

EDUCATION POLICY PAPER 1

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'STAYING POWER' IN RURAL BASIC SCHOOLS IN GHANA

A LOOK AT TEACHER TRAINING
MODALITIES AND TEACHER
RETENTION

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ABSTRACT

Retention of trained teachers in deprived rural communities in Ghana is one of the key challenges facing the education sector especially at the basic level. Ministry of Education Performance Reports over the last five years suggest that trained teachers are not willing to accept postings to the deprived areas which has created a trained teacher supply gap in these areas (MOE, 2015; MOE 2014). This paper uses primary data from a longitudinal evaluative study spanning 2-years and covering 400 teacher trainees across nine districts in 5-regions of Ghana to explore the impact of the distance teacher training modality under the Untrained Teacher Diploma in Basic Education (UTDBE) programme. The study explores teacher retention and motivational factors for teaching in rural primary schools. Results of the study show that distance education training modalities positively contributes to teacher retention in these areas. The findings also suggest that most of the teacher trainees have a high level of social affiliation and commitment towards their communities, aspire to continue teaching and are far more likely to remain teaching in their communities after completing their diploma in Basic Education. The trained teachers who attended conventional training at the College level and are not from the community show less commitment in staying in deprived areas. The study findings highlight the need for policy makers to consider reforming their teacher recruitment and selection processes along with deployment strategies for teachers in order to retain trained teachers in deprived areas of Ghana.

THE CHALLENGE

THE SCALE OF UNTRAINED PRIMARY TEACHERS PARTICULARLY IN RURAL DEPRIVED AREAS

Ghana's educational sector faces numerous challenges that hinder the delivery of quality education to, most especially, the deprived parts of the country. Aside the short fall in teacher supply, retention of teachers who have been posted to deprived communities is a major worry to stakeholders in the education sector. Trained and qualified teachers mostly refuse to accept postings to rural areas and if they do, they seek for a transfer within the shortest possible time. In many countries, most teachers tend to prefer teaching in urban areas to that of rural communities for various reasons. According to (Mulkeen, 2005) cited in (Akyeampong and Lewin, 2002, p346), about 80 percent of teachers in Ghana prefer teaching in urban areas. A number of factors can be attributed to low teacher retention in the deprived areas of Ghana which include but are not limited to unavailability of electricity, portable drinking water, accommodation and access to recreational or leisure centers. Teacher characteristics also plays a role in their retention, (Miller, 2012) cited in (Grissmer & Kirby, 1992; Murnane et al., 1988) suggest that teachers who teach specific subjects such as Mathematics, Science, and special education tend to have lower retention.

Teachers in rural areas are faced with limited opportunities for educational development or advancement compared to their counterparts in the urban areas (Mulkeen, 2005 cited in (Hedges, 2000). Newly trained teachers in Ghana are reluctant to stay in rural communities after they have been posted there as they are of the view that staying in the rural areas will not promote their self-development.

Why the Untrained Teacher Diploma in Basic Education in Ghana?

Ghana's Education Strategic Plan sets out a policy to achieve a minimum of 95% trained teachers in basic schools by 2020. To achieve this, the Ghana Government introduced the Untrained Teachers Diploma in Basic Education (UTDBE) programme in 2004.

The UTDBE Programme is a distance learning programme which is aimed at improving the quality of education at the basic school level in Ghana by advancing the personal and professional qualities of untrained teachers serving in basic schools and not on the regular DBE training programme. The UTDBE course is aimed at academically qualified teachers providing them with self-instructional modules, residential courses in CoEs and mentoring support during academic terms. The overall purpose of the programme is to produce well-trained and qualified basic school teachers who will inspire learners to realise their full potential. The UTDBE Programme is a 4-Year Teacher Training Programme offered through distance learning and is based on the same curriculum as that approved for the pre-service training model offered in the Colleges of Education. The structure of the programme makes it possible for untrained teachers serving in deprived areas to pursue the programme whiles teaching.

Purpose of the UTDBE Impact Assessment

The purpose was to assess the extent to which the UTDBE programme has achieved its objective of upgrading the skills of the untrained teachers serving in deprived areas of the country where trained teachers usually refuse postings, and also to determine the extent to which that has impacted on learning outcomes of pupils. The assessment was also to explore the key factors that support or impinge on teacher retention in deprived areas as well as understand the teacher retention and performance dynamics taking into consideration the location, conditions, economic and social factors. Whiles also exploring the impact of the distance teacher training modality under the UTDBE programme and the factors that motivates teachers to serve and stay in rural communities.

Methodology for the study

The study used primary data from a longitudinal evaluative study spanning 2-years and used a mixed method approach of both quantitative and qualitative. In line with the design, data collection instruments included face-to-face interviews and summated closed and open-ended Likert scale self-reporting questionnaires. A variety of analytical techniques including inferential, descriptive and narrative analysis were used in analysing data collected from the field.

The study sampled 400 UTDBE trainees for the two year longitudinal study. They were interviewed and their lessons were observed during the period. The survey also observed lessons at the KG, primary and JHS levels and interviewed an additional 185 DBE teachers for the purpose of comparison. The study covered nine districts across five regions of the country. A total of 193 school sites were visited for the study in the five regions.

District	Number of Trainees	Number of Trainees in Extremely Deprived Schools		Number of Trainees in Less Deprived Schools		Number of Trainees in Deprived Schools	
Atebubu Amantin	47	12	26%	21	44%	14	30%
Nkoranza North	44	4	9%	23	52%	17	39%
Bunkpurugu Yunyoo	36	10	27%	20	56%	6	17%
West Mamprusi	40	11	28%	17	43%	12	30%
Bongo	45	8	18%	12	27%	25	56%
Talensi Nabdam	43	9	21%	8	19%	26	60%
Jirapa	48	10	21%	9	19%	29	60%
Lawra	53	9	17%	23	43%	21	40%
Wassa Amenfi	44	19	43%	19	43%	6	14%
Totals	400	92	23%	15	238%	156	39%

Trained Teacher Demand & Supply

Across all the regions and districts sampled for the IA study, data gathered suggests that there is a preponderance of untrained teachers. Consequently, there is a high demand for trained teachers. Analysis of data covering the last four years (2010-2014) is presented in Table 2. The table shows that, on average, the PTTR for the Upper East was 67 at KG level. Primary had a PTTR of 1: 65 and Junior High School had a PTTR of 1: 27. The PTTR for all the three levels of basic education was 50 indicating a high demand for trained teachers. The percentage of trained teachers across the three levels is 61.5% of which KG has 39.7%, Primary 58.7% and Junior High School 74.6% (Table 2).

Table 2: Regional Summary of Trained Teacher Supply in Sampled Districts (2010-2014)

Region	Level	Ave. Enroll	Ave. No Teachers	Ave. Trained	%	PTTR	Ave. Teacher Demand	TR Short Fall
Upper East	KG	3,731	141	56	39.7	67	149	8
	PRIMARY	19,937	520	305	58.7	65	575	55
	JHS	6,972	346	258	74.6	27	279	-67
	TOTAL	30,640	1,007	619	61.5	50	1,003	-4
Upper West	KG	6,226	123	34	27.6	183	249	126
	PRIMARY	17,050	378	224	59.3	76	487	109
	JHS	6,074	259	169	65.3	36	243	-16
	TOTAL	29,352	760	427	56.2	69	979	219
Northern	KG	9,740	103	43	41.7	226	390	287
	PRIMARY	25,339	542	259	47.8	98	724	182
	JHS	7,754	272	193	71	40	310	38
	TOTAL	42,833	917	495	54	87	1424	507
Brong Ahafo	KG	6,283	244	58	23.8	108	251	7
	PRIMARY	12,141	507	193	38.1	63	347	-160
	JHS	3,529	266	197	74.1	18	141	-125
	TOTAL	21,953	1017	448	44.1	49	739	-278
Western	KG	16,664	290	45	15.5	370	667	377
	PRIMARY	34,942	754	292	38.7	120	998	244
	JHS	9,910	341	248	72.7	40	396	55
	TOTAL	61,516	1,385	585	42.2	105	2061	676

Source: EMIS/GES 2013/2014

Key findings from the impact assessment

Trainee performance comparisons during the baseline and endline surveys indicate that UTDBE trainees had improved remarkably. The findings also suggest that there was not much difference between UTDBE trainees and DBE teachers' instructional performance in the classroom. The UTDBE trainees had satisfactory performances in six indicators during the baseline compared to sixteen at the endline stage. Performance of the 400 UTDBE trainees observed in only three indicators was rated as 'unsatisfactory'. These three indicators were the preparation of teaching learning materials, sensitivity to diverse learner needs and usage of TLMs.

Overall the findings from the examination scores of UTDBE and DBE trainees suggest that DBE teachers tend to perform better on core subjects while the UTDBE trainees perform better on practical course work. A comparison of DBE and UTDBE examination results in the subject "Trends in Education, and School Management" found that at the lower grades (E, D, D+, C, C+), there is a higher percentage of DBE students, whereas at the higher grades, (B, B+, A), there is a higher percentage of UTDBE students.

The general findings on the comparison of examination results shows that, while the DBE trainees performed better in the core subject area of Integrated Science, the UTDBE trainees performed better in the professional field course of Trends in Education and School Management. Thus, the UTDBE trainees demonstrated a higher degree of competence in the practical courses since most of them had more experience in direct classroom teaching compared to the DBE. The UTDBE trainees had difficulties with the core subjects which required rigorous calculations.

Key Findings - Cost Effectiveness & Efficiency

The endline study has revealed that the UTDBE programme is more cost effective relative to the DBE model of training. The major cost component of the DBE model of training is the College of Education student allowances which made the training more expensive. Thus training a DBE teacher costs the government 60% more than training the UTDBE teachers. Even when a major cost component (which was 63% of the total cost) in the DBE model has been removed from the total cost due to the withdrawal of teacher trainee allowances at the CoE by GOG, the cost was still high. Thus, training a teacher on the conventional mode (DBE) cost the government 60% more than the cost of training a teacher trainee using the UTDBE modality. The total cost of training one UTDBE trainee over the four year period is GH¢13,048 (US\$3,441) per trainee. UTDBE trainees bear GH¢6,552 (US\$1,728) of the cost, representing 50.2% of the overall cost of the training, while GPEG supported approximately 49.8% of the cost (GH¢6,496 (US\$1,713)) over the four year period. The average cost of training a DBE teacher over the three-year period was GH¢17,787 (US\$4,691). DBE trainees bear GH¢7,389 (US\$1951), representing 42% of the cost while the Government of Ghana (GoG) bears GH¢10,398 (US\$2,742) representing 58%.

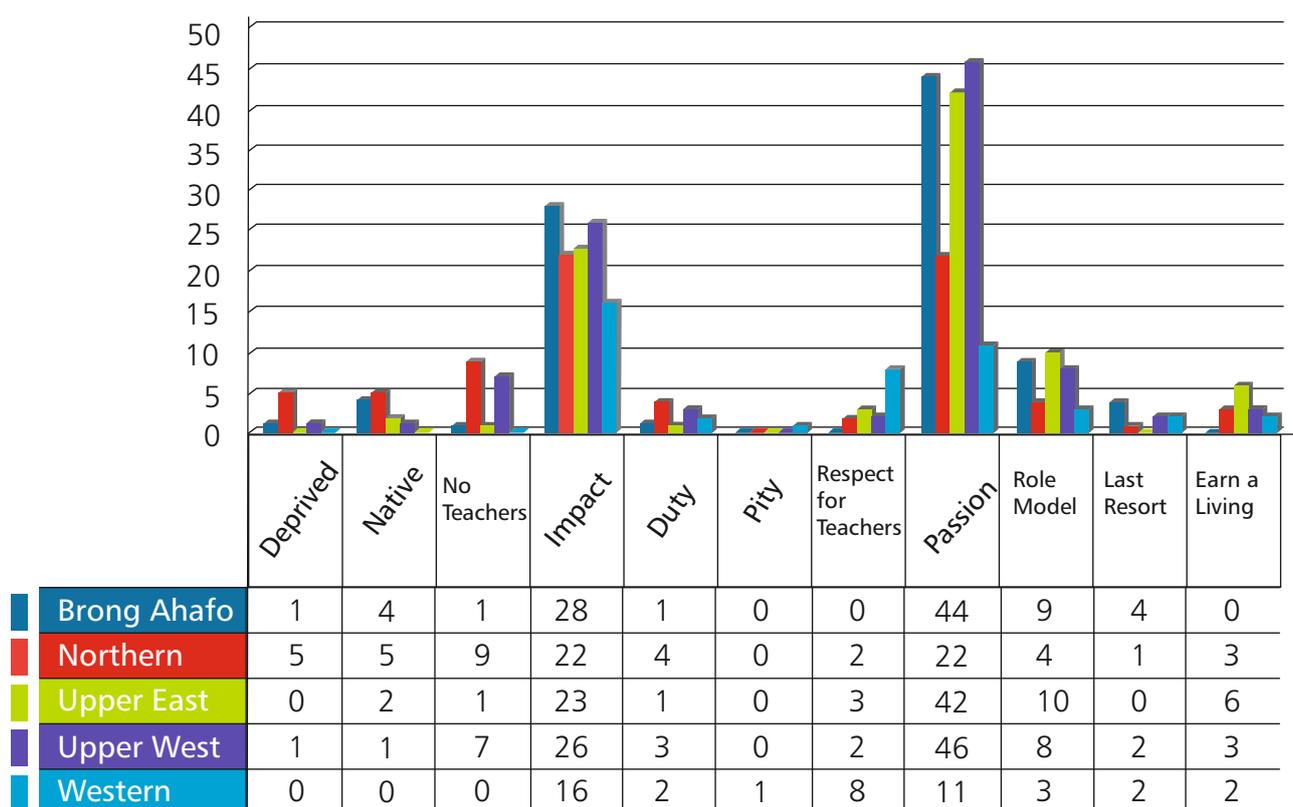
Key factors relating to teacher retention

Unlike the UTDBE trainees serving in rural communities, the trained teachers who acquired their qualification by going through the teacher training college did not get support and finance for their training so this bonds them to serve in a particular area for a period of time. Also they are posted to areas where they are not affiliated to and some find it difficult adjusting to the living conditions of rural areas especially where decent accommodation is not made available to them. The DBE teachers, therefore, show little commitment in staying in the deprived areas as

compared to the UTDBE trainees. UTDBE teachers cited their affiliation with the community and district as a key consideration for choosing to serve in the rural communities.

The motivational factors for becoming a teacher were also explored in relation to the UTDBE trainees' interests and potential retention in rural deprived communities after the programme. This helps policy-makers, especially human resource and education managers, look into the entry behaviour and aspirations of UTDBE trainees; determine if the entry motivations change over time and to examine whether there are differences in motivation due to demographic characteristics.

Motivation for Becoming a Teacher by Trainees by Region (actual in sample)



Source: UTDBE Impact Assessment Endline, 2016

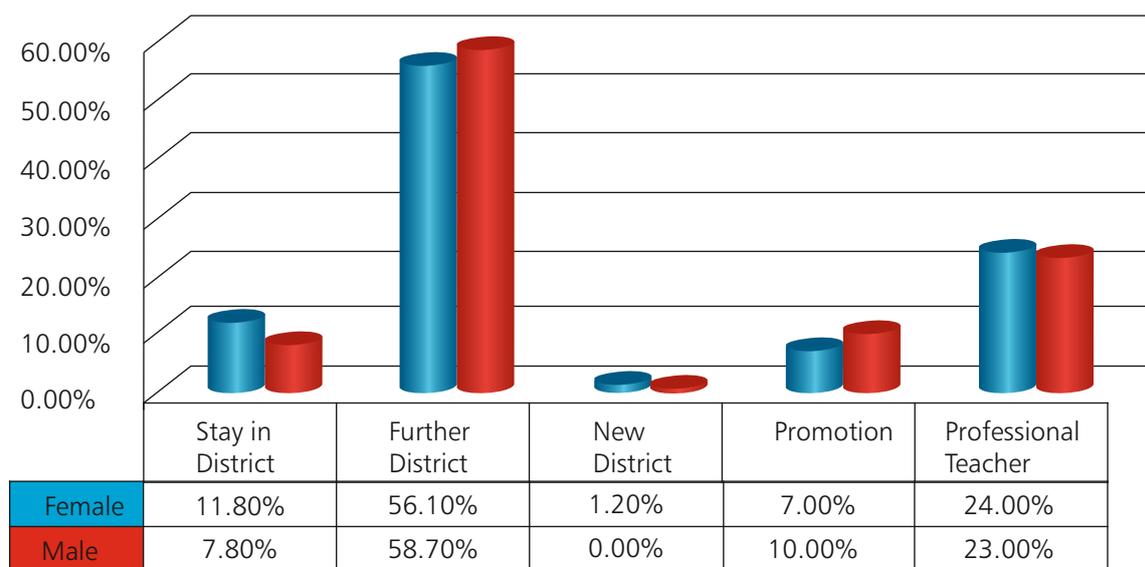
A total of 10 different reasons were given by the 401 trainees interviewed during the endline survey as to why they were motivated to become teachers. Some of the reasons indicated that the trainees felt their communities were deprived communities, lacked teachers and so they needed to volunteer their services to teach in the communities. Others also felt that, in being “natives of the communities” it was their duty to teach the children in the community and give them the potential to be educated. Others wanted to “impact the knowledge they have learnt to their younger brothers and sisters”. A large number of trainees said they were passionate about the teaching profession, while some trainees attributed their motivation to the respect teachers are accorded in the community and took their position as a role models in their communities.

And finally a small number of trainees interviewed saw teaching as “a last resort and a way to earn a living”. From the table above, it can be seen that across all the five regions, the main

motivational factor to becoming a teacher was their passion for the teaching profession and their desire to have an impact on knowledge within their community.

Another issue which emerged from the data was how the trainees' aspirations were influenced by sex. For instance, 58.7% of all male trainees interviewed aspired to further their studies to attain a degree or higher in the next 5 years compared with 56.1% for female trainees. With regard to becoming a professional teacher, 24% of the female trainees compared to 23% of the male trainees aspired to become professional teachers. What was encouraging to note was that only a very small proportion of the trainees, both male (0.4%) and female (1.2%), said they would like to change their career in the next five years and move out of teaching. The findings show that education authorities must appreciate the accelerated policies or programmes aimed at promoting learning, mentoring, training and on-the-job development opportunities for committed pupils or volunteer teachers. It also points to the fact that there is likely to be the situation where trainees will continue to be teachers even after five years if they continue to experience job satisfaction through training and professional development opportunities which challenge them; this will also enhance teacher retention. The aspiration of trainees is shown in the figure below

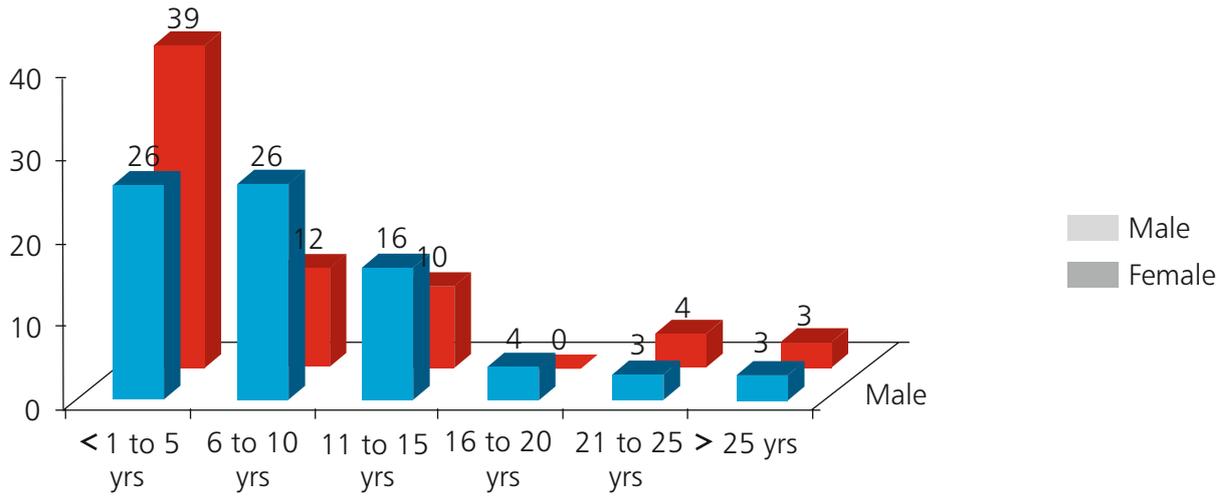
Trainee Aspirations by gender



Source: UTDBE Impact Assessment Endline, 2016

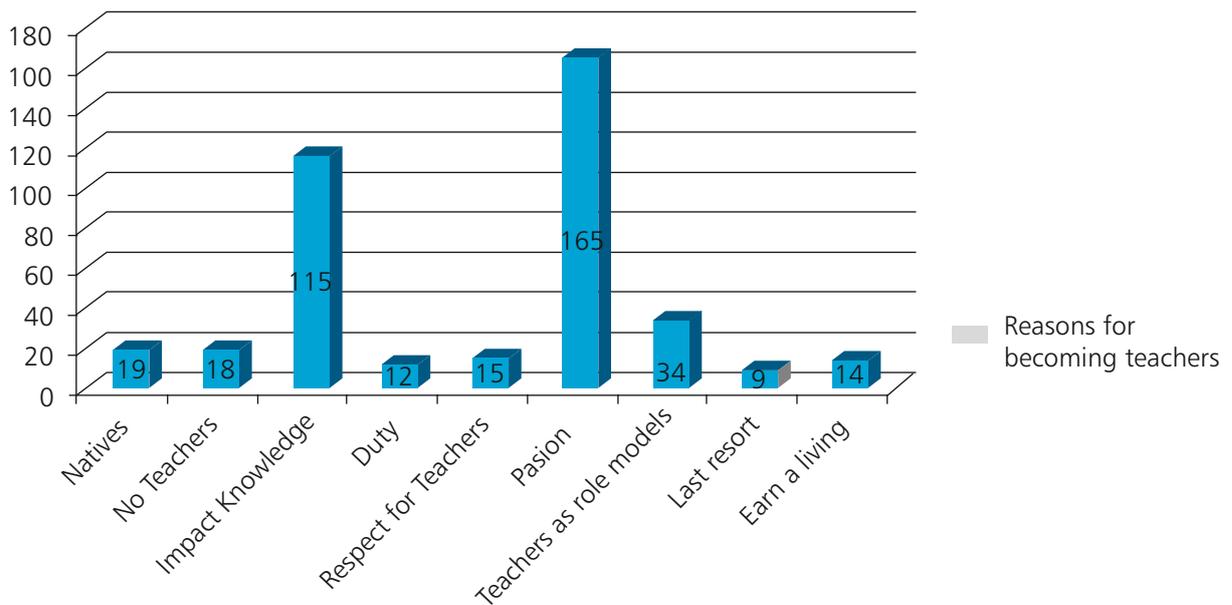
After the UTDBE training course, the GES conditions of service state that the trainee has to report to his/her school and serve at that same school for another 3 years before any transfer can be considered. This policy guideline was found to promote trained teacher retention in the deprived rural schools and addressed the high demand for trained teachers. The UTDBE endline study also found that in districts where transfers were becoming the norm, the length of stay of the trainee after graduation in a district at the time of selection for the programme was at least 8 years. The overall IA results suggest that the UTDBE programme was having a tremendous impact in the deprived areas by addressing the need for trained teacher retention. The figure below shows the years of service by UTDBE trainees in rural communities.

UTDBE Trainees years of service in deprived rural schools by sex



Reasons for becoming Teachers

The table below shows the varying reasons given by UTDBE trainees for serving as teachers in the rural areas.



Social and Affiliation Factors for Teacher Retention

Majority of the beneficiaries of the GPEG sponsored UTDBE are indigenes of the communities where the schools they teach are located. This makes it easy for them to stay in these communities as long as their services are needed and would not crave to move to the urban areas such as the district and regional capitals. A variety of factors account for teacher retention in rural areas including community affiliation. The UTDBE trainees being indigenes of the communities they teach in are willing to stay in order to help educate their younger ones.

Another main reason they gave was that good teacher-community relationships existed in the community. In addition, they contended that, as a result of the community's support they would remain in the community in order to give back to the community for its contribution to their

education. In other words, they were staying back after their UTDBE training in order to show appreciation for the community's role in their education. Other reasons UTDBE trainees gave was their desire to help the children in their community, the lack of trained teachers and also the disciplined nature of the pupils

Community context factors related to Teacher Retention

Community support plays an important role in the motivation and retention of teachers in the deprived and hard to reach communities. Support from the community comes in the form of cash or in kind which is given voluntarily by members of the community to teachers who decide to stay back in their communities. It was reported that teachers were given foodstuffs and access to lands which the teachers could cultivate on if they had the interest in farming. This coupled with cordial relations between community members and teachers, made the decision to stay in the communities easier for the teachers (UTDBE).

The availability of social amenities like electricity, portable drinking water, communication networks, accommodation, good road networks and others influence the retention of teachers in rural areas. Most often, it is the unavailability of these that tend to discourage trained teachers from accepting postings to deprived communities. This view is confirmed by the UTDBE baseline study where head teachers attested to the fact that the availability of social amenities plays a crucial role in motivating teachers to stay in deprived areas. In fact it serves as a motivation to teachers to want to stay in rural areas. If teachers in deprived areas are sure of enjoying some social amenities that are available to their colleagues in the urban centers, there wouldn't be the drive and desire to seek transfers to the urban centers since they can equally enjoy what is available to their colleagues in those areas. It is mostly the absence of these social amenities that discourage trained teachers from staying in the deprived areas.

Teacher Modality Factors for Retention

The structure of the UTDBE programme which makes it possible for trainees to go to the colleges when school is on vacation is another factor that helps retain teachers, according to the baseline study. This makes it possible for teachers to be present in school throughout the school term and would not have to miss school hours due to their studies. With this, it would not be out of place to suggest that training or supporting indigenes or natives of rural and hard to reach communities is a sure way of improving teacher retention in deprived communities.

Bonding of teachers is another way of retaining trained teachers in deprived communities. Findings from the UTDBE baseline study suggest that the trainees were made to sign a bond to stay in their schools for at least three years after successfully completing the programme. This measure according to head teachers is an effective way of getting trained teachers to accept to stay in deprived communities. In effect, if people are supported to go through the teacher training programme, they can be made to accept postings to deprived communities. This should also be accompanied by materials that will facilitate teaching and learning.

Policy Implication for the GOG and other key stakeholders

Findings from the UTDBE baseline study confirms the long held view that the provision of social amenities in rural deprived areas goes a long way to help retain teachers especially trained teachers in rural communities where there is a shortfall in trained teacher supply. A conscious

effort should be made by stakeholders in education, to at least, get decent accommodation and portable water for teachers who are posted to deprived communities. The absence of good accommodation and portable drinking water as well as electricity in deprived areas is what is cited by teachers as the reason they do not want to accept postings to deprived communities. Even though the cost of providing social amenities may be out of the reach of the stakeholders, a teacher should not be worse off as a result of being posted to a deprived community to impart knowledge on pupils. Support mechanisms should be in place to cushion the lives of teachers in remote parts of the country.

Sponsoring or supporting of people from deprived communities who wish to develop a career in teaching is a good way of solving the problem of teacher retention in deprived areas. The Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service in their quest to get trained teachers to accept postings to deprived areas can consider assisting indigenes to access teacher training education. This can be done either by financing the full cost or partial cost of their training and making the trainees sign a bond to serve in their communities for a period of time before they are eligible to seek transfers. A cue can be taken from the GPEG sponsored UTDBE programme which is seen as helping keep teachers trained under the programme in deprived communities where majorities hail from.

Motivation for teachers who accept posting to deprived areas can help attract trained teachers to these deprived and hard to reach communities. Due to the fact that teachers who serve in urban areas like the district and regional capitals have access to social amenities such as electricity, hospitals and recreational centers which are unavailable to their colleagues in the deprived areas, allowances could be given to teachers serving in deprived communities as an incentive to get more trained teachers willing to serve in remote areas. The allowance will serve as compensation for forfeiting the leisure of staying in the urban center due to the fact that majority of trained teachers cite unavailability of social amenities as a reason for not wanting to serve in deprived areas.

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