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CHAPTER 7

Continuing Professional Development and the Relevance of the IED Model in East Africa

JANE RARIEYA & FRED TUKAHIRWA

Introduction

This chapter addresses the introduction, implementation and impact of the AKU-IED (Institute for Educational Development at the Aga Khan University) teacher education programmes in East Africa.

East Africa consists of three countries: Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. In their first decade of independence, the governments of the three countries had to identify new goals and objectives to guide the growth and development of education. Educational developers saw a competent, well-trained and dedicated teaching force as a critical factor in establishing an education system for the development of a high quality and skilled workforce for all the three countries.

Despite varying political systems in the three countries, the commitment to improving the quality of education is reflected in the following objectives of teacher education in Kenya, which are similar to those of Tanzania and Uganda:

Develop the basic theoretical and practical knowledge about the teaching profession, so that the teachers' attitudes and abilities can be turned towards professional commitment and competence;
enable teachers to recognize the pupils as the centre of education;
create a national consciousness for educational excellence in every teacher;
develop in the teacher the ability to adapt to new situations; and, develop in the teacher an awareness and appreciation of innovation in the field of education and to utilize them. (Njoka, 1995, p. 104)

Concern about the quality of teaching in schools in East Africa has seen the creation of various commissions appointed to review and evaluate the education systems at all levels and recommend measures and strategies for

their improvement. For example, the Uganda Government White Paper (1992) recommended a review of the condition of education, beginning with primary education reform and calling for restructuring in teacher education. Reform aimed at improving the quality of teachers (including their pedagogical skill development); improving learning materials, supervision and assessment; improving the financing of primary education and management of resources; building the management and implementation capacity of educational institutions; and promoting universal access to education and equity.

All three countries have adopted Universal Primary Education (UPE) – the provision of free education for all eligible primary school children. Whilst UPE in the three countries has led to an increase in the enrolment of children in school at the primary level, this has not been accompanied by similar expansion of teacher personnel, support and services. This discrepancy has been compounded by lack of regular in-service programmes for capacity building and enhancement of teachers' knowledge which are necessary for teachers to cope with educational reforms. For example, in Tanzania, many teachers are ill-prepared and poorly motivated to teach. A large number of teachers who were hired under the UPE programme continue to teach with little more than a primary school education as their training. 'According to the Ministry of Education and Culture, in 1997 only 44% of all primary school teachers had a diploma or Grade "A" qualifications, and not even one of the total 110,000 primary school teachers held a university degree' (Kuleana Centre for Children's Rights, 1999). Subsequently, the competence and morale of the teaching force have dwindled. This has been exacerbated by socio-economic, political and environmental changes, which have placed additional responsibilities on teachers. For example, as teaching becomes more learner-centred, teachers are expected to play a more active classroom role. Head teachers are expected to take on further responsibilities in the management of their schools. As a result of such expectations, teachers and head teachers wish to see improvements in their careers, such as access to training and upgrading.

Response of Both Government and Private Agencies

According to Sitima (1995, p. 105), continuing education for teachers in East Africa serves three main purposes, namely:

1. provision of further personal and professional education;
2. enabling teachers to review and modify teaching methods and curricula in the light of present-day changes be they technological, economic, cultural, social or political; and
3. meeting in-service needs of a stable teaching force due to the fall in demand for new teachers in some areas such as music, art, agriculture and home economics.

At the Third Education Conference in Nairobi in 1995, which brought together all the important stakeholders in education in Kenya, the following recommendations were made with regard to continuing education for teachers:

There should be regular in-servicing of teachers and teacher trainers.

All teachers should have opportunities for academic and professional advancement which should form a basis for their promotion by their employers. (Lodiaga, 1995, p. 102)

All three governments recognize that teacher effectiveness is largely influenced by the nature of support teachers receive; thus they have attempted to put in place programmes that would help provide continuing professional development to both teachers and head teachers. This responsibility has been mandated to a number of institutions, departments and organizations, which work either as part of directorates of education or in partnership with the respective Ministry of Education, sponsored by donors, in the three countries. Institutes have been established with specific objectives to strengthen the management and planning capacity of various cadres of education as well as provide support to practising teachers.

However, in implementation of such initiatives for improving teacher education major constraints have been identified. For example,

- For donor-dependent programmes, the withdrawal of donors has often led to the collapse of the programmes due to lack of sustainability. Even in instances when the withdrawal has not been total, lack of efficient provision of services has always been the case.
- Financial constraints limit some programmes. Funding for courses, like any other public service activity, is done by the Treasury which is guided by what is considered as priorities. Unfortunately, 'in-service training ... tends to be placed rather low in the priority list for public spending' (Lodiaga, 1987, p. 50).
- Recognition of a need to provide continuing education support to teachers has not been matched by the development of a strong cadre of teacher educators. More systematic development of teacher educators and strategies to retain those competent in a particular field are needed.
- Frequent deployment of staff affects teacher services: often teachers and head teachers are deployed elsewhere before they can implement what they have learned in an in-service course.
- Although current trends globally are for teachers to take more responsibility in identifying their own development needs, the trend in East Africa is still for teachers to expect centralized training programmes.

Existing In-Service Programmes in East Africa

In order to determine the relevance of the AKU-IED model in East Africa, it is imperative that some comparisons be made between this model and the existing ones.

In East Africa, in-service programmes for teachers are usually conducted to help teachers understand better the demands of newly introduced curricular reforms with the aim of enabling curriculum implementation. In other words, the thrust of most of these programmes is to familiarize teachers with the new reform. There is no established way in which teachers of a particular subject area can be helped to improve their teaching skills. In-service programmes tend to take a theoretical stance during training. Those who conduct the programmes *tell* trainees what should be done rather than demonstrating the relevant practices. Teachers who attend upgrading courses find themselves being offered new, often academic, content areas while little effort is made to seek out and build on their classroom experiences. Although, some of these programmes claim to be field-based, this does not seem to be so at the practical level. Most of the local in-service programmes are of short duration ranging from a day to a week and conducted at a central venue with participants sometimes numbering as many as 70. Participants are given materials to read for the sake of preparing for examinations pertaining to the course. When these teachers have been ‘trained’ there is little or no follow-up when they return to their respective classrooms. Thus, the graduates of such programmes end up not improving their teaching practices; instead they use the qualification acquired to enhance their career opportunities in terms of promotion and salary increment.

The demands placed upon teachers today in East Africa and the almost non-existent support structures for teachers to meet these demands has led to the demoralization of the teaching force which tends to view teaching as a routine task with little challenge or attraction.

Most in-service courses in East Africa are either conducted by donor agencies and their personnel (who may not necessarily be locals) or personnel from the respective Ministries of Education or their institutes. In the case of the former, such programmes are not contextualized to fit the demands of the local contexts, thereby being out of touch with the very participants they are expected to serve. In the case of the latter, often the methodology employed by these trainers is little different from that which the teachers practise in their classrooms, thereby resulting in teachers feeling that they have learnt nothing new at such courses.

Such factors have led to current East African in-service or professional development programmes for teachers being deemed as inadequate to meet educational aims and teaching needs. For example, Uganda’s Ministry of Education’s Teacher Development and Management Plan (TDMP, 2000) identifies issues concerning current continuous professional development programmes as follows:

- Continuous professional development for practising teachers – taken to mean refresher courses and upgrading – is inadequate. Teachers do not adequately apply knowledge and skills acquired from refresher courses. Current upgrading for primary teachers does not necessarily lead to better classroom performance.
- No incentives are offered to teachers to encourage continuous professional development initiatives.
- The organization of continuous professional development for teachers at secondary school level is non-existent.
- Schools do not prepare staff development plans, neither are there school and district initiatives.

AKU-IED/Professional Development Centre (PDC) courses in contrast are designed to try to meet current educational aspirations and associated needs in East Africa.

The Advent of AKU-IED

The entry of the Aga Khan University's Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) into the arena of provision of continuing education for both teachers and head teachers in East Africa is partly a response to the shortcomings and recommendations identified above which was revealed by a survey conducted by a specially appointed task force by His Highness, The Aga Khan. This looked into the need to establish a PDC similar to that at the AKU-IED in Karachi. Following this survey, the PDC Lead-in Project was established in 2000 to conduct a two/three year preparatory phase for the establishment of PDCs in East Africa.

The first programme offered by the AKU-IED in East Africa was the Visiting Teachers Programme (VTP), currently referred to as Certificate in Education Programme (CEP), in August 1998 in Nairobi. It drew participants from Kenya and Tanzania. This particular programme, adapted by a facilitating team of Professional Development Teachers (graduates of the Masters in Education at AKU) from the model developed at the AKU-IED (see Chapter 5), is now referred to as the East African Model. In this model, courses run for five-six months with both central and school-based elements. They target primary school teachers and dwell on a specialist focus (English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Primary Education). They are tailored to the needs of the teachers and attempt to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills, particularly exposing teachers to non-traditional teaching methodologies, and developing their understanding of students' learning processes, curriculum development and enrichment, and subject content knowledge.

Following implementation of the certificate programmes, a certificate course in Educational Leadership and Management (CE:ELM), based on the same model as the CEPs, is now in place for head teachers and school inspectors. The thrust of this course is a shift from the traditional

administrative approach to educational leadership to the development of pedagogical leaders who can effectively contribute to school improvement initiatives. Similar courses are being planned for education officers, centre co-ordinating tutors (Uganda) and teacher advisory centre tutors (Kenya).

Both the CEP and CE:ELM courses are conducted by Professional Development Teachers (PDTs), CEP and CE:ELM graduates and carefully selected personnel from local educational institutions and government departments under the supervision of a faculty member of the AKU. The use of the above range of facilitators is partly to build a large group of teacher educators across the region which is likely to enhance the sustainability of the change initiatives. Participants find these courses enriching since they dwell on improving teaching and school leadership and are based on their identified needs. Unlike most professional development courses, these ones do not solely focus on curricular innovations or reform of the time as directed by ministry officials.

The East African Certificate in Education Programme

AKU-IED/PDC programmes in East Africa are geared towards enhancing teachers' pedagogical skills and pedagogical content knowledge. First, a survey is carried out on a sample of teachers who would be eligible for the programme and their perceptions of need form an important component of the programme content. Second, teachers' perspectives and classroom experiences are taken into consideration during the delivery of the programme. Thus the relevance of programmes to the teachers' classrooms is ensured in the duration of the programme. Furthermore, the facilitation of the AKU-IED/PDC Lead-in Project programmes is such that the participants actually experience the teaching strategies proposed in the programme, thereby providing them with the opportunity to see the feasibility of the suggested ideas. It is against this context, that they are able to better appreciate the workings of the teaching strategies proposed. For example, one graduate of a CEP course commented,

This programme [VTP] is very intensive and very enriching. I have learnt so much more in the past five months than I ever did during my two-year teacher training programme. (Course Participant, Reflective Journal Entry, December 2001)

Programmes run for five to six months depending on the country where the programme is being conducted and cater for 27 participants in any course. A programme is divided into three modules. For modules 1 and 3, participating teachers converge at a central venue (a school) for a period of three weeks, usually during a school vacation. This has helped to resolve problems of releasing teachers during the school term. Participants meet face to face with each other and with the course facilitators. They are introduced to the content of the course, to ways of working and thinking as part of the course,

and to approaches to reflecting on and evaluating their own teaching. In the second module, participants return to their schools for one school term. During this period, they are provided with support by the course facilitators as they try to implement in their classrooms whatever they had learnt in the first module. Saturday seminars are held during this time to bring participants together to discuss their challenges and successes during this module, as well as to provide an opportunity to the facilitators to address issues emanating from their observations of classroom practice and discussions about it with the participants.

IED/PDC programmes are highly practical in nature, with participants often having to demonstrate their understanding of the issues discussed through micro-teaching and presentations. Experiences registered from the participants clearly indicate that they find these easily applicable in the real classroom/school situation as reflected in the comment made by one participant:

We have learnt that it is initiative and innovation that makes Mathematics more practical and makes a learner more of an active participant and not just a mere passive listener. (Course Participant, Reflective Journal Entry, May 2001)

Thus it can be seen that the practical nature of the programme is one of the factors that make the participants more willing to adopt the principles of teaching and learning shared at these courses. This prevents the course from being a one-stop workshop that may not result in improved teaching skills on the part of the teacher. Indeed, one of the aspects of the programme that is greatly appreciated by the participants is the fact that the participants leave the programme looking at things anew. As one such participant stated:

You see these things are not really new, but now we are looking at them differently. When I was in college, I came across some of these things that we are discussing here, but they were rather theoretical and the purpose then was to pass exams. I never really understood what they all meant. Now, I have the chance to fully do so and see how they relate to the way I teach or am expected to teach. (Course Participant, Reflective Journal Entry, August 2002)

IED programmes aim at getting teachers to reconceptualize their roles as teachers and at creating an attitudinal shift among teachers. One important aspect of the programme is that it seeks to develop teachers into reflective practitioners. Thus, it is as a result of continually engaging in reflection that teachers are able to evaluate and re-evaluate their teaching practices, and this often results in a shift in attitude as regards teaching. For example, one participant in the Certificate in Educational Management course (which uses similar approaches to VT courses) commented,

I did not know how to reflect. Reflection has been a big thing for me. This has enabled me to understand who I am, how I can come down and work with others. (Course Participant, Reflective Journal Entry, September 2001)

Reflection is a skill most participants have identified as the most beneficial as it enables them to make professionally informed decisions.

Significant Features of AKU-IED Programmes

One of the strengths of the AKU-IED programmes in East Africa is that they are planned, organized and conducted by teacher educators who are graduates of the Masters in Teacher Education Programme at the AKU-IED and have specially been trained to run such programmes. These graduates are teachers in their respective countries. Upon graduation from AKU-IED, they start to work as teacher educators in their schools. These facilitators understand the philosophy of AKU-IED programmes and are in a position to translate it to the participants through the way they design and conduct the programmes. Many participants have commented on the way course facilitators work with participants, and the following statement by one such participant aptly sums it up:

One of the things that impresses me about this VT[P] is the way the facilitators work as a team. The way they relate to one another as well as to us [participants] has made me realise how important it is for me to be positive about my work as well as the way I deal with my students. I'm beginning to realise that teaching is not so much about me but about my students. (Course Participant, Reflective Journal Entry, August 2001)

However, the PDC Lead-in Project, under whose aegis IED programmes are run in East Africa, still does not have a sufficient number of IED graduates to facilitate programmes entirely. Thus, facilitators of the courses in East Africa are drawn from the pool of AKU-IED graduates in the region and former participants of Certificate in Education Programmes run by AKU-IED as well as staff from other institutions in the region that have the personnel able to contribute. This has led to close collaboration between the AKU-IED/PDC Lead-in Project and the respective government agencies in the field of education. It has also ensured that the programmes in place address contextual needs. Thus programmes in East Africa have developed a flexibility that has contributed to establishing their relevance for the East African participants.

The content of the courses is also another flexible aspect of the course. When the courses first began, they aimed at improving the pedagogical knowledge of the teachers. However, it soon became apparent to the course facilitators that a large number of the participants faced huge challenges in implementing new ideas learned in the programmes because they were weak

in the content knowledge of the subjects they taught. For example, the courses advocate that children should be at the centre of the teaching-learning experience; this requires teachers to take children's prior experiences into account and calls for the teachers to allow students to ask questions freely in class and discuss issues. Many teachers often felt vulnerable as they realised that they did not have strong enough content knowledge of their teaching subjects to work in such ways. As a result, they often reverted to their old traditional teacher-centred methods that provided a safety net for them. Now, the programmes have been modified to teach both content and pedagogy to the participants. Participants are consulted to determine what subject content should be handled during the course. The content taught is also determined during Module II of the programme when classroom observations of the participants reveal particular needs.

Another important distinction, yet likely to be considered minor by some, is that modules 1 and 3 of the IED programmes provide participants with the materials they require for the course, including meals. Although this raises the cost of running the programme, it contributes to making the participants comfortable and gives them a sense of being well cared for. Participants are, therefore, in a position to relax and concentrate on the course. Indeed, this is one area of the programme that is often rated highly during the programme evaluation in overt contrast to other in-service programmes which expect participants to provide their own stationery and meals. This actually deters many teachers from participating in these programmes as they find attending the courses costly. Such provision is, of course, an issue to be considered when funding for programmes is limited.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, IED programmes in East Africa provide in-service courses to all cadres of education that are necessary for whole school improvement. The purpose of this is to ensure that all involved (teachers, head teachers, school inspectors and education officers) work together in trying to improve the quality of teaching and learning offered in schools by having a shared understanding of the processes involved. This is because the AKU-IED/PDC Lead-in Project has realized that if the participant teachers are to be the change agents that the programmes ask of them, then they are more likely to play this role effectively if they have people of like mind within their environment. In contrast, other in-service programmes in the region target specific cadres who are then trained in isolation. The link between all these sectors is not really established and thus participants leave the courses with their own agenda that may not involve collaboration with others.

Challenges Presented by Use of the AKU-IED Model as a Tool for Continuing Education for Teachers in East Africa

The success of the IED model as an in-service approach can be seen in the increased participation of schools in the programmes. In Nairobi (the latest

course site), there are five government participating schools instead of the usual three. There have been numerous appeals from both ministries of education agencies and non-participating schools for inclusion in the programmes.

Furthermore, the cooperation extended to the PDC Lead-in Project by the Ministries of Education in putting up the programmes is an indication of the success and high regard the governments have for these programmes. For example, in Zanzibar, the provision of programmes was initially at the request of the Minister of Education. In Uganda, the first course for School Inspectors was at the request of the Ministry of Education. The linkages that have been established between AKU-IED/PDC Lead-in Project and local universities and Teacher Training Colleges, leading to their participation in AKU-IED programmes is yet another indication of the positive regard with which these programmes are viewed.

However, the above successes notwithstanding, there are several challenges that are presented in using the IED model of in-service teacher education in East Africa. They include the following:

1. The first challenge comes in the form of certification of the courses attended. In East Africa, a lot of value is placed on the certificate one receives at the end of a course as it is used as a basis for promotion. In as much as most participants view the IED programmes as powerful in terms of their personal and professional growth, this does not count much for promotion for teachers in Kenya and Tanzania. The accreditation of Aga Khan University certificates by all the East African governments would go a long way in ensuring that participants and their employers take the programmes much more seriously.
2. The second challenge comes in the form of facilitation of the programmes. Like AKU-IED, Karachi, the leading facilitators in the programmes are graduates of the institution. Currently East Africa has a total of 25 such graduates spread throughout the region. These graduates also work as teachers in their respective schools. As a result of the demands placed upon them by their respective schools, they find themselves constrained in developing and conducting the programmes as required. This, if unchecked, is likely to affect the quality of programmes offered to participants.
3. At the moment, the training approach used by the PDC Lead-in Project is to provide training opportunities to selected schools, which are referred to as collaborating schools. The collaborating schools are expected to send three teachers to any given programme. This means that few teachers get to take part in these programmes in a given year. Therefore, the bulk of teachers from a given school do not get the opportunity to participate in the programmes and are therefore unlikely to provide the cooperation the course participants might require when they return to their schools. This also means that based on this approach, it would take several years for all, or a majority of the teachers in a school to undergo such a programme.

Given that high teacher turnover is quite a common phenomenon in schools in East Africa, the programme could have little effect on the teaching and learning in some of the collaborating schools.

4. The follow-up of the participants who have undergone AKU-IED/PDC Lead-in Project programmes is at the moment inadequate. Once participants are through with the course, they move on to their schools and a new group of teachers are taken through a similar programme. It is assumed that once the participants have completed the programme, their approach to teaching will have changed; yet all indications are that with lack of systematic follow-up, which could be in the form of classroom visits, seminars, reflective dialogue groups, formation of professional associations, among others, teachers would revert to their old practices.

Recommendations

As stated earlier, IED programmes in East Africa are perceived to be a success, with the demand for such programmes growing within the region. It is in the light of this that the following recommendations for AKU-IED/PDC are made:

- AKU-IED/PDC needs to seek government accreditation (consideration of the certificates awarded in terms of promotion and monetary attachments) for its courses within the East African countries. Otherwise, most course participants might shun them due to lack of financial attachments at the end of the course. This is in contrast to courses that are usually run by government institutions and whose participants often receive some form of promotion or salary increments upon completion of the course.
- There is need to develop follow-up mechanisms for those who have completed the courses to ensure that the courses do not assume the one-stop workshop/programme approach that usually shrouds most in-service programmes. This would also minimize the possibility of course graduates reverting to their former teaching practices.
- It would be valuable to extend the fieldwork component of the programmes as this would allow the course facilitators to consolidate the change initiatives into the school systems, and thereby provide support where necessary.
- In all the programmes so far piloted: CEP and CE: ELM, there has always been a request from the participants that more time be allotted to the concepts covered. It is recommended that the programmes be extended to a whole year so that ample follow-up of the participants is done before certification.
- Finally, for the real worth of programmes to be felt in East Africa, there is a need to expand the programmes so that teachers, especially those in rural and disadvantaged areas, and who need these programmes most,

can benefit from them. This can be done in collaboration with teacher advisory centres and teacher coordinating centres.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to review the relevance of the AKU-IED model of continuing education for teachers against a backdrop of past and prevailing teacher professional development courses in East Africa. From the foregoing, the AKU-IED model can be said to be relevant and this, no doubt, stems from the fact, that prior to its entry into the East African educational arena, AKU-IED was engaged in a series of studies and discussions with the relevant stakeholders in the education sector in East Africa. This has resulted in programmes that are quite responsive to the local needs. However, the challenge that now faces AKU-IED is largely one of how to meet a rapidly growing demand for its programmes, especially now when the effects of UPE are acutely being felt in East Africa.

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