

The Emergence of Teacher Education in Zambia

Brendan P. Carmody

Emerald Studies in Teacher Preparation **in National and Global Contexts**



The Emergence of Teacher Education in Zambia

EMERALD STUDIES IN TEACHER PREPARATION IN NATIONAL AND GLOBAL CONTEXTS

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BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Foreword

This study on *The Emergence of Teacher Education in Zambia* is an outstanding contribution to the global story of educational development. With painstaking attention to historical and scholarly detail, Professor Carmody delineates the transition within Zambia from teacher training to teacher education. In doing so, he maps out in considerable detail how, over a period of more than a century, teacher education evolved from imparting a narrowly conceived ability to transmit the three R's, through delivering some of the basic skills needed for formal employment, down to developing the in-depth knowledge and understanding of subject-matter that are required today. As he does so, he depicts in fine detail the education sector's response to changing social and political situations, reshaping and reformulating its teacher formation programmes and policies in the light of public expectations, economic realities, political aspirations and the limits of the possible.

At the same time the book brings out the steady increase in government control of the education system and the way this was seldom accompanied by a corresponding increase in resources. From beginning to end, education comes out strongly as the 'poor cousin', lacking the resources needed for responding to the high expectations of a rapidly increasing population and the dictates of not-always-creditable political elites. That it came to its present moderately developed state is a remarkable tribute to human tenacity and popular faith in the high value of education.

Throughout the study, Professor Carmody laments the way the preparation of teachers has remained narrow, concentrating its efforts on equipping prospective teachers with the skills needed to enable their future pupils climb the social ladder. He finds this to be far from the ideal so eloquently expressed by one of his informants who said what she finds attractive about teaching is that it provides her with an opportunity to do what she loves, 'mould and guide learners so that they have an impact on society and make it a better world'. The ideal is that teacher education should imbue all teachers with a similar spirit so that they would be empowered to educate not solely for jobs but also for flourishing lives. Unfortunately, this is far from being the situation in Zambia, and very likely in many other parts of the world, where an urgent need remains for a more future-inspired and professional approach to teacher formation.

Professor Carmody finds that this call for a more professional approach to the enterprise of being a teacher has been mooted many times in the past, but has been thwarted by the social, political and even academic view that the

primary and secondary school teacher has a very minor role to play as a thinking, decision-making, reflective and autonomous professional. The book notes the troubling implication of this failure to recognise the wealth of experience, understanding and good will present in most teachers, to say nothing of the enormity of the responsibility society places on them – that she or he is in effect merely a second-class professional, constrained to survive in a poorly paid career with unattractive prospects and very little motivation to excel on the job. What is required, the book pleads, is to effectively upgrade the status of teaching, not just by improvements in salaries, career prospects and conditions of service, but also by clearer public recognition that the teacher plays a crucial role in preparing the oncoming generations – in ‘moulding and guiding learners’ – for their life, performance and happiness in a rapidly changing world.

Lurking in the background of Professor Carmody’s study are the ever-present questions:

What next? Where will education in Zambia go from here? What new developments are needed to correct what has gone before and reform teacher education so that classroom practitioners can become the channel for the formation of responsible, caring, satisfied, imaginative, adequately informed young adults? Can it be brought about that teachers become ‘transforming intellectuals’? What can be done to upgrade the status of teachers and the image of teaching as a career?

Hopefully, with the considerable scholarship at his disposal, Professor Carmody will address questions such as these and point us to the next stage in the evolution of teacher education, not only in Zambia, but also in Africa and throughout the world.

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However, I am solely responsible for whatever shortcomings this work may have.

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