



## Policy Brief: In-service Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa

### Introduction

The attainment of the Education for All (EFA) goals is hinged on the availability of adequate and qualified teachers to service the ever expanding basic education sector, especially in the developing countries. However, while no doubt progress is being made in terms of the quantity and quality of pre-service teacher education and training (PRESET) programmes in many of these countries, a much greater effort is required to address the perennial shortages of teachers with the necessary qualifications and competencies for the attainment of the laudable goals of universal basic education which accompanied the explosion of education at this level. In many developing countries uncertified teachers are recruited to fill in teaching vacancies that would otherwise remain unfilled underscoring the need to prepare such untrained teachers with the necessary skills to be successful on the job.

Ministries of Education have historically, as part of their main functions, provided opportunities for in-service training for teachers (INSET) irrespective of their certification both to complement the pre-service teacher education provisions and to improve on the quality of teachers and teaching. However, baseline data is lacking on the nature and efficacy of these in-service teacher education programmes across countries.

It is against this backdrop that a multi-country review of in-service teacher education in Sub-Saharan Africa, supported by the Commonwealth Secretariat, UNESCO\_IICBA, UNESCO Office in Dakar, the ADEA Working Group on the Teaching Profession and the International Taskforce on teachers for EFA was conducted in eight countries namely, Central African Republic (CAR), Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Zambia. The study sought to fill in the gaps in our current knowledge and understanding about in-service teacher education practices and innovations in these countries as a basis for drawing up lessons that would both improve current practices and inform future initiatives.

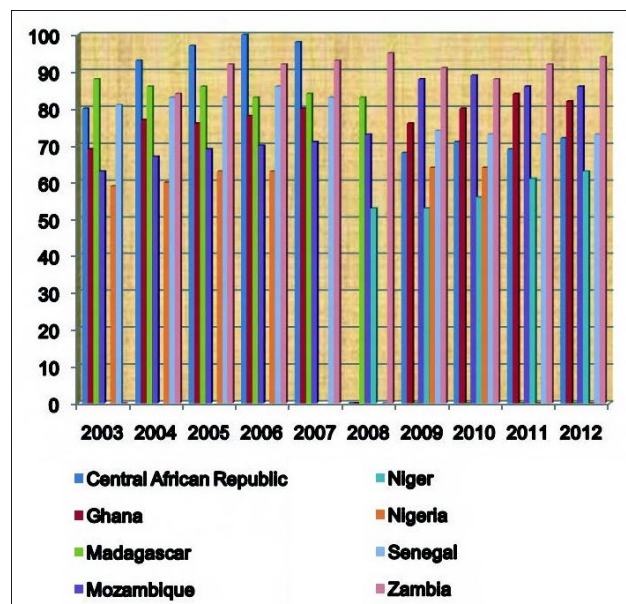
This Policy Brief developed out of the consolidated synthesis report of the study is intended to support governments who want to improve current practices and future initiatives in in-service teacher education. However, the Brief is not intended as a prescriptive manual, but rather, as a guide outlining policies, models, structures, processes and lessons learned. Each country needs to adapt the lessons and approaches according to an assessment of its own particular context and needs.

### General Education Policy

The general education policies of the eight countries stressed the importance of education in national development. The educational goals of these countries were all linked to the broader goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000 and the 1990 Jomtein Declaration on Education for All (EFA), which aim to eliminate poverty and promote sustainable human development through education.

Critical to the attainment of these goals are universalizing access to primary education and reduction of gender and other disparities existing in the society. Consequently, governments in these countries have increased their commitment to the expansion of education at all levels, particularly at the basic education level. The concomitant results of this expansion of the education sector include, among other things, soaring enrollment figures, particularly at the basic education level of all the eight countries, increased numbers of basic education schools and classrooms, as well as, a pressing need for more qualified teachers in the schools. In Nigeria, for example, according to a Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Report, "nearly 9 out of every 10 children, (representing 88.8%), were enrolled in basic education schools by 2010". In Ghana, in the period 2002 – 2012, basic education enrollment increased by 75%. In Niger, between 2000 and 2011, the number of primary 1 pupils increased from 657,000 to 1,900,000, representing an increase rate of 2.9% in just a year.

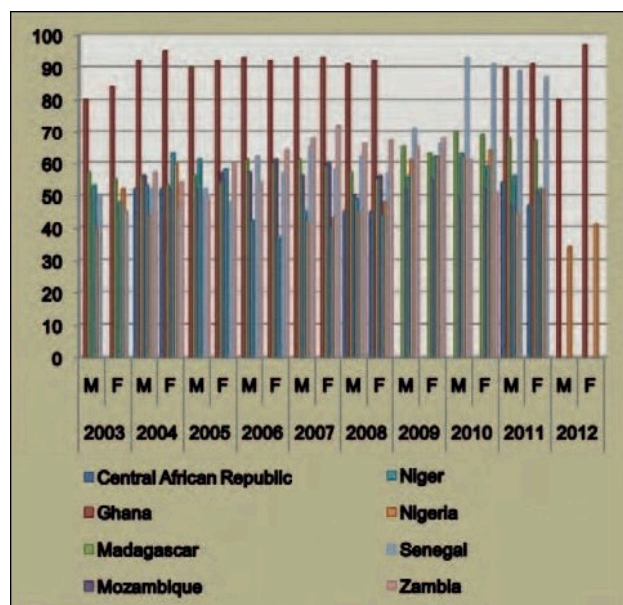
Figure 1: Primary net enrolment rate, by country and year



Sources: UIS (<http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/indicators>)

The enrolled pupils had practically trebled over that period. Over the same period, the estimated rate of access to schooling increased from 34.1% to 76.1% representing a gain of 42%. The gross rate of schooling in CAR rose from 74% in 2007 to 84% in 2009. Unfortunately, teacher production had not kept pace with the increases in enrollments in these countries forcing many of them to resort to employing untrained teachers to teach in their basic education schools.

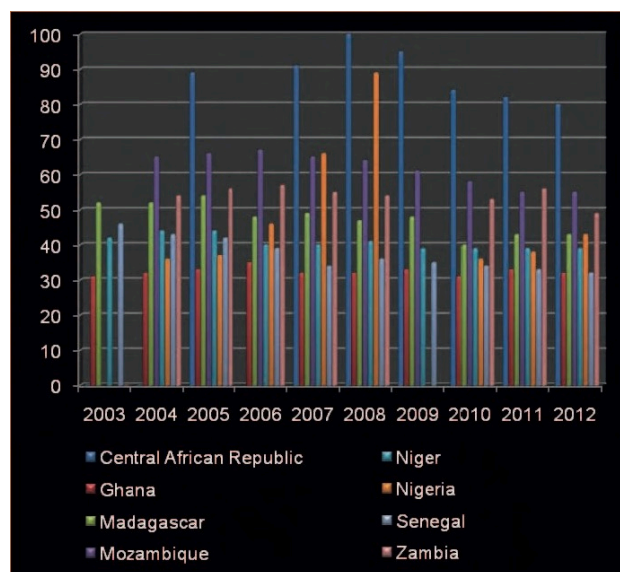
Figure 2: Transition Rate from Primary to Secondary by Country, Year and Sex



Source: UIS (<http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/indicators>)

The manifestation of this mismatch between rising enrollment figures and supply of teachers is seen in the high pupil-teacher ratios at the primary school level across the countries.

Figure 3: Primary Pupil Teacher Ratio by Country and Year



Source: UIS (<http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/indicators>)

In Ghana, class sizes in more than half of the schools have been found to be above the national norm of 35:1 in terms of pupil-teacher ratio and about a fifth of the classes have 41 to 50 pupils while a little less than a third have over 50 pupils per class (Asare, 2012). In Nigeria, the ratio can be as high as 100:1 in some parts of the country (Isyaku, 2012). In Senegal, despite an acceptable national pupil-teacher ratio of 35:1, there are disparities and ratios as high as 100:1 particularly in the suburbs of Dakar where some teachers have double stream classes (Ndiaye, 2012). In CAR, the ratio is as high as 90:1. Indeed, as Table 3 above shows, Madagascar, Mozambique, Niger and Zambia have all exceeded the recommended standard pupil-teacher ratio of 35:1. These ratios include teachers that are untrained and so are not reflective of the actual pupil to qualified teacher ratios in these countries. Nevertheless, they do give useful indications about the existing teacher gaps in the selected countries.

### The Case for INSET

As mentioned earlier, the attainment of the Education for All (EFA) goals is dependent on the availability of adequate and qualified teachers to service the ever expanding basic education sector, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. However, because the provision of pre-service teacher education institutions in any one country, particularly in the SSA countries is not commensurate with the explosion in the number of basic education schools that are established, a wide gap is created between the supply and demand for teachers in these countries.

Table 1: Actual Number of Teachers & Teachers needed by Country as at 2012

Country	Total number of teachers	Number of teachers required
Central Africa Republic	8,000	10,560
Ghana	190,198	36,519
Madagascar	84,895	DNA
Mozambique	93,597	92,762
Niger	42,619	36,000
Senegal	48,771	1,143
Zambia	16,497	32,592
Nigeria	2,892,692	500,000

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics; EFA Review Report.

DNA = data not available

Although none of the eight countries in the study reported any formal attempt to match supply with the demand for teachers, the figures in Table 1 give some indication of the numbers of teachers that might be needed at the basic education level in each country.

When these figures are compared with the numbers of trainees in the pre-service teacher training institutions in these countries shown in Table 2 below, it is clear that the rate of supply of qualified teachers in these countries falls far short of the demand for them.

**Table 2: Number of trainee teachers, by country and gender**

Country	Number of trainees	
	Male/Female	Female
Central African Republic	DNA	DNA
Ghana	26,863	11,461
Madagascar	23,070	DNA
Mozambique	DNA	DNA
Niger	DNA	DNA
Nigeria	318,887	157,228
Senegal	DNA	DNA
Zambia	7,298	4,253

Source: INSET study country reports 2012.

DNA = data not available

The 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report indicates that Nigeria, for example, would need 500,000 additional qualified teachers to achieve EFA by 2015. In Ghana, only 44.8 per cent of the required target of qualified teachers for kindergarten, 66.3 per cent of primary school target and 82.9 per cent of the target for junior high school had been met as at 2011/12. In Senegal, less than half of its primary school teachers (33.4 per cent) are qualified, even though there has been a deliberate attempt to upgrade all the unqualified teachers to qualified teacher status through selection criteria for new teachers and a short in-service training programme. While pre-service teacher education is often given greater attention in terms of government funding, a much greater effort is required to address the perennial problem of teeming numbers of teachers in the basic education schools of the sampled countries without the necessary qualifications and competencies for the attainment of the laudable goals of universal basic education. As documented in the main study, a number of the sampled countries (CAR, Madagascar, Niger and Senegal), had resorted to recruiting uncertified teachers to fill in teaching vacancies that would otherwise remain unfilled underscoring the need to prepare such untrained teachers with the necessary skills to be successful on the job.

In-service teacher education is widely accepted to have the potential for addressing and responding to the persistent problems of teacher quality and shortages, as well as, low students' learning outcomes bedeviling countries in the Sub-Saharan African region. Indeed, in-service teacher education has become a focus of governments' attention in this sub-region, not only because teachers' classroom practices benefit from ongoing professional support, but also because, as this multi-country study on INSET revealed, it offers vital opportunities for upgrading teachers' qualifications.

In terms of upgrading the qualification of teachers, INSET programmes have a greater impact for uncertified contract and voluntary teachers that dominate the teaching force of many countries. One of the key elements of teacher quality is the provision of adequate opportunities for personal growth and professional development through regular

training. The effectiveness of teachers depends largely on the extent to which their knowledge and skills are upgraded regularly. In-service Teacher Education (INSET) is both a process and a strategy for addressing and responding to the diverse training needs of teachers by increasing their participation in continuing professional development activities and enhancing their professional knowledge and skills.

### The Issues

Despite its potential, country examples documented in the main study report revealed that INSET in many countries in the Sub-Saharan African (SSA) region still had a long way to go to fully equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills for effective teaching. This Policy Brief highlights a number of issues in respect of INSET policies and practices in the study countries, including:

- Policy on INSET is generally fragmented and more often than not simply non-existent.
- Lack of a coherent, comprehensive and financially sustainable INSET policy in many countries. Pre-service teacher education (PRESET) is often given greater priority than INSET with little or no attempt to align and strengthen the complementary relationship between pre-service and in-service teacher education.
- INSET policy is often an ad-hoc, stop-gap measure to upgrade the teeming numbers of uncertified teachers that are recruited to fill in vacancies that would otherwise not be filled due to the wide gap created between supply and demand for teachers caused by the explosion in the number of basic education schools in an attempt to attain EFA and MGD goals.
- The provision of INSET in the eight countries is often variable and circumstantial resulting in a growing concern about the efficacy of existing professional development schemes in meeting the training needs of teachers.
- Most disturbing is the apparent lack of, or inadequate budgetary provision and absence of elaborate policies and structures for effective management of in-service training for teachers. The reports indicate that in some of the sampled countries (for example, Ghana and Madagascar) most of the available INSET programmes are often donor-driven, initiated and funded by donor agencies, usually on a small scale and involving few regions or sections of the country.
- Lack of alignment of the INSET programmes with clearly defined career paths in all the countries apart from mere expression of intent in policy documents of some countries (e.g., Nigeria, Ghana and Mozambique), which has rendered most of the existing INSET programmes, particularly those focused on pedagogical renewal both ineffective and unattractive to teachers who do not perceive any relevance or link of the training programmes to their career progression.

- In many countries, the authority lines within ministries and associated roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined making the management and governance of INSET system very ineffective and difficult.

It is important to keep in mind that there are numerous models of INSET programmes and no one size fits all. Furthermore, the study also revealed diversity in teachers' profiles in all the sampled countries: In addition to trained teachers, in some countries such as, CAR, Madagascar, Niger and Senegal, there is a heavy reliance on uncertified voluntary and contract teachers to fill in vacant teaching posts created by the massive expansion of education at the basic education level. Although this mix has helped in placing teachers in the classrooms in these countries, it does also mean that these teachers will have different training needs and will react differently to various types of INSET provision.

Hence, it is important to carefully consider the implications of various INSET programmes, both in terms of their development impact on teachers and on the costs of different models, particularly for countries with limited resources.

### **INSET Models**

INSET policies in the sampled countries tend to be a subset of teacher policies, which themselves are a further subset of the general education policies. This third place position of INSET makes it less visible on the policy agenda of many of these countries. Governments often act as though the continuing professional development of teachers is less important. A lot more emphasis is given to how teachers are initially prepared for their work.

Nevertheless, evidence from the country reports reveals a growing recognition of the value of continuing professional development for teachers in all the countries. However, this growing interest in in-service teacher education tends to focus on the delivery of basic education, with a concern on students' low achievement in both national and international examinations. In Ghana, the *"Preliminary Education Sector Performance Report 2008"* and the *"Education Strategic Plan (2010-2020)"* both emphasize the role of INSET in finding solution to the low proficiency levels of primary school pupils in basic education, which the 2008 report puts at "less than 25% of Ghana's youth reach proficiency level for P6 English and 10% attain proficiency in Primary 6 Mathematics."

In the same vein, both Nigeria's policy documents (*"Education Sector Road Map, 2009"* & *"Four Year Strategy Plan (2011-2015)"*) and Zambia's (*"Educating our Future, 1996"* & *"Education Sector Investment Plan, 1997"*), recognize the growing demand for in-service capacity building of the country's serving teachers in order to improve the quality of education.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE INSET PROGRAMME**

In-service teacher education is usually most successful and effective when:

- It is supported by an enabling policy framework and sustainable financial arrangement.
- It is based on a solid understanding of the unique perspectives of teachers of their training needs.
- Teachers play an active role in the process of developing and implementing the INSET training programme, to avoid it being seen as an "imported" model.
- It is linked with elaborate career paths for teachers.
- There are strong governance structures and clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the various actors.
- Powerful systems/mechanisms of follow up and evaluation of the training programmes are set up to ensure that norms and standards are adhered to.
- There is a balance of inputs from different stakeholders, including the private sector and NGOs who have experience in advocacy and leveraging of resources for education.

There is a tendency, particularly among the Anglophone countries (in particular, Ghana and Nigeria), to conceptualize INSET provision as a panacea for low academic performance of pupils in basic schools favoring the use of a costly formal model, similar to that of primary education, involving large scale cascade training models. These countries have largely relied on existing structures, universities and teacher training colleges to increase teacher qualifications.

The Francophone countries (CAR, Niger, Madagascar and Senegal) on the other hand, are exploring alternative models. These models offer in-service teacher training to contract or volunteer teachers and allow the hosting of INSET training in schools and non-traditional centres. The aim of INSET policy in these countries is largely focused on preparing the multitudes of unqualified teachers in their basic education schools for professional examinations and certification. The prevailing practice of employing volunteer and contract teachers many of whom are unqualified to address the pressing need for teachers to achieve EFA had underscored the need to fill the gaps created by the deficits of initial training of successive generations of volunteer and other contract teachers in the education system.

**Effective INSET calls for significant changes in policies, approaches, processes, structures and strategies, with a common dual goal of improving teacher quality and students learning outcomes.**

The Francophone countries, thus exemplify a policy of relaxed Certification requirements, which allows for the selection of teachers for tenure based on content knowledge examinations without the assurances that teachers had the opportunity to Learn or master what is expected of them. In Senegal, for example, every year, from 1994 to 2004, uncertified teachers with minimal or no pre-service training at all were hired and placed in teaching positions. The role of INSET in this context then became that of preparing such individuals for professional examinations. The preponderance of uncertified teachers in the education systems of these countries has raised the demands for continuing professional training generally high and the examples of CAR, Madagascar, Niger, Nigeria



*Teachers should be supported to design and implement school-based INSET training activities*

and Senegal show that it is not only expensive, but also difficult to raise such teachers to the qualified teacher status as they lack the necessary initial academic background that would prepare them for that.

However, mixed results have been noted. Niger and Mozambique reported the difficulty involved in ensuring both the quality and sustainability of the training programmes, which were often ad hoc in nature and characterized by uneven levels of merit and with a very specific and localized impact. In general, lack of well-defined teacher policies coupled with an absence of criteria to value INSET training seminars and workshops being run by the schools has hampered the attainment of the INSET's main objective of producing well motivated, trained and supported teachers. The issues will require going beyond the mere location of INSET in schools to ensuring greater accountability for the quality and sustainability of the school-based INSET programmes.

### Funding of INSET

The level of public funding of INSET varies among the eight countries and is affected by the annual budgets allocated to the general education systems by the national governments and their laid out priorities.

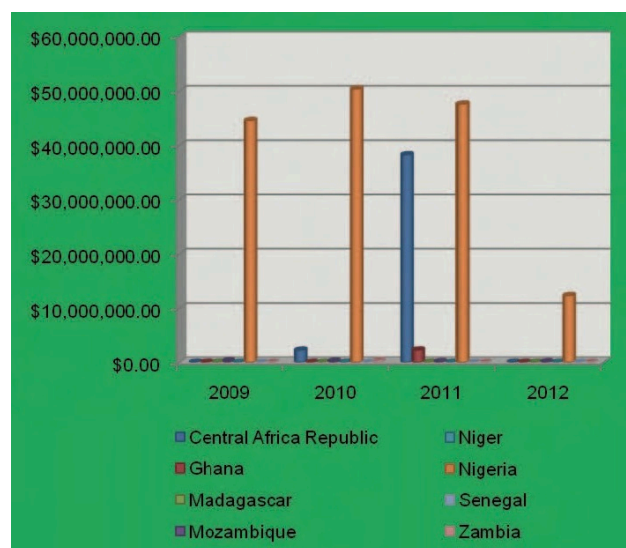
As mentioned earlier, the Sub-Saharan African Countries are challenged with the provision of universal basic education for all since Jomtein in 1990. At the heart of this challenge is the expansion of access to basic education. Accordingly, large chunks of the available resources/funds for education in these countries are devoted to establishing

schools and increasing enrollments to the detriment of teacher education. There is a recurrent problem of under-funding of education in general and INSET in particular, across the countries studied with many of them reporting inadequate or no budgets for the INSET programmes (Figure 4 below). It is understandable therefore, that only few of the sampled countries have addressed INSET in any depth.

If the resources are not there it becomes difficult to set up and manage the INSET system. The Nigeria and Madagascar examples illustrate how costly it is to provide INSET opportunities to teachers using the cascade model. For instance, the annual one-week re-training of over half a million primary school teachers in Nigeria launched in 2006 required a budget in the order of \$25m [US\$] per annum over a four-year period. Likewise, the launch of the Special Teacher Upgrading Programme (STUP) required an initial funding of \$2.5m US\$. In Madagascar, 46 per cent of the \$18.6m allocated to teacher education was devoted to in-service training of contract teachers. Again, since half of the contract teachers were to be certified by 2012, an additional \$2.5m was to be allotted to their training from the country's FTI.

Another source of funding for INSET, which is reported but not adequately quantified in the country reports, is external funding from international development partners (IDPs). IDPs represent one of the most significant sources of funding for INSET in many if not all of the eight countries. However, the country reports fell short of providing detailed analyses of the costs involved in this regard. Nevertheless, there are scattered examples of donor-driven INSET programmes across the countries such as the Strengthening Mathematics and Science Education (SMASE) projects in Ghana and Nigeria, supported by Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA); the Continuing Professional Development Programme (CPDP) project in Mozambique, funded by the Netherlands; and the school-based continuing professional development (CPD) in Zambia, supported by JICA.

*Figure 4: INSET Funding by Country and Year*



Source: INSET Country Reports.

The basic problem facing these donor-driven INSET initiatives is sustainability once the donors withdraw their support at the end of project cycles, given these countries' limited government resources. There is no shortage of examples of donor-driven projects that have ultimately failed as a result of the withdrawal of donor support.

A further point compounding the problem is the apparent lack of involvement of the private sector in the provision of INSET in all eight countries. While the public sector can and must remain the focal point in the provision of INSET for teachers, the potential of the private sector must also be fully exploited. This sector has enough reference points in the provision of education and other social services demonstrating its strength as a viable source of funding.

### **Issues affecting structures and functions of INSET**

The first issue facing the countries is the large number of their basic education teachers, both certified and uncertified, who need INSET training on a continuous basis. As noted earlier, the significant expansion of basic education influenced by high-profile international policies such as EFA and MDGs has escalated the demand for teachers, leading to mass recruitment of unqualified teachers in the study countries. This, coupled with the fact that effective in-service training requires well-equipped facilities, high-quality training materials and well-paid tutors, makes the provision of INSET on anything but a limited basis well beyond the means of many of the sampled countries.

Secondly, the lack of alignment of INSET programmes with clearly defined career paths in all the countries, apart from a brief expression of intent in the policy documents of some countries (e.g., Nigeria, Ghana and Mozambique), has rendered most existing INSET programmes, particularly those focused on pedagogical renewal, both ineffective and unattractive to teachers, who do not perceive any relevance or link between the training programmes and their career progression. Even with regard to the INSET for certification, because the academic and pedagogical skills required for effective teaching have not been mastered before employment, the remedial training being offered to such teachers has proved both ineffective and expensive, as the experiences of Senegal, Madagascar and the Central African Republic illustrate.

Thirdly, the patronizing nature of the provision of INSET, exemplified by the popular 'one-shot' training workshops, raises questions about the relevance of the INSET programmes to teachers, who are reduced to being mere receptacles of knowledge. The prevailing mixture of certified and uncertified teachers in the education systems of these countries calls for differentiated training programmes based on the established training needs of different cohorts of teachers. Available research (Truell 1999; Washburn et al. 2001) tells us that the in-service needs of teachers vary according to teaching experience, qualification and location, and also change over time. This means teachers' professional experiences, mode of certification and location need to be utilized in the preparation of differentiated training programmes.

Where these differences are ignored in the development of training programmes, national reforms have enjoyed little support and ownership from teachers, resulting into poor outcomes or outright failure.



*Teaching should be learner-centred and activity-based*

The purpose and objectives of the INSET systems in these countries therefore need to be re-examined and refocused on the actual training needs of teachers and their career aspirations. INSET will not be effective without a stress on the critical issue of engaging teachers and their organizations in the processes of planning, self-evaluation and external evaluation of training programmes, with the aim of ensuring that the relevance and quality of the services provided are guaranteed.



*Effective Teaching Methods Improve Literacy and Numeracy Skills.*

## KEY MESSAGES

Country examples documented in the consolidated INSET report highlighted a number of key messages for any country that wants to improve its in-service teacher education system. Among them are the following:

- Heavy reliance on uncertified voluntary and contract teachers only compounds the problem of teacher shortages and further escalates the costs of teacher quality and development.
- Short term education management initiatives that are often donor driven fail to provide systemic improvement to quality education and effective schools in the long term.
- Absence of criteria for valuing CPD training results in poor outcomes and performance of the INSET system.
- The ability to guarantee quality is the most relevant success factor for INSET, and no doubt, one which is central to its sustainability.
- Country examples from Nigeria and Senegal illustrate the potential of DLS and ICT in guaranteeing that majority of teachers have opportunities for CPD related to their training needs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The main recommendations of the study include the following:

- Develop comprehensive policies that guarantee the integration of pre-service and in-service teacher education in national policy frameworks.
- Strengthen governance and management structures for effective management of in-service training programmes.
- Align INSET with an elaborate reward system that includes links to career paths for teachers.
- Embed INSET programmes within countries' annual national budgets to ensure availability of adequate funding for effective implementation of the programmes.
- Set up powerful systems/mechanisms of follow up and evaluation of the training programmes to ensure that norms and standards are adhered to.
- Consider more effective ways of attracting, training and retaining effective and committed teachers.
- Diversify the approaches to in-service training to include more school-based approaches to teacher professional development, which evidence from the study countries have shown to be more cost-effective and relevant to teachers' classroom needs.
- Leverage private sector support for INSET through advocacy and sensitization

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