

TESSA OER: A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO TEACHER EDUCATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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Summary

The sustainable supply of highly qualified teachers is critical to the human resource development of sub-Saharan Africa; the teacher is responsible for preparing the next generation of engineers, doctors and other professionals and skilled personnel. The current need has arisen from the upsurge in school enrolment since the 1990s as a result of the commitment of sub-Saharan African countries to the MDG and EFA goals as well as other regional and sub-regional commitments. In some countries pupil/teacher ratios are as high as 81:1 at the primary level.

The dire need for qualified teachers is exacerbated by the presence of a high percentage of untrained primary teachers in more than half of sub-Saharan African countries. Worsening the issue is the negative effect on teacher supply of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the migration of trained teachers to other countries and other job situations inside their countries. All these factors play a contributing role in the low levels of pupil achievement and low rates for pupil completion of primary schooling in many parts of the region.

It is clear that the conventional approach to TE in sub-Saharan Africa that restricts teacher education to the college- or campus-based model has not been able to meet the increasing demand for teachers with effective pedagogical competencies and in their right numbers in a sustainable way.

The Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) model of teacher education is designed to train adequate numbers of quality teachers in a sustainable way to meet increasing demand for teachers and at the same time provide adequate, and affordable resources for teacher education.. Combining innovative educational models and technological tools, TESSA has created an extensive range of web-based open educational resources (in English, French, Arabic and Kiswahili) and advisory support systems to extend access to new modes of school-based teacher training. As a consortium of thirteen teacher training institutions from nine countries in sub-Saharan Africa, it is providing support for sustainable teacher development in these countries. In Ghana, TESSA resources are being used in the Colleges of Education and the teaching universities. The materials allow educators to have access to a wide range of free quality open educational resources, which they can download, use, reuse, modify, and share.

It is observed that if sub-Saharan Africa is to meet its teacher need, which is currently estimated to be 4 million then it must adopt innovative and sustainable models of teacher

development that uses the new forms of communication technologies such as the TESSA model.