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Teacher Migration from Jamaica: Assessing the Short-Term Impact[1]

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Introduction

Teachers and schools are part of the social and cultural infrastructure of all societies but they are particularly relevant in developing countries. A good education system is central to the creation of human capital and a fundamental element contributing to successful economic development (Skeldon 2005). In order to establish and maintain a credible system of education it is important to have a sufficient number of trained and experienced teachers. Therefore, the migration of teachers from a developing society is more than a debate about the movement of a specific sector of skilled labour, it has wider implications for the future growth of productive and social capital in the society. As a result of the deepening of globalisation, the demand for skilled labour in developed societies and the movement towards the liberalisation of the movement of people across borders (as exemplified in Mode 4 of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)), the issue of migration from developing countries has become a more salient one in the last decade. There are those who posit that labour migration is positive for source countries, for example, through the generation of remittances and savings or because the source economy does not have the capacity to absorb excess labour. Finally, there is the potential benefit of return migration, or 'brain gain', whereby migrants return to the local labour market with added value as a result of their experience (training, studying, professional development) working abroad. Those who raise concerns about migration point to the loss of skilled labour within the context of a developing economy, particularly in the public sector (specifically education or health workers) or in areas of skills shortages (the so-called 'brain drain'). Critics have argued that the loss of public sector

personnel trained at the expense of the government is a loss of investment to the wider society.

Migration is not a recent phenomenon in Jamaica (or the Caribbean in general). Indeed, it has been a feature of island life for generations so much so that "the livelihoods of the migrants are not necessarily bound to one location, and people conduct different aspects of their lives in different places at different times in their lifecycle." (Thomas-Hope, 2002:2). It has been has calculated that 814, 106 Jamaicans have migrated since the 1970s (from a total population of 2.7 million people) (Thomas-Hope 2004: 4). The advantages of migration are recognised within a society with a formal unemployment rate of fifteen percent and where many people make a living in the informal economy. In addition to this, remittances are a major source of foreign exchange. In 2004, Jamaica received US$1.4 billion in remittances from migrants living and working overseas and this figure does not include the money sent back to the island informally through family and friends. However, in recent years concerns have been raised by the Jamaican government about the impact of the loss of skilled labour on social and economic development. The Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) revealed that in the past 20 years, Jamaica had lost 54,288 highly skilled professionals to North America alone, representing 30.2 per cent of the output of Jamaica's education system (*Jamaica Observer*, April 08, 2003). Specific concerns about the migration of teachers and health workers have been partly driven by the development of organised mass campaigns to recruit teachers and nurses, particularly by developed countries, most notably the United States and England. However, there is a lack of empirical data which has made it extremely difficult to accurately assess the extent to which the migration of teachers (or nurses) has had a negative short-term impact on the delivery of education (or health) in source countries such as Jamaica. In this article, we present and analyse specific data collected from nineteen schools in urban and rural Jamaica in September and November 2004. Through a combination of semi-structured interviews with principals and questionnaires distributed to teachers, we discuss how the migration of teachers since 2000 has affected the delivery of education to Jamaican children. Our findings reveal that while there appeared to be little correlation between direct migration and teacher shortage in the schools visited, there were important impacts on the quality of education delivered.

Context for the Debate about Teacher Migration

The key concern about the loss of skilled persons from developing societies is related to impacts on development. This is particularly the case in terms of health and education personnel. Both categories of professionals make fundamental contributions to the society. It is also often the case that teachers and doctors perform other functions within communities, particularly in the rural areas, for example, as members of the local council, as members of the church, or working with youth and so on. The lack of adequate data on the numbers of skilled professionals leaving to work abroad, the precise amount of money they remit (as part of a professional group), whether they return after a period of time working abroad and what 'added value' they bring with them on their return is an under-researched area. This leaves gaps in understanding which add to the difficulty of determining the impact of migration within a specific country and/or profession. While debates about migration have tended to be dominated by the concept of the 'brain drain', i.e. skilled professionals being trained in their home country only to seek financial and other non-monetary benefits elsewhere (Carrington and Detragiache 1999), there has been a shift in recent years. This has been particularly influenced by globalisation debates and more particularly Mode 4 of the GATS agreement which deals with the removal of restrictions on the right of people to move and work in other countries. Mode 4 has had a limited impact at present due to political and economic concerns within developed and developing countries. Issues such as visas and work permits, recognition of qualifications and the development of a transparent process will need to be rectified before the potential benefits of Mode 4 will be realised (DRC Briefing 2005). The literature also examines the potentially positive aspects of migration for the source countries. The level of remittances has been a central argument in this discussion (Adams 2003). A report by the World Bank (2005) highlighted that in 2004, US$37bn was remitted to Latin America and the Caribbean (World Bank 2005). However, the issue is not solely about the amount of money remitted but how that money is spent and/or invested within the source country. Is it mainly spent on consumption? If so, is the money spent on local goods or imported goods? Is money channelled into productive investment that will create wealth and employment? Does the financial remittance offset the loss of skilled personnel from key sectors of the economy? While there is a great deal of literature on the potential and actual benefits

of remittances, there is little research that attempts to measure remittances against the potential economic loss of skilled workers. The second area the literature examines is the extent to which migration can act as an incentive for individuals to develop their education and/or professional skills. In other words, it is argued that migration can enhance human capital within a country. As Skeldon (2005) explains 'People respond to the possibility of migration by raising their investment in human capital creation. However, not all who have increased their capital will either want to migrate or be accepted for migration, leaving the economy with a higher level of human capital than before' (Skeldon 2005:18). This is the position that informs the development of a managed migration programme: more people will be trained than migrate so the source country does not lose by the process of migration. In a sense, there would be a win-win situation especially if the receiving country contributed to the costs of training. While many of the wider issues related to migration are beyond the scope of this current article and research project, a brief examination of them highlights the complexity of the debates within the migration literature.

The recruitment of teachers from Jamaica provides an interesting case study within the wider debates about migration and its impacts (whether positive or negative). First, as a small-island state Jamaica has a long experience of general migration which, in the context of high unemployment and informal employment, can be seen to have acted as a 'safety valve'. Second, the level of remittances is a very important source of foreign exchange for the economy and third, within the specific area of education there are concerns about the level of exam pass rates and the ability of the education system to equip young Jamaicans with the skills needed to actively and productively participate in the society (David et al 2004). The questions which informed this study focused very specifically on the experience of teachers who migrated from Jamaica. The research was limited in time and scope and therefore is only able to provide a brief snapshot of the short-term impact of the migration of teachers from Jamaica between 2000 and 2004. A longer term and in-depth study would reveal more, particularly in terms of the impact of return migration. However, it was possible to gather data on the numbers of teachers who had migrated during a specific time period and to explore the impact of teacher migration within the small group of schools visited. In order to understand the impact at the school level it is

important to explore the context within which teacher migration occurred from 2000 onward.

Teacher Recruitment in Jamaica

Jamaican teachers have always worked in other Caribbean islands and in recent years have been recruited to work in Botswana and Ghana. However, the 'mass' organised recruitment of teachers to work in developed countries is a relatively recent phenomenon (Ochs 2003:21). In 2001, representatives from the United States[2] and England through state boards, private recruitment agencies and Local Education Authorities (LEAs) arrived in Jamaica to recruit teachers. According to English recruitment agencies, their involvement in Jamaica was precipitated by two events. First, there was the announcement made in August 2000, by the then Jamaican Minister of Education, Burchall Whiteman[3] that approximately 300 teachers were to be made redundant (*Daily Gleaner*, August 24, 2000)[4]. Second, a number of LEAs in England which provided for children of Caribbean heritage approached private recruitment agencies because they were interested in recruiting Caribbean teachers. The response to the advertisements by the US recruiters in the Jamaican media was overwhelming. In May 2001, it was reported that the New York City Board was in the Caribbean with the aim of recruiting 640 teachers for two years starting August 2001. The Director of Recruitment explained that there were shortages in New York due to the large number of teachers who were retiring. Particular shortages were in the subject areas of: elementary education, special education, reading, mathematics, Spanish, sciences and English as a second language. She also noted that Jamaican teachers were particularly sought as a high percentage of the students in the New York schools were from a Jamaican background (*Daily Gleaner*, May 25, 2001).

The initial response of the Ministry to this recruitment was to express confidence that "we will be able to cope with the situation" (*Daily Gleaner*, June 4, 2001). By July, the Ministry was advertising for teachers and other strategies were being considered such as part-time teaching and teaching across shifts. It was also proposed that more Cuban teachers could be recruited to fill some of the vacancies resulting from the migration[5]. According to newspaper reports, 350 teachers had actually been recruited from Jamaica to the USA, 40-50 of them were maths and science teachers and the

others were elementary (primary) school teachers. Newspaper reports also stated that 150 teachers had been recruited for English schools during 2001. The impact of the teacher migration received widespread coverage in the Jamaican media. A report in the Sunday Gleaner found that "an unusually high number of schools are advertising to fill specialist positions". (*Sunday Gleaner,* September 23 2001). Coverage of the issue of teacher recruitment in the newspapers had declined considerably by 2003 and 2004 and officials from the Ministry of Education confirmed that teacher recruitment did not appear to have had a significant impact on the education system after 2002[6].

The Response of the Jamaican Government

Dialogues were initiated on a number of different levels. In October 2001, Minister of Foreign Trade Anthony Hylton was reported to be seeking negotiations with the UK and US governments about the teacher brain drain. Jamaica proposed a discussion about the 'brain drain' of teachers and nurses at the Coolum Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in March 2002. The Jamaican Government raised the issue of 'brain drain' at the UK-Caribbean Forum held in Georgetown, April 5, where it was announced that the UK and European Union would fund a pilot study into the impact of the loss of skills on Caribbean economies. In April 2002, the CARICOM Council on Human and Social Development (COHSOD) agreed to work on the "development of a strategy for 'managed migration' with the training of professionals for export on a rotation basis." (*Stabroek News*, April 20, 2002). On April 25, 2002, it was reported that the Commonwealth Secretariat had offered to assist Jamaican and other Caribbean governments to develop a protocol on skilled migration, especially teacher recruitment, for use within Commonwealth countries. At a Commonwealth Caribbean Ministers of Education meeting in Barbados in July 2002, Jamaica, along with other Caribbean governments, signed the Savannah Accord. This called on Commonwealth Ministers of Education to conduct national research on teacher recruitment and its impact, share information on best practice, to conduct a pan-Commonwealth study of the impact of teacher recruitment and to mandate the Commonwealth Secretariat to draft a protocol on the recruitment of teachers in Commonwealth countries. At the October 2003 Commonwealth Education Ministers Meeting in Edinburgh, it was decided to set up a working group that would draft a protocol. Jamaica was a member of this working group and following two

meetings (in Lesotho in February 2003 and in Stoke Rochford in September 2004), a Commonwealth protocol was agreed in September 2004[7]. Dialogues at bilateral and multilateral levels have continued and the current view within Jamaica is that the government needs to examine how to further develop its capacity to successfully manage and benefit from the migration of its skilled professionals[8]. In line with this, the Commonwealth Secretariat is in the process of examining the feasibility of a 'managed migration' process. This issue will be discussed at the end of the article.

Data Collection Methods

The methodological framework was designed to explore the quantitative and qualitative impacts of teacher migration and teacher shortage. Through the variety of methods employed it was possible to explore the general impact of teacher migration and shortage on education systems as well as to investigate school and individual experiences. Qualitative material was gathered through individual school case studies. Within each school, face-to-face interviews were conducted with principals or vice-principals. These semi-structured interviews revealed information about the general pressures affecting the schools as well as the specific issues regarding staffing levels and migration. Location (urban or rural), type of school (primary, high or special needs) and management of the school (government or private) were all factors that we were able to examine as a result of these in-depth discussions. The school studies provide clear examples of how individual principals and teachers have responded to migration and present a more complex picture of the impact than would have been gained through a larger-scale survey. Interviews with policy-makers, teacher associations, teacher trade unions, recruitment agencies and others involved in the process ensured that we were able to include the variety of experiences, views and positions of the key actors.

The quantitative approach allowed us to develop the broader picture of migration and shortage. This was important in countries where no national data on shortages or on migration was available. Quantitative methods focused on the distribution of questionnaires to all teachers in each case study school (non-migrants, migrants, returned teachers). They were also circulated in conjunction with appropriate teacher unions and through web-sites. As well as helping to understand the process of teacher

migration, the questionnaires asked about the remittances and other linkages that remain between the migrant teachers and their home countries. They asked also about teachers' career plans and specifically about the likelihood of return migration. Whilst the majority of the questionnaire comprised closed questions, there was an opportunity for teachers to comment on their experience of migration or their views on it. These open questions elicited a variety of different opinions that have proved to be a very rich source of informative qualitative data. Questionnaires were also distributed to trainee teachers which allowed us to explore levels of interest in migration by age, sex and academic teaching subject profile.

Nineteen schools were visited in total over the course of the two field visits. The choice of schools was made following advice from staff at the Department of Educational Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Education, University of the West Indies. The project team was keen to visit schools in urban, rural and remote rural locations and to ensure that primary and high schools were visited. As there was no existing data on which schools had been affected by migration, the selection of schools was not based on any pre-existing knowledge. While it is not a representative sample, these case studies have allowed us to examine the impact of teacher migration at the school level and have provided us with a variety of experiences which are discussed in later sections of the article. The table below gives a breakdown of the schools visited:

Table 1. Types of Schools Visited

Type of School	**Number visited**
Urban Primary School	3
Rural Primary School	2
Remote Rural Primary School	1
Urban High School	7
Rural High School	2
Urban All Age School	1
Urban Primary & Junior High School	1
Private Urban Preparatory School	1
Private Urban High School	1
Total	**19**

At each school we had a 45 – 60 minute interview with the principal or vice-principal to discuss the issues of teacher migration and shortage. We left questionnaires for distribution to all Jamaican teachers, returned teachers (those that had worked abroad

and returned) and foreign teachers. We had a 38% response rate from the school visits which included 326 Jamaican teachers, five foreign teachers and two returned teachers.

Profile of Migrant Teachers

We asked each principal/vice-principal how many teachers had migrated from the school since 2000. Fourteen of the nineteen schools had experienced teacher migration: ten were high schools (nine government and one private), three were primary schools (two government and one private) and one was an all-age school. In total, 82 teachers had migrated since 2000. We gathered specific information about 62 of these teachers (in one of the schools the principal had recently been appointed and did not have precise information to share with us). Seventy one percent of the teachers who migrated were female. This corresponds to the gender breakdown of teachers in Jamaica according to the statistics made available by the Ministry of Education: 67% of teachers in Jamaica are female. The peak years of recruitment/migration were 2001 and 2002. The subject specialisations of the teachers who migrated reflected most areas of the curricula, although English and mathematics teachers migrated more than other subject specialists. Forty-five percent of the teachers went to the United States, 42% to England, eight percent to Canada and five percent to the Cayman Islands. The majority of the teachers who migrated were classroom teachers (68%) although 19% were senior teachers and 13% were either heads of department or vice-principals. All the teachers who migrated were described by the principal/vice-principal as 'seasoned' or experienced teachers.

Quantitative Impact

'There is no difficulty filling the vacancies left by migrating teachers. There are enough suitably qualified candidates and people who apply on the off-chance that a job is available.' (Principal of an inner city high school).

'It is not always easy to replace a teacher and to some extent it depends on the grade. At grades 5 -6, which are the exam grades, it is very important to appoint someone

you can have confidence in. I am not always happy with the people who are appointed." (Principal of a private primary school).

The quantitative impact of migration refers to whether teacher migration led to a *direct* shortage of teachers in schools. The question we sought to address initially was whether the teachers who migrated could be replaced. There was limited evidence that teachers could not be replaced in the schools we visited. The main impact of the migration was at the high school level and it was concentrated in certain subject areas. Difficulties replacing teachers were reported in the area of mathematics, English, science and information technology. In several cases, principals had appointed staff who were not suitably qualified, particularly in the subjects of mathematics and science. One school was unable to find a qualified maths teacher so they were forced to appoint an economics/accounts graduate. Another issue which arose in discussions with the principals concerned the timing of the teachers' resignations. One reported that a senior teacher had left the school a week before term started and another recalled a physical education teacher had resigned their post a week after school begun. The lack of notice had left principals scrabbling around to find suitable replacements[9]. The two schools with the highest level of attrition due to staff migration were a traditional high school[10] and a private high school. The traditional high school had been facing a series of problems over a number of years and the new principal felt this was a major reason why so many teachers had migrated abroad. The private high school principal believed that the recruitment agencies were aware of which were the 'best' schools in Jamaica and deliberately targeted those teachers. In fact, he recalled that the previous principal of the school had been approached by an agency to ask if they could come in to the school to recruit. He had refused.

The general view of principals from schools that had experienced migration was that it had not been particularly difficult to find replacement teachers. Difficulties were noted in the shortage subject areas of mathematics and science. Urban schools reported more problems replacing staff but they had also experienced more teacher migration. Interestingly, one of the rural principals said she believed there was less problem recruiting teachers to work in the rural areas because working and living conditions were much better when compared to the urban areas (she particularly mentioned Kingston which experiences high levels of crime and violence). However,

while most principals could recruit replacement teachers for those who had migrated, the issue of their suitability was raised. In the next section we examine the extent to which teacher migration has impacted upon the quality of the education delivered to Jamaican children.

The Impact on Quality

"We can find replacement teachers but the calibre is different. Some of the maths teachers that left were very experienced and were replaced by newly qualified teachers. So while the school can get a body, the quality is not the same" (Principal of an urban high school).

"We have enough candidates in some areas but there are problems in the maths and sciences. The candidates are not good enough and so we have to take someone less good. We also shuffle the staff around, so for example, the vice-principal is a maths teacher so she will take maths classes sometimes" (Principal of a rural high school).

It was clear that while that for the most part there were candidates who could replace the migrant teachers, a significant proportion of the replacement teachers did not have much teaching experience. As one principal commented regarding the appointment of a maths teacher the candidates for the job were not very good but the school had to appoint someone in order to fill the vacancy. Another principal of an inner city high school said: "*we can replace the teachers who are leaving but we can only replace the knowledge not the experience"*. The principal of a reclassified high school was annoyed that he had lost an excellent accounts teacher to migration and he had great difficulty replacing him (this teacher was defined as excellent because the children had attained very good pass rates in their exams). With the loss of skilled, experienced teachers through migration the pool of candidates to choose from is, in the short term, going to be smaller and of lesser quality.

The migration of experienced teachers had undoubtedly had an impact on the quality of education that some schools have been able to provide to Jamaican children. This is in the context of migrants being replaced by newly qualified teachers. Fifty percent of the teachers who replaced migrants were newly qualified. One principal remarked that

supporting a number of newly qualified teachers at the same time had put a strain on the senior teaching staff. One of the possible reasons given for this preference for newly qualified teachers seems to be related to the divisions which exist within the education system. One principal of a traditional high school stated she felt teachers from inner city and reclassified schools would not 'fit' in the traditional schools as they had a different teaching culture and tradition. Another principal of a traditional high school commented: "*[T]here is not much internal migration from one system to another*."

In order to assess the qualitative impact of teacher migration, we asked the principals to comment on the teachers they recruited to fill the gaps caused by staff migrating overseas. Information was given regarding the replacements for the sixty-two staff that had migrated and is given in the table below:

Table 2

Views of Principal as to effectiveness of replacement teacher compared to migrant teacher	**Number of teacher in each category**
Less effective	30
As effective	20
More effective	7
Not Applicable	5

Principals reported that nearly half (48%) of the teachers who replaced the migrant teachers were less effective. This can partly be explained by the fact that migrant teachers were replaced by newly qualified teachers who had little teaching experience. As one principal of a rural high school reported: *"[I]n all cases, the teachers have been replaced by young people. Not only do they not have teaching experience but they also don't have experience working with teenagers. All of those who left the school had ten years plus experience.*" On the positive side, 32% of the replacements were as effective suggesting no negative impact in teaching quality as a result of migration. Seven teachers (11%) were judged to be better than those they had replaced. It is also important to mention here that many good teachers have remained in Jamaica. The debate surrounding migration has implied that only the 'best' teachers have been recruited. As one teacher still working in Jamaica stated: '*It is being said*

that the crème of the teachers, crème de la crème as it were, have migrated. Thus the remaining teachers are regarded as substandard. This has cast a shadow on the teachers who are patriotic/ dedicated [but who] feel undermined and unappreciated. This attitude has affected the morale of the teaching profession'.

While only four schools (21%) said migration had had a direct impact on educational quality, when we probed deeper it was clear that there were more widespread repercussions. For example, we asked principals how they dealt with staff shortages in their schools. The responses are contained within the table below.

Table 3.

Ways of Coping	Number of Schools
Teaching outside subject area	5
Increasing class sizes	4
Employing a foreign teacher	2
Dropping subjects from the curriculum	1
Other*	1

* In this school, a private high school, one of the teachers worked part-time. Rather than appoint an unsuitable candidate, the principal gave her more sessions.

What is particularly worrying, in terms of the impact of migration on the quality of education received by the children is the number of schools that have coped with shortages by asking teachers to teach outside their subject area. The lack of expertise in the subject particularly for children facing examinations is troubling. While we cannot argue there is a direct correlation between a lack of subject specialist knowledge and poor pass rates in the Caribbean Secondary Certificate (CSEC), particularly in mathematics, English and science, there is little doubt that the quality of education the children receive from a non-specialist teacher is going to be less than from an experienced, fully-qualified teacher. Similarly, schools that increased class sizes as a coping strategy will undoubtedly experience a decline in the quality of the education they provide for the children simply because individual children will receive less attention[11].

Migration can have other negative impacts on school life. Several principals mentioned the fact that children develop strong bonds to their teachers and are often upset when the teacher leaves. This is particularly the case for the children whose

lives are unstable whether because of economic issues, the experience of living in violent communities or because their own parents have migrated[12]. There can be a psychological impact on the children which can be very disruptive to their learning processes which is particularly important during examination periods. As one principal noted: *"[T]he continuity for the children of having the same teachers impacts very positively on discipline and learning. The children develop attachments to the teacher and develop confidence in their own abilities to do well. When teachers leave it causes all sorts of disruption to the children, their attitudes and results".*

The Costs and Benefits to the Jamaican Government of Teacher Migration

One of the key debates that has arisen around the issue of teacher migration concerns the loss of investment experienced by the source country when teachers migrate. Figures from the Ministry of Education in Jamaica highlight that while students pay one third of the cost of their fees, the Ministry pays 90% of the total costs of training a teacher. This investment in human capital is lost when the teachers migrate. However, Jamaican teachers that we contacted in England had worked an average of eight years as teachers. They had therefore worked a considerable period of time in Jamaica before migrating. Those who are currently training who plan to migrate immediately upon completing their course would represent a direct loss to the Jamaican education system, providing there was employment within the country available to them on graduation. Surveys we did among trainee teachers in two teachers colleges and at the University of the West Indies highlighted that one third of trainees were interested in teaching overseas at the end of their course. None of the teachers had contracted employment abroad at the time of the survey (October 2004). Whether these trainee teachers would contract employment abroad on completion of their course would most likely depend on their subject areas. However, representatives of private recruitment agencies in England interviewed for the research stated they are ideally looking for candidates with at least one or two years teaching experience[13].

In terms of whether there is a 'brain drain' of teachers, which implies that teachers migrate and do not return, there would appear to be some evidence of this from the work undertaken with Jamaican teachers in England, although our results are from a small sample of Jamaican teachers. Of those who responded to our survey, 40% of

Jamaican teachers said they did not plan to return home during the course of their working lives.

Whilst there are costs to teacher migration, in terms of the loss of teachers, experience and investment, there are also potential benefits to the governments of source countries. The first is the level of remittances and savings that teachers can contribute to the home economy. We have already seen that the total level of remittances to Jamaica is of crucial importance to the economy. Our research with Jamaican teachers in England has highlighted that teachers, on average, remit and save a significant proportion of their monthly salary. The average remitted per month is 9.47% and the average saved is 13%. Individual teachers also benefit financially from the migration. Average salaries of teachers in Jamaica before they left for England were £398.40 per month. The average starting salary in England was £1384.75. Clearly, there are cost of living differentials to take into account, particularly for the teachers who are working in London, but the individual financial benefits of migration are significant. One of the vice-principals interviewed during the course of the research said she could understand why a young teacher would migrate: "*[T]he salary of a young graduate teacher is 28,000JM$ per month (approximately £280). If you have a house and family, it is impossible to support yourself on the salary. The financial gain is huge and many teachers want to save money and come back and buy a house".*

The other key area where source countries could potentially benefit from migration is through the return of teachers who have been working abroad and re-enter the school system. As the Minister of Education, Maxine Henry-Wilson, stated in an interview: "*…the most important thing for us is to see if we can find a way to return to the system persons who have had that experience [working abroad]*'" (interview: September 2004). During the course of the research in Jamaica, we found it very difficult to locate returned teachers. The consensus from school principals, officials and representatives from teacher associations was that it was too soon in the migration cycle for Jamaican teachers to have returned (given that the peak of migration to the USA and England was in 2001 and 2002). Research conducted with Jamaican teachers in England found that the average time they wanted to work in England was seven years. This suggests that few teachers have returned as yet. Of those who plan to return, none of the teachers currently working in England wants to return to

Jamaica to work as a teacher. However, 78% of those planning to return do intend to work in an education-related profession. Further research in this area would be of great use to the Jamaican government as it would identify why teachers do not want to return to teach and what kind of incentives might be developed to draw them back into the classroom so that Jamaican children could benefit directly from their experience. This is particularly important given that 93% of Jamaican teachers in England had undertaken some form of professional development and only seven percent said it was not at all relevant for their practice back in Jamaica.

An interesting additional benefit of migration mentioned by several teachers and principals was that it had led to increased job opportunities within the education system for newly qualified teachers. As one teacher explained: '*without this [migration] new teachers would not get a job. Members from my graduate batch (2003) are still without jobs'.* As a trainee teacher wrote: *"[T]he positive impact is that when teachers leave, other persons who would otherwise be unemployed are employed.*" At the same time, vacancies as a result of migration also offer promotion possibilities to teachers within the system. While we need to be cautious about generalising, particularly bearing in mind that there are few newly qualified teachers in shortage subjects, it is evident that migration has ensured that newly qualified teachers have more employment options available to them.

Is Managed Migration the answer?

Debates have moved considerably since the early 2000s when the Jamaican government was expressing deep concern about the recruitment of their teachers by developed countries. From their initial position, which concerned discussions with recruiters about limiting the numbers recruited and ensuring a more transparent process, the Jamaican government is currently exploring the possibilities of a 'managed' migration programme. Raised at the level of CARICOM and Commonwealth Secretariat level, discussions have focused on the creation of a system which would ensure sufficient numbers of nurses and teachers were trained for the local and overseas markets. As Jamaican banker Aubyn Hill stated in a speech in July 2003: 'If those countries' needs are for nurses, teachers, accountants and computer programmers, we should get to work producing those skilled persons for the

overseas labour markets' (*Jamaica Observer*, July 8, 2003). Plans are in the pre-feasibility stage at present. The Commonwealth Secretariat has contracted independent consultants to undertake a study and a meeting was held in Barbados in March 2005 to discuss the possibilities of developing such a scheme.

Whether a managed migration scheme for skilled persons is workable is something that remains to be seen. There will be a number of practical issues that will need to be developed, for example, who will decide which of the nurses and teachers that are trained will work overseas? What is to stop people who have been trained and not chosen for migration through the programme, migrating on their own individual initiative? How will it be possible to ensure that those who migrate for a fixed period returned to Jamaica upon completion of their contract? Who will fund the training of the extra nurses and teachers? These are the kind of issues that will need to be discussed if such a programme is formulated and is to move to the next stage of development. There are influential voices in Jamaica in favour of this programme but there are underlying concerns related to the idea of labour being 'exported'. When the issue was first openly discussed in Jamaica, the response of a spokesperson for the Jamaica Nurses Association was: 'I don't think anyone should begin a slave trade for nurses' (*Inter Press Service*, November 14, 2003). There is a sense within the Ministry of Education that such a proposal would need to be handled very sensitively. However, there are precedents for this scheme. There is currently a farmworkers programme which gives low skilled persons the opportunity to work in the United States for a fixed period of time. The difference with nurses and teachers is that they do not need a specific programme in order to access opportunities to migrate: their skills are in demand in many countries

There are several potential benefits to the Jamaican educational system of a managed migration scheme for teachers. First, if a managed scheme was in place the Jamaican Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture (MOEYC) would know how many teachers were going to migrate thereby ensuring they were in a position to replace teachers in the required subject areas. In other words, managed migration would assist the development of a more efficient labour supply system. Second, a managed migration scheme would mean schools were given plenty of notice to recruit new teachers rather than receiving information at the last minute. Third, as mentioned at the beginning of

the article, a system of managed migration may increase the number of people coming forward to train as teachers because of the possibility of working abroad for a fixed period of time. Fourth, a managed system would ensure teachers returned to Jamaica to ‘add value’ to the Jamaican education system, especially if the period of working abroad was combined with the opportunity for further study and/or professional development. Fifth, Jamaican teachers who have worked abroad could input into the educational policy process as a result of being exposed to different methods, curricula and approaches to teaching. Finally, but most importantly, the children would benefit from the wider experience that returned teachers will have been exposed to both in educational and cultural terms. The current discussion is ongoing as to the feasibility of a managed migration programme. If the practicalities can be ironed out and the political issues sensitively addressed, then it could well provide an opportunity for all countries involved in the recruitment of highly skilled persons to benefit.

Conclusion

Migration raises a number of complex issues. In this research we have examined the impact of the migration of one professional group, teachers, from one small-island state, Jamaica, during a specific time period. Our findings suggest there is a small direct correlation between the migration of teachers and shortages of teachers within the educational system, except in subject areas where shortages had already been identified (i.e. mathematics and science). However, the fact that replacements could be found for migrant teachers does not signify there were no negative repercussions for the Jamaican education system of teacher migration. The key problem raised by school principals was the loss of experience: migrant teachers were ‘seasoned’ and were generally replaced with newly qualified teachers. Other issues related to teachers teaching outside their subject expertise, the need to have larger class sizes and the difficulty experienced by some children who had developed strong emotional bonds with their teachers. These problems should be placed in the context of economic and social challenges currently affecting the society.

The research did find a number of positive benefits of teacher migration. At the individual level there was little doubt that teachers benefit financially and

professionally as a result of migration. At the level of the wider society, there are financial benefits accruing through the levels of remittances and savings that Jamaican teachers send back to friends and family. There are also potential benefits if the returned teachers do come back to Jamaica and 'add value' to the education system. We are not in a position to determine whether this has occurred or not and would suggest a longitudinal study be established to monitor the return of teachers and their potential contributions.

At the present time the issue of managed migration of teachers and nurses is being discussed and many practical and political issues remain to be resolved. However, the mere fact that the proposals are on the table highlight that source countries are recognising the potential of a process that if properly managed could ensure they actively benefit from the migration of their highly skilled professionals, particularly in the context of globalisation and discussions around the increasing right of people to seek employment outside of their own country.

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[2] This study did not cover the recruitment experiences of Jamaican teachers to the USA. Our information about the US recruitment practices is gained from Jamaican-based sources (interviews and newspapers).
[3] The Minister stated that according to calculations some high schools were overstaffed by 578 teachers, while others were understaffed by 132. Primary schools were overstaffed by 565, while others were understaffed by 687. These calculations were based on a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:25 in high schools and 1:35 in primary schools (*Daily Gleaner*, August 24, 2000).
[4] Dr. Adolph Cameron of the Jamaica Teachers Association recalled that the teacher migration in 2001 was a direct result of the Government's decision to 'rationalise' the teachers leading to "a lot of instability in the system… even the people who were principals and were secure in their jobs felt a sense of insecurity" (Interview, Adolph Cameron, September 2004).
[5] This proposal was condemned by Dr Adolph Cameron of the Jamaica Teachers Association (JTA), who argued that it was not simply a question of putting a person in front of the class because "that body may not have all the competencies to deliver the instructions that we want to be delivered for the children to benefit" (*Jamaica Observer*, August 21, 2001).
[6] This is interesting given that the work permits given to teachers from Jamaica to work in England only slightly declined between 2002 and 2003. This may well reflect the decline in supply teacher recruitment or the fact that recruitment to the USA declined sharply in 2002- 3. We can only speculate on this as we did not undertake research on US recruitment from the Caribbean.

[7] In an interview with the project team, Minister Henry-Wilson expressed the view that the protocol could be extended beyond the Commonwealth, and most specifically with the United States. To see the Commonwealth Protocol, go to the website of the Commonwealth Secretariat at: http://www.commonwealth.org

[8] One of the Teacher Training Colleges in Jamaica is exploring the feasibility of offering a programme which would train teachers to be equipped for employment in the US market (Interview, September 2004).

[9] In August 2001, it was reported in the Daily Jamaica Gleaner that teachers were giving very little notice to their school principal before resigning in order to migrate. According to the then president of the Jamaica Teachers Association, Judith Spencer-Jarrett, the teachers were receiving their acceptance letters as late as August for a September start in the United States (*Daily Gleaner*, August 21, 2001).

[10] High schools in Jamaica can be divided into two different categories although these are not reflected in the official figures or discussions. There are the 'traditional' high schools which have historically catered for the middle class and elite members of the society, have been well resourced and are seen as the best government schools. The other category is the upgraded high schools. Despite efforts by government to upgrade and equalise resources, there are still divisions between these types of schools. The recently produced Task Force on Education highlighted that in upgraded high schools only 4.7% of students achieved pass rates in mathematics and 9.2% in English compared to 38% and 55% respectively in the traditional high schools (Davis et al 2004: 55).

[11] More research is needed into these specific issues over a longer time period in order to establish a direct connection.

[12] This is an important strand of Jamaican life. Children whose parents have migrated are known as 'barrel children' because their parents send them barrels of goods from abroad (Crawford-Brown, 2002). It was an issue mentioned by one primary principal in an inner city school. We do not know to what extent teachers have children or have migrated with their children.

[12] The view of the agencies is that these teachers are better able to adapt to the demands of teaching in England having worked for a few years in the home environment.

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