

Lusaka Central Zone Teachers' Perspectives on Continuing Professional Development

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Most education systems in Africa and possibly the world over have undergone continuous changes in search for relevance and improved practices. In some cases, fiscal have led to changes in the delivery of education as countries had to adjust their budgets to suit the available resources. For example, Kelly (1991) observes that Zambia experienced increasingly grave financial problems in the mid-1980s leading to a decline in the economy which affected all sectors including education. He contends that the deterioration occurred at a time when the population was growing at a rapid rate hence the education sector has been subjected to two opposed pressures: a fiscal pressure to curtail financial commitments and a demographic pressure to increase the provision of education. Kelly further concludes that the outcome has been a virtual stagnation in resource allocation, a substantial increase in enrolments and in consequence, a reduction in unit expenditure.

The effects of these demographic and fiscal pressures on the economy in Zambia had to be mitigated by embarking on programmes that support development of instructional materials and teacher development. The Ministry of Education (MoE, 1992) reports that some of the deteriorated education system was supported by donor countries such as Finland and Sweden through the FINIDA book writing project and the Self Help Plan for Education (SHAPE) project sponsored by the Swedish International Development (SIDA). These also supported teacher development through In-service.

Abstract:

The study investigated Lusaka central zone teachers' perspectives of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The study was premised on the theoretical framework of Experiential learning and situated cognitive learning characterized by the concepts of experience and reflection. The objectives of the study were to: find out the teachers' knowledge of CPD, establish the support that teachers got from CPD, determine teachers' participation in CPD and establish challenges teachers faced in CPD. The study was a survey design whose population included all the four secondary schools in Lusaka central zone, all the teachers and administrators at the secondary schools and the District Education Standards Officer (DESO). A sample of 20 teachers and 1 administrator from each school and the DESO making a total of 84 respondents was selected purposively. Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were used to collect data from administrators and teachers respectively. Data was analysed inductively by recording the responses from the (FDGs) and interviews into common themes. The findings of the study reviewed that

teachers in Lusaka Central Zone (LCZ) had knowledge of CDP and received some support in their teaching through CPD. Teachers participated as participants and facilitators. However, not all teachers participated in CPD.

The challenges teachers faced in CPD included their lack of understanding of the concept and function of CPD, failure by CPD to create time for individual development and meet the teachers' needs, lack of variety in content and presentation of CPD materials and unfavourable meeting times and environments for CPD. The study concluded that teachers in LCZ were aware of CPD but had not embraced it as viable form of in-service training because it did not lead to a credible qualification. The study recommended that; CPD would flourish in LCZ when Education management at both provincial and district levels sensitize the teachers on the value of CPD; CPD should be given a utilitarian value, like making it a requirement for teachers' promotions and or merit increment in their salaries and CPD should be done when pupils are not in class to avoid losing class time. The study was significant in that its findings will provide insights to the teachers and policy makers on CPD in order to understand appreciate and support its activities. Keywords: Continuing Professional Development (CPD), Performance, Zone Teachers, and Management.

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