



## Every Child Needs a Teacher

### Global Action Week on Education, 2013

The Every Child Counts policy of the Kwara State Government sets out a vision for achieving universal basic education and improving learning outcomes within basic education. While there have been many advances towards achieving universal basic education in Kwara, a number of barriers remain which are hindering children's access to education, retention and participation in school. These barriers include, but are not limited to: the distribution, quality and turnover of teachers; PTA levies and other fees; cultural and religious beliefs on education (especially for girls); health issues; exclusion of groups including those with disabilities and orphans and vulnerable children; distance and poor roads between communities and schools; and poor school infrastructure. As part of our efforts to improve universal basic education, this year, CSACEFA Kwara is advocating for improvements in: teacher recruitment; teacher deployment, monitoring and retention; and teacher welfare.

CSACEFA believes that every child in Kwara has the right to a quality education, and no child has a chance of realising that right without an effective teacher. Teachers make the difference between children just being in school and learning. However, for a variety of reasons, teachers in public primary schools in Kwara State are not evenly distributed. Many communities lack the number of qualified, trained and supported teachers needed to deliver quality primary education to children. The Kwara House of Assembly has highlighted that some schools have just 1 teacher handling classes 1-6 and at the same time acting as Headmaster (Motion of Deplorable Condition of Primary Schools in Rural Areas of Kwara State: Kwham 11). Schools in urban areas usually have more teachers than are necessary, to the detriment of schools in rural areas (see box). When disaggregated by gender, it also becomes apparent that there is a severe imbalance of female teachers in the oversubscribed urban schools.

### Teacher Figures at a Glance

- There are 14,442 public primary school teachers in Kwara State: 6,241 (43%) are male while 8,181 (57%) are female
- Only 11,864 (82%) of these teachers are qualified
- Six urban LGAs with 90,582 pupils (45.4% of pupils in the state) have 50.2% of teachers in the state
- In rural schools, pupil teacher ratio (PTR) is as high as e.g. 123 in Baruten, 126 in Oke Ero, 133 in Ekiti, 195 in Kaiama and 200 in Patigi
- In urban schools, the maximum PTR is 64, with average PTR as low as, for instance, 13 in Ilorin South and 16 in Ilorin East.

\*2010-11 Kwara State Annual School Census Report

A lack of teachers can lead to large combined classes; or children being sent home as there is no one there to teach them. The means that even when children are attending school the quality of education they receive can be very poor. This has led to parents in some rural areas pulling their children out of school. A shortage of teachers also manifests itself in a lack of consistent attendance for those hired to work in difficult areas. Rural areas in particular exhibit a high level of teacher absenteeism due to unattractive conditions, which lead to frustration and low motivation (Akila, 2004; Banerji, 1997). Teachers in rural parts of Kwara complain of difficult working conditions, they feel their salary is too low and that promotion does not happen regularly enough. Many have admitted to being disillusioned by the whole teaching process and when asked to rate their current job satisfaction only 16% of teachers in rural areas expressed a high rating.

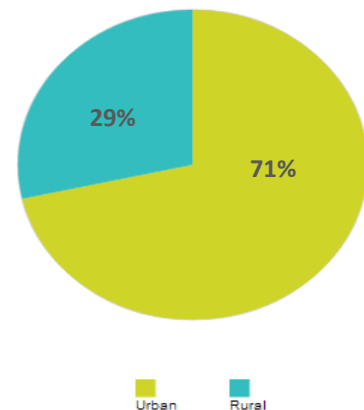
Not surprisingly, teacher absenteeism has a strong negative impact on educational quality; studies have shown that a 5% increase in teacher absence rates reduced average learning gains over the course of an academic year by 4% to 8% (UNICEF, 2012). This is creating an education gap between children in urban and rural communities across Kwara. More needs to be done to ensure that every child in Kwara state has access to a trained and qualified teacher.

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## Teachers Recruitment

With over 70% of teachers stating that their preference is to work in an urban school the NUT admits that 'teachers will do anything to get to urban areas'. While the Kwara House Assembly on the Motion of Deplorable Condition of Primary schools in Rural Areas of Kwara clearly sets out that 'no person, including the political office holders, should interfere in the posting of teachers to schools in the rural areas' CSACEFA research has shown that only 30% of teachers believe that this policy is being properly implemented. Teachers have spoken of being able to use connections, 'godfathers' and 'godmothers', to help them to choose which school they teach in. The phenomenon of 'ghost teachers' can mask the true shortage of teachers in marginalized areas because they appear on paper to be in the classroom, but too often live or work elsewhere (Rogers & Vegan, 2010). One Head Master interviewed in Ilorin East admitted that he has a teacher on his books that he has never seen, he reported the teacher but nothing was ever done. Therefore, more needs to be done to implement the Motion of Deplorable Condition of Primary Schools in Rural Areas. One way to achieve this is to have greater transparency in the recruitment process. All available teaching posts and appointments should be made publically available.

If given the choice would your preference be to work in an urban or rural school?



In addition more effort should be made to recruit indigenous teachers and ensure teachers are deployed back to their local communities. The current transfer process does not always take into account local languages resulting in teachers being deployed to areas where they do not speak the local language. Research has established the importance of teaching and learning in the mother tongue, but recruiting teachers who speak local and indigenous language can be a challenge. This is particularly a problem in years 1-3 where teaching is delivered in the local language, but continues to affect the quality of teaching in older years. 20% of Class 1- Class 3 teachers admitted that pupil's limited grasp of languages other than the local dialect affects their attendance in school. Moreover, currently 51% of rural postings required teachers to be based away from their families; 10% of these teachers are more than 3 hours of travel from their families. This distance affects teachers' attendance in schools with 39% of those surveyed admitting that they occasionally or regularly miss school because of having to travel to where their family was based (CSACEFA, 2013). Increasing numbers of indigenous teachers would also help with these issues

Recruiting teachers who speak local and indigenous language will be a challenge in the short term. One way to begin the process would be to create a scholarship programme for indigenous teachers in exchange for a minimum of five years of service in their community once qualified. More must be done to ensure current teachers from rural areas are able to request for postings to teach in their own communities.

### Success of Indigenous Teachers



In the River Rhine community of Pasha, Edu LGA, one Head Master has worked tirelessly to ensure that every child in his community is given their right to a trained teacher. Pasha is not an easy community to get to, it is up to a 2 hour drive from Lafiagi to reach the river banks, and from there the only way to reach the community is by canoe, or a further 2 hours on foot. In the past, teachers from outside the community who were deployed here would not relocate, or would "run away as soon as they saw the terrain". But this did not stop the ambitions of this educator; instead of giving up, over the years this Head Master successfully managed to request for four local teachers to be deployed back to their own community in Pasha. All of these teachers were personally taught by this Head Master and had promised him that



11% of teachers said that further training opportunities would encourage teachers to relocate to rural areas. CSACEFA believes that on-going in service training done in clusters would help to solve this issue. Such trainings should also be used to communicate to teachers what their rights and responsibilities are.

To encourage teachers to develop, and discourage absenteeism, performance based promotion should also be implemented. Alongside the current exams which teachers are expected to sit for promotion, reports should also be collected from the community, pupils and LGA that the teacher works with. This will allow for proper tracking of teachers; those who are performing better than expected should be rewarded and those who are consistently absent to be punished. One reward CSACEFA is recommending that accelerated promotion is used for teachers who are serving well in rural areas; instead of having to wait three years, they could be considered after two years.

## Teacher Welfare

More must also be done to improve teacher welfare in general. We need to recognise the important contribution that teachers make and prevent teaching from being viewed as a low-status job; low status leads to low-quality teaching. The NUT and teachers have all called on a greater package to be offered to teachers in rural areas. Research has shown that teachers make choices about where they work based on both monetary and non-monetary factors (UNICEF, 2012). From a policy perspective, these factors guiding teachers' decisions are crucial to understand if governments wish to attract and retain the best and brightest teachers. CSACEFA suggest that a holistic package is put together to address the problems teachers face.



There are still a lot of rural schools in Kwara which are situated in dilapidated buildings; many without toilets and other basic facilities. Rural teachers are often overworked in terms of teaching more than one or two classes at a time because of a shortage of teachers. Teaching materials can be limited and student attendance is not regular. The government must work to ensure that there are enough teachers for each school and encourage better school attendance and management through strengthening the capacity of school based management committees. In addition with bad roads and expensive transport still all too common in rural areas, schemes should be looked in to which provide reduced fares on buses and motorcycles for teachers. 15% of rural teachers stressed that

improved mobility would make them more likely to stay in a rural area. Examples of communities negotiating with ocado drivers to reduce teacher fares have already worked well in promoting teacher attendance. Additionally the transport loan scheme which the Ministry of Education introduced should be better promoted and implemented so that more teachers can afford to buy transport.

Teachers should also be provided with a rural orientation programme which introduces them to communities, customs and languages. This will help to strengthen ties with the community and also help with any security concerns that teachers may have. Communities should also be consulted and encouraged to provide free accommodation of a good standard for teachers to stay in. Rural communities can also help to strengthen ties with teachers posted to them by providing local non-monetary incentives e.g. land acquisition, provision of water etc.

Available evidence suggests that teachers will change locations in response to higher salaries, even if these changes lead to major relocations. Evidence from other countries including Zambia and South Africa suggests that by offering teachers incentives to work in more marginalized areas and with more disadvantaged populations, governments may be able to make the distribution of teachers more equitable (Kang & Hong, 2008; Luschei, 2012a; Luschei, Chudgar, & Rew, in press, 2013; Rogers & Vegas, 2010). Almost 30% of teachers surveyed by CSACEFA said that an

## Teacher Absence

Teachers surveyed admitted that they occasionally or regularly miss school because...

- 39% to travel to where their family was based.
- 25% due to the cost of transport to get to school
- 25% because they fear for their personal safety.
- 14% because of the working conditions they face (factors which make up the working conditions included school infrastructure, number of teachers, student attendance, availability of teaching aids, students ability to understand not just local language).
- 13% other issues: the most popular included a lack of available transport, health issues, poor roads and travelling to banking facilities.

\*CSACEFA Teacher Welfare Survey, 2013

increase in rural allowance would encourage them to relocate to, or stay in a rural post. Research undertaken by ESSPIN in 2012 showed that an additional allowance of N5,000 per month would be enough to encourage teacher to take up postings in rural areas, if this is part of a wider holistic welfare package. More must also be done to improve teacher's access to funds; mobile banking should be considered as an alternative means of salary collection for teachers in rural areas. MTN Mobile Money is planning a large scale roll out in rural areas of Kwara and should be looked at as a way to solve this issue. This service also requires local people to work as Mobile Money retailers; CSACEFA recommends a trialling to see if teachers can act as retailers as it would allow them to supplement their salary outside of school hours.

## Policy Recommendations

CSACEFA Kwara is calling on the Kwara State Government and other relevant stakeholders to implement the following reforms to improve teacher welfare and close the education gap between urban and rural schools:

Teacher Recruitment	Teacher Deployment, Monitoring & Retention	Non-Monetary Incentives	Monetary Incentives
<p><b>Increased Transparency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching posts and appointments made publically available.</li> <li>Improved implementation of Motion of Deplorable Condition of Primary Schools in Rural Areas of Kwara State</li> <li>Community involvement in recruitment of teachers.</li> <li>Needs assessment of rural schools led by LGAs.</li> </ul>	<p><b>More Equitably Distributed Teachers</b></p> <p>Increase the number of female and older teachers in rural areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Female teachers posted in pairs to rural areas.</li> <li>Short term: contract appointments offered to retired teachers in rural areas.</li> <li>Long Term: longer serving teachers encouraged to return to rural areas in exchange for extended years of service.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Holistic Rural Welfare Package</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accommodation: free housing with amenities for teachers to stay in Monday-Friday.</li> <li>Security: community sensitisation programme.</li> <li>Transport: reduced teacher fares for buses and motorbikes.</li> <li>Working Conditions: enough teachers for each class, students who are present and prepared, textbooks for teachers, and infrastructure repair.</li> <li>Rural orientation: induction for teachers to rural communities, customs and languages.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Rural Allowance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased to N5,000 per month on top of base salary.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Indigenous Teachers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trained teachers from rural areas posted to their community.</li> <li>Scholarships for training of indigenous teachers in rural communities: would in turn spend a minimum of 5 years teaching in their community.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Improved Monitoring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better tracking of teacher attendance and penalties for absenteeism. Current reporting structures to be improved (better monitoring by and of SSOs).</li> <li>Quality Assurance Bureau to appoint a Desk Officer for SBMCs in each LGA to create a direct link with communities and CSOs working in communities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural communities provide local non-monetary incentives e.g. land acquisition for planting, provision of water etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Increased Access to funds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trialling of mobile banking for salary collection (e.g. MTN Mobile Money).</li> <li>Trialling of teachers as Mobile Money retailers in rural areas to increase income.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On-going in service training done in clusters.</li> <li>Trainings used to communicate to teachers what their rights are.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Transport Loan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further implementation and promotion of current transport loan policy for teacher in rural areas.</li> </ul>	

**Promotion**

- Accelerated promotion for those serving in rural areas.
- Performance Based Promotion: Community, Pupil and LGA reports to supplement current promotion exams.