations, the National Union of Teachers in the UK, hosted the Commonwealth meeting that adopted the Protocol.

CTG works with other bodies to promote greater contact between Commonwealth teachers, and to develop links supporting professional development activities. It also aims to promote the interests of teachers and education with the Commonwealth Secretariat and other Commonwealth bodies.

- The *League for the Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers*, founded in 2001, offers a number of opportunities for teacher professional development with an international dimension:
 - The Commonwealth Exchange Programme supports post-to-post exchange between UK teachers and Commonwealth colleagues for extended periods.
 - The Teachers International Professional Development Programme (TIPD), managed under a contract from the Department for Education and Skills, provides over 500 places on a local authority-based programme of themed study visits.
 - Study Visits. Short themed international visits, to destinations throughout the world though with a strong Commonwealth focus, are offered to UK teachers. Recent themes include citizenship education, social inclusion, involving and supporting parents, and raising achievement.
- The *Commonwealth Association of Science, Mathematics and Technology Teachers (CASTME)*, founded in 1974, has members throughout the Commonwealth. It works to advance the social relevance of science, technology and mathematics teaching by networking educators in these subjects. It organises workshops to promote good practice and the development of curricula and learning materials. CASTME runs an annual award scheme in which teachers and teacher educators are invited to submit completed innovative projects. Professionals from 35 Commonwealth countries have received awards.

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Teacher Councils could usefully be established. It 'argues strongly for a Commonwealth-wide approach to the recognition and transferability of teacher professional registration' and recommends that a Commonwealth standard for professional registration status be developed.

Commonwealth associations of teachers

The work of the *Association of Commonwealth Universities* and *Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa* at tertiary level is referred to on pages 3 and 4. Prominent among Commonwealth civil-society teacher organisations at school level are:

- The *Commonwealth Teachers' Group (CTG)*, operating under the auspices of Education International and being formally launched in Cape Town in December 2006 at the Teachers' Forum of

More information

Secretary, Commonwealth Consortium for Education
7 Lion Yard, Tremadoc Road, London SW4 7NQ

Consortium website: www.commonwealtheducation.org
or CCEM website: www.16CCEM.com

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