

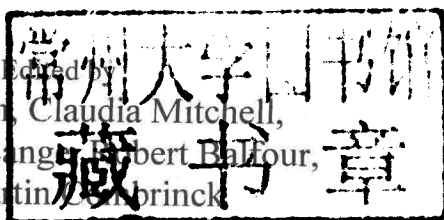
**SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE  
IN RURAL SOUTH AFRICA**



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**Particular Challenges and Practical Cases**

Edited by  
Faisal Islam, Claudia Mitchell,  
Naydene de Lange, Robert Balfour,  
and Martin van der Merck



With a Foreword by  
C.A. Odora Hoppers

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~Faisal Islam, Claudia Mitchell, Naydene de Lange,  
Robert Balfour, and Martin Combrinck

## FOREWORD

For decades since the end of colonial rule, African educationists have twitched and fidgeted around the word 'rural'. Is it primitivity, the place where savages dwelled, that final site of cosmological battle to be won over by the European notions of progress? Or is it the locus for sustainable living, with codes of livelihood that may be elliptical and even alternative to the unsustainable Western-modeled urban and peri-urban life?

Once upon a time, these questions would not even have been warranted a platform. African people were to be saved from themselves. The modern and the primitive, the secular and the non-secular, the expert and the layman, the scientific and the unscientific, the employed and the unemployed, the normal and the abnormal, the developed and the underdeveloped were all pitted one against the other in a seemingly irreconcilable existential divide. The two occupied extreme ends of a spectrum whose reconciliation could only be possible using the evolutionary trajectory of one society—the Western one. Presumed to possess no such thing as social, cultural, or cognitive capital, forces needed to be released within the colonized societies to alter their cultural priorities once and for all. Education's key role was to bring this change.

Alas, it is becoming clear that this project contained not only the seeds of the most profound cognitive injustice, but it also couched one of the most toxic formulas for epistemological disenfranchisement ever witnessed. It was to take complete generations of critical thinkers to overcome their own awkward indifference to this noxious default drive and gradually let evolve what is now coalescing into a new, decisive consensus that the meek do not inherit the earth by their meekness alone. They need defenses of the mind and conceptual categories around which they can organize their thoughts and actions. They need new friends who can echo their cry for dignity, who can create a compassionate and protective ring around the good and the best in them. From utter disdain of the idea of 'rural' as a reality to be negated, to be forgotten, it is being realized that rural living embodies something more than just poverty.

From the school (that unforgettable image of the square building amidst round huts) being uncritically endorsed as the first step in a systematic process of delegitimizing local collectives, a grassroots empowerment perspective now seeks to develop concepts that can guide new actions that are not only geared to solving immediate pressing problems such as hunger and malnutrition but also the restoration of dignity. From the now unacceptable understandings of community participation as a pretext for exploiting cheap labor from rural communities, calls for new paradigms of practice are getting louder. Conscientious coalitions of educators are acting differently.

This book on partnerships for educational change is precisely one such example of the interventions by an emerging coalition of conscientious educators who, even in their material poverty, are prepared to expand their imagination and embrace the "Other", to evoke the strength that lies within them, and to galvanize this strength into a force for sustainable change within the local communities. Assets such as trust, the lived philosophy of sharing, mutual obligation, and caring have always set African rural people apart. Centuries of forced metamorphosis threatened to shred this but did not succeed completely.

It is this kind of intervention by this breed of scholars that constitutes the moment of rupturing the potential vicious cycle of humiliation, turning it into a virtuous cycle of healing and restoration in which the inner cry for self determination meets, at long last, a warm embrace of co-determination.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### ***School-University Partnerships for Educational Change: An Introduction***

*Faisal Islam, Claudia Mitchell, Naydene de Lange, and Robert Balfour*

#### **Why Teacher Education and Why Change?**

There is probably no single area of education in development literature that features more regularly in the recommendations section of an executive summary of a final report than the training of teachers, or, as it is framed in the more enlightened literature, “train[ing] more and better teachers” (Kirk & Dembélé, 2007, p. 1). And even if the majority of recommendations in the literature are for the development of new policies on school attendance, gender violence, or HIV and AIDS; the improvement of governance and school leadership; the improvement of curricula and the supply of appropriate books and other learning materials; or the need for better school infrastructure, there is probably no study that dares to leave out the critical feature of ‘the teacher’, although this recommendation may often seem to be tacked on. This ‘tacked on’ nature may seem surprising to those outside education. After all, schools are, of course, about teachers and teaching. But sometimes it is everything associated with teaching—management, books, structures, forms—that is taken seriously and not ‘the teacher’. And yet, it is clear that investing in teachers is critical. This was highlighted in a UNESCO study (Villegas-Reimers, 2003), which revealed that professional development does indeed affect teachers’ attitudes and behaviors along with students’ learning and perceived educational reforms. In an era of greater professionalization and greater expectations of schools, there are few who would question the significance of teacher preparation, though there may be many different models and approaches. Most education systems emphasize the need to support teachers who are already in the field and, at the same time, strive to ensure that more and better new

teachers are coming into teaching. In particular, there is a growing realization that teacher preparation has to link personal, classroom, and family and community experiences as a first step in a lifelong learning process (Kirk & Dembélé, 2007; Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

New teachers are the focus of *School-University Partnerships for Educational Change*.<sup>1</sup> This book emphasizes the importance of improving teacher preparation, especially for teachers who will be working in rural areas, since this can also be an entry point for supporting teachers, learners, and the community as a whole. In essence, teacher preparation for working in rural areas can be regarded as a development path in and of itself—a hopeful one that invests in young people who choose teaching as a career. Universities, ministries of education, and others seeking to improve service delivery in rural areas may want to re-think and indeed ‘re-invent’ (as well as invest in) teacher education as a critical aspect of rural development.

*School-University Partnerships for Educational Change* draws together a series of chapters by new and leading scholars working in the area of rurality and teacher education. Many of the chapters describe the results of a 3-year study of the Rural Teacher Education Project (RTEP) in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The study began in 2007 and was carried out as a partnership among several schools in a rural district, the Faculty of Education of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), and McGill University in Canada. The study was first developed as a pilot intervention through the financial support of Nedbank and McGill University and then sustained under the broader umbrella of Every Voice Counts: Teacher Development and Rural Education in the Age of AIDS, a National Research Foundation (NRF) project (with support from McGill University and the Toyota Foundation). RTEP involved a number of schools with which the UKZN Faculty of Education had already been working for several years. RTEP added a new focus and a new set of questions related to improving teacher education with respect to rural areas. The project made rural schools into sites of learning and turned teachers and learners into agents of social change through a combination of research and intervention. Over a period of 3 years, 60 third- and fourth-year student teachers from the UKZN Faculty of Education carried out their 4-week teaching practicum in the rural district where RTEP had been implemented. Alongside these student teachers, 10 interns, mostly master’s and doctoral

students from Canada, Germany, and Norway, participated in RTEP over the 3 years. The student teachers and interns (and often faculty members) lived together close to the participating schools during the 4-week time periods. A project team from the Faculty of Education worked closely with the principals, teachers, and governing bodies of the schools and offered integrated professional development in a number of curricular areas including early childhood development, life skills, numeracy and literacy, inclusive education, information and communications technology, and teaching methods more generally.

Although the majority of the chapters relate to one main school-university partnership, the analysis contained in these chapters draws from a much wider body of literature related to a number of key areas, including peer education, the use of cohorts, service learning, the use of IT and media, the role of teachers in addressing HIV and AIDS, and participatory research. *School-University Partnerships for Educational Change* also includes the perspectives of other school-university partnerships in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, framing the work more broadly within the literature on rurality and on partnerships. Thus, the book attempts to generate a fresh understanding of how school-university partnerships can identify new ways to (1) transform preservice teacher education; (2) address the issues of HIV and AIDS; (3) gain new insights about rurality; and (4) transfer the benefits of working in collaboration to on-going school development within the context of rural South African schools.

### **The Context for Teacher Education in South Africa**

Teacher development has been regarded as a pivotal <sup>关键的</sup> aspect of transforming the South African educational system inherited from Apartheid. However, it has encountered many difficulties, especially in rural areas, including a shortage of qualified teaching staff. Teaching and learning in rural schools is challenging; teachers are confronted with the problem of little or no equipment or infrastructure—both vital to providing quality education (South African National Department of Education, 2005a). The AIDS pandemic has further exacerbated the situation. In particular, it has affected both the demand and supply of education. In South Africa, 5.4% of the child population aged 2–18 is HIV-positive (Motala et al., 2007). In 2003, 17.4% of children had lost one parent and 3.4% had lost both parents (South African National Department of Education, 2005a, 2008).

The immediate impact of HIV and AIDS on children includes an increase in illness and absenteeism, a loss of interest in education, an increase in drop-out rates, and an increase in pressures on schools and teachers to provide emotional and psychosocial support to affected children (South African National Department of Education, 2008). HIV and AIDS also affect the supply side of education. In 2004, 12.7% of teachers were HIV-positive, with the highest rate among teachers between 25 and 34 years old, especially in the predominantly rural provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga. More than 18.3% of HIV-infected educators died from AIDS in 2004: a significant number between the ages of 25 and 49 (Peltzer et al., 2005). In addition, schools in rural areas are confronted with the issues of gender violence, sexism, bullying, and corporal punishment—many of them legacies of Apartheid (Human Sciences Research Council [HSRC] & Education Policy Consortium [EPC], 2005). All these factors have contributed significantly toward the poor quality of education and lack of interest in education and teaching in rural schools (Motala et al., 2007).

Simultaneously, the state of teachers' capabilities to deal with the situation and to organize systematic learning in schools is also severely limited. When the post-apartheid government took power in 1994, the quantity as well as quality of teachers was a major challenge. Approximately 36% of the total teaching force in South Africa was either unqualified or under-qualified in that year (South African National Department of Education, 2005b). According to the *School Education Survey*, the overall percentage of unqualified or under-qualified educators has been substantially reduced (South African National Department of Education, 2005b). However, this does not tell the whole story. In fact, many teachers are lacking training in relation to new standards initiated during the post-apartheid era and even those who received training were often critical of its poor quality (South African National Department of Education, 2005b). According to new standards set by the qualification framework of the *National Norms and Standards for Educators* published in 2000, all new teachers must have a post-matriculation 4-year professional degree instead of a 3-year post-school diploma. Although current educators are still considered fit for the job, about 77% of them did not qualify in 2005, according to the new standards (South African National Department of Education, 2005b). In the absence of extensive empirical research on the state of qualifications and training of teachers in the rural areas (in accordance

with the new requirements), it is believed that a large number of teachers in rural schools are either unqualified or under-qualified as reflected in the declaration adopted by the Teacher Development Summit held in Johannesburg in 2009 (Teacher Development Summit, 2009).

A critical entry point to improving the quality of education is through newly qualified teachers. Because this new group of teachers has been produced after Apartheid, it is believed that these teachers have the skills and capabilities to implement the post-apartheid policies and to play the diverse roles of educator, as prescribed in different policy statements (South African National Department of Education, 2005b). However, acute shortages have been observed by comparing the rate at which the teachers are leaving the profession and the rate at which new teachers are entering it. The estimated annual teacher attrition rate as observed in 2005 is approximately 5.5%, which means about 20,000 teachers are leaving the system annually. At the same time, the system is producing only 5,000–7,000 new teachers annually (Peltzer et al., 2005; South African National Department of Education, 2008). Many factors (for example, HIV and AIDS, poor salaries, increased workload, dissatisfaction with workplace policies, and low morale) are the main reasons why teachers are leaving their profession (Shindler, 2008). One study revealed that 54% of mid-career inservice teachers reported that they had thought about leaving the teaching profession at least once during their career, followed by 29% who reported that they had quite often thought of leaving the profession. Similarly, one-quarter of the respondents mentioned that they had considered leaving the teaching profession several times during their careers (Peltzer et al., 2005). Not only are existing teachers in South Africa leaving the system in large numbers, but South African matriculants appear uninterested in choosing teaching as a professional career. A study in 2003 reported that only 1.5% of surveyed students opted for teaching and training in comparison to the percentages of students looking for careers in other fields: Business, Commerce, and Management (26.6%); Manufacturing, Engineering, and Technology (16.2%); and Health Sciences and Social Services (14.6%) (South African National Department of Education, 2005b). Similarly, the existing profile of newly qualified educators is also a critical point; young, white females with a background in social sciences are the most likely to go into teaching compared to other groups (South African National Department of Education, 2005b). Without

denying the importance of white females or the social sciences, it is important to note the need for a diversity that matches the learner population. A more alarming situation is observed in another study that revealed that only 64.7% of the surveyed newly qualified teachers across 11 South African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) wanted to teach in South Africa. About one-third of the surveyed final-year student teachers mentioned that they would like to teach abroad, and 7.4% observed that they did not want to teach at all (Bertram, Appleton, Muthukrishna, & Wedekind, 2006).

Making teaching jobs attractive for existing and new teachers and persuading young people to go into teaching are challenges that the post-apartheid education sector is facing. The *Report of the Ministerial Committee on Rural Education* recognized it as a major challenge in rural schools and made 80 recommendations to improve education in rural areas (South African National Department of Education, 2005a). The report rightly emphasized the need to provide more resources and to improve the infrastructure of schools in the rural areas. Indeed, one key recommendation was to make rural teaching attractive to newly qualified educators. On the basis of the report, a Rural Education Directorate was established in 2006 to address the shortages and to reform the state of education in the rural areas. Although it is too early to predict how these new measures will affect the schools and teachers in the rural areas, one thing is clear: The provision of resources to rural schools is not the only requirement to making teaching in rural areas more attractive. The devastating legacy of racial separateness, entrenched inequities, and little or no development in the aftermath of Apartheid have given people living in the rural areas a sense of loneliness, and they suffer from a 'loss of hope'. Thus, it is critical that all relevant sectors of society and all communities, especially those who have a direct involvement in the schools, come forward to help in alleviating this sense of mental and physical isolation. Also, the Ministerial Committee has pointed out that schools in the rural areas often view themselves through a deficit framework, thinking of themselves as powerless victims rather than thinking about how to direct their capacities and skills when opportunities arise (South African National Department of Education, 2005a). There is a need to look at the rural schools beyond such a deficit framework and see, instead, what they can offer to the development of broader education. The potential of the rural communities as a strong transformative signifier, influencing the attitudes



and behaviors of teachers, health professionals, and social workers, as noted by Balfour, Mitchell, and Moletsane (2008), is largely under-researched in the South African context. In this regard, much responsibility devolves onto those agencies and sectors that are directly related to education in the schools, such as teacher education institutions, which play a role in providing opportunities to young people to teach and work in the rural areas in a way that can influence their perception about rural schools as well as help them grow professionally.

Post-apartheid legislation has brought about opportunities for HEIs and schools to work together. The responsibility for preparing teachers has been moved from teachers' colleges to the HEIs. The South African Schools Act from 1996 emphasized decentralization and an increase in the role of local communities in the functioning of schools (South African National Department of Education, 1996). This provides a new opportunity to work together and explore how teachers can be best prepared with respect to the challenges in teacher education, especially with regard to schools in rural areas.

### *起源 / 'genesis'* **The Genesis of School-University Partnerships for Educational Change**

Like most books, *School-University Partnerships for Educational Change* has a back story. Much of the preliminary thinking for a project on rural teacher education and involvement of beginning teachers—the focus of this book—dates back to the preparation for the 2<sup>nd</sup> KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Teacher Development Conference in February 2006 that focused on the theme of teacher development and rural education. Organized by the Teacher Development Directorate and in partnership with faculty members from the University of Zululand (Unizulu) and UKZN, the conference drew presenters from many parts of South Africa as well as Canada and Australia. From consideration of indigenous knowledge systems through to reflection on rural teaching in the age of AIDS, youth participation, and the significance of teachers' self-study, the conference was an important one in the recent history of rural education in South Africa (see also Chikoko, 2008). Out of the conference came three complementary proposals: (1) the development by Balfour, Mitchell, and Moletsane of a funding proposal submitted to Nedbank and other funders to develop a rural teacher education initiative (later to become RTEP); (2) the Every Voice Counts: Teacher Development and Rural Education project proposal submitted to the National Research