

PRIMARY EDUCATION EXPANSION AND THE CHALLENGE OF INADEQUATE TEACHER SUPPLY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the expansion of teacher education and the efforts to introduce universal primary education (UPE) in Africa. It also looks at the need for an adequate supply of primary school teachers. With specific reference to the expansion of teacher education in Kenya after independence, and the country's issues regarding quality education, it shows that the poor supply of teachers in most African countries, following the introduction of free primary education, has more to do with (among other factors) the ad hoc manner in which UPE programmes were introduced, structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), and the teachers' wage bill, rather than the inadequacy of inherited systems of teacher education.

Key words: primary education expansion, challenges, inadequate teachers, universal primary education

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INTRODUCTION

The teaching sector relies primarily on the human resources it employs. Their work significantly determines the quality of the educational services that are delivered. These facts most certainly make teacher issues central to the development of educational systems. In this regard, the challenge that many countries face in maintaining quality education is to recruit an adequate number of qualified teachers. Consequently, the teacher plays a dominant role, in that he or she is central to the learning process. In addition, quality education is often associated with specific teachers' characteristics. Thus, for many people, quality education corresponds to teachers having a good academic qualification, solid teacher training, and a comfortable salary, preferably with civil service status. Naturally, these factors are to be taken into account, but are not necessarily a measure of what pupils have learnt, which is the ultimate goal of education (and so to be considered as the principal focus in assessing systems of education) (UNESCO-BREDA, 2010).

It is for these reasons that this paper focuses on the expansion of teacher education, the efforts to introduce universal primary education (UPE) in Africa, and the need for an adequate supply of primary school teachers. By focusing on the expansion of teacher education in Kenya after independence and issues of quality education, the paper attempts to show that the inadequate supply of teachers in most African countries, following the introduction of free primary education, has more to do with the ad hoc manner in which UPE programmes were introduced, the effect of the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), and teachers' wage bill, among other issues, rather than with inherited systems of teacher education. It has been claimed that these systems have proved increasingly unable to meet the dual demands for higher quality training and substantially increased output, which are necessary due to commitments to universalise primary schooling. Such assertions have contributed considerably to a strong advocacy for distance teacher education programmes, without any serious thought being given to expanding and modernising existing teacher education colleges. As a matter of fact, despite the fact that teacher pupil ratios continue to rise due to UPE interventions, in some countries teacher training colleges as well as universities have trained many teachers who remain unemployed.

EXPANSION OF PRIMARY TEACHER EDUCATION

At the dawn of independence in Africa in the early 1960s, education for human resource development and modernisation was strongly embraced by donor agencies and western scholars as an important model of economic growth. With the achievement of independence in most African countries in the early and mid '60s, planners were guided by these theories, which assumed that education was the most profitable form of investment, not only for society, but also the individual. Education was believed to contribute to economic growth by improving the quality of the labour force, and equipping workers with the skills, knowledge, and qualifications expected of them in the modern economic sector. This would also make workers more productive and motivated, due to better standards of health and child care, and the resulting reduced fertility rates. To illustrate the validity of an investment in formal education as being essential to high and sustainable rates of economic growth, the experiences of the United States of America, Japan, and more recently Korea have been cited, supporting the causal link between education and growth (Simmons, 1980).

Apart from human capital and modernisation theories, which lay behind the expansion of formal education during the early period of political independence in each African country, human resource planning was dictated by the need to provide local replacements of expatriate personnel. The provision of formal education opportunities, especially secondary education and higher education, was a major political issue in the colonial period. In the eyes of African nationalists, the colonial administration had deliberately suppressed the expansion of secondary and higher education, the two levels modelled on the western education systems, in order to limit the number of Africans taking important jobs in the administrative and private sectors (Tuqan, 1976).

Donor agencies and western expertise, combined with local personnel needs, were largely responsible for promoting education for human resource development in Africa. The Addis Ababa Conference of African Ministers of Education, held from 15 to 25 May in 1961, sparked the expansion of formal education systems in Africa, and crystallised the donor and national perspectives on the development of education. The conference was the result of a decision taken at the General Conference of UNESCO during its fifth session: to convene a conference of African states for the purpose of 'establishing an inventory of educational needs and programme to meet those needs in the coming years'. The conference was held under the joint sponsorship

of UNESCO and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa/UNESCO, (1961:1).

The conference report stressed Africa's need for more and better educational opportunities, and suggested that the substance of education be adapted to fit the era of independence. Although mention was made of the need for agricultural training and community development, emphasis was on academic reforms, such as the inclusion of African history and culture in the curriculum, and the importance of meeting the high-level human resource requirements of emerging nations. Greater urgency was assigned to secondary and post-secondary education rather than UPE (in case it were to become apparent that, for financial reasons, the two were incompatible). Primary and adult education was to be developed at the same time, with the goal of achieving universality by 1980. There was a need for massive financial commitment, and in order to meet this need, African nations would have to allocate increasing percentages of their national budgets to education. Massive amounts of supplementary external aid would be required, and the conference called on UNESCO, developed countries, and non-governmental organisations to support and share in the implementation of the proposed plans. The Addis Ababa conference set the stage for educational development strategies in most independent African countries. These strategies centred on the expansion of secondary and tertiary education, with clear implications for teacher education – in fact, this was the focal point (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa/UNESCO, 1961).

In most African countries, especially the Anglophone ones, many of the teacher training colleges, which largely trained primary school teachers, were originally established by the bodies who were also responsible for establishing the majority of the schools. These bodies were religious organisations or voluntary agencies that operated during the colonial period. Teachers' colleges that were set up by governments were either established at a later date to provide training where no provision existed, or to increase the number of trained teachers where voluntary agencies' colleges were unable to do so. Colleges established by voluntary organisations varied quite considerably in size and in the numbers of students. In many of them, there were fewer than 100 students in total, and it was often difficult to provide specialist training. It was also manifestly impossible to do so in the very small colleges with around 30 students and two or three tutors. For practical reasons, therefore, there was a good basis for some re-organisation of the smaller colleges into fewer but larger colleges, especially following independence (Burns, 1965).

To improve the quality of teacher education, there was an increasing need for reform; this became more urgent as some countries moved towards attaining independence. Among the major reforms was the amalgamation of small teacher colleges, to make them more economical and effective. This was initially difficult to achieve, as most colleges belonged to different religious agencies. Another important reform was the need to co-ordinate the work of different colleges through some central institution, which could play a leading role in the study of modern pedagogy, experimentation and research. Different Anglophone countries contributed to the co-ordination processes, set up by means of the establishment of national teacher training councils, while others set up institutes of education. Such bodies were responsible for functions that included overseeing the selection of students for admission into teachers' colleges, designing course programmes and examinations, giving recommendations for the awarding of certificates, the in-service training of qualified teachers, and creating programmes of research in education (Burns, 1965).

The rapid expansion of education depended heavily on the expansion of teacher education. In Kenya, for example, at independence the government embarked on a policy of consolidating small primary teachers' colleges established during the colonial period into larger and better-equipped facilities. The number of primary teachers' colleges went down from 37 (with an enrolment of about 400 students) to 17 (with an enrolment of 9 843 students). With fewer but larger colleges, teaching technology improved tremendously, and the variety of subjects that could be taught also increased. With assistance from the first and second International Development Association (IDA) projects, the quality of buildings and facilities improved considerably at most of these colleges. With World Bank assistance, 10 new primary teachers' colleges were to be completed by 1985, bringing the total number to 27 public teachers' colleges, with a total enrolment of 16 500 student teachers. Emphasis was also placed on upgrading the academic quality of entrants into primary teacher education (Sifuna, 1997). The majority of the entrants from this period are now holders of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) with a C average, having scored at least a C in English and Mathematics in the KCSE. These individuals were trained as Primary 1 (P1) teachers, which was then the highest grade of teacher in primary education. A small percentage of the former KCSE division four graduates, (the lowest attainment in that examination) and the Kenya Junior Secondary Education (KJSE) graduates used to be trained as Primary 2 (P2) teachers, and holders of the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) were trained as Primary 3 (P3) teachers. This last group

of teachers catered for less developed areas like the North-Eastern Province, parts of the coast, and the former Rift Valley Province, but was later abolished. The duration of the course for all teachers in training was two years, and this has continued to the present. They study the following subjects: Professional Studies, English, Kiswahili, Mathematics, Science, Religious Education (Christian or Islamic Studies), Physical Education, Art Education, Music History, Geography, Agriculture, Home Science, and Teaching Practice. The P1 and P2 groups take a national examination at the end of the two-year course, set by the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC).

Public primary teacher colleges produce around 8 200 graduates annually. Nonetheless, it must be noted that despite teacher-to-pupil ratios continuing to rise due to the free primary education intervention, there are many trained primary school teachers who remain unemployed by the public Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) (Chege & Sifuna, 2006). Since the late 1990s, a good number of private primary teacher colleges have also been established all over the country, by religious organisations and individual entrepreneurs. It is important to mention that the Kenyan trend in the development of teacher education has by and large been followed by many of the Anglophone African countries (Sifuna & Sawamura, 2010).

Following post-independence developments, the proportion of qualified teachers in relation to pupils has been exceedingly high at both the primary and secondary school levels in Kenya. The number of qualified primary school teachers rose from 184 393 to 192 306 from 1996 to 1998, which constituted an increase of 3.1%. The proportion of trained teachers rose to 96.6%, while the number of untrained teachers decreased by 37.8% (from 10 556 in 1997 to 6 570 in 1998). The trained teacher-to-pupil ratio remained at 1:32 in 1996, improving slightly to 1:30 in the next two years (UNICEF/ Government of Kenya, 1999; Kafu, 2011). In other words, by the turn of the century and leading up to the free primary education intervention in 2003, primary teacher education institutions in Kenya produced adequate numbers of teachers to staff most of the public primary schools in the country, and considerably reduced the number of untrained teachers in the system. This was the general trend in many African countries (Sifuna & Sawamura, 2010).

In Kenya, the National Conference on Education of 2003 and the Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005 on Education and Training stressed the importance of reforming teacher education, by enhancing the quality of training, and adopting better teacher management and deployment strategies (Republic of Kenya, 2005). The in-service training of teachers was to form an important component of these policy

reforms. The policy articulated the need for continuous improvement in the quality of services through ongoing teacher development. It was observed that:

- Primary school teachers in Kenya lack adequate capacity to discharge their teaching duties effectively, as training does not allow for specialisation.
- The in-service training programme that should ensure that teachers in the field have a chance for professional development does not function efficiently. A survey commissioned by the Ministry of Education revealed that most teachers do not think that in-service courses respond to their needs. This shows that the in-service courses, when provided, are supply driven and not sufficiently linked to teachers' needs.
- A related finding was that 60% of teachers reported that they had never received any in-service training (or feedback) based on a pedagogical problem that had been reported. This again suggests that the in-service courses are supply driven and not focused on the classroom or student achievement. It may also suggest there are no structured programmes for in-service training of teachers over a defined period (Republic of Kenya, 2005).

QUALITY OF TEACHER EDUCATION

A major area of concern in teacher education in general, and primary teacher education in particular, is the inadequate quality of teacher training. Indeed, this is an area which was noted over 50 years ago by the Australian educator, C. E. Beeby (1966), when he pointed out that in the context of planning education for development, attempts to change the quality of learning in schools have to be linked to improvements in the education of teachers if they are to be effective. Yet this area has received relatively little attention from policy makers, donors and researchers since then. For example, while development agencies have supported a range of teacher education projects, few have contained support for research on learning processes and practices. As a result, the evidence base is weak, and much policy on teacher education has not been grounded in the realities that shape teacher education systems and their stakeholders, in less industrialised countries in general and African countries in particular.

A glaring example of the neglect of teacher education at the international level is that, not perhaps surprisingly, the World declaration on Education for All (EFA), which emerged from the conference in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, devoted scant attention

to the problems of teachers and teacher education, despite their centrality to the achievement of better learning outcomes for all (World Conference on Education for All, 1990). It was not until 10 years later, at the global forum on EFA in Dakar, Senegal, that it became clear that in many of the countries that had fallen short of the goals set at Jomtien, teacher supply and teacher quality were among the most salient constraints. At the Dakar EFA forum, therefore, teacher education moved up the agenda to the extent that the Sub-Saharan Regional Action Plan included it as one of its 10 targets: '[e]nsuring that by the year 2015, all teachers have received initial training, and that in-service training programmes are operational. Training should emphasise child-centred approaches and rights and gender-based teaching' (UNESCO, 2000: 11).

At a local level in many countries, while the importance of teachers is given a lot of emphasis, including in international reports, attention given to teacher education and the professional development of teachers often lags behind that given to other levels of the education system (UNESCO, 1998; UNESCO, 2000; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2001). While there is a strong recognition that teacher education and professional development need to be integrated in ways that operationalize lifelong learning for teachers, the resources allocated to this are usually inadequate. Consequently, in much of the developing world in general and Africa in particular, teacher education has reached a serious crisis. Inherited systems of teacher education are said to have proved increasingly unable to satisfy the dual demands of higher quality training and substantially increased output, as demanded by commitments to universalise primary education (Ncube, 1982; UNESCO, 1998; Lewin & Stuart, 2007; Little, 2006).

The quality of teacher education is dependent on the availability of qualified and motivated teacher trainers, a curriculum that is both relevant and manageable, and adequate physical facilities and instructional materials in teacher education institutions. For public teacher training colleges, grants from the public budget are the main source of resources for teacher education. As is the case in other subsectors, due to constraints in the state budget and the rising cost of living, allocations for teacher education are inadequate. Due to shrinking public capitation, teacher colleges have been forced to introduce user fees. Some institutions have even developed income-generating activities through which some revenue is being realised (Sifuna & Sawamura, 2010).

Following the over-enrolment of student teachers, teacher training classrooms in many countries are reported to be congested, because they were built to cater for smaller groups of student teachers. Other physical facilities such as laboratories, workshops, special rooms, and resource centres (which include libraries and catering facilities) are also grossly inadequate and poorly maintained. Additionally, because over-enrolment was not systematically accompanied by a commensurate increase in government grants, inadequacies in instructional materials, such as textbooks, library books, stationery, and equipment, are rampant. Of special importance is the lack of facilities for training teachers in the practical subjects of the school curriculum, inadequate transport options, and poorly maintained vehicles, making the organisation of teaching practice difficult.

In many countries, at all levels, practical teaching is under threat. Given budgetary constraints, training institutions are increasingly under pressure with regard to meeting travelling and subsistence expenses of both student teachers and supervisors during teaching practice. There are situations in which teacher education institutions, including public universities, have found it necessary to shorten the usual duration of teaching practicals. This has a far-reaching effect on the quality of teacher education provided by these institutions (Sifuna & Sawamura, 2010).

THE CHALLENGE OF INADEQUATE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Issues regarding the quality of teacher education are often quickly translated into the challenges confronting primary education following the UPE intervention. It has been noted that many education systems in Africa still contain high proportions of untrained teachers; at the primary level many are said to enter teacher training after completing nothing more than secondary school. The quality of primary schools is such that many are unable to provide a supportive professional environment for trainees: the kind where staff are fully trained and mostly graduates. Donor enthusiasm for new pedagogy, which frequently advocates learner-centred approaches, group work, attention to special needs, and a panoply of methods of training associated with best practice in rich countries, has sometimes sat uneasily with the realities of the training environment, the teacher education infrastructure, and different cultural and professional expectations for the role of the teacher in Africa (Kunje, 2002). While it cannot be denied that issues of expansion in teacher education and quality are still a major challenge in the provision of qualified primary

school teachers in sub-Saharan Africa, key factors, seemingly not given sufficient emphasis, are the approaches chosen for the launch of UPE, as well as for ensuring efficiency in primary education.

Many countries in the sub-Saharan region, similar to countries in other regional blocks, have committed themselves to the achievement of UNESCO's Education for All (EFA) goals and the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which include the completion of UPE by 2015. As a result of commitment to these goals, various initiatives have been launched to provide free primary education, which has led to an upsurge of school enrolments since the 1990s. This has created an urgent need for African countries to devise and implement policies to meet the demand for trained and resourceful teachers, due to increased pupil enrolment and participation. The major challenge with the UPE interventions in most African countries, however, is that they were unplanned, often proposed in response to a political agenda. Hence they have led to undue pressure on existing institutions and resources. For example, in East Africa, it was only Tanzania that displayed a modicum of preparation in its UPE intervention; in Uganda and Kenya the introduction of free primary education was based on ad hoc arrangements.

The UPE interventions seriously exacerbated the presence of a high percentage of untrained primary teachers in many African countries. It is estimated that half of the existing 2.6 million teachers in the region are unqualified. In some countries, there are high proportions of untrained teachers who are often thrown into their jobs with little or no induction. Multi-grade teaching is quite common, but most teachers are not adequately prepared for the special demands of this type of teaching (UNESCO, 2006). Poor quality in-service training compounds the negative effects of poor pre-service training and induction in many countries. As Matson (2006) observed, in many countries legislation for UPE has introduced a 'fire brigade approach' to teacher training and deployment, with entry requirements and minimum qualifications being lowered and training reduced in order to meet the growing demand – with the inevitable result of declining teacher quality.

The UPE conventions and policies in many countries seem to have reduced the economic burden of primary education for disadvantaged groups, and have decreased delayed enrolment, hence boosting participation. Consequently, UPE policies have had positive impacts for the poor in improving access to schooling. In this respect, these policies have contributed significantly to access and equity in primary education. However, the push for UPE in many countries has come

to be identified with increasing deterioration in the quality of primary education, from the provision of physical facilities and teaching and learning materials, to the deployment of teachers, their performance, and their pupils' ability to transition from primary to secondary education as a result (Sawamura & Sifuna, 2008). There seems to be strong evidence of internal inefficiency, due to enrolment of over-aged children, high rates of repetition and dropouts, and use of unsound pedagogical approaches. On the whole, in the majority of sub-Saharan African countries, the primary education sector is quite inefficient, with very high attrition rates reaching an average of over 60%, especially in the lusophone and some francophone countries. The completion rates even in many anglophone countries are rarely 50%, and have consistently remained below that mark (Sifuna & Sawamura, 2010).

The impact of repetition policies and the demand for more qualified teachers are both issues. Government policies on repetition certainly have repercussions: notably, the need for more teachers. Basically, a high rate of repetition increases the number of pupils, and so the number of teachers who need to be recruited. This practice has given rise to much criticism regarding poor political decisions, questionable pedagogic efficacy, and the negative impact of keeping children from the most disadvantaged families in school; others try to justify direct action to limit this practice. If sufficiently extensive, policies to reduce repetition can provide an opportunity to reduce the need for new teachers (UNESCO-BREDA, 2010).

In determining teachers' needs, it is also important to consider the foreseeable number of teachers leaving the system: every year, adequate numbers of teachers have to be recruited, not only for new teaching posts, but also for the replacement of teachers who are no longer teaching, either due to retirement, sickness or death, secondment to non-teaching administrative posts, or resignation from teaching (UNESCO-BREDA, 2010).

In sub-Saharan Africa it is estimated that teachers living below or near national poverty levels are likely to suffer from high levels of illness. Teachers are also believed to be a 'high risk' occupational group with respect to HIV and AIDS infection. This has a major impact on teacher motivation in certain areas of sub-Saharan Africa. Apart from the obvious impact of teachers who are living with HIV and AIDS, working with colleagues who are sick and who may eventually die is also demoralising. The extra workload created by covering for sick teachers is also a key factor. HIV and AIDS is now said to be a major cause of absenteeism among teachers as well as

other educational personnel, even if they have not reached the terminal stage of the disease. The disease affects teachers' absenteeism in two ways, namely: teachers themselves become infected and are unable to travel to school to carry out their teaching duties, and teachers become care-givers to members of their families who have been infected (Benavot & Gad 2004; Tamukong, 2004).

Teachers, who usually represent a younger and more mobile workforce, are said to be more likely to be infected by the pandemic than other workers (Akyeampong & Bennell, 2007). An estimated 860 000 children in sub-Saharan Africa have lost their teachers to HIV and AIDS. The high level of infection and death rates among school teachers has undercut the ability of schools to find suitable replacement teachers. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, the lack of teachers due to the pandemic resulted in many schools closing (Kelly, 2000; UNESCO, 2000). Evidence from several African countries suggests that the number of newly trained teachers graduating from teacher training colleges does not approximate the quantity of teachers no longer working in the profession due to death, disease, or new and conflicting responsibilities within the family. This also reflects the escalation of mortality rates among teacher trainees. Despite this critical situation, few ministries of education have adequately addressed the problem; even fewer have developed feasible intervention strategies (Kelly, 2000; Benavot & Gad, 2004; Tamukong, 2004).

In order to understand the implementation of these new policies, it is relevant to explore the breakdown of government expenditure on education, and more particularly the position of salary costs within that expenditure, and the impact on enrolments. When examining teachers' salaries and the recruitment process for new teachers in many countries, one can clearly see that recent recruitment dynamics as a whole are, to a large extent, determined by these salary adjustments (UNESCO-BREDA, 2010). It must be taken into account that salary level is connected to certain aspects such as academic qualifications and professional training, which in any case are not the only determining factors to be considered in educational financing. Trade-offs in expenditure on education cannot be restricted to teachers' salaries alone. There are also concerns regarding other educational expenditure, with the supply of textbooks at the top of the list, but also pupil-to-teacher ratios, and expenditure connected to the pedagogic and administrative management of primary education. Indeed, whether looking into the best way of allocating additional resources for the system or striving to make the best use of dwindling resources,

seeking the best possible trade-off between the different factors mentioned above cannot be avoided. Hence, the recruitment of adequate teachers to cope with demands of UPE is not just determined by the supply of teachers, but also by the cost of their salaries, as well as the overall cost of education in a given country (Michaelowa & Wechtler, 2006; Akyeampong & Bennell, 2007; UNESCO-BREDA, 2010).

Another important consideration is that the implementation of UPE programmes in most African countries was affected by the impact of structural adjustment plans and budget constraints on education systems. Many sub-Saharan African countries have faced a serious economic crisis since the mid-1970s, through to the 1990s. Under pressure from international financial institutions, the African economies, which were suffering from significant structural and financial deficits, were obliged to adopt measures with a view to more rigorous budgeting, by reducing government expenditure (especially the payroll, where the teaching profession was high on the list). This tendency became more pronounced in the 1990s when the International Monetary Fund (IMF) set new terms for granting loans, concerning not only the traditional area of monetary and tax policies, but also the management of the public sector. While agencies such as the World Bank encouraged African governments to reform their education systems with the aim of ensuring education for all, the IMF expected many governments to reduce the level of their public expenditure, with a view to ensuring some macroeconomic stability and solving problems related to the economic crisis. The freeze on teacher training and recruitment within the civil service during a period of high growth in the demand for education (enhanced by the Jomtien Conference in 1990) led to spontaneous adaptations in communities that were anxious to offer their children an education: using their own initiative, they recruited community teachers and paid for them as well. Governments in turn envisaged new solutions to increase teacher recruitment within the context of maintaining or even reducing the size of the civil and teacher services. These solutions varied, depending upon the historical legacy and specific characteristics of each country (World Bank, 2007; UNESCO, 2006; UNESCO-BREDA, 2010). In 1999, the IMF set up the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF), an instrument that enables access for low-income countries to concessional loans. These loans are intended to support poverty reduction programmes and strategies, as developed in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP). The latter are the reference for any IMF or World Bank loan or debt relief transaction.

The freeze on civil servant teacher recruitment and training contributed further to the drop in public funding. This had two major consequences initially: a rise in pupil-to-teacher ratios in the classroom on the one hand, and the emergence of teachers recruited and paid by parents on the other hand. Concerned about offering their children an education, some communities have indeed attempted to address teacher shortages by recruiting community teachers. Many African communities have had recourse to this category of teachers since the 1990s. What community teachers in different countries have in common is that they respond to a need for schooling, which the public authorities have been unable to satisfy. They have generally been selected from the most qualified people available locally, and often have had no professional training. They may have been recruited as a result of local community initiatives, or else as an interim solution in public schools lacking teachers (UNESCO, 2005; Mulkeen & Chen, 2008).

CONCLUSION

This paper has focused on the expansion of teacher education, the interventions to introduce UPE in Africa, and the need for an adequate supply of qualified primary school teachers. By means of specific reference to the expansion of teacher education in Kenya after independence and issues of quality education, it has been shown that the poor supply of teachers in most African countries, following the introduction of free primary education, has much to do with the ad hoc manner in which UPE programmes were introduced, as well as structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) and teachers' wage bill, among other factors. These have been considered over and above the inadequacy of inherited systems of teacher education, although these have proved increasingly unable to meet the dual demands for higher quality training and substantially increased output, as have been called for by commitments to universalise primary schooling. Before the UPE interventions, existing colleges of education in many African countries trained sufficient numbers of teachers. These teachers coped with existing demands, and the ratio of untrained teachers was being reduced significantly. Colleges continue to train many primary school teachers whom the public sector is unable to accommodate, despite high teacher-to-pupil ratios, largely due to a restricted budget for teachers' salaries. In this regard, policy makers should not jump on the bandwagon of introducing alternative methods of teacher training, especially distance teacher education programmes. Rather, they should consider expanding and modernising existing teacher education institutions.

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