

Migration of South African teachers: an issue of political debate

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Introduction

- Human mobility – most significant development, domestic, and foreign policy issues
- Large movements of people – social, political and economic reasons
- Estimated 230 million migrants
- In 1994, South Africa was welcomed back into the Commonwealth
- It provided new opportunities to South Africans
- Emigration levels immediately increased
- Leading destinations (1995-2005): New Zealand, Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, United States

Introduction (cont)

- Most popular destination for South African emigrants, including teachers – UK
- Recruitment of teachers from developing and/or source countries – a popular solution to fix a shortage of teachers in many industrialised, host countries
- Recruitment by foreign countries:
 - newly qualified teachers
 - the best and brightest teachers
 - teachers teaching scarce subjects

Introduction (cont)

- UNESCO estimates that 18 million new teachers are needed by 2015 – ‘*Education for All (EFA)*’ goals
- African countries need to recruit 2-4 million teachers
- South Africa loses 4 000 teachers a year to emigration (MacGregor 2008)
- South Africa needs 25 000 teachers a year

Introduction (cont)

- Teacher loss in South Africa:
 - teacher attrition
 - career change
 - mass teacher recruitment
- Source and receiving countries gain from migration:
 - emergence of an educated workforce
 - transfer of knowledge
 - fostering of commercial ties

Research questions

- What are South African teachers' motives for migration?
- What marketing strategies are recruitment agencies using?
- What are the implications for South African teachers with the implementation of the UK Youth Mobility Scheme?
- What is the impact of teacher migration on the South African education system?

Motives for migration

Push factors

- Career dissatisfaction
- Poor salaries
- Unemployment

Pull factors

- Higher salaries
- International teaching experience/professional development
- Travel opportunities
- Family/friends overseas
- Recruitment agency persuasion

Recruitment of teachers

Marketing strategies of recruitment agencies (Mulvaney 2005):

- direct marketing activities on university campuses (40%)
 - posted letters, pamphlets, posters in cafeterias, presentations
- advertising on the internet (29%)
- advertising in the local and regional newspapers (25%)
- magazines (3%)

Other:

- schools
- friends

Recruitment of teachers (cont)

Agencies' online 'pitching' to schools and teachers

- invite teachers to imagine an exciting life outside the classroom and good pay
- promise schools thorough vetting of candidates and low fees
- assure both customers that they can make the 'right' match

Extra incentives

- friend bonuses, loyalty bonuses, or both
- discount shopping cards or gift vouchers
- free use of the internet or a travel agency
- discounted insurance
- free personal accident cover

The revision of the UK migration policies

The introduction of the Points Based System (PBS) is part of the biggest shake-up to the UK immigration system in 45 years

This tier system is:

- managing migration for those wishing to enter the UK for study or work
- tightening control against foreign workers who seek to abuse the system
- reinforcing the UK's position as a destination of choice for foreigners

The revision of the UK migration policies

(cont)

This PBS focuses the structure of UK immigration services into a five-tier immigration model:

- Tier 1 – highly skilled migrants, entrepreneurs, investors and graduate students
- Tier 2 – skilled workers with an offer of employment
- Tier 3 – low-skilled workers to fill temporary shortages in the labour market
- Tier 4 – students
- Tier 5 – youth mobility and temporary workers

The Youth Mobility Scheme: implications

- The Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS) replaces the Working Holidaymaker Visa. It was launched worldwide on 27 November 2008
- The YMS is a cultural exchange scheme. It creates reciprocal youth mobility opportunities for young people from participating countries and the UK
- The visa is designed for short-term exchanges
- Countries currently participating in the YMS: Australia, Canada, Japan, Taiwan, New Zealand, Monaco
- South Africans are ineligible for the new YMS visa because SA does not have such a reciprocal scheme

The Youth Mobility Scheme (cont)

Prospective migrants need to accrue 50 points under the UK Home Office's PBS before applying for the YMS visa:

- 10 points – 18 and 30 years
- 10 points – £1600 in the bank
- 30 points – citizen of Australia, Canada, Japan, Monaco, New Zealand, Taiwan; British overseas citizens (The new Points Based UK Immigration System 2012)

Tier 2 General visa

- Without the Youth Mobility Scheme available to South African teachers, the only real option they have is applying for the Tier 2 General Work Permit – provided they are able to secure a teaching post in the UK
- This sub-tier under Tier 2 is for people coming to the UK with a job offer to fill a gap that cannot be filled from within the resident labour force
- This category is also for applicants coming to fill shortage occupations

In terms of the PBS the following has to be done before a teacher can start working for a school under Tier 2:

Tier 2 General visa (cont)

- A Certificate of Sponsorship must be assigned by the UK school to the teacher
- The teacher needs to accrue 70 points under the PBS:
 - 10 points – Language
 - 10 points – Maintenance
 - 50 points – Shortage occupation list
 - 30 points – Certificate of Sponsorship
 - 15 points – Academic qualifications
 - 20 points – Prospective earnings
- Once the Certificate of Sponsorship has been approved, the teacher needs to apply for a visa in his/her own home country

Implications for South African teachers

- South Africa's teaching corps is particularly favoured for their loyalty, hard work and their dedication (Garrun 2007)
- For many years there was a high demand for South African teachers in the UK
- The demand for South Africa's well-trained teachers will increase, not only in the UK but also other destination countries
- South African teachers' popularity will be absorbed by countries such as Taiwan, Thailand, China, Singapore, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and especially the United Arab Emirates (UAE)

Implications for South African teachers

(cont)

- Recruitment of South African teachers to the Middle East
- Middle East holds many possibilities and advantages for South African teachers
- The rewards are substantial:
 - free air tickets
 - free accommodation and meals
 - free transport to and from work
 - free medical services
 - they can earn R35 000 per month, tax free
 - learners are more disciplined

Teacher migration: impact on the education system

- The shortage of teachers remains a great concern for SA
- SA has a shortage of Mathematics, Science and Language teachers in both urban and rural public schools
- The supply of newly qualified teachers is substantially less than the number of teaching posts that become vacant each year
- In recent years, SA has produced only a third of the teachers it needs
- SA needs at least 25 000 new teachers a year
Only 8 000 - 9 000 teachers graduated per annum

Teacher migration: impact on the education system (cont)

- Negative impact upon the education system of South Africa:
 - SA's education system is debilitated by international recruitment
 - SA is funding the training of teachers who serve in other countries
 - International migration is leaving SA with insufficient teachers to staff its own education system
 - The loss of the most experienced and highly skilled teachers impacts greatly on learner outcomes and education quality

Conclusion

- Teacher shortage in South Africa does exist
- Drastic steps and strategies of DoE and government:
 - (i) DoE allocated million of rand for service-linked bursaries for thousands of student teachers in universities

To train more:

- primary school teachers
- teachers to work in rural and impoverished schools
- Mathematics, Science and Language teachers

Conclusion (cont)

- (ii) Retired and unemployed teachers were recruited to take up jobs in the education profession
- (iii) Teachers have been recruited from more foreign countries – such as Egypt, Kenya, India, the Netherlands
- (iv) SA has signed no reciprocal agreement for youth mobility opportunities in the UK

Conclusion (cont)

- How to resolve the shortage of teachers in SA:
 - Recruit retired and unemployed subject experts
 - Have a compulsory one-year internship after graduation
 - Make more bursary schemes available for prospective student teachers
 - Monitor teacher recruitment agencies closely
 - Introduce international relocation grants
 - Eliminate negative perceptions about the teaching profession
 - Improve teachers' work conditions

Conclusion (cont)

- Foreign teachers already in SA: Zimbabwe, Botswana, Uganda, Australia, New Zealand, Canada
- Recruitment of foreign teachers – a short-term solution
- SA blamed the UK for enlisting foreign teachers, “UK behind SA brain drain”
- Are we pouring water into a leaking bucket?
- Hiring of foreign teachers may be a band-aid treating the symptom of the teacher shortage
- SA has to start producing its own teachers

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