



Teacher shortage and attrition are threatening the future of education. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 15 million more teachers are needed to achieve universal primary and secondary education by 2030 (UNESCO, 2024). While educational reforms are being implemented across the region, not much research has been conducted to establish their influence and impact on teacher wellbeing and retention.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Supporting Teacher Education, Wellbeing, and Retention via Informing Feasible Educational Policies and Incentives in Africa (STEP-EA)

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

Häme University of Applied Sciences; Egerton University; University of Nairobi; Dar es Salaam University College of Education; Mkwawa University College of Education; University of Juba

KEY THEMES

**Teacher wellbeing
Teacher retention
Teacher agency**

PROJECT BUDGET

€ 681 050

COUNTRIES OF IMPLEMENTATION

Kenya - South Sudan- Tanzania

PROJECT DURATION

18 months

CONTACT

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Focus on teacher wellbeing and agency

This project focuses on teacher wellbeing at work and teacher retention, shortage, and attrition. The goal is to provide in-depth and novel empirical evidence on teachers' wellbeing, professional agency and commitment, and to suggest policy recommendations and practical implications for educational policy, teacher education and schools in Africa.

Key objectives

- Strengthen educational policies and teacher education curricula by embedding teacher wellbeing, agency, leadership, effective planning and management of teachers' work.
- Examine how teachers' working conditions, wellbeing, agency, and commitment interact, and
- Identify best practices for sustainable teaching in fragile contexts to guide regional policies.

Methods

- Concurrent mixed-method research approaches

This research project is funded by the European Commission under the Regional Teachers Initiative for Africa.



In many parts of Africa, a significant number of children face challenges in developing basic numeracy skills. A UNESCO (2017) report indicates that in sub-Saharan Africa, 80% of children up to the early adolescent age range fail to achieve minimum proficiency in numeracy across the relevant grade levels in mathematics.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Investigating the outcomes of professional development linked to the Mental Starters Learner Workbooks for Early Number Learning at pre- and in-service teacher education levels

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

Dublin City University;
Rhodes University;
Abubakar Tafawa Balewa
University

KEY THEMES

foundational numeracy learning
pedagogical skills

PROJECT BUDGET

€ 468 803

COUNTRIES OF IMPLEMENTATION

South Africa- Malawi- Nigeria

PROJECT DURATION

18 months

CONTACT

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Pedagogy for foundational learning

This project focuses on pre- and in-service teacher development programmes using the Mental Starters Learner Workbook. The aim is to generate evidence on how the materials improve the teaching and learning of key mental maths skills in South Africa, Malawi and Nigeria.

Key objectives

- Generate evidence on effective teacher education policies and practices for foundational numeracy, through collaborative research.
- Share research findings with policy and practitioner audiences while strengthening Europe-Africa and inter-African partnerships for improving numeracy through teacher education.

Methods

- Eight pre-service studies in South Africa, Nigeria, and Malawi will use qualitative and quantitative measures to assess teacher learning through the Learners Workbook.
- In South-Africa, an in-service project will use pre- and post-tests to assess how the Learner Workbook improves mental maths in primary schools.

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The Tanzanian Competence Based Curriculum of primary and secondary schools emphasises developing skills, attitudes, and values to equip learners with 21st century competencies, green skills and inclusivity. To ensure learners developing these skills, teacher preparation and continuous professional development must critically focus on equipping teachers with such skills as well as pedagogical skills on how to foster similar competencies and skills to learners.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Strengthening Primary School Teacher Professional Development in Tanzania: Generating Evidence for Policy and Practice, STEP-STUDY Tanzania

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

**University of Dodoma;
University of Graz, Institute for
Education Research and
Teacher Education;
Arusha Technical College**

KEY THEMES

**Teacher professional
development
Pedagogical skills**

PROJECT BUDGET

€ 537 645

COUNTRIES OF IMPLEMENTATION

Tanzania

PROJECT DURATION

18 months

CONTACT

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Supporting teachers in implementing the curriculum

This project provides evidence-based insights into the professional development of primary school teachers, with a focus on addressing systemic gaps and improving curriculum implementation in Tanzania. The goal is to inform teacher training, policy review, teacher training programmes and continuous professional development design, review, implementation and practice.

Key objectives

- Assess how teacher education programmes align with the requirements of the Competency Based Curriculum in Tanzania and integrate key skills such as ICT literacy, inclusivity and sustainability.
- Provide actionable recommendations to improve teacher education frameworks, strengthen capacity building and inform policy reforms.

Methods

- Mixed-method approach, combining surveys and qualitative research

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Low teacher wellbeing and high attrition represent major obstacles to achieving national and regional education policy objectives and are major drivers of the current ‘learning crisis’ in several sub-Saharan African countries. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, teachers are subjected to high levels of violence and displacement, while in Uganda, education systems in refugee-receiving regions are under considerable strain with persistent teacher shortages and growing social tensions.

RESEARCH PROJECT

The Drivers of Teacher Wellbeing and Retention in Contexts of Protracted Violence and Displacement

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

Institute of Development Studies; Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Bukavu; The Secretariat for Support and Coordination of The Education Sector; Luigi Giussani Foundation; Oxfam Uganda; Oxfam Denmark

KEY THEMES

**Teacher wellbeing
Education in emergencies**

PROJECT BUDGET

€ 876 885

COUNTRIES OF IMPLEMENTATION

The Democratic Republic of the Congo - Uganda

PROJECT DURATION

18 months

CONTACT

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Teacher wellbeing in crisis contexts

This project examines locally grounded drivers of teacher retention and wellbeing in crisis-affected regions. The focus is on the effects of informal teacher and community strategies, school leadership and sub-national education governance, and peer-based professional support and professional development. It centers teachers’ perspectives, with particular attention to marginalised educators.

Key objectives

- Generate evidence on teacher retention and well-being in crisis-affected contexts and strengthen research capacity to inform national and regional policy.
- Mobilise stakeholder expertise and build equitable Africa-Europe partnerships to ensure policy uptake, programmatic relevance, and effective dissemination.

Methods

- Participatory approach, comparative design combining qualitative methods with quantitative analysis of existing datasets.
- Equitable and collaborative partnership model.

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Limited access to continuous professional development is one of the key challenges facing teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa. Professional learning communities (PLCs) are forums that provide the setting and necessary support for groups of teachers, school managers and subject advisors to participate collectively in determining their own developmental trajectories, and to set up activities that will drive their development.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Implementation of Professional Learning Communities in selected African Countries: Implications for Policy and Practice

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

South African Institute for Distance Education; Institute of Education, University College London; University of Education, Winneba; Botswana Open University

KEY THEMES

**Teacher professional development
Peer learning**

PROJECT BUDGET

€ 642 334

COUNTRIES OF IMPLEMENTATION

Kenya - South Africa - Botswana- Ghana

PROJECT DURATION

18 months

CONTACT

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Professional Learning Communities for Teachers

This project enables teachers to improve their practice by participating in professional learning communities (PLCs). Each of the communities focuses on an aspect of their practice and will work with a facilitator to gain confidence through collaboratively designing, observing, and refining lessons focused on improving student engagement and achievement in a specific level of education and subject area.

Key objectives

- Strengthen teacher education and professional development in Africa by supporting governance reforms, promoting PLCs, and generating evidence to improve teacher preparation, practice, and the attractiveness of the profession.
- Foster integration of evidence into policy making and build strong Africa-Europe research partnerships to enhance teacher development and education policy.

Methods

- Multiple case study approach

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The global learning crisis reveals a critical challenge in many low- and middle-income countries: despite impressive gains in primary school enrollment, educational investments do not convert into student learning. The available evidence suggests that this gap largely arises from a teaching crisis, creating a cycle where inadequately trained teachers continue to shape future educators.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Teacher Professional Development at Scale: Leveraging Teachers' Perspectives for Success

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

**HELVETAS Swiss
Intercooperation;
University of Bern;
Ruaha Catholic University;
University of Zambia**

KEY THEMES

**Scaling teacher
professional development
and training of trainers**

PROJECT BUDGET

€ 745 849

COUNTRIES OF IMPLEMENTATION

Tanzania - Zambia

PROJECT DURATION

18 months

CONTACT

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Scaling approaches for teacher professional development

This project evaluates two approaches to scaling teacher professional development: peer-to-peer cascading and training-of-trainers models. It also integrates teachers' perspectives on new pedagogical techniques to generate practical, teacher-centered recommendations for more effective professional development.

Key objectives

- Study teacher beliefs and perspectives as a central mechanism in the scalability of a proven in-service teacher training programme in Tanzania;
- Assess the applicability of experimental findings from Tanzanian primary schools in Zambian secondary schools, where the same professional development program has been implemented in 2021/22.

Methods

- Large-scale randomised controlled trial with 900 teachers in Tanzania, and quasi-experimental analysis of ex-post data in Zambia.
- Classroom observations, survey based choice experiments and chronometer measures

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