

## Session 1: Teacher Mobility, Gender and Status, I

The Chair, Mr Richard Bourne, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, opened the session and introduced the two presenters, Mr Dennis Sinyolo and Dr Roli Degazon-Johnson.

Mr Sinyolo presented his research on teacher supply, recruitment and retention in six sub-Saharan Anglophone countries. He said that one of the strategies adopted by the forum to achieve the EFA goals, as set out in the 2000 Dakar Framework, was to ‘identify, train and retain good teachers ...’,<sup>3</sup> but unfortunately some countries had ignored the importance of having qualified teachers and decided to employ unqualified, volunteer, contract or para-teachers. These teachers generally had the minimum, if any, teacher training, and were normally hired locally and paid by the community. Such teachers were sometimes employed on the advice of international financial institutions like the International



Left to right: Helena Awurusa, National Gender and HIV/AIDS Coordinator, Ghana National Union of Teachers; Lulame Nare, Head of Department, Gender Unit, South Africa Democratic Teachers Union and Dennis Sinyolo, Co-ordinator, Education and Employment, Education International

Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank as a way of controlling or reducing education budgets and government expenditure.

**Table 1: Participating countries at a glance (2005)**

	The Gambia	Kenya	Lesotho	Tanzania	Uganda	Zambia
Population, total (millions)	1.5	34.3	1.8	38.3	28.8	11.7
Population growth (annual %)	2.6	2.3	-0.2	1.8	3.5	1.6
Surface area (sq. km '000))	11.3	580.4	30.4	945.1	241.0	752.6
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	56.3	48.3	35.6	46.2	48.9	38.1
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	89.0	78.5	80.0	78.4	80.2	102.0
Youth female literacy rate (% of females aged 15—24)	-	80.7	-	76.2	71.2	66.2
GNI (current US\$ billion)	0.4	18.0	1.8	12.1	8.5	6.7
GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$)	290.0	530.0	960.0	340.0	280.0	490.0
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population aged 15—49)	2.4	6.1	23.2	6.5	6.7	17.0

**Source:** *World Development Report*, World Bank, 2005

3 *The Dakar Framework for Action*, Dakar, 2000, p. 20.

Mr Sinyolo said that the overall goal of the survey was to investigate various issues that affect the recruitment, supply and retention of qualified teachers in The Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The methodology utilised a desk study, a questionnaire, and country visits and meetings, combined with discussions and interviews.

The main findings of the survey were:

- ◆ **Teacher supply:** Four of the six countries, The Gambia, Lesotho, Tanzania and Uganda, had a shortage of qualified teachers. The shortage affected both primary and secondary schools. For example, in Lesotho in 2006 44 per cent of primary school teachers and 42 per cent of secondary school teachers were unqualified.
- ◆ **Teacher attrition:** The average rate of teacher attrition in the six countries was 4 per cent. Most of the attrition is attributed to retirement, resignation, death and dismissal. Many respondents felt that deaths due to AIDS-related illnesses had contributed to the high rate of attrition, especially in Lesotho and Zambia.
- ◆ **Brain drain:** Brain drain has also contributed to the high level of teacher attrition in Zambia, particularly at secondary level. The main cause of brain drain was cited as low salaries and poor conditions of service. The best way of reducing teacher attrition would be to address its root causes, particularly HIV/AIDS, low salaries and poor working conditions.
- ◆ **Teacher remuneration and motivation:** The survey revealed that teachers' salaries were generally low and below the poverty datum line or cost of living. Conditions of service were also poor and many schools had no accommodation, or inadequate accommodation, for teachers. The situation was even worse for unqualified teachers, most of whom earned 40—60 per cent of the salary of the lowest-paid qualified teacher.
- ◆ **Teacher absenteeism:** Teacher absenteeism was reported to be a problem (but not a

major one) in 50 per cent of the countries (Lesotho, Tanzania and Zambia). The main causes were irregular paydays (e.g. in Tanzania and Zambia) and illness, probably related to HIV/AIDS. Teachers from rural areas usually travelled to urban areas or district centres to collect their pay and this took up to three or more days, especially when the processing of salaries was delayed.

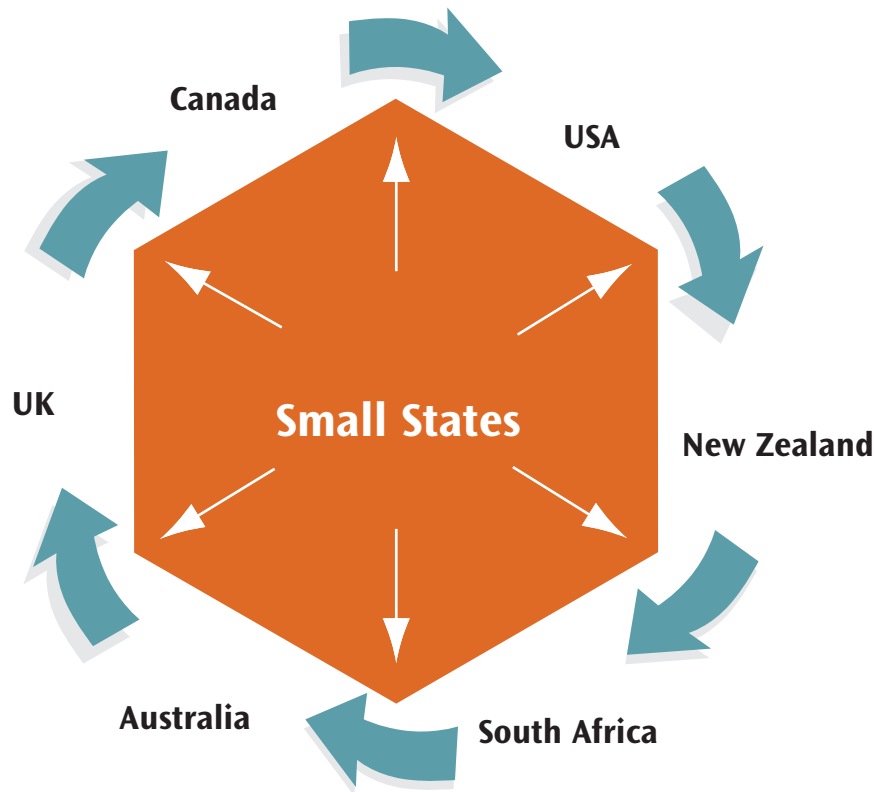
- ◆ **Union involvement in policy development:** In countries like The Gambia, Kenya and Uganda, the involvement of the union is provided for in the country's legal statutes, such as the Education Act or in education policy papers or plans. Generally, all the unions were working closely with civil society organisations such as EFA country coalitions, and this strengthened their ability to influence education policy.

(For the full text and recommendations of the paper see Appendix 2.)

Dr Degazon-Johnson presented her paper, entitled 'An Overview of Commonwealth Teacher Mobility, Recruitment and Migration', moving from the country-specific findings of the first paper to the bigger picture of teacher mobility and recruitment in a broader pan-Commonwealth perspective. She began by providing a brief summary of the Commonwealth's make-up as a unique family of 53 developing and developed nations, encompassing 2 billion people — 30 per cent of the world's population. The Commonwealth spanned every continent, many races, faiths, languages and cultures, and had shared values relating to democracy, good governance, human rights and the rule of law. In focusing attention specifically on the Secretariat's education, health and gender programmes, she noted that these activities, undertaken through its Social Transformation Programmes Division (STPD), supported the MDGs on achieving universal primary education and gender equality in education by 2015.

Addressing the research on teachers which the Commonwealth education programme had undertaken since the adoption of the CTRP in

**Figure 2: The ‘Migration Merry-Go-Round’ — the reality in Commonwealth teacher recruitment**



2004, Dr Degazon-Johnson discussed the ‘Migration Merry-Go-Round’ which recent Secretariat studies among teachers, doctors and nurses had revealed, noting that migration and development had now become an international concern that had been taken up at the UN. She argued that the impact of migration on development in certain contexts had yielded brain drain and waste, and that factors such as unethical recruitment practices, the *de facto* utilisation and deployment of remittances, and other economic and social push-pull factors made it apparent that migration was a multifaceted phenomenon — positive for some countries, but not for all. She noted the work of the Secretariat in developing Commonwealth instruments in response to the requests of health and education ministers, specifically the International Code of Practice for the Recruitment of Health Workers (2003) and the *Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol* (2004). She emphasised that while these instruments did not seek to restrict the free movement of labour, they did seek to balance the rights of the highly skilled to free

movement and migration against the need to prevent erosion of the development process in poor countries and the exploitation of scarce human resources in those countries.

Addressing qualitative data obtained from member countries, she advised that in the Pacific, Samoa lost teachers through recruitment to New Zealand, where they were employed as bus drivers and prison warders. Cameroon lost its bilingual teachers to China and Canada, and Kenya, which had an over-supply of trained qualified teachers, organised structured recruitment programmes with Rwanda, Seychelles and Sudan. Small states in the Caribbean, Africa, Europe and the Pacific, which comprised three-fifths of Commonwealth countries, experienced the most detrimental effects of human capital loss of teachers. Jamaica, with a population of under 3 million, lost nearly 1,000 teachers to the UK between 2001 and 2003. Guyana trained 300 teachers every year and lost the same number through migration. In the Caribbean region, 70 per cent of those who completed tertiary education migrated to industrialised countries.



Dr Roli Degazon-Johnson

Dr Degazon-Johnson reported on interviews conducted with 66 Commonwealth recruited teachers during 2006.<sup>4</sup> The interviewees had been identified with the assistance of the Commonwealth Teachers Group. The concerns and issues that they raised included:

- ◆ The positive experiences provided by Botswana
- ◆ The unethical treatment meted out to teachers by some recruitment agencies
- ◆ Poor promotion prospects
- ◆ Challenges encountered in supply teaching

- ◆ Lack of recognition of qualifications, which affected pay levels
- ◆ Lack of knowledge about the CTRP by 90 per cent of the teachers interviewed.

Symposium participants were also informed about the findings of a quantitative study based on data drawn from 17 Commonwealth countries during 2006 which revealed that there were high turnover levels and low levels of retention among their teaching cohorts, and that more male than female teachers appeared to be leaving the profession. Female, rather than male, teachers were filling the vacancies created by male teachers' departure.

Concluding her presentation, Dr Degazon-Johnson highlighted policies and programme initiatives which could be undertaken by government and teacher organisations to create an environment that was conducive to teacher retention. They included:

- ◆ The promotion of brain circulation to encourage migrant teachers to return to their country of origin;
- ◆ Minimising brain waste through the promotion of international recognition and professional registration of teachers and their qualifications;
- ◆ The need for 'consideration' to be provided by richer countries when they recruited large numbers of teachers from poor and developing countries;
- ◆ Dissemination of information to all teachers about the existence and provisions of the CTRP.

---

4 From South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, UK, Botswana, Canada and the USA.