Original Article

In-Service Teacher Reflections on Program Innovations towards Education Responsive to Local Communities

 Dr. Michael Walimbwa, PhD[1], Arthur Mugisha[1], Dr. Alfred Buluma, PhD[1] & Dr. Julius Mbulankende, PhD[1]

[1] Makerere University, P. O. Box 7072, Kampala, Uganda.
[*] Author for Correspondence ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7889-0064; Email: walimbwamichael@gmail.com

Date Published:

ABSTRACT

Innovation in teacher training encompasses additions to a program so as to serve the most recent skills required by stakeholders. Innovation requirements push the redesign of in-service teacher education program which has seen embedding of an internship aspect. Using the theory of partnering pedagogy, these innovations focus on provision of education that is relevant and responsive to the local communities around and beyond the school. The innovations engage principles of effective pedagogy to design activities that involve and promote local community engagement practices and learning experiences. Using educational design research, ten in-service teachers participated a program that was recently reviewed with some innovation brought aboard. This study is qualitative which explored in-service teachers' reflections on having gone through a recently reviewed in service program with innovations on board. The in-service participated in a reflection on their lived experiences and impact on their pedagogic practice having gone through the reviewed program. The resultant qualitative data was subjected to content analysis. Findings indicate that program review innovations that bring local stakeholders aboard allow integration of competencies beneficial to in-service teachers, learners, and the local community in which the school is located. Innovation design that engages communities lead to pedagogic practices that emphasize learning by doing and not just transmission and accumulation of theoretical knowledge. Innovation in program design and review should therefore focus on activities that engage the in-service teacher, learners, and the local community. This leads to the design of innovations that focus on quality learning and development of contextually purposed skills for the local community. However, because of the collaborative attribute among stakeholders, there are challenges in the implementation of

innovative suggestions. It is concluded that innovations in program design and review need to be contextually relevant because then, their impact extend to the local communities surrounding the school. In these ways, innovations provide avenues for schools to provide quality learning opportunities and skills to serve the local communities and beyond.

APA CITATION

Walimbwa, M., Mugisha, A., Buluma, A. & Mbulankende, J. (2022). In-Service Teacher Reflections on Program Innovations towards Education Responsive to Local Communities *East African Journal of Education Studies*, *5*(2), 285-297. https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.5.2.779.

CHICAGO CITATION

Walimbwa, Michael, Arthur Mugisha, Alfred Buluma and Julius Mbulankende. 2022. "In-Service Teacher Reflections on Program Innovations towards Education Responsive to Local Communities". *East African Journal of Education Studies* 5 (2), 285-297. https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.5.2.779.

HARVARD CITATION

Walimbwa, M., Mugisha, A., Buluma, A. & Mbulankende, J. (2022) "In-Service Teacher Reflections on Program Innovations towards Education Responsive to Local Communities", *East African Journal of Education Studies*, 5(2), pp. 285-297. doi: 10.37284/eajes.5.2.779.

IEEE CITATION

M. Walimbwa, A. Mugisha, A. Buluma & J. Mbulankende. "In-Service Teacher Reflections on Program Innovations towards Education Responsive to Local Communities", EAJES, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 285-297, Aug. 2022.

MLA CITATION

Walimbwa, Michael, Arthur Mugisha, Alfred Buluma & Julius Mbulankende. "In-Service Teacher Reflections on Program Innovations towards Education Responsive to Local Communities". *East African Journal of Education Studies*, Vol. 5, no. 2, Aug. 2022, pp. 285-297, doi:10.37284/eajes.5.2.779

INTRODUCTION

Quality of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) programs is a global concern. This is influenced by the quality of program designed and the philosophy of the teacher. Instructional practice is basic for the achievement of all-encompassing training including social, financial, and political improvement of the country. Effective pedagogical approaches are critical in providing quality education (Westhuizen, 2010). Teacher training programs prepares teachers to engage in effective pedagogic practices. To contribute to quality learning, teacher education programs should involve activities that instil these competencies in the trainees by working with all stakeholders. In-service teacher training is a program that focusses on development of skills for teachers already serving (Biggs & Tang, 2011). In essence, these teachers are already trained at an initial lower level and so the trainees are progressing to another level through upgrading. These teachers already have a level of understanding of what and how effective pedagogy is structured. Program review is a process that evaluates the status, effectiveness, and progress of academic programs and helps identify the future direction, needs, and priorities of those programs (Fox et al., 2018). As such, it is closely connected to strategic planning, resource allocation, and other decision-making at the program, department, college, and university levels. During the review process, both internal and external academic teams discuss departmental plans for the future including departmental goals and plans to achieve those goals. Globally, national plans in several nations indicate that there is belief in the role of education in driving sustainable development. The missions set for teacher education programs indicate a desire to ensure quality teacher training processes and therefore contribute to sustainable development. Education cannot be divorced from the teachers and therefore the quality of teachers training is also brought into perspective (Gaskell, 2016). Globally, teachers are trained at either certificate, diploma, or degree qualification. At each of these levels, a teacher can upgrade to the next level through the available in-service training programs. However, in Uganda, the current policy dictates that teachers

must have a Bachelor's degree as their first qualification (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2019). Several teachers have therefore enrolled for Bachelor's Degrees through in-service channels. In-service teacher program is the education teachers receive after they have entered the teaching profession (National Institute of Education, 2009).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Partnership pedagogy involves a genuine purposeful relationship with a partner or partners to co-design, co-develop, co-deliver, or co-credential curriculum (Barrie & Pizzica, 2019). Partnership pedagogy has become a key concept shaping curriculum transformation. It refers to curriculum that is co-created with a range of internal and external partners- community, industry, commercial providers, Research Institutes, teachers, and students. In teacher education, the focus was on working with all stakeholders to ensure that the graduate teacher comes out with all the all-round abilities to serve in the profession. In the COVID-19 times, when continuity of learning was threatened, the community started questioning how teachers are trained to ensure the continuity of learning amidst the pandemic (Commonwealth of Learning, 2020). When partnership pedagogy is embraces, it ensures that there is co-creation including co-design, co-development, co-delivery, and co-credentialing of curriculum. Partnering pedagogy includes the process of collaborating with diverse partners at local, national, and international networks and communities. In these collaborations, the university enhances knowledge exchange and co-create highly relevant and responsive learning. This is becoming increasingly important in the future as the world of work becomes even more fluid and changeable. Co-creation enables devise adaptive responses to ongoing regional or global changes and to shape and participate in the disruption we and our students are navigating. The focus of this project however is limited to partnerships that aim at helping out local communities.

Quality learning is learning that fosters the individual's ability to acquire knowledge that is utilized in real situations to make valid informed decisions and enhance individual ability to be positively involved in the sharing of ideas and opinions (Lombardi, 2007). Given the complexity of quality learning as a process, it is not a given. It is however embedded in issues and activities that will always play in favour of the learning environment. This results into a crisis in the quality of learning that emanates from the quality of pedagogic practices that do not cater for more hands-on learning strategies and activities. This is because teacher education has been accused by stakeholders at local contexts as theoretical that competences are not well developed in the graduates. Addressing the crisis in quality of pedagogy requires redefining what an education system is for most especially at programs design (Westhuizen, 2010). Skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes that pedagogy promotes in in-service teacher education must reflect and respond to the needs and expectations of individual contexts and today's world of work including other stakeholders. This is the reason why partnership pedagogy is the way to go as it brings all other stakeholders aboard in the entire training process. Partnership pedagogy ensures that during curriculum design, pedagogic activities do not only focus on basic skills, but encourage critical thinking while fostering the desire and capacity for development of life skills with and around the school community (Keynan, 2014).

Partnership pedagogy emphasizes life skills (Butcher et al, 2011). Life skills are described as psychosocial abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to effectively deal with the demands and challenges of daily life (Harlen, 2014). These skills are usually associated with managing and living a better quality of life and are a result of exposure to quality learning activities. Indeed, most stakeholders when involved in program design emphasize provision of life skills. Curriculum studies as a field loosely groups these skills into cognitive, personal, and inter-personal categories (Marphatia et al., 2010). Cognitive life skills are those used for analysis and usage of information, personal life skills are those that are used for development of personal action and managing oneself, and inter-personal life skills are those used for effective communication and interaction with others. This project focused on Keynan (2014) definition of life skills as a set of acquired through learning and/or direct life experiences that enable individuals to effectively

handle issues and problems commonly encountered in daily life including hunger, hygiene, housing, money, poverty among others. For quality learning activities that enhance quality learning, partnership pedagogy indicates the need to emphasize life skills as essential to meeting challenges in everyday life. For example, the changes in global economies have been matched with the transformation in technology which all impact education, the workplace, and home life (Biggs & Tang, 2011). To cope with the increasing pace and change of modern life, learners at every level of education need new life skills such as the ability to deal with stress and frustration. These skills can ably be attained when appropriate pedagogic practices are used, in which the teacher must be well propounded.

Partnership pedagogy is more than providing work placements or seeking external feedback (Western Sydney University, 2018). It is enacted differently in different disciplines and can be complemented by other pedagogies. For example, transformative pedagogies, inquiry-based learning, or employability. Regardless of the disciplinary focus, genuine co-creation involves more than providing internships or establishing an external advisory board. The partnership focuses on several issues including collaborative design, development, and delivering assessing curriculum. Co-designing curriculum is where the overall intention of the curriculum is thought through and developed. The goals and purpose of the course and curriculum elements are formulated via ongoing dialogue between partners, learning outcomes identified, pedagogy refined, content devised, learning activities, and assessment strategies conceptualized. Co-developing curriculum resources involves collaborating in the production of tasks, resources, and artefacts to be used in the teaching and learning activities (Ramakrishna & Rama, 2020). This may include classroom activities, audio and video resources, apps or computer simulations, and text or image-based resources. It may include re-purposing professional materials so as to provide students with access to contemporary tools and authentic resources during their studies. Co-delivering curriculum is about partners collaborating in co-delivering or co-locating teaching or learning either at workplace placements or guest lectures. There are many other ways partners can collaborate in the delivery of curriculum such as mentoring students,

participating in simulations, acting as clients for student consulting teams, participating in student conferences, or collaborating in cooperative research projects (Kennedy, 2021). In co-assessing, partners collaborate in designing assessment tasks and standards, both on and off campus, setting questions, determining criteria, co-marking, or supervising assessment activities. Please note that these four stages of co-creation are not exclusive, there is often considerable overlap between stages when working with partners, and partners often collaborate in more than one stage.

METHODOLOGY

The current study adopted an exploratory research approach (Creswell, 2009). This approach was suitable for this study because it allowed the in-service teachers to deeply reflect on their experiences regarding their participation in an in-service program. The collection of qualitative data ensured the richness and accuracy of the results obtained (Creswell, 2009). As such, it accorded the researchers an opportunity to engage in an intense data collection exercise. This method is not only about "what" people think but also "why" they think so.

Participants were taken through two weeks' class sessions where they were taught innovation and skilling. They were taught how design and implement projects in their schools. Each of the participants designed a concept note of their project, and was assigned a supervisor to oversee their implementation and report writing. The supervisors went to the field across the entire country to assess the field work process. It is this entire process that is reflected on in this paper.

Selection of the Participants

Using purposive sampling technique 10 in-service teachers were selected to take part in the study. These in-service teachers were enrolled for a Bachelor of Education course in a Ugandan university. The participants were in their second and third years of study. This particular group of students were chosen based on three reasons: the program they were on was purely for in-service teachers; students were upgrading from Diploma to Degree and; the in-service teachers came from diverse socio-economic backgrounds thus; it was

presumed they could experience the participation on the reviewed program differently. All of them wilfully participated in the study as they took it as an opportunity to share what they had just gone through.

Data Collection and Analysis

The qualitative approach had open-ended questions which required the participants to reflect on their experiences during the time of upgrading. The researchers interacted with the participants for two semesters while observing and supervising the projects they were engaged in. The data was subjected to content analysis by identifying codes and categories and then relational analysis

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This project was based on 30 projects that were designed and implemented by the in-service teachers across several districts in Uganda. Some of the projects were unique like ensuring no bad odour in a school farm piggery project, and yet others were similar and shared like making disposable pads and growing mushrooms. The in-service teachers were both male and female and they came from urban, peri-urban and rural school setting.

Several institutions have designed in-service teacher education programs to enable teachers upgrade to the levels they desire. The in-service programs have been designed to be appropriate and cater for work environment of teachers in such a way that some are delivered during weekends, other during school holidays and others on a modular basis. Apart from the fact that a teacher can upgrade from say Diploma to Degree level, the contents of the programs both at Diploma and Degree are quite similar in terms courses and contents. This challenge therefore is what value addition does the upgrading from one level to another bring to the teacher. It is on this basis that we suggestion that value addition be done at program design and review levels.

Through in-service trainings, teachers are empowered to improve the quality of learning using new experiences, methodologies, and strategies. In-service teacher programs should therefore be vital in facilitating teachers to attain requires pedagogic competencies but are not well structured to ably do

so because they are too theoretical. Such programs cannot afford to focus of reminding teachers the theories and philosophies acquired at lower levels of training. Instead, they should focus on enabling in-service teachers to be reflective, deliver quality learning, and develop life skills as these are vital in fostering the conditions for sustainable development (UNESCO, 2015; UNICEF, 2000).

Effective program review design caters for authentic learning (Lombardi, 2007). Authentic learning is a pedagogical approach that allows exploration, discussion, and meaningful construction of concepts and relationships in contexts that involve real-world problems and projects that are relevant to the learner (Herrington & Herrington, 2006). Teacher training that involves authentic learning therefore implies the learning of what happens in the real world and becoming cognitive apprentices to the experts.

Program design therefore need to ensure an education that offers quality learning opportunities and skills through authentic learning environments. In such environment, internship program design puts emphasis on development of competencies, active collaborative, and self-directed learning that positively contribute to sustainable development. The focus on authentic learning processes at program design implies learning and taking the thinking like an expert in each field for example when learning about weather, we learn to use tools that meteorologist use; when learning to draw, we are taught techniques that real artists use. Such approaches to pedagogy is elusive when program design has not catered for the appropriate practice activities and only focused on theory development. When program design caters for authentic learning experiences, the available resources must be able to enable one attain the relevant skills and competencies for 21st century from a context of operation. To be able to attain this however, it is not enough to wait at the end of the process and measure what learners learn; it is essential to target the program experiences that fundamentally shape in-service teacher learning, and highlight the required abilities (Harlen, 2014).

There are many attributes to quality teacher training, one being the internship programs. This is because an internship aims at putting theoretical skills into

practice, and in this way, interns attempt to carry out their practices while ensuring quality learning and life skills expressed in terms of needs-based criteria. Teacher education has always focused on ensuring that trainees graduate to teach well with very little focus on development of competencies that bring about quality learning. Quality learning is a complex phenomenon because it is embedded in politics, culture, and economics (UNICEF, 2000). Indeed, during the COVID-19 pandemic several perspectives of quality learning including assessment got severally questioned (UNESCO, 2020).

Several years after the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE) in Uganda, there has been an enormous increase in enrolment with challenges related to the quality of teachers, pedagogic practices, and the learning process (UWEZO, 2010). Reports indicate that proficiency (knowledge) for Primary Six pupils, especially those in UPE schools, have not improved for the last 10 years and the situation is getting worse. Results for primary three and primary six literacy and numeracy are poor with only 50% of the learners in primary six achieving the basic proficiency levels. The report found the competence of in-service teachers wanting with their proficiency in English language at 66% meaning that 34% did not know English. The numeracy level of the teachers stood at 60%, implying that 40% are incompetent in mathematics (UWEZO, 2010). All these are tagged on the programs that teacher educators whether in-service or not go through. In addition, the quality of the pedagogy determines the quality of education provision by teachers and training institutions. It has been inferred already that a teacher is only as effective as the programs they went through during training. These finding leaves one curious about the quality of learning teachers offered to the learners thus bringing the education system in the limelight. Interventions to avert this situation are many, however the focus of this paper is on program review design that includes offering creative and innovative internship projects that help in-service teachers to effectively play their role.

To cater for quality learning, teacher education institutions redesign content and methodology of programs with a strong focus on more effective ones that promote skilling and sustainable development. Three elements of a program include the coherence and integration among the course in which there are intensely supervised internships integrated with course work using pedagogies that link theory to practice, and closer, proactive relationships with schools (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Courses included on a teacher education program are components of a whole and presented in a much more coherent and integrated manner to ensure the trainees benefit from them. To ensure theory is closely linked to practice, program review should be well planned and executed taking full advantage of linkages and collaboration with the school and community surrounding the school. This component is sometimes seen as costly and therefore the high temptation to sometimes make internships shorter than they ought to be (Ramakrishna & Rama Devi, 2020).

In the 21st century, there is a growing demand for a new set of skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, innovation, and adaptability, which require new teaching styles and methodologies for both pre-service and in-service teachers (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2019). For today's education to help learners stay competitive in the job market, they need three categories of skills including learning, literacy, and life skills. UNESCO (2015) asserts that in nearly a third of the countries in the world, the challenge of effectively training in-service teachers is more than that of recruiting and training pre-service ones. Effective in-service teacher internships therefore ought to support teachers in acquiring the skills while at the same time prepare the teachers to impart these skills in the learners (Employer guide to structuring a successful internship program, 2016). The learning skills include creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. Literacy skills include information, media, and technology; while the life skills include leadership, flexibility, initiative productivity, and social skills (Stauffer, 2020). UNESCO (2015) asserts that millions of learners are not learning basic life skills because the quality of pedagogy. Much more attention to in-service teacher internship programs is one way of working towards addressing such challenges because internship helps link theory to practice, thus quality learning. It is at the level when partnership pedagogy is key.

In-Service Teacher Program Internship Project Innovations

To support sustainable co-creation of curriculum, the partnership needs to be clearly beneficial from the perspective of all the partners. While there are no completely right or wrong ways to forge 21st Century curriculum partnerships, as some develop organically, and others are brokered through more formal agreements, guiding principles to help the relationship be successful, sustainable, and scalable include integrity, interdisciplinary, and interdependence. Integrity encourages honest and innovative thinking for social responsibility (Keynan, 2014); fosters trust as parties are open about their contribution and rationale for investing in the partnership (Flint & Harrington, 2014); follows open and agreed methods of governance. Interdisciplinary draws on the multiple perspectives, theories, resources, or data from different disciplines; parties challenge existing ideas and practices, develop new ways of working and learning together, and ease barriers for potential partners (Flint & Harrington, 2014). Interdependence welcomes the different experiences and knowledge that all parties bring; encourages multipoint collaboration, dialogue, and shared leadership; and advances transformation through reciprocity, common goals, and shared benefits (Butcher et al., 2011).

The 21st century education climate is essentially driven by an overriding interest in preparing effective teachers using in-service approaches using partnering pedagogy (True, 2016). There have always been deliberate attempts to help in-service teachers attain the required competencies. Teacher education programs developed to enhance this process therefore explores possible approaches which encourage teachers towards learning-focused teaching activities. These activities are aimed at offering quality learning and enhancing the development of life skills. The belief in the power of a teacher to be an agent of change, transform schools and improve lives that formed the basis for the development of the in-service teacher education program.

This described in-service program is a three-year duration undergraduate external program, where trainees are off campus for most part of the training.

This program has been majorly running traditional print paper technologies, with carry home handouts instructional materials given to the trainees then a two weeks' face-to-face session. Of recent however, it is a blended learning one with the outset of COVID-19. The instructional approaches and materials are professionally designed by instructors qualified in the design and development of distance learning materials. The limitations of these materials however are that they are text-based and trainees are just required to read the text and answer the assignment on a piece of paper and return to the instructor for grading. In other words, they are assessed on the traditional read and write tests that do not ably test the development of many other competences. It becomes hard to determine whether it was a trainee who did the assignment or some other person did it for them. Indeed, in some individual trainees who are looking for the paper qualification instead of the skill opt for this irregularity. This was the basis for the college ensuring the supervision was by a qualified university supervisor who would be able to see the field exercise by the in-service teacher. However, with the emergence of COVID-19, the university allowed all models of innovative assessment practices including online and digital supervision modes due to restrictions in movements across district borders.

In the Ugandan model of teacher education, qualification for admission on the Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) degree program requires that one has a diploma in education which is offered at one of the National Teachers Colleges (NTCs). Trainees are offered a number prescribed of theoretical course including professional studies. Before a diploma is awarded, an individual trainee must engage in and pass a supervised school practice process. The debate as to whether B. Ed students should go out for school practice activities and be supervised again like they went through at diploma level ensued. Those pro the debate argued that it would help the in-service teacher trainees to improve on their competencies under the guidance of a university tutor and yet those against said that this would be a waste of time and resources as it is a repetition of the school practice activity already done at diploma level. However, the consensus was, an activity that ensures that a university supervisor engages with an in-service teacher trainee at their

workplace. This was the beginning of the internship project for in-service teacher trainees.

An internship project with several activities that engages in-service trainees with a university supervisor at the trainee's workplace environment was designed as part of the program redesign. This internship is therefore one of the courses offered during the second year, when one is given induction lectures including project proposal and development (National Institute of Education, 2009). The induction enables the in-service trainee to draw a work plan with a specified timeline. The induction also caters for tips in writing and maintaining a field journal in which a recording of the implementation activities and lessons learnt are noted. In addition, there is also need for a register of the students who attend the implementations. It is at this period that an in-service teacher trainee is assigned a supervisor. All the induction activities are initially handled by the program coordinator who eventually assigns a university supervisor to the trainee. With guidance from the supervisor, the internship program engages the in-service trainee into the process of developing a concept note, writing a proposal, and implementing a project at a workplace. Specific guidelines are given to supervisor to enable them determine how the internship program is contributing to the in-service trainees' competence in pedagogy.

From using partnering pedagogy approach, a consultation with stakeholders was done and suggestions came through that in-service teacher trainees should design and implement an internship project at their workplace under the supervision of a university lecturer. It should be noted that projects described here were not focus only on academics but aimed also at development of generic practical life skills among both the in-service teacher trainees and the students whom they teach. Even when they could be taught in the normal talk and chalk theoretical description sessions, the internship projects required that the in-service teacher trainee should be creative and embed more learner centred activities in teaching for competence development. Over a period of five years, there is a diversity of the projects by in-service teacher trainees.

Nurturing water source through effective waste management was one of the supervised projects.

The teacher designed project which involved learners in the 3R's of Removing, Reusing, and Recycling of waste materials that are dumped within the environment. The projects dealt with the destruction of water sources by dumping waste materials which causes reduction in fish, blocking of water channels, and a dirty environment. The age group involved were learners aged between 7 and 14 years who served as ambassadors of change. The organization of this project involved consultations with community leaders and visiting parents' homes. The in-service teacher indicated that the community around the school found the project very useful and they even continued good disposal of waste to ensure their water sources were safe long after the supervised project ended.

Some in-service teachers were involved in enhancing literacy and improving reading activities among pupils in their classes. With the help of the school, the in-service teacher acquired and established a dedicated room for reading and literacy development among young learners. The teacher designed and furnished the room with reading and literacy materials. Learners were grouped in several reading levels based on their classes. In addition to learning literacy and reading in their classes, learners were always ushered in the literacy and reading room based on their level and engaged in the reading process. After a couple of weeks, more learners who were not part of the pilot approached the head teacher to allow the entire school be part of the project because the materials made their learning process fun and interesting. Parents were part of this process.

Three in-service teachers designed a project of mushroom growing activities in their schools. The teacher acquired materials used in planting mushroom including coffee husks and black polythene bags. The school provided space and the in-service teacher took learners through the process of preparing the material used for growing the mushroom. Learners prepared the materials by cooking the coffee husks, packing them into the polythene bags, arranging them in the germinating room, watering them, and caring for them. Learners were practically engaged in the growing and harvesting process. After the first harvest, the entire school including other teachers and students wanted

to be part of the project because it involved hands-on training and money making.

Several projects designed by the in-service teachers were around sanitation and hygiene improvement activities in the school environment. Students voluntarily got enrolled into the club. The teacher gave them a 'talk' related to hygiene and sanitation. Learners made and acquired local brooms, water, and dug a rubbish disposal pit around the school. This became an activity performed on a weekly basis. In three weeks, the school hygiene and sanitation greatly changed. The community around the school embarked on this practice too as modelled by the school.

Among the unique projects proposed and implemented in the schools was making reusable menstrual sanitary pads. It was amazing that a male teacher was the one that implemented this project in one of the schools. Pupils engaged in the process of getting towels, pieces of cloths, cutting and sawing them into reusable menstrual pads. Although this was thought to be an activity for girls, several boys got curious and involved. The pupils informed their parents about the project at school. Local mothers encouraged all their children to go to the school and learn these skills. At their request, this teacher organized a workshop for mothers around the school to learn this skill. Several mothers got trained and the menstrual hygiene of the entire community had greatly improved.

One teacher was involved in envelop and paper bag making activities using sugar papers. The in-service teacher bought the paper material, took students through the process of measuring and cutting the paper in the right dimensions and shape to make either the paper bag or envelops. By the time of supervision, some of the envelops had been sold to the school, while orders for paper bags from a nearby super-market and a few shops were coming in. The school decided that all students could use their free time to produce envelops and paper bags for sale. All students were earning pocket money courtesy of getting involved in the project.

Among the unique projects that was designed and implemented was one in-service teacher termed as small entrepreneurships. The in-service teacher took the learners through using the pocket money productively. A group of students used their pocket money to buy materials used to make doughnuts and cookies including cooking oil, sugar, baking powder, and wheat flour. Learners got practically involved in making the products. Products were sold to the teachers and students through the school canteen. In only two weeks, the participating learners had all got back their pocket money, bought more materials, and earned profits.

Another unique project was dealing with female genital mutilation vice. This is a culture is the Sebei region in Uganda that was initially meant to cut down the libido of women so that they do not misbehave sexually. The world health organization condemned this vice and therefore the practitioners do it stealthily. It was on this basis that the teacher organized the community and the students and carried out drama shows that empowered people to fight the vice. The in-service teacher reported that this vice was now becoming complicated because now it is no longer an open practice.

Implications of the Internship Project Implementation

In-service teachers design and implement these projects as part of qualification for a degree. However, it has further consequences to learners and the community. Solutions to some of the challenges considered to be inhibiting quality learning and life skills development can be handled at the in-service internship program design level. This calls for a regular critical look at programs offered to the in-service trainees. It also calls for more innovations to be included in program reviews. Such innovation is more possible when there is collaboration across stakeholders. Indeed, this collaboration should go beyond placements of interns in the communities, but the communities getting aboard curriculum design, development, and evaluation. The needs of today are not necessarily the needs of tomorrow. Innovative thinking and practices should therefore be seen to guide the process of program design and development. There is therefore the need for authentic basis for internship program design.

Local innovations provide multitudes of pedagogies usable in the delivery of quality learning and development of life skills that promote sustainable development. Indeed, local innovations and contexts offer more rich environments for teachers

to engage in offering quality learning. This is because teachers can be able to use local, totally free, and more accessible materials to help learners develop competences. Local innovations used in pedagogy can help students reap financial benefits from their learning process. This ensures that even when a learner for one reason or another drops out of school at whatever level, they remain productive, useful, and can sustain themselves. This is as opposed to the acquisition of theoretical knowledge that is crammed and produced for the teacher to grade.

Local innovations at program design to encourage transfer of skills from the schools to the surrounding communities which leads to a more sustainable life styles in such communities. Indeed, some communities have sought for collaboration with the schools to ensure that the projects that begin as internship for the in-service teachers become institutionalized and shared with the community beyond the schools. Projects that learners engage as part of their learning process as school end up as adopted and practiced in the communities. Learners are therefore power knowledge transfer agents that should be given valued knowledge at a critical stage.

Inhibitors to Implementation of Internship Program Activities

Challenges inhibiting implementation of the internship program activities that enhance quality pedagogical activities are teacher and learning environment related. The inhibitors range from the teacher inability to ensure that every learner has a fair share of quality learning considering the overcrowded classes to community encumbrances. An Examples is a school in Mid-Eastern Uganda which proposed and implemented a policy of every learner bringing two rolls of toilet tissue worth about one thousand Uganda shillings. Some parents were unable to afford due to poverty. When the children were sent back home from school to bring what they could, parents organized a local authority meeting in which they decreed that no child should be sent back home from school for lack of toilet tissue. The local political environment was already against the school implementation of policies that the parents had themselves put in place to improve

hygiene in the school practices and would have a multiplier effect in the communities.

Economic factors have also have affected the quality pedagogic practices, even leading to drop out from schools at a very early stage. There are children who become sick themselves for a term or two. Without access to hygienic environments and medical care, the children are frequently attacked by diseases which make them stay home often, by the time they report back to school, they have missed a lot and yet the teacher cannot have make-up lessons. Indeed, even some schools reported that the parents are so poor to afford even an exercise book and pencil, thus making the teacher's attempts to engage in interactive pedagogic practices a nightmare. In one school, it was reported that learners only see graph papers when they get to sit for primary leaving examinations. It would be interesting to see how a learner who has had a graph paper for the first time can plot on it. Some of the learners are orphans who stay with grandparents, not working and without any income. It was reported that parents in one community which practices little agriculture engaged in trade in a very far daily market. These parents have some non-agricultural merchandise they trade in and since the market is about seven kilometres away, parents wake up early at about 4.00 am and start their trek to make it on time. Meanwhile, they advise the children to wake up later to go to school. Left home with no supervision, the children over sleep up to past 10.00 am when they wake up, it is too late to go to school.

The cultural factors like early marriages, taking up roles and attitude towards girls going to school are far from being sorted. It was reported that learners in communities are victims of poor health in situations when their immediate relatives are sick. The learners take up the role of care-taking the sick. In one community, the children preferred to go to work and make quick money by cutting sugarcane instead of going to school in sugar cane community, being the same scenario in the tea growing community where learners preferred to make quick money by harvesting tea. In some communities, the learners, most especially girls have been forced into early marriages when they reach primary five or six. In this way, they miss the very theoretical lessons that the teachers offer and it is very difficult for

them to catch up even upon returning to school after a week or two.

The quality of pedagogy has for some time been assessed in the ability to reproduce what one has been learnt. This has brought up a disjointed generation where individuals cram and reproduce what is taught to them like parrots and yet do nothing significant for themselves in life using the same knowledge and skills they could put on a piece of paper. Considering learner numbers and their corresponding teacher ratio, there is a still a dire need for lots of efforts to attain effective pedagogic activities. Statistics from the various schools indicate that a school had 800 learners with 23 teachers, others had 400 learners with 16 teachers, 2000 learners with 43 teachers, 1200 learners with 26 teachers, and 300 students with 25 teachers. Simple mathematics indicates an average learner student ratio of 33:1. It should be noted however, that those with a lower ratio are secondary schools while the higher ratio are primary schools. These scenarios have always inhibited the teacher's capacity to design for and implement activities relevant and engagement to address life problems.

CONCLUSION

The teacher education program review design that embeds internship which provide room for contextually sensitive authentic learning processes that provide provision for creativity and innovation. Innovations that are to be included on the program should be sought from the communities through situational analysis sessions. In this way, in-service teachers are innovative in finding opportunities and materials that enable engagement in quality pedagogy and contribute to sustainable development practices for the local communities. Such program innovations should help put up teacher education programs that go beyond regurgitation of what they have gone through. These program innovations give value beyond the qualification document to skills for service delivery. Therefore, partnering pedagogy program designs can enable innovations that go a long way to help in-service trainees to creatively design activities that enable learners to be able to develop contextual life skills that are useful and also benefit communities around the school. The basis for design of in-service teacher internship programs should be to use them

as more practical activities to provide quality learning and ensure the development of life skills among the learners and the school community implying some more sustainable practices that enhance sustainable development accruing from the quality of pedagogic practices.

CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHORS

REFERENCES

Barrie, S., & Pizzica, J. (2019). Reimagining university curriculum for a disrupted future of work: Partnership pedagogy. In J. Higgs, G. Crisp, & W. Letts, *Education for Employability: Learning for Future Possibilities.* Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense-Brill Publishers.

Biggs, J., & Tang, C. (2011). *Teaching for Quality Learning at University.* Berkshire, England: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.

Butcher, J., Bezzina, M., & Moran, W. (2011). Transformational partnerships: A new agenda for higher education. *Innovative Higher Education*, 29-40.

Commonwealth of Learning. (2020). *Distance Learning Guidelines.* Commonwealth of Learning.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). Mapping the field of mixed methods research. *Journal of mixed methods research*, 95-108.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2006, May/June). Constructing 21st Century Teacher Education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 57*(3), 300-314.

Employer guide to structuring a successful internship program. (2016). *Good internships are good business*. Rhode Island, South Africa: BRIDGE.

Flint, A., & Harrington, K. (2014). *Framework for partnership in learning and teaching in higher education.* York: Higher Education Academy.

Fox, H. L., Thrill, C., & Keist, J. (2018). *Advancing Program Review: Evaluating and Envisioning the Future of Program Review at Illinois Community Colleges.* Illinois: Office of Community College Research and Leadership.

Garone, A., Bruggeman, B., Philipsen, B., Pynoo, B., Tondeur, J., & Struyven, K. (2022). Evaluating professional development for blended learning in higher education: a synthesis of qualitative evidence. *Education and Information Technologies*. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-022-10928-6

Gaskell, A. (2016). Sustainable Development and Inclusive Quality Education. *Journal of Learning for Development*, 1-2.

Harlen, W. (2014). *Assessment Standards and Quality of Learning in Primary Education.* York: Cambridge Primary Review.

Herrington, A., & Herrington, J. (2006). What is an authentic learning environment? In T. Herrington, & J. Herrington, *Authentic Learning Environments in Higher Education* (pp. 1-14). Hershey, PA: Information Science Publishing. doi:10.4018/978-1-59140-594-8.ch001

Kennedy, E. (2021). *Blended Learning in Teacher Education & Training: Findings from Research & Practice.* Brussels, Belgium: European Schoolnet (EUN Partnership AIBSL).

Keynan, I. (2014). Knowledge as responsibility: Universities and society. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 179-206.

Lombardi, M. (2007). *Authentic Learning for the 21st Century.* EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative.

Loughran, J., & Hamilton, M. (Eds.). (2016). *International Handbook of Teacher Education.* Singapore: Springer.

Mantei, J., & Kervin, L. (2009). "Authentic" learning experiences: what does this mean and where is the literacy learning? In A. Moult (Ed.), *National for Teachers of Education and Literacy* (pp. 1-16). Hobart, Australia: Research Online, University of Wollongong.

Marphatia, A., Legault, E., Edge, K., & Archer, D. (2010). *The role of teachers in improving learning in Burundi, Malawi, Senegal and Uganda: great expectations, little support.* London: Institute of Education and Action Aid.

Ministry of Education and Sports. (2019). *The National Teacher Policy.* Kampala: Ministry of Education and Sports.

National Institute of Education. (2009). *A teacher education model for the 21st century.* Singapore: National Institute of Education.

Ramakrishna, A., & Rama Devi, N. (2020). Principles of Effective Pedagogy. *Journal Of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, 90-104.

Stauffer, B. (2020, March 19th). *Applied Education systems*. Retrieved from What Are 21st Century Skills?: https://www.aeseducation.com/blog/what-are-21st-century-skills

True, M. (2016). Starting and maintaining a quality internship program. University of Virginia.

UNESCO. (2015, 19-22 May Tuesday-Friday). *World Education Forum 2015*. Retrieved from http://en.unesco.org/world-education-forum-2015/5-key-themes/quality-education

UNESCO. (2020). *Distance Learning Solutions.* Paris: UNESCO.

UNICEF. (2000, June). Defining Quality in Education. *A paper presented by UNICEF at the meeting of the International Working Group on Education* . Florence, Italy: UNICEF.

UWEZO. (2010). *Are our children learning?* Annual Learning Assessment Report, Uganda. Kampala: Uwezo.net.

Western Sydney University. (2018). *Partnership Pedagogy.* Sydney: Western Sydney University.

Westhuizen, C. (2010). Development of facilitation skills. In L. Louw, & E. Toit (Eds.), *Help, I am a student teacher! Skills development for teaching practice* (pp. 51-70). Pretoria: Van Schaik.