



What are the key themes to consider in support of improving teacher education in South Sudan?

Executive Summary of a Literature Review

Project Summary.

The purpose of this literature review is to contextualise the findings of the documentation review and the surveys of teachers, school leaders and other stakeholders. This is a thematic review of relevant literature, drawn, as far as possible from the context of education in Sub-Saharan Africa. It identifies key issues relating to continuing teacher education, offering insights into the design of effective continuing professional development courses.

Background.

The difference an effective teacher can make to student learning outcomes compared to a weak teacher is considerable. This effect is documented world-wide with the difference measured at up to a year in the USA (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2010) but with large effects documented elsewhere including Uganda (Buhl-Wiggers et al., 2017).

There is broad and consistent recognition that improving the capacities of serving teachers is a key driver of sustained improvements in educational outcomes (Evans & Popova, 2016). However, not all Continuing Professional Development (CPD) has an equal impact on learning. On the contrary, evidence suggests there is a wide divergence between successful CPD that positively impacts teacher practice and student learning, and unsuccessful CPD that may in fact negatively impact teacher practices and student learning (Popova, et al., 2018).

Process

The literature search was undertaken using Cardiff Met's library discovery service, MetSearch. This searches over 150,000 books, 285,000 ebooks, 120,000 journals and just over 100 databases. The following search terms were used in various combinations:

Motivation(s)

Teachers

CPD (in full and acronym)

In-service

Education

Initial Teacher Education / Initial teacher training (ITE/ ITT) (in full and acronyms)

Pre-service

Teacher Professional Development (TPD) (and acronym)

Self-efficacy

Perceptions

Results and Conclusions.

There is a considerable and persistent provision of unsuccessful CPD which is wasteful of resources and teacher time. Tulu (2019) identified a number of factors leading to a lack of success in a CPD programme in the Hawasa region of Ethiopia:

- Lack of support from schools
- Lack of time to implement CPD activity
- Lack of trained CPD Mentors and facilitators
- Lack of teacher motivation and commitment
- Lack of budget and resources for implementation of CPD

These issues are echoed elsewhere in the literature surrounding CPD in Sub-Saharan Africa in particular. For example, Abakah et al.'s work on CPD programmes in Ghana (2022) also highlights a lack of trained mentors, as well as a lack of consistent implementation of an existing CPD strategy. While some of these issues are systemic, relating to resource provision or to specific educational systems, others are issues of design which can be avoided by recognition of their importance and adaptation of the role which stakeholders see CPD playing in the career of a teacher and the life of a school.

Extensive research has been conducted in this area. These can inform the development of future policy in South Sudan. There are a number of reasons why CPD may not be effective (or indeed negatively impact teacher practice or teacher motivation). On an individual level, successful CPD acknowledges and supplies teachers' basic professional needs for autonomy, competency and relatedness (Aelterman, *et al.*, 2016).

At a more theoretical level, models of CPD defined by Kennedy (2005) as *Transmission* models – where information is shared with an expectation that the recipient will 'cascade' this to colleagues – is flawed. More successful designs require greater co-construction of knowledge on the part of participants – *Transitional* designs for CPD. With the *Transformational* designs allowing for the most enduring change in teacher motivation and practice (Korthagen, 2018).

According to the extensive meta-analysis conducted by Popova, *et al.* (2018) the practical features of successful CPD are:

- Links participation and subsequent changes in practice to professional career development.
- Delivers appropriate development at the right point of a teacher's career (the first five years being the time most teachers develop their practice most).
- Uses specific subjects to structure pedagogical and content input, recognising the diversity of challenges of teachers in different areas of the curriculum.
- Requires teachers to put ideas into practice and reflect on their experiences, preferably with a partner or mentor.
- Sequentially structures development with engagement at repeated points, with a focus on developmental support rather than performance evaluation.

Recommendations.

Recommendations drawn from this analysis of the literature draw closely upon the findings of Popova, et al. (2018) and Badroodien (2018).

1. CPD should be linked to career progression.
2. CPD should be focused particularly on newer teachers (within the first five years of their career) and, wherever possible, build on the themes set out in the content of the Pre-Service, Initial Teacher Training syllabus.
3. CPD should develop teacher skills and knowledge of pedagogical theories and challenges but wherever possible this should be within the context of specific subjects in the school curriculum.
4. CPD should be undertaken in the context of a framework of reflection and ongoing support, provided either by properly trained mentors either within the school or with close connections to the school.
5. CPD should not be designed or delivered as one-off event. It must be designed as part of a process of ongoing implementation and reflection with dialogue between the participant and their colleagues and mentors.
6. CPD should be a co-ordinated effort between stakeholders to limit repetition and build on successes. A systematic account of CPD programmes across the country should be developed to strengthen partnerships that and systems that continually seek to refine CPD.
7. Training for teachers should include dedicated, systematic approaches to monitoring and evaluation, ensuring that CPD is continually assessed so that it has the desired impact on learning.
8. Opportunities should be created to engage teachers in the design of CPD as well as the global debates about what CPD means and how it can be leveraged to support teachers professionally.

Reference List:

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