

Assessing the Contribution of Educational Non-Government Organizations to Teachers' Professional Development in Secondary Schools in Nyabihu District, Rwanda.

Emmanuel Simpeze¹; Vincent Manirakiza² & Dan Imaniriho³

¹ Master student, College of Education, University of Rwanda; ^{2,3} College of Education, University of Rwanda

Abstract

Teachers' Professional development is crucial to meet educational changes. This study analyses the way it shaped teachers' practices in Secondary schools of Rwanda from the case study of Nyabihu District through coaching and mentoring program. The qualitative and quantitative methods were used to get data by using the questionnaire and the interview. The population was 79 teachers trained in the program. The purposive sampling was used to get 39 trained and 39 not trained teachers in program. The findings revealed that secondary school teachers do not maximize the benefits that accrue from the program. This is due to challenges: lack of time, language barrier, school leadership influence and weak interaction between the teachers. It revealed that 91.1% of the trained teachers on program used Continuous professional Development (CPD) activities in teaching practices while only 19.3% of non-trained teachers use them. The study recommends that teachers' CPD activities should be given time and all teachers should be trained on Educational Coaching and Mentoring.

Key words: Non-Government Organization, Continuous Professional Development, In-service Teachers, Mentoring and coaching

Background of the problem

It is assumed that "nothing within a school has more impact on students in terms of skills development, self-confidence, or classroom behavior than the personal and professional development of their teachers. (Sahagun, 2019). That is why training of teachers is very important and needed; due to the benefits that accrue from investment in education.

UNESCO (2014) recommends that countries invest heavily in education. More specifically, UNESCO recommends that at least 20% of the total government expenditures and at least 6% of the country's GNP should be allocated to education.

In this regard, Rwanda Basic Education Board, in collaboration with its relevant education partners implemented CPD programs to train secondary teachers who are in service in government and government aided schools to overcome professional challenges for teachers to ensure quality of education. The Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance (VVOB) is an international non-profit organization which is contributing in that area through an education mentoring and coaching program for teachers as one of its 3 programs of leading, teaching and learning.

Researchers focused however on administrative component looking at the impact of the CPD activities on the managerial skills and capacities of school's leaders (Head teachers and sector education inspectors) without looking at pedagogical component. This research intends to fill that gap by assessing the contribution of education mentoring and coaching training for teachers on teaching and learning processes in Rwanda.

Statement of the problem

With the launch of the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) in 2015 by Rwanda Education Board (REB), new mechanisms were also needed for delivering effective CPD and promoting school-based collaborative trainings in all schools. REB decided to recruit mentors to facilitate in the implementation of CBC however It has been doubted by educationalists that mentors are not performing well at their respective schools and that different programs given to them are not yielding the intended results hence intervention of different NGOs including VVOB comes in coaching and mentoring to deal with CBC implementation challenges for teachers, thus this research entitled Assessment of contribution of Educational NGOs to Teachers Professional Development in Rwanda analyses the contribution of VVOB Coaching and mentoring Program in NYABIHU District. It focused on pedagogical component for mentors who were trained by VVOB. It was intended to assess to what extent the trainees apply the acquired knowledge and skills regarding CPD activities in teaching and learning process.

Nyabihu, being one of the 17 districts in which VVOB operated its CPD activities from 2017 up to now, and already 72 teachers were trained. However, when it comes to implementation many problems were raised by teachers by saying that they are overloaded, they have limited facilitation from school managers to facilitate CPD sessions in their respective schools. This issue attracted the attention and motivation of the researcher as Sector Education Inspector in Nyabihu District to conduct this research.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to assess how trained teachers apply knowledge and skills gained from VVOB in its educational mentoring and coaching program to the teachers 'professional development in Secondary schools of NYABIHU District.

Research objectives

Specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Investigate how the trained teachers are applying acquired knowledge and skills in teaching and learning process in their respective practices.
2. Find out the way teachers, who benefited from VVOB Educational mentoring and coaching program, are working differently from those who have not been trained.
3. Identify the challenges which are hindering effective use of knowledge and skills gained by trained teachers in mentoring and coaching program through 18 CPD activities for teachers.

Review of related literature

CPD for teachers refers to the process of tracking and documenting the skills, knowledge and experience that teachers gain both formally and informally as they work, beyond any initial training. It is a record of their experience, learning and then application of new competences in their practice. (Claudius Komba, 2019).

Formal CPD was defined as an ongoing process encompassing all formal learning experiences that all staff in schools, individually and with others, to reflect about what they are doing, enhance their knowledge and skills and improve ways of working so that pupil learning and wellbeing are enhanced as a result. This CPD should achieve a balance between the individual, group, school and national needs encourage a commitment to professional and personal growth, and increase resilience, self-confidence, job satisfaction and enthusiasm for working with children and colleagues. (Claudius Komba, 2019). On the other hand, informal CPD involves activities undertaken by an individual, like experiential of workplace learning, reading and research. It can be difficult to gain third part evidence for informal CPD.

Kirkpatrick's theory of training guided this study. It states that a successful training is evaluated through 4 levels namely: reaction, learning, behavior and results (Kirkpatrick, 1975). However, this theory was applied by the researcher by focusing only on two levels: behaviors and results in order to get real information from trained teachers 'behaviors and results of educational coaching and mentoring training given to them.

It is noticed that professional teachers 'development programs need to put much emphasis on processes in the schools and classrooms as necessary and very important levels of intervention for improving the quality of effective teaching and learning for Kenyans teachers and students. They realized that students' achievement depends on teachers 'competences that are why they focus on improving teachers 'competences through school based training.

The ministry of education in Kenya with JICA through its in-service training department ran a countrywide, distance- based teacher education program for classroom teachers. This program was named:” The School-Based Teacher Development program (SBTD).”

Effective teacher professional development is on-going and includes training, practice and feedback, and provides adequate time and follow-up support (OECD, 2009). It is in this context that successful programs involve teachers' learning activities that are similar to the ones that they will use with their students, and encourage the development of teachers 'learning communities.

Different Scholars (Pedder, Conceptualizing Teacher Professional Learning, 2011), argue that a well-structured and organized CPD leads to successful changes in teachers 'practices, improvements at institutional levels as well as significant improvements in students 'achievements.

On the other hand, Craft (1996), confirms that professional development and teachers' in-service training have attracted increasing attention since the early nineties whereby they faced rapid changes, demands for high standards and calls for quality improvement, teachers now have a need to update and improve their skills as well as knowledge through in-service training, attendance at external courses and through the process of reflective practice.

Nowadays, teachers are asked to teach in increasingly multicultural classrooms; to place greater emphasis on integrating students with special learning needs in their classrooms; to make more effective use of information and communication technologies for teaching; to engage more in planning within evaluative and accountability frameworks and to do more to involve parents in schools. (Chris Gonsalvez, 2019/2020)

Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey research design to describe respondents' opinions about the topic under investigation (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). By using systematic sampling frame, the target population was 79 teachers who had benefited from VVOB Educational coaching and mentoring program at current schools for at least one year (those who can have adequate information on teachers' CPD program) in Nyabihu District. A purposive sampling also of 39 not trained teachers and 39 trained teachers was used. The researcher applied convenience sampling technique to choose the representative sample of trained and not trained teachers. Jack R. Fraenkel, Normane E. Wallen (1932) described this type of sampling as the one in which the researcher simply uses as participants those individuals who are easy to get; who are selected on the basis of their availability and willingness to participate in the research. Questionnaires made of closed-ended questions were used to collect data from trained teachers and not trained teachers. Key informant interview guides were also used to collect data from teachers in Rwandan Secondary Schools in Nyabihu district. Expert-judgment and test-retest techniques were used to check research instruments' validity and reliability respectively; this was indicated by respondents during the pilot of the questionnaire. Data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages and thematic analysis and they were presented in tables and texts.

Findings and discussion

Different scholars in literature said that continuous professional development for teachers is a key for effective teaching and learning. They argued that it is ongoing in nature and in service-based approach. This matches with current practices in Rwandan schools whereby school based mentors are helping their colleagues to address professional challenges on daily basis at their respective schools

This section presents findings according to the research objectives.

Knowledge and application of CPD activities in teachers' daily work

Table 1 gives an overview of the situation about knowledge, use and relevancy of the CPD activities by both trained (T) and not-trained (N-T) teachers.

Table 1. Knowledge and application of CPD activities for teachers (Source: Primary data)

CPD Activities		I know this activity		I knew this activity before training		I use this activity		I find this activity useful	
		T	NT	T	NT	T	NT	T	NT
1	Peer lesson observations and helpful	39	8	17	6	39	7	39	16
2	Discussions and sharing good practices	39	7	16	5	39	6	39	19
3	Reflection/self-evaluation	39	9	15	3	39	4	39	15
4	Community of practices	39	5	16	3	39	6	39	20
5	Model lesson	39	6	19	4	39	8	39	14
6	Lesson study	39	6	19	4	38	9	39	12
7	Team teaching	39	6	17	5	38	5	39	9
8	Developing and adapting new instructions	39	5	19	4	38	10	39	21
9	Rotating jobs	7	5	2	3	31	3	31	7
10	Structured feedback	39	8	3	3	38	7	32	18
11	Self-study	39	11	14	4	37	13	37	24
12	Training and workshop	39	7	17	3	38	5	38	30
13	Study tours and field visit	39	9	15	4	35	7	38	27
14	Action research	39	6	16	3	35	4	38	15
15	Case study discussion	39	5	16	3	38	15	39	17
16	Coaching	39	14	15	7	39	12	39	23
17	Mentoring	39	35	16	9	39	15	39	31
18	Job shadowing	13	1	4	0	1	0	1	0
Total scores of respondents		644	153	256	73	640	136	644	318
Percent of scores		91.7	21.79	36.4	10.3	91.1	19.3	91.7	45.2

Table 1 above shows that 91.7% of trained teachers know CPD activities against 21.7% of non-trained teachers. The difference of 70% of scores is large which shows that teachers who were trained are more aware of CPD activities than those ones who were not trained.

This table also shows that before VVOB training respondents scored 36.4% that they knew some CPD activities compared to those ones who know them today who scored at 91.7%. This an important input of the

training to teachers 'professionalism especially in teaching and learning processes by considering the role of CPD activities.

For the use of these CPD activities, trained teachers scored that they use them at 91.1% which means some of CPD activities are not yet used because they are not known by respondents who were trained.

About usefulness of CPD activities, the trained teachers find CPD activities very important at 91.7% and this is justified with the way they scored that they use them even though some of them were not known for them.

It is also clear that many non-trained teachers said that they do not understand the use of CPD activities as they mentioned it by scoring at 45.2% this means that because they do not know them, they do not use them. REB, VVOB, UR-CE with their relevant partners should solve this problem by training all teacher's because all CPD activities are very important for teachers.

It is worth to note that many non- trained teachers do not know these activities as it is indicated in this table while they are important for their teaching and learning activities. However, the large majority find them useful and are willing to know and use them.

Table 2. Information given by teachers on most areas of influence in coaching and mentoring.

Number of respondents (n) =39

Areas of influences of training in coaching and mentoring	Frequencies	Percentages
Preparation of pedagogical documents	37	94.8
Conducting lesson observation	33	84.6
Organization of community of practice	30	76.9
Elaboration of teaching resources	25	64.1

Table 2 shows 39 trained teachers 'views, the training in education mentoring and coaching they benefited, has had a positive practice influence on preparation of pedagogical documents (94.8), lesson observation (84.6), organization of community of practice(COP) (76.9) and elaboration of teaching resources (64.1) as highlighted in the table above. As mentioned by many trained teachers, *"you cannot implement all of the acquired competences overnight, change is a process but we are trying, we have started to initiate some changes and with time the desired results will be achieved"*.

Table 3. Trained teachers 'views on benefits of CPD trainings for teachers.

Benefits	Frequencies	Percentages
Experience Sharing	39	100
Peer learning	39	100
Professional collaboration	39	100
Working with parents	34	87.1
Learners 'outcomes	33	84.6
Classroom management	29	74.3
Use of students 'assessment results	26	66.6
Ensuring values for learners	26	66.6
Improved teaching practices	25	64.1
Teachers 'professional development	23	59

Table 3 shows the views of respondents when asked about the benefits of coaching and mentoring in their professional development, trained teachers highlighted the following practices: Experience sharing, Peer Learning, Professional Collaboration, working with parents, learners' outcomes, effective classroom management, Use of students' assessments results, ensuring values for learners, improved teaching practices, and continuous professional development programs for teachers. The table above shows to what extent they scored to the benefits they got from education coaching and mentoring program.

Challenges facing trained teachers in their professional development

Table .4. Views of trained teachers on the challenges hinder effective implementation of CPD for teachers

Challenges	Frequencies	Percentage score
Limited time	39	100
Language barrier	31	79

Overcrowded classrooms	27	69
School context	25	64
Lack of financial support	19	49
Complex of inferiority	16	41
Influence of school leadership	14	36

Table (4) represents the views of respondents highlighted a number of challenges that undermine the effective implementation of educational CPD activities for teachers and which need to be addressed appropriately.

These challenges include among others, limited time due to heavy workload for teachers, language barrier, overcrowded classrooms, school context, lack of financial support, teachers 'resistance, complex of inferiority, and school leadership involvement.

As it can be read from the views of 39 trained teachers in the table (4) above, not all those challenges have the same weight. It is obvious that all 39 trained teachers (100%) expressed the issue of limited time while only 14 trained teachers (36%) mentioned the school leadership issue.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the study concluded that trained teachers on educational coaching and mentoring, are totally different from those ones who were not trained.

CPD activities for teachers are very crucial in their daily working conditions.

Some challenges are still influencing effectiveness of teachers'CPD implementation at school level, thus failures in some CPD activities implementation in their practices, specifically due to limited time, language barrier and leadership influence.

Teachers perceive CPD activities as pillars and motivating factor for teaching and learning practices.

Recommendations

Teachers mentioned that continuous professional development program with its activities is a key for their daily practices, especially coaching and mentoring program,

Therefore, the government of Rwanda through Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) and other relevant stakeholders especially VVOB which started this training on educational coaching and mentoring, should train all teachers in-service on educational coaching and mentoring.

Ministry of education should avail means that teachers can use during CPD sessions.

The District Directors of Education and Sector Education Inspectors should also supervise teachers'CPD activities regularly to provide advice about the effective use of CPD activities in Rwanda including Nyabihu District.

Finally, head teachers should work cooperatively with trained teachers on educational coaching and mentoring to avail time to help their colleagues to solve professional challenges at their respective schools.

References

- Ajayi, O. V. (2017). Distinguish between primary sources of data and secondary sources of data Candidate : B
- Tuli, F. (2017). Teachers'Professional Development in Schools : Reflection on the move to create a culture of Continuous improvement. Nairobi: Teacher Education and Educators.enue state university.
- Bartleton, L. (2018). Teachers 'Perceptions of the impacts of Continuing Professional Development on their professional practice. Wolverhapmton: Wolverhampton University.
- Chris Gonsalvez, D. G. , Professional Development. Professional Development Programs and Services Guide, 1-40.
- Claudius Komba, S. (2019). Teacher Professional Development in Tanzania: Challenges and Opportunities. Dodoma: Equip Tanzania.
- Craft, B. (1996). The Implementation of Teacher Evaluation for Professional Development in Primary Education in Taiwan. Taiwan: Chao-Wen Liu.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education, 1-3.
- David Hustler, O. M. (2003). Teachers' Perceptions of Continuing Professional Development. Manchester : Manchester Metropolitan University.
- Grace W. Bunyi, J. C. (2013). Teacher Preparation and Continuing Professional Development in Kenya. Nairobi: Kenyatta University.

- Heredion, N. (2019). Exploring the Outcomes of VVOB Continuous Professional Development Programme for Head teachers on their Professional Performance in Rwanda: A Case Study of Nyabihu District. Kigali: Adventist University of Central Africa.
- Hord, S. M. (1997). Professional Learning Communities: Communities of Continuous. Texas: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.
- Hunzicker, D. J. (2010). Characteristics of Effective Professional Development. Peoria, USA: Bradley University.
- Jody AIP. Sahagun, E. A. (2019). Impacts of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Activities among Elementary School Teachers. Olongapo City: Columban College.
- Kennedy, A. (2005). Models of Continuing Professional Development: A framework for analysis. *Journal of In-Service Education*, 235-250.
- Kirkpatrick, D. (1975). Kirkpatrick 's Evaluation Model. Wisconsin: Wisconsin University.
- Kvale, S. (1996). Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 1-5.
- OECD. (2009). The professional development of teachers. Denmark, the Slovak Republic and Turkey: TALIS.
- OECD. (2011). Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers. Directorate for Education, Education and Training Policy Division, 1-18.
- OPM. (2006). Improving early grades literacy and numeracy learning outcomes through continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers. Dar-Salaam: Equip Tanzania.
- Pedder, V. D. (2011). Conceptualizing Teacher Professional Learning. *Review of Educational Research*, 1-34.
- Pedder, V. D. (2011). Conceptualizing Teacher Professional Learning. Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- Pedder, V. D. (2011). Conceptualizing Teacher Professional Learning. American Educational Research Association.
- Ntawiha, P. M. A. (2021). Determinants of Students 'Performance in Selected Public Secondary Schools in Rwanda. *Rwandan Journal of Education*, Vol.5, No.1 (2021), 107.
- Sahagun, J. A. (2019). Impacts of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Activities among Elementary School Teachers. COLUMBIA: Institutional Multidisciplinary Research and Development Journal.
- Simpson, J. (2012). Teacher training in Rwanda and the shift to English-medium education. *Commonwealth Education Partnerships*, 154-157.

Steyn, G. (2008). Continuing professional development for teachers in South Africa and social learning systems: conflicting conceptual frameworks of learning. *Continuing professional development for teachers in South Africa*, 1-17.

Teachers' Professional Development: A Content Analysis about the Tendencies in Studies. (2016). *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 214-233.

Terhart, E. (2009). *School-Based Continuous Professional Development through Lesson Study*. Lusaka: JICA /ZAMBIA.

Tyagi, C. (2021). *Continuing Professional Development of Teacher Educators: Challenges and Initiatives*. Chicago: adventure works press.

UNESCO Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All. *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/2014*.

UR-CE. (2019). *Continuous Professional Development Certificate in Educational Mentoring and Coaching*. Kigali: UR-CE., VOB and REB.

Appendix 1: Questionnaires

1.1. Questionnaire for teachers

Dear Teacher, thank you very much to sacrifice part of your precious time for this interview despite your overloaded work. I am SIMPEZE Emmanuel, a student at University of Rwanda-College of Education, pursuing a Master’s degree in Education Leadership and Management. I am currently conducting a research on the “Assessment of the contribution of Educational NGOs to Teachers’ Professional Development in Rwanda: Case study of VVOB in Secondary Schools of NYABIHU District” as part of the academic requirements for the award of Master of Education in Education Leadership and management. The information you provide through this interview will be used solely for academic purposes and will be kept confidential.

I. Identification of respondent

- 1.Names 2. School name
- 3.Position 4. Level of education
- 5. Gender 6. Age . Trained by VVOB
- 8. Not trained by VVOB

II. Perceptions of teachers about 18 CPD activities

Tick where appropriate according to your experience

No	CPD activities taught by VVOB for teachers	Do you know it ?	Did you know it before VVOB training?	Do you use it?	Is it suitable for you?	Why?
1.	Peer observations and constructive feedback					
2.	Discussions and sharing good practices					
3.	Reflection					
4.	Community of practice					
5.	Model lesson					
6.	Lesson study					
7.	Team teaching					
8.	Developing and adapting new instructional and learning materials					

9.	Rotating jobs/jobs					
10.	Structured feedback from students					
11.	Self-study					
12.	Training and workshop					
13.	Study tours and field visits					
14.	Action research					
15.	Case study discussion					
16.	Coaching					
17.	Mentoring					
18.	Job shadowing					

1.2. Interview guide questions for teachers

SECTION: I. IDENTIFICATION OF RESPONDENT

1. Names 2. School name
3. Position 4. Level of education
5. Gender 6. Age ained by VVOB
8. Not trained by VVOB

SECTION II: OPEN QUESTIONS

1. Do CPD training skills you got influence your teaching practices? YES/OR NO if yes, how?.....
.....
2. For you what activities you implement as a result of new attitudes, skills and knowledge gained from VVOB CPD training program?
.....
.....
3. Are you doing differently as a result of VVOB CPD activities in this school?.....
4. Can you please provide us with vivid examples of the benefits of CPD activities in your daily activities.....?
5. Is there any challenge that prevents you as a teacher to implement the VVOB CPD activities for teachers in your school?.....
6. Basing on your experience, what are the recommendations would you provide with regard to the CPD activities for teachers?.....