

# Policy Brief



## In-Service Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Synthesis Report (2015)

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### Summary

In order to achieve the Education for All (EFA) goals, it is important to provide adequately trained and qualified teachers in schools. The pre-service requirements in many countries, however, are not enough to prepare teachers for the growing demand for basic education. While enrolment rates increase rapidly, uncertified teachers are being recruited to fill teaching vacancies. For this reason, there is a significant need to better prepare untrained teachers with the proper skills to do their jobs successfully. This can be done effectively through in-service teacher education.

This report examines the findings of research conducted in eight African countries: **the Central African Republic (CAR), Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Zambia**. The purpose of this research is to find and address gaps within current in-service education and training (INSET) practices. From this information, a number of conclusions and recommendations have been drawn to further improve INSET programs and policies.

### Context of Teacher Education

The countries sampled for this study have not achieved the goals set out by EFA because of the lack of qualified teachers and lack of incentives, which often prevent teachers from performing to the best of their abilities.

*General Education Policy:* Policies in these countries stress the importance of education within national development and the elimination of poverty. Governments have begun to increase their commitment to the accessibility of universal basic education. Unfortunately, the supply of teachers has not kept up with this increase, which often results in high pupil-teacher ratios in classrooms.

*Specific Teacher Education Policies:* In order to improve teacher quality, the following areas must be addressed: teacher training, efficacy of teacher education programs, and the opportunities teachers have for continuous professional development.

The Federal Ministry of Education (FME) in **Nigeria** developed an evidence-based comprehensive National Education Policy (NTEP), which aims to supply knowledgeable and skilled teachers. It does this by incorporating the components

### What the Research Shows

#### Socioeconomic and Demographic Background

The ongoing social, economic, and demographic changes taking place in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) have led to a greater commitment to quality basic education. Some of the common factors contributing to and affecting the growth of education are:

1. Improved health services and facilities, which have had a positive impact on life expectancies
2. Steadily increasing GDP's in the eight sampled countries, which have led to some increased financial support in the education sector
3. International policies, such as the EFA goals and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), have led to rapid increases in school enrollment and, therefore, a greater demand for teachers

In response to the demand for teachers, it is clear that the traditional pre-service education approach alone cannot address this issue. For this reason, it is important to investigate how INSET can help support the effort for creating more qualified teachers.

of pre-service teacher education (PSTE) and in-service teacher education (ISTE), to ensure coherent and continuous opportunities for teachers' development.

In the **Central African Republic**, a National Strategy for the Sector of Education (SNSE) was created to cover the period from 2008-2020. The aim of this strategy is to improve the methods and contents of teacher training through the review and development of teacher training curricula, emphasizing competency-based instruction.

In **Niger**, the Decennial Program for the Development of Education (PDDE) was created to emphasize the mechanism of self-directed training for teachers called 'la CAPED' (*Cellule d'Animation Pédagogique or Cell of Teaching Animation*) to address the shortage of training tutors. The program promotes the integration of pre-service teacher education (PRESET) and INSET.

In 2003, the minimum teaching qualifications in **Nigeria** were raised from the Grade II Teachers Certificate (TCII) to the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). The NCE is a three-

year post-secondary qualification, where as the TCII required a five-year post-primary qualification. **Ghana** also replaced its three-year certificate with a Diploma of Education, raising the necessary qualifications. In 2008, Ghana's new education act (Act 778) established the National Teaching Council (NTC) to set and ensure professional standards and codes of practice for professional development. The country's Education Sector Plan emphasizes the importance of continuous professional development for teachers and makes the management of INSET programs mandatory for stakeholders at all levels.

In **Mozambique**, the entry level for teacher training was raised to Grade 10, plus one year of training. Additionally, the country's Strategic Plan of Education places a high value on in-service training and teacher performance evaluation in schools and classrooms. The plan focuses on improving teacher skills and creating a better connection between teachers' performance in the classrooms and evolution of their careers. The Ministry of Education has opted for school-based INSET models.

After the reform of its teacher education program in 2010, **Senegal** extended the required time for pre-service training from six to nine months, stopped recruiting volunteer teachers, and required a baccalaureate diploma as the minimum qualification.

Some countries include incentives in order to retain good teachers. For example, in **Zambia** the government provides a housing allowance for teachers, pays a rural hardship allowance, a retention allowance to teachers with degree qualifications, and decentralizes the process of teacher recruitment. **Nigeria** and **Ghana** celebrate good teachers through an annual National Best Teacher Award Scheme, the rewards of which could be monetary or non-monetary; this award is meant to motivate teachers and raise their status in society.

*Existing Teacher Training Programs:* **Ghana, Nigeria, and Zambia** emphasize pre-service teacher education models, where as **Niger, the CAR, Madagascar, and Senegal** all emphasize the in-service training model. The length and structure of these two models of training varied across the eight countries, depending on both the level teachers would teach and the resources available for training. In **Ghana, Nigeria, and Zambia**, the teacher training was longer than in Madagascar, Niger, Senegal and the CAR. This is because in Ghana, Nigeria, and Zambia, academic courses were studied at the same time as pedagogical course, while in the other countries, pedagogical courses are offered to trainees with degrees or diplomas. In addition to differences based on length and structure, the quality of teacher training varied.

*Institutional Landscape:* Teacher education programs across the sample countries can be found in colleges of education, institutes and faculties of education in universities, national and regional training centers, and other teacher training institutes. Almost every country structures its teacher education programs using two categories: teacher training for the supply of teachers at the basic education level and programs of study for the preparation of teachers for the senior secondary level. The length of time for these programs can vary from several months to a few years.

*Curriculum of Teacher Education:* The common elements of teacher education programs include (1) content knowledge, (2) pedagogy, and (3) professional ethics. Content knowledge refers to knowledge related to the teachers' subject(s) of specialization. Pedagogical skills are those skills needed to effectively deliver instruction including communications skills, classroom management and discipline skills, and ICT skills. Lastly, professional ethics is the code of conduct, which governs teachers' behavior, including standard rules and regulations. The organization of the curriculum of the training institutions varies among countries. The mode of delivery comes in two main forms: face-to-face training and distance learning.

*Funding:* For the sampled countries, the governments are the main funders of teacher education. However, there are a number of international development partners such as the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, USAID, CIDA, and Commonwealth Learning in all of these countries, which provide financial assistance. Despite this fact, teacher education is still grossly underfunded.

## In-Service Teacher Education in Sampled Countries

Teacher effectiveness significantly depends on how often and how well teachers' knowledge and skills are updated. Teachers need and deserve opportunities for professional growth and development. Many developing countries, including the ones in this study, acknowledge the benefits of INSET programs and provide them to teachers. However, these programs heavily rely on donor assistance, highlighting the need for more comprehensive and integrated teacher education policies. Additionally, INSET programs can range from the popular "one-shot" training, often occurring over a weeklong period, to a more extensive school-based professional development, occurring over a longer period of time.

*INSET Policies:* One of the main challenges is the need to establish a policy framework that guarantees the institutionalization of INSET. When INSET becomes a national

policy, it provides all teachers with an equitable opportunity for continuous professional development. Of the eight countries studied, only Ghana and Nigeria have developed separate and well-defined INSET policies. All eight countries, however, do recognize the importance of providing INSET programs to teachers, both certified and uncertified, if they wish to improve the quality of teaching.

*INSET Governance:* Governance structures for INSET of these eight countries extended from national ministries of education to decentralized regional and district offices to schools.

*Functions of INSET:* In the Francophone countries (**CAR, Madagascar, and Senegal**), INSET is deliberately used as a means of recruiting unqualified teachers in the basic education systems, concentrating efforts on certifying these teachers. **Niger**, however, does not offer certification through INSET; it has set up a school-based system of training and supervised practice for improving teacher quality. In the Anglophone countries (**Ghana, Nigeria, and Zambia**), INSET is mainly used for pedagogical renewal, providing qualified teachers with opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills continuously. **Mozambique** uses INSET for both reasons: certification and the improvement of educational services in schools.

*Issues Affecting Structures and Functions of INSET:* The main issues include: (1) the large number of teachers who need, but are not receiving, continuous INSET opportunities, (2) the lack of alignment of INSET programs with clearly defined career paths for teachers, (3) the existence of ineffective and expensive remedial training, and (4) the fact that not all teachers' needs are being met because their in-service needs vary. INSET programs should be re-examined and restructured to better focus on actual needs of teachers.

*INSET Funding:* The level of public funding for INSET programs varied among the eight countries based on the annual budget allocations from the government. A significant amount of the resources that are budgeted for education go to increasing enrolment and building schools, rather than to teacher education. Without financial resources, developing and managing substantial INSET programs becomes difficult.

*Modes of Delivery:* The three main modes of delivery of INSET are face-to-face, distance learning, and school-based modes. Face-to-face delivery often involves short training workshops. The distance learning system (DLS) mode can be carried out through the use of conventional print materials supplemented with CDs and DVDs, and the use of

ICTS in the delivery of training activities. Lastly, the school-based mode uses self-help models based on teachers working together at the school or cluster level to provide training to teachers. In this mode, teachers share their experience with one another, discuss common problems, and provide solutions to these issues.

*Promising INSET Initiatives:* The eight countries in this study provide some promising, innovative approaches to in-service education. In **Nigeria**, for example, the Federal Ministry of Education has implemented an annual retaining of primary school teachers nationwide, a JICA-assisted SMASE-Nigeria in-service project for math and science teachers in three states, and the Special Teacher Upgrading Program (STUP) aimed at raising the qualifications of teachers with the lowest certificate in the basic education sector (from Grade II to the Nigeria Certificate in Education). In **Zambia, Niger, Senegal, and Mozambique**, the school-based approach has been a means of best practice, which has proven effective. **Ghana**, with the support of DFID and JICA, created the Whole School Development (WSD) program, which established an implementation structure for INSET, the development of high-quality training modules, and the capacity building of officers in national, regional, and district INSET units. Lastly, in the **CAR**, the INSET approach is holistic, covering inspectors of education, in-service and newly recruited teachers, school administrators and principals, the Parent-Teacher Association, and members of the community; most in-service training in the CAR is done at the school level using the face-to-face delivery mode.

*Rewards and Sanctions:* None of the countries studied had a substantial reward and sanction system, although some efforts to do so have been made. For example, in **Ghana**, it has been proposed that points earned in INSET should be recognized for issues of re-licensing and promotion. In **Nigeria**, an attempt has been made to link qualified teachers' registration requirements with the new teachers' salary scale. If INSET programs are to be successful, it is important for them to play a significant role in the career progression of teachers.

*Quality Assurance and Monitoring Mechanisms:* Quality assurance is an important aspect of INSET programs. Additionally, quality control is achieved through training 'master' trainers and administrators at the state and local government levels. Collaboration at these different levels can help guarantee that INSET programs are of good quality. Administrators must be trained in INSET system management and quality control strategies, and then they must train relevant officials at the local level.

## Conclusion

Although the progress of its implementation among the studied countries varies, INSET programs are recognized as an important aspect of ensuring teacher quality and should be included in education policies. The status of INSET is yet to be well established in these countries and compared to pre-service programs, the structure, coverage, and funding are still low. In-service teacher education does not receive the necessary resources and funding it deserves from the government. INSET is particularly important in countries with high numbers of uncertified teachers.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings from these eight countries, the following recommendations are suggested for improving in-service teacher education:

1. Create **comprehensive and integrated education policies** that include in-service education and **coordinate policy frameworks with each country's INSET structures**
2. **Diversify the approaches** to in-service training, including the use of school-based approaches and continuous professional development (CPD)
3. Link INSET with **elaborate career paths** and **incentives** for teachers
4. Establish **effective and decentralized INSET systems**
5. Strengthen **quality assurance mechanisms**
6. Embed INSET projects **within countries' annual budgets** to **ensure adequate resources**
7. Increase **private sector support** for INSET

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