



# Teacher Migration in South Africa

## Advice to the Ministries of Basic and Higher Training

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## **Acronyms and Abbreviations Used**

CEEQ	Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Qualifications
CPTD	Continuing Professional Teacher Development
ETD	Education, Training and Development
FET	Further Education and Training
ILO	International Labour Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States (of America)
VSP	Voluntary Severance Package

# 1. Introduction

This paper is based on a review of available literature on teacher migration “into” and “out of” South Africa. It must be pointed out from the outset that there is a great difficulty accessing statistical data on the number of teachers who have emigrated out of South Africa over the years, nor is there accurate data on the number of teachers who have immigrated into South Africa. Attempts to obtain such data from various sources yielded no success. One of the sources for such information would have ordinarily been the Department of Home Affairs. A high ranking official in the Department of Home Affairs indicated that the Department has no system of capturing the skills and qualifications of people entering the country, but that it is something that is under serious consideration at the Department and might be implemented in the next three years or so.

Data available from Statistics South Africa does not provide disaggregated figures on *inflows* and *outflows* of skilled labour at specific profession level. However, published research and conference presentations on teacher migration in and out of South Africa do provide important insights into the push and pull factors that contribute to teacher migration in and out of South Africa.

In this review, global trends in teacher migration are discussed first in order to provide a context within which to understand teacher migration in South Africa. This is followed by a brief discussion of the nature and extent of teacher migration into and out of South Africa, using proxy data. In this section, ***internal teacher migration*** is also discussed. The third section of this review focuses on the reasons why some South African teachers have emigrated and why teachers from other African countries (and elsewhere) have immigrated into South Africa. The fourth section focuses on the impacts of teacher migration in South Africa.

The review concludes with a summary of the key findings and some policy recommendations that could be considered when seeking to address the negative consequences of teacher migration in and out of South Africa.

## **2. International Trends in Teacher Migration**

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2004), since 1990 there has been a marked increase in the international migration of highly skilled professionals in three sectors: health, education and new technologies. Increased globalization, which has been characterized by advanced transport and information and communication systems, has brought with it renewed concern about the effects of emigration of skilled labour from developing countries to developed ones. According to a study conducted Commonwealth Secretariat in 2005, 50 to 80% of all highly educated citizens from several developing countries in Africa and the Caribbean live and work abroad (Manik *et al.*, 2006). Indeed, as Manik (2005), Mulvaney (2005), de Villiers and Book (2009) and the American Federation of Teachers (2009) have observed, developed countries have pro-actively sought to address their critical needs such as the shortage of teachers by developing “innovative” strategies to attract, recruit and retain teachers from abroad, especially science and mathematics teachers.

While some researchers have sought to downplay the negative impacts of teacher attrition in developing countries, it cannot be denied that the vacuum created by emigrating teachers compromises the developing countries’ ability to provide quality education to future generations in their own countries. As Manik (2010) has correctly pointed out, the onus falls on schools and national education departments in developing countries to “... create an attractive, healthy and supportive environment for local teachers or run the risk of losing them to international recruitment agencies offering rewarding work and travel packages overseas”(p. 109).

In many developed countries such as the US, UK, the Netherlands, Canada and Australia, the teaching profession is ageing due to an inability to attract young people into the profession. Thus, as long as this trend exists, these countries will continue to experience teacher shortages which they will seek to address by luring teachers from elsewhere – and, teachers in developing countries will remain the primary target. It is in this international context that the issue of teacher migration in South Africa must be understood.

Interestingly, the same international patterns appear to be playing out on the African continent itself where, an increasing number of teachers from other African countries (e.g. Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Zambia, etc) are immigrating into South Africa due to the country's economic prosperity, political stability and promise of better working conditions and income. For the most part, teacher mobility is driven by a demand for educators in the receiving country and the push-and-pull factors that motivate individuals to leave their own country's educational system (Sives, Morgan & Appleton, 2004). Thus, the issue of the international movement of educators is an important policy issue for South Africa (Appleton, Sives & Morgan, 2006b).

### **3. The Nature and Extent of Teacher Migration into and out of South Africa**

In South Africa, the majority of schools are public schools owned and managed by provincial departments of education and district education authorities at local level. To a large extent, the demand and supply of teachers is determined by the government's policies (Appleton *et al.*, 2006b). Teacher migration escalated in the 1990s due to the perception created by the government that there was an oversupply of teachers in the country precipitated by the offering of voluntary severance packages (VSPs) to ameliorate the oversupply.

The Hofmeyer audit of teacher training estimated that about 25 000 new teachers being trained each year, a large amount in comparison to the number of students and schools in need of their services at the time (Appleton *et al.*, 2006b). As a result, there was a moratorium placed on the employment of new teachers in 1997 such that, by the year 2000, newly qualified teachers were only hired on a temporary basis, with severance packages even being offered to entice teachers to take early retirement (Appleton *et al.*, 2006b). These conditions in the South African education system led to a decline in the number of people who were trained to become teachers and allowed for countries that were experiencing shortages in the supply of educators to recruit South African teachers.

As the United Kingdom and other countries became appealing to South African teachers, the migration of South African teachers to those countries meant that the South African education system began to experience substantial losses of educators. However, in 2000, there was a reassessment of the 1990s position that there was an oversupply of teachers, partly because the measures that had previously been introduced to deal with the perceived “over-supply” of teachers had been effective; as well as reducing demand, they had made the teaching profession an unattractive career choice for young people who could have potentially chosen to become teachers.

In 2006, it was estimated that the total teacher population in South Africa was approximately 400,000 and that South Africa needed to recruit 17 000 to 20 000 teachers per year (Morgan *et al.*, 2006), yet the teacher training output was around 9 000 newly qualified teachers per year. Thus, the estimated flow of newly qualified teachers was substantially below the number of teaching posts that became vacant each year. Various reasons contributed this state of affairs: an ever-changing education policy landscape and teachers’ under-preparedness to cope with it, unattractive salaries and conditions of service leading to demoralisation and creating higher propensities to leave the profession as well as the impact of HIV and AIDS on the teaching profession. In order to address the teacher shortage problem, especially at secondary level (and particularly in mathematics and science disciplines), South

Africa subsequently turned to other countries for the provision of teachers, thereby became both a 'sending' and 'receiving' country for migrant teachers (Appleton *et al.*, 2006b).

### ***3.1. Movement out of South Africa***

As indicated, South Africa does not keep track of the number of teachers that the country loses due to international recruitment. Available data suggests that South Africans constitute the majority of foreign teachers in the United Kingdom. South Africa is also described as being primarily a *sender country* to Australia, the United States of America and Canada (Appleton *et al.*, 2006b; Manik *et al.*, 2006). While national data on teacher migration are lacking for South Africa, figures provided by *Statistics South Africa* estimate that an average of 1 000 skilled people (including teachers) leave South Africa for other countries every month (Manik *et al.*, 2006). If this estimate is correct, it translates to a yearly total of approximately 12,000 skilled professionals (including teachers) leaving South Africa to seek employment elsewhere in the world.

However, because of the lack of data collected on the issue, it is difficult to provide precise figures of how many trained teachers from South Africa are working overseas at any given time (Morgan, Sives & Appelton, 2005). Nevertheless, the use of the 'receiving countries' immigration and teacher registration data provides the most reliable indication of the number of South African educators entering and working within a particular country and have been used by many researchers to gain some idea of the extent of teacher migration (Bhorat, Meyer & Mlatsheni, 2005). For example, figures from the United Kingdom indicate that a total of 5564 work permits in the year 2003 were given to people whose job included teaching. South Africans made up close to thirty percent (30%) of teaching permit holders; with 1492 South Africans holding teaching permits (Morgan *et al.*, 2005). In comparison to other sender countries, such as Jamaica which had 523 similar permit holders, South Africa was the largest foreign provider of teaching staff in the United Kingdom (Kok, Gelderblom & Van Zyl, 2006; Morgan *et al.*, 2005).

The survey by Appleton et al of 2003 - published in 2006 - indicates that 48% of practicing teachers in South Africa intended to migrating and 27% of student teachers were considering migrating upon graduation. South Africa is in a situation where the rate of teacher attrition in South Africa currently exceeds the rate at which newly trained teachers are being produced (Appleton, Morgan & Sives, 2006a). For example, in the year 2006, the statistics showed that about 17 500 educators were lost through attrition, while only 2 500 teachers were being trained (Gilbey, 2001; Manik *et al.*, 2006). In the period from 2000 to 2004, South Africa experienced an estimated teacher attrition level of just over a third, that is, about thirty-four percent (34%) (Manik *et al.*, 2006). About 8.6% of teachers left to work overseas in this same period, with an estimated 4% of teachers working abroad in the year 2006 (Manik *et al.*, 2006).

South African teachers are documented as having entered foreign countries through various methods, including but not restricted to, recruitment agencies, internet applications and others through procurement of working holiday visas that allow them to work while on vacation. Others acquired a teaching position at a foreign school after visiting family members or friends in that country (Morgan *et al.*, 2005).

Of particular concern is the fact that there is evidence of higher rates of international recruitment of teachers specialising in subjects that are considered to be 'scarce subjects' – notably, the sciences (Morgan *et al.*, 2006). There is also evidence of the qualitative impacts of international recruitment of teachers from South Africa in that, emigrating teachers tend to be rated by their headmasters as being of above average effectiveness, suggesting that the recruitment process, not surprisingly, targets the best teachers in the country. Furthermore, migrant teachers appear to be younger than the average South African teacher and tend to be from urban schools that were formerly exclusively for whites (Appleton *et al.*, 2006).

### ***3.2. Movement into South Africa***

Although some research has been carried out on the movement of South African teachers from their country to other countries (Appleton *et al.*, 2006b; Manik *et al.*, 2006; Morgan *et al.*, 2005), by comparison little research has been carried out on the movement of non-South African teachers into the country. Research on teacher migration in South Africa appears to be centred on highlighting and understanding the reasons for the decline in quality of education in the country with the problem being attributed to the loss of teachers to other countries. As mentioned previously, the movement of teachers out of South Africa left a vacuum in the education system, and led to South Africa becoming a receiving country.

According to research carried out by the International Migration Programme, in conjunction with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on skilled labour migration in South and Southern Africa, neighbouring countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region have served a replenishing role in terms of providing skilled labour to South Africa (Bhorat *et al.*, 2005).

South African statistics take into account only those who have declared themselves and registered as teachers when they enter or leave the country (Bhorat *et al.*, 2005). In a study looking at the overall migration of skilled labour into South Africa, the results of a survey carried out by the South African Migration Project (1997-1999) suggested that South Africa was a receiving country of more than half of its skilled immigrants from Europe (McDonald & Crush, 2002); around three percent (3%) from Asia, with the United Kingdom and Germany taking first and second position, respectively, in the numbers of skilled workforce that the country received (Wentzel & Tlabela, 2006).

The research also revealed that South Africa primarily attracted the Zimbabwean skilled workforce, including teachers (Wentzel & Tlabela, 2006). Lesotho has also been identified as a sender country of workers to South Africa (Wentzel *et al.*, 2006).

Indeed, South Africa has long been attracting intellectuals from the rest of the African continent and projections point towards the continuation of such a pattern of migration as long as South Africa remains economically dominant and attractive in Africa (Wentzel, Viljoen & Kok, 2006).

In Botswana, nearly five percent (5%) of all teachers were once foreigners (Manik *et al.*, 2006). In order to curb the continued presence of such a large number of expatriates in their education system, in 2005 a decision was taken not to renew their contracts with the aim of allowing the proportion of Botswana teachers to rise (Manik *et al.*, 2006).

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), among various things, is responsible for the evaluation of foreign qualifications for people coming into the country to pursue further studies or seek employment. This is done in its Directorate for Foreign Qualifications Evaluation and Advisory Services (DFEQAS). The last five years of SAQA's work indicates that in Field 5, i.e. Education, Training and Development (ETD), the following qualifications were evaluated from immigrants who were ostensibly teachers:

**Table 1: Foreign teachers' qualifications evaluated by SAQA**

FINANCIAL YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER EVALUATED PER YEAR	%
2009/10	25 500	17.5
2008/9	29 347	22.0
2007/8	29 849	9.0
2006/7	14 382	12.5
2005/6	8 420	11.5

While the above figures include both new and re-activated applications for evaluation, it reliably indicates the number of teachers who enter the country considering that according to SAQA new applications constitute approximately

86.5% of the total in each case. The above table indicates that of the total number of people entering South Africa for work purposes, 14.5% on average, in the last five years were teachers. Moreover, as expected, SAQA has indicated that ‘by far the most applications and therefore qualifications and therefore also teacher qualifications received are from Zimbabwe.

**Table 2: Education profile of Zimbabweans in South Africa**

<b>EDUCATION/QUALIFICATION LEVEL</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
University degree	4
Professional qualification, including teachers and nurses	15
Artisan qualification	3
Post-secondary diploma/certificate	10
Secondary education	62
Primary education and other	6

(Source: Makina, 2007: 7)

Any perceived decrease in teacher migration into South Africa can be attributed to the perception that the policies that have been introduced by the Department of Home Affairs are restrictive. The policies are in place to protect the South African population from non-South African labour competition. The policy of restriction is implemented through the use of a system of work and residence permits (Wentzel *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, the need for one to be professionally registered for teaching in another country serves as an extra restriction. According to the Commonwealth Secretariat (2010), thousands of teachers from Zimbabwe are unable to work as teachers as their qualifications are not recognised by South African qualifications agencies; a problem that is in no way unique to the Zimbabwean-South African situation, as other migrant teachers experience the same thing in other countries all over the world (Keevy, 2008).

In order for a teacher to be allowed to practice in the country, registration with the South African Council of Educators (SACE) is a statutory requirement, as it is for all other local teachers in the country. In the financial year of 2009/2010, the SACE registered 28 723 new educators, foreign educators registered made up approximately 28% of registered educators; however, the registration of foreign teachers was on a provisional annually renewable basis (SACE, 2010). It should be noted however that while the numbers appear high, the registration of foreign educators with the SACE takes up to three months, in comparison to the three weeks it takes local educators (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2010). Therefore, foreign educators are still at a disadvantage in terms of entering the South African education system, in comparison to their South African counterparts. South African teachers still comprise over 70% of teachers in the country and yet their numbers are still insufficient to provide services to the whole country.

**Table 3: SACE registration categories and numbers for the financial year 2009/2010**

<b>DIFFERENT CATEGORIES REGISTERED</b>	<b>NUMBERS OF TEACHERS REGISTERED PER CATEGORY</b>
Educators registered	28 723
Full registration	6 690
Provisional	12 957
ECD	1 115
Foreign educators	7 961
Updates, extensions & reprints	12 980
Pre-accredited members (PAM)	3096

(Source: SACE, 2010: 10)

It would be important to do a comparative analysis of the 2009/10 figures of foreign educators registered with SACE with the previous four years. Table 4 below depicts these trends showing significant increases in the number of foreign nationals professionally registered as educators in South Africa.

**Table 4: SACE Registration of Foreign Educators over the past four years**

FINANCIAL YEAR	FOREIGN EDUCATORS	NUMBER OF SACE REGISTRATIONS	%
2009/10	7 961	28 723	28
2008/9	2 259	20 774	11
2007/8	1 950	18 507	11
2006/7	274	22 773	1.2

(Adapted from SACE Annual Reports: 2005 –9)

In the year 2006/7, the registration of foreign educators as a separate identifiable category was new at SACE, hence the low number of foreign educators who were registered with SACE. The figure was also skewed by the fact that the registration might not have necessarily started at the beginning of the financial year. For data reliability reasons, 2006/7 will be set aside. Nonetheless, these figures indicate some very important trends in the movement of educators into South Africa. At least between 2007 and 2009, there was an increase of more than 10 000 educators registered by SACE (i.e. from 18 507 to 28 723). In the same period there was an increase of 6 000 foreign educators provisionally registered by SACE. This was a significant increase, translating to an average of 16 %. While the percentage remained the same between 2007 and 2008, the actual number of registrations increased by more than 300. This trend compares with SAQA figures as the number of foreign qualifications evaluated by SAQA between 2005 and 2009 tripled and the average is about 15%.

### ***3.3. Internal migration***

Internal migration refers to the movements of people from one part of the country to another (Kok *et al.*, 2006). This phenomenon has not been well researched in South Africa, with internal teacher migration being limited to the discussion around how rural schools and government schools usually lose teachers to urban and private schools (Wentzel & Tlabela, 2006; Manik *et al.*, 2006). Rural or remote schools are usually then left with teachers who are described as *desperate for jobs* and who have failed to acquire jobs in other preferred areas (Wentzel & Tlabela, 2006).

As limited information is available on the specific trends with regard to internal migration, by focusing on general migration trends, one can estimate the extent of internal rural-to-urban migration among teachers in South Africa. According to Cross, Seager, Wentzel, Mafukidze, Hoosen and Van Zyl (2009), approximately half of all rural districts in South Africa undergo a net loss of population due to rural-to-urban migration. Young adult males in particular, with secondary education, are migrating out of rural areas in search of employment in urban areas. However, those with tertiary education tend to remain or return to their rural homes and continue to be present in the rural labour markets (Van der Berg, Burger, Leibbrandt & Mlatsheni, 2006). One can argue that the younger generation aspires to move out of their rural lifestyles, while those with tertiary qualifications, after a period of urban living, eventually opt to return to their rural homes, out of a sense of responsibility to the family, due to emotional ties with home that the younger generation may not necessarily have.

Data acquired by Statistics South Africa indicates that most rural-to-urban migration is temporary, with most migrants returning to their rural homes after retirement or retrenchment (Lehola, 2006). Knowledge of such trends may be useful in terms of informing policy on how to ensure adequate and qualified teachers are made available for rural schools. If most migrants, including skilled teachers only stay in urban areas temporarily, providing incentives to local qualified teachers to remain in their rural areas and teach is likely to yield positive results for increasing the numbers of teachers in rural schools.

In discussing the problems many governments face in ensuring quality teachers are present in rural schools, Mulkeen (2005) states that while the problem of teachers is usually linked to low numbers of teachers being produced by the system, in actual fact, there are qualified teachers in urban areas who are unemployed. Teachers prefer to teach in urban areas while rural posts remain unfilled or when filled, the teachers who take on these posts tend to be unqualified and inexperienced (Mulkeen, 2005). Therefore, there is a need to ensure that well trained and motivated teachers are made available for rural schools. Large incentives may be necessary to attract teachers to rural schools.

### *3.3.1. Reasons for low levels of teachers in rural areas and possible solutions*

In 2006, the then Department of Education (2006) highlighted challenges facing teachers and schools in rural areas, namely, the shortage of competent teachers, the small class sizes coupled with the shortage of teachers which results in multi-grade teaching, under-resourced school facilities and limited access to professional development programmes. These findings are consistent with the findings by Mulkeen (2005) in the analysis of the state of education in rural schools in Africa. Mulkeen (2005) reported that many teachers prefer to teach in urban settings due to similar reasons mentioned previously, including the low quality of accommodation and classroom facilities.

Another reason for the shortage of teachers in rural schools has been attributed to the incorporation of colleges of education into institutions of higher education (Gordon, 2009). Teaching education became more centralised and located mostly in urban areas and as such, became less accessible to students from rural areas (Gordon, 2009). Therefore, young rural people who could have become rural teachers, became unable to enrol at teaching colleges and universities in urban areas mostly for financial reasons, thus, a potential group of teachers who could be more willing to teach and remain in rural areas was lost (Gordon, 2009). There was a large decline in the numbers of teachers enrolled in teacher training colleges between the year 1994 where 80 000 student teachers were enrolled, and the year 2000 where only 10 000 student teachers were enrolled, with the decline being greater in provinces which are predominantly made up of rural areas (Gordon, 2009). In particular, the decrease in student teacher enrolment was about 90% in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Northern Cape provinces (Gordon, 2009).

Bennell (2004) argues that local teachers are less likely to choose to migrate to urban areas if they have some ties to their local community. This means that if training colleges were present within rural areas, those who attend them would be more likely to remain in their local areas and provide much needed teaching to these areas, willingly. However, because of the urban location of teaching colleges, most newly qualified teachers who have had to invest in their training through loans or bursaries, tend to choose to remain in urban settings, or to go overseas should the

opportunity arise, returning only after retirement or retrenchment as previously mentioned.

These findings provide reasons for the movement of teachers from the rural areas to urban areas, and also provide reasons for the reluctance of qualified teachers from the urban areas to teach in rural schools. In order to ensure that teachers are placed where they are needed most, such negative factors need to be addressed.

### *3.3.2. Possible solutions*

Bennell (2004) states that in most African countries, including South Africa, rural allowances are often provided for teachers; however, the allowances are often too low such that they do not offer enough of an incentive to influence teachers' choices to be placed in rural schools. In assessing the impact of incentives in other African countries, it was found that better housing and housing credit was also a useful incentive in ensuring rural teachers are retained in their posts (Bennell, 2004). In New Zealand, a point system is in effect, and this system influences the re-assignment of teachers to different schools. Teachers who are placed in rural schools are allocated extra points which will determine the schools in which they are placed in the future (Bennell, 2004). While such a system seems to be effective, this can only work if the allocation of teachers to different schools is monitored and enforced by an overall body, and this form of centralisation is not without problems and so is not always ideal.

In other countries, such as Sri Lanka, all teachers are expected to work for at least 3 years in rural schools. The rural school service years amount to a type of national service system which will be of benefit to the learners but could also be beneficial to the teachers who in being exposed to different teaching environments will have new levels of experience.

In response to the problem of teaching colleges being integrated into higher education and the subsequent inability of most rural people to attend teaching colleges, and in addition to the shortage of teacher supply in rural areas, the South African state started a new bursary scheme in the year 2007 (the Funza Lushaka scheme) (Gordon, 2009). The Funza Lushaka bursary is a full-cost bursary, which provides students with the opportunity to complete a full teaching qualification with

the condition that the newly qualified teacher makes available their services in a provincial education department for the same number of years that they received the bursary (Gordon, 2009). For those who choose not to teach, a full repayment of the bursary is required.

Such allowances for repayment may be exploited by those wishing to gain formal qualifications. Furthermore, there is no mention of the fact that these same newly qualified teachers may continue to teach in non-public schools. This means that one can easily gain the qualifications they desire and offer their services to a private institution while repaying the bursary in the same way others would repay an education loan from any other financial institution. Also, the stipulations of the bursary state that the individual can provide preferences for provincial departments they wish to teach in, and should such a position fail to arise, they will then be allocated to areas where a need arises (Department of Education, 2007).

Bennell (2004) argues that there is an overwhelming reluctance and resistance by teachers to being placed in rural schools. Problems may also be attributed to the level of transparency in the allocation system which have been identified in other African countries and may allow for corruption and bribery of officials to ensure that a teacher is placed in an urban school even though a need is visibly present in a rural school (Bennell, 2004). Thus, while the number of qualified teachers increases, there are still no teachers available to teach in rural schools as was assumed at the allocation of the bursary.

The inclusion of more binding aspects on every beneficiary of a state bursary for teaching which obligates them to provide their services in rural schools for a minimum duration of say 3 years in their local communities would be a possible avenue to consider. In addition to binding contracts, while bursary holders may still be allowed to indicate their preference in terms of provincial departments they wish to work for, the allocation of teachers could be limited to rural schools for a stipulated period of obligated service provision as indicated by the bursary, with re-assignment being possible thereafter. This will ensure that rural schools have qualified teachers at least every graduating year and a consistent provision of teachers to rural schools becomes possible.

## 4. Reasons for migration

Research has revealed that there is generally a high interest among South Africans, to teach in foreign countries (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a). The Commonwealth Survey (2005) revealed that twenty-seven percent (27%) of newly qualified teachers in the KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa said that they had plans to teach abroad, and 48% in schools visited also expressed an interest in teaching abroad (Manik *et al.*, 2006; Morgan *et al.*, 2006). Teachers leave their home country for a variety of economic, social and career reasons. International teacher migration is said to escalate when there is disequilibrium in the number of teachers required in a country and the number of teachers that the system produces (Appleton *et al.*, 2006).

Among South African teachers, *job dissatisfaction* was given as a key reason for teachers leaving the country (Manik *et al.*, 2006). Reasons for such dissatisfaction were primarily associated with new changes in educational policies that included poor management and increased workloads; poor remuneration, the reduction of teachers' leave days; the implementation of outcomes-based education (OBE) and the uncertainty faced by temporary teachers, among other reasons (Manik *et al.*, 2006). Teachers who chose to migrate did so because they felt that they were economically marginalized professionals in addition to feeling that they were ill-equipped to teach within the new educational paradigm (Manik *et al.*, 2006).

Economic reasons are a great motivator for movement, both into and out of South Africa. International migration becomes desirable when teachers consider the large wage differentials between what they could be earning abroad, and what they are currently earning at home (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a). For example, Morgan *et al.*, (2006) have observed that South Africans are able to earn three to four times more by teaching in the UK than by staying in their own country. South African teachers teaching abroad are estimated to repatriate around a third of their earnings to their families back home.

Although teachers in developing countries are described as being relatively well paid in their home country, higher salary was the leading reason for teachers deciding to work abroad (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a). Figures indicate that South Africans working in Britain, earn 46% more income than they made at home (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a). The movement of Zimbabwean teachers into South Africa has been attributed in part to the political instability in their country of origin. While politics may be a reason, research shows that economic reasons are more likely to serve as an impetus, primarily because Zimbabwean teachers who come to South Africa continue to have families back in their home country and more often than not, commute back and forth between Zimbabwe and South Africa and send remittances back home (Makina, 2007; Mosala, 2008).

While income is a great motivator, it is not the only reason for migration (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a). Professional development, opportunity for travel and an overall desire for better work opportunities are equally important in determining those who leave their home country and move to other countries (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a; Kok *et al.*, 2006).

The returned teachers interviewed in the study by Appleton *et al* (2006a) mentioned that they would recommend the experience of working abroad to others. In discussing the impact of teacher migration on a particular previously white school, a head teacher was reported as saying that he would encourage teachers to take part in teaching abroad, as this would open up opportunities for the unemployed teachers, most of whom are African (Appleton *et al.*, 2006b).

## **5. Impact of migration**

According to Appleton *et al* (2006a), the impact of teacher migration is based on how well the affected education system adjusts to the loss of teachers. The duration of teacher migration (i.e. whether it is temporary or permanent) has important implications for policy, primarily the fact that losses in teachers to other countries should be seen as being temporary (transitional) most of the time, as opposed to permanent, and should be dealt with as such (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a). While teacher

migration occurs frequently and in large numbers, most labour migrants from developing countries plan on returning to their home countries before retirement (Kok *et al.*, 2006). Therefore, international teacher mobility is described as being transitional in nature, a short-term strategy for South African teachers (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a).

Returned migrant teachers interviewed indicated that they had taught for short periods of less than two years. Newly qualified teachers who were interested in teaching abroad indicated that they planned to teach overseas for the same amount of time (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a). Therefore, temporary migration would then be useful in giving national education systems an opportunity to return balance to the demand and supply of teachers. This is in accordance with the argument that the movement of teachers out of South Africa, translates into reduction in unemployment levels in the country as teaching posts become vacant for others to fill.

If migrant teachers are replaced, adverse effects can be avoided (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a). According to the research produced by Appleton *et al.* (2006a), international migration is not found to have a direct or harmful impact on teacher shortages in South Africa. Duncan Hindle, former Director-General in the Ministry of Education, argued that there is no general shortage of teachers in South Africa with a pool of 240 000 unemployed teachers available (Appleton *et al.*, 2006b). Problems in filling vacant posts in schools were attributed to administrative delays or the limited pool of suitable candidates for the required positions (Appleton *et al.*, 2006b). Administrative delays included the requirement by the Department of Education that vacant posts should be advertised in government bulletins and the errors that this procedure entails, such as the post being excluded from a bulletin are there (Appleton *et al.*, 2006b).

An additional problem arose due to the delays in the selection and appointment of teachers by different school governing boards. Racially driven objections by different governing boards meant some vacant posts were not promptly filled due to the lack of applicants who were racially acceptable to the respective boards. In one case

reported by Appleton *et al.*, (2006b), African governing body members were opposed to the appointment of an African teacher to a former Coloured school. Similarly, Indian bodies did not want to employ Africans, and previously white schools were sceptical about the hiring of African teachers (Appleton *et al.*, 2006b). These trends indicate the presence of a system that continues to emphasise race in the selection of teachers to vacant positions. The Department of Education should be responsible for the appointment of teachers to posts, as opposed to giving such responsibility to governing bodies (Appleton *et al.*, 2006b).

It appears that previously white schools and private schools generally do not experience the challenge of the shortages of teachers, and that is because of their attractive working environments for teachers making teacher replacements quite easy to come by (Appleton *et al.*, 2006b). However, all schools generally experience problems in finding suitable teachers for specialist subjects such as mathematics and science (Appleton *et al.*, 2006b). Specialist subject teachers may migrate in large numbers or, with the introduction of compulsory mathematics and science as subjects, the number of teachers produced by the country in these specialist subjects, may be lower than the current demand (Appleton *et al.*, 2006b). Government policies may therefore be contributing to the scarcity of teachers teaching certain subjects. Current and future policies aimed at introducing grade R as compulsory by 2010, and internet in all schools by 2013, are seen as policies that will lead to a shortage of teachers which could result in importing teachers as there is no internal capacity to give effect to policy (Appleton *et al.*, 2006b).

One can conclude that international mobility of teachers does not adversely affect the provision of education in the country; the problem appears to be in the quality of education provided as the more experienced teachers are abroad (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a & b). However, the effect on the quality of education was described as minimal, the sizes of the classrooms and the large numbers of students per classroom posed more of a danger (Appleton *et al.*, 2006b). One teacher is expected to monitor 40 students; the result is that there is more of a focus on maintaining order and discipline in the classroom instead of teaching (Appleton *et al.*, 2006b).

The teacher-student ratio needs to be re-evaluated to ensure that both learners and teachers become productive.

On one hand, there are fears that the migration of skilled labour may be disadvantageous to the sending country as it reduces the country's human capital in what is termed a 'brain drain' (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a; Kok *et al.*, 2006). On the other hand, there are indications that teacher migration is beneficial to the sending country, and to the individuals who remain in the sending country. In the case of Botswana, where a large number of teachers were expatriates, the country gained from teacher mobility as it allowed the country to expand its educational system rapidly and efficiently (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a).

Teachers in South Africa argue that the migration of teachers provided the necessary stimulus the government needed to improve teachers' pay and conditions, and it also created teaching opportunities for those left behind (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a). Furthermore, the return of teachers to their home countries means that the experience gained abroad in a more developed country is brought back home for the benefit of the home country (Morgan *et al.*, 2005). Other benefits include the reduction in unemployment and an increase in domestic wages. The sender country also benefits from remittances sent back home by migrant workers. Kok *et al.* (2006) argue, however, that remittances tend to encourage migration. Remittances show that migration is beneficial and entice other people to migrate.

Economic considerations for governments surround the cost of teacher training (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a). The cost of training teachers is an investment made by a country, with the expectation that the expertise will be used to develop that country. A government may feel aggrieved about investing in teacher training, with the benefits being reaped by other countries (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a). However, research shows that migrant teachers provide an average of 50% of their teaching career services to their country of origin (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a). Thus, for a teacher in South Africa who has been teaching for about 30 years, 16 of those years are spent teaching in their own country (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a). Migrant teachers do teach in

their home countries and with an average external stay of two years, the economic burden is rather modest (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a).

The benefits of teacher migration seem irrelevant when one considers that the education of an entire population is deprived of the skills and knowledge of teachers, at the benefit of an already developed country such as the United Kingdom or Australia. The ripple effects of such a loss will have a huge impact on the literacy levels of a country and continue to hinder any form of significant development in such countries. Teacher shortages are not the problem, neither is the quality of education adversely impacted by teacher migration. The dissatisfaction with the working environment and payment conditions, the bureaucracy, and the policies formulated that make teachers feel like they are ill-equipped to provide their services effectively, seem to be the main reasons driving teachers out of South Africa. Policy needs to focus on making the profession stable, policy wise, more appealing and ensuring that the experienced teachers are nurtured and recognised so as to provide more reasons to keep teachers in the country.

## **6. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

Among other things, this review has highlighted the international context within which teacher migration in South Africa takes place. In particular, a significant proportion of all highly educated citizens from several developing countries live and work abroad, mostly in developed countries. Faced with an ageing teacher population and a general negative perception of the teaching profession, Western countries have proactively developed effective strategies for attracting, recruiting and retaining teachers from developing countries such as South Africa.

The vacuum created by emigrating teachers compromises the developing countries' ability to provide quality education to future generations in their own countries. It is in this international context that the issue of teacher migration in South Africa must be understood. It is therefore imperative that South Africa develops effective strategies

for dealing with the loss of its teachers, especially science and mathematics teachers who are in high demand elsewhere in the world.

The review of international trends in teacher migration also shows growing numbers of teachers from the African continent entering South Africa to work as teachers owing to the country's relative political and economic stability. This trend has serious negative consequences on the quality of education in the immigrant teachers' countries of origin. Unfortunately, the absence of specific data on migration into and out of South Africa hampers our ability to gain a clear understanding of trends and patterns over time. It is therefore recommended that a system for gathering such data be put in place for future use at decision-making level.

Teachers leave their home country for a variety of economic, social and career reasons. Indeed, economic reasons are a great motivator for movement, both into and out of South Africa. International migration becomes desirable when teachers consider the large wage differentials between what they could be earning abroad, and what they are currently earning at home (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a).

However, while income is a great motivator, it is not the only reason for migration (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a). Professional development, opportunity for travel and an overall desire for better work opportunities are equally important in determining those who leave their home country and move to other countries (Appleton *et al.*, 2006a; Kok *et al.*, 2006). Among South African teachers, *job dissatisfaction*, primarily associated with new changes in educational policies that included poor management and increased workloads, poor/low remuneration, the reduction of teachers leave days, the implementation of outcome based education (OBE) and the instability faced by temporary teachers, among other reasons, appears to have motivated some of the teachers to emigrate.

Reviewed literature suggests that, despite many denials, the teacher shortage in South Africa is likely to remain a key issue that will have to be addressed in order not

to compromise the quality of the entire education system in the country. Good teachers at primary school level feeds quality learners to the secondary school level who in turn go to the FET colleges and universities and are adequately prepared to cope cognitively with the level of study in such institutions and get into the labour market and society as transformed individuals.

In order to curb mass migrations, Manik *et al* (2006) recommended that stakeholders in the South African education system needed to focus on ways to make the teaching profession attractive while nurturing those that choose to become educators. Furthermore, as migration will always take place, tertiary institutions are encouraged to produce a greater number of teachers to ensure that the numbers are enough to continue to provide a service to the South African population.

**In the light of the above, SACE recommends the following:**

1. That the Department of Home Affairs develops a migration database that will capture the skills and qualifications of people who enter South Africa and share such information with other departments (including Basic Education and Higher Education and Training) so that there can be proper migration management across government. This will also assist in ensuring that people who are qualified to teach are directed to agencies and government departments that can assist them find teaching positions. Research indicates that upon entering the country, some people opt for any positions other than those for which they are qualified.
2. That the Department of International Affairs and Cooperation puts in place mechanisms of tracking the qualifications and skills of people who leave the country to live and work abroad. Similarly, such information should be shared with all government departments so that the impact and trends of professionals leaving the country should be better understood.
3. SAQA, SACE and the Department of Basic Education as agencies which receive teachers before they start working in South Africa should conduct ongoing research on migration into the country to assist planning in this regard.

4. There has been an ongoing debate in the past few years about the re-opening of the colleges of education. This was given serious consideration at the Teacher Development Summit held in July 2009 given the lack of access to post-secondary education particularly for the youth in the rural areas. It is clear that the colleges of education cannot be re-opened in the form that they were during the apartheid era. The Ministry of Higher Education and Training, as part of ongoing work of reconceptualising the post-school education landscape, is urged to give due consideration to this need. It will not only ameliorate the gaps left by teachers who are teaching abroad, but will generally expand access to post-school educational opportunities for the South African youth.
5. Given the reasons for migration cited above, it is important that the status of the teaching profession and the associated conditions of service for teachers should be improved. This will assist in attracting young people into the profession and retain those who are already in the profession. The entire education system of the country and the labour market and the economy depends on the availability of capable quality teachers.
6. Given SACE's Professional Development mandate, SACE's CPTD system should be adequately resourced to respond with sufficient swiftness to policy changes in the system so as to facilitate the preparedness of teachers to cope with such changes and reforms. Such interventions will help provide teachers with an ongoing sense of competence, which will translate into better delivery of teaching. As recommended at the Teacher Development Summit, such funding could be obtained from such sources as the skills development levies. This will require an even closer working relationship between SACE and the two departments of education. In another piece of advice given to the Ministry of Higher Education and Training, a recommendation is made for SACE to register FET college educators. This will mean that this category of educators will benefit from such interventions as SACE may from time to time introduce in response to a changing policy landscape to prevent them from also leaving the country at a time when the FET sector is being invigorated.

7. In the same way that the developed countries are doing, the Department of Basic Education should consider putting in place measures that will be aimed at attracting and retaining teachers from other countries, particularly in the areas of greatest need, e.g. mathematics and science. While this is done, measures must be put in place to attract South African nationals to consider teaching careers in these areas, including sustaining and improving financial incentives such as the already existing Fundza Lushaka Bursary Scheme.
8. In reviewing the funding formula for higher education, the Ministry of Higher Education and Training is advised to improve the funding of institutions in the area of teacher training generally and particularly teacher training in mathematics and science.
9. While it is acknowledged that the Ministry of Basic Education and its provincial counterparts communicate on an on-going basis with trade unions representing teachers, they should nevertheless consider developing an effective communication strategy with teachers so that there is awareness of impending policy changes to avoid panic that results when such news are learned for the first time in the media. This will foster a sense of pride and ownership in the system itself, and in the curricula they are intended to teach. Such emotional connections will work towards motivating teachers to remain in the country.
10. The Ministry of Basic Education, in collaboration with the Ministry of International Affairs and Cooperation, should initiate a '*buyel' ekhaya*' (come back home) campaign to encourage teachers who are working abroad to return home.
11. Young people from rural areas need to be encouraged to remain and teach in their local communities through a '*fundis' ekhaya*' (teach at home) campaign. The reintroduction of more teacher training colleges in rural communities will allow rural people to train and teach in their areas, while providing centres for future teacher development programmes that allow for professional advancement for those located in rural areas.

12. As a form of voluntary temporary migration, exchange programmes between South African and overseas teachers should be encouraged as it will diversify the experiences of South African teachers and improve the quality of education. The international relations units in both departments are urged to facilitate this initiative. These programmes will provide an opportunity for teachers in South Africa to travel and teach overseas for designated periods and will be of great value to the learners they will be teaching upon their return and to the entire system. Similarly, the visiting teachers from overseas will provide insight into their country and broaden the scope of knowledge of those they engage with while visiting. Such programmes may also serve a greater purpose of establishing inter-country relations, which will boost the foreign relations of the country.
13. School management teams should be encouraged and incentivised to explore ways of raising additional funding through partnerships with donors and private sector companies as this will help improve and maintain high standards of facilities, which can serve as yet another motivation for teachers to remain in the country. This should be underpinned by a capacity development programme that will enable school managers to competently manage such relationships.
14. While the SACE is able to keep records of the numbers of educators that are officially registered, other state institutions which collect information need to make provision for information around teacher migration patterns, placement and other issues discussed in the report, to allow for the SACE to have readily available, up to date and reliable data for policy formulation.
15. The resistance of teachers to be placed in rural schools is attributed to the poor conditions associated with the rural areas. Teaching in non-urban areas should be incentivised to ensure that teaching in such areas becomes attractive. In addition to incentives, conditions in rural areas need to be improved with decent housing and sanitation being made available for teachers.
16. Teaching bursaries should be re-structured in such a way as to ensure that beneficiaries of state funding make their services available where they are most

needed, that is, in rural areas, for a specified duration equal to the time they are required to service their obligation. Alternatively, a system that requires newly qualified teachers to serve a minimum amount of time in rural or semi-urban schools will assist in broadening the experiential horizon of educators, while providing much needed quality education to learners in rural schools.

17. Given that there are noticeable numbers of unemployed teachers in the urban areas, in addition to appropriate incentives being made available for them to teach in rural areas, a point system could be implemented that monitors the activities of teachers in the country. The participation of teachers in rural schools could be linked to bonus points and these scores can serve as the determining factor for re-assignment of teachers to schools of their choice when such openings become available, with preference being given to teachers who have the most points.

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