Fieldwork Findings:
Understanding Human Resources Development in Practice in 7 Regions
DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR THE NAMIBIAN BASIC EDUCATION SECTOR

BACKGROUND REPORT

Fieldwork Findings: Understanding Human Resources Development in Practice in 7 Regions

Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

Published in October 2017

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All photographs in this report are from the UNICEF Namibia photo bank.

ISBN 978-99916-893-6-4
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Abbreviations

B.Ed. Bachelor of Education
BETD Basic Education Teacher’s Diploma
CoE College of Education
CPD Continuous Professional Development
CRO Chief Regional Officer
EMIS Education Management Information System
FSD Fifteenth School Day (Survey)
HOD Head of Department
HR Human Resources
HRAC Human Resource Advisory Committee
INSET In-Service Education and Training
MoE Ministry of Education (the Ministry’s name until March 2015)
MoEAC Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (the Ministry’s name since March 2015)
NANTU Namibia National Teachers’ Union
NIED National Institute for Educational Development
PQA Programme Quality Assurance
PSM Public Service Management
REO Regional Education Office
UNAM University of Namibia
UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund
Enrolment rates in Namibian schools have progressively increased since Independence in 1990. The introduction of Universal Primary Education in 2013 and Universal Secondary Education in 2016 has further increased the accessibility of education. The growing demand for schooling in turn creates a need for sufficient teachers in terms of both numbers and specialised training. The report points to the need for teachers who are committed and able to be deployed to the country’s most remote areas. In the project reported on, there is a strong emphasis on post-provisioning, meaning the system whereby teachers and other staff are distributed across public schools. The report presents an analysis of this issue, and offers solutions to the current problems.

There remains, however, a concern about the number of teachers being trained in national tertiary institutions, and the specialisations that they are currently undertaking. Also, research points to poor learning outcomes in both primary and secondary education. Learner performance in the sciences and English language remains poor across both of these levels. For example, only 28% of those who took the Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (NSSCO) in 2016 received a D grade or higher in English, and only 45% received a D or higher in Mathematics. This poses a serious challenge for creating a new generation of well-qualified teachers, especially when it comes to training higher-level Maths, English and Science teachers.

The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture requested technical and financial assistance from UNICEF for a comprehensive study of need, supply and demand in respect of human resources in the basic education sector. Research on Socio-Economic Policy (ReSEP), a research group attached to the Department of Economics at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa, undertook the study to develop a Comprehensive Human Resources Development Plan and Implementation Strategy for the Namibian Basic Education Sector. This project entailed field research in six of Namibia’s regions (//Kharas, Khomas, Otjozondjupa, Ohangwena, Kavango and Omaheke), for the purpose of analysing trends in education, current outputs of the tertiary institutions, and the post-provisioning, training and recruitment processes. This report conveys the findings, and provides insight on the enrolment trends, current teacher numbers and attrition rates, and demand and supply in the future. It also examines post-provisioning and recruitment policies, and provides clear recommendations and a comprehensive implementation plan.

It is clear that Namibia faces a dramatic skills shortage in the basic education sector, and that multi-sectoral collaboration is needed to address the shortfall. A collaborative task force has been appointed to address the issues raised in this valuable report. I call on all stakeholders in education to support the Government in addressing the recommendations made in the report.

Katrina Hanse-Himarwa, MP
Minister of Education, Arts and Culture
The Human Resources Development Plan (HRDP) for the Namibian Basic Education Sector was developed by Research on Socio-Economic Policy (ReSEP), a research group attached to the Department of Economics at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, with financial, logistical and technical support from UNICEF Namibia. A word of thanks and appreciation goes to the research team, in particular Prof. Servaas van der Berg, Dr Chris van Wyk, Dr Martin Gustafsson and Dr Gabrielle Wills, who facilitated the development of the HRDP reports.

This project required considerable inputs from a wide range of people and institutions. The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture thanks all of the Ministry officials and stakeholders at national and regional level who shared their insights and data for the development of the HRDP.

Finally, we thank our partner, UNICEF, for the support that made this vital project possible. UNICEF’s input and guidance towards inclusive, equitable and quality education for all children in Namibia, particularly the most vulnerable, are always greatly appreciated.
Section 1

Introduction

The Department of Economics at the University of Stellenbosch, within the programme of Research on Socio-Economic Policy (ReSEP), undertook a project for the Namibian Ministry of Education (MoE) supported by UNICEF, to develop a Comprehensive Human Resources Development Plan and Implementation Strategy for the Namibian Basic Education Sector. As part of the wider project, fieldwork interviews have been conducted in six regional education offices in Namibia with the intention of providing critical research inputs informing the sector plan. Specifically, the intention of the fieldwork was to understand in practice how the current post-provisioning system works in Namibia, and, closely linked to this, the recruitment process for teachers. The interviews were also used as an opportunity to supplement research findings on the current capacity development opportunities available to incumbent teachers and other ministry personnel to improve their skills and qualifications.

This report consolidates the findings from interviews conducted from 9 to 12 February 2015 across six of Namibia’s regions: //Kharas, Khomas, Otjozondjupa, Ohangwena, Kavango and Omaheke. These findings provide a key input into the larger project report, the Human Resources Development Plan.

1 The Ministry’s name at the time of the fieldwork (February 2015). In March 2015, the MoE was split into two ministries, namely the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, responsible for basic education, and the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation. In the five reports on the HRDP, the old name has been changed to the new name where appropriate. In this report on the fieldwork findings, the old name is largely retained.

2 As Kavango East and Kavango West shared a Regional Education Office during the development of the HRDP, the two Kavango regions (East and West) are treated as a single region in this report.
Namibia’s 14 Regions

The HRDP fieldwork regions
Section 2

Fieldwork Objectives and Instrument Design

Post-provisioning and recruitment processes are critical avenues determining the quality of the personnel who are positioned within an education sector. These processes are the first points of entry for personnel into the system, with notable bearing on the baseline capacity of a system to deliver quality teaching and efficient administration. Once personnel have entered the system, capacity development on the job, including in-service training for teachers and capacity-building training for other administrative officials, are also important for maintaining and improving the existing skill levels of personnel. It is necessary to understand the workings of these processes, and to identify existing strengths and weaknesses, as these processes have important implications for the learning that takes place in schools and ultimately the knowledge capacity of a nation.

To guide the field team during the interviews, an instrument was constructed (see Appendix 1), with three overarching objectives:

- The first was to understand in practice how the current post-provisioning system works in each region, and the extent to which this process is controlled through the application of staffing norms and standards for school posts. An attempt was also made to gauge to what extent budget constraints are considered in the allocation of posts to schools.

- The second objective was to understand the current recruitment process through which teachers apply for posts, and are selected and appointed. A specific aim was to understand to what extent procedures outlined by the Public Service Commission and MoEAC for the recruitment and selection of education personnel is correctly followed across the regions. Procedures involving how posts are advertised and whether interviews are conducted with shortlisted candidates, are important controls for ensuring that the most qualified teachers and school leaders from the pool of suitable candidates are positioned in posts. Prior research has indicated that this is a notable weakness within regions (Bennell, Sayed & Hailombe 2009; UNESCO 2013).

- The third objective was to investigate the current opportunities available to teachers, school leaders and regional officials for capacity development, with a focus on in-service training for teachers.
The framework for the instrument was strongly guided by initial exploratory interviews at the MoE by senior project leaders during January 2015 as well as previous research reports on the education sector, in particular the 2013 UNESCO Needs Assessment Report and the detailed analysis on teacher demand, supply and utilisation by Bennell, Sayed and Hailombe (2009). The findings of interviews serve to confirm many of the findings of these research reports.

The instrument was intended to be used as merely a guide to focus interviews on critical research objectives. The questionnaire consisted of over 40 open-ended questions and prompts to collect substantiating documentation or data to support the research. At the discretion of the interviewer, only sub-sets of questions may have been asked given interview time constraints or because the respondent was not in a position to provide relevant responses to certain questions. Additionally, it was often necessary to rephrase questions in such a way that interviewees understood what was being asked of them or to ask other questions that would aid the research process and probe further into the nuances of each region’s operations and procedures. However, an attempt was made to at least ask the full set of questions across the interviewees in each region.
Section 3

Regions Visited and Types of Officials Interviewed

With the support of the MoE and UNICEF, interviews were scheduled in each of the six regions visited between 9 and 12 February 2015. UNICEF personnel accompanied the team members supporting the research process, and were often actively engaged in the fieldwork interview process. ReSEP acknowledges the assistance of Gerrit Maritz, Aune Victor, Catherine Tiongco, Taimi Amaambo and Nolan van der Ross from UNICEF, and Mary-Elizabeth Haihambo and Kay Wentworth from the MoE head office (Windhoek) in accompanying field teams to the respective regional offices. Furthermore, the time given by the numerous regional officials to the interview process and making themselves available to answer various questions and queries is acknowledged and appreciated.
Table 1 lists the types of officials interviewed in each region. In order of priority, face-to-face interviews with directors of education (or in some cases acting directors) were held, followed by individual or group interviews with Human Resource (HR) and finance practitioners, including chief and/or senior HR officers and senior accountants. Then, where possible, chief and/or senior planners, education officers in advisory services, inspectors of education and even representatives of the Namibia National Teachers’ Union (NANTU) (who were also school principals) were interviewed. In three regions interviews were also held with the Chief Regional Officer (CRO) of the Regional Council. The motivation for the interviews with the CROs is that the Regional Councils, under the leadership of their respective CROs, have been delegated decision-making authority at the regional level, with implications for the running of regional education systems, expenditure approval and the appointment of temporary teachers. The observed relationship between the Regional Councils and Regional Education Offices (REOs) is described in Box 3 (page 23).

**Table 1: Regions visited and personnel interviewed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personnel Interviewed</th>
<th>//Khomas</th>
<th>Kavango</th>
<th>Oshangwena</th>
<th>Otjozondjupa</th>
<th>Khomas</th>
<th>Omaheke</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dates visited in February</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9,10</td>
<td>11,12</td>
<td>9,10</td>
<td>9,10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directors</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Education</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Director of Education</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Director of Lifelong Learning</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Director of General Services</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief/Senior Education Planner</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chief/Senior HR Officer</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other HR practitioners</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief/Senior Accountant</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other finance practitioners</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisory services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education officers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Councils</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Regional Officers (CRO) / Acting CRO</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other officials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspectors of Education</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School principals who are also NANTU representatives</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 4
Post Provisioning

4.1 Post-provisioning staffing norms

In prior research, the application of post-provisioning staffing norms was identified as problematic, as evidenced by the mismatch in actual learner-teacher ratios and those prescribed by staffing norms. The mismatch has been associated with weaknesses in managing post provisioning, as well as impracticalities on the ground in applying staffing norms (Bennell, Sayed & Hailombe 2009; UNESCO 2013). During the interviews, a strong focus was given to understanding what staffing norms, if any, are used in the regions, and to what extent these inform decisions around post provisioning in each region. The following findings are identified.

i) There was an acknowledgement of the existence of norms and standards which guide the allocation of posts in schools in each region, albeit notable variations existed across and within REOs on what these staffing norms were and how closely they are adhered to.
Human Resources Development Plan for the Namibian Basic Education Sector: Fieldwork Findings

Awareness among inspectors, school principals, HR practitioners and planners of staffing norms is a first step to controlling post allocations. The chief HR officer has a large role to play in this regard in circulating the right policies and staffing norm circulars to regional officers, inspectors and principals. However, this is often not happening. In one region, for example, within the HR department alone, three HR practitioners had different ideas on what norms and standards were being used, and presented interviewers with a staffing norms document that differed to the one presented by their Director of Education.

The staffing norms used are summarised in Table 2. With respect to teacher allocations, four out of five regions visited were using a general rule of 35 learners to 1 teacher in primary schools and 30 learners to 1 teacher in secondary schools. These learner-teacher ratios are identified in PSM Circulars 13 and 25 of 2001. Even where the actual circular documents had not been directly consulted, these are the general rules that are mostly accepted by officials from directors to inspectors and school principals. In other words, staffing norms are often only observed with regard to learner-teacher ratios and not the full policy. In //Kharas, however, the new 2013 norms and standards are being used, which reverse the primary and secondary school allocations and allow for additional teachers to be added to account for higher school enrolments and for the compulsory Life Skills subject introduced as well as other specialised subjects. The 2013 and 2001 staffing norms are, however, consistent with respect to teaching allocations for school management. Principals are meant to have a 25% teaching load, deputies 50% and HODs 75%.

With regard to special schools, post-provisioning norms and standards were updated in September 2008 where teacher-learner ratios were identified for specific schools ranging from 8:1 to 14:1 learners per teacher. The ratios here possibly vary where different disabilities or needs require more teacher inputs. In primary schools which have special classes, 2001 staffing norms provide for 1 teacher per 15 learners.

Table 2: Norms and standards used for provisioning of teaching and promotion posts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher and Promotion Posts</th>
<th>//Kharas</th>
<th>Kavango</th>
<th>Ohangwena</th>
<th>Otjozondjupa</th>
<th>Khomas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circular 13, 2001</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circular 25, 2001</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General rule of 35 learners: 1 teacher at primary level; 30 learners: 1 teacher at secondary level</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 norms (allocations per learner intervals) for a region</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New 2013 norms and standards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'No teacher norms'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Schools</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2008, Post-provisioning norms for government schools and hostels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: n.d. stands for “not determined” through interviews.
Given time constraints, limited attention was given to identifying what staffing norms for support staff are being used. Nevertheless, it appears that 2001 circulars are largely governing these allocations. School secretaries, and hours for which they can be appointed per week, are linked to school sizes. Posts for cleaners are linked to facilities where one cleaner can be appointed for every nine rooms and nine individual latrines. Staff, including matrons and chief matrons, are allocated to hostels on the basis of the number of hostel residents.

ii) Clarity is needed on what the official staffing norms are. Directives provided to regions have not been clear on this.

In general, a request was made from the regions for clarity around which staffing norms to use. Various circulars since the 2001 norms and standards have been circulated, but officials were unsure as to whether new versions, particularly the 2013 staffing norms, had been adopted as the de facto staffing norms. For example in //Kharas the 2013 staffing norms have been stamped, legitimising their use, whereas in Khomas this is not the case. This breeds confusion and results in non-standardisation in post-provisioning practices across regions.

iii) Staffing norms are considered to be very inadequate and inflexible to realities on the ground. Furthermore, they are considered to be disadvantaging small schools in remote areas which serve the most vulnerable students.

The current norms and standards were also regarded as impractical for application in the context of small schools; schools with multi-grade teaching; schools in remote locations; and locations where individual school enrolment numbers fluctuate considerably from year to year. Decisions to extend the curriculum in schools, i.e. to add more senior grades, also makes it difficult to adhere to staffing norms if only a few learners proceed into higher grades offered, and if more teachers with subject specialisations are needed to be able to deliver curriculum. These findings confirm earlier findings, by Bennell et al. (2009), on the application of staffing norms. Furthermore, in Omaheke officials pointed out that staffing norms failed to consider the diversity required in some schools for mother-tongue instruction. Individual teachers are unlikely to be able to speak multiple languages, necessitating the need for additional language teachers.

There was particular uncertainty as to how to accommodate teachers of the compulsory Life Skills subject within the 2001 staffing norms where existing staff components were established in some cases before the introduction of Life Skills.

4.2 How posts are allocated to schools

In investigating how post allocation occurs in practice across regions, it became clear that the post provisioning process is typically led by school principals. They determine their own needs for teaching and support staff in light of staffing norms and standards which they are supposed to consult. While this demand-led approach helps direct human resources to where it may be most needed, it must be accompanied by high levels of monitoring and accountability to ensure an equitable distribution of resources.

As identified through the interviews, the subsequent processes and actions which usually follow the initial needs determination from schools are mapped out in Figure 1 (next page). The red
arrows and blocks identify points along the post-allocation process subject to irregularity or where accountability channels are bypassed. The process starts where principals forward their requests to circuit inspectors who may write a motivation for the school when verifying the legitimacy of these requests. An exception was //Kharas, where staffing details for each school are prepared at the REO, sent to inspectors and then passed on to schools where principals must verify the staffing detail in the light of current enrolment (especially if there have been notable fluctuations in numbers) and staffing norms. Verifying the legitimacy of requests for new school personnel depends largely on the work of circuit inspectors, planning and/or human resources verifying the requests against Fifteenth School Day (FSD) Survey statistics and staffing norms. Furthermore, in addition to calculating where schools are understaffed, these officials should be responsible for identifying where schools are overstaffed. In //Kharas, understaffing and overstaffing calculations are done when preparing the staffing detail forms for inspectors which are passed onto schools.

Importantly, approval for permanent and temporary new posts is delegated from the Permanent Secretary to the regional level. Provided that posts have been budgeted for in annual budgets, regional directors typically approve appointments. However, if during the year new posts are requested with cost implications that exceed annual budgeted amounts, then permission should be sought from the Permanent Secretary for these new posts. It is noted, however, that all new principal posts must be approved by the Permanent Secretary.

Figure 1: General process for post provisioning in schools (requests for new posts)

1. The school makes a request for a new post.
2. The request is sent to the circuit inspector.
3. The inspector verifies the legitimacy of the request.
4. The inspector writes a motivation for the new post OR prepares ROUTE FORM for a temporary appointment.
5. The request is passed on to Planning or Human Resources.
7. Approval for the new post is sent to the Director of Education OR considered in a consultative meeting.
8. HR is informed as to whether the post can or cannot be advertised.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS
(See Figure 2 on page 22.)

NEW POST FILLED

Finance may or may not be consulted or sign off requests.

Note: Red boxes and arrows highlight areas for too much informality and irregularity in the post-provisioning process.
4.3 Inefficiencies and informalities in post provisioning and the appointment of temporary teachers

There was no obvious indication through regional visits that certain schools are preferentially favoured over others in terms of the allocation of teachers in an intentional or fraudulent manner. This may be a result of it being difficult to detect inequities in post provisioning given the amount of discretion and informality in the system; but there was definitely a strong sense among officials interviewed that unduly favouring one school over another is wrong. Nevertheless, informalities and administrative inefficiencies along the post-provisioning process, particularly the informal appointments of temporary teachers, are likely to breed sub-optimal post-provisioning outcomes. These sources of inefficiency and informality are identified below.

i) There is considerable variation across and within regions in the efforts made by inspectors, planning and HR in verifying school requests for new posts.

Although it was not easy to ascertain how much effort inspectors and planners actually make in verifying the requests in each region, what was obvious is that there is great variation in the rigour with which this verification is done. In one region (Otjozondjupa), inspectors were identified as not doing this job well, and some schools would simply bypass inspectors and send their requests directly to planning or even regional directors. However, planning was very understaffed with only two personnel. By contrast, in regions such as Ohangwena, Khomas and Omaheke, a concerted effort was made to verify requests, with evidence of some requests being rejected.

A thorough verification of the post-provisioning allocations to schools may also take place during inspection weeks. This involves inspectors and advisory service education officers visiting schools and conducting an evaluation on the management processes of the school, implementation of policies and, in some cases, the quality of teaching in the classroom. Notably, posts may also be verified against the payroll during these inspections. Circuit inspectors interviewed in two districts indicated that they were required to conduct three full school inspections per term, which are time intensive. In view of the number of schools that each inspector oversees, this may mean inspecting a school thoroughly only every three years.

Verification of requests is considered to be more complex in the case of upper primary and secondary schools. In the primary school context, an evaluation of current enrolment numbers and staffing numbers usually provides sufficient information for making a decision in line with staffing norms. Where requests are made for posts at senior grades with subject specialist teachers, officials need to scrutinise timetables, subjects taught by each teacher and each teacher’s teaching load schedule to determine whether the school can manage with its current staff component or whether it needs an additional teacher. This process may lend itself to differential treatment across schools where there are different perceptions about acceptable teaching loads.

ii) Lack of coordination between inspectors, planning, HR and finance departments may prevent proper verification of school requests for posts.

Inspectors, planning, HR and finance play a critical role in evaluating the legitimacy of school requests for new posts. Without clear coordination across these different departments, necessary
data for informed decision-making is either not provided to key decision-makers or is not used effectively. For example, decisions of REOs are likely to depend strongly on the recommendations of inspectors, who should play a critical role in providing informed motivations on the needs of schools. They are the first point of accountability, and they must provide planners with relevant information about the realities on the ground.

Furthermore, information flows are necessary within REOs where post-allocation decisions must be made through consultation across critical departments. In addition to verifying staffing norms, finance has to determine the affordability of requests. In some regions, finance plays a key role in signing off approval for each post request, while in other regions this did not obviously occur.

iii) Informed decision-making is compromised through unreliable or outdated data on school enrolment, facilities and existing school post allocations.

In the case of teacher and promotion post allocations, reliable and up-to-date data on enrolment is needed as a minimum data requirement for verification. In allocating cleaners, for example, accurate data on classrooms and facilities are needed where staffing norms follow facilities rather than enrolment. Across the six regions, Education Management Information System (EMIS) data collected through the Annual Education Census are seldom used for verification of post requests (or for planning in general), as these data are considered outdated, given a roughly two-year delay before they are sent to the regions. This is considered a wasted resource that could be very useful if provided timeously. Furthermore, a concern was raised in one region that the information they submit to the national office in relation to the EMIS is inconsistent with the information in the EMIS report that they eventually receive.

Instead, the FSD Survey statistics are used as the dominant source of data for verifying requests for new posts. The reliability of these statistics depends on principals filling out the data forms accurately and inspectors validating the data through headcounts of learners and school staff. Validation of results through headcounts is essential where schools may be inclined to inflate learner numbers if it means receiving more resources. In Otjozondjupa, an inspector interviewed noted that about 20% of schools in his circuit had attempted to inflate their enrolment numbers where resources follow learner numbers. There is much variation across regions in the extent to which validation occurs, given differences in implemented institutional controls or capacity to fulfil control functions.

In Omaheke, for example, the regional director indicated that once a year a physical headcount was carried out by a joint task team from HR and finance to ensure that actual numbers from the FSD Survey matched budgeted and approved posts. By contrast in Otjozondjupa, there was little evidence from planning that data was often validated by inspectors through headcounts. Rather, planners cross-check the FSD statistics against historical data or other informal requests for data from schools. In Ohangwena, in addition to the FSD Survey, a trimester survey has been implemented to track changes in enrolment during the year and school staff components, given fluctuations that occur during the year. Using this up-to-date data, they can make informed decisions on post allocations and other planning decisions. This can be particularly useful for informed decision-making in regions or for schools experiencing notable in- or out-migration.

The capacity of regional offices to capture data and use this data also has implications for the level of evidence-based decision-making in allocating posts. FSD statistics are data captured by
regional clerks, but this capturing process will be delayed if there is understaffing of clerks and/or inspectors do not provide the hard-copy surveys timeously to the REOs.

iv) **Informal application of staffing norms.**

In allocating posts, class sizes are often considered as benchmarks rather than staffing norms based on total learner enrolment to teacher ratios. Where class sizes become the benchmark ‘norms’, without taking into account the efficient timetabling of teachers and efficient classroom usage, more teachers than are necessary may be appointed in schools.

v) **Temporary teacher appointments.**

The process of appointing temporary teachers is haphazard and lacks procedural rigour. This is very problematic where these temporary appointments become the informal gateway through which teachers (who are possibly not the most qualified candidates) are permanently appointed and remain in the system.

The appointment of permanent and temporary teachers has been delegated to the regional level in recent years, in efforts to reduce bureaucratic processes that delay teacher appointments. The Chief Regional Officer (CRO) of the Regional Council has the *de facto* authority to appoint, specifically, temporary teachers, but in some regions the Director of Education has reclaimed this responsibility to reduce time delays and/or because the CRO is not engaged with teaching issues. There is a lack of clarity and inconsistency in these appointment procedures.

A school need may arise, and instead of following processes for new permanent post approval, temporary appointments are made through the use of, for example, a “Route Form”. This is a quick and easy way of getting a teacher into a classroom. But in some regions inspectors may instruct school principals to recommend a person for this position without following formal recruitment processes. This person may not be the most qualified person for the position, and may have low qualifications, but the principal nonetheless tells this person to assume duty. This may occur even before the Route Form has been approved by the Director of Education or CRO (and checked by planning, HR or validated by finance as being affordable).

Where posts are filled before approval, the temporary teacher may initially be paid out of school funds such as the Universal Primary Education Fund, usually for up to 30 days. Then, either discretionary regional budgets or remuneration expenditure budgets may be used to pay these teachers, but payment complications arise when these temporary teachers assume duty before their appointment is approved.

These temporary appointments are often formally advertised only at a later stage. However, where applications are not forthcoming or applicants fail to meet the advertised qualification criteria, the incumbent temporary teacher remains in this position. This is especially likely to happen if such persons display a willingness to upgrade their qualifications. This informal and irregular appointment becomes entrenched in the system, even though the appointee was not necessarily the most qualified person for the position.

Informalities in the appointment of teachers to the region have assisted officials in filling vacant posts quickly. But this positive gain from deregulation must be accompanied with monitoring
and absolute clarity on how these appointments should be managed. Temporary appointments currently are a considerable source of sub-optimal placements of teachers in the system, with implications for quality teaching. The next subsection discusses how temporary appointments may also be a source of swelling teacher numbers in Namibia, as these ‘cheaper’ posts are more easily accommodated within budget constraints.

4.4 Post provisioning and links with budgeting

A sub-objective of the interviews was to understand whether budgetary constraints have any bearing on post-allocation processes. Included in Circular 25 of 2001 on post-provisioning norms and standards is an adjustment for post allocations in view of budgetary constraints. Nonetheless, in practice, calculation of school norms is not directly linked to budget availability. This was made very evident when one regional director, when shown the post-provisioning formulas with budget adjustments in Circular 25 of 2001, had actually never seen those pages of the circular and could not explain what was presented.

Budgets only have an indirect impact on post provisioning through informal decisions taken to only appoint staff who can be accommodated within the budgetary constraints. The extent to which this happens depends largely on whether finance officers are regularly consulted in post-allocation decision-making and recruitment processes. Finance officers should play an integral role in this regard, but this varies considerably across regions.

The key point of connection between regional budgets and post provisioning in each region takes place in preparations for submitting the annual budget. Regions are given a three-year rolling budget, and submitted budgets must remain within the specified ceilings. It is at this point that new posts for the upcoming financial year are budgeted for. However, the number of posts included in regional budget submissions is usually less than the number of new posts identified as needed in the coming year as forecast by planning departments. New post requests for the coming financial year are initially prioritised through a meeting or consultative process between, for example, the Director, Programme Quality Assurance (PQA) officers, planning officers, HR and finance officers.

The prioritised posts are included in the budget, and the remaining vacancies requested are intended to be budgeted for in the following year’s submitted budget. Importantly, new posts are always budgeted for as permanent, qualified teacher appointments. This was noted in five of the six regions. This allows the regions to have ‘savings’ with which to play during the year, as many of the budgeted vacancies are likely to be filled with temporary appointments and/or unqualified teachers with lower cost implications. ‘Savings’ are also identified where a post has remained vacant for a period, where savings are generated in the months for which salaries were budgeted for but not paid out.

Through identifying ‘savings’, more posts than the number actually planned for in the budget are filled during the year. Initially, this does not necessarily mean that personnel expenditure budgets are exceeded in a specific financial year if a region operates within its ‘savings’. However, where temporary appointments, at lower costs, eventually become permanent appointments – for example as teachers acquire necessary qualifications – this is likely to have future budgetary implications for each region.
In some regions where new requests for posts exceed what is budgeted for, a written request is sent to the Office of the Permanent Secretary for these non-budgeted appointments. However, this is often more of a rubber-stamping exercise than a procedural request. Regions may proceed with appointments, and particularly temporary appointments, regardless of whether approval is obtained. The needs of the school, and the learners’ right to quality education, are considered as more important than budgetary constraints in some regions. There was a perception among some key individuals in REOs that funds must be made available and are available. This perception is fuelled by a lack of regular communication on what funds are actually available in each region’s operational budget for personnel expenditure – see Box 1 (next page).

“One cannot negotiate when it comes to teachers. They need to pay for it.”
– A Director of Education

“A school will never be told that a post cannot be filled, because you are accountable to them.”
– Chief Education Planner

“You want to provide an education for all children, so sometimes you have to close your eyes and just do it.”
– A Director of Education

“It is better to get forgiveness than to get permission. If I get delayed waiting for an answer, then, you know, I must take a decision. I must provide a teacher.”
– A Director of Education

Even though posts not budgeted for may be allocated, this still occurs in the context of rejection of certain requests for new teachers who are considered to be unnecessary. In one region, requests for new teaching posts are occasionally accommodated by moving excess teachers into new requested posts rather than adding a new teacher to the payroll. This action was motivated by this REO’s decision to remain within its budget and avoid new appointments. But it is difficult to move excess teachers.

Many officials interviewed commented on how primary school numbers have increased notably in recent years with the introduction of the Universal Primary Education Grant in 2013, allowing for free primary education. At the lower grade levels, officials perceive there to have been large increases in enrolment and rising class sizes. Although this needs to be verified against recent EMIS data, requests for more posts are more likely to be made at the lower grade levels including pre-primary grades.

Another key reason for new posts being created is where REOs decide to extend the grades offered in certain schools (referred to as “curriculum extension”). This typically occurs where schools offering higher grade phases are situated far away from lower-phase schools. This can have notable implications for exceeding staffing norms where subject specialist teachers are required for subject combinations in senior grades.
Each region is informed of their three-year rolling budget with allocations specified for each financial year (March to April). Expenditure is allocated into two parts: an operational budget for remuneration (personnel expenditure) which is managed at the national head office; and then a non-remuneration operational budget and development budget which is deposited into the Regional Council account. In each case, the budget is allocated into four divisions: pre-primary; primary; secondary; and libraries and adult learning. Our discussion on budgets highlighted some key issues.

i) There is a lack of understanding in some regions as to how the three-year rolling budget allocations are calculated for each region, but there is some suggestion that there has been a move toward a per capita funding system.

As identified by one Director of Education interviewed:

“We were informed that it [budget allocations] was always done on a historic basis. Nobody could tell you what is ‘an historic basis’. But this changed in the past few years. We can really say that the region has a very good operational budget now. It is obviously not what you want, but it is a much more improved budget compared with previous years. But it’s not yet on the per capita fund system as we would want. The full per capita funding system with the criteria is not yet implemented and we are still experiencing problems with that.”

ii) Where enrolment numbers fluctuate considerably, for example through inward migration to an area, budgets are unlikely to respond to changing enrolment patterns in the short to medium term. This is perceived as very problematic in some regions who struggle to manage new demands for teaching within their budget constraints.

iii) Regions are ill-informed on the extent of the remuneration budget available to each region at any one point during the financial year for the appointment of new posts. This complicates post-allocation decision-making.

Interviewees typically noted that they are uninformed about what money has been spent from their operational budget for personnel expenditure, because this budget sits with the national head office. Directors and financial officers are engaged in ‘guesstimation’ as to their available ‘savings’ in their personnel expenditure budget. This is particularly a frustration at the beginning of the school year (which coincides with the last quarter of the financial year) when many new appointments are requested in response to changing enrolment.

In one region it was noted that the financial officer was receiving a funds distribution certificate on a monthly basis from the national head office, which provides a detailed breakdown of budgetary spend from their operational budget for personnel expenditure. However, the Acting Director seemed to be unaware that these certificates were being sent to finance. This information, while available, is not being used to inform decision-
making for post allocation and to track spending of operational budgets for personnel expenditure.

A Director of Education shared this perspective:

“Now the danger with us is that the remuneration budget is not with us; it’s with head office. So I don’t have good control. If I ask my financial manager, ‘Can you check the savings,’ he’ll say, ‘I’ll have to ask the director of planning because it’s on their system; they’ll have to access it.’ Now what proof do I have that I’ll get good and correct figures … it’s a major problem. So you can’t project. This is a problem at the beginning of the year especially. But people migrate all the time, people move, people die, people live, people get sick. Changes happen in families. Although you have your projections, the reality of the day comes and you need to add classrooms and teachers.”

4.5 Overstaffing and the transfer of excess teachers

Excess teachers are very present in Namibian schools if one considers staffing norms as a benchmark for learner-teacher ratios (UNESCO 2013). As noted in the UNESCO needs assessment report, on the basis of EMIS 2012 data and 2001 staffing norms (ibid., p. 16), “… more than 2000 teachers in excess of the official staffing norms are being employed by the Ministry. It is not clear if this has been noticed or condoned by the Public Service Commission and Treasury.” In this context, regional officials were asked about the presence of excess teachers and whether actions are ever taken to transfer them to understaffed schools.

In general, there is a mismatch between the extent to which the presence of excess teachers is perceived to be a problem and the reality on the ground as indicated by low learner-teacher ratios in schools (MoE 2012). This is interesting, given a general acknowledgement of staffing norms. The presence of excess teachers may be very understated where a general sentiment holds that very little can be done to deal with this problem. Any transfers must occur on a voluntary basis without causing union conflicts. Where excess teachers are acknowledged, this overstaffing may rather be dealt with by preventing any new posts being created in an overstaffed school rather than transferring excess staff. Furthermore, there are strong perceptions that enrolment at the primary level has increased, considerably mitigating overstaffing issues. Teacher mobility is often constrained through various “linguistic, cultural and language barriers in Namibia”. As noted by Bennell et al. (2009, p. 72), “… a major issue is that, since mother tongue is the medium of instruction in lower primary schools, lower primary BETD graduates should only work at schools where this language is spoken, which reduces both their mobility and marketability.”

In //Kharas, Khomas and Omaheke, there was little acknowledgement of the presence of excess teachers. In Ohangwena, there was some acknowledgement by inspectors of overstaffing in some schools. This was acknowledged particularly in cases where learner enrolment had decreased notably. However, only one of the five inspectors interviewed in this region had actually engaged in a successful transfer of an identified excess teacher to another school in the preceding year. This inspector said the following: “When I must trim the staff, I have to be careful and slow. Teachers must do this on a voluntary basis.”
In Otjozondjupa, planning officials indicated that only two to three schools in the region were overstaffed. The senior planner mentioned that in some cases an attempt is made to transfer excess teachers to other schools, but teacher moves are voluntary, and no teacher can be forced to move.

Where excess teachers are identified, problems arise in the selection of teachers who should be transferred. In Kavango and //Kharas, it was identified that principals will select the weakest-performing or least-qualified teachers to be transferred, but receiving schools are unlikely to accept these ‘weak’ transfers, where school boards and principals may strongly object to such an appointment. Teachers may also object to being moved if it means moving to remote areas, regardless of incentives provided.

“Another problem is with the receiving school. The school board wants to know the history of the teacher they will be receiving – they will pick up if this is a troublesome teacher, so will just refuse and not accept the teacher. The school boards have a lot of power and the skills to negotiate. The Director took a teacher to a school, but the school just refused, so he convinced the school to take the teacher just for a year. If they are not happy, the Director will come fetch the teacher again after the year. They were happy after the year.”

– Regional official

Box 2  Human resources data management

Considerable improvements in human resources data management are required to alleviate inconsistencies and inefficiencies in the management of personnel. Mechanisms for record-keeping are varied across the regional HR departments. Furthermore, discrepancies exist in the appointment data held by HR and that used by finance, or it varies with EMIS data on appointments. Moves toward an electronic system for managing personnel data that is integrated across regions has been proposed with the Human Capital Management System being piloted in Khomas at the time of writing. An electronic, integrated system is needed, e.g. to resolve issues of cross-regional transfer of files associated with teacher transfers across schools. Teacher files are at times not moved, and paypoint numbers are not amended, which has implications for incorrect payment of teachers.

In addition, systems are needed for filing applications, documenting how many applications are received and shortlisting successful applicants.
The quality of teachers entering the teaching profession is strongly dependent on requirements set for filling teaching posts, and how these are implemented or deviated from where appropriately qualified teachers are not forthcoming. “Again, the budget acts as a constraint here, but so also does the country’s current skills set and what part of such skills are potentially available for education” (Van der Berg, Gustafsson, Fleisch, Van Wyk and Meyer 2014). In this section, existing strengths and weakness in the current implementation of recruitment and selection processes across regions is considered.
5.1 The recruitment process for teachers, heads of departments and principals

Clear procedural guidelines for the recruitment and selection of personnel exist in the Ministry of Education. The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that positions in the basic education sector are attractive to a pool of suitable applicants, and that the most qualified candidates are hired. Where regions deviate from official processes, there are risks that quality is compromised in the hiring of teachers, non-teachers and regional officials. Over the years, the Ministry and independent research has identified considerable deviation across the regions in following these processes (Bennell, Sayed & Hailombe 2009; UNESCO 2013).

During our interviews, considerable focus was given to investigating whether official recruitment and selection procedures are followed. Across the regions visited there was a clear awareness that official recruitment and selection processes should be followed. These steps are identified from steps A to F in Figure 2 (page 22). With respect to, specifically, preparations for the mid-year national gazette advertising school vacancies across Namibia, regions noted that they obtain lists of vacant posts and temporarily filled posts from schools, which they collate for the region as a whole and send to the national head office for publication. Both teacher and promotion posts are advertised in this yearly national gazette. Applications are received at schools or regional offices which are then sorted by HR departments to determine whether applicants meet the advertised criteria. A shortlist of suitable candidates is then provided to schools for each post advertised. Following this, interviews should be conducted with shortlisted candidates, with members of school selection panels and school boards present to assess each candidate’s suitability. The school then sends its recommendation to HR at the REO. It is the prerogative of the school board (in terms of the Education Act of 2001) to make a recommendation to the Regional Director of Education. At a meeting of the Human Resource Advisory Committee (HRAC), the school's recommendation is considered. If the recommendation is accepted, HR processes the appointment. Permanent appointments are processed where current minimum requirements for appointment as a teacher are met, and usually where supplementary requirements are also met. The minimum criterion for an entry-level post is a Basic Education Teacher's Diploma (BETD), this being a three-year qualification, or an equivalent qualification. Teachers at senior secondary schools should have a four-year Bachelor’s degree in Education. Teachers may be appointed on probation for a period of 12 months if they have not previously served in a public school.

Although there was a clear understanding of what procedures should be followed, there are deviations from the official recruitment processes, particularly at points identified by the red arrows and red blocks in Figure 2. Following is an outline of these deviations.

i) Formal recruitment processes typically delay the appointment of temporary teachers.

At times very little recruitment is involved in hiring temporary teachers. This was discussed earlier. These temporary posts may never be advertised if the temporary appointment evolves into a permanent appointment – for example, if necessary qualifications are obtained through distance learning. In one region it was noted that recruitment processes are often avoided when reappointing retired teachers in temporary positions. For teachers in Namibia, retirement is compulsory at 60 years of age, but some teachers aged 60+ are still considered fit for service and are reappointed temporarily.
Where temporary appointments of underqualified or unqualified teachers occur, it is not clear who determines, and how regions determine, the suitability of one such teacher over another. This is an increasing concern, as large numbers of temporary appointments are being made yearly, either in renewing existing temporary appointments or effecting new ones. Clearer guidelines and/or awareness of guidelines for the appointment of temporary teachers is needed.

ii) When no or few suitable candidates apply for positions, there is considerable variation as regards what happens next.

A second round of advertisements may or may not be initiated by the region or schools, and initial criteria for appointment may be reduced. In some cases, advertisements are placed in local newspapers, or aired on radio or pinned on noticeboards, or simply take the form of word of mouth. Regions may even ‘headhunt’ potential teachers, using Grade 10 or Grade 12 results of outgoing students in a process of localised recruitment. In Otjozondjupa and //Kharas this practice was occurring.

iii) Interviews may or may not be conducted, and telephonic interviews may be conducted rather than face-to-face interviews.

This depends on the controls in place at the REO, and on whether inspectors check for minutes of meetings, the school selection committees’ capacity to hold interviews, and the practicality of doing so in remote locations – see Box 3 (page 23) on interviews with shortlisted candidates.

iv) School boards often challenge the final appointment recommendation of the HRAC.

The HRAC may reject the school board’s first recommendation in favour of a more qualified shortlisted candidate. In at least three regions, there was clear evidence that the HRAC follows protocol, selecting the most qualified shortlisted candidates over less-qualified candidates recommended by the school boards, but the HRAC faces considerable pushback from the school boards, particularly in respect of promotion posts. This is further complicated where principals selectively steer the formation of the school board members to influence decision-making.

In Omaheke, conflicts were coming particularly from some rural schools. Regional personnel stated that mechanisms are urgently needed to resolve such disputes. The Permanent Secretary is often called upon to validate the HRAC’s recommendation to the school board and intervene. It was not possible to ascertain how these disputes are eventually resolved and to what extent the school board has the final say. Regardless, there must be resulting tensions for those personnel who assume the contentious post.

“School boards fight with us to get the people in place that they want. Sometimes we try and address them here. Then they will go to the PS. We try and workshop with them. This is a problem at the beginning of the year. They sometimes want to retain the retired principals. They often don’t want the people that have been recommended … the interview recommendation is not the same as the right qualified person. The school board have a very big say. They want people in promotion posts that come from the school.”

– HR officer
A clear observation across the regions is that more due diligence is applied to the recruitment and selection process for promotion posts compared with entry-level teaching posts. There are more procedural controls where these promotion posts must be advertised, at least at the regional level, and there is increased consultation at the REO and with the Permanent Secretary with respect to final appointments. These posts are also more easily filled with suitable candidates, thus the informality associated with temporary appointments is more likely to be avoided.

Figure 2: Recruitment processes with highlighted nodes subject to non-procedural actions

Note: The red blocks denote points in the recruitment process where informalities are likely to be most present. The red arrows reflect ‘shortcuts’ taken to bypass procedural process and accountability routes.
There is considerable variation across and within regions as regards whether or not proper interview processes are followed for teaching posts and promotion posts.

Within regions, whether interviews are conducted often depends on:
- the circuit inspectors enforcing the interview requirements;
- the competency of the school boards in conducting interviews; and
- distances between the school and the prospective candidates.

Regarding the latter, travel costs for candidates, regardless of whether they are currently in the public service, are meant to be agreed upon before the interview process begins, and the school should pay these costs.

**Omaheke:** It appears that this region monitors the interview process, and where possible assists directly with interviews, but the extent to which this monitoring and assistance occur varies across the circuits. School boards are often considered to be lacking the requisite competencies for conducting interviews and choosing suitable candidates, particularly where decision-making is influenced by nepotistic requests from traditional authorities. It was noted that it becomes impractical to monitor interviews in the case of schools located far away from the circuit and regional offices or the candidate to be interviewed. Some interviews are not conducted face-to-face if the candidate lives far away from the school and the travel costs cannot be covered by either the school or the candidate.

**Khomas:** HR practitioners actively engage in the interview process at times. They would like to participate more in the interview process to ensure that the best candidates are selected, but this is currently not possible due to a lack of capacity in terms of numbers of HR practitioners. This region offers training to school interview committees on the procedures for conducting interviews. There is a strong request for more HR practitioners in this region, where the current norms and standards for these officials are considered to be inadequate for their fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.

**Kavango:** There was little evidence that interviews are ever conducted in both Kavango East and Kavango West. The interview process had been circumvented to speed up the appointment process, but efforts are now underway to implement interviews.

//**Kharas:** There was little evidence that interviews are ever conducted in this region.

**Otjozondjupa:** In a perusal of documents, evidence of interviews being conducted – as indicated by minutes of meetings attached to shortlisting documents – was found for only one circuit, namely Grootfontein.

**Ohangwena:** Inspectors monitor the interview process closely. If they are not provided with evidence – in the form of meeting minutes – that interviews took place at a school, they will send the school’s recommendations for the appointment back to the school.
5.2 The extent of temporary appointments and shortages of qualified teachers

It was initially intended that data would be gathered during interviews to determine how many people apply for teaching posts, how qualified the applicants are, and what proportion of the posts advertised are filled with permanent versus temporary teachers. The objective was to understand whether there is a sufficient pool of qualified teachers applying for posts, and whether the most qualified teachers are being appointed among the group of candidates. In practice this data mostly could not be obtained. HR departments usually work with paper-based systems, sorting through applications but rarely taking a systematic-data approach to managing and tracking recruitment processes. However, interviewees were able to provide some rough estimates as a substitute for this data, and could identify subject specialisations or grade levels for which there is a shortage of suitably qualified applicants.

An overall observation is that where unqualified teachers are appointed, this is largely driven by the short supply of qualified teachers rather than irregularities in the appointment of teachers. Where recruitment procedures are followed, there was no evidence across regions that unqualified or underqualified applicants are intentionally appointed over qualified candidates. Interviewers across the five regions were not able to detect any irregularity here, but noted that regions want to attract the most qualified teachers. However, temporary appointments made during the year without following recruitment procedures could be a source of concern where very unqualified teachers may be appointed over more suitable candidates. Another circumstance where this may happen is where the qualified applicant does not speak the language of instruction of learners in a school. In these cases language proficiency in the dominant mother tongue is considered more valuable than higher qualifications. This particularly applies in schools serving San communities or other minority groups.

The lack of suitably qualified applicants for teaching posts is a notable concern in some regions. However, it was not possible to get reliable figures on what proportion of posts were filled with new unqualified/underqualified teachers. Although the majority of new appointments made are temporary appointments, these are often renewals of temporary contracts of incumbent teachers whose posts have been re-advertised after one year because temporary appointments are only for a fixed one-year contract. The FSD statistics for Ohangwena in January 2015 indicate that about 14% of teachers are employed on a temporary basis in that region.

There was a unanimous concern across regions about the lack of suitably qualified lower primary teachers, pre-primary teachers and teachers with indigenous-language proficiencies and the ability to speak multiple languages in schools where a diverse range of mother-tongue languages are spoken. This specific shortage was identified by Bennell et al. (2009), and clearly the situation has not been reversed. Large numbers of unqualified teachers are appointed in such positions.

2 In January 2015, 440 unqualified/temporary teachers were appointed or reappointed as opposed to only 82 permanent/qualified teachers. Roughly over 70% of new appointments are of temporary/unqualified teachers in Ohangwena. In Otjozondjupa, regional officers indicated that only 40% of the advertised posts were filled with permanent teachers (i.e. teachers met the qualifications). In Kharas officials stated that they are struggling to attract qualified applicants, and indicated that roughly half of the applications received are from unqualified people. As a direct consequence of the large number of temporary appointments made, HR departments are having to re-advertise the same posts every year, as temporary appointments are only for a fixed one-year contract.
Alternatively, teachers qualified to teach at more senior school-phase levels, with little experience in teaching lower grades, are appointed to teach lower grades.

Interestingly, in at least two regions, qualified teachers for mathematics and the sciences were identified as being in good supply.

Table 3 provides a breakdown of the types of grade levels and subjects which officials identified as being in critical short supply of qualified teachers.

Table 3: **Identified grade levels or subjects with a short supply of qualified teachers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade/Subject</th>
<th>//Kharas</th>
<th>Kavango</th>
<th>Ohangwena</th>
<th>Ojoozdjupa</th>
<th>Khomas</th>
<th>Omaheke</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous languages ^</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower primary teachers</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-primary teachers (Grade R)</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
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<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics and Sciences (higher grade)</td>
<td>Not a problem</td>
<td>Not a problem</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Technology (IT) (higher grades)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>*</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

^ Indigenous languages for which there are shortages of qualified teachers by region:

- Khomas – Khoekhoegowab;
- Omaheke – Khoekhoegowab and Setswana;
- Ojoozdjupa and //Kharas – Khoekhoegowab.

*** Considerable shortage.

** Shortage.
Section 6
Capacity Development and In-Service Training for Teachers

6.1 General perceptions of teacher supply and in-service education and training (INSET) needs

In recent years the teacher training system in Namibia has undergone a notable restructuring. In addition to the four-year teaching degree (B.Ed.) offered by the University of Namibia (UNAM), teacher training was provided by former Colleges of Education (CoEs), managed by the Ministry of Education, which offered a three-year Basic Education Teacher’s Diploma (BETD) for the three school phases constituting basic education. The former CoEs were merged with UNAM in 2010 are now UNAM campuses where the four-year teaching degree (B.Ed.) is offered rather than the former three-year diploma. Also, a new curriculum for the four-year B.Ed. was devised and introduced for all teachers, striving for a better balance between subject knowledge and pedagogical skills.

There were various motivating reasons for this restructuring process: the provision of pre-service training was not considered a core function of the MoE; financial and personnel resources were constrained at the CoEs; and there were potential economies of scale associated with a merged system. But concern about the quality of the BETD programme was the dominant motivation, and the key shortcomings noted were insufficient content knowledge provided through this three-year programme and low entrance requirements (Bennell, Sayed & Hailombe 2009).

Many regional officials have perceived this restructuring as a factor aggravating existing shortages in the teacher supply. In the opinion of one Regional Director of Education, “This phasing out of the BETD has caused a national disaster.” The concern is that the new system has excluded a large number of potential teachers who do not have enough Grade 12 points to enter the university system. This concern was expressed in at least four of the six regions visited, namely Kavango, Khomas, Ohangwena and Otjozondjupa. HR attributed the difficulties in finding qualified teachers directly to the phasing out of the BETD. These perceptions need to be verified against actual data on new appointments.

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3 Bennell et al. (2009, pp. 42) note that even though on paper the UNAM B.Ed. and CoE BETD academic entrance requirements were the same – a minimum of 25 points in the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), the scaling of points at UNAM was higher, raising the de facto entrance requirements for the B.Ed. over the BETD. There was also considerable leniency applied in the implementation of admission requirements when intake numbers were low.
In addition to studying through UNAM, teachers who wish to upgrade their qualifications, and have sufficient Grade 12 points (roughly 25 points or more for UNAM) for acceptance, are studying through South African universities such as North West University, and even Rhodes University was mentioned. Teachers with fewer than 25 Grade 12 points are studying predominantly through the Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) and the Institute of Learning (IOL). Despite these programmes, there is a perception that there are not enough avenues through which specifically temporary, unqualified teachers can upgrade their qualifications with bridging courses or a hierarchy of certificates, especially where their Grade 12 points are low.

While the first set of graduates from the new system are perceived as likely to have better content knowledge than teachers who had graduated through the former BETD programme, there is a general concern that these teachers have little classroom experience and methodological preparation for teaching. In this regard, regions have expressed a need to prioritise induction training for newly qualified teachers.

Specific areas identified for priority training for teachers include teaching in the lower primary phase and pre-primary phase. Advisory services personnel expressed the need for training lower primary teachers to teach reading methods, reading for meaning and basic mathematical concepts, and to set tests as well as implement continual assessment for learners.

There is also a general sentiment that the combination of subjects offered through institutions is inconsistent with the subject combinations required at the school level. This has implications for rising post allocations at schools. This was also noted Bennell et al. (2009). Closer consultation is required between NIED, PQA personnel and UNAM to ensure that training institutions teach relevant subject combinations. Furthermore, efforts need to be taken to attract teachers to specialise in languages, particularly indigenous languages.

6.2 Provision of INSET training at regional level

Although the majority of teachers are upgrading their qualifications and skills through their own initiatives to study, some support is provided by regions to up-skill teachers, albeit limited in its ability to meet competency gaps.

Funding of studies from training budgets

Through the REOs, training funds are available for a small number of teachers to pursue studies where full or part sponsorship of study fees is provided and compensatory teaching salaries may also be paid in part or full for the duration of the study period. However, this funding is provided on only a very small scale, and is steered towards select candidates who apply to specialise in subjects or areas where there is an identified shortage of qualified teachers as determined by the national office. There are some practical issues that are limiting the impact of these sponsored
studies for capacity development. First, it appears that temporary teachers are excluded from applying for funding. Second, contracts for teachers who access study funds are considered to lack conditions to ensure that teachers return to work in their pre-study region or school. Third, regional funds that are available are possibly not being allocated where the training committees are not meeting consistently to consider and approve applications. In one region visited, the training committee responsible for discussing applications for both training and sponsorship had dissolved due to time constraints as well as key committee members having resigned from their posts.

**Training provided by regions**

There was evidence in most regions that advisory services were providing at least some training to teachers, albeit varying in scope and intensity from region to region. However, existing gaps in teacher content knowledge and pedagogy are far from met through the existing services provided by advisory officers. Advisory services are perceived as understaffed relative to the number of schools and teachers to be trained, which is exacerbated by the need to travel long distances to schools to assess teacher competencies. Excluding existing vacancies in some advisory officer posts, the numbers of officials in these departments are considered inadequate to meet their professional obligations. For example, capacity constraints in Khomas have forced the region to engage in a ‘train the trainer’ exercise to capacitate teachers to train. Moreover, some interviewees questioned the competencies of some advisory officers to advise in subject specialisations or grade levels when they are ill-equipped and underqualified to provide expert assistance.

“As an advisor we are unprepared. I was just a teacher. We continue to advise people but on the basis of our previous mistakes. The previous system did a lot of damage. We were only training in method not in content knowledge. Current advisors were teachers in the past without strong content knowledge in that subject.”

– An inspector but former subject advisor

At present, most of the training by advisory services is focused on preparing teachers for the new curriculum, and associated with this, training on new methods of assessment. Workshops are held at circuit level and are usually scheduled in the afternoon or on weekends, but the effectiveness of the training is compromised by sometimes low attendance of teachers and a mismatch between the competencies of teachers and the training provided. One education officer interviewed noted that training will be planned, but then they find that basic learning competencies of teachers must be addressed before they can move on to the actual training material.

In some regions, advisors determine the training needs through classroom observations. School principals are also able to contact advisory services and request training for certain teachers. Workshops are held in response to identified competency gaps. Under-performing schools are most likely to be targeted with training initiatives, but there is a strong likelihood that remote schools are overlooked in the provision of such training, given their distance from circuit offices and regional centres. This was identified in Omaheke, for example, as being a problem.

In at least two regions (Khomas and Ohangwena), there was evidence that leadership training for principals has been implemented. Ohangwena prepares principals in two areas: (i) instructional
leadership (material has been written for this); and (ii) labour-related issues and HR policies. Ohangwena also provides induction training for all newly appointed principals and HODs.

**Induction training for newly qualified teachers**

The lack of induction training for teachers was highlighted as a problem where new teachers lack classroom experience and classroom management and assessment skills. This confirms an earlier finding of Bennell et al. (2009, p. 50), who note that the lack of training for newly qualified teachers is striking: “... an effective system of continuing professional development needs to pay special attention to the Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) who require a great deal of support during their first year of teaching. Moreover, the experiences of teachers during their first years are crucial in determining whether they remain in teaching.”

The interviews indicated that there are pockets of induction training for teachers being provided in some regions, but there was no evidence of a systematic approach to this issue.

In Omaheke and Khomas there was some indication that advisory services are providing training to newly qualified teachers, focusing on pedagogical skills and classroom management. In Otjozondjupa, readiness training for new teachers entering the lower primary and pre-primary phases was identified as occurring in the first week of the year. Ohangwena provides induction training for all newly appointed principals and HODs. In //Kharas and Kavango there is little evidence of any induction training provided.

**Professional development**

In 2010, a project was initiated to institutionalise continuous professional development (CPD) in Namibia. Funded through the Millennium Challenge Account Namibia, a framework has been established for the Continuous Professional Development Unit managed through UNAM. The aim of this project is to institutionalise a culture of continued learning among teachers, where “local structures are empowered through participatory processes to identify their own professional development needs, plan for these needs and have the needs addressed” (UNAM 2012, p. 6). The intention is for the CPD programme to deliver more systematic training for teachers, rather than once-off workshops that can be disjointed, while recognising that training needs should be determined at the school level rather than by the central head office. The training is meant to be linked to a form of accreditation system.

The CPD model relies heavily on regional CPD coordinating committees which are responsible for coordinating CPD activities for teachers at the regional level, and then school-based CPD coordinating committees which must drive professional development at the school level. The school committees are chaired by the school principals. These regional and school committees are meant to have elected focal persons or coordinators who must take on numerous responsibilities for identifying training needs, planning CPD activities, monitoring and implementing these activities, and liaising with various stakeholders in the process.

Five years since the initiation of the CPD idea, there is little evidence that the programme has been implemented in regions. There is a lack of awareness of about how the programme is meant to operate, and confusion exists with respect to how it relates to pre-service training, INSET and the functions of advisory services. In one region, posters about the programme are placed
around the regional office, and booklets are available describing the programme and how it relates to pre-service training etc., but in reality officials are unaware of what this programme is about, how the programme is actually meant to work, and whether it will in fact work.

Currently there is little capacity to implement and support the CPD programme at the regional level. In REOs, advisory services are already stretched, especially as they prepare teachers for the new curriculum. In one region, funds had been allocated to the region in 2014 to set up the CPD committees. A request was made to appoint a person to run the CPD programme in this region, and to initiate the regional and school committees using the funds allocated, but the national office did not approve this request for a staff member.

At the school level, the establishment of the CPD coordinating committees are in practice likely to hinge strongly on the motivations of principals. However, many principals have teaching loads that far exceed the 25% load intended in the 2001 staffing norms. In Ohangwena, for example, principals, inspectors and the Director of Education identified this as a problem in the running of schools, especially at the primary level. Little time is left for even the most basic management activities, let alone spearheading training activities.

It was not possible to assess the extent of the CPD and training initiated at school level, because regional officers were often unaware of what was happening on the ground in this regard. The general impression is that not much school-initiated training is taking place. There was some evidence of pockets of successful cluster-level collaboration occurring with respect to training and assessment of learners, but this varied across and within regions, and often depends on the distances between schools. In Otjozondjupa, an education officer noted that good collaboration was occurring at the primary level where cluster-standardised assessments were being implemented.

6.3 Capacity development for officials

During interviews, regional directors or other senior officials were asked about the general level of capacity of regional officers to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. There was mixed evidence provided, with capacity issues often connected to vacancies in existing regional office posts. The following issues and capacity constraints were highlighted as concerns.

i) Teachers have been promoted into non-teaching posts in regional offices, such as planning, HR and finance, who do not have the background to execute functions associated with their roles and responsibilities. Training is required for many of these individuals to acquire job-specific skills. This is particularly the case with respect to planning departments in which data analysis and forecasting skills are lacking in some regions.

ii) HR departments are considered to be very understaffed due to staffing norms that guide the allocations of HR practitioners to each region. In Khomas and //Kharas, understaffing in HR departments was noted as a concern, where incumbent HR practitioners are not able to manage with the amount of work that must be done.

iii) There is a lack of induction training for newly appointed officials. Recent graduates with very little work experience are at times appointed to administrative posts such as finance and HR. Orientation for new appointees is required, particularly to ensure their awareness
and understanding of important policies and circulars that affect their day-to-day decision-making and tasks.

iv) There is a lack of consistent awareness and understanding of important policies, circulars and procedures in some regions. This can create confusion and result in haphazard work where systems are not well defined. Policies are not the answer to clarity in systems, but they can help in standardising processes across regions. However, policies are often not readily available within departments, or officials simply have not read them. This is concern particularly in departments such as HR when practitioners are not in possession of the relevant legislation.

v) A formal handover of roles and responsibilities is required when a regional officer leaves his or her position, to prevent loss of institutional knowledge. In one region there had been notable leadership changes in the preceding few months. It was observed that there had not been any proper handover of roles and responsibilities, especially where posts were vacated before another person was appointed. This is particularly problematic when a department is understaffed to begin with, and institutional knowledge is not passed on to junior officials.

vi) The regions are meant to be allocating 2% of their regional budgets to training. Officials stated that this was not happening. They have money to spend but they often do not know how to spend it and what training to use it for. Systematic approaches need to be taken to thinking about how to use training budgets to capacitate personnel.

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**Box 4 Regional Councils and their relationship with the Regional Education Offices**

Namibia embarked on a process of decentralisation for the purpose of increasing the grassroots influence on decision-making, with the adoption of a decentralisation policy in 1996 and the launch of a Decentralisation Programme in 1998. The policy was given legal force by a series of new laws introduced in 2000, including the Decentralisation Enabling Act, 2000 (Act No. 33 of 2000). There is an intention to shift to the regional level government functions which have been managed through line ministries, with a strong central focus on a process known as “devolution”. With devolution, the central authority gives full responsibility and public accountability for certain functions to the sub-national level (Hopkins 2005). Once the period of devolution of central control is implemented, the REO functions will resort directly under the Regional Council.

Currently this process of decentralisation is in the “delegation” phase. In this interim period before devolution, the Regional Councils are meant to be acquiring competencies in each of the regional ministries to be placed under the Councils’ authority. Delegation currently entails two lines of control for the REOs: each REO is accountable to the Permanent Secretary in the Central Government, and technically to the Chief Regional Officer who in turn is directly accountable to a Regional Council committee composed of councillors. On the whole the decentralisation process has been very slow because of considerable competency and funding constraints (Hopkins 2005).
In the interviews, some effort was made to understand the current relationship between the Regional Councils and the REOs. Two Regional Councils were also visited and Chief Regional Officers (CROs) were interviewed. Three findings are highlighted:

i) There is virtually no capacity in the applicable regional offices to take on the plethora of ministry functions to be placed under Regional Council control, let alone education functions.

ii) To date the decentralisation process has had little implication for the running of the REOs, with a few minor exceptions. All funds sent to the REO are deposited into one Regional Council account. The CRO is a signatory, and large payments must be authorised by the Regional Council. Furthermore, communications from the national head office to the REOs are sent via the CRO, so that the Regional Council can be made aware of what is required of the REO, with the intention of developing the competencies of the Regional Council. Authorisation for various things, particularly expenditure of the development budget for minor infrastructural projects in schools, must be obtained from the CRO and economising committees. Technically the CRO should have considerable control over what is happening in the REOs. However, it seems that it is informally agreed that the Regional Council has neither the expertise nor the resources to take on education functions, and they play a largely advisory and rubber-stamping role for the sake of following procedure. The extent to which the Regional Council and CRO have control over what happens at the REOs is likely to be region-dependent.

iii) Relevant to the HR development plan for the basic education sector is that in some regions the CRO is responsible for authorising the appointment of temporary teachers. This process of authorisation is very vague and requires more clarity.

iv) If more control of education functions is given to the Regional Councils, it will create an avenue for too much political interference in the provision of education, especially if councillors influence the appointment of teachers and school infrastructural spending for political favour.

It is important to keep monitoring this relationship, as it has various implications for the efficiency of systems, spending of development budgets, which teachers get study funding, teacher appointments and the creation of posts. Currently it is clear that the Regional Councils lack personnel and have no capacity in terms of human and capital resources to take on much responsibility.
This report on the fieldwork findings has explored how post provisioning in Namibia’s basic education sector is managed in practice in six of the country’s 14 regions, and has identified key areas of inefficiency in the application of current recruitment processes across the six regions visited. Opportunities available for developing teachers’ capacity through In-Service Education and Training (INSET) have also been considered. Many of the findings serve to confirm existing weaknesses which were identified by Bennell et al. in 2009 in their analysis of teacher supply, demand and utilisation in Namibia.

The key findings discussed in each section of this report are summarised here.
Post provisioning in practice

- In practice, post allocations are determined by the needs of schools for both teaching and support staff, which posts each school should verify against staffing norms. Although this demand-led approach helps to direct human resources to where they are most needed, it has to be accompanied by high levels of monitoring and accountability to ensure an equitable distribution of resources.

- Monitoring and channels of accountability break down where inspectors or HR or planning fail to adequately verify schools’ requests for posts, or where reliable and up-to-date data such as the Fifteenth School Day (FSD) Survey statistics or the Annual Education Census (AEC) data are not consulted. Furthermore, finance must be consulted in these post-provisioning processes to ensure that posts allocated can be accommodated within budgets.

- There is clear awareness of the existence of staffing norms, but much clarity is required on what the official norms actually are both across and within regions.

- The 2001 staffing norms are also considered impractical and inflexible in various contexts, in particular disadvantaging small, rural schools serving the poorest students.

- The AEC data collated into the EMIS data is currently not being used for post-provisioning planning or in monitoring current post allocations, as it is considered outdated.

- The key point of connection between regional budgets and post provisioning is the preparations for submitting annual regional budgets. Importantly, new posts are always budgeted for as permanent, qualified teacher appointments. This allows the regions to have ‘savings’ with which to play during the year, as many of the budgeted vacancies are likely to be filled with temporary appointments and/or unqualified teachers with lower cost implications.

- With respect to budgets, more teachers than the number actually planned for in the budget may be appointed during the year. This is possible where temporary teachers who are paid less are appointed, rather than the fully qualified permanent teachers originally budgeted for. In the future this may have notable budgetary implications for each region as temporary teachers upgrade their qualifications.

- In making appointment decisions, regions are often ill-informed on the extent of remuneration budgets available at any point during the year. They rather ‘guesstimate’ their available savings. This constrains the considerations for making sound financial decisions to allocate new posts.

- In general, there is a mismatch between the extent to which the presence of excess teachers is perceived to be a problem and the extent to which current learner-teacher ratios are much lower than prescribed in the staffing norms.

Recruitment and selection in practice

- There is generally a clear understanding of what procedures should be followed in recruitment and selection processes, but actual practices deviate from official processes. The concern is that even where formal recruitment processes are followed, this may delay the temporary appointments of teachers, which appointments are characterised by high levels of informality.
There is no obvious indication that regions are appointing less qualified or underqualified teachers over more qualified teachers where recruitment processes are followed correctly. In general, there is an expressed desire for qualified teachers to fill vacancies. An overall observation is that where unqualified teachers are appointed, this is largely driven by the short supply of qualified teachers rather than irregularities in appointment. However, due to informalities in the appointment of temporary teachers, unqualified teachers may be entering and possibly staying in the system when other more suitable candidates may be available to replace less-suitable incumbents.

Mechanisms for record-keeping and documentation regarding advertising, recruitment and management vary across the regions. Considerable improvements in HR data management is required, moving towards an electronic system that is integrated across regions.

Delegated authority to the regions to appoint teachers has been identified as a good move forward in ensuring that empty posts are filled with teachers on time. Nevertheless, the appointment of temporary teachers requires higher levels of monitoring as well as clarity on the correct processes to be followed.

There is considerable variation across regions as regards whether or not proper interview processes are followed in recruiting candidates into vacant teacher posts. Within regions, whether or not interviews are conducted often depends on the circuit inspectors enforcing the interview requirements, as well as the competency of school boards to conduct interviews and the distances between the school and the shortlisted candidates.

Higher levels of due diligence are applied in the recruitment and selection process for promotion posts than in recruitment and selection for entry-level teaching posts. There are more procedural controls for promotion-post appointments.

High levels of resistance from school boards are being experienced where they challenge the final appointment recommendations of the Human Resource Advisory Committee (HRAC) at the regional level. There is a strong need to address this problem, for example through formal dispute resolution procedures.

There is a growing concern about the lack of suitably qualified teachers applying for posts. A shortage was unanimously identified for pre-primary and lower primary teachers as well as teachers with indigenous-language proficiencies.

**In-service training for teachers**

The restructuring of the teacher training system, and particularly the phasing out of the Basic Education Teacher's Diploma (BETD) as part of this restructuring, has been perceived by many regional officials as having negative consequences for the teaching profession, including aggravating existing shortages in the teacher supply. The concern is that the new system has excluded a large number of potential teachers who do not have enough Grade 12 points to enter the university system.

There is a perception that there are not enough avenues through which temporary, unqualified teachers can upgrade their qualifications with bridging courses or accreditation systems, especially if their Grade 12 points are low.
There was evidence in most regions that advisory services were providing at least some training to teachers, albeit varying in scope and intensity from region to region. However, existing gaps in teacher content knowledge and pedagogy are far from met through the existing services provided by advisory officers.

Advisory services are perceived as understaffed relative to the number of schools and teachers to be trained, which is exacerbated by the long distances that officers have to travel to schools to assess teacher competencies.

At present the majority of training provided by advisory services is focused on preparing teachers for the new curriculum, and, associated with this, training teachers on new methods of learner assessment.

The lack of induction training for teachers was highlighted as a problem where new teachers lack classroom experience and classroom management and assessment skills. There is little evidence that induction training is being systematically provided in many of the regions visited.

There was evidence that leadership training for school principals has been implemented in some regions.

The Continued Professional Development (CPD) programme is not functioning as it should; in fact it was non-existent in most of the regions visited. There is considerable confusion as to how this programme relates to pre-service training, INSET and the current provision of training by advisory services. Currently there is little capacity to implement and support the CPD programme at the regional level and at the school level where principals have high teaching workloads.

**Capacity development in REOs**

Historically, teachers have been promoted into administrative posts in regional offices such as planning, HR and finance. But they do not necessarily have the background to execute all functions associated with their roles and responsibilities in those posts. This is particularly highlighted in the planning department where the data analysis and forecasting skills required are sorely lacking. Training is needed for developing the specialist competencies of incumbent personnel.

HR departments are struggling to fulfil their functions efficiently due to understaffing, which is informed by the staffing norms for HR practitioners.

Induction training for newly appointed officials is required, where HR could play a strong role in ensuring that new officials are familiarised with important legislation and circulars.

Some regions have experienced notable turnover in leadership positions. This compromises the capacity of departments to function when replacements are not found quickly and positions are not handed over systematically, leading to lost institutional knowledge. In the case of the anticipated retirement of officials, succession planning should be strongly considered.

There is extremely limited capacity foreseen within the Regional Council to take on fully decentralised functions. With a few minor exceptions, the Regional Education Offices mostly operate in isolation of their Regional Council.


University of Namibia (2012). *Continuous Professional Development Unit: Introduction to Continuous Professional Development*. Windhoek: UNAM.

Human Resources Development Plan for the Namibian Basic Education Sector: Fieldwork Findings
The following is a guide for interviewers going to regional offices. It serves to outline the key objectives of the interview process, providing an open-ended instrument that serves merely as a guide to (i) relevant questions to be asked and (ii) the type of information to be acquired from each region. Circumstances may be different in each region, requiring that other important issues be probed that are context specific.

Objectives of the interview process

There are three key objectives of the interview process:
1. To understand in practice how the current post-provisioning system works, with a particular focus on how current practices aid or detract from an equitable distribution of teachers across schools.
2. To understand the recruitment process.
3. To understanding more about the current in-service training of teachers.

Given time constraints, the first and second objectives are the most important for the interview, so the related questions are situated earlier in the questionnaire. If you are very pressed for time, ask the most important questions, which are identified by an asterisk.

Strongly recommended reading before entering the field

  - Definitely read Chapter 6, “Continuous professional development”, and Chapter 7, “Teacher employment and utilisation”.

  - There are succinct fact sheets with statistics on each region at the beginning of this document.

**Interview setup**

The Department of Economics at the University of Stellenbosch, within the programme of Research on Socio-Economic Policy (ReSEP), is undertaking a project for the Namibian Ministry of Education (MoE) supported by UNICEF, to develop a Comprehensive Human Resource Development Plan and Implementation Strategy for the Namibian Basic Education Sector. As a part of the wider project we would like to understand more fully how the post-provisioning system works in your region – how this really works in the context of the constraints you may face. We would also like to acquire some insights from you into the in-service training programmes available to teachers. Your opinions and knowledge on these topics is invaluable to us for this project.

Would you be comfortable if I record this interview? We are not going to be documenting word for word what people have said. We just would like to use the recording so that we don’t miss any important parts of the conversation.

**PART A: POST PROVISIONING**

**Allocation rules, allocation in practice and budgets**

1. *Can you tell me a little about how budgets are allocated to each region? On what basis is the amount that is allocated to each region determined?* **Wait for a response then prompt:**

   i) *Is the national budget for education distributed to each region according to the number of schools or number of students or by some other means?*

2. *Do the costs of teaching and management posts in schools get allocated from regional budgets?*

3. *How does your office determine how many teachers should be allocated to each school in your region? Can you tell me about this?** **Wait for response then prompt:** Are teacher numbers determined by the schools’ requirements or are teachers allocated to each school by some other method?  

   * **Note to interviewer:** Listen for whether the explanation given relates to the determination of the number of post entitlements or the number of posts that can be paid for. These processes may be quite different and need to be distinguished.
4. Are you aware of any guidelines or rules that should be applied in allocating teachers to schools, for example guidelines that specify how many teachers should be allocated according to learner numbers, budgets or other factors? Can you describe these guidelines or rules to me?

Note to interviewers: Universal staffing norms for primary and secondary education were introduced in 2001 based on learner-teacher ratios, and there have been some developments on these norms since (see for example Chung 2013), but nothing concrete.

Then ask for a policy document or anything that the respondents may have that describes these rules.

5. To what extent would you say that your office uses these rules in establishing the number of teachers to be allocated per school? Can you tell me a little more about this?

6. In your opinion, in what circumstances does it become impractical to have set rules for allocating teachers? Wait for response then prompt: Is it more difficult to apply rules for post calculations to certain types of schools such as small schools or in remote areas?

7. How does your office determine how many promotion posts (Head of Department and Principal posts) should be allocated to each school in your region? Can you tell me about this?

8. How does your office determine how many non-teacher posts (for example secretaries and hostel staff) should be allocated to each school in your region? Can you tell me about this?

9. Who actually calculates how many posts each school in your region should have? Wait for response then prompt: Are schools or principals themselves responsible for this, or is this done by the regional office or at the national office? Can you tell me about this?
Probe into the details of this process – questions 10 and 11:

10. If school principals calculate their post requirements, then ask the following, otherwise skip to question 11.
   i. Who is responsible for checking that the school’s calculation is correct?

11. If the regional (or national) office calculates school post requirements, then ask …
   i. Does your regional (or national) office use data collected through the Annual Education Census and EMIS to establish post allocations? If so, how reliable do you think the data is for this important process?

12. * How often does it occur that school post calculations exceed what is budgeted?

13. * If school post calculations exceed what can be paid by the region, who decides whether there is sufficient regional budget to pay for this additional post? On what grounds is this decision made?

14. * If school post calculations exceed what can be paid by the region, how does the region then decide which schools get vacant posts filled and which do not?

15. Suppose a school post calculation is correct but budget constraints do not allow for the filling of this post. Do you inform the school that the school entitlement cannot be met, and how is this done?
16. What is the typical response of schools in this scenario where a budgeted allocation (i.e. what can be afforded) is less than the calculated post allocation? **Wait for response then prompt:** Does the post remain vacant, or is the post filled by the region despite budget constraints, or do schools take some other action to fill the post?

**Equity**

17. * Would you say that public schools with wealthier students are able to get access to more state-paid teachers compared to schools with poorer students? If yes, can you explain to me why this may be the case?

**Excess teachers**

18. * Are you aware of there being any excess teachers in your region? If yes, how many excess teachers would you say there are in your region?

19. In which specific school phases or certain subject specialisations are excess teachers more likely to be a problem?

20. * In the past year, what actions have been taken, if any, to reallocate excess teachers?
PART B: UNDERSTANDING THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

We would like to understand a little more about how the teacher recruitment process works.

***Most important questions if time constrained: 20-25, 30

Recruitment of teachers

21. * Would you be able to explain to me the process by which teacher vacancies are advertised and filled in your jurisdiction? Start with one case in which a post becomes vacant in a school. What are the steps involved in getting this post filled?
   * Note to interviewers: This process is described in the UNESCO 2013 report. The ‘formal’ processes described may not be followed properly for valid reasons or reasons of convenience. Listen to how respondents describe the process, then use questions below to probe about deviations from this official process.

22. * How are vacant posts at schools in your region usually advertised, and when does this occur during the year? Prompt: Are vacant posts advertised in the national gazette or in other ways such as local newspapers or by word of mouth alone or other means?

23. * Does it ever happen that vacant posts in schools in your region are filled without advertising the post? In how many schools do you think this happens, and why?

24. * When filling vacant posts, does it ever happen that interviews are not conducted with potential candidates? In how many schools do you think this happens, and why?

25. * In what other ways is the official process of filling posts often not applied, and why?
26. What is the usual number of applications received for such posts?

* Ask for documents/data:
  ▶ Do you have documents or data on these advertised vacancies in schools since, say, 2012? Would you be able to share with these with me? It’s okay if this is in a hard-copy format, but if you have something electronic, that is even better.
  ▶ Also, do you have any documents/data on who applied for the posts advertised and the qualifications/experience or subject specialisation of those who applied?
  ▶ OR, do you have any other data/documents on who actually filled these vacant posts?

27. In the event that a post is advertised and there are no forthcoming applications of suitable candidates, what usually happens in filling this post?

28. In the interim period between which a post becomes vacant and is filled, what is usually done in managing this empty post? **Wait for response then prompt:** Are relief teachers brought in?

29. What would you say is the time delay between a post becoming vacant and being filled? In what circumstances, schools or areas is this delay likely to be much longer?

30. * What proportion of applicants are usually well qualified (i.e. have at least a three-year post-secondary qualification including a teaching qualification on an NQF level 6, i.e. referred to as “Teacher E”)?
  * You want to specifically ask about the qualifications of lower primary teachers, which are particularly problematic according to the EMIS data.
31. *In your experience, have you ever observed that schools often select an underqualified (or less-qualified) teacher for a post, even though more qualified persons may have applied for the post? If so, to what extent has this been a problem in your region? Why do you think this tends to happen?

32. In your experience, which type of posts advertised are most easily filled and which are least easily filled? For example, do you find that it is more difficult to fill mathematics or biology posts, language posts or posts in remote schools?

33. When it is difficult to fill certain posts with specialised teachers, what is your opinion about offering higher salaries for these posts to attract more applications?

**Recruitment of MoE officials**

34. How easy or difficult has it been to fill posts for MOE officials?

35. What is your opinion of the level of competency of the appointed MoE officials in general?

36. For which of the more specialised posts (e.g. accountants and EMIS officials) do you think there are specific shortages of skills?
PART C: IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF TEACHERS

Note to interviewers: Over the past 10 years, the In-Service Education and Training (INSET) programme for unqualified and underqualified teachers has apparently been phased out as the numbers of qualified teachers increased. At present the University of Namibia (UNAM) is host to two important outsourced in-service training activities of the Ministry of Education: the English Language Proficiency Programme and the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Programme. You might want to ask specifically about these programmes if no information is forthcoming.

37. What is your general opinion about the level of competence of teachers in your region?
   ● Note to interviewers: Ask specifically about teachers in the lower primary phase, which, according to the EMIS, has the lowest levels of teacher qualifications compared to all the other school phases.

38. In what areas do you think teachers would most benefit from in-service training?

39. What programmes or opportunities are currently available for teachers to engage in in-service training? Can you tell me a little more about these programmes?

40. What is your perception of these in-service training opportunities available to teachers? In what ways have they been effective or not effective in improving teaching quality and content knowledge?

41. Which of these in-service training programmes are serving the highest number of teachers in your region?
42. Can you tell me a bit about the current CPD programme?

43. What is your perception of the effectiveness of the current CPD programme in improving teaching quality and content knowledge?

44. How many schools do you think are actually providing regular opportunities for their teachers' continuous professional development?

45. Do you know of any in-service training that is being directed specifically at newly qualified teachers? Can you tell me about this? Or are there any induction programmes for these new teachers?