

Teachers as Agents of Change: A Qualitative Study of Master of Education Graduates from Pakistan

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Abstract : The 'Strengthening Teacher Education in Pakistan' (STEP) is an innovative programme jointly funded by the Government of Canada and the Aga Khan Foundation Canada and implemented by the Aga Khan University - Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) in partnership with the local governments, education departments and communities in the provinces of Balochistan, Sindh and Gilgit-Baltistan in Pakistan. One of the key components of the programme is professional development of teachers, head teachers and teacher educators through a variety of teacher education programmes including a two-year Masters of Education (MEd) Programme offered by AKU-IED. A number of teachers, head teachers and teacher educators from these provinces have been developed through the MEd Programme. This paper discusses a qualitative research study conducted to explore the nature, relevance, rigor and richness of the experiences of the MEd graduates, and how these experiences have fostered their own professional development and their ability to bring about positive changes in their schools. The findings of the study provide useful insights into the graduates' self-actualization, transformation of their professional beliefs and practices, the difference they have made in their schools, and the challenges they face. The study also provides evidences of how the implementation of this multi-stakeholders and multi-partners STEP programme has led to the development of 'communities of practice' in schools. The study then makes a number of recommendations for policy and practice related to teacher education programmes as well as for partnerships in education.

Keywords : STEP, change agents, Pakistan, Canada, teacher education, MEd

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