Quality Matters:

Communicating News across the EdQual Community

TEACHERS

"they have a power which is second to none…the teachers now at work and going through training college…are shaping what [the country] will become"

Julius Nyerere, Tanzania

Teacher, South Africa

This is the third edition of the EdQual Newsletter and it's focused firmly on teachers – head teachers, primary or secondary teachers, teachers of teachers. Teachers are the backbone of any form of quality education, whether they are inspiring their pupils face to face or writing distance learning modules.

The articles in this Newsletter range from the practical (sanitation in Ghana) to the hugely ambitious (Education For All by 2015), and from individual contributions (one PhD student in South Africa) to the involvement of EdQual in international television series and conferences.

"There is little point in providing the opportunity for a child to enrol in school if the quality is so poor that she will not attend, become literate, numerate and …equipped with skills for life"

www.unicef.org/girlseducation

Everywhere in the world there are examples of born teachers who enthuse their students despite impoverished environments. Most teachers develop their skills 'on the job', with support from Teachers' Colleges, professional workshops and each other. Where training and resources are inadequate, the quality of teaching and learning is affected. Again and again, research and researchers demonstrate that quality education is dependant on an adequate school infrastructure and environment, on teachers' and learners' communication skills and on school leadership. Environment is included in UNICEF's five elements of quality education; Dr Ola Uduku has surveyed schools in Ghana and South Africa to find out what effects the design of buildings has on a primary school. And as Audrey Msimanga found in the course of her PhD research, complex skills such as argumentation can only be an ideal when the basic skills of teacher science talk have still to be learnt. And in the Sources for Resources section of this Newsletter, we highlight the work of TESSA, a programme supporting teachers in sub-Saharan Africa.

We hope teachers and those who work with them will find this Newsletter interesting and stimulating – we hope you will give us feedback and contribute to our research projects by sharing your own experiences and discoveries, whether positive or negative. How do you use ICT? How do you run a lesson with over 60 pupils? How do you teach pupils who do not understand the language you speak? How do you find support and encouragement under difficult circumstances? Do contact us—details are on the back page.

"Teachers who are committed to their profession and who are willing to engage with pupil learning, parents who value education, and pupils who are also committed to learning themselves, should be the key players to achieve quality education."

Tanzanian Education experts talking to EdQual's SeeQ researchers

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For more information on EdQual or to download a copy of this news-letter please visit www.edqual.org

Quality School Buildings for Quality Education

Dr Ola Uduku
Edinburgh College of Art, UK

EdQual is supporting a number of small scale Research Projects; one of these is "Schools as Development Hubs for Learning", led by Dr Ola Uduku, of Edinburgh College of Art, UK. She is working with Prof. George Intsiful of KNUST (Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology), Ghana and Dr Jeremy Gibberd, CSIR Built Environment, South Africa.

Research in education theories and practices often focuses on areas like learning outcomes, how teachers teach or how the curriculum is designed. This project is different. The researchers are architects and they are interested in how an African primary school's buildings and layout can best support the children's learning.

Over the past year, the team has surveyed nine case-study schools in remote and peri-urban areas in South Africa and Ghana, including the Western Cape, Kwazulu Natal and Gauteng regions of South Africa, and the Kumasi region in Ghana. They have interviewed school staff as well as key people in the education and planning ministries. They have also filmed a day in the life of each school, and surveyed typical classrooms and other teaching areas. Back at their desks they have analysed the class sizes and performance at each school over 5-10 years.

Researchers in Ghana

Overall, their Report shows a case of hope and experience seldom meeting. Many of their findings will be sadly familiar to teachers working in primary schools across Africa but they also found some surprises.

> "In most of the areas surveyed, staff and pupils have to work with buildings and facilities that just weren't designed for the 21st century."
>
> *Ola Uduku*

Not surprisingly, those with better facilities have higher enrolment figures and are more in demand but in spite of inadequate buildings and resources, all the schools show good exam performances. It's a credit to the teachers that they are able to produce these good results despite their surroundings.

"when class numbers exceed forty, one is not teaching; one is using crowd control."

South African primary school teacher

Overcrowding is a key issue that featured prominently, particularly in the urban schools. School planners in both countries base their school building plans on the UNESCO design standards but these have not changed to take account of migration to the townships and peri-urban areas. Add to this the "fee-free" education policy in both countries and you have more children than ever being enrolled at all primary levels.

Some schools have devised ways to cope, while others struggle. One school in Ghana has adopted a whole shift system with the equivalent of two schools using the same facilities; one in the morning, one in the afternoon, switching around each month. But simply having so many pupils affects practical as well as educational aspects of the school; cooking and eating space, sanitation, and sharing already limited resources such as ICT.

Health proved to be a major issue, exacerbated by overcrowding and the inadequate school building design. In South Africa, many pupils are already exposed to AIDS related illnesses and many are orphans looked after by their extended families. In Ghana, pupils face regular health problems related to malaria and other tropical diseases. In both cases, poor healthcare on top of the normal state of affairs leaves the children quickly exposed to infections, which can spread rapidly in crowded schools.

Sanitation is a typical example of these health issues being affected by inadequate school building design; all the schools visited have access to some sort of water supplies, but actual latrine or toilet provision is poor and sometimes appalling. In Ghana for example the case study schools have very limited access to pipe-borne water. In both countries, the toilets surveyed simply weren't designed to cope with the numbers using them. Plus the planners hadn't taken into account how many pupils wouldn't know how to use them, having poor or no sanitation facilities in their homes.

The researchers found other cases where plans and reality didn't meet. For example, in both countries the original school plans included widespread ICT access. So in South Africa the surveyed schools often have whole rooms designed for computers …but no computers. In Ghana the electricity supply is frequently interrupted, making the use of ICT almost impossible even in schools which have computers.

The researchers also discussed with the schools how they might share their library or ICT facilities with their local communities. In practice only a few already did this or felt able to do it. Local control of administration or resources, lack of security or funding, as well as the schools' design and layout made after-school use very difficult.

Dr Uduku and her team are planning to publish their findings both as an academic Report, and also as a handbook targeted at local schools and education administrators. They will include a number of recommendations, such as providing library and ICT resources that work in the classroom instead of needing their own buildings, and adopting sanitary systems designed for high user rates. They have also suggested a number of potential joint projects between Ghanaian and South African institutions.

Both the Report and the handbooks will be available at www.edqual.org or by contacting EdQual (cf contact details on the back page).
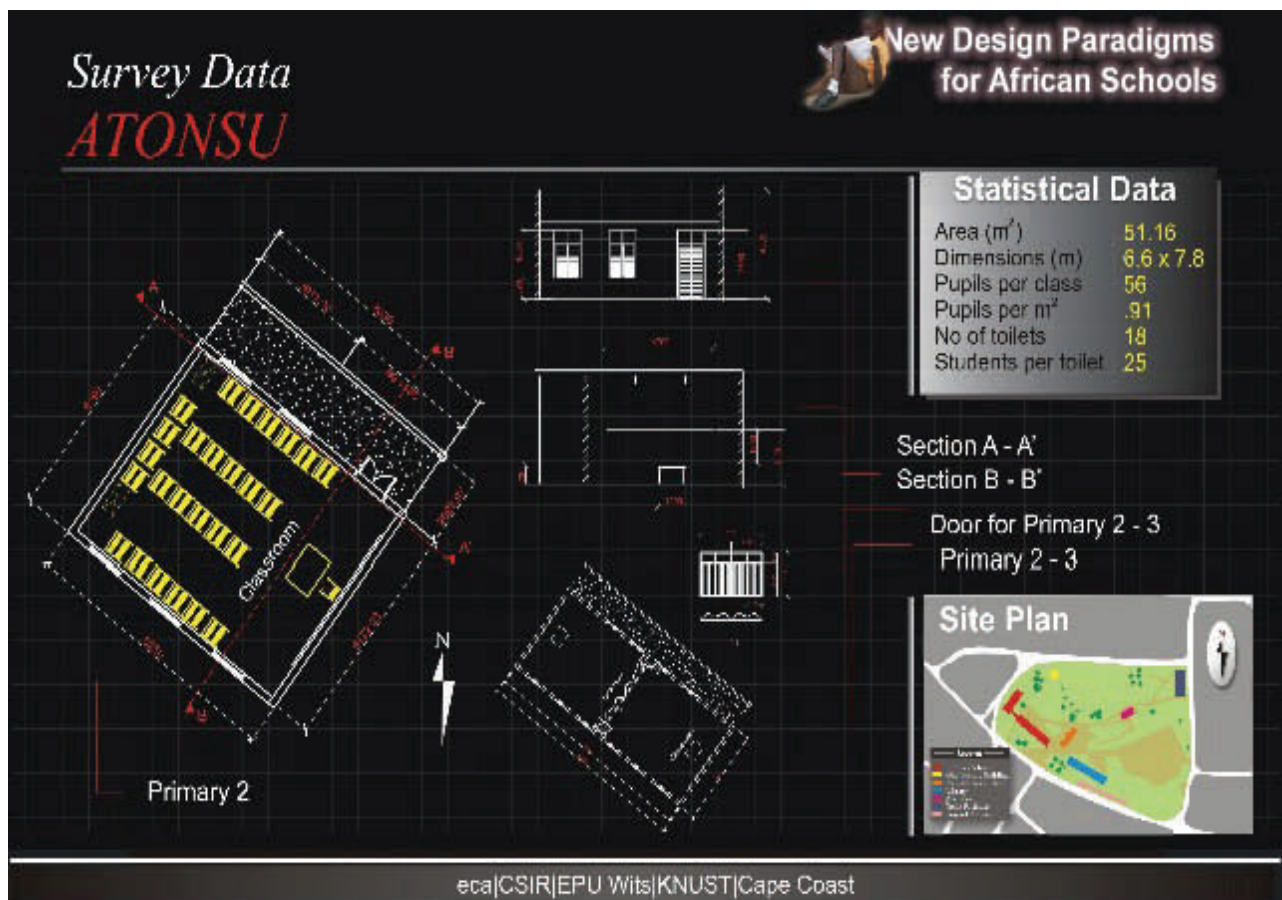
Research Site Plan for Atonsu Primary School. Ghana

Source: Dr Ola Uduku, Edinburgh College of Art, UK

Please send news and reviews for our next issue to Ellie.Tucker@bristol.ac.uk or to your in-country institutional coordinator.

Comparing Research and Experience – SeeQ Project Findings

EdQual's School Effectiveness and Educational Quality (SeeQ) Project is using statistical analysis and consulting local experts to find out what makes schools effective in sub-Sahara Africa.

The approach taken by the SeeQ researchers contrasts with that of Ola Uuku and her architectural colleagues. Dr Uduku's team has looked at how the practical aspects of education in African schools affect their results. SeeQ starts with data and information on pupil performance, and pupil and school characteristics, from a very large number of schools.

The statistics analysed by the SeeQ team are collected by governments within the SACMEQ Consortium (Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality). SACMEQ II data consists of reading and numeracy results from tests sat by 40,000 pupils and their teachers in 14 countries in Southern and East Africa. It also includes data on pupil, class and teacher characteristics as well as on the schools themselves.

The SeeQ team aim to estimate the contribution of the school characteristics to the pupil and teacher performances, using the latest statistical techniques.

Alongside the statistical research, the team are consulting educational policy makers, teachers and other key stakeholders, principally in mainland Tanzania, Zanzibar and South Africa.

Does repetition raise performance?

One key difference between the practitioners' views and the statistical research has already come up; on pupils repeating a grade. Few of the practitioners thought that repetition at Grade 6 or the number of times a grade was repeated has much of an effect on the pupils' results. But the SACMEQ data suggests that the number of times a grade is repeated has a negative effect on the pupil's performance – except for a single repetition at Grade 6.

In most other respects the practitioners have agreed with the statistical research about which factors most affect pupil achievement. School factors that most strongly appear to raise pupil achievement are
- Teacher subject knowledge and skill
- Head teacher's academic qualification
- Overall school resources as well as the school's library facility and policy, availability of exercise books and pens.


Classroom in Tanzania

School factors that appear to reduce pupil achievement are
- Large class sizes
- High pupil absenteeism
- Teacher behaviour problems (eg absenteeism)

The 'class size' factor echoes the findings in Dr Uduku's research as well as numerous other projects – overcrowding makes both teaching and learning difficult. It could be assumed that this might also affect pupil absenteeism and teacher behaviour problems.

Language of instruction matters
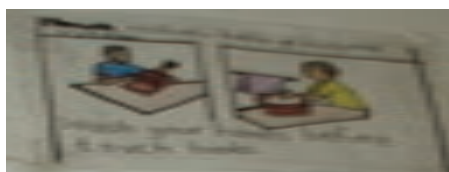
School sign in Tanzania

Language of schooling is a hotly debated issue in Tanzania. It is the subject of another EdQual Project – the Language & Literacy research in Ghana and Tanzania. The Tanzanian and Zanzibarian experts consulted by the SeeQ team could not agree on whether the language used in schools should be English or Kiswahili but all felt strongly that the language children are taught in matters enormously.

But it's people's attitudes that count for so much

The key factors identified by those actually working in and with schools were to do with people and their attitudes. They were very clear—

> "Teachers who are committed to their profession and who are willing to engage with pupil learning, parents who value education, and pupils who are also committed to learning themselves, should be the key players to achieve quality education."

Source: Dr Guoxing Yu, University of Bristol UK

How do these views compare with yours? The SeeQ Research Team would be very interested in your experiences; what have you found that helps or hinders quality education? Their University of Bristol contact details are on the back page of the Newsletter.

Who Runs the Lesson – the Teacher or the ICT?

"I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand." (www.ngsir.netfirms.com/)

The Kigali Institute of Education (KIE), Rwanda, is leading EdQual's Use of ICT to Support Basic Education in Disadvantaged Schools and Communities Project. The Project team are designing and evaluating teacher development initiatives that will raise teachers' competence and confidence to use ICT in teaching and learning and introduce communities to ICT.

The debate over what dictates the quality of a lesson, whether it's the teacher or the teaching and learning resources, is long-running. ICT often stands accused of encouraging teachers to 'tell not teach'. As part of their EdQual research, KIE has been running a series of workshops that look at how ICT can be used to *support* the teacher, without taking over the lesson or replacing sound teaching skills.

Much of the feedback from the teachers involved confirms all the advantages and convenience that makes ICT so attractive to teachers.

"explaining information with the help of power point makes the teacher confident because some definitions are given and illustrations are very clear"

"preparing the lesson takes a short period"

"learners are highly motivated; they are curious and eager to manipulate things"

Rwandan teachers

Pupil and teacher in South Africa (UNESCO)

But the research also highlighted how it is possible for teachers to become over-dependent on powerpoint. For example, although some teachers reported significant time savings when using ICT, the time saved was not always devoted to the preparation, explanations, exercises and sharing that make for quality teaching.

"teaching [with ICT] takes a short time compared to traditional teaching learning style"

"it's easy to teach using ICT"

Rwandan teachers

In one workshop, the researchers showed primary and secondary school teachers a film of three lessons being taught using ICT. The teachers' criticisms of what they saw confirmed that even ICT cannot replace basic teaching skills, and that there is a danger of ICT allowing an inexperienced teacher to avoid actively engaging with the pupils. Some of those watching felt keenly that a teacher's work should be to facilitate but that most of the work should be done by the pupils.

Handwritten teaching in Tanzania

"use of power point does not apply to some topics; a teacher has to write something in addition to verbal explanations."

Rwandan teacher

"it is not easy to teach maths using power point; some things require practical calculations on the chalk board".

Rwandan Maths teacher

Pupils at individual keyboards in Rwanda

As ever, the secret will be to capture the advantages of using ICT without losing the teaching skills that keep ICT in its place - as a tool, not a teacher.

Source: Mr Alphonse Uworwabayeho, KIE Rwanda

Between Languages

*Dr Noah Mtana,
Morogoro Teachers' College,
Tanzania*

Morogoro Teachers' College (MTC) is a leading teacher education institution in Tanzania. Noah Jonas Mtana is a respected Head of Department at MTC with over ten years experience of teaching in primary schools. He is also a researcher on the EdQual Language & Literacy Project in Tanzania and speaks with authority on the role of language in teaching in Tanzania. His article looks at what teacher educators from Morogoro Teachers' College say about improving communication in school classrooms in Tanzania.

Teacher Educators in Tanzania discuss teaching teachers

It is generally accepted that clear pupil-teacher communication is crucial to the transfer of knowledge in a classroom. This process can be undermined by a variety of factors. For example, the inexperienced use of resources such as ICT and the overcrowding endemic in peri-urban schools are discussed elsewhere in this Newsletter. But a discussion among senior MTC teacher educators on Improving Communication in Classrooms highlighted a more fundamental threat to communication.

"There are teachers still who think teaching is only telling.. . . . they have to get away from relying on talk and chalk".

There are some very professional and effective teachers out there, they say, but there are others who "still think that teaching is only telling". In the opinion of the educators, inadequate teaching skills mean that classroom communication in primary and secondary schools and even in some teachers' colleges, in Tanzania is poor, and frequently one-way from teacher to student. One-shot training workshops are not enough to broaden these teachers' day to day classroom communication techniques, yet they are rarely offered sustained school-based professional development.

ELIMU KWA WOTE

"Education For All"

But even 'talk and chalk' relies on being understood.

As in many African countries, language of instruction is a major issue. In Ghana, the change in language is around year three in primary school. In Tanzania children are taught in one language in primary schools and in a different language in secondary schools; Swahili at primary level and English at secondary. This is regardless of the language they use at home or have grown up with. For many it is a case of not only learning a whole new language, but of learning how to apply it to academic situations and subjects. As one senior educator said "after seven years of using Swahili at school, the students have to switch to English before they are even competent enough in academic Swahili". The situation is worse, say the senior educators at MTC, if the new language is taught badly in primary school and is not used for daily communication outside classrooms.

*Language issues in Botswana—
"I left school as standard [year] two. My class teacher used to speak very fast and I did not understand Setswana or English. I was not following learning instruction. I failed all the class tests"
        - early school leaver in Botswana 2007*

There is an ongoing debate in Tanzania as to whether Swahili should be used in secondary education, at least at early year stages, or if improving teachers' classroom skills will reduce the problem. English is still felt by many to be important enough to remain the language of secondary schools. Which leaves the issue of the transitions – from a preschool home language to the language of the primary school, and then to the language of the secondary school.

Who will teach the pupils these languages of instruction, and who will teach the teachers? Most importantly, how quickly can the lack of communication between teacher and learner be resolved? These are questions that the Language and Literacy Project team are facing in their research, with Dr Mtana as a valued member of the team.

Literacy and Language Development Through Primary Education is an EdQual Project led by the University of Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. Many children in Sub Saharan Africa are taught in a language which is not their first language; the project will identify practical strategies that teachers can use to help learners cope with the transition from an African language to English, in Tanzania and Ghana.

Science Talk –
Teaching Strategies that Promote Learner Participation

Audrey Msimanga, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

Audrey Msimanga is an EdQual-sponsored PhD Student based at Wits University, South Africa. Her doctoral study is supporting the research led by the EdQual ICC Project team (Implementing Curriculum Change to Reduce Poverty and to Increase Gender Equity).

The new curriculum in South Africa includes teaching strategies designed to promote learner participation in science. My doctoral thesis investigates these strategies; specifically whether and how teachers are using them. I have a particular interest in argumentation, one of the key skills identified for critical thinking in the new curriculum.

Argumentation involves developing the ability to use evidence to support a theory or inform decision-making. In the school science curriculum, argumentation can be used as a learning method, as part of discussions and group interaction. I have been reviewing the relevant literature and presenting to teachers on this subject.

However, after a series of classroom observations on teaching and learning in our schools, I have decided to look at science talk in general. Argumentation as defined by the curriculum requirements is proving a step too far for many of the teachers and pupils I observed; I am investigating how teachers can get learners to engage in ordinary but meaningful talk on science concepts.

My observations from science classrooms in South Africa are that pressures inside the classroom can inhibit both learning and teaching.

For example, where teachers are under pressure to complete the syllabus and prepare learners for examinations, they resort to teacher talk, to questioning for recall, and copious note giving.

Often the classes are very large and some are over-crowded, resulting in lecturer-style lessons and insufficient time on task. Sometimes there is a weakness in the teacher's skills – some teachers who do attempt to engage learners in discussions are not sure how to handle the ensuing debate.

Many learners simply do not talk. And even where discussion is successfully initiated, learners cannot formulate the kinds of arguments envisaged for argumentation. Usually it is the top achievers who make the assertions and claims, but arguments tend to degenerate to uncoordinated or defensive talk.

Interestingly, learner interactions outside the classroom contrast with what goes on inside the classroom. Discussions are characterised by the same lack of coordination but participants insist on evidence or grounds on which claims are made as well as clear links.

Science Teacher in South Africa

I have found that although learners have difficulty expressing their thinking in science classrooms, they do possess the capacity to do so. Perhaps the first task should be to get them talking and then progress towards the highly structured arguments envisaged for argumentation.

Source: Andrey Msimanga,
University of Witwatersrand South Africa

Basic mathematical and scientific knowledge can help communities combat HIV/AIDS, improve nutrition and manage their environment sustainably. Disadvantaged groups, including girls, face barriers to achieving in maths and science subjects. EdQual researchers are working with teachers in South Africa and Rwanda to design initiatives that will support schools to improve student learning and promote mathematical and scientific literacy in their local communities. Outcomes will be trialed in Pakistan to assess their suitability for another cultural context.

Education for All by 2015 - Will sub-Saharan Africa Make It?

In April 2000 in Dakar, Senegal, 164 countries sat down to work out how they could ensure that by 2015 every person in the world benefits from a proper basic education. The result was the six goals of 'Education for All' (EFA);
1) expand & improve early childhood care and education
2) provide free & compulsory universal primary education by 2015
3) equitable access to learning & life-skills programmes
4) achieve a 50% improvement in adult literacy rates
5) eliminate gender disparities in primary & secondary education by 2005 & at all levels by 2015
6) improve all aspects of the quality of education

Almost every year since, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) has published its Global Monitoring Reports. The GMR08 marks halfway to 2015 and looks at progress across all six goals. The good news from the GMR08 is that the number of children starting primary school has increased sharply since 2000; there are more girls in school than ever before and spending on education and aid has risen. On the down side, poor quality, the high cost of schooling and high levels of adult illiteracy are undermining the chances of achieving EFA by 2015.

The Education for All Development Index (EDI), calculated for 129 countries, shows that 25 of them are far from achieving EFA. Around two-thirds of these are in sub-Saharan Africa. And those are just the countries for which there is data. In addition, it may be assumed that most countries for which data is not available, will not achieve the goals.

The Colloquium on EFA\GMR, held in London in January08 included contributors from EdQual and CREATE RPCs. Participants observed that not only are the EFA goals interlinked (e.g. enrolments and quality in primary education are related to adult literacy and participation in early childhood care and education) but also that progress in education is interdependent with other sectors, such as health.

Sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the furthest to go but also the one making the greatest progress, particularly in access to primary education. Most African countries are categorised as having a low chance of achieving universal primary enrolment by 2015 but Rwanda is the only African country for which data is available that is considered at serious risk of not having primary education available to all by 2015. Not surprisingly, countries where primary enrolments rose sharply had generally increased their education spending, added to which, aid for basic education in low income countries more than doubled between 2000 and 2004.

Tanzania is an example of this success with the greatest rise in primary enrolments between 1999 and 2005; it achieved universal primary education in 2005. And while Ghana has recently achieved gender parity in primary education, 118 of 172 countries missed the gender parity index. Although the differences in performance have narrowed between girls and boys, they are still significant among other groups, such as poor, rural, urban slum, and marginalised indigenous and minority pupils.

Success has brought new challenges though; the most important one is keeping children in school. Since 1999, less than 63% of pupils reached the last grade of primary school in at least 17 sub-Saharan African countries. This high drop out rate is symptomatic of a number of quality issues. Language, school resources and environments, teaching skills and leadership are all subjects of EdQual's research projects featured in this Newsletter.

But the GMR also highlights successful initiatives; Cambodia now has scholarships, feeding and school health programmes, remedial classes, improvements to teacher training and funds to encourage teachers to work in hardship areas. In Pakistan, a mentoring programme improved the skills of 8000 teachers to teach multigrade classes more effectively. Zambia's *New Breakthrough to Literacy* course improved children's literacy in both a local language and in English during the first two primary school years. India has launched the world's first dedicated education satellite for distance learning courses.

Other country case studies and background papers, including EdQual's, are available on the UNESCO website; http://gmr.uis.unesco.org/.   Source: Dr Angeline Barrett, University of Bristol UK & UNESCOPRESS

Local Television — Mediae's Approach to Communication

Television is growing fast in rural Africa and has already reached saturation in urban areas, including slum dwellings, as one of the most popular ways of accessing news and entertainment. After news, locally produced dramas are the most popular viewing, preferred over imported shows with higher quality production. This makes television an important vehicle for research programmes such as EdQual to communicate with a broad audience, including teachers, pupils and parents.

Mediae produce just such a programme in Kenya, which is transmitted across East Africa. Makutano Junction is a television drama series that both entertains and educates its audience on issues related to health, gender equality, agriculture, education HIV/AIDS and citizenship. With the support of DFID, Ford Foundations and others, Mediae has trained a local team of ten scriptwriters, actors and a film crew to produce the programmes and it has already shown four 13-episode series.

Angeline Barrett and Rosemary Bosu, both EdQual researchers with responsibility for communications, took the opportunity to contribute EdQual research findings directly to the storyline of a future series. They worked with one of the scriptwriters, Naomi Kamau, herself a former teacher, to construct a storyline that illustrates EdQual's positions on such quality issues as medium of instruction and dependence of quality on context, as well as raising questions around the impact of the mushrooming private sector on quality and the challenge of making pre-school education more widely available.

Readers in Ghana look out for it — *Makutano Junction* will be appearing on your TV screens in 2008.

Actors and TV crew ready to film a scene for 'Makutano Junction', focusing on ethnic conflict. This was filmed two months before the recent disturbances in Kenya….

The 'think tank' - the scriptwriters put all their ideas for a story on a board for contributions, discussions and criticisms.

Source: Dr Rosemary Bosu, University of Cape Coast Ghana
Dr Angeline Barrett, University of Bristol UK

Mediae are a communications organisation working in television, video, radio and print, as well as media research and training. They also advise NGOs, donor organisations, and government departments on appropriate communication strategies. The organisation focuses mainly on rural and peri-urban communities whose access to information, new ideas and education is often limited and works with the local audience to involve them in the programme production at all stages They also train the people they work with, and aim to develop communications that are appropriate, informative and sustainable.

The TESSA Programme

Teacher in South Africa

> *"Teaching is a job you must love and dedicate yourself to, to better who you are and to become a role-model for your learners and the community"*
>
> Mrs Muikweni,
> teacher, South Africa

> *"A teacher is someone who gives you the green light to knowledge. Teachers are our future."*
>
> Goduka Andiswa
> (aged 15) South Africa

Teacher in Sudan

> *"Using TESSA resources is the best way to teach science. I have used group discussions which resulted in good responses from my students who have thoroughly understood the lessons. I have found myself as a teacher, so I will adopt it for the rest of my life'*
>
> Fawziya, teacher,
> Al Jazirah State of Sudan

TESSA has created a multi-lingual (Arabic, English, French, Kiswahili) bank of web and text-based teacher training materials, including audio resources. Over one hundred academics and one thousand teachers have been involved in designing TESSA's programme and materials.

The Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) Programme's primary aim is to research and develop resources and systems that can help to significantly improve teacher education and meet the challenges of providing universal basic education by 2015. It is a research and development programme that aims to contribute to a better understanding of the factors and variables that facilitate the successful building of new models of provision in teacher education across Sub-Saharan Africa.

TESSA is an international partnership comprising 9 countries in Africa, 13 universities and 5 other international organisations. The participating countries are Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Rwanda, Sudan, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia and include EdQual's partners KIE in Rwanda and the University of Cape Coast in Ghana.

The Programme began in 2005, with the first phase focusing on basic education and aiming to deliver the following:

- A series of teacher-support modules, in different versions to fit national and local contexts, including local language versions.
- The adaptation of these materials for use across nine countries reaching up to half a million teachers
- A web site that will be Africa's largest on-line repository focused on teacher education and training
- The development of a range of audio and radio resources broadcast through the BBC World Service and for web-based use
- Research that will inform further development of the programme and publication of data on the TESSA development process. This includes a major research study: "Teachers' Lives in Challenging Rural Contexts"
- To engage in a dialogue with teacher educators across the region

TESSA provides a flexible resource specifically for local school-based and school–supported education and learning for teachers. The TESSA materials are free to use, adapt and share. These are focused on classroom practice in five module areas: literacy, numeracy, science, life skills, social studies and the arts and include 2250 classroom based activities. They are designed to support all teachers, including those with little or no formal training.

For more information and to access resources for teachers log onto www.tessafrica.net

Free Information and Resources

A Google search on 'teaching resources primary subSaharan Africa' can produce over 70,000 links. The links on these pages are a few of the reputable international sources of teacher support material. We hope these will be helpful to you; please contact us with details of any other sources you can recommend using the contact details on the back page.

UNESCO

www.unesco.org/education

You can access free downloadable material on the UNESCO website through the link to Education, and into Themes (eg. Primary Education, Teacher Education) or Countries (eg. Africa, Burundi). Clicking Teacher Education will also take you to the TTISSA site – the Teacher Training Initiative for sub-Saharan Africa www.unesco.org/education/TTISSA.

There are also links to selected websites, such as the Global Learning Portal at www.glp.net. Most of the international resource materials here are free to download.

KALAFRICA

www.noe-kaleidoscope.org/group/kalafrica/en/

Kalafrica is a website-based source of information, news and networking for people interested in the design and use of learning technologies in Africa. It is part of the Kaleidoscope series of resources but focused only on Africa.

Researchers and research students particularly will find Kalafrica very helpful, but it also has links to useful material for those teaching with technology in Africa. For example, two of the linked websites offer curricula and resources, including maths and science literacy, and health education, for primary and secondary education; Curriki (www.curriki.org/) and Mindset (contact through Kalafrica).

Kalafrica also invites researchers and research students to join the international TeLearn (Technology Enhanced Learning) Network and hosts a blog and forum site for the exchange of ideas and questions. As the site develops, RSS feeds on resources will feed from TeLearn to the Kalafrica site.

The key contacts, Rosamund Sutherland of University of Bristol UK (ros.sutherland@bristol.ac.uk) and Nicolas Balacheff of Grenoble Computer-science Laboratory, France (Nicolas.Balacheff@imag.fr) handle queries in English or in French. Kalafrica is also actively supported by academics across the world, including Chile, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Zimbabawe, Norway, France, and Canada.

ELDIS

www.eldis.org or email eldis@ids.ac.uk

Eldis is a knowledge service run from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex, UK. Although mainly a website service, it does have telephone and postal contact details. It shares published documents on international education development, policy, practice and research. All are selected by the Eldis editorial team and available to download free of charge. (IDS is the copyright owner of materials on the website, except where otherwise indicated, and users need to check the conditions of use).

Eldis currently holds over 22,000 summarised documents from over 4,500 development organisations, including full text papers (mainly on international education research) and resource guides (giving quick access to key documents, organisations, discussions and other websites). It also carries country profiles.

The following examples of practical resources were found at www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/education/

A Practical Guide for Improving Gender Equity in African Universities is a toolkit for tertiary education institutions in Africa. Intended for academic leaders, managers, staff and students, it covers staff recruitment, student welfare, curriculum development and the general institutional culture.

A Practical Training Guide for Teachers of Multigrade Classes is for teachers who may have received little or no training in multigrade teaching. Although it was originally designed for teachers in Sri Lanka, it is suitable for use in a variety of settings where multigrade teaching is used, either as part of in-service training sessions or as self-study.

The Teacher Training Manual for HIV\AIDS Prevention and Care aims to train teacher educators using participatory active learning. Its eleven modules help teachers prepare teaching-learning plans, develop materials and devise assessment tools, as well as teaching life skills techniques and learner-centred activities.

Primary class, Nigeria

Please send news and reviews for our next issue to Ellie.Tucker@bristol.ac.uk or to your in-country institutional coordinator.
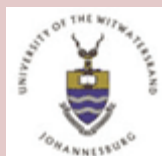
EdQual Publications

These papers are among those listed on the EdQual website and are free to download. They can also be obtained by contacting the EdQual team in Bristol, or your local institutional co-ordinator (cf left and below for details).

Initiatives to Improve the Quality of Teaching and Learning; a review of recent literature (2007). Background paper written by the team who authored the EdQual contribution to the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2008; A.M.Barrett, S.Ali, J.Clegg, J.E.Hinostroza, J.Lowe, J.Nikel, M.Novelli, G.Oduro, M.Pillay, L.Tikly & G. Yu. The paper focuses on issues and examples of recent initiatives to improve education quality, including meeting diverse learners' needs, curricula for relevant learning, and enabling teachers. The writers conclude that successful initiatives to improve education quality all strengthen the three–way relationship between teacher, learner and materials, and are responsive to social context.

Education Quality: Research Priorities and Approaches in the Global Era (2007) L.Tikly & A.M.Barrett. The paper was presented at the 9th UKFIET International Conference, University of Oxford, UK in September 2007. It sets out EdQual's views on what education quality means and the main characteristics of the RPC's approach to researching Education Quality in Africa. One of the key principles is that
 "any understanding of education quality in sub-Saharan Africa needs to be grounded in the realities and perspectives of Africa's policymakers, researchers, practitioners, learners and communities."

Implementing Curriculum Change Project Literature Reviews; Pakistan, South Africa and Rwanda (2007) R.Barwell, K.Bishop, S.Erduran, A.Halai, D.Iyamuremye, T.Nyabanyaba, N.F.Rizvi, S.Rodrigues, J.Rubagiza and A.Uworwabayeho. This comprehensive literature review focuses on the teaching and learning of science and mathematics in South Africa, Pakistan and Rwanda. It is concerned in particular with improving gender equity in science and maths classrooms, and the contribution of curriculum to poverty alleviation.

Report on a Needs Analysis Workshop with Headteachers and Ward Education Coordinators, Tanzania 15-16February 2007 (2007). This is a report from a workshop involving headteachers from primary schools in Tanzania. Participants felt strongly that a record of their discussions on such key issues as creating child-friendly environments, academic leadership and the skills that headteachers need to manage schools in decentralised systems would be valuable both to themselves and to other headteachers and education managers.

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