ATTRACTING AND RETAINING QUALITY TEACHERS

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Attracting and retaining quality teachers is a continuing concern that is facing educationalists around the world. No school system can be higher in quality than the level of motivation and job commitment of teachers within the system (Adelabu, 2005). If a teacher is satisfied with these aspects of his or her career, the decision is often made to be a stayed. If a teacher is dissatisfied with these aspects of his or her career, the decision is often made to become a leader. Hammond and Sclan (1998) posit that "it is clear that the shape of the teaching work force depends not only on the qualities and qualifications of individuals who enter, but also on how occupational workplace factors affect teachers’ decisions to enter, stay in, or leave the profession".

According to Adelabu (2005) research has showed that teachers are poorly motivated and are dissatisfied with their living and working conditions. The key reasons for this are:

- Low wages when compared with other professionals
- Low status in the society
- Mass promotion of teachers
- Lack of career advancement opportunities
- High teacher–pupil ratio
- Poor work environment
- Inadequate fringe benefits
- Irregular payment of teacher salaries

Low teacher salaries are a major factor in the high exit rate for new teachers (Carnegie foundation, 1990). It is clear that compensation has been a major factor in teacher turnover for some time, and remedies have not been forthcoming to do anything about it. One could predict from equity theory (Cascio, 1987) that teachers who do not believe that they are compensated equitably for the work and hardships they must endure will take action to remedy the inequity. One of these remedies is leaving the profession. Teacher pay is lower than for some key equivalent occupations in the public sector (Adelabu, 2005). To retain teachers the government
should ensure that teachers are paid and have benefits that are equivalent to their counterpart i.e. doctors.

Another major factor that causes teachers attrition in South African is the violence against teachers in schools. Teachers experience a variety of offences such as physical harassment, obscene gestures, verbal abuse, and physical attack and property such as theft and damage to property. As a result teachers’ health deteriorates because of the violence. Many teachers leave the profession because there is lack of support in their well being from the employers. Furthermore, there is an increased expectation holding teachers solely accountable for the learning outcomes of their students whilst they are not safe at institutions.

The education sector suffers huge costs such as high rate of attrition, absenteeism, lost wages with untold consequences, accumulated debt because of exhausted medical aid and lost of instructional time. A quality teacher education can also enable teachers to bring change in their communities both as citizens and as professionals.

TEACHERS SHORTAGE IN SOUTH AFRICA:

According to a survey done by the DBE in 2008, South Africa had a shortage of 4 890 maths teachers and 4 551 science teachers nationally. There are at least 25,850 such schools and by the end of March 15,087 of them had vacancies for teachers. According to research done by the Centre for Development and Enterprise in 2012 South Africa needs 25,000 new teachers every year in order to cope with pupil demand. About 4000 teachers retire every year. At the beginning of 2012, 6641 schools across the country had fewer than six teachers, and more than 20000 teachers were forced to practise "multi-grade teaching", in some instances teaching as many as four grades in one class. Eastern Cape Province has the largest number of schools - 2,333 - with fewer than six teachers, followed by KwaZulu-Natal with 1,131 schools. A total of 561 schools in KwaZulu-Natal needed additional maths
teachers, with 557 needing maths literacy teachers and 508 requiring more science teachers.

**Research on teacher retention in developing countries**

The research study on teacher retention in developing countries (i.e. Tanzania and Namibia) was conducted and it addressed the following research questions:

1. What motivates teachers to take teaching posts in rural areas?
2. What are the teachers’ perceptions of valued incentives that can trigger teacher retention in rural areas?

**Research Methodology**

Mixed research methodologies that are both qualitative, such as focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews; and quantitative methodologies such as documentary review, statistical and descriptive methods were implemented for these research studies.

**Research findings**

Some of the research findings that were arrived at are that there are influential factors for teachers to work in rural areas such as cash incentives packages, promised accommodation, and government employment, hardship allowances, teaching allowances and convenience allowance among financial incentives. Non-financial incentives focused more on conditions of service, which are housing, reliable transportation system, infrastructure and administrative support. Other factors that impact on teacher retention in rural areas in developing countries are collegial and regional domicile, and gender and marital status.

**WHAT SUGGESTIONS DO WE MAKE?**

The suggestions that were made are that during the design and planning on policy for rural allowance, all stakeholders, especially teachers should be highly involved. The coverage for the policy design should be guided by resources such as human, financial and physical. The design approach should be a bottom-up than top down
design and should be geared towards improving primary and secondary school education.

It is clear that countries do not have a policy of retaining teachers in the system, whilst the growth of any countries lies in the success of its education in the system. Efforts are done to attract novice teachers by allocating bursaries and other incentives, but an intensive effort should be made by retaining good teachers.

- SADTU continues as per our NGC (2013) resolution to conduct research on rural incentives to guide the design and planning of policy on rural incentives by the Department of Basic Education.

- That the rural incentive policy is part of both human and labour rights and should be central to collective bargaining agreements between teachers unions and department of Basic Education which will require SADTU to raise this issue as one of the non negotiable on improving quality of teaching and learning in rural areas by providing attractive incentives to attract scarce teaching skills in these areas.

- Through the Institute research will focus on key areas that impact negatively on teaching and learning e.g. What is overcrowding, and what are the impacts of overcrowding on teaching and learning with regards to lack of personal space etc. Another area is quality vs. quantity. Whilst we focus on the quantity that Departments need to account for, what is the quality of these learners? How many enter HEI’s and enter the world of work, and contribute to the economy of the country. What are test and assessment tools testing and how does it impact on quality. Retention of learners in the system.

- Organised labour like SADTU established their professional development Institute, to do ongoing professional development of our members. This interventions are based on a needs analysis done with our members and happened in conjunction with other stakeholder e.g. SACE/HEI’S and SETA to mentioned but a few. Maintaining teachers through professional development have a two - fold purpose 1. For recruitment purposes, but also to maintained and increase our members, and to play a more significant role

**Attracting and Retaining Teachers at Work**
in Education Labour Relation Council (ELRC) and direct policy discourse to benefit the marginalized and poor in the country. Also to have bigger bargaining power benefiting our members with the majority in challenging school environments. By establishing communities of practices the Institute zoom in on under-performing areas, develop resource material for them self by themselves, and have ongoing discussions, and sharing of best practices in the district. Training intervention is direct and customised further to address specific needs.

- Incentivise ongoing training by allocating Professional Development points (CPTD)
- Ensure that teachers are well in the system. SADTU done research on teacher wellness, and a training manual was developed NTA. Special incentives having a late day etc. Incentivise teachers by having an exchange program to different schools locally and nationally. A change in experience will revitalize teachers, and assist with trying new methodologies and approaches in teaching.
- Relations with other countries for Cross country exchange programs as an incentives for hard working teachers to exchange methodology, learn from other countries and develop inter country methods for specific subject fields.
- Managers or School Management Teams don’t know what and how to manage all the aspects at schools. Capacitation of all layers will ensure accountability and proper management that will reduce burn out of teachers. In-service training over school holidays must be limited.
- Higher Educational Institution should also play a bigger role in the preparation of teachers for different context they will be exposed to. One comes to the realization that teachers are prepared as generalist, and a few as specialist in a subject field. Those specializing in certain subjects, seldom have the privilege of teaching in their specialized field because of demands at an institution.
- Comparison of corporate compensations via subject specialist e.g. Maths and Sciences. Specialist in these field are scares and recruited by corporate

**Attracting and Retaining**
all the time, and when opportunity arises or when recruited by corporate, higher salaries becomes the key in decision making processes.