

# Managing Teachers' Resource Centres for Effective Teachers' Professional Development in Zanzibar

Mary Atanas Mosha

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Faculty of Education, University of Bagamoyo, P.O BOX 31285, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. E-mail:  
marymosha@hotmail.com.

## ABSTRACT

Teachers' Resource Centres (TRCs) were established in Zanzibar in 1996 with aim of upgrading pedagogical knowledge and skills of teachers who were teaching at primary schools without initial training. The centres are monitored by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training under the Department of Professional Services, Division of Teacher Education. This study investigated the management system at the Teacher Resource Centres and its effectiveness for teachers' professional development in Zanzibar. The study applied qualitative approach whereby interview schedules and documentary reviews were used to collect data. Findings from the study indicated that Zanzibar TRCs had effective management that played part in teachers' professional development but encountered with shortage of resources such as funds and teaching facilities to run their programmes effectively and efficiently. Moreover, the presence of computers that were not used by teachers and tutors as means of teaching and learning, books that were not at teachers' level and poor learning environment affected teachers' professional development at the TRCs. In addition, TRCs Coordinators were not trained on how to run the centres, and tutors on how to support/facilitate teachers in distance learning. In order for the management to function effectively then, TRCs need financial support from various sources such as the government, private sectors, NGOs, and stake holders to achieve the expected goals.

**Key words:** Managerial Skills, In-Service Training, Untrained, Unqualified, Pedagogy, Teacher Committees, Policy and Resources.

## INTRODUCTION

This study was done in nine Teachers' Resource Centres in Zanzibar where five of them are located in Unguja (A, B, C, D and E) and four are in Pemba (F, G, H and I). Zanzibar comprises of two main islands of Unguja and Pemba and a number of smaller islets along the western shores of the islands in the Indian Ocean. Administratively, Zanzibar has five regions-three in Unguja and two in Pemba each with districts (Bakari, 2008).

### Education Context

Education has long been a priority in the socio-economic policies and development strategies in Zanzibar.

Strengthening of the education system was a central goal of the Revolutionary Government. For instance, in September 1964, a policy of "Free Basic Education" was declared, and the government's aim was to make education more equitable by addressing imbalances and disparities in its provision (USAID, 2005). Since primary school education is fundamental to the strengthening of higher levels of education (URT, 1995), Zanzibar Ministry of Education came up with a number of policy documents addressing the issue of access, equality, and quality of education. For example, the (2006) Education Policy aims at improving the quality and effectiveness of education system by:

(1) Raising the quality of education so that the learners

will be able to develop their own skills and realize their potential as citizens;

(2) Improving education and training of teachers so that their knowledge and skills respond both to the changes and expectations in society and to the diverse students' needs;

(3) Providing learners with relevant skills required for life. In order to achieve objective two above, Zanzibar Ministry of Education, with support from Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), introduced TRCs in Zanzibar in 1993 that fully operated in 1996. The aim was to provide systematic academic and professional upgrading courses through cost effective techniques and minimizing the problem of having a large number of untrained and unqualified primary school teachers who were recruited without initial training (Qvist and Omar, 1996). Their establishment focused on the Ministry's key strategy of the qualitative improvement of education through ongoing in-service training of teachers and support. The rationale of using this approach was to decentralize training and bring professional development services closer to teachers as they operate in their own environment (ADEA, 2003). Their major role therefore, is based on teachers' professional development that is, to train the untrained teachers through distance education, develop, and support the trained teachers. However, the establishment of the TRCs in Zanzibar faced challenges on one hand; on the other hand they played part in reducing the number of untrained teachers (NTRC Annual Report, 2007/2008).

## THE CONCEPT OF TEACHERS' RESOURCE CENTRES

Teachers' Resource Centres originated in Britain in the 1950s for the purpose of providing teachers with a place where they could get assistance with professional developments, training for new tasks, discussion with their fellows, and recreation in a friendly atmosphere (Knamiller et al., 1999). According to Sabaya (2011), TRCs may vary according to subject specializations, geographical locations and unique environments, and working conditions of the schools from which the teachers come. Sabaya (2011) adds that TRCs are meant to make it possible for teachers to obtain professional support relevant to their particular needs in their classroom practices and general school work. Moreover, Giordano (2008) explains that TRCs are used for delivery of professional development activities such as in-service training and to support teachers instructionally. Furthermore, TRCs provide a meeting point for teachers and other stakeholders involved in education. They are places where teachers come together to discuss matters related to their work and where teaching and learning resources are housed (Hoppers, 1998 as cited in

Knamiller, 1999). According to Giordano (2008) and Khaniya (1997) TRCs centre strategies was an attempt to address the problems faced by teachers and schools in rural areas. From Giordano's and Khaniya's idea, one can find that TRCs of today have gone beyond the mentioned boundaries. Now they are addressing teachers' problems in both rural and urban areas with the aim of improving the quality of education. For instance, Knamiller et al. (1999) see TRCs as strategies that aim to provide professional support to teachers to enable them to perform effectively in their classrooms. Along with that, literature review shows that the concept of TRCs has proven to be flexible, adaptive, and organic wherever it has taken root but its subsequent evolution has been affected by social, political, administrative, and cultural environment (Mushi, 2003).

Additionally, Qvist and Omar (1996) explain that, TRCs provide on-going professional development and academic support to teachers as well as improving classroom instructional performance for the improvement of quality education. That meant that TRCs are crucial for teachers in the aspect of improving not only their profession but also knowledge of the subjects they are teaching at the schools. For instance, research shows that pedagogical content knowledge is highly specific to the concepts being taught, is much more than just subject matter knowledge alone, and develops over time as a result of teaching experience. What is unique about the teaching process is that it requires teachers to "transform" their subject matter knowledge for the purpose of teaching (Shulman, 1987). Considering the teacher as a primary agent for educational change, and access to resources as a major factor in educational quality, TRCs have been set up to administer support to teachers (Mac Neil, 2004 as cited in Giordano, 2008).

## THE DESIGNED PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMMES FOR TEACHERS IN ZANZIBAR TRCs

Zanzibar TRCs had three kinds of programmes designed for primary school teachers, namely, in-service training, workshops, and seminars. The programmes were implemented in different ways for different teachers according to their needs. For instance, in-service training was targeted to Form Three untrained teachers, Form Three with a grade IIIB Certificate, Form Four pass but untrained teachers, and Form Four fail and untrained teachers. Workshops and seminars were targeted to untrained teachers with consideration of the subjects they were teaching. The in-service training programme was designed to upgrade teachers academically and professionally.

The training was expected to end in 1999, but due to financial constraints, it was stopped for two years, which contributed to TRCs failing to achieve their objectives.

However, in 2003, the first intake completed its course whereby 355 teachers graduated as Grade IIIA teachers. In 2005 to 2008, 469 teachers completed the course in the second intake. The last intake had 699 teachers who completed their course in 2013, a higher number compared with the past two intakes. This is an indicator that TRCs played role in developing teachers academically and professionally. These positive achievements (results) would not be possible (realized) if there was no management system that managed the planned activities.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The overall aim of TRCs in Zanzibar was to support teachers, to enhance their skills academically and professionally and thereby improve teaching and learning process in the classrooms that would lead to quality primary education. Three intakes of teachers had completed their training at the TRCs since they were established in 1996. However, USAID (2005) report shows that only about 3% of pupils who sat for the standard seven examinations were selected to pursue secondary education. This means that majority of the students (97%) were not selected at all. It should be noted that the aim of introducing TRCs in Zanzibar was of two folds; to improve teachers' knowledge and skills so that they will play part in improving pupils' performance at the primary schools. This would be achieved if TRCs would have effective programmes, coherent management, and administration system that would enable them to achieve the stated objectives, and the major one being improving teachers' professionalism. It appears that little research has been done in Zanzibar concerning management system and its effectiveness in TRCs for teachers' professional development programmes that has a crucial role to play in students' performance. Therefore, the study was guided by four questions which were:

- (1) How are the Zanzibar TRCs managed?
- (2) How do they function?
- (3) What resources are available at the TRCs?
- (4) What are the problems that might have hindered the process of managing and functioning of the TRCs for effective teachers' professional development?

### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The quality of learning that students can access substantially depends on "the quality of teachers which in turn depends to some extent on the quality of professional development they have experienced" (Wanzare and Ward, 2000). In practice, teaching is a complex and demanding job that requires highly

specialized skills and knowledge to impact significantly on students' learning (Department of Education and Training-Victoria, 2005). Gaible and Burns (2005) argue that teacher professional development is the tool by which policy makers convey broad visions, disseminate critical information, and provide guidance to teachers. It is the instruction provided to teachers to promote their development in a certain area such as technology, reading instruction, and subject mastery. Furthermore, Hassel (1999) considered professional development as the process of improving staff skills and competencies needed to produce outstanding educational results for students. Professional development is a program of activities planned and carried out to promote the personal and professional growth of teachers. For instance, Shulman (1987) described an extensive knowledge base for teacher education. He identified seven categories of professional knowledge and four sources of such knowledge.

The seven categories were content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational context, and knowledge of educational ends and purposes. He mentioned the sources of the knowledge as scholarship in disciplines, educational materials and structure, formal educational scholarship, and the wisdom of practice. There is evidence that engaging teachers' in high quality professional learning is the most successful way to improve their effectiveness (Elmore and Burney, 1997 as cited in Hawley and Valli, 1999). Furthermore, Diaz-Maggioli (2004) argues that providing teachers with opportunities to work with colleagues is the hallmark of effective professional development. Currently, teacher professional development has been found to be a deliberate process guided by a clear vision of purpose and planned goals (Guskey, 2000). It is a "long-term process that includes regular opportunities and experiences planned systematically to promote growth and development in profession" (Villagers-Reimers, 2003).

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Teachers' Professional Development

Teachers' professional development is the process and activities designed to promote professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of teachers for the purpose of improving pupils' learning (Guskey, 2000). The purpose of professional development in education is to build and transform strong knowledge through teachers with the ambition to achieve excellence in education Compo (1997). That meant that teachers' professional development should be effective and successful in order

to improve pupils' learning which will lead to quality education in any country. Moreover, Gaible and Burns (2005) assert that in order to be effective, teachers' professional development should address the core areas of teaching-content, curriculum, assessment, and instruction.

Additionally, literature indicates clearly that there should be a number of criteria to guide and promote teachers' professional development programmes (Little, 1992; as cited in Villegas-Reimers and Reimers, 2000). However, Villegas-Reimers and Reimers (2000) contend that, teachers' professional development requires four types of growth: growth in knowledge, growth in skills, growth in judgment (classroom related), and growth in the contribution teachers make to a professional community. In this regard, Guskey (2000) argues that "viewing professional development as a special event of three or four days of the school year severely restricts the educators' responsibilities to learn". That meant that teachers need an opportunity to analyze the effectiveness of their current practice, and continually explore new alternatives and opportunities for improvement. For instance, the Department of Education and Training, Victoria (2005) asserts that in order to be effective, teachers need a deep understanding of their subject area knowledge of how pupils learn specific subject matter and a range of strategies and practices that support learning. Since quality education processes require well-trained teachers who are able to use learner-centred teaching and learning methods, and life skills approaches (Pigozzi, 2003), then TRCs have been given several roles to play to ensure rapid delivery of in-service training in order to enhance teachers' understanding of the content they teach.

It is through teachers' professional development provided at the TRCs that will enhance the quality of teaching that pupils receive in the classrooms. That is why Pollard and Tann (1993) maintain that high-quality education is not possible without the committed professionalism of teachers. They add that, the nature of teaching, professional development, and learning should never stop. This means that teachers need ongoing, sustained opportunities to develop knowledge and skills in order to teach effectively. Along with that, a number of studies have reported that the more professional knowledge teachers have, the higher the levels of pupils' achievement (National Commission on Teaching and American Future, 1996 as cited in Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Kimaro, 2005; Koda, 2006). This means that improving the quality of teaching at primary schools is a major concern and the demand of today's primary education calls for teachers who are well skilled and grounded in knowledge, values, and teaching strategies. That is why literatures for instance, (Mbunda, 1998; Villegas-Reimers and 2003; Giordano, 2008) insist teachers at all levels to have access to training, on-going

professional development and support because they are essential players in promoting quality education. So the establishment of the TRCs should aim at training untrained teachers as well as upgrading trained teachers for effective teaching and improved performance of learners. Looking at the foregoing evidences, it can be argued that professional development for teachers plays an essential role in improving the quality of education for all pupils, but Villegas-Reimers (2003) alleged that high-quality professional development should first, focus on teachers as central to pupils learning yet includes all other members of the school community. Secondly, it should enable teachers to develop further expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, uses of technologies, and other essential elements in teaching to high standards. Thirdly, it should promote continuous inquiry and improvement embedded in the daily life of schools. Fourthly, it should be planned collaboratively by those who will participate in and facilitate the development. Fifthly, it requires substantial time and resources that are driven by a coherent long-term plan. Lastly, they must be evaluated ultimately on the basis of its impact on teacher effectiveness and pupil learning; and this assessment guides subsequent professional developments efforts (Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

### **Management at the TRCs**

Management is the process of administering and coordinating resources effectively and efficiently in an effort to achieve the goals of the organization (Lewis et al., 1995). From the definition, TRCs should take into consideration the management aspect in order to achieve their goals by doing the right thing at the right time. Since the purpose of the management at the TRCs is to improve the quality of teaching in primary schools then, there must be a well-established and effective management and administrative machinery (Kaziri, 2003) but Kimaro (2005) found the interaction of educational leaders at Kibaha TRCs in Tanzania mainland minimal, on one hand; on the other hand, Mirambo (2007) found out that TRCs management in Iringa TRCs failed to design in-service training programmes which could assist teachers to improve their professionalism. Literature indicates clearly that good management requires that the resources are used in the most efficient way possible and that a high quality of product is maintained. However, resources alone will not be of value if the management team is not trained. Therefore, successful managers require both talent and skill since they can be developed through training, mentoring, and experience.

In order for the management to function well, Lewis et al. (1995) associate planning, organizing, leading, and controlling to the process of management where in planning; the organization should set goals and define the actions necessary to achieve those goals. In

organizing, the organization should determine the tasks that must be done, who will do them, and how those tasks will be managed and coordinated. Leading is motivating and directing the members of the organization so that they contribute to the achievement of the goals of the organization. Controlling refers to monitoring the performance of the organization, identifying variations between planned and actual results, and taking corrective action when necessary. There have been several changes and shifts in the management personnel of TRCs that are likely to influence the degree and direction of achieving the goals and objectives laid down by stakeholders (Mushi, 2003). For instance, the proceedings of the management workshop for TRCs held at Arusha from 19 to 25 July 1998 (Mbunda, 1998) revealed that there was:

- (1) Role confusion between the teaching and the coordination functions of TRCs.
- (2) Teachers had problems in day today responsibilities of running the TRCs.
- (3) A lack of clear administrative hierarchy in TRCs.
- (4) Some resource constraints ((Mbunda, 1998).

In Zanzibar, TRCs are nationally managed under the Department of Professional Services, Division of Teacher Education. Under this division there is a National Teacher Resource Centre Coordinator (NTRCC) who coordinates and organizes training for all TRCs based in the districts. The main objectives are:

- (1) To provide support and co-ordinate the cluster teacher centres;
- (2) To provide support in educational innovations and the use of low cost teaching and learning resources;
- (3) To provide in-service training to education supporting staff, like subject advisors, material writers, and other education related personnel;
- (4) To revise curriculum and suggest any technical changes;
- (5) To co-ordinate teacher support programmes with the aim of improving the status of teachers academically and professionally;
- (6) To improve the pedagogical skills of teachers through in-service trainings;
- (7) To improve school management by training school heads and members of school committees;
- To improve teaching/learning through TRC libraries and thereby help teachers to improvise learning materials;
- (9) To provide support in educational innovations and the use of low cost teaching and learning resources (National Teacher Recourse Centre, 1999).

### **Functions of the TRCs**

TRCs are centres for in-service training and are responsible for training teachers in active teaching methodologies in order to replace the traditional 'chalk and talk' (Giordano, 2008). Additionally, TRCs are

responsible in encouraging teachers to play an active role in educational innovation which can take the form of curriculum material development, adapting natural curricular, teaching methodology, and resource production. In order to achieve this, Tyler (2003) asserts that good training enables participants to gain new knowledge and skills as well as the attitudes. Furthermore, TRCs are responsible for the need to bring educational services closer to the schools as well as providing on-going professional support to teachers (Chonjo, 1998). This is done at the TRCs through distance learning programmes whereby teachers and tutors are separated in time and place. Additionally, TRCs serve as convenient places where government and other lovers promoters of education can make inputs for the enhancement of teachers and the teaching profession, provide for teachers' professional in-service training and development all together in recognition of the central and critical value of teachers in society. At the TRCs, teachers are able to get induction on how best to implement approved programmes, teach relevant courses, use appropriate teaching devices and materials, and assess students' progress and achievements.

The relationship between education policy makers, administrators of education, curriculum writers, publishers, school inspectors, teachers, and parents can best be promoted in the interest of school children and students (Sabaya, 2011). Drawing from what have been discussed, it can be said that professional development of teachers is necessary since the quality of learning depends on the quality of teachers which in turn depends to some extent on the quality of professional development they have experienced. That is why Knamiller et al. (1999) confirmed that quality teachers are the single greatest determiners of pupils' achievement. So, like other practitioners in other professions, teachers need to deepen their knowledge and improve their skills over the course in their career. Therefore, professional development through TRCs gives teachers at all levels the tools they need to approach classroom challenges with confidence.

### **Quality of the Trainers**

Trainers are considered to be essential in the TRCs training course programmes. Their experience is also a crucial factor in the quality of work. That meant that they need to be trained through various approaches and patterns to make them competent in such a way that they would be able to use several different strategies within space of one lesson. Therefore, quality trainers are very essential if learning is to be effective, but Mwashitete (2004) findings showed that there were no competent tutors at Ilaje TRCs in Mbeya region in Tanzania mainland. In addition to that, it is argued that good trainers need to use language which does not limit

trainees' responses as well as teaching and learning materials (Koda, 2006).

### **Financing TRCs**

The financing of TRCs is basically centralized. The need for financing is greatest in the PRESET and INSET programme development and management. Increased funding will update teacher trainers with latest content and pedagogical skills. Improved funding for TRCs will also improve the learning environment, thus leading to production of well trained and effective teachers. In addition to that, a well-trained and resourced pool of teacher educators means that they can produce competent teachers for the school, and also retrain the ones already in the schools. Adequate investment in teacher education, can therefore improve the profession much faster but most of the TRCs in Tanzania mainland are not operational (URT, 2000 to 2005). In Zanzibar TRCs are financed through contribution from teachers, students, and the communities but Knamiller et al. (1999) found that some communities were not able to finance the running of the centres because, in the first place they were unable to sustain themselves. In the same vein, Mirambo (2007) found communities in Iringa region did not regard TRCs as they belong to them. As a result, TRCs did not receive much support from the surrounding communities.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The objective of the study was to investigate the management system at the TRCs and its effectiveness to teachers' professional development in Zanzibar. The study utilized qualitative approach for the following reasons. First, the nature of the study needed interpretation rather than hypothesis testing. In this context, the researcher relied on the views of participants that allowed room to explore, discover, and seek inner meaning to get new perspectives. Secondly, the researcher chose this approach because of its methods of data collection (interview and documentary review) that enabled the researcher to collect detailed information from different groups of the informants. For instance, Kothari (2004) maintains that qualitative methodology puts emphasis on the qualities; process, and meaning that cannot be experimentally examined.

### **Research Design**

Case study design was used because it focuses on one particular study area or issue such as one region or one school, even if this has been criticized as descriptive and takes more of a qualitative than quantitative approach.

Kothari (2004) asserts that the case study approach

allows participants to speak for themselves, thereby enabling the situation to be seen through the eyes of participants. This triggered the researcher to use the case study design because it is often the best methodology for improving practice.

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

It is usually not possible to deal with the whole target group, and so one must identify a portion of the population called the sample (Kothari, 2004). The sample of the study included one National Teachers' Resource Centre Coordinator (NTRCC), one Head of Division, one Distance Education Officer, one Course Coordinator, nine TRC Coordinators and twenty seven tutors; three from each TRC. Others were nine head teachers; one from each of the selected primary schools, nine resource teachers, and nine subject advisors. The study had a sample of sixty seven people in total. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. For instance, the information collected from sample showed the extent to which the management had managed to achieve their objectives since the establishment of the TRCs as well as the problems that faced them in their day-to-day activities.

### **Data Analysis**

Cohen et al. (2000) assert that for qualitative data analysis the researchers have their disposal range of techniques for example; coding of field notes content analysis of field notes, case studies, narrative accounts, cognitive mapping, and seeking patterning of responses. They add that the criteria for deciding which forms of data analysis to undertake are governed both by fitness for purpose and legitimacy. Following these expositions the researcher utilized content analysis of field notes since the study was qualitative in nature. For instance, data collected through documentary review was subjected to content analysis in order to obtain latent meanings of the opinions described. This analysis technique was used because it would produce qualitative materials, which give deep meaning and a full understanding of certain opinions described in documentary evidence. Data from the interview were analysed following Holliday's (2002) strategy that data from all parts of the corpus were arranged under thematic heading.

### **RESULTS**

Findings from the study showed that Zanzibar TRCs had a well-organized administrative structure from top to bottom and they were nationally managed under the Department of Professional Services, Division of Teacher Education. The staffs were selected by the Ministry of

Education and Vocational Training according to experience and levels of education. All TRCs were coordinated by the NTRCC

#### **Qualifications and Roles of the Staff at Zanzibar TRCs**

##### ***The National Teachers' Resource Centre Coordinator (NTRCC)***

The NTRCC had diploma in education but with different roles, and his major role was to link the division of the NTRC and manage the library and the laboratory facilities at the TRCs in Unguja and Pemba. He was accountable to the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) by reporting all activities done at all TRCs every three months. Also he had to write an annual report to the Department of Education which is later sent to the Director at the MoEVT. Additionally, he had to do follow-up on TRCs administration, management, and the national activities done at all TRCs as well as making sure that all primary school teachers were trained. Since all TRCs were under the umbrella of NTRC, the study unearthed some of the achievements attained since they were established in 1996. The following were some of the achievements as provided by the National Coordinator: "TRCs have managed to improve teachers' professional development, link schools in their clusters, and involved schools in various activities. Additionally, TRCs have raised awareness, mobilization, and information sharing with the community".

##### ***Head of Division***

Findings from the study showed that the Head of Division was an experienced teacher with a diploma in education. Administratively, he was under the NTRCC. Results indicated that he was responsible for running and coordinating all activities as well as supporting all TRCs to fulfill their duties as prescribed in Zanzibar policy. Also he had a role of visiting all TRCs as well as writing reports quarterly to the MoEVT. In addition to that, he had to make sure all TRC Coordinators submit their reports of all activities done at their centres to the NTRCC quarterly. When asked how TRCs had contributed to teachers' professional development, this is what he said: "TRCs have helped teachers to upgrade themselves from lower to higher levels of education and brought them closer than before.

In addition, TRCs have raised teachers' awareness in such a way that they have an identity. Furthermore, TRCs have trained teachers on child- centred approach as well as reducing the number of untrained and under qualified teachers to the minimum". The provided positive points illustrated clearly that TRCs have played its role in developing primary school teachers in terms of

awareness, up-grading courses as well as training them in child-centred approach which is now needed at the schools for effective learning. These were possible because TRCs had effective management system.

##### ***Distance Education Officer***

Results from the study showed that under the Head of Division, there was a Distance Education Officer. He was also an experienced teacher with diploma in education. He was the overall in all distance learning activities as well as distributing the modules to the teachers to all TRCs. In addition to that, he was supposed to make sure that all programmes at the centres were managed and implemented accordingly in order to enable teachers to improve not only academically but also professionally. Besides, he was responsible in allocating and monitoring tutors at the centres according to their subjects of specialization as well as monthly allowances they were given which was found low compared to the work they were doing.

##### ***Course Coordinator***

Findings from the interview with Course Coordinator indicated that he was an experienced teacher with diploma in education. He was also responsible in all examinations in terms of preparation, moderation, and marking as well as unit exercises done by teachers at all centres. In addition to that, he was responsible in counseling teachers during in-service training.

##### ***TRC Coordinators***

Findings indicated that all nine TRCs had Coordinators. All had diploma in education. They were experienced teachers. For instance, seven Coordinators out of nine have been in that post for more than ten years. Two of them were new to the post because the former ones had retired. For example, data from documentary review showed that all Coordinators were responsible in managing the centres and making sure that they operated effectively and efficiently despite the fact that they had not attended any special managerial training apart from the normal teachers' training courses they had undertaken and their experience in teaching. Furthermore, it was found out that all TRC Coordinators had similar roles in managing their centres. Their roles were as follows:

- (1) To prepare development plan for their centres.
- (2) To plan three monthly action plans which focus on workshops, seminars, and the school based follow up work for subject advisors.
- (3) To ensure quality in-service training.
- (4) To coordinate and manage their staffs.
- (5) To prepare budget for TRC activities.

- (6) To monitor the progress of all plans.
- (7) To write reports on TRC activities.

All these were achieved through the cooperation from the Teacher Centre Management Committees (TCMCs), subject advisors, tutors, and resource teachers.

### **Teacher Centre Management Committees (TCMCs)**

Zanzibar TRCs had Committees whose members were the head teachers of the schools served by the centres. Their professional qualifications ranged from Form Four to Diploma level. For example, six head teachers out of nine had diploma in education while three were Form Four Leavers. Results revealed that the Committees were the main organs that managed all activities at the centres. In this view, TRC Coordinators were secretaries to the Committee meetings. It was also found out that the Committees were responsible in managing and addressing all matters pertaining TRCs. On top of that, they advised the TRC Coordinators and make sure that teachers' programmes were implemented as planned.

### **Subject Advisors**

Subject advisors at the centres worked according to the subjects of their specializations. The subject advisors had degrees and diploma in education. They played two roles: firstly, as tutors whenever there was a shortage of tutors at the centres and, secondly, they visited and advised teachers at the school in their clusters in subject wise. Furthermore, they had to manage and coordinate the resource teachers for their specific subject areas as well as identifying topic areas for focus. Other roles were explained by the Coordinators as follows:

- (1) To organize and run workshops and seminars every quarter of the year.
- (2) To carry out follow-up activities through school visits in their clusters (this was found difficult to them because of high number of schools in their clusters).
- (3) To keep up to date records of all workshops and seminars.
- (4) To coordinate and produce supporting materials for schools in connection with workshops every quarter in the form of booklets and handouts. (This was not active in all TRCs and the reason being that they had limited time and shortage of resources).

### **Tutors**

Twenty seven tutors were included in the study; three from each TRC. Results showed that they had different qualifications. For example, twenty one tutors had diploma in education, one had post graduate diploma, and five had degrees in education. Generally, results indicated that Zanzibar TRCs had enough, qualified, and experienced tutors to facilitate teachers at all centres.

Tutors had various roles to play as follows:

- (1) To conduct face to face sessions, share ideas with teachers, solve their problems, and guide teachers on how to design, produce and use of teaching and learning materials at low costs.
- (2) To mark exercises, assignments, and examinations each year.
- (3) To observe teachers during teaching practice.
- (4) To make a follow-up of teachers who had completed in-service training at the TRCs teaching at various schools in their clusters.
- (5) To provide guidance and counseling to the teachers at all TRCs.

### **Resource Teachers**

The interview with TRC Coordinators showed that resource teachers had certificates and diploma in education. It was also found out that they were crucial and they had various roles to play at the TRCs as follows: To work together with the subject advisors in assessing the needs of the teachers in their clusters through needs analysis and to plan and facilitate seminars and workshops at the TRCs. The study found the resource teachers important because they were models to the teachers by participating in micro-teaching lessons during workshops at the TRCs.

### **Availability of the Resources and Their Functions**

The study investigated the availability of the resources and their functions at the centres. Results indicated that all nine TRCs had financial, human, and physical resources. Physical resources were as follows: offices, computer rooms, classrooms, stores, laboratories, furniture, televisions and videos, toilets, and libraries. The study examined the extent to which the resources were capable of proper functioning of TRCs for effective teachers' professional development. Findings revealed that all TRCs had shortage of resources. For instance, classrooms were fully utilized during the face to face sessions, workshops, and seminars but in some of the centres like E and F the number of teachers was high. It was difficult for such centres to accommodate more than forty teachers at a time because of the nature of the classrooms that were small. For instance, there were some occasions where one chair was shared by two teachers in the class (centre E).

In order to minimize the problem, the store was used as a classrooms but the situation did not motivate teachers and tutors in the whole process of teaching and learning. Apart from the classrooms, libraries were also investigated. Findings from the interview with all nine Coordinators indicated that they were faced with shortage of update textbooks and references related to the programme. That meant that tutors depended only on



**Figure 1.** Main building (right) and unfinished Hall (left) at TRC in Pemba.

teachers' modules because they did not have time to visit other libraries that existed in Zanzibar due to many responsibilities they had. From the findings, only one library was active and used by pupils, secondary, and University students in Unguja. In Pemba for instance, the Coordinator said, "Students from the Open University of Tanzania are the main user of this library instead of our tutors and primary school teachers". Moreover, the researcher found tutors in the libraries marking teachers' work because they did not have offices/staffrooms. Figure 1 shows unfinished hall and the main building of one of the centres in Pemba. In Figure 1 from the left is the unfinished hall, and to the right is the main building that has Coordinator's office, a store, a classroom, a library and a computer room.

The building was small with comparison to number of things it was accommodating. The presence of unfinished hall blocked the possibility of the centre to manage and use some of the resources as planned. For example, the hall was built through efforts of the centre together with help from the school communities that would be used as a source of income but it was not yet completed because of shortage of funds. The Coordinator said, "We do not have money. If there were funds, then constructions would not have been stopped because the hall is one of the ways of generating income at our centre". The centre had no conducive teaching and learning environment that could attract both teachers and tutors. The study also explored the extent to which computers were managed and how beneficial they were to the teachers. Findings from the interviews with Coordinators showed that there were computers in all TRCs but they were not functioning. One of them said, "Our computers are not working at all. You see, they are covered with dust here". Tutors and teachers had no access to computers even though they were meant for them. Photocopier machines

found were not working and the main reason was lack of funds to maintain them. Besides, televisions and videos that were found at the centres were not used by tutors as a method of teaching or teachers' means of learning, but used by the staff contrary to the objective of the programme.

### **Problems that Faced Management at the TRCs**

Results from the interview with all nine TRC Coordinators showed that they were faced with shortage of funds to manage and run their programmes effectively as well as other planned activities whereby seventeen tutors out of twenty nine (58.6%) said that they had problem in communication with teachers in English at the TRCs during face-to-face sessions that might have been affected the quality of the training. To a large extent shortage of resources such as relevant books according to the level of learners, shortage of teachers' modules, few classrooms, and computers hindered tutors' possibilities in supporting teachers effectively. Coordinators were faced with challenges on how to manage and accomplish their long plans.

### **DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS**

Regarding management, the study found a well-organized administrative structure in all nine Zanzibar TRCs contrary to Mushi (2003) and Mirambo (2007) who found TRCs in Tanzania mainland with no uniform system of managing TRCs as well as lack of clear administrative hierarchy. Findings also differed from Mbunda (1998) that TRCs in other regions had problems such as confusion between teachings and the coordination, lack of clear administration, and shortage of

resources. In Zanzibar for instance, Coordinators were supervisors for all activities planned at the TRCs. They were found active, qualified, experienced, committed, hardworking, and competent but faced with various challenges. Also they were able to manage and monitor teachers' programmes at their centres even though they had not taken any special training/course on management of education institutions. However, it is very dangerous to have such untrained people to run such very important institutions because it might hinder the effectiveness of TRCs in achieving their targeted goals.

The presence of TCMCs that managed all activities enabled the Coordinators to address all matters pertaining TRCs as they plan together. This means that Zanzibar Coordinators were not the only decision makers on what to do at the TRCs which are of advantage. Under the Coordinators, there were subject advisors who were working hand in hand with Coordinators to make sure that TRCs' programmes were managed and implemented as planned even though they were faced with shortage of resources. Besides, they managed to follow up teachers at the schools and see the way they utilize skills and knowledge learned at the TRCs as one way of improving the quality of teaching at the primary schools. Additionally, the subject advisors and tutors were working together with the Coordinators in order to upgrade teachers' professional development. In regard to how the staff was selected, the study found Zanzibar TRCs with transparent appointment procedures to select its staff from top to bottom. All staff was selected by the MoEVT according to their qualifications but not according to the needs of the TRCs.

In terms of qualifications, findings from the study indicated that all TRC Coordinators, tutors, and subject advisors had required qualifications but not trained. Results contradicted those of Mwashitete (2004) who found tutors in Tanzania mainland in his study were unqualified and incompetent. Similarly, Mirambo (2007) in his study found that facilitators were not teachers by profession and they lack skills and experiences in supporting teachers. Despite the positive comments, tutors in Zanzibar TRCs lacked skills that were necessary to enable them to facilitate distance learning effectively. Generally, academic members of the staff were in better position to provide direct assistance to teachers whenever possible such as instructional materials, equipment, and library services. Moreover, the aspect of subject advisors to work together with resource teachers played part in solving teachers' problems they were facing at their schools. Empirical studies (Khaniya, 1997; Mushi, 2003; Giordano, 2008) demonstrate clearly that when TRCs are doing their job well, they provide more effective support and need-based training which in turn, help motivate teachers, enhance their professionalism, and have a positive impact on their classroom performance. On top of that, the head teachers who were

members of the TCMCs had a role in supporting teachers' professional development at the centres. Their willingness to observe teachers at their schools was found significant because they knew their teachers' teaching abilities and ensuring proper implementation of the curriculum.

The results from the study concur to those of Giordano (2008) that head-teachers who were more informed and involved in cluster-wide initiatives, reforms, and improvement projects from the beginning can be catalyst for change. Also TRC Coordinators had a problem of extending new buildings as planned, as well as completing the existing ones due to lack of funds. Since the number of teachers was increasing each year then the physical resource needs to match with the number of neither teachers for effective training rather than using stores as classrooms which did not attract neither tutors facilitation nor teachers learning. This means that TRCs should not be left under communities alone because they were not able to contribute the required amount of money to enable the Coordinators to run their programmes accordingly, and to attain the desired goals. Furthermore, findings indicated that tutors had problems in facilitating distance learners because they had not attended any training on how to support teachers who were adult learners. That meant that Zanzibar TRCs had no uniformity or guidelines that would help tutors on how to facilitate distance learners for effective teacher professional development. Results were similar to those of Shoo (2004) who found tutors in Tanzania mainland had never attended any in-service courses to equip them with new knowledge and skills. Since literature has related pupils' achievement with TRCs effectiveness and efficiency, then tutors need to be trained because training usually helps one in acquiring the knowledge and skills needed for performing specific tasks.

## Conclusion

On the basis of the research objectives and findings it can be concluded that TRCs have played their role in providing professional development programmes for teachers but not as it was planned. For instance, the policy behind the establishment of the TRCs is to provide training to primary school teachers but in the case where the in-service training programme was stopped for two years because of shortage of funds meant that the policy did not work as intended. To some extent it hindered the effectiveness and efficiency implementation of the designed programmes at the centres. Results also indicated that Zanzibar TRCs had a well-organized management system that was not found in other studies particularly in Tanzania mainland because they have Coordinators, Teachers' Resource Centre Management Committees (TCMCs), Subject Advisors, Resource

Teachers and supporting Staff. The committees were the main organs that oversee, assess, and evaluate all the activities on behalf of the owners of the centre on a day-to-day basis. The staffs were selected through proper and fair channels. They were found competent, and had required academic qualifications. The qualified and competent personnel were selected through proper and fair channels but they were not trained in managerial skills. However, they were faced with shortage of human, physical, and financial resources to accomplish their required tasks.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends TRCs to have adequate resources (human, physical, and financial) for effective training in order to achieve their objectives. Having resources, which are used effectively and efficiently bears a high quality product (teachers). In addition to that, tutors need to be equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills in their area of specialization. Since skills can be learned and developed through training, then there is a need for the Department of Teacher Education to provide training to all tutors for successful and quality training which will play part in pupils' high performance. The fact that findings showed that subject advisors were not enough in numbers to meet the demands of the increased schools then, the MoEVT need to increase their number to enable them to visit all schools in their clusters as scheduled at the TRCs to foster teachers' professional development. In order for the management to function effectively then, Zanzibar TRCs need financial support from various sources such as the government, private sectors, NGOs, and stakeholders to achieve the expected goals.

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