

## **Determinants of Career Professional Development of Female Teachers in Uganda.**

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Education is a continuous process from birth to death and is a responsibility of a number of people. Becoming a teacher is also a process that continues throughout one's professional career. Supporting conditions can facilitate this process of continuously growing as a professional. William and Heck (1984) suggest the following conditions as being conducive to teacher's needs and satisfaction, high self-esteem and better performance, empathy, caring, psychological freedom and safety, effective communication with the school system and the community. The teachers must also be motivated so that they have their own programs for professional growth based upon their perceptions of problems and issues in their classrooms and professional lives. In some societies however, women do not have equal access to these supporting conditions to enable them develop their professional careers. This study was carried out in four rural areas of Uganda and reveals that female rural teachers need support.

### **Training Teachers in Uganda**

The lowest qualified teacher in Uganda has a grade three teaching certificate, which is obtained after undergoing a two-year training in a Primary Teacher Training College. The minimum entry requirements are six passes including at least passes in English and Mathematics. These teachers can only teach in primary schools, however, they have the opportunity to upgrade to grade five level by joining the National Teachers College whose graduates obtain a diploma in education. It is a two-year training programme where students can either do it as a full time course or holiday programme. Teachers with a diploma in education can also upgrade to obtain a Bachelor's degree in education. These teachers and either take a full time course at the Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo (now Kyambogo University) or through Distance Education programme at the Institute of Adult and Continuing Education at Makerere University, Kampala. Five other private

universities offer opportunities for upgrading teachers. For each of these levels, teachers are trained using one common curriculum and one examination body, particularly in government aided institutions. Upgrading from one level to another requires financial support in terms of tuition fees, funds for scholastic materials, support for accommodation while training as well as their families they leave at home.

### **Literature review**

#### **The Teacher and Career Development**

The teacher as a professional is expected to have the following characteristics as she/he develops in her/his teaching career.

1. The teacher should know herself with respect to her perceptions, knowledge, values, energies, abilities, attitudes, goals, development progress and probable future growth. She should learn to be herself not to pretend to be something to fill out a role.
2. She should know a variety of alternative educational methods, mediums, materials and resources suitable for facilitating learning.
3. The teacher should be able to suggest, analyze synthesize, evaluate, develop and implement learning alternatives relevant to a given situation i.e. The teacher should be scholar of instructional strategies. That is possesses and seeks knowledge about various approaches to instruction. (Hogan 1973).
4. Should be able to interact with peers on a scholarly as well as purely recreational level.
5. The teacher is a community educator as well as educator of the student population. The community will at times look at the teacher for leadership; secondly the community offers a wholistic education. That is the teacher must be a well informed citizen in areas of government, community activities, world and national affairs, other general aspects of life and living especially knowledge about the learners she works with. In depth study of the cultures is important to the development of the worldview.

6. After training, the teacher must have a commitment to learning; that is constant craving and search for knowledge related to areas of interest and responsibilities. The rapid rate at which knowledge becomes outdated and obsolete is a strong reason why a teacher must maintain an on-going commitment to the study of her field or related areas of concern. The teacher must have access to television, newspapers, radio, and magazines, must attend workshops, conferences, travel, and go for advanced professional training. This will help the teacher explain to students the pace of change and how to cope with the process of social change (Kagoda 1997).
7. The teacher in the community where the school is located seeks to change the conditions that create social inequalities in the school i.e. stand firm against racism, tribalism, injustice, poverty and most important gender discrimination and other gross inequalities in schools and society.
8. The teacher must be able to cope with constant reforms in schools, such as: change in curriculum, new ideas such as children's rights and responsibilities, introduction of gender in school activities etc.

### **Hindrances to teachers career and professional growth**

Bacchus (1996) argues that in most developing countries, the school environment doesn't provide role models for teachers to help them continue growing in their professional and career life. First and foremost is the low prestige of the profession. Many teachers have a fairly negative image of their role plus an inadequate appreciation of the value of their work. They lack a belief in their own potential and their ability to influence students become effective learners and active citizens. Bacchus adds on that in developing countries teachers are rarely, if ever, prepared to reflect on their own professional practice with a view to identifying their weaknesses in teaching. Such reflection could provide the basics for improving their professional practice.

Again the centralized curriculum according to Bacchus (1996); Kagoda (1997); Shor and Freire (1986), dis-empowers the teachers. The curriculum makers define the teacher's work and the teachers become implementers of other people's ideas. This curriculum is disconnected from the non-school world of students thereby remaining an activity, which is abstract and scholastic in character. This alienation is revealed in the way teachers do not take seriously the academic demands of their profession. Shor (1986) goes on to say that "teachers" who have too many students and too many courses, and have taught for many years the same subjects, teaching in shabby schools, submitting to one testing body often lack the will to believe in what they are doing. This kind of curriculum doesn't inspire teachers, it kills their creativity and the education system becomes bureaucratic and mechanical, making them lose interest in their work.

It has been observed by Buchman (1990); Shor (1986) Kagoda (1997) that teachers work under conditions where they are not involved in decision making, not free to plan, act or think independently. They have to submit, obey and comply with the headteacher and moral authority without question. Personal freedom is cut off to the ethical requirements of professional roles. The situation in rural areas is that opportunities for continuous or life long learning are few. Teacher's chances to engage in additional professional growth enhancing activities are limited or non-existent. In addition teachers in most third world countries receive less pay than semi-skilled workers in the private sector and are not acknowledged to be academically well educated. This low remuneration is partly attributed to the stagnant economy, budget cuts and a general neglect of social service sector.

Shor (1986) and Bacchus (1996) believe that the training of teachers in teacher training colleges doesn't help them much after qualification. Lecturers still use 'lecture and talk chalk' methods in training teachers. There is a lot of memorization, mechanical testing, abstract subjects which are remote from student interest using standardized syllabi. Such a process of teaching/learning keeps the students intellectually passive.

In Uganda English is the official national language and is taught right from elementary to the high institutions of learning. However the language is a big

problem to rural schools where reading materials are rare. The teachers themselves are not adequately trained to be able to teach it effectively. In addition there is a very poor reading culture even if reading materials are available to female teachers who in most cases do not have time. The situation is made worse by the fact that the teaching profession has not attracted many geniuses it should and has not been able to retain them. Therefore the majority of teachers in primary schools are of low academic and professional qualifications. Students from such poor primary education background end up in rural Teacher Training colleges to graduate as “Grade Three” teachers for primary schools of Uganda. Similar observation was made by MacNamara (1989), that as a result of the low pay and relatively poor conditions of service, almost all students admitted to the teaching profession were failed candidates for the academic high school or university. Many teachers therefore do not enter teacher’s colleges with the most appropriate aspirations.

Shark (1973) writing about Canadian female teachers argues that many teachers are or rural background, are a product of schools in small community schools. They go for training in community teacher training colleges and return to teach in the home region. These teachers live to the expectations of their communities. The communities where they live have never understood the need for a second academic background and lengthy training. The teachers are rarely encouraged to raise their qualifications and they rarely consider themselves capable and worthy of promotion. She argues that even the school boards have done little to encourage the female teachers to upgrade. The female teacher look for job satisfaction in the classroom, in contact with the children they teach. In Uganda especially in the districts where this research was carried out, the district education officers are men and most of the headteachers are men. The female teacher has to work under this framework of male domination. Some female teachers in Uganda do not know how to write a CV and in fact never present them when doing interviews as apposed to their male counterparts (Kagoda 2000). They are normally shy, not assertive and easily intimidated by male headteachers as well as district education officers. It is difficult for female teachers to ask for promotion from the authorities and lobby

them to get leadership positions something which is normally done by male teachers.

### **Realities of poverty, Heavy Domestic work and Teaching in Rural Areas**

In most rural areas of developing countries like Uganda female teachers still carry the burden of providing food for the family. She has to grow food, using hand-hoe, weed it, harvest it and process it manually. Since there is no electricity she depends on firewood or charcoal for cooking and candlelight for lighting and reading. This means she still has to look for firewood and water for the family from long distances. Other domestic work includes looking after the domestic animals like chicken, pigs and goats, cleaning the house, washing for the children and husband clothes, looking after the sick and participate in the community activities. Teachers in rural areas still have a high fertility rate ranging from five to seven and this is mainly due to traditional culture and a belief that many children will provide for them in old age. This affects the development of their teaching careers especially during maternity leave, a period which headteachers hate and wish to sack them, if they had powers. Female teachers are forced to carry their babies to class due to lack of day care centres (Kagoda 2000). The rural teachers are actually too poor to hire a baby sitter especially in cases where the husband controls her income. The female teachers in rural areas have to walk either 1-5km or use a bicycle to go to school daily where accommodation is not provided by the school. Most women still do not have access to property i.e land, house property if married, and with the very low salaries they are still dependent on men. Primary teachers get a government salary of Grade Three Ug. Shs. 93,000/= or Approx. 50 US dollars a month. Grade Five Ug. Shs. 140,000 or Approx. 80 US dollars a month, University Graduate Ug. 200,000 or Approx. 120 US dollars a month.

### **Statement of the problem**

Many women have joined the teaching career especially at the primary and grade five levels. They are already teaching in schools of Uganda. However, although there are many opportunities available for these teachers to develop their career and get promotions very few female teachers take up this opportunity. The main

purpose of this study was to establish the main factors affecting career and professional development of female teachers in Uganda.

### **Objectives**

1. To establish the status and quality of female teachers in Uganda, in the four districts of Iganga, Kamuli, Mukono and Soroti.
2. Identify qualifications of teachers in the district.
3. To establish conditions of schools under which teachers work.
4. To explain factors affecting their career and professional development.

### **Methodology**

Qualitative data collection approach was used since the stud was dealing with feelings, opinions, attitudes. Data was obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Face to face interviews and focus group discussions were the two main methods used to collect data. Observations and an extensive related review of literature were other methods used in this study.

### **Sample**

A total of 70 male and female teachers 4 District Education Officials and 20 Management Committee members were interviewed in four districts of Soroti, Kamuli, Iganga and Mukono. This study was especially done in primary schools with a few secondary school teachers doing their Bachelor's degree in my class at the Uganda Christian University, Mukono and Makerere University, Kampala.

Presentation of Results – (A Summary)

Table 1 Qualification of Respondents

District	Teachers (Male/Female Marital Status (M=Married)  Or S = Single	
Soroti	10 Female 7 Male (m6) (S7) 2 headteachers Male (M) 1 DEO Male (M) 1 Inspector of Male (M)	3 Grade Five (Diploma) 7 Grade Three 3 Grade Five 7 Grade Three Grade Five B.A. Degree, M.Ed Grade Five
Kamuli	10 Female (6M, 2S) 7 Male (M) 2 Headteachers Male (M) 1 Female headteachers (S) 1 Inspector of Schools Male (M)	2 Grade Five (Diploma) 8 Grade Three 2 University Graduate 5 Grade Five University Graduate
Other Districts Iganga and Mukono	14 Female teachers (8M 6S) 10 Male (9M IS) 4 DEO and Inspectors –Male(M)	Upgrading to Bachelors Degree University Graduate

Table II

Members of school management committee (Primary schools)

District	Sex	Qualifications
Soroti 10	8 Male (M) 2 Female (M)	2 above S.4 standard 2 Senior 4 standard 6 Below senior 4 standard
Kamuli 10	6 Male (M) 4 Female (M)	4 Senior four standard 2 Below senior four 2 Senior four standard 2 Below senior four

Table III

A summary of factors hindering female teachers' career and professional development (Presented by 90 Respondents)

A  
Item

		SA	A	NS	D	SD	%P	%N
1	Heavy domestic chores	40	40	5	5		88	5
2	No time to extra reading, leisure and income generating activities	30	40	5	15		77	16
3	No libraries in schools, no access to Newspapers, cost of reading materials too high especially in rural areas.	40	25	5	15	5	72	16
4	Lack of staff accommodation near schools. Therefore walk long distances daily.	30	25	2	20	18	61	42
5	Hunger at school where lunch is not provided for teachers and students	40	40		5	5	88	05
6	Infections diseases like HIV limits teachers interest in career development	50	30	00	10	10	88	11
7	Large number of children plus extended members of family to look after	30	10	8	12	30	44	46
8	Low and delayed salaries	40	40	0	10		88	11
9	Large classes with poor classroom structures sometimes conducted under trees	50	30		00	10	88	11
10	Students are very poor with no pens, books, hungry at school	70	10		5	5	88	5
11	Husband controls all family income including wife's salary	30	30	10	10	10	66	22
12	Husband do not allow wife to update because of fear of having same or higher qualification	40	30	5	5	10	77	16
13	Regarded by society as people with substandard knowledge and skills	10	40	10	20	10	55	33
14	Headteachers do not want women of child bearing age in their schools	40	30	5	10	5	77	16
15	Fear or not allowed to teach in upper classes	50	20	7	10	3	77	14
16	Staff ceiling policy by govt. leaves many teachers out of practice							
17	Sexual harassment by headteachers, district education officials, male teachers and students	30	30	10	10	10	66	22
18	Lack of self esteem	40	20	10	5	10	66	22
19	Lack of fees for further studies	60	10	5	5	10	77	16
20	Poor community attitude towards female teachers therefore even students in school have no respect for them.	40	10	10	00	30	55	33

21	Not supported and encouraged by school management committees to go for further studies	50	23	10	00	07	81	7
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		SA	A	NS	D	SD	%P	%N
22	Lack of incentives in teacher's salary even after upgrading	61	20	00	00	09	90	10
23	No systematic increment in teacher's salary even after upgrading	67	03		5	2	97	7
24	Lack of guidance and counseling during and after training as teachers	50	19	11	7	13	76	22
25	Lack of interaction between staff, school administration, management committees, parents and community as a whole.	34	28	10	10	10	68	22
26	Lack of job security in case of teacher is absent from duty during time of upgrading	20	36	4	30	00	62	33
27	Long distances to training institutions for upgrading purposes	60	60	4	1	29	73	33
28	Change of curriculum in teacher training colleges leading to fear to fail examinations	40	22	8	10	10	68	22
29	Shortage of accommodation facilities in training institutions	19	30	11	20	10	54	33
30	Fear of losing spouses due to long periods spent in colleges when upgrading	70	03	01	6	10	81	17
31	Some teachers feel they are too old to go for upgrading	40	00	07	30	13	44	47
32	No refresher courses in the teaching profession	70	20	00	00	00	100	00
33	Teachers are comfortable with their current qualifications	10	00	10	60	20	11	88
34	Lack of information regarding career development opportunities e.g. courses offered in various institutions, dates of application and admission requirements.	40	23	07	20	00	70	22
35	Many other reasons not classified e.g. fear to be labeled promiscuous if interact with males for purposes of lobbying for promotion	72		08		10	80	11

### Key

SA Strongly Agree

A Agree

NS Not sure

D Disagree

SD Strongly disagree

% Positive tendencies of respondents

% N Negative tendencies of respondents

### **Discussion**

Overall female teachers are not comfortable with their current qualifications and if refresher courses were offered most would attend. Poor remuneration which is often delayed, poor unmotivated students, large classes and poor learning environment combined with heavy domestic work are factors which are regarded by most respondents as hindering teacher development in schools. Hunger at school for both teachers and students, diseases and lack of care, lack of effective involvement by management committees in the running of schools are ranked next. Lack of access to property including salaries earned by female teachers, disrespect by headteachers, male teachers and students and the community as a whole leads to lack of self-esteem. This makes female teachers lack the ability and the will to apply and lobby for promotion in the education system.

Poverty again leads to inadequate funding of teacher training institutions and the running of schools leading to teacher inadequacy. Poverty is the vital cause of failure of teachers to go for further training or acquire reading materials. Poverty has led to failure of government to give teachers a living wage, provide accommodation for them, build classrooms and provide adequate reading materials. Remoteness of some schools due to poor transport facilities and other modern information technology makes it difficult for some teachers to get in touch with institutions of high learning.

Data indicate that women are still regarded as second/third class citizens in some parts of Uganda. Female teachers in rural areas are still dominated by men and traditional culture. This gender inequality has roots right from the community where schools are located, explaining why even the male pupils have no respect for their female teachers. The male dominated education structures discourage female teachers to aspire for more education and promotion. The upgrading teachers in the university had financial support of either their husbands or relatives. Secondly their academic performance in secondary schools and teacher training colleges was above average, inspiring them to go for further studies.

**Recommendations**

1. The government of Uganda should set up a special education commission to look into the affairs of primary teachers including justice for female teachers. Maternity leave should be extended, day care centres set up in rural areas and affirmative action in the promotion of teachers should be instituted in the education system.
2. Teacher training curriculum should be gender sensitized, diversified to include themes like lobbying skills, life skills, vocational courses, reproductive health so that it is more relevant to the teachers in the making. This will make female teachers more self-reliant, develop the urge to continue learning as well as enable them to enjoy the teaching career.
3. The government of Uganda needs to include in their poverty alleviation programmes provision of information Technology in rural areas. Sensitization of teachers especially the females, about their rights and responsibilities. The sensitization of school management committees of their responsibilities of promoting teacher development in their schools irrespective of their sex, and sensitize the district officials, headteachers about the inequalities existing in schools which leads to poor performance by both teachers and students.
4. Female teachers need support, encouragement and time to relax from their work and plan for their future more than their male counterparts.

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