

# The New Secondary School Teacher Education Modality in Ethiopia: Challenges and Implications

**Mulugeta AWAYEHU**

*Lecturer, Department of Adult Education and Community Development,*

*College of Educational and Behavioral Sciences, Bahir Dar University*

*P O Box 79, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia*

*mulugetaawayehu@gmail.com*

## **Abstract**

Ethiopia launched a new teacher training modality for secondary schools, Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching, in 2011. This study explores the major challenges hindering the implementation of the program. A total of 557 participants (trainees, instructors, program coordinator, department heads and the dean) were surveyed. Questionnaires, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were employed to gather pertinent data. Challenges identified from instructors were class absenteeism, lack of interest in and commitment to the program, and failure to provide timely and constructive feedback to trainees. Similarly, problems observed from trainees include class absenteeism, lack of interest in and commitment to the program. Moreover, trainees' misconceptions on teacher professional development are reported and they assume the program as short term training and has additional benefits. Many of them believe that the program is not worthwhile to their career. Institutional challenges such as loose coordination system, lack of concern for the program by the University and MoE officials and failure to treat trainees like other students in the regular program were identified. Based on the findings, teacher training institutions are recommended to devise mechanisms to enhance the commitment and motivation of instructors and trainees. The Ministry of Education and University are urged to revisit the management system of the program.

## **Key words**

PGDT; Pre-service; Secondary school; Teacher education; Teacher trainees

## **Introduction**

In the production of qualified, competent and ethical citizens, teachers at all level play a paramount role. As contended by UNESCO (2004), since teachers have many roles and responsibilities in an education system, it seems that the goal of education is unattainable without them, and someone can boldly say that there is no substitute to having better teachers. Similarly, Thompson and Power (2015) argue that education policies, however well-intentioned, and official curricula, however well

crafted, cannot succeed without the teacher, whose professional management of the teaching-learning process ensures that education really takes place.

Moreover, school teachers) are regarded as key actors and critical inputs to achieve the Millennium Development Goals for education and the wider EFA goals (Harris & Sass, 2008). As strengthened by Marphatia, Legault, Edge and Archer (2010), a dedicated and well-trained teacher can provide students with the essential skills to critically analyze, challenge and improve the discriminatory attitudes or behavior that may be present in their homes, schools and communities. Indeed, a good quality teacher can guide the learning process of students, making learning relevant and stimulating.

However, it is not just any teacher that can make education happen. It has to be an effective teacher. An effective teacher (Thompson & Power, 2015) is not just born; they are made over time through training and experience. Teacher education is crucial in this process. Teacher education refers to the policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and wider community

In materializing the goal of producing effective and competent teachers, different approaches to teacher education have emerged around the world. Cheng, Chow and Tsui (2001) and Haris and Sas (2006) affirmed that, in facing the challenges of globalization, information technology, and transformation towards new knowledge based economy, there have been diverse reforms and initiatives to change teacher education in different part of the world.

Particularly, at the beginning of the 21st century how to optimize our efforts to enhance the aims, content, and practice of teacher education for teachers to develop and excel in such a rapidly changing local and global context is an urgent international concern in education reforms. This again demands developing a new teacher education characterized by effectiveness, quality, and relevance or meeting the challenges to education for our new generations in the new millennium (Cheng, Chow & Tsui, 2001). Similarly, Bansilal, Webb and James (2015) noted that, higher education institutions are rethinking curricula for teacher training in order for trainees to have higher qualifications.

Hence, pre-service and in-service teacher trainings are profoundly important in enhancing the teachers' competence and ability in shaping the future generation. According to UNESCO (2011), since teachers are required to deliver content knowledge, develop skills and foster attitudes that will enable learners to reach their potential, training is essential. Mpokosa and Ndaruhutse (2008) and UNESCO (2014) also pointed out that, pre-service training and in-service professional development and the informal training obtained through on-the-job experience are main avenues of becoming a qualified and competent teacher

Most importantly, well designed and quality pre-service training is the first step in equipping prospective teachers with fundamental subject matter and pedagogical knowledge. World Bank (2013) also asserts that, developing teachers' instructional competence is a career-long process that starts with quality pre-service education. To this effect, as stated by State University (2015), all nations have established specialized institutions and particular processes by which prospective teachers are educated; however these institutions and processes vary in their structure, goals, and organization around the world. In Ethiopia various reforms have emerged since the 1994 Education and Training Policy (ETP). As argued by Koye and Yonas (2013), to respond to the rapidly changing

demands of education, the Ethiopian teacher's development program has passed through different reforms since 1994.

According to Tekeste (2006), the landscape of Ethiopian education has changed dramatically since 1994. It can be safely said that (Ministry of Education, 2002) in all these long years, there was never such a clear policy by which to evaluate and accordingly shape the direction of education and training in Ethiopia. Beyond having no policy direction, the previous educational system had acute and severe problems of both access and quality. Fekede (2009) pointed that, following the overthrow of the Dergue regime in Ethiopia, a number of efforts have been made, aimed at transforming society through education. New goals of access, equity, quality and efficiency have been articulated in Ethiopian education and training.

Among the areas of reforms and prioritized action, one focuses on teacher training and overall development of teachers. A task force was formed to study the problems of quality and effectiveness of the teacher education system in Ethiopia in 2001. The study was extensive and entitled "A Critical Review of the Quality and Effectiveness of the Teacher Education system in Ethiopia". The study reported that the system's ability to provide education in accordance with the goals of the ETP was weakened by several factors. The principal one was teachers' qualification and pedagogical skills required to perform. This in turn led to the preparation of Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) document in order to address the serious problems identified in the study. It was initiated in 2002 and came into effect in 2003 and secondary teacher education was reduced from four years to three (MoE, 2003; MoE, 2006; Fekede, 2009; Mulugeta, 2009; Koye & Yonas, 2013; Shoeb, 2013; UNESCO 2005).

After eight successive years of implementation of TESO program, the task force composed of several stakeholders was established to study the major problems of the TESO program and develop a sound teacher education program in the country. Furthermore, teacher educators were invited to reflect on the TESO program and suggest possible direction for improvement. Also empirical evidences from teacher education programs and theoretical bases of teacher education from various countries were examined: experiences of various countries taken through different means (Worku & Alebachew, 2015).

Ministry of Education (2009) in the Curriculum Framework revealed that, despite achievements following the introduction of the TESO program in 2003 for preparing secondary school teachers, their competence has not shown improvement and, in fact, might have declined. The major problems in secondary teachers' capacity and performance were: inadequate competence of teachers, the improper and insufficient implementation of active learning methods, the low commitment and ethics among teachers, and the low interest and involvement of teachers in following up and assisting their students. Taking into account all the problems and the shared experiences, the MoE introduced a new teacher-training program called Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT) in 2011 (Worku & Alebachew, 2015). According to World Bank (2013), the main aim of PGDT was to confront several problems of the old teacher training program i.e. TESO. Specifically, the new teacher training is aimed to fill the content and pedagogical gaps of earlier secondary education teacher training programs.

Currently, with introduction of the PGDT program, the selection criteria and training of secondary school teachers is changed. Primarily, as to Adugna (2012) they join universities and graduate in applied departments. Then, those who are interested in the profession and can satisfy the requirement of MoE will be selected for the teaching training. Similarly, MOE (2013) stated that, under the new system teacher trainees are given one year of professional and practical training

before they are employed in teaching job. After they have finished this training, they are awarded a certificate named Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching. According to World Bank (2013), this one-year professional education program mainly consists of training in educational foundations, pedagogy, and school based practicum experience.

This new teacher education program (PGDT) in Ethiopia was launched five years ago. As one of the public universities, Bahir Dar University has been offering the program for the last five years, since 2011. The College of Educational and Behavioral Sciences has been intensively working in preparing teachers. From the researchers' experience as a trainer and head of the registrar of the College, the PGDT program went through numerous problems and turbulence. The program has been challenged by problems emanated from various sources. Moreover, to the best knowledge of the researcher, the problems of the current teachers training program at Bahir Dar University have not been studied. Hence, this research was mainly aimed at exploring the major challenges of the current teacher training program (PGDT) at Bahir Dar University and suggesting implications for better reform.

## **Research Questions**

The following basic research questions were raised;

- a) What are the major teacher-trainer related challenges to the new teacher training program?
- b) What are the institutional challenges hindering the teacher training program?
- c) What are the challenges observed from teacher trainees?
- d) What are the implications for better practice?

## **Significance of the Study**

The results of this study will be helpful firstly to Bahir Dar University. The research will make the university officials, trainers and the coordination office aware of the challenges of the program. It will enable them to design appropriate intervention strategies to make the program more effective. The Ministry of Education will also learn about the growing pains of the PGDT program at Bahir Dar University. Moreover, Universities in Ethiopia and elsewhere teacher training programs can benefit from this study as it recommends possible solutions for the challenges observed in the program.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The researcher employed descriptive survey design as appropriate one in identifying the major challenges of the teacher training program. As supported by Kothari (2004), descriptive research is relevant in describing, recording, analyzing and interpreting current conditions of a particular individual or group.

## **Research Method**

In this study, mixed research method was employed. Spratt, Walker and Robinson (2004) suggested that, combining quantitative and qualitative methods sounds like a good idea. Using multiple approaches can capitalize on the strengths of each approach and offset their different weaknesses. Creswell (2003) also asserted that, mixed methods design is useful to capture the best of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Accordingly, this research combines both methods in identifying the major challenges of the program.

## **Participants**

The target population of this study is all 968 PGDT trainees participating in winter and summer programs in 2014/15 academic year, all 52 instructors involved in the training, department heads, dean and the coordinator of the program. To select representative samples of trainees from summer and winter modalities, proportional stratified random sampling technique was used. From 231 winter program 102 participants and from 737 summer program 367 participants were selected for the study. Generally, a total of 469 teacher-trainees were involved in filling questionnaires.

In relation to the selection of interview and FGD participants, purposive sampling technique was employed. Accordingly, four department heads, the dean and PGDT coordinator were also selected for an in-depth interview. As the university is applying a lecture-tutor approach in the PGDT program, five instructors (two lecturers and three tutors) were selected purposively. Moreover, 18 trainees for FGD, 9 from each program, were also selected purposively.

## **Data collection tools**

In this study, questionnaires, in-depth interviews, FGDs and document review were utilized. Questionnaires were used to collect data from trainees and instructors. The questionnaires were developed by the researcher and two different types of questionnaires were distributed to trainees and trainers. The questionnaires are likert type and consist of items related to trainee, trainer and institution related challenges. The alternatives were coded as; Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4) and Strongly agree (5). The questionnaires also included open-ended questions under each theme.

In-depth interviews were also held with the department heads, dean, coordinator and lecturers and tutors of the program. Moreover, Focus Group Discussions were also conducted with trainees. Two FGDs were held with trainees selected from each programs. Relevant documents from the registrar and MoE were also duly reviewed. Permission was obtained from the university officials to conduct interviews and dispatch questionnaires. All the interviews and FGDs were audio-taped based on the consent of the respondents and transcribed. Participants of the questionnaires were assured anonymity and those interviewed were promised individual confidentiality as agreed during the initial FGD and pre-interview discussion

## **Data analysis techniques**

In relation to quantitative methods, the primary data gathered through questionnaires were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, percentages and frequencies. Moreover, thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected through in-depth interview and FGDs. The tape recordings of an in-depth interview and Focus Group Discussions were initially transcribed. After transcribing, the core concepts were categorized containing broad themes like trainee related, trainer related and institutional challenges. The qualitative data was presented using direct quotes from respondents,

summarizing and paraphrasing. Finally, the major findings under each theme and sub-theme were analyzed by organizing, summarizing and interpreting.

## Results

### Trainers and Trainee Related Challenges

Challenges in the PGDT program are broadly treated in terms of challenges stem from teacher-trainees, trainers and the institution (university, coordination office, college and Ministry of Education). As the nature of challenges for summer and winter programs are different, this section treats these challenges independently. As depicted below, the mean results of each of the items were computed. Hence, to see the degree of severity of each problem, 3 (the mean) is used as a reference point. If the mean is below 3, the result shows the less seriousness of the problem. Whereas, if the mean result is found to be above 3, it indicates the problem is serious.

Accordingly, as can be observed from Table 1 below (as rated by teacher-trainees), for summer PGDT program, low interest and motivation of teacher trainees and shortage of time to work on assignments and projects were rated as most serious problems. Whereas, for winter program, the first five serious challenges were; missing of classes by instructors, low interest and motivation of students, low support of trainers to teacher trainees and low interest of instructors.

Table1. Mean Results of Trainers and Trainees Related challenges

No.	Challenges	N		Mean	
		Summer	Winter	Summer	Winter
1.	Missing of classes by instructors	363	87	2.80	3.31
2.	Low motivation from the part of trainees	361	85	3.07	3.25
3.	Trainees disappointment on the accommodation	352	84	2.96	2.89
4.	Teachers showing low interest	358	84	2.89	3.04
5.	Teachers' low commitment and devotion	355	85	2.78	3.15
6.	Low interest of teacher trainees	357	83	3.33	3.23
7.	Disciplinary problems of teacher trainees	358	85	2.42	2.38
8.	Low trainees' engagement in the classroom tasks	360	82	2.74	2.84
9.	Shortage of time to work on assignments and projects	355	83	3.28	2.57
10.	Low support of instructors to trainees	358	85	2.87	3.12
11.	Trainees are less serious to work	358	84	3.05	2.86
12.	Teachers poor relationship with the trainees	357	85	2.83	3.06
13.	Poor attendance of trainees	361	85	2.74	2.78
14.	Poor relationship among teacher trainees	356	85	2.43	2.49
15.	Teaching methods not different from 1st degree	356	85	2.92	3.01

### Institutional Challenges in the Program

From the responses, challenges stemming from the institution (university, coordination office, Ministry of Education and College) were found to be more serious than problems from trainers and trainees. Also, most of the institutional problems were found to be more serious (above mean = 3) in winter program than in summer.

Table.2. Mean Results of Institutional Challenges

No.	Challenges	N		Mean	
		Summer	Winter	Summer	Winter
1.	Tight block system (schedule)	330	77	2.80	2.73
2.	Lack of orientation to teacher trainees	355	86	3.15	3.72
3.	Weak communication of the coordination office to trainees	352	84	3.47	4.10
4.	Low concern of the Ministry of Education to the program	357	84	3.40	3.13
5.	Inconvenient class schedule	354	85	3.14	3.09
6.	lack of study centers and facilities (Library, computer)	360	84	2.72	4.00
7.	Unavailability of counseling unit to support students	353	85	3.22	3.86
8.	Shortage of time to work on assignments and projects	356	85	3.27	2.62
9.	Lack of organized learning materials	360	84	3.33	3.69
10.	Inconvenient location of the classrooms	356	84	2.74	3.27
11.	Lack of facilities (e.g. recreation center, clinic)	356	84	2.97	3.58
12.	Problem of instructors responsiveness to trainee's concern	351	85	2.99	3.31
13.	Lack of supportive books in the library	356	85	2.65	3.98
14.	Lack of monitoring and support system	359	84	3.19	3.80
15.	Low priority given to PGDT program by the University	359	85	3.26	3.78

As can be seen in Table 2 above, the most serious problems in the winter program were poor communication between the coordination office and trainees, lack of study centers and facilities (library, computer), lack of supportive books in the library, lack of monitoring and support system. Moreover, unavailability of counseling service to trainees, low concern of the university to this program and lack of orientations to trainees were other constraints in the program. All the aforementioned challenges were rated as serious problems. In summer training program, weak communication between the coordination office and trainees, lower priority given to PGDT by University and MoE officials, unavailability of counseling center, lack of organized learning materials are hindering the summer PGDT program.

### Interview and FGD results

#### *Challenges observed from trainees*

Trainees misconceived this teacher training program. They join the program assuming that the training is a kind of short term training and believe there is additional benefit by being part of the training. Teacher trainees are misinformed that in this PGDT program, there is no grading and probability to be expelled if they can't qualify. What makes matters even worse is there is no serious orientation from the concerned officials to clear these confusions.

Moreover, many trainees join this program after intensively searching for other jobs due to low wages for teachers and the lack of fringe benefits. Becoming a teacher is their lowest preference and they use it as a stay. This attitude lessens their interest in the teacher training. They search for better jobs while they are attending the training. Still some trainees are employed in other sectors and disturb the whole system and are bad models.

Lack of trainees' interest and commitment in the program is another challenge in the program. In the winter program as revealed in the FGDs and interviews, the problem is attributed to no incentive mechanism to trainees. Even though they graduated from universities and have certificate,

nevertheless they don't earn additional benefit by being part of this training. Moreover, they believe courses they have taken in their applied degree are adequate to be a teacher.

In summer PGDT program, lack of interest and commitment is mainly resulted from their belief this teacher training is less worthwhile for their teaching profession. They believe that most of the courses are taken at the Diploma level. As most of them were teachers before this PGDT program, they think that they are complete teachers and feel wasting their time in the program. One summer FGD participant sourly said that:

*We are matured and experienced teachers and getting bored with repeatedly taking courses. The university is not considering our previous experiences. We have been teaching for so many years. This training is not relevant to us and we are not getting new experiences. Most trainees including me believe that we have taken most of the courses during our diploma program so we give less attention to the program and we are feeling we are simply wasting our time.*

#### *Challenges from Instructors (trainers)*

Some trainers instead of being part of the solution and molding trainees in the appropriate way, they add problems. Many of them don't show the interest to involve in the PGDT program and they only agree to be a trainer because they earn more. They missed classes repeatedly but no administrative measure was taken. This problem is worse in subject area courses. Moreover, trainers focus on theory rather than practical applications and dominantly use lecture method. Failure to provide timely and constructive feedback for assessments and submit trainees' grade on time to the registrar office is another headache to the program. On account of this, teacher trainees are not getting registered and graduation is not endorsed on time. For instance, in 2014/15 academic year trainees were taking courses without being registered. They were not able to know their academic status.

#### *Institutional Problems*

The most challenging factor for the winter program was found to be the campus where trainees were assigned. Teacher trainees are assigned at a distant place, 7 Kilometers away from the College of Education and Behavioral Science campus. In this campus, there are not enough classrooms, no library, no support system, very small halls for lecture session. The university doesn't seem to be concerned to the program and does not treat teacher trainees like the regular students.

The PGDT program being offered at Bahir Dar University is based on the lecture-tutor approach. In this approach, trainers are given the role of the lecturer and tutors and both have different but complementary roles. The lecturers are assumed to be experienced and offer weekly lectures to trainees in large halls. Based on the contents covered in lecture session, the tutors design activities that actively engage trainees. Assessments are expected to be set by the collaboration of the lecturer and tutors. In the study, it was found that, poor communication between the lecturer and tutor is creating numerous problems in the program. Both the lecturer and tutor are not working together in designing the learning contents, classroom activities, tasks and various assessments. It is also found that there is role confusion and both the lecturer and tutors are not fully aware of their responsibilities.

Loose coordination system of the program was another challenge hindering this training program. One department head said that:

*For me the role of the coordination office is not only registration, assigning classes and setting schedules. There must be a regular follow up of the program. Most instructors are missing classes, grades are not submitted on*

*the due date and academic advisors are not working. The office is not monitoring the overall condition of trainees. Regular orientations are not being provided to trainees.*

Ministry of Education was found to be source of the trouble to the PGDT program due to irregular assignment of teacher trainees. In some time trainees are sent in summer, on the other time in winter. Even in winter, as respondents bitterly explained, there is no consistency. This is creating serious management problems to the university. Since trainees are being assigned at a time when the regular students settled and all dormitories occupied, the university is obliged to locate trainees at the outskirts of the town. The sudden decisions made by MoE are creating trouble for the program. For instance, in 2014/2015 most of the instructors were assigned to teach in the regular University program assuming that there will not be PGDT program. All of a sudden MoE send students in January at a time when all instructors were undertaking their regular routine. Besides, MoE has no serious supervision and follow up system for this program.

## **Discussion**

In the study of Mukeredzi, Mthiyane and Bertram (2015), it is noted that promoting acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies through education is necessary for the performance of chosen roles that contribute to national economic and social development. This requires an education system staffed with teachers who are well equipped to effectively discharge their roles. To this end, teachers need to pass through formal professional study and acquiring the requisite pedagogies, knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and competences to engage in the activities of classroom practice.

Cognizant of the paramount role of teacher training in producing competent citizens, many countries are investing resources to train in-service and pre-service teachers. Likewise, the Ethiopian government launched a new teacher education training program in 2011. However, this teacher training is entangled with challenges from various sources. Hence, this study explored the major challenges of the teacher training in the Ethiopia and suggests implications for better implementation. Drawing upon participants' experiences, this study identified several challenges that impede the PGDT program at Bahir Dar University.

The data analysis shows that the major challenges of the current teacher training program can be divided into three main categories: 1) Trainees related problems 2) Instructors related challenges and 3) Problems created by the institution (Coordination office, faculty, the University and MoE). Table 3 below illustrates the specific challenges hindering the PGDT program.

In this teacher training program, instructors are found to be sources of problems that hinder the implementation of the training. The findings indicate that, most of the instructors involving in this training program are less interested and motivated. Even though, the training is believed to be practical, instructors hugely focus on theory. Again, trainers in the PGDT program lack innovativeness in selecting appropriate learning methods and employ dominantly teacher-centered methods. This is contradictory to contemporary educational reform, constructivism (Gordon, 2009; Sjøberg, 2007), where learners are assumed to be active creators of their knowledge rather than passive recipients.

Table 3. Summary of Major challenges of the program

Instructors	Teacher trainees	Institutional		
		Coordination office and College	University	Ministry of Education
→ Low interest and commitment	↪ Low interest and motivation	↔ Tight schedule	⊗ The university doesn't treat trainees like the regular students	→ No incentive mechanism to trainees
→ Low support of instructors to trainees	↪ Consider this program as a stay station	↔ Lack of serious orientations	⊗ Assigning winter students outside PGDT	→ Irregular assignment of trainees
→ Focusing on theory rather than practice	↪ Believing the training is worthless for their career	↔ Poor contact between the lecturer and tutor	⊗ Lower priority given to PGDT	→ No serious supervision and follow-up system
→ Dominantly applying lecture-method	↪ Misconception the program	↔ Weak documentation of students result	⊗ Lack of study centers and facilities (library, computer),	→ Low emphasis given to teacher training
→ Absenteeism	↪ Missing classes repeatedly	↔ Lack of monitoring and support system	⊗ Unavailability of counseling service to trainees	
→ Failure to provide feedback		↔ Poor communication	⊗ Lack of monitoring of the program	
→ Poor academic advising				

In this study, it is also revealed that teacher trainees are posing several challenges to the program. Most of the trainees are found to be less interested and committed in this program. Absenteeism was another major problem observed from the trainees. Similar findings were indicated from the research works of Koye and Yonas (2013) on the practices and challenges of PGDT program at Haramaya University. This training program is also misconceived by trainees in that they expect additional benefit from their enrolment in this program. Besides, most of the trainees believe that the program is less worthwhile for their teaching career.

The third major challenge is emanated from the institution. The institutional challenges are viewed from the coordination office and college, the university and MoE. In relation to the coordination office and faculty, the PGDT program is hindered by poor communication between the lecturer and tutor, trainees and the office and lack of serious orientation to trainees. This finding corroborated what is noted in Young et al (2001) that poor coordination between teacher education and the faculty is one of the hindrances in educating teacher trainees. Besides, the program is not well supervised and there is lack of monitoring and support system to trainees.

The University also seems to place low priority to this training program. This is manifested by lack of study centers and facilities (library, computer) and unavailability of counseling service to trainees unlike the regular students. Similar problems were revealed from Tadesse and Meaza (2007) study at Jimma University. Moreover, winter trainees were assigned at a distant campus from the college. The University is not monitoring and supporting this program like other regular programs. Equally important problems are also observed from the Ministry of Education. As Koye and Yonas (2013) found, teacher trainees are assigned to the university late. Incentive mechanism is not designed to encourage these teacher trainees. Officials from MoE are not supervising and assessing the implementation of the program at the university. The MoE seems to give lower priority to the program.

### **Implications for Teacher Training Practices**

Currently, the teacher training program is entangled with various challenges. Hence reforms have to be made in this teacher training program. Based on the above findings and suggestions recommended by respondents the following implications were drawn for better implementation of the program.

#### **Revisiting Management Strategies**

The coordinating office should have a strong follow up and monitoring system, including making unannounced visits to inspect instructors' presence, classrooms, assessment systems and grade submission. The office has to work hand in hand with trainees and instructors. Trainers should be well informed on various issues in the program through short meetings, direct contacts and email. Clear communication between the coordination office and instructors as well as trainees has to be established.

The College needs to set guidelines for the PGDT program that clearly states the consequences for teachers who missed classes, failed to notify grades to students and submit to the registrar office on time, and do not accomplish tasks of academic advising. The College has to develop a guideline to govern the Lecture-tutor approach in the program. Specifying the independent tasks of the lecturer and tutor is worthwhile for the success of the approach

The College has to raise the profile of trainers. An institution training teachers need to be first critically evaluate itself and make sure that trainers are well equipped in teacher training. Practical trainings, consultative workshops and orientation sessions must be organized. In assigning instructors to the program, their commitment and interest should be considered. Only instructors who are interested and experienced should be part of the training. As the College is striving to be a center of excellence in education, due emphasis in all aspects should be given especially in designating appropriate and merit based training system.

#### **The Ministry of Education and the University**

Another major obstacle for the PGDT program is that the Ministry of Education is not perceived to fully support the program. MoE is highly recommended to send trainees on time and communicate issues as early as possible. Teacher training has to be given a paramount place by MoE and it has to be well recognized that, teacher training need to be greatly valued. Moreover, to increase the interest and commitment of trainees, incentive mechanism must be devised by the MoE.

The university is not valuing PGDT as one of its focus and show low sense of ownership. The university itself has to take a serious responsibility for this program and follow each activity. The university is urged to treat these trainees as regular students. Winter trainees must be assigned in a campus where they can read various books, practice in a laboratory, meet their instructors, discuss with the management bodies and access different resources like internet and computer.

#### **Trainer and Trainees of the Program: Re-thinking Involvement**

Instructors are highly recommended to work as hard as regular program and to be models to these trainees. Teachers are expected to attend classes regularly, provide feedbacks for assessments notify trainees' grade and submit to the registrar, and accomplish the role of academic advising. Teachers need to be innovative in applying active learning methods rather than the traditional talk and chalk. Teachers need to inculcate the notion of "what goes to the teacher, goes to the nation".

Trainees must be well oriented that, this is a nation building process and molding the future generation is the greatest of all professions. Teacher-trainees should be kept on task continuously and should be oriented that this is a preparation for a career and not for a happy-go-lucky type of life. They should know that they will be expelled if not properly attending classes and assessments.

## Conclusion

From the vast literatures in teacher education, well designed and quality teacher training is crucial in preparing competent teachers. Similarly, Young et al. (2001) state that, teacher education programs play a significant role in the preparation of a highly qualified teaching work force, which is necessary to support the development of a complex 21<sup>st</sup> century society. However, the preparation of qualified secondary teachers at Bahir Dar University is impeded by several factors.

This study explored the challenges of teacher training and drew some implications for reform. From trainees up to the Ministry of Education, different bodies share in responsibility for the problems and for finding solutions. Instructors and trainees were found to be less interested and committed to the program. Instructors focus more on theory than practical applications and lack creativity in applying active learning methods. Loose coordination and communication system and lack of monitoring and support were major problems observed from the faculty and coordination office. Furthermore, MoE doesn't give serious attention to this teacher training program and posed considerable problems.

As noted by Botha and Reddy (2011), if trainees' roles and competencies as teachers are not adequately developed, pre-service and in-service teachers will be ill prepared to pursue their roles as competent teachers. Hence, it is important to recognize that the current teacher training program in Ethiopia requires drastic reform. As teacher training is a nation building process, strong effort has to be made by the Ministry of Education and Bahir Dar University. The Coordination office and the College should have strong follow up of the program. The commitment and interest of instructors and trainees has to be enhanced. Even though this educational change is not a one-off event, the concerted effort exerted by the aforementioned bodies can cure the poorly implemented teacher training program. As the challenges are multifaceted, it might take a long time to alleviate, but it is not impossible as Sahlberg (2011) described how Finland transformed from only modestly educated nation to a modern knowledge society with a well-performing education system in the globe.

## References

- Adugna B. (2012). Assessment of the Attitude of prospective teachers enrolled in the postgraduate diploma in teaching: the Case of Wollega University. *Science Technology Arts Research journal*, 1(4): 65-73
- Bansilal S, Webb L & James A. (2015). Teacher training for mathematical literacy: A case study taking the past into the future. *South African Journal of Education*: 35: 1-10  
doi:10.15700/201503062356
- Botha M. & Reddy CPS. (2011). In-service teachers' perspectives of pre-service teachers' knowledge domains in science. *South African Journal of Education*: 31: 257-274
- Cheng, Y, Chow K & Tsui K. (2001). *New Teacher Education for the Future: International Perspective*. Hong Kong: The Hong Kong Institute of Education.

- Cresswell, J.W. (2003). *research design qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. 2nd edition, London: Sage publications.
- Fekede Tuli. (2009). Understanding undergraduate students' practicum experience: A Qualitative case or Jimma University. *Ethiopian journal of Education and Sciences*. 5 (1).
- Gordon, M. (2009). Toward A Pragmatic Discourse of Constructivism: Reflections on Lessons from Practice, *Educational Studies*, 45: 39-58. doi: 10.1080/00131940802546894
- Harris & Sass. (2008). *Teacher training, teacher quality and student achievement*. Working paper 3 Available at <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED509656.pdf> Accessed 15 October 2015.
- Koye Kassa & Yonas Amdemeskel. (2013). Practices and Challenges of Post-Graduate Diploma in Teaching Programme: The Case of Haramaya University, Ethiopia. *e – Reflection: 2(1)* 254-274.
- Marphatia A, Legault E, Edge K & Archer D. (2010). *The role of teachers in improving learning in Burundi, Malawi, Senegal and Uganda: Great expectations, little support*. London, UK: Action Aid.
- Ministry of Education. (2002). *The Education and Training Policy and its Implementation*. Addis Abeba: MoE
- Ministry of Education. (2003). *Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) Handbook*. Addis Abeba, Ethiopia: Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Education. (2006). *Five Year Education Sector Capacity Development Strategic Plan*. Addis Abeba, Ethiopia: Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Education. (2009). *Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT) Curriculum Framework for Secondary School Teacher Education Program in Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa: MoE.
- Mpokosa, C & Ndaruhutse, S. (2008). *Managing Teachers: The centrality of teacher management to quality education. Lessons from developing countries*. London: CfBT and VSO.
- Mukeredzi, T., Mthiyane, N & Carol B. (2015). Becoming professionally qualified: The school-based mentoring experiences of part-time PGCE students. 35: 1-9
- Mulugeta Teka. (2009). *Evaluation of Implementation of the Paradigm shift in EFL Teacher Education in Ethiopia PhD Dissertation*. Addis Abeba: Addis Abeba University
- Sahlberg, P. (2011). Paradoxes of educational improvement: The Finnish experience. *Scottish Educational Review*, 43 (1), 3-23
- Shoeb Ahmed. (2013). *Teacher Education in Ethiopia: Growth and Development*. *African Journal of Teacher Education*. 3(3).
- Sjøberg, S. (2007). Constructivism and learning. *Encyclopedia of Education: 3rd Edition*. Available at [http://folk.uio.no/sveinsj/Constructivism\\_and\\_learning\\_Sjoberg.pdf](http://folk.uio.no/sveinsj/Constructivism_and_learning_Sjoberg.pdf) Accessed 20 August 2015
- Spratt, C., Walker, R., & Robinson, B. (2004). *Mixed research methods*. USA: Commonwealth of Learning.
- State University (2015). *International Perspective Teacher Preparation-New Paradigm in Teacher Education, What Do Teachers Need to Know?* Available at <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2484/Teacher-Preparation-International-Perspective.html> Accessed 15 August 2015
- Tadesse Walelign & Meaza Fantahun. (2007). Assessment on problems of the new pre-service teachers training program in Jimma University. *Ethiopian journal of Education and Sciences*, 2 (2): 63-72.

- Tekeste Negash. (2006). *Education in Ethiopia: From Crisis to the Brink of Collapse*. Discussion Paper 33. Stockholm: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.
- Thompson, S. & Power, L. (2015). *Pre-service teacher training (Report)*. Available at <http://www.heart-resources.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Pre-service-teacher-training-helpdesk-FINAL-for-web1.pdf> Accessed 15 September 2015
- UNESCO. (2004). *Quality Education for All Young People: Reflections and Contributions emerging from the 47th International Conference on Education of UNESCO*. GENEVA.
- UNESCO. (2005). *Teacher Training Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa: Country Report, Ethiopia*: Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (2011). *Booklet 6: Pre-service teacher training. Good Policy and Practice in HIV & Education*. Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (2014). *Enhancing Teacher Education for Bridging the Education Quality Gap in Africa: The case of Uganda*. Available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002330/233078e.pdf> Accessed 15 August 2015.
- Worku Fentie & Alebachew Hailu. (2015). Evaluative research of the mentoring process of the PGDT, with particular reference to Cluster Centers under Jimma University facilitation. *Educational research and reviews*, 10(7): 831-838.
- World Bank. (2013). *Secondary Education in Ethiopia: Supporting growth and transformation*. Washington, D.C: World Bank
- Yirgalem Alemu, Aschalew Teshome, Million Kebede & Tessema Regassa. (2014). Experience of stress among student-teachers enrolled in postgraduate diploma in teaching (PGDT): The case of Haramaya University cluster centers, Ethiopia. *African Educational Research Journal*, 2(3): 96-101.
- Young, E., Grant, A., Montbriand, C., Therriault, D. (2001). *Educating Pre-service Teachers: The State of Affairs*. 1120 East Diehl Road, USA: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.