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School-based continuous Teacher Professional Development in Addis Ababa: An Investigation of Practices, Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine opportunities and challenges in practicing Continuous professional Development (CPD) in selected schools in Addis Ababa City Administration. Questionnaire pilot tested in two primary schools was administered to 300 randomly selected primary school teachers in Addis Ababa. With regard to the variable "Teachers' self-reflection", male respondents tend to use self reflection techniques more than female respondents to improve their career development. The mean score for teachers teaching at the second cycle was found to be statistically higher than that of teachers working in the first cycle of primary education indicating that teachers in the second cycle tend to use peer discussion, self-assessment of one's own daily routines, and use of portfolio more often than their counterparts teaching in the first cycle. The mentoring process stood as number one contributing factor for teacher professional development followed by action research and school in-house workshops. Lack of knowledge and experience on the theoretical underpinnings, implementation inconsistencies, lack of budget to run the program at school level, lack of incentive procedures to recognize teachers who made utmost efforts to change themselves and their colleagues were major problems identified from the qualitative data. Despite these problems, the new CPD has entailed a number of opportunities and useful experiences in terms of empowering school teachers and ameliorating school-based problems related to the teaching learning process. Future implications of the research were also suggested.

Introduction

For education to play the role of enhancing the capacity of citizens and informing important choices to their welfare effectively, it has to meet minimum quality standards. Among other conditions, it is strongly argued that universal goals set for education in terms of access need to be accompanied with quality instruction. This in turn requires teachers to be qualified to do their job effectively. This is reflected in the Education and Training Policy (TGE, 1994) and Education Sector Development Programs focusing on expanding educational opportunities and increasing access to all levels of education.

Teachers in the present Ethiopia are expected to be reflective and change-oriented

to meet the government and public demand for quality education. They are expected to consider the dynamic nature of the learners and the society. This situation signifies the importance of continuous teacher professional development (CPD) aiming at improving the teaching learning process thereby improving quality of education. Teachers are expected to employ interactive methods of teaching to help students learn better. The literature on education quality indicates a strong link between teacher professional development and quality especially in the areas of teachers' beliefs and practices, students' learning and on the implementation of educational reforms (UNESCO, 2006).

CPD is said to have been coined in the mid-1970's (Griffin as cited in Gray, 2005). Its notion is rooted in the constructivist philosophy which claims that a person's constructions and views of the world are not stable, but are in continuous change. Accordingly, it is presumed that teachers have to engage themselves in planning and executing their professional development on continuous basis to cope with the continuous change. In this regard, Amare and Temechegn (2002) noted that teacher development is an essential element to bring meaningful changes in addressing equity, quality, relevance and efficiency.

According to Griffin as cited in Gray (2005), CPD embraces the idea that individuals aim for continuous improvement in their professional skills and knowledge, beyond the basic training initially required to carry out the job. In teaching, such development was used to be called 'in-service training', or INSET, with the emphasis on delivery rather than the outcome. Similarly, CPD is viewed as professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically (Reimers, 2003; Institute for Learning, 2009).

Various models were developed to explain professional development of teachers. Guskey (2002) has viewed CPD as a tri-dimensional aspect of the change process that includes teachers' classroom practices, change in teachers' attitudes and belief systems and change in the learning outcomes of students. The pedagogical versus subject area model emphasized the need for qualified teachers who have appropriate subject knowledge and pedagogical skills (Amare, A., Daniel, D., Derebssa, D. & Wanna, L., 2006). Ehman, Bonk and Yamagata (2005) developed the Teacher Institute for curriculum knowledge about Integration of technology (TICKIT) model. The model integrates technology with individual and group activities in the school settings. The infusion of technology into the curriculum created an environment in which TICKIT teachers would share their experiences with their colleagues, the university staff and graduate program students in universities. Kennedy (2005) discussed a spectrum of CPD models in a comparative manner. He identified nine CPD models namely the training, award-bearing, deficit, cascade, standards-based, coaching/mentoring, community of practice, action research, and transformative model.

The teacher professional development program in the Ethiopian context is a national intervention program run by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and supported by six European countries with the intent of enhancing the quality and effectiveness of teachers'

education through pre-service teacher training, in-service teacher training, Teacher System Overhaul (TESO), Leadership and Management Program (LAMP), and English Language Improvement Program (ELIP). The national program involved eleven Regional Educational Bureaus (REBs), Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs), and nine universities as implementers (MOE, 2007; MOE, 2008a).The purpose of this national project was to improve the knowledge, skills, qualifications and attitudes of primary and secondary school teachers by setting Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVIs) and target outcomes for the aforementioned areas. The target outcome for the in-service CPD priority area was pedagogical knowledge and improving the capacity of teachers (MOE, 2007).

A document produced by Teacher Development Advisory Team (MOE, 2007) argued that Teachers' Competency Standards at different career levels provide a foundation on which all other teacher training related activities should be based. Re-licensing of teachers and climbing the next career ladder in the competency standard scales requires teachers to pass through CPD program courses.

An evaluation study by Haramaya University (MOE, 2009a), for example, indicated that the CPD structure was absent or inadequately organized in most of the schools. The study further reported inconsistencies in implementation, resource limitations, and communication gaps among stakeholders. Although interviewed teachers ascertained that the program has brought significant changes in their attitude towards the profession, lack of readiness to participate actively in the program was found to be an overarching problem.

An assessment made by Mekelle University (MOE, 2008b) also suggested that ELIP and CPD trainings resulted in outstanding changes compared to other forms of trainings received by teachers. Paradoxically speaking, not less that 50 % of the interviewed teachers, however, tend to show lenient behavior to demonstrate the "student-centered" approach in their classrooms.

Taking into account the major findings and implications of the impact studies conducted by the two universities and the recommendations entailed from need analysis (MOE, 2009b), the new CPD program underlined the importance of awareness-based understanding of all stakeholders on the essence of CPD, active involvement of teachers in planning and implementing the CPD program, relentless effort to bring change in students' learning through continuous improvement of one's teaching methodology.

According to the new CPD framework and toolkit documents (MOE, 2009b), the CPD is a developmental program that moves in a cyclical path anchored at four stages namely: Analyze→ Plan→ Do→ Evaluate. The aim of the new CPD is "to improve the performance of teachers in the classroom in order to raise student achievement and learning. It is a career-long process to improve knowledge, skills and attitudes centered on the local context particularly classroom practice" (MOE, 2009a, p.16).

Statement of the Problem

Ethiopia has made extraordinary achievement in expanding education at all levels of the system. However, it seems that this achievement in terms of students' enrollment did not meet quality standards. Quality of education has become a serious concern among all stakeholders. The national assessment results of 2000, 2004, and 2008 (MOE, 2008a) indicated that, in many schools, children were not mastering basic skills. Despite the concerted effort by the government, improving quality of education while at the same time keeping the expansion of the education program has become a challenge.

A review of the performance reports of Teacher Professional Development program I and II showed tangible results and shortcomings both at policymaking and implementation levels. Evidences documented from researches conducted by universities, reports compiled from field visits and impact studies by the Ministry of Education showed that the TDP program has brought promising changes in terms of the targets set for the projects life span. Achievements registered and problems encountered are linked to organizational arrangements and readiness to implement the program by all stakeholders. In response to these problems, the MOE has worked out a new toolkit for effective implementation of school based Continuous Professional Development (CPD) at school level.

Thus, the objective of this study was to examine the practices, opportunities, challenges and prospects of school-based teacher professional development as per the new CPD program in selected schools in Addis Ababa City Administration. The study focused on examining views and experiences of teachers, CPD committee members and pertinent education officers in relation to creating opportunities for teacher professional development at school level. Efforts were made to identify supportive provisions in place, procedures developed, results gained, challenges and shortcomings observed in connection to program implementation.

Research Questions

1. How do teachers and CPD committee members perceive the purpose and importance of school-based teacher professional development?
2. What relationships exist between the different demographic groups and teachers perception of the process aspects of CPD?
3. What practices and procedures are in place to implement teacher professional development at schools?
4. What provisions are in place to support teacher professional development efforts at school level?
5. What are the major challenges and shortcomings observed in implementing school-based teacher professional development program?
6. What are the major results obtained through school-based teacher professional

development in terms of influencing change and improvement in teachers' practices?

Methods

The design of the study was mixed approach where data from the quantitative and qualitative designs complemented each other. As part of the quantitative design the survey method was used to assess teachers' perception and understanding of the process aspects of the new CPD program. The quantitative data was complimented by qualitative data obtained from focus group discussions, interviews and analysis of documents.

Three steps were taken to develop the teacher self-report questionnaire. The first step was to review the literature on continuous teacher professional development. That was followed by review of policy documents issued by MOE on teacher professional development. Key areas relevant to the research purpose were identified from the literature review. These include general perception of teachers about the impact of CPD, the mentoring process, action research, teachers' self-reflection of their performance, and essential conditions for successful implementation of CPD. All items under these thematic areas were framed on Likert-type scale along a five-point continuum ranging from 'Strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Moreover, items that require participants to rank order ten activities from 1(most important) to10 (least important) that contributed to their professional development were constructed. A pool of eighty items was constructed. These items were clustered under the thematic areas. Content analysis was made by the research team and items that did not fit into the themes were discarded or modified and re-constructed. After preliminary screening of the items, experts evaluated the relevance of the items to the research purpose along a five point scale ranging from 'Most favorable' to 'Least favorable'. Inter-rater agreement between the experts was found to be 87 percent.

A preliminary survey was undertaken in two purposefully selected primary schools in the study area. The purpose of the preliminary survey was two-fold. One was to determine the reliability of the measuring instruments and to verify whether or not these instruments suffice the purpose for which they were developed. The second purpose was to see the general pattern of data collection and to verify the suitability of analysis techniques suggested in the research proposal. The preliminary data and the analyses highlighted important information that helped to refine the instruments and the measurement of variables in the study.

In order to find out the internal consistency of the measuring instruments each item was correlated with the total score. Except for two items, namely "The mentoring process is according to the needs of the beginner teachers rather than the school management" (r=0.06) and "I do action research as a means for promotion in the career structure" (r=0.07), the rest of the items were moderately and highly correlated with the total score on the fifteen items (coefficients range from 0.224-0.779). However, in some cases it was found out that there were some ambiguous items which required some kind of amendment

to improve their quality. Cronbach alpha for the whole instrument and the four subscales namely General perception, Mentoring, Action research and Self reflection were found to be r=0.935, r=0.95, r=0.40, r=0.18, and r=0.81 respectively. Alpha value for the action research was found to be low. The research team decided to reframe the items in this subscale separately as "yes" "no" items.

The data collected through self-report questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as percentages, t-tests and analysis of variance in order to draw relationships between demographic variables and CPD process variables. Data obtained from interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis were coded thematically. The two types of data were analyzed using concurrent triangulation method as suggested by Creswell (2009).

Results

A self-report questionnaire piloted in two primary schools was distributed to 300 teachers teaching in the first and second cycles of twelve primary schools located in Addis Ababa City Administration. Two hundred eighty-one questionnaires were returned which makes the return rate 94%. A total of 154(54.8%) of the respondents were males. The questionnaire had different components meant to assess teachers' perceptions and understanding of the overall benefits of CPD, the mentoring practices, teachers' self-reflection on the program, and the role of action research in promoting teachers' professional development.

An attempt was made to see the relationship between the different demographic variables such as gender, respondents qualification levels, their current career position, and the levels at which they were teaching at the time of the study and the process variables (i.e., Positive Conditions for CPD, Mentoring, Teachers' self-reflections, Essential conditions for the effectiveness of CPD).

Forty eight percent of the respondents were diploma holders whereas 21.7% had bachelor degree. Only 2.1% of the respondents were at a certificate level. Upgrading the qualification of primary school teachers teaching in the first and second cycles to diploma and degree levels has been set as target of school improvement program by the MOE. Prior to the introduction of School Improvement Program, teacher training institutes used to train primary school teachers at certificate level heavily focusing on the methodology aspect. These same teachers were at times expected to teach at junior level (grades 5-8) which of course was a challenge for many teachers in terms of mastery of subject knowledge.

The new career structure for primary school teachers is hierarchically structured ranging from "beginner teacher" to the highest "lead teacher". The minimum number of years a particular teacher is expected to stay at each level and the requirements to be fulfilled for the levels vary as teachers move from one career position to the other. Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by their career position.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by their position in the career structure (N=281)

Career ladder	N	%
Beginner teacher	20	7.1
Junior teacher	95	33.8
Teacher	76	27.0
Higher teacher	26	9.3
Associate teacher	7	2.5
lead teacher	56	19.9
No response	1	0.4
Total	281	100.0

The majority of the respondents in this sample were in the "Junior" and "Teacher" levels (33.8 % and 27% respectively). Although the criteria seem stringent as one progress upward, a significant number of the respondents (19.9%) have reached the rank of "lead teacher".

With respect to the level at which the respondents were teaching, 121(43.1%) were teaching at the first cycle where as 151(53.7%) teaching at the second cycle. Independent t-tests were computed to see if there are statistically significant differences between male and female respondents along the four dependent variables i. e., positive influences of CPD on the overall teaching-learning process, CPD and the mentoring process, teachers' self-reflection on their day-to-day teaching activities, and essential conditions needed for the implementation of CPD. Except for the variable "Teachers reflection" male and female respondents did not statistically differ in their perception on the rest of the process aspects of CPD.

Table 2: Gender difference in CPD variables (N=281)

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	S	t-values	P
Positive Conditions for CPD	Male	152	27.11	10.23	-0.60	0.55
	Female	123	27.89	11.42		
CPD Mentoring	Male	150	22.07	3.76	1.02	0.31
	Female	123	21.61	3.59		
CPD Teachers' self-reflections	Male	153	9.44	3.65	3.85	0.00
	Female	121	7.95	2.50		
Essential conditions for the effectiveness of CPD	Male	151	26.50	8.74	-0.17	0.86
	Female	119	26.70	9.68		

With regard to the variable "Teachers' self-reflection", male respondents tend to use self reflection more than female respondents to improve their career development ($t=3.85$, $p < 0.00$) using various strategies such as peer discussion, and assembling of good practices in the form of portfolios. Descriptive statistics and "t" values for mean comparisons of male and female respondents in relation to the four variables are shown in

Table 2.

Respondents were also compared in their qualification levels. Mean comparisons were employed to find out statistical significance between certificate, diploma, and degree holders. The "F" statistics revealed significant mean differences between teachers in the different qualification layers in relation to the variables "Positive conditions of CPD" and "Essential conditions for sustainable use of CPD for professional development" ($F= 4.77$, $p < 0.00$, and $F= 6.48$, $p < 0.00$ respectively). Results are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Mean differences between the qualification levels in CPD variables (N=281)

Variables	Source of variations	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Positive Conditions for CPD	Between Groups	1487.78	3	495.93	4.77	0.00
	Within Groups	25661.79	247	103.89		
	Total	27149.57	250			
CPD Mentoring	Between Groups	23.71	3	7.90	0.59	0.62
	Within Groups	3293.08	245	13.44		
	Total	3316.80	248			
CPD Teachers' self-reflections	Between Groups	43.73	3	14.58	1.39	0.25
	Within Groups	2593.09	247	10.50		
	Total	2636.82	250			
Essential conditions for the effectiveness of CPD	Between Groups	1472.50	3	490.83	6.48	0.00
	Within groups	18328.43	242	75.74		
	Total	19800.93	245			

Respondents teaching in the first cycle and second cycle of primary education were compared in their responses to the four CPD dependent variables. Except for the variable "Teachers' self-reflection" respondents did not significantly differ in their perception of the remaining three variables. Descriptive statistics and "t" values for mean comparisons of responses for the two groups are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Mean differences between teachers in the first and second cycles in CPD variables (N=281)

Variables	Cycle	N	Mean	S	t-values	p
Positive Conditions for CPD	First cycle	119	27.49	11.98	0.19	0.85
	Second cycle	150	27.24	9.66		
CPD Mentoring	First cycle	118	21.48	3.77	-1.69	0.09
	Second cycle	150	22.25	3.60		
CPD Teachers' self-reflections	First cycle	118	8.07	3.08	-3.24	0.00
	Second cycle	150	9.35	3.33		
Essential conditions for the effectiveness of CPD	First cycle	116	26.16	9.48	-0.55	0.58
	Second cycle	147	26.78	8.73		

The mean score for teachers teaching in the second cycle was found to be statistically higher than the mean score of teachers working in the first cycle of primary education ($t= 3.24$, $p < 0.00$) indicating that teachers in the second cycle tend to use peer discussion, self-assessment of one's own daily routines, and use of portfolio to assemble best practices more often than their counterparts teaching in the first cycle.

Further analyses were made to find out if there existed significant differences with regard to teachers work experience as measured by number of years they stayed in the profession. Comparisons were also made between teachers found at different positions of the career structures. In both cases statistically no significant differences were revealed in relation to the four CPD variables.

Action research is considered as an important component of teacher professional development. Teachers in the Ethiopian context are expected and encouraged to conduct action research to mitigate problems they encounter in their day-to-day activities. Apart from developing their career, action research is supposed to be taken as an important milestone to move upward in the career ladder. Five "Yes", "No" type items were developed and teachers were asked to what extent action research contributed to their professional development. Percentage distributions for the "Yes" and "No" items are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Teachers' perception on action research practices (N=281)

Item	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
I do action research to improve my profession	188	66.9	74	26.3
Action research is one of the criterion for professional development	188	66.9	77	27.4
I have no time to do action research	101	35.9	164	58.4
Teachers do action research with imposition	65	23.1	199	70.8
I do not get sufficient professional support for doing action research	156	55.5	107	38.1
I do not get sufficient resources for doing action research	140	49.8	123	43.8
I have knowledge for doing action research	191	68.0	73	26.0

As shown in table 5, most of the respondents perceived action research as a means to develop in their profession. For example, for the items that read "I do action research to improve my profession" and "Action research is one of the criteria for professional development" 66.9% said "Yes" and about 26 % said "No" in both cases. Despite shortage of time to conduct action research, teachers are of the opinion that action research can still be conducted. It appears from the data in Table 6 that the school management is also supportive in terms of availing resources and professional backings for those who have the will to conduct action research.

The last part of the questionnaire asked respondents to rank order factors that contributed more to their professional development. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which school based programs and activities contributed to their professional

development along a five-point scale ranging from "Very low" to "Very high". In order to ease the analysis and find out the most contributing factors, percentages in the "High" and "Very high" categories were merged together and composite percentages computed. Based on the composite percentages for the high and very high categories, the contributing factors were ranked. Percentage distributions for each contributing factors are shown in descending order in Table 6.

Table 6: Factors that contributed most to the CPD process

Items	High		Very high		Composite		Rank
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Mentoring	49	17.4	33	11.7	82	29.1	1
Action research	59	21	22	7.8	81	28.8	2
School in-house workshop	50	17.8	28	10	78	27.8	3
Advice from colleagues	42	14.9	34	12.1	76	27	4
Directives from the school leadership	45	16	29	10.3	74	26.3	5
Visits to other schools	44	15.7	27	9.6	71	25.3	6
Learning from students	38	13.5	30	10.7	68	24.2	7
Study groups	41	14.6	22	7.8	63	22.4	8
Observation of colleagues work	31	11.0	30	10.7	61	21.7	9
Learning from individual readings	20	7.1	33	11.7	53	18.8	10

As shown in Table 7, the "Mentoring process" stood number one contributing factor for teachers' professional development (29.1%) followed by "Action research" (28.8%) and "School in-house workshop" (27.8%). "Advice from colleagues" (27%) and "Directives from the school leadership" (26.3%) were also preferred areas of activities for teachers. These results have important implications for designing professional development training programs at school and city administration levels.

Qualitative data from interviews and focus-group discussions were analyzed to identify participants' perceptions and understandings of school-based teacher professional development and its practice in enhancing quality education. Categories were derived from interviews and discussions. Issues of importance that emerged from the open ended items, interviews conducted with vice principals and education officers and focus group discussions with CPD committee members were triangulated for the purpose of comparison.

Teachers' responses to open-ended questions in the self-report questionnaire revealed a number of problems that affected the implementation of the CPD program at school level. One of the major problems reported was the issue of knowledge and understanding on the essence of CPD program. This point was explained with reference to teachers, CPD coordinators, school principals and trainers each of which are involved in the program in different ways and at various levels.

Lack of adequate knowledge and experience on CPD was one of the problems

as reported by teachers. Teachers and principals who participated at entry phase of the program were not able to help them develop clear understanding on the program; hence, teachers viewed the contribution of the trainers as limited. Another dimension of the issue relates to knowledge of the coordinators of the program at school level. Review of teachers' views indicated that officers involved in the coordination of the program do not have clear understanding about CPD and its implementation strategies. It appears that this situation has resulted in low level of understanding on the part of the teachers who are the major targets in the CPD program.

The gap in the knowledge and understanding of teachers and coordinators on CPD, as noted by teachers, was attributed to problems associated with the duration of the training period, lack of experience of trainers, inadequate discussion and understanding at the inception stage. Review of experiences of some selected primary schools confirmed this assertion. Before the launching of the new CPD in February 2011, sub-cities education offices organized five days training for school leadership (principals and deputy principals) followed by two days in-house training for all teachers in the respective schools headed by the vice principals. Subsequently, each teacher was provided with the guide material prepared on the new approach to CPD.

This shaky start of the program without adequate training and preparation was also concern of focus group discussion participants in three purposefully selected primary schools. They disclosed that the training was given only for two days for some teachers. In addition, lack of budget to organize school-level training on continuous basis was a problem indicated by discussants. Based on this evidence, one can reasonably argue that the quality of the initial training program had notable drawbacks. Hence, it would be at least difficult to assume that it has met the objective of enabling teachers to understand and implement the CPD program at school level.

Another area of problem strongly linked to the inception stage of the program was induction of the new CPD toolkit which has been introduced in the year 2011. The MOE developed and disseminated a national framework document which was supposed to serve as a guide for primary and secondary schools to run school based CPD. The toolkit envisages detailed activities to be worked out by individual teachers, departments and at school levels and the expected outcomes from the CPD program. However, teachers' response to open ended questions in the self-report questionnaire characterized the CPD toolkit as lengthy and unattractive. The new CPD toolkit, however, has a number of worth mentioning properties compared to the old one. Accordingly, the old CPD was monotonous, ambiguous, full of inconsistencies and something that does not address school-based problems and detached from context. The new CPD follows a different approach. It aims at up-dating and upgrading teachers in terms of knowledge and adjustment in career structure. Here, schools are expected to identify three priority problems out of which each teacher selects and implements one based on his/her interest and area of study. In other words, a plan for teacher professional development is developed and implemented by each school with active participation of teachers in groups

at department level and at individual teacher level.

Participants were asked to explain the unique features of the new CPD program and what opportunities exist to encourage teachers to participate actively in the program. The distinguishing feature of the new CPD program according to the discussants is the bottom-up approach. Teachers plan, teachers implement, teachers evaluate. In the new approach teachers are the sole owners of the program.

In line with the new CPD guideline, schools are expected to identify problem areas that have immediate significance to their context. Each school at an individual, department and institutional level is expected to develop a module plan along the identified priority areas, work out detailed procedures on how to execute these priority areas, devise monitoring and evaluation strategies. National policies and strategies are considered in selecting priority areas of interventions at schools.

Document analysis carried out in one of the Primary schools, for example, suggests the procedures adopted. Before identifying the three top priority areas, teachers, students and parents held a meeting and discussed over a wide array of problems. They identified twenty problems in their school. Further analysis of the problems enabled sorting out of three top-problems that need immediate intervention and resource mobilization in that particular school context. The three priority agenda of the school were: enhancing parental involvement in children's education, improving students' mathematics performance and increase teachers' awareness on the importance of continuous assessment. It was around these three problems that each subject teacher, departments, and principal worked their respective CPD module plans. In order to accomplish the anticipated module plans, procedures and specific actions were devised at all levels. The sixty–hour CPD time was further apportioned into different activities in line with the three basic priority problems.

Formats and working procedures were also in place to follow up the implementation of the activities. Minutes, checklists, parental communication letters, records of students who do not work assignments were some of the tools used by teachers and the vice principal to monitor day-to-day results of the CPD program. An important component of the CPD cycle is the evaluation stage. To what extent the problems identified by the school community have been mitigated as a result of these implementation strategies and to what extent their solution contributed to students' learning was not substantiated by this research.

Despite these opportunities that can be reaped from the practice of the new CPD, program implementation seems to be entangled by a number of human and organizational problems. Interview with deputy principals disclosed that quite in many cases, teachers show low interest to participate in discussions on CPD. A quote from focus group discussions with CPD committee members substantiated the views of deputy principals.

> *Commitment of each teacher is a key to program sustainability. Teachers should be convinced to be committed to their profession. As it is mandatory to participate in the program, we believe that it will sustain. There are many*

> *teachers who are being convinced about its importance and usefulness. Step-by-step, it will become part of the day-to-day activities of teachers. It will sustain.*

Absence of certification and lack of clear scheme to motivate teachers to engage in CPD activities, as noted by teachers, has contributed to the fall in teachers' motivation. As solution to this problem, participants underlined the importance of establishing a procedure to recognize and reward the efforts of hard working teachers. Participants of the focus group discussions noted:

> *The promises made by the ministry of education in relation to certifying teachers through the CPD program have not been implemented. This situation has led to confusion and lack of direction on the part of teachers. This situation would likely entail negative impact on continuity and sustainability of the CPD activities by teachers.*

Qualitative data captured through open ended questions, focus group discussions, interviews and analyses of documents such as portfolios, checklists and minutes were clustered around three thematic areas, namely opportunities, challenges, and useful experiences.

Opportunities

- The new CPD followed bottom-top approach. It is planned, executed, analyzed and evaluated at school level. Hence, it opened opportunity to contextualize the program;
- Career development as a motive for executing CPD at school level;
- CPD is considered as an opportunity for self-enhancement, improvisation of quality of education;
- CPD empowered teachers.

Challenges

- Lack of knowledge and experience on the theoretical underpinnings, implementation inconsistencies, lack of uniformity in implementation, confusion and redundancy;
- Lack of budget to run the program at school level;
- Lack of interest, initiative and commitment by some teachers especially by teachers with long years of teaching experience;
- Becoming too ambitious and looking for immediate return from the CPD program;

- The incomparable nature of the sixty-hour time demand and regular work load of teachers;
- The detailed nature of the toolkit being not handy;
- Lack of incentive procedures to recognize teachers who make utmost effort to change themselves and their colleagues;
- CPD module plans are coined and implemented in relation to peripheral issues that were indirectly related to students learning.

Useful experiences

- Opened widow of hope in practicing student-centered approach, improvement in students learning, reduction of school-based disciplinary problems;
- Facilitated easy flow of information and feed-back among teachers in a department, cluster schools, and the management at large. The territory that bounded them has become porous;
- Facilitated documentation of better experiences and success stories in portfolios and anecdotal records.

Discussions

This research has examined the practices, opportunities, challenges and prospects of school-based teacher professional development in selected primary schools in Addis Ababa City Administration. It examined the relationship between teachers' demographic factors (sex, qualification, grade level at which teachers teach, teaching experience) and selected CPD process variables (self reflection, mentoring). The study also examined teachers' views on essential conditions for effective implementation of school-based CPD and major barriers to the implementation of the program.

With the exception of few cases, teachers held favorable views on the need for a school-based continuous teacher professional development program. Teachers viewed school-based continuous professional development as a means by which the school community collaborates to improve quality of teaching and learning. Results suggested that the program has set a direction and regulatory mechanism to ensure teachers' engagement in on-job learning task on a continual basis. It opened an opportunity to address problems and challenges that can affect the quality of education.

Teachers' involved in the study reflected a positive attitude towards school-based continuous teacher professional development. The new CPD, as reported by most teachers, facilitated easy flow of information and feedback among teachers, cluster schools, and the management. Teachers believed that CPD facilitates documentation of better practices and success stories in the form of portfolios and anecdotal records.

The extent to which teachers engage in monitoring and evaluating their own work beyond compiling portfolios was examined. Results suggested that male teachers tend

to evaluate their performance more than female teachers using various strategies such as peer discussions and assembling of good practices. This difference could be explained in relation to the contextual factor. Female teachers carry equal load with their male counterparts. They are expected to engage in CPD programs on equal basis. Nonetheless, they shoulder more social and family responsibilities. They have more stress due to time constraints which could limit the extent of their engagement in self reflection and peer discussion practices.

Compared to teachers teaching at first cycle, those teaching at the second cycle showed better and higher involvement in peer discussions and self-reflection activities. This difference could be attributed to differences in qualifications where relatively better qualified teachers are assigned to teach in the second cycle of primary education. Teachers teaching at the second cycle, held more favorable views on essential conditions for CPD. The fact that the second cycle deals with more advanced concepts could compel teachers to seek answers to many questions and challenges through the CPD program. This explanation, however, does not imply that teaching in the first cycle is easier.

Teachers identified action research as most contributing factor for their professional development. This finding is supported by Burbank & Kauchack (as cited in Kennedy, 2005) indicating that action research is a means for teachers' success. Despite the time constraint and lack of experience to implement CPD, most teachers hold favorable views toward engaging in action research. Teachers also reflected positive views on mentoring, school in-house workshop, and advice from colleagues and directives from the school leadership as supportive elements in implementing CPD program in their respective schools.

Mentoring often implies counseling and supportive relationship where one partner is novice and the other more experienced (Rhodes & Beneicke; Clutterbuck; cited in Kennedy, 2005). In the Ethiopian context, mentoring is practiced particularly during induction period of new teachers in the first two years of their employment. It was assessed by teachers as an important contributing factor for teacher professional development. However, variations were observed among teachers on the extent of its importance. Teachers with long years of teaching experience particularly those who achieved the highest career structure seem to lose their interest in the activities of the new CPD. It appeared to them that the new CPD would entail no significant benefit. The research team was able to realize that some of the experienced teachers were reluctant to coach the newly recruited teachers who were in their induction period.

In not few cases, teachers held negative position about the program. Results showed that the school-based CPD was too ambitious in terms of what was expected of teachers. Quite many teachers reported experience of stress and overload problem in connection to the sixty hour CPD activities in the academic year.

Knowledge and understanding on the objectives, contents and methods of CPD was found to be among the determinant factors affecting quality of implementation of the program. Results showed gap of knowledge and understanding about CPD among trainers

and trainees. This situation has resulted in low level of understanding of the contents and methods of CPD on the part of the teachers who are the major targets in the program.

The limitations observed in connection to knowledge and understanding could be explained in reference to particular drawbacks related to the initial training. First, the training material (CPD toolkit) was lengthy and not reader friendly. This, in turn, affected teachers' motivation and resulted in frustration. Second, as reported by the teachers, duration of the training was very short. Third, knowledge and experience of trainers at central level was questioned. Fourth, further professional support at school level was missing. Fifth, those who were trained as trainers faced budget limitations to organize training in their respective schools. In brief, sufficient opportunities were not created for teachers to develop knowledge and understanding on the objectives, contents and methods of the new CPD program. Hence, it would be difficult to assume that the training met the objective of enabling teachers to understand and implement the CPD program.

Teachers' attitude emerged as another important factor in influencing the practice of school-based teacher professional development. Results suggested that some teachers were less enthusiastic about the CPD program. Low level of interest and commitment, as well as limited collaborative learning efforts among teachers were identified as problems. In the views of teachers, the new CPD was coined and implemented in relation to peripheral topics, for instance, students' discipline, parental involvement, etc; that were not directly related to students' learning. Limited involvement of communities in education of their children and lack of students' interest in learning were reported to affect teachers' overall attitude towards the new CPD program.

Conclusion

Most of the research participants held the view that school-based teacher professional development program is important as it focuses on core issues– teacher professional development and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers and school leadership were widely engaged in developing CPD modules at the level of individual teacher, department and school. They implement the module plan and assemble portfolios. On the other hand, it was observed that there were teachers who had negative attitudes in their views on the real contributions of the program to improvement in teachers' knowledge and skills. Such teachers engaged in CPD as the program was mandatory for all teachers. It could be argued that these teachers' activities on CPD might not be genuine efforts to learn and improve their performance. The activities could be carried out merely to meet formal requirements. Whether or not, the overall practices of CPD have contributed to improved learning among students is yet to be established. It is expected that all stakeholders need to collaborate and ensure that schools particularly teachers get adequate professional support to effectively engage in the implementation of the new CPD program.

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