

## Co-Curriculum Responsiveness for Adaptability and Challenges for Teachers in Hard-To-Live Areas of Mkushi and Luano Districts, Zambia

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### Abstract

*This article shares findings of a study which examined the teacher Education co-curricular responsiveness to teacher adaptability in hard-to-Live Areas of Mkushi and Luano districts in Zambia. It employed a narrative research design on the adaptability and experiences of teachers deployed in difficult-to-live-in- environments in Mkushi and Luano districts of Zambia. The objectives of the study were twofold: firstly, to establish if the co-curriculum aspect of the teacher education curriculum was tailored in such a way that it prepares student teachers to work in difficult-to-live environments in rural and remote areas; and secondly, to establish the challenges that newly deployed teachers' likely face in such areas. A narrative design was employed with a sample of forty teachers, twelve Head teachers and 2 District Education Board officers. The findings suggest that teachers adapt to hard-to-live- environments differently according to various factors which included the nature of the teacher education curriculum they underwent, general background and prior experience or exposure to rural areas, administrative challenges among others. The article recommends that a responsive teacher education curriculum should be cognizant of equipping teachers with knowledge and skills that may make them adapt easily and that there is need for administrative and policy adjusts towards enhancing responsiveness of teacher education.*

**Key words:** *Teacher education, Co-curriculum, Hard to live environments, Responsiveness.*

### Background and Context

The Teacher Education curriculum (TEC) in Zambia is generally provided by government, Faith-Based Organisations (FBO) or Grant-Aided, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO), private organizations and individuals. Each Teacher Education institution has the liberty to add to the core curriculum activities deemed to be of value and relevant to the learner, the learning environment and eventually the society. It is for this reason that Banja and Mulenga (2019: 175) actually noted that 'teacher education comes into the university or college culture loaded with public expectations and a sense of urgency of meeting needs and demands of the school curriculum for which the student teacher is being trained'. Kabila, *et al.* (2018) found out that like many other countries worldwide, Zambia has been trying to improve teacher practice and performance in order to have effective teaching and learning in schools. Most teachers are employed by the Ministry of General Education who deploy

them to any part of the country where their services may be needed. However, most teachers in Zambia do not like working in rural areas especially in places where social and economic services are not available. It was the assumption of researchers in this study that those that were given extra skills necessary for rural adaptability would adapt to rural life and transition to rural environment better.

Moulton (2016), contends that fewer teachers want to serve in rural schools due to a number of reasons. Many are reluctant to be posted to remote rural areas, especially in communities that are not their own. This is particularly true of female teachers. Most teachers posted to rural and remote areas demanded transfers to urban areas as soon as they are posted as a result rural and remote areas were poorly staffed due to such (Banda et al, 2014). This forced government to introduce a policy that a newly posted teacher cannot transfer to another station until he or she has worked in the new station for at least two years. It was expected that this policy would stabilize the teacher turn-over in rural areas since most areas had become severely understaffed. It seems that teachers' refusal to working in rural areas is not just a phenomena of developing countries such as Zambia (Masaiti, 2018).

According to Kathy, Paul *et al.* (2011) shortages of teachers willing to teach in Australian rural schools have been evident for some time particularly in the areas of secondary Mathematics and Science. Explanations of such shortages often convey a negative or deficit 'view of teaching in rural areas. It is also common to find teachers being hesitant to take up a rural position or being eager to leave the country sides having only served for a short time. However, since teachers spend some time in college or university where they are prepared for their future teaching duties, it would be interesting to find out if the teacher education curriculum takes care of this aspect of preparation. This is important 'because teachers are familiar with the classroom situations, their role is deemed central for discovering the gaps and bringing about change and improvement' as Mulenga and Mwanza (2019) had put it.

This study was guided by the social constructivist theory popularised by Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978). This was fitting primarily because it helped bring out viewpoints of teachers; co-curriculum aspect of the teacher education curriculum was tailored in such a way that it prepares student teachers to work in difficult-to-live environments in rural and remote areas; and the challenges that newly deployed teachers are likely to face in such areas. These were teased out and linked through three core areas of the theory, namely:

1. Knowledge is constructed by both teachers and learners – this was in respect of teachers who were either pre-service or in-service, who shared their knowledge and expertise during their teaching time in rural and remote places herein under study:

2. Learning involves social interaction – this took place in the communities of schools targeted in the study, teachers, learners, school administrators, heads of departments (HoDs), and lecturers; and
3. Learning is situated – this took place in two places, in and outside classrooms; co-curricular activities.

Watson (1983) argued that rural teachers should be trained to effectively perform their task of teaching in the traditional classroom setting before any attempt is made to prepare them for a wider social and educational role in the rural community. But the question is, does this happen in the Zambian teacher education institutions. Considering that colleges of education and universities have co-curricular activities which play the role of molding the character of the graduates as was reported by Namuyamba et al (2018) about the Development Aid from People to People (DAPP) College in Mkushi district researches in this study wanted to find out the extent to which this was being done. The objectives of the study were to; establish if the co-curriculum aspect of the teacher education curriculum was tailored in such a way that it prepares student teachers to work in difficult-to-live environments in rural and remote areas and establish the challenges that newly deployed teachers are likely to face in such areas.

### **Methodology and Design**

A narrative design was used to conduct the study in Mkushi and Luano districts in the central province of Zambia. Sampled schools in both districts were located in the rural and remote parts of the districts. The schools from Mkushi district are located at least 120 kilometers south of Mkushi district while the schools in Luano district were about 15 to 20 kilometers north of the district main centre. The target population of the study included all the teachers in the rural and remote parts of Mkushi and Luano districts. The sample consisted of 2 District Education Board Secretaries (DEBS), twelve schools, twelve head teachers and forty class teachers. All the participants in the study were purposely sampled. Researchers interviewed the participants using an interview schedule and recorded the responses which were transcribed. Data was analysed according to emerging themes.

### **Findings**

Findings of the study are presented by recalling the research questions and presented in the following: description of participants, prior experience in hard-to-live places,

#### **Teachers' Adaptability in hard-to-live places**

The findings revealed that there was no relationship between the Teacher Education Curriculum and the teachers' adaptation and transition to rural and

remote areas in Mkushi and Luano districts. Unanimously, teachers from the same training colleges depicted different levels of adaptation and resilience to placement in rural and remote areas. For example, there were no common reactions by teachers who were working at the same school although they were educated at the same teacher education institution. Similarly, no two teachers from different schools who trained at the same institution gave answers that indicated that they perceived the issue of rural posting alike. The other indicator of the non-existence or significance of the influence of the co-curriculum was that teachers attributed their willingness to stay and transition well into rural posting to their earlier exposure to such environments prior to their education as teachers. One respondent notes:

I have no problems with living in rural areas. I grew up in such an environment. I got used to it when I was a child in the village. We used to do a lot of things which I remember and do even now.

The head teachers and DEBS further explained that experience of rural life made most teachers more resilient to living and transitioning in difficult-to-live-environments than those without previous exposure to rural life. One teacher actually confirmed this view:

Previous experience of rural life before attending a teacher training college has a huge bearing on whether a teacher will integrate well in the community or not. Previous exposure helps the teacher to survive and accept rural life as well as to engage in local survival activities. I lived in the rural swampy areas of one of the rural districts in this country and that has made me easily get used to living here in the rural area.

Another teacher also said that:

The rural experience I had during my college days prepared me well as I was sent to a rural school. I was trained how to handle different types of people and how to embrace diversity. I actually choose to go to a rural school and I applied for transfer so as to experience rural life and teaching. I asked for a transfer to a rural school in order to teach at a senior level. The other reason I wanted a transfer to a rural school was because that was where my family was at the time.

One interesting finding from the study was that teachers deployed to rural and remote areas and stay there longer are those who had an experience of life in hard-to-live places in the first place (earlier in their lives). These accepted to be posted because they had nothing to fear about rural life compared to those who had had no experience in hard-to-live places before.

The study findings also revealed that many teachers working in rural areas engaged in activities that were common in the localities. This was in order to identify themselves and integrate well with the communities they served. One teacher confirmed that:

Some of the activities done by the teachers are Poultry farming, Bee Keeping, Shop keeping, Internet Café and cell phone token sales and cash transfers, livestock keeping, Crop Farming, Carpentry /blacksmith, selling clothes and gardening.

Two teachers stated that the co-curricular activities learnt from college assisted them to adapt to rural life and would not desire to live in urban areas. This finding was unique. The researchers visited the homes of these teachers and discovered that they were involved in agricultural activities at their farms. The researchers were shown the fields of maize and other crops that teachers had ventured. Some teachers actually were in commercial farming and thus saw no need of working in an urban area. One of these teachers in cattle keeping stated that:

I have taught in this school for the past 10 years from the time I lost my husband. Cattles have helped me educate all my children. My son is at Lusaka University studying business administration and my daughter is studying medicine at Apex University in Lusaka. Being a teacher who is a widow I have never failed to pay school fees for my children due to the fact that I sell my cattle and manage to sort out school fees and other financial responsibilities.

One of the DEBS mentioned that:

The only co-curricular activity that trains teacher to adapt to rural life is that of DAPP Mkushi College of Education. This curriculum allows students to go and do teaching practice in rural and remote schools twice before graduation. This curriculum is designed in such a way that students are involved in the management of the school from the lowest to the highest level activities. Students are in charge of all the farming activities and farm produce is used for food at the college. They have a policy of not buying things they can produce through farming. These activities assist students to build a character that enables them to adapt to rural life. Students are involved in coming up with the budget of the college. They are also involved in the implementation and sourcing of fund projects and many more other activities concerning the college.

Namuyamba *et al.* (2018) reported on the co-curricular activities at the DAPP Mkushi Teacher Education College and this is in agreement with what a head teacher mentioned in this study. However, the study did not discover where the respondent involved here was trained. The research reviewed that those teachers who had adapted to rural environments and were involved in income generation activities did not desire to transfer to urban areas due to the fact that they were generating income that was improving their social and economic welfare.

Although the study did not specifically identify the respondents according to gender, some respondents further explained that female teachers shunned the rural and hard-to-live places on account of their spouses. Some Head teachers

felt that male teachers had the ability to adapt well in rural areas. One Head teacher actually said that:

The male teachers appear to have the ability to adapt well in rural areas, female teachers have a tendency of leaving rural and remote areas as compared to their male counterparts, and they advance various reasons for transfer such as going to join their spouses and rural hardships such as lack of social amenities'

This Head teacher was supported by one DEBS who said that:

Some female teachers had gone to the extent of forging marriage certificates in the fight to be transferred to the urban areas. He further stated that such vices have robbed the rural areas of the required human resource and teachers to educate the masses of these had-to-live areas.

During the co-curricular activities in colleges of education, there is no separate training for females and males. The fact that female teachers usually wanted to transfer to urban areas does not mean that they learnt that from the colleges. This finding links us back to the first finding that survival in these hard-to-live places should safely be associated to one's experience and not the co-curriculum of a teacher education college. All the Head teachers and the two DEBS mentioned the fact that TEC was not preparing teacher graduates for hard to live environments in rural areas. In supporting this view, a Head teacher said that:

Most of the colleges and universities usually tell their students to go on attachment to schools that are easily accessible and are near good roads, unlike remote schools that are hard to reach. This denies the students an opportunity to have the needed rural experience and preparation for adaptation to rural life.

### **Challenges likely to be faced by teachers**

On the other hand, most teacher respondents observed that TEC had nothing to do with persistence to transfer to urban areas. But poor accommodation (housing), lack of electricity and poor internet, poor classroom and school environments, lack of teaching and learning materials, witchcraft, lack of social amenities and fear of losing spouses and marriage due to long distance relationship make teachers to fail to cope with life in rural and remote areas forcing them to seek transfers to urban schools.

On poor housing and lack of electricity one teacher said following:

Most of the school houses were old and had cracked walls, floors with holes and broken window panes made it difficult to adapt.

This result into teachers looking for private accommodation which is not up to standard and may also be far from school. As a result Zambia has the highest teacher pupil ratio of 35:1 with the highest ration in rural areas due to teacher attrition and unwillingness to be hosted in rural areas due to lack of housing and other amenities identified by the respondents. One teacher actually complained saying:

Surely this cracked house is life threatening. I have never seen such accommodation. I was born in the capital city of Zambia and have lived there all my life. I don't know how I can continue living in a dilapidated house I just had to go back home. They must give me a transfer. It's also difficult to prepare teaching notes because there is no electricity. The lack of electricity makes it difficult to communicate with family and friends back home.

The study further found that lack of electricity and poor internet connectivity had made communication difficult for teachers in rural areas. A number of them studying with distance learning online were failing to go on with their studies because for them to do school work they had to travel miles to charge their laptops, phones and I-pads and to also get internet connectivity.

On poor classroom and school environments, teachers explained that the condition of the classroom were similar to those of the houses where the floors had holes, the walls were cracked and windows broken. Working in rural schools is widely regarded as being considerably more difficult and thus more de-motivating than in urban schools mainly due to poor teaching and learning conditions.

On lack of teaching and learning materials researchers observed and found that it was evident from how a teacher struggled to make a demonstration in one of the classes that the researchers attended. The schools did not have most of the books required by both the teachers and pupils this made lesson delivery very difficult. This finding was common in most of the schools in rural and remote areas. It is actually despite most scholars such as Musilekwa and Mulenga (2019: 99) have made vital observations about the importance of textbooks that 'textbooks play an important role in education because of their close relation to the classroom teaching and learning process'.

Fear of losing one's marriage due to long distances made teachers request for transfer. This was very common with female teachers. One teacher narrates:

When I came to work in the rural area my husband was okay with a distant marriage but after 3 years he demanded that I get a transfer back to the urban area where I left him with two of our elderly children. At this point I requested for transfer which was not granted as quickly as I thought it would come. On one visit to my home I discovered that my husband had moved on with another woman. My transfer came but it was too late and there was nothing to return to town for.



Lack of health facilities was one of the greatest challenges teachers who teach in the rural and remote areas were facing. Respondents attested to the fact that health facilities were poor and distant from their places of residence and work. In some cases, poor road networks made it impossible for teachers to access the required health care. One of the teachers explained that:

Accessing clean water is very difficult because of the distance that has to be covered. When the water pump has broken down I am forced to carry water on my head, from a far off place of about 10 Kilometer. On a good day when I have money I have to pay people to fetch water for me.

The study also revealed that there was poor communication among the Ministry of General Education Head Quarters, the Provincial Education Office and the District Education Office leading to moving of many teachers from the rural area. One DEBS stated that:

Ministry officers would grant teachers transfers without consultation the district office. As a result, a number of teachers on the payroll of these districts are ghost teachers who have been long transferred or never reported in the district at all. Now this poses a challenge when it comes to recruitment due the fact that records have not been changed hence a false picture is portrayed that the district has the required number of teachers when it is not the reality on the ground.

The DEBS further lamented that a good number of graduate teachers in rural areas have applied for employment but have not been offered the job by the Ministry of General Education Headquarters even after making recommendations from the district. This poses a challenge because the teachers that are sent in this way do not remain in the district as they demand to be transferred. This proves that teachers recruited from the district are likely to stay within because they have experienced the life and ethos of rural and remote areas.

Another DEBS said that:

Teachers who were posted recently are likely to stay in the district because they applied for posting from within. We are sure of that because they are familiar to the life in this rural district not from training but from childhood.

## **Discussions**

The discussion of findings is segmented in the following thematic areas:

### **Theme 1: Zambian teacher education co-curriculum's social and educational role in the rural community**

The finding that the Zambian teacher education co-curriculum seems to pay a blind eye to the wider social and educational role in the rural community is not misplaced. The finding is not unique to Zambia as Reiff and Anderson (1989) report a similar trend in Nigeria where the teacher education programmes pays more attention to classroom teaching than to the other social factors within the community when they report that teacher preparation programs across Nigeria



have not prepared teachers for the rural setting. They acknowledge the fact that issues to do with the children were well covered and this dearth in coverage of the surrounding community ethos has been recognised. This demonstrates the weaknesses of a centrally planned curriculum which fails to incorporate the needs of learners in different locations as pre-service education programs do not differentiate between urban and rural issues in terms of personnel preparation. Moreover, in countries like Zambia teachers are not even involved in the development of the school curriculum as Mwanza and Mulenga (2018: 81) observed that ‘the majority of school teachers were not involved in the curriculum development process. They noted that their role has been mainly to receive the already developed curriculum and then implement it in their different schools.’ Making the challenge even worse. Outside Africa, Australia also faces similar challenges where urban teachers resist transfers to rural and isolated areas. Such behaviour can be associated with the lack of preparing the teachers for hard-to-live environments where only those with the experience of living in rural areas can accept.

The Teacher Education Curriculum (TEC) does not have anything specific objective for rural life as was acknowledged by MoE (1992) when they stated that on the other hand the government focused on increasing the education of teachers for the country however, aspects of curriculum relevance to rural resilience were not specifically addressed.

These findings are also in agreement with what Watson (1983) discovered when he stated that rural teachers should be trained to perform better their task of transmitting knowledge in the traditional classroom setting before any attempt is made to prepare them for a wider social and educational role in the rural community. This gives an indication that the TEC concentrates more on the classroom activities than the ethos of the environment. A clear indication that those not well vested in the ethos of rural life cannot depend on the TEC to prepare for life in rural and remote areas.

## **Theme 2: Prior experience in hard-to-live places**

This finding is in line with those found in a study by Huddle (2014) where it was revealed that students in resource scarce environments navigate through a multitude of barriers in the quest to transition and adapt and are aided by their familiarity to rural life. Adaptation to rural and remote living is truly based on experiencing rural living at some point in life. Although the study did not investigate the origin of the participants this revelation points to where the participant came from prior to doing the teacher education course. In developed countries awareness has increased the body of unique needs of rural communities as Reiff and Anderson (1989) had observed. In agreement to this, Collins (1999) in Robyn, Robert and Maree (2006) contends that rural teachers should have rural backgrounds and be certified to teach more than one subject area.

The findings of this study on ‘prior experience of some teachers in hard-to-live places’ are consistent with those by Boylan *et al.* (1993: 122) in Kathy, Paul and Neil (2011) who reported long-term rural teachers ‘intentions to stay rural’ was closely related to their commitment to teaching and their perceptions that rurality provided them with healthy, safe, clean living environments, with less crime and the opportunity to bring up their children in a caring community as well as increased chances of upward mobility and career progression.

### **Theme 3: Crosscutting Issues in Teaching in hard-to-live places**

There are crosscutting issues that emerged from findings in this study that are worth discussing. Below are two of them.

#### **Issue Number 1: Mobile, Distance, Weekend and Correspondence Marriages**

Revelations by almost all participants in this study regarding mobile, distance, weekend and correspondence marriages are in tune with findings of a study by Goldenberg and Goldenberg (1990) which showed that the absence of one parent may have particularly damaging effect on the remaining parent as well as the children. In a related study on the effects of commuter marriages on teachers, Chikopela *et al.* (2020) established that teachers in rural and remote places are frustrated, separated from their spouses and children (even when both are teachers at the same school, either one in a rural area or both in far apart rural schools or one in a rural area and the other in an urban area) opt to get transferred to schools in urban areas, rent homes in towns for their children and families. This emerging practice deserves further interrogation by schools, district and provincial education authorities to curb foreseen and unforeseen vices that it may breed, which can have a triadic effect on teachers, learners and school management. Notwithstanding this revelation, the Ministry’s deployment policy regulations (2010) on the distribution of married teachers, teachers should be employed in specific schools where vacancies existed. Where a married teacher accepted a position in a school far from their matrimonial home, they were expected to serve in such a school for at least two years before they could be considered for transfer. Even after serving for more than two years, a transfer back to a school near their matrimonial home was not guaranteed.

#### **Issue Number 2: Fear of Loss of Marriage; and Intergenerational sexual relations and marriages**

Respondents in this study revealed that they fear losing marriages and opt to leave rural and remote schools where they are stationed. This is not a surprising finding as it is common in many other fields of work other than education (teaching). Findings of a study by Mpolomoka *et al.* (2019) intimated that schools are now enrolling big girls in Grade One who already have had sex, who are ready for any offer in return for sex, who even offer themselves for sex,

who flirt with teachers and can tease a teacher if he or she does not take up their sexual offer ‘not men or women enough. Reflectively, based on moral grounds, some teachers have sought transfers from schools, especially if the area has no potential marriage partners and they are single.

#### **Theme 4: Communication Hiccups in the MoGE**

The finding of the study regarding poor communication among the Ministry of General Education Head Quarters, the Provincial Education Office and the District Education Office as leading to the movement of many teachers from the rural areas corroborates with what Adelabu (2008) explained that rural underdevelopment is not only common in developing countries. This is more so because rural infrastructure are often neglected, while investments in health, education and water supply have largely been focused on the cities as though the rural populous is immune to such services.

#### **Theme 5: Common Issues emanating from the Findings of this study**

Below are findings that emanated from this study and herein said to be common in many schools even though somewhat problematised by respondents in this study. In as much as they are have been captured herein, the researchers feel they are not unique and cannot solely account for teacher absence, teacher frustration in a rural school, cannot consultative a problem for a teacher in a hard-to live rural school. These have been categorised as issues below.

#### **Issue Number 1: Teaching Learning materials**

Findings in this study revealed a common problem that many schools face in Zambian rural and urban schools of lack of teaching learning materials. It is not surprising that this was revealed and one may not really allude it to a teacher’s decision to leave a rural school for an urban one. Nonetheless, such findings confirm what Moulton (2001) observed when he stated that in many cases, building materials and furniture can be locally supplied, instructional materials are not available. But rural school lack required materials to teach, these include not only textbooks but also the visual materials that decorate classrooms and stimulate learning, as well as simple scientific lab equipment, radios, and other audio-visual equipment that have become a standard part of many classrooms (Masaiti, 2015). There is need for teachers to embrace culturally relevant education in the absence of routine teaching learning materials. The term culturally relevant education (CRE) seems common among educators. Yet, there are not many who are able to put into effect the actual dictates of culturally relevant education (Banda *et al.*, 2018: 89). Gay, 2000) contends that CRE revolves around three characteristics: promotion of academic proficiency, cultivation of cultural competence, and inculcation of critical consciousness.

This is what is argued by Khera (2004: 23) quoted by Banda (2008: 24) who compares misplaced education without taking into account the context to be like animals being given tasks contrary to what they know better:

Some animals in a forest decided to start a school. The students included a bird, a squirrel, a fish, a dog, a rabbit and a mentally retarded eel. A board was formed and it was decided that flying, tree climbing, swimming and burrowing would be part of the curriculum in order to give a broad-based education. All animals were required to take all subjects. The bird was excellent at flying and was getting As but when it came to burrowing, it kept breaking its beak and wings and started failing. Pretty soon, it started making Cs in flying and of course in tree climbing and swimming it was getting Fs. The Squirrel was great at tree climbing and was getting As, but failing in swimming. The fish was the best swimmer but couldn't get out of water and got Fs in everything else. The dog did not join the school, stopped paying taxes and kept fighting with the administration to include barking as part of the curriculum. The rabbit got As in burrowing but tree climbing was a real problem. It kept falling and landing on its head, suffered brain damage, and soon couldn't even burrow properly and got Cs in that too. The mentally retarded eel, who did everything half as well, became the valedictorian of the class. The board was happy because everybody was getting a broad-based education (Khera, 2004: 23).

## **Issue Number 2: Lack of electricity, Internet Connectivity, Poor School Environments**

Another common finding of this study relates to lack of electricity, Internet Connectivity, Poor School Environments. With alternative sources of power readily available in Zambia, power connectivity is no longer a preserve of schools in the line of rail and schools in urban areas. This corroborates with findings of a study by Namuyamba *et al.* (2018) which revealed unique ways in which graduates from Mkushi DAPP College are made to adapt and transit in hard to live rural areas.

## **Theme 6: Life in Work Stations Schools and Surrounding Areas**

Regarding the finding that poor sanitation and lack of clean water made teachers seek transfers, Adelabu (2008) equally saw limited education opportunities and poor health services which tend to be popular in rural settings causing teachers to request for transfer to urban areas and perpetuating the poverty cycle. This further corroborates with another earlier observation made by Adelabu (2001) that the cycle of poverty is unbroken among the rural population where poverty is passed on from one generation to another. Where jobs are available, the education of the rural dwellers is inadequate. Given the deplorable conditions under which rural pupils learn, it will be too much to expect them to attain a level of performance comparable to that of children of urban schools (Junaid and Umar, 1991). This just confirms that class rooms and school environments are so poor that they do not just affect teacher morale and job performance but

pupil's performance as well. Adelabu (2008) further elaborates that teachers in rural areas are not motivated or encouraged to cope with life.

### **Theme 7: Link between TEC and persistence for transfer to better live-in environments**

There is no link between TEC and persistence for transfer to better live-in environments. However, the findings further show us that TEC does not prepare teachers for work in rural and remote areas hence the failure of some of them to adapt. Nevertheless, as seen in the discourse persistence for transfer is caused by lack of social amenities and other challenging issues of living in rural areas. Until recently when the number of secondary schools had increased in the rural areas, most secondary schools were located in the urban areas making it difficult to get candidates with sufficient rural exposure to train and be posted to rural and remote areas.

### **Conclusion**

The research findings have revealed that the teacher education co-curriculum does not significantly contribute to teacher adaptation and transition to rural and remote areas in Luano and Mkushi districts in Zambia. To the contrary, the prior experience one has of rural and remote life greatly influences their resilience and adaptation to hard-to-live places. The findings have also shown that the high level of transfer requests by teachers are caused by poor conditions and lack of amenities in rural areas. Some of these are accommodation (housing), lack of power or electricity and poor internet connectivity, poor classroom and school environments, lack of teaching and learning materials. Others include witchcraft, lack of entertainment facilities and fear of losing spouses and marriages due to long distant relationships.

However, the research discovered that some teachers involved in income generating activities did not want or even imagine any transfer to the urban areas. It was discovered that a good number of teachers rejected transfers even from one rural setting to another because they had established themselves in commercial farming and other economic activities which improved their social-economic status.

It can also be concluded that there are teachers that are committed to teaching in rural and remote districts because they had the experience of rural and remote areas and were greatly committed to working there to serve the rural communities. They did it for the love of the nation and believed that even rural communities deserve teachers that will deliver education efficiently and effectively in order to produce the qualified human resource that will in turn bring development to these communities that will translate to national development.

## Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the Ministry of General Education should enhance the policy of recruiting teachers at district level to reduce unnecessary transfers. This will enable those familiar with rural and remote areas to remain in such an environment without problems. In addition, this will serve as a model for pupils in rural area who will see their own relatives return to the rural areas.
2. Colleges of education and universities preparing teachers should restructure the teacher education co-curriculum to include rural related activities so as to prepare every teacher for rural and remote posting. They can adapt the DAPP Mkushi model for co-curricular activities which prepares teachers for hard-to-live places.

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