



A Desperate Need for Quality Trained Teachers in sub-Saharan Africa

Good teachers are key to the success of all educational programs throughout the world but in countries deeply affected by poverty and conflict, it is often difficult to find someone with the qualifications and training that teaching requires. In sub-Saharan Africa, many communities are happy to find anyone who has completed secondary school to act as a teacher. However, when teachers are not well trained, they cannot deliver quality Education. Their students struggle to learn basic literacy and numeracy and frequently drop out of school or complete school not being able to read or write properly.

Education is a universal right. It is key to helping countries move towards peace and prosperity and key for individuals to reach their full potential. It is recognized as the best way to attain economic growth, national development, and societal changes. Good Education cannot be achieved without well-trained teachers, knowledgeable in their subject areas and the ability to share that knowledge with students.

Two years ago, world leaders (including Canada) agreed on a set of global targets for access to Education as part of the new UN Sustainable Development Goals. Keeping this promise to deliver inclusive, quality primary and secondary Education for all by 2030 requires a huge increase in the numbers of teachers worldwide. Africa will require almost 20 million new trained teachers with 17 million of these new teachers needed in sub-Saharan area alone.

https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/sites/gem-report/files/PR_teachers_en_0.pdf

This critical situation exists for three main reasons:

- * A serious teacher shortage is already present throughout sub-Saharan Africa that is getting worse in some areas, not better;
- * Africa has the fastest-growing school-age population globally;
- * At present, teaching positions remain unattractive to young adults embarking on careers due to low and irregular salaries, large classes (typically 40 to 50+) and the severe lack of supplies and equipment.

Although public spending on Education in Africa has increased during recent years, the numbers of children accessing all levels of Education has increased by 60% in the past two decades resulting in a serious funding shortfall. And yet, without an increase in quality-trained teachers, the future looks bleak for this younger generation. Much more work needs to be done.

One of the major goals of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is to provide quality professional development of teachers. Canada can be a world leader in supporting the Education of new and existing teachers in sub-Saharan Africa by ensuring that the GPE is fully funded during its next replenishment conference. Our Prime Minister has stated that Education is key to world security and peace and that trained teachers are key to a quality Education. Now is the time to have our actions speak louder than our words.

Perhaps a young Mandela or Malala is waiting and only needs a good teacher to reach his/her potential.