

CONTRIBUTION OF PRIMARY TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM TO QUALITY PRIMARY EDUCATION IN UGANDA

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Abstract

With the frequent changes in education environment caused by dynamic economy, politics, and global trends among others, primary teacher education should keep abreast with these trends. However, in Uganda this has not been the case. While government designs new curriculum for primary schools, the changes in teacher education curriculum seem to be slower. Teacher educators are not familiar with the new trends in education such as ICT in teaching and learning, gender, learner centered education etc. The teaching materials are not easily available in the teacher training colleges because of shortages of funds. The study sought to: analyse the curriculum of Primary Teacher Education (PTE) since 1990, assess the challenges Primary Teacher Colleges (PTC) experience in the preparation of quality teachers and analyse the extent to which PTE curriculum is responding to the new trends in primary education. Using mainly interviews and focus group discussion, this paper explored the relationship between teacher preparation and quality of teachers produced. Findings showed that the curriculum of the teacher training colleges is not tailored to the requirements of the primary curriculum. In addition PTE faces many challenges that affect the preparation of teachers.

Key words: primary teacher education, primary school curriculum, quality education.

Introduction

Globally teachers are expected to play several roles singly or collectively so that the investment in education can have desired effects. Teachers define who will be taught, what will be taught, how it will be taught and the standard of evaluating what has been taught. Recent studies have identified the teacher as the most important factor influencing the quality of education (Snoek, Swennen & Klink, 2010; Yates, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Darling-Hammond 1997). UNESCO (2006) also asserts that teachers are the key agents in ensuring effective teaching and in determining the quality of education that children receive. This is why Shober (2012) and Darling-Hammond (1997) assert that the quality of teachers has a larger impact on the learning of pupils than the quality of the curriculum, the teaching methods, the school building or the role of parents. The importance of a teacher underscores the significance of how they are trained while still in the training institutions and the curriculum they are exposed to (Berry and Van Driel, 2013). Teacher education is so far the most important and known way of preparing change agents because success in educational reforms depends on the teachers' awareness of the new changes, their attitudes to it and incorporation of the reforms in the daily conversation, professional values and commitment and knowledge of content (Talbert-Johnson, 2006). How teachers are prepared in terms of the courses they are exposed to pertaining to values, beliefs, attitudes for practices significantly influence how they will in turn prepare citizens who will be charged with various aspects of societal development.

Despite the perceived impact primary teacher education could have on teachers, the institutions seem to be slow in responding to the changes in the society. In a study in the US, Polikoff (2013) cited Gordon (2000) who found that teachers viewed their teacher education

programs as “a waste of time” and as detached from the realities of urban schools. Brouwer & Korthagen (2005) also report that novice teachers do not feel sufficiently prepared by their teacher educators and come to view colleagues in their schools as “realistic” role models, as the people who “do know” how one should go about teaching. Unfortunately such teacher, the products from the similar institution are not always very helpful.

Background to the Study

Uganda currently has 47 Primary Teachers Colleges (PTCs) of which 45 are owned and funded by the government and 2 religious-based private colleges. All Primary Teachers Colleges (PTC) provide residential training leading to the Primary Teaching Certificate [Grade III], which is the minimum required qualification for teaching in primary schools of Uganda. The PTCs use a standard curriculum, prepared by Kyambogo University which has the mandate for primary teacher education. Of the 45, 23 are *core* institutions that run both pre- and in-service programmes and 22 are *non-core* institutions that have only pre-service programmes. The core PTCs also offer a three-year, part-time in-service training program for untrained teachers currently teaching in government aided schools. The minimum entry requirement to PTC is Ordinary Level (that is 11 years of education – 7 at primary and 4 years of secondary education) with a *pass* in 6 subjects including mathematics, English and at least two sciences (MoES, 2011). Applicants can join only within 2 years of taking their Ordinary Level national examination. This implies the average age of entrants is 17 years old. In Uganda majority of the students seeking admission to PTC are mainly those who would have failed to join higher education of two years, which after leads to higher institutions of learning. PTC graduates with a grade three certificate teach in primary schools of Uganda. This means changes in primary schools should immediately impact on the training of teachers.

Since 1990, the government has focused on primary education as well as primary teacher education. The initial concern of the Government was to improve access of all children to education so as to achieve the national vision of “to have education as a basic tool for the transformation of society, national integration and development” (MoES, 2011). This was clearly elaborated in ESIP 1998- 2003 and actualized through implementation of UPE. With the improvement in access another need, that of quality emerged. Hence through the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2007-2015 the focus shifted to the quality and relevance of education and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the education sector. In addition at the international level education is expected to embrace Education for All (EFA) goals and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Teacher education is considered key in achieving both ESSP plans and EFA and MDGs. According to the Government White Paper on Education (1992: 152), “no education system can be better than the quality of its teachers, nor can a country be better than the quality of its education. Hence, it is the quality of teachers which ultimately determines the lot of the nation”. The Uganda Government therefore acknowledges the importance that must be attached to the quality of its teachers and recognises the key role of leadership and service they play in implementing education policies and programs (Ssentamu-Namubiru, 2007).

According to the MOES (2004) primary teachers qualifying from PTC should possess several competence such as instructing pupils (preparation, teaching, assessment and evaluation), caring for the learners (providing physical needs of the learners, providing psychosocial needs of the learners, providing moral and spiritual needs of the learners, and fostering networks with parents), providing guidance and counselling to learners (helping learners choose and develop a career, helping learners cope with difficult situation, helping learners develop healthily relationship with others, helping learners familiarise themselves with the new environment, helping learners develop appropriate study habits), providing leadership and management (managing and utilizing resources, providing leadership in the school and community, building effective teams within the school community and building trust among members) managing ones professional growth (regular reflection on performance, documenting and sharing ones experiences with others, seeking and using opportunities for improvement).

Teacher education institutions are expected to organize their curriculum around the primary school curriculum and the competencies mentioned above. It is not clear whether PTC has taken care of the competencies. In a report published in the local daily newspaper *The New Vision* (Feb. 2013), the Chairperson of Uganda National Examination Board reported that much as the teachers have knowledge of the things they are required to do; only 10% actually do them. Reading, listening to learner and planning were only done by 8.59% while only 7.8% of the teachers guided and counselled learners. Many people have attributed such gaps variation in teacher preparation and what is required of them in primary schools. Another factor hindering teachers' effective performance is the medium of instruction, English, which is a second language to both the tutors at colleges and the teacher trainees. Even when there are changes in the curriculum, many scholars have questioned the ability of the tutors to effectively interpret the curriculum and pass it to the student trainees.

Nature of Tutors in Primary Teachers Colleges

Previously tutors were trained only by Kyambogo University, which specializes in Primary Teacher Education programme; however, tutors are now recruited from other universities who mainly prepare secondary school teachers. The majority of these tutors are not conversant with the primary education content and pedagogies. With no orientation to such secondary school teachers, their ability to train primary teachers is questionable.

Another category of tutors at PTC are those who started as primary teachers with a Grade three certificate, through upgrading they obtained a diploma in teacher education, and thereafter a degree in education. The degree in education may not be necessarily from Kyambogo University, but any other which may not be oriented to primary teacher education. This category of tutors has a weakness in their subject content and the English language fluency. The tutors joined PTCs with a minimum of only 4 passes out of the 8 subjects they take. Moreover these 4 pass scores were not restricted to mathematics and English. As a result the tutors are sometimes challenged by teacher trainees who join colleges with higher qualifications, with deeper and wider content knowledge.

Further, the contact between tutors and students are reduced to only class time. This is because the Salary of a tutor like any civil servant in Uganda is very low which makes it difficult for them to stay in the college all the time since they have to look for extra funds to survive. They appear at the college only when they have a lesson to teach, and this may be two days a week.

Quality of Teacher Trainees

Applicants can join only within 2 years of taking their Ordinary Level national examination. This implies the average age of entrants is 17 years old at the peak of their teenage development and requires intensive guidance and counselling. In Uganda majority of the students seeking admission to PTC are mainly those who would have either failed to get the required grades to join higher education of two years, or don't have tuition fees for the next two years secondary education. Since teacher education is fully sponsored by the government, this type of student normally uses the college education as a stepping stone to higher education.

Problem of Research

Since 1990, the Primary school curriculum in Uganda has been changing. For instance, in 1993, 1999, and from 2007 until 2012, a new curriculum was rolled out each year to cater for primary one to primary seven. The 2007 curriculum covered the Thematic curriculum for primary one to three (lower) and along with it the Transition curriculum for primary four (the

Middle class) and subject-based curriculum for primary five to seven (Upper). However, it appears the PTC curriculum is not in congruence with that of the primary schools. While the primary school curriculum has changed over time that of the Primary Teacher Education have not. It is therefore not clear the gap this might created. This paper analyze the Primary Teacher Education curriculum since 1990 with a view of assessing extent to which it is responding to the new trends in primary education and the challenges Primary Teacher Institutions experience in the preparation of quality teachers. Specifically the study responded to these research questions;

- a) What is the curriculum of Primary Teacher Education in Uganda since 1990?
- b) What challenges do Primary Teacher Colleges experience in the preparation of quality teachers?
- c) To what extent does the PTE curriculum respond to new trends in primary education?

Research Focus

This research focuses on quality of Primary teacher education in Uganda. For a long time the quality of teacher education has been questioned because of the poor performance of primary teachers and primary pupils they teach when they graduate. The main purpose of this research was to identify the curriculum of PTC and its' alignment to the primary school curriculum. This article focuses on PTC curriculum, the extent to which it responds to emerging issues and challenges PTC experience in preparation of quality teachers. Four PTCs out of 45 were selected. The assumption in this research is that PTCs use the same curricular, face similar challenges therefore the four colleges would be representative of the rest. The participants in this study, 4 tutors and 2 principals

Methodology of Research

General Background of Research

This research was basically qualitative in nature. Qualitative approach was preferred because the study sought tutors' perceptions, feelings and attitudes about teacher curriculum. Survey design was adopted because of the need to obtain basic data that could be used for future research.

Sample of Research

The survey covered 3 regions in Uganda namely central, northern and eastern. Since PTCs use the same curriculum, the four PTCs from each of the three regions were randomly sampled. The PTCs were Kabulasoke in Central Uganda, Kaliro and Iganga in Eastern Uganda and Arua Core PTC in Northern Uganda). From the PTC, principals were purposively selected while the tutors were also randomly sampled.

Instrument and Procedures

The actual data collection was largely pursued along two triangulated fronts, namely:

1. *Secondary data sources*: This involved a critical perusal and auditing of the relevant documentation including PTC curriculum since 1990, MoES policy documents on teacher education and circulars to PTC.
2. *Primary data sources*: Data was also collected through direct field-based sourcing of information through interactive on-site key informant interviews (KIIs) with key

purposely sampled respondents. The interviews focus on the tutors' perception of the extent to which curriculum respond to the changing needs in primary schools and in the country and the challenges PTC experience.

3. Observation of infrastructure specifically availability of the classroom furniture, classroom facilities, availability of laboratory and the equipment in them was also undertaken.

Data Analysis

Data capture and coding was executed in accordance with the research questions. Open coding (Glaser 1978) that allows topics to emerge from the data, rather than beginning with preconceived codes was used during analysis. The codes were then grouped into themes which were subsequently categorized and compared in order to generate relationships and generalizations. Thereafter the themes were examined to ascertain whether they address their research questions. Reliability was checked by sharing the individual coding schemes with one another to discover a high similarity of coding schemes. Thus, the findings discussed here results from the inter-rater reliability.

Results of Research

Research Question 1: What is the Curriculum of Primary Teacher Education in Uganda since 1990?

The current PTC curriculum was launched in 1995, two years after that of the primary school curriculum. Since 1990 the PTC curriculum has changed twice in 1995 and again 2010. In 1997, the Kiswahili curriculum was launched and distributed to PTC. This was to enable the PTCs to prepare Kiswahili teachers for primary schools where the subject has been introduced. However the findings showed that this curriculum has never been implemented, mainly due to lack of Kiswahili tutors. The 2010 curriculum was merely a listing of topics for each year of study. It does not indicate the objectives of each of the courses. This means the tutors were not able to ascertain whether the content were in line with the primary teacher education objectives. As a result the primary teachers' colleges have continued to use the 1995 curriculum.

The objectives of primary teacher education in Uganda include:

- a) Enabling students to acquire basic knowledge of how children grow, develop and learn and the skills of handling these children;
- b) Imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes to students that would enable them prepare children for basic education;
- c) Prepare and laying a foundation for the next level of education;
- d) Stimulating objective and dialectical appreciation and awareness of society's economic, political and specific needs and potential;
- e) Promoting positive attitudes towards work and self reliance to enable them to guide their pupils appropriately in vocational education;
- f) Enhancing moral and ethical values in the schools and the rest of the community;
- g) Providing students with a more academic education so as to deepen and strengthen their knowledge of their environment and of the world and build up their intellectual powers as well as their self confidence and;
- h) Equipping all teachers with proper knowledge and methods to enable them to counsel children guide them for their future education and employment careers, and to undertake literacy and adult education during their teaching career.

In order to achieve these objectives, teacher trainees are exposed to 6 compulsory subjects namely; Professional Educational Studies, Language Education, Mathematics Education, Science Education, Social Studies Education and Cultural Studies which consist of Art and Crafts, Music, Dance & Drama, Physical Education and Moral Education (Religious Education). In addition, students have three optional subjects to select from including research, home Economics and Early Childhood Education. According to one of the tutors, cultural study does not have a syllabus. Tutors therefore have to improvise.

The primary teacher education curriculum is expected to be tailored to the primary school curriculum and other issues of national importance. Along this line the PTC curriculum was expected to respond to the issues raised in the education strategic investment plan (ESIP) (1998-2003) and that of Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2007-2015. ESIP places emphasis on UPE and democratization of education by ensuring greater access to all types of education, adoption of a language policy that makes learning easier, diversification of the curricula, strengthening guidance and counselling, and creating appropriate educational opportunities for the handicapped and other disadvantaged children (MoES, 2004). ESSP concentrates on quality and relevance of education and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the education sector. In addition at the international level education is expected to embrace Education for All (EFA) goals and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Analysis of the objectives and the content of the PTC curriculum shows that the content is unlikely to enable students to achieve all the stated objectives of primary teacher education, let alone the quality focus of the ESSP. For instance, although the content includes professional studies, some of the tutors interviewed reported that it is so wide that detailed discussion of the different areas is minimal. As such teaching remains theoretical with little practice, if any. Such teaching does not only affect students' understanding of the subject content knowledge and subject pedagogical knowledge but also their ability to teach pupils using other methods they have not seen being practiced by their tutors. Moreover performing some of the tasks expected of a primary teacher such as counselling will remain challenging for such teachers. Another tutor from Kabulasoke also reported that the PTCs are expected to offer opportunity for three supervised school practice each running for 6 weeks but this is not implemented. The first school practice termed 'child study' is not supervised. Consequently the first supervised school practice is the semi final. Thus instead of 18 weeks the trainees are exposed to 12 weeks of school practice. This is why the teachers graduating from PTCs find it difficult to teach in some schools.

Further findings showed that primary teachers in Uganda are trained as general teachers and are expected to teach all subjects, all classes from primary one to seven; (English, Mathematics, Science, Performing Arts, Production Skills and Art & Craft). According to one of the principals, this is problematic given the methodology that should be applied in lower primary is slightly different from that in upper primary. Moreover, the PTC curriculum also does not integrate pedagogical content and competencies to enhance the academic and professional proficiency of the student teachers. Besides individual weaknesses of the teacher trainees in the various subjects are not taken into account. The PTC approach of preparing general teachers differs from the practice in primary schools where teachers are deployed to teach specific subjects and class levels depending on a school's needs and the perceived ability of the teacher. This is why the findings showed that many teachers shied away from teaching some levels of primary education due to lack of confidence in handling them. In addition, most of the graduates of PTCs are incompetent in science practical oriented topics because of lack of exposure to practice according to the tutors who participated in this study. Many PTC does not provide opportunities for teacher trainees to practice teaching as such they enter a class for the first time during teaching practice.

Fourthly, the PTCs curriculum is examination oriented with students being assessed using only final examination set by Kyambogo University. This again contradicts the practice

in primary schools where continuous assessment is emphasised. Further reliance on summative assessment means that PTCs are unable to detect the weaknesses in their teacher trainees before they graduate.

Research Question 2: Challenges PTC Experience in Preparing Quality Teachers

According to the findings, Primary teacher education is experiencing many challenges including; limited government funding, inadequate teaching learning materials, the period of training, the language of instruction, English and the absence of a unified continuous professional development programme.

a) Limited communication skills

In Uganda English is the official language and education curriculum right from kindergarten up to universities. Being a second language to both teachers and trainees, they are not fluent in the English language. Given that the majority of the teacher trainees or students who would have scored Grade 3 and 4 in secondary schools; their grasp of English is even weaker. As a result both the students and the tutors have poor command of spoken and written English making it difficult for the tutors to effectively prepare the teacher trainees. This was evident in the responses of the principals who pointed out that some of the tutors started as grade three teachers whose basic education before joining PTC was very weak. Through upgrading these teachers have become college tutors and they are academically very weak. As a consequence the primary teachers' curriculum is not well understood and interpreted by graduates of PTCs, putting pupils in primary schools at a disadvantage.

b) Limited government funding

The government pays small grants to colleges to cater for the programmes, which cannot support tutors' full involvement beyond their engagement with trainees in the classroom. Since the colleges cannot offer allowances, and the tutors have personal and family responsibilities to cater for. Thus, the trainees interact with their tutors in structured space and lesson activity and see little else of them. In addition the colleges cannot purchase teaching learning materials; feeding students too becomes a problem.

c) Inadequate teacher learning materials and infrastructure

Another area that was cited by the respondents as a challenge is inadequate teaching learning materials. This arises from the latest release of Government grants. As a result, colleges are not able to expose the teacher trainees to practical subjects, field studies and co-curricular subjects.

Teaching materials are inadequately supplied to both PTC and primary schools. It is up to a tutor to look for information from the internet yet computers are not available in most PTC. (Iganga tutors) Tutors are not trained in ICT except those who take the initiative to do so, some primary schools on the other hand are connected to the internet and have computers at school. Some tutors reason that the need to meet the demands of Kyambogo University, which sets the final examinations of PTCs, affects the way they teach. 'What we need is a well stocked library with up to date textbooks' said one tutor from Kaliro. Extracurricular activities are seen as a burden since it takes time that should be used for preparing students for examinations. Therefore while in primary schools extracurricular activities are essential, in some PTCs the teacher trainees are not well prepared for it

Secondly, the learning environment in the aspect of the infrastructure has not been expanded in response to the large number of students and pupils attending school. The college's buildings were constructed before Uganda's independence either by missionaries, Catholic, An-

glican or Muslims. Classes were constructed for small number students of 30 – 40. The halls of residences were also constructed for a smaller number of students. Since 1997 when Universal free Education was introduced in Uganda the classrooms have become congested in both the colleges and primary schools. The teachers however are trained to teach smaller classes of 40 – 45 and not eighty to hundred 80 - 100 pupils in one class. The pedagogy for large classes is not exposed to teacher trainees while at college may be as a consequence of the tutors themselves not being familiar with such methods (response from Iganga and Kaliro PTC).

d) The training period

Many respondents felt that two years are inadequate for effective exposure to the theoretical content of all the subjects taught and involved in the practicum. The pre-service programme consists of two years of training in content and pedagogy, with three school practice periods of 8 weeks each. In-service students follow the programme for four years. They attend college during school holidays, take school practice twice, and must pay their fees.

e) Absence of a unified continuous professional programme

In-service for PTC tutors is a responsibility of college principals (response from tutors) who are supposed to organize induction for tutors for any change in the primary curriculum as well as for professional growth in science courses for tutors. This is not done at all yet some tutors are not well grounded in primary methods. A number of tutors, who upgrade by studying Masters of Education, specialize in secondary education, rather than primary pedagogy. The question that arises is how relevant the training is to their professional growth in the training of primary teachers. This staff development course is intended to help college tutors upgrades their content and pedagogical knowledge and skills but does not apply appropriately to PTC education.

It was also reported that existing professional development programmes are fragmented and lack a systematic approach. Therefore practising teachers would have hoped to gain from Tutors who currently are also weak academically and are therefore not able to deepen teacher trainees' content and upgrade their skills.

Research Question 3: In Which Ways is Primary Teacher Education Responding to the New Trends in Primary School Curriculum?

Teacher education is a lifelong experience that goes from teachers, their initial education to the time of their retirement. It constitutes a solid base of the knowledge and skills that they need for their task in primary schools, with continuing training they are able to update and to adapt it to the changes of the teaching environment (Musset, 2010). Primary schools curriculum should be the centre of teacher education programmes and it is their needs that have to be taken in account for the design of these programmes. Programmes that are linked to specific school needs are more effective, especially activities based on demonstration and peer review (Musset, 2010; Teaching document, 2011). Considering the period 1994 in Uganda, there are many changes that have taken place in the primary school curriculum but not much in that of primary teachers' colleges.

First and foremost, the curriculum of PTC is objective (subject) based and yet teacher education graduates go to primary schools to handle competence based curriculum. The primary teacher education is designed by Kyambogo University and it would be difficult for tutors to make changes within their colleges without consulting the University. The methods tutors use to train teachers are teacher-centered dominated by lecture methods, and less emphasis if any on student/child centered methods (tutor Iganga PTC). The assessment of the college teacher education is done by Kyambogo University consequently each college teach teacher trainees to pass the national examinations rather than helping them become quality primary teachers.

Secondly, according to the respondents, the curriculum of PTC does not include some of the subjects taught in primary schools. Such subjects include languages, specifically Kiswahili and local languages. The Kiswahili Language was introduced in primary school curriculum on government recommendation in 1997 and in the same year, the module for teacher trainees was prepared and distributed to the primary teacher colleges to facilitate preparation of Kiswahili teachers. However, the PTC could not implement the curriculum due to lack of Kiswahili tutors and lack of orientation of tutors in colleges. As such the curriculum was just kept in the shelves according to one of the respondents. The graduate teachers from the PTCs to date have not learnt the Kiswahili language and yet are expected to teach it in schools.

Additionally the introduction of a thematic curriculum in primary schools promoted the use of local languages as a medium of instruction from primary 1 to 3. However according to the findings PTC has not been training teachers in the different local languages. Initially, the PTC used to focus on the area language (that is the language of the area the school is located in). The disadvantage of that some teachers are recruited to schools in different areas, some of which do not speak the same local languages as the area the PTC is located in. As a result instead of developing the different languages that are used in primary schools, PTC exposes student trainees to *the basics of teaching languages irrespective of the language one speaks, skills in material development, orthography*. This unspecific teaching of local languages meant that many graduates could not effectively instruct in local languages. Moreover Kiswahili is optional and not examinable. Many students therefore ignore it. Further, during interviews, one of the principals explained that, *'even tutors are not well versed with thematic curriculum'*.

Thirdly, another area where the curriculum of PTCs is not aligned to that of primary is in practical subjects. While primary schools promote practical subjects such as music, art and craft, agriculture among others, that of PTC cluster them under cultural subjects and offers some as optional subjects.

Fourthly, the college tutors according to the respondent from Kaliro PTC, are not well grounded in infant methods of teaching. To make matters worse, secondary school teachers from university, familiar with secondary school methods of teaching, are being employed in PTCs to teach subjects like SST, English, and Science subjects yet; there is no orientation course in primary methods of teaching for these kinds of teachers. Consequently they teach primary teacher trainees in the way they were trained at university. Numeracy and literacy skills' pedagogy for infants are not well taught. The teaching council of Ireland (2011) argues that *"consideration should also be given to standards of literacy and numeracy to ensure that teacher trainees are offered opportunities to enhance their own literacy and numeracy and their competences in promoting and assessing literacy and numeracy as appropriate to their curriculum. As the Council explains, "if tutors are incompetent in this area, it is difficult to implement the college curriculum"* (page 11).

Inadequate Response to Emerging Issues in the PTC Curriculum

Since 1990 there are many salient contemporary cross-cutting issues that have impacted on education, including Education For all (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which the PTC curriculum have not incorporated into their curriculum. This means the PTC graduates are not responsive to the dynamic needs, aspirations and demands of the society.

Contemporary issues in education are not fully integrated in the PTC curriculum; these include, gender responsiveness, peace education, HIV/Aids, environmental issues and education for sustainable development. The response from Kaliro tutors was that with the help of TDMS programme sponsored by USAID, UNESCO and Uganda government, a selected number of colleges have been exposed to the above issues through workshops. However, the current problems of untrained tutors in the areas mentioned above, empty libraries are still affecting the quality of teacher education. The concept Education for Sustainable Development

(UNESCO 2005) with its appropriate student-centred methods are not known nor practiced by the majority of tutors in the PTCs. This calls for appropriate staff development policies to ensure that staff updates their qualifications and/or enhance/expand their knowledge and expertise including that relating to reflective practice, research, curriculum development and a learning community for teacher educators (Teaching council 2011). Teachers are also becoming aware of gender issues, and of potential differences among pupils due to many factors; cultural sense, economics, health issues like HIV/Aids. Teachers as agents of change in teaching/learning processes need knowledge and skills to teach their pupils. The tutors who are supposed to pass on such knowledge and skills are not adequately knowledgeable as well, not able to teach teacher trainees effectively. Through the PIACY programme, reproductive health activities in schools, the primary schools teachers have some information while others need it desperately.

Discussion

This study shows while the primary teacher education curriculum has changed twice since 1990 while that of primary schools have been adjusted 3 times in 1993, 1999 and 2007. Since 2007, each year a new curriculum for primary school is rolled out to cater for primary 1 to 7. Carless, (1998) explained that teacher training and support are crucial issues in the preparation of teachers to implement a new curriculum and can play a major role in shaping the teacher attitudes already discussed. Verspoor (1989) in a study of change in developing countries, suggests four elements needed for successful teacher training to support innovation: permanent and locally available in-service training, e.g. through a cascading model; establishment of effective systems for supervision and support of teachers; adjustment of the content of teacher training to the teachers' own level of knowledge and experience; and encouragement of teacher motivation and commitment, e.g. through improved working conditions or opportunities for professional development. This is why training needs to be an ongoing and development.

It is also clear that the teacher education institutions in Uganda are not preparing teachers who can effectively teach in primary schools because of the gap between the curriculum offered at PTC and that of primary schools. As a result there is a disconnection between the campus (PTC) and school-based components of programs Zeichner (2010). Yet many scholars assert that for teacher education to prepare quality teachers, their curriculum should be in congruence with that of the level they are to teach (the Teaching Council, 2011). As Darling-Hammond (1997) asserts about teacher expertise; *what teachers know and can do affects all the core tasks of teaching*. Further what teachers understand about content and students shapes how judiciously they select from texts and other materials and how effectively they present material in class., Hence, the first priority is reaching agreement on what teachers should know and be able to do in order to help students succeed at meeting the new standards Darling-Hammond (1997). Darling-Hammond (2000) also stressed that teacher education should develop teachers' abilities to examine teaching from the perspective of learners. Gore (2001) cited by Berry and Van Driel (2013) also argues that pre-service teachers (PSTs) should "*develop deep understanding of the complexities surrounding learning as well as strong skills for producing learning,*" to support their own students to "*achieve high quality learning outcomes*". This is difficult in a situation where the PTC curriculum is not aligned to that of the primary schools.

The study has also shown that *research* which is an important subject in teacher education is optional meaning that a student can graduate from a PTC without any research knowledge and skills. Yet one of the ways of improving practice is research and practice reflection (John, 1993; Ezati, et al, 2010; Lamb, Lane, & Aldous, 2013). As John (1993) explained the kind of knowledge-base that is being developed through reflective approaches, is much more comprehensive because it is directly tuned into what workers actually know about the work. Moreover research is important in enabling a teacher to face and become a lifelong learner and to continuously adapt the course of their career to enable them support their students. The fact

that teachers rarely have opportunities to plan or collaborate with other teachers, to observe and study teaching, or to talk together about how to improve curriculum and meet the needs of students (Darling-Hammond, 1997) hardly help the situation.

PTCs in Uganda are also daunted with many challenges that affect the quality of the graduates such as inadequate grasp of English, low government fundings, lack adequate knowledge and skill of training primary teachers, inadequate teaching learning materials, inadequate period of training, inadequate linkage between primary curriculum and that of the PTC. All these affect the quality of the products graduating from the PTCs. As already mentioned teacher trainees are not necessarily high performing students, and yet their preparation is for only two years. Many of the tutors who participated in this study agreed that there is need to increase the training period to three years to give opportunity to the trainees have more practice. Musset (2010) argues that teacher education should be based on the acquisition of basic skills, through practice. This helps them to master specific aspects of the teaching practices, providing them with solutions to certain well defined problems they may face in the classroom.

The findings also showed lack of linkage between PTC and primary school curriculum in content subject knowledge such as social studies (geography, and history) mathematics, English and science. The tutors are still training using traditional approaches, for example, history and geography separately. It this disconnection of the two subjects that compose social studies, that has led to an outcry about the quality of the primary school pupils (The New Vision, Feb. 2013). As Darling-Hammond, (2006) explains education must venture out further and further from the university and engage ever more closely with schools in a mutual transformation agenda

Although the PTC curriculum currently is changing by simplifying the subject matter to match with the primary curriculum, methods of teaching from teacher to learner centered, many tutors expressed difficulties in implementing this curriculum. The tutors complained that the orientation course of one week given to them was inadequate. Moreover the tutors have a poor reading culture, which is likely to lead to poor English Language development and the continuation of the old type of teaching. Therefore they prefer teaching theoretically and have a poor attitude towards practical work.

This calls for adequate preparation of tutors if the quality of the teacher trainees is to be improved.

Conclusions

This study has shown that the primary teacher education curriculum is quite elaborate but has not changed at the same pace as that of primary schools. Since 1990 the PTE curriculum has changed in 1995 and again 2010, when a listing of topics was sent to PTCs. On the other hand primary school curriculum was adjusted in 1992, 2007, 2010 and in 2011. The teaching approach in PTE remains theoretical which in turn affects the primary teachers' ability to effectively translate the curriculum in primary schools.

Secondly PTC continues to face many challenges that affect the quality of the teachers produced. These are an inadequate grasp of English, low government fundings, and tutors' lack of adequate knowledge and skill of training primary teachers. Moreover, infrastructure to meet the increasing numbers of students each year in terms of buildings, science laboratories as well as teaching materials are inadequate. The PTCs are also inadequately staffed to enable them to teach all the subjects effectively and efficiently, since the Uganda government doesn't have funds to pay salaries. The tutors are also poorly paid, some are not housed near the colleges making them frustrated workers.

Thirdly, there is low congruence between the PTC curriculum and that of primary schools. Moreover there are limited professional development programs for tutors. Government does not sponsor the tutor to upgrade neither are they given paid leave to pursue further studies.

Recommendations

There is a need for the curriculum designers in both Kyambogo University and National Curriculum Development Centre to work together and write a harmonized curriculum for both PTCS and primary schools. This will help PTCs prepare teachers to the expectations of the primary school curriculum.

To reduce problems faced by PTCs government should inject more funds in teacher education if quality education is to be promoted. The principals and tutors of PTCs should be trained as entrepreneurs so that they develop projects that bring money to their colleges/or develop in them the ability to get NGOs that can fund certain aspects of the curriculum. For example Bishop Willis Core PTC Iganga has had some funding on a small scale from Rotary clubs.

Government should set friendly policies that would enable tutors to professionally upgrade their qualifications, for example paid study leave should be instituted as it was before. Individual colleges should be encouraged to organize workshops and conferences where tutors can present their work from research carried out with the support of administration and the Ministry of Education and Sports.

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