Chapter 1
Introduction

Background

The study that forms the basis of this book is the outcome of four commissioned reports on primary teacher deployment policies and practices in the Commonwealth countries of Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and the United Republic of Tanzania. Practices and policies that countries are following in teacher deployment and the effect these have on delivery and children' access and retention in school are critical factors towards the attainment of universal primary education (UPE) (UNESCO, 2006). Although it is understood that many countries in the Commonwealth are undoubtedly facing the problem of teacher supply, there are also serious challenges of teacher deployment (Commonwealth, 2003). Uneven deployment patterns, with surpluses in certain schools and areas co-existing with shortages in others, exist even in countries where there are sufficient teachers. Factors contributing to these challenges can vary and can include issues pertaining to urban-rural divides, along with other geographic and demographic dynamics. These can include factors such as extreme geographic remoteness, stakeholder influences, local-level versus macro-level targeting, responsiveness to regional deployment practices intricately linked to the overarching issue of decentralisation, and the lack of management and support given at the local administrative level.

Deployment patterns also have a crucial role on gender parity and gender equity, and these are often integral to the other factors already mentioned. For example, in Commonwealth Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, the enrolment and retention of girls is far less than that of boys, with under-representation being greatest in the rural and disadvantaged community areas. Arguably, the presence of female teachers in schools is believed to contribute positively to the presence of girls in education. Sensitivity to this gender consideration within teacher deployment policies and how to face prevailing challenges is a core issue. Underpinning the issue of access and retention is that of quality. Deployment and utilisation

of teachers impact upon the quality of education provided, and raise further issues of teacher training, qualifications, shift teaching and the use of innovative practices such as multigrade teaching.

Specifically, the book looks at the following issues:

- identification of the major issues in the country, e.g., rural-urban divides, low proportion of women teachers, low proportion of qualified teachers, lack of teachers in remote areas or conflict situations, etc;
- The teacher deployment policy (at national/regional levels) relating to minimum qualifications, training, selection, placement and ensuring the presence of women teachers in schools. Analysis of policy in the context of the major issues that exist in the country and whether they are responsive to the real issues;
- Are there any policy-practice divides? The presence (or, absence) of mechanisms to ensure that the polices are practiced as conceived, presence of norms, presence of monitoring mechanisms;
- Institutional arrangements: Does the country have institutional bases and arrangements to have suitable policy solutions and turn them into practice? and
- Suggestions for policy and institutional changes

Context

Universal primary education is a Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and one of the Commonwealth Secretariat's Six Education Action Areas, as mandated by education ministers at the 15th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (15CCEM) in November 2003. The other education MDG, eliminating gender disparities and inequalities in education, is also a Commonwealth Action Area, along with ensuring quality in education, education in difficult circumstances, mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS, and providing open and distance learning to overcome geographical barriers.

Indicators and reports suggest that progress in both UPE and eliminating gender disparities in education around the Commonwealth has been varied. Commonwealth countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia continue to have some of the greatest numbers of out-of-school children. However, the past five years have also seen large percentage increases in net

enrolment ratios (NERs) following acceleration of policies and practices towards achieving UPE. The 2006 Education for All Global Monitoring Report (GMR) showed that while worldwide progress towards UPE generally has been slow since the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, 2000[1] , many regions with low participation and insufficient school supply are also the regions where enrolment ratios are increasing most rapidly and the gender gap is narrowing. However, issues pertaining to access, retention and completion still prevail, and at the sub-national level girls are the most disadvantaged, and predominantly in rural areas.

With teachers playing a central role in the achievement of both the education MDGs and Education for All (EFA)[2] , the impact of teacher numbers, their supply and pupil-teacher ratios (PTRs) – both on educational outcomes and quality – is a crucial area of concern. The countries chosen for the study that this book highlights are a cross section of Commonwealth member states that are yet to achieve UPE. Each of the countries has national PTRs between the 35.1–45.1 range, with the exception of Tanzania that falls within the 45.1–60.1 range (UNESCO GMR, 2006). However, although compared with other countries within the Commonwealth these are relatively low national PTRs, as the following report will demonstrate, this is by no means an indication of equitable distribution at the sub-national level, with regional and local indicators showing significant disparities. Additionally, both Tanzania and Nigeria have regressed from PTRs that were previously below 40 in 1998, to figures above that level by 2002. Papua New Guinea (PNG) has also shown signs of a much slighter 1-point regression in PTR, although unlike the African case studies that both exhibit NER percentage growth since the new millennium, PNG also showed a fall in NER between 1998 and 2002.

The following are synopses of the national, cultural and educational policy environments, and the institutional set-up of each of the countries analysed in the book.

Nigeria

Nigeria is Africa's most populated country and the Commonwealth's fourth largest member state. Independence saw the inheritance of a three-tiered system of primary, secondary and higher education based on the British model of wide participation at the bottom, dividing into academic and vocational training at the secondary level, and higher education for a small elite. The education system is based on the National Policy on Education (NPE) document of 1977 and has undergone several revisions since then.

Universal primary education has been a stated priority of every Nigerian government since its introduction in the 1970s. The two decades prior to the return of a democratically elected government in 1998 were a time of political instability in the country, and this had a serious impact on the education sector. The new government re-launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Scheme in 1999 as one of its top priorities (Moja, 2000). Currently, Nigeria has over 50,000 public primary and pre-primary schools, with over 9,000 private ones (UBEC, 2005).

Nigeria is constitutionally comprised of 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Abuja and its suburbs. The states have six loose zonal affiliations grouping them together on a regional basis: the South West Zone, South East, South-South, North West, North East and North Central (also known as the Middle Belt). At present, education is on the concurrent list in the Nigerian constitution. This means federal, state and local governments and others (including individuals and organisations), can set-up schools from nursery through to universities, using guidelines and principles put into place through either consultations or Acts of the Assembly. There are also parastatal agencies that have responsibility for policy formulation and implementation. In the case of primary education, this is mainly the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), although other relevant commissions, such as the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) also have a stake. Administration of the education sector is therefore shared jointly between the federal and state ministries, and these commissions (Moja, 2000). However, as a matter of policy the federal government does not operate primary schools. Public primary schools are managed and supervised by State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) and Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs). Implementation of the 2004 UBE Act (which provides for compulsory free universal basic education and bringing into being the legal framework for the UBEC) means that the federal government is now also disengaging in the running of junior secondary schools, because they now form part of the nine-year basic education.

Nigeria therefore presents an interesting picture of overlapping layers of responsibility for different sub-sectors within education, with federal, state and local governments all co-existing alongside each other and the overarching presence of the parastatal commissions.

Pakistan

Pakistan inherited a very meagre school education system at the time of independence in 1947. There were around 10,000 primary and middle schools, with only a small proportion (17 per cent) for girls (Jalil, 1998). The number of primary teachers at that time was 17,800, with a small percentage (13.5 per cent) being female teachers (AEPAM, 2005). The literacy rate was as low as 10 per cent at independence (Hayes, 1987). According to the latest estimate, Pakistan now has 122,873 primary schools with 43,628 schools exclusively for girls in the public sector (AEPAM, 2005); the number of teachers has increased to around 450,000, meanwhile, with 46 per cent female teachers (AEPAM, 2005). Pakistan's literacy rate has also increased to 53 per cent (AEPAM, 2005). It is to be noted that Pakistan also has a large private primary school sector, comprising 18,502 schools (AEPAM, 2005).

It is evident that Pakistan has made significant quantitative expansion in the last 59 years; however, debate continues about the quality of education in the public school system. The Ministry of Education (MoE) states that about 25 per cent of children in Pakistan are not enrolled in primary school, and 50 per cent of those who are enrolled drop out before completing primary education (MoE, 1998). These figures contrast sharply with China and Indonesia, also low-income countries, where literacy rates in 1990 were over 75 per cent and enrolment of primary-school students reached 100 per cent (Warwick & Reimers, 1995).

Since independence, Pakistan has faced a staggering number of political crises, and the rise and fall of different governments has become a common sight. This political instability has had a profound effect on the education system too. Although all education plans and policies have emphasised the importance of quality education and have reiterated improvements in teaching standards as being one way of improving quality, nevertheless efforts have not been sustained in applying the recommendations of these policies (Ahsan, 2003). Consequently not much attention has been given to the issues of teacher deployment and utilisation, which impact upon the quality of education provided and raise further issues of teacher training and qualifications (Gazdar, 1999).

Constitutionally Pakistan is a federation with four provinces: Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), and federally administered areas, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Islamabad (the federal capital). The federal capital has all the powers pertaining to policy-making, strategic direction and other macro-level aspects. Similarly,

education policy is also centralised and formulated at the federal level. The details and aspects of implementation are mostly transferred to provincial governments and now from provincial to district level.

In the year 2000, the Government of Pakistan announced the Local Government Plan intended to build democratic institutions and empower people at the local level. District governments were created across urban and rural areas under the Local Government Devolution Plan for addressing governance and service delivery by introducing decentralised approaches to decision-making (MoE, 2001). The most important institutional arrangement since decentralisation in 2001 has been the devolution of authority or devolution of power. Devolution brings a number of structural changes in the public sector, and education is no exception. As a result of decentralisation, education up to the higher secondary level has been devolved to the district level in all provinces.

According to the MoE (2001), governance and management issues in education are to be addressed through various means following decentralisation. Three among these are: i) capacity building at all levels; ii) adequate institutional mechanisms for ensuring resource availability at local levels; and iii) setting up an independent monitoring and research programme to track decentralisation for informing policy and practice. Keeping the devolution plan as the main framework, government initiated the Education Sector Reform (ESR) programme. Announced in January 2002, ESR is a comprehensive sector-wide programme for increased access, enhanced equity and improved quality at all levels of education (MoE, 2001). The most important objective is to develop an educated population in which every person has completed at least a minimum level of education, such as universal primary education.

The International Crisis Group (ICG, 2004) reports that the Devolution of Power Plan gives district governments lead responsibility in deciding on the location of new schools, arranging funding for their construction, monitoring the schools and carrying out annual evaluation of teachers; it also provides powers to district officers for teachers' appointments, transfers and promotions. Following devolution, massive restructuring took place to facilitate the transfer of powers to the lowest administrative level.

Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is located in the southwest region of the Pacific Basin. Physically PNG varies enormously with extremely rugged mountains, tropical rainforests, savannah grass plains, swamps and lagoons. It has

about 1,400 islands to the east and northeast parts of the country. The population is 5.2 million (53 per cent male and 47 per cent female), with an annual growth rate of 2.6 per cent. Eighty-five per cent of the country's population lives in rural areas. There are more than 800 distinct languages; however, English is the official language of education, commerce and industry, while Motu and Tok Pisin are the national languages. Approximately 55 per cent of the population is illiterate and average life expectancy is 54 years. About 45 per cent of the population is under the 15-year age bracket, indicating an enormous pressure on the formal education system.

The PNG formal education system was established in early 1970s, with approximately 1,050 institutions, 9,060 teachers and 254,000 students. By 2003, the system had grown to 4,000 elementary schools, 3,300 primary schools, 170 secondary schools and 140 vocational schools employing 33,000 teachers. The current education reforms began in 1994, which focused on the structure followed by the curriculum. The key features of education reform are:

- Provision of nine years of basic education (elementary preparatory to Grade 8);
- Introduction of community-based elementary schools providing a preparatory and elementary Grades 1 and 2. Teaching would take place in a language chosen by the community, and could be a vernacular or a national language;
- Primary schools would start from Grades 3 to 8, using a strategy called 'Bridging to English' as the medium of instruction;
- Relocate Grades 7 and 8 from high schools to primary schools; and
- Increase access to Grades 9 and 10, as well as Grades 11 and 12.

The PNG education system is highly decentralised, with provinces and local-level governments (LLGs) empowered to administer the system. The national government is responsible for policy, planning, curriculum and allocation of teachers' positions and examinations (standards). Provinces are responsible for teacher appointment, discipline and training, while LLGs are responsible for the operation and development of schools. Understanding the different players and their roles and responsibilities is important. Newly appointed District Education Administrators are yet to create an impact on supervision and monitoring of teachers' performance and school management. Boards of Management (BoMs) require better understanding to improve teaching and learning in schools.

Tanzania

Tanzania gained its independence from Britain in 1961, and inherited an elitist education system with a low level of primary school enrolment. In 1967, there was a major policy change in favour of the philosophy of 'Education for Self Reliance', which focused on combining learning with manual work and preparation for life in villages. The primary school medium of instruction was also changed from English to the national language, Kiswahili, in 1968; however, English has remained the medium of instruction in secondary and tertiary education to date. In 1977, Tanzania declared universal primary education, but due to a shortage of teachers the government recruited a large number of under-qualified teachers to fill places in primary schools at that time. In 2001, Tanzania embarked in a Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP), funded by the government through a combination of local resources and a loan from the World Bank and other donors. The programme seeks to return UPE to 100 per cent net enrolment, as it had slipped to below 70 per cent in the late 1990s.

Methodology

Data for the study that forms the basis of this book was gathered via four in-country researches of documents, using both primary and secondary sources, and through interviews with officials and stakeholders. Unless otherwise noted, indicators used in the main body of the comparative situational analysis all pertain to state/public schools.

In each of the countries, national statistics were consulted throughout. The Nigeria report used data from UBEC, the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and the NCNE, while in Pakistan documents from the Academy of Educational Planning and Management (AEPAM) were consulted. The Papua New Guinea and the Tanzania studies used statistics gathered from the Ministry of Education and Vocational Skills and the Department of Education respectively. Respective national sector plans and action plans were also consulted, as were international reports including the Education for All (EFA) documents and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Reports. Articles and papers by other authors were also referred to.

National and sub-national data are presented throughout, and these vary given the differences between the countries studied. All were disaggregated according to rural/urban and gender. All the data refer to the public education sector only, with the exception of Tanzania. The scope and depth

of the data from each country varied, partly in response to differences in size and composition, along with availability of data within the time allowed for the study. A clear example of these differences would be Nigeria's 36 states as compared to Pakistan's four provinces, despite the fact that their population counts are almost the same. The Tanzania study looked at the national, regional and district levels, using a sample from the 120 districts in the country. Pakistan used regional level data in both the public and private sectors, and conducted interviews at the regional level in the province of Sindh. Nigeria's case presented an overview of sub-national data at the state level. Given the size of Nigeria's federal structure, quite distinct trends particular to each state could be discerned, some of which were used in the study. Further analysis would have rendered the study biased in information towards Nigeria. The Papua New Guinea country study used data at the provincial level, with a further analysis of disadvantaged schools (following DoE criteria) in rural provinces.

The report is structured into four chapters, including this introductory chapter. Chapter 2 conducts a comparative situational analysis that brings out some of the key disparities in deployment indicators in each of the four countries. Major similarities are drawn on for analysis and evaluation of the causes, while more country-specific contexts and trends are also highlighted when in evidence. Chapter 3 identifies and evaluates the policies and practices being carried out in each of the case studies. Starting with a basic understanding of the institutional arrangements for teacher deployment in each country, the chapter then analyses the experiences of policy provision in areas such as teacher education and recruitment, placement and transfers. The chapter then addresses specific strategies for counteracting deployment imbalances. Using the knowledge acquired from the previous two chapters, chapter 4 sets down recommendations on what policies, practices and institutional changes are needed to improve processes towards more equitable quality teacher deployment.

The study highlighted here is the first cross-regional comparative analysis of teacher deployment in the Commonwealth, and in so being is bringing some important sub-national indicators and government institutional frameworks managing teacher deployment to light for dissemination. Within limits of time and funds, in-country researchers have been able to provide statistics and insights that would have been difficult to gather otherwise. However, much of the analysis in the study relies on data presented from official government statistics. The lack availability of alternative sources meant that alternative perspectives could not be sought, but

the study nonetheless provides an initial documentation for the case study countries. Interviews were conducted by the in-country researchers to get perspectives of various education managers and practitioners at the national, regional and district/local levels. These interviews were also used to obtain perspectives on existing institutional arrangements for teacher deployment and issues faced in order to develop suggestions for policy and institutional changes. Due to the scope of the overall study using four countries, in-depth analysis of teacher deployment at the more localised community level was not possible; as a result, it has not been possible to analyse deployment imbalances between schools within districts, for example. Such an approach may have yielded further statistical and process insights. However, the level of understanding gleaned has been sufficient for the type of multi-country study this is, and also provides a strong foundation for further in-country analysis and policy recommendations.

Notes

1 For more information see: http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/wef_2000/ [accessed 16 June 2008]
2 For more information on the MDGs, Dakar EFA Goals and the Education for All Global Monitoring Report, visit: UNESCO website (www.unesco.org) and UN website (www.un.org/millenniumgoals).