

TEACHER EDUCATION POLICY IN AFRICA: PURPOSE AND IMPACT

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The concept of policy

- A policy is not the same as a plan or a programme or a principle or a regulation.
- A policy statement is a statement that consists of a plan by some agent, to do something in particular, whenever particular conditions obtain, for some purpose.

Teacher Education Policy

- Policies of teacher education deal with what the relevant education authorities must be doing or putting in place, on a continual basis to enhance the quality of teacher education.

Policies of teacher education can be grouped into policies on:

- Trainee selection
- Pre service and in service training for teachers
- Curriculum of training institutions
- Teacher employment and deployment
- Teacher disengagement

We can adopt either a descriptive approach or a prescriptive approach to analyse educational policies. In this paper the two approaches are synthesized.

Policy on Trainee Selection

- The quality of teachers is related to the entry qualification of teachers trainees. But because teaching is seen as the last resort in Africa people with high scores do not often choose education as a career. For example 69% of student teachers in Ghana had E in maths.

- Teaching is often used as a stepping stone to other profession. To stall the use of teaching as a springboard to other careers a policy of restricting admissions to only the candidate who are interested in teaching is called for
- To attract a large number of interested applicants there is need for an antecedent policy of raising teachers salaries and improving the image of teachers

Pre-service and in-service training of teachers

- In some countries more teachers are trained than the number required. In others there is acute shortage of trained teachers. A country needs to balance the supply of and demand for teachers

Curriculum of teacher training institutions

- In some countries there is little or no difference in the effectiveness of trained and un trained teachers. There must be a policy of continual review of the curriculum of teacher education to ensure relevance and effectiveness of training

Teacher employment and deployment

- The quality of African teachers is relatively low.
- To teach maths to Mariama, the teacher Maria needs to know maths beyond the level of what she is to teach in the lesson.
- The Qualification of a teacher must be higher than the qualification for which he is to prepare his students
- To make deployment of teachers an easy exercise a policy of training teachers to specialise in two teaching subjects will be found helpful

Teacher disengagement

- Should teachers have a fixed age of retirement?