9. Zimbabwean education professionals in South Africa: Motives for migration

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Abstract

Interest in South–North teacher migration has yielded a substantial corpus of literature on the motives for teacher migration and teachers' experiences in host countries. This article focuses on South Africa (SA) as a receiving country for migrant teachers, in particular Zimbabweans, a perspective not previously explored in studies. It examines the push factors responsible for the migration of Zimbabwean education professionals to SA. The article draws from an ethnographic study undertaken in 2011 to understand the nature of Zimbabwean education professionals' migration to SA and their experiences in the host country. The data is sourced from 13 semi-structured interviews with Zimbabwean education professionals located in the province of Kwa Zulu-Natal in SA. The findings illuminate two cohorts of migrant education professionals in the sample: teachers and lecturers. They were exiting Zimbabwe for multiple, interrelated reasons. The reasons articulated by participants for their migration included the economic situation in Zimbabwe, coupled with the current political climate. Collectively, this negatively influenced the education opportunities available to Zimbabwean education professionals. This paper highlights human vulnerability as Zimbabwean education professionals attempt to survive by pursuing work opportunities in SA. The article concludes with some suggestions for critical education stakeholders in SA. Furthermore, the author argues for the need to provide support to Zimbabwean education professionals, who could assist in addressing immediate labour shortages that exist in SA education.

Key words
Zimbabwean Education Professionals, Migration, South Africa

9.1 Introduction

Concern about the migration of teachers from small states and countries in the South, which could ill-afford to lose their human resources, to countries in the North led to various Commonwealth initiatives such as a teacher recruitment protocol and symposia to manage teacher migration. Within this framework, South Africa (SA) has been perceived as a sending country and the United Kingdom (UK) as a receiving country. This article focuses on SA as a receiving country for migrant education professionals, a dimension previously absent from teacher migration literature. In particular, there has not been a rigorous in-depth study undertaken to unpack the migration of Zimbabwean education professionals to SA.

This article utilises data from a larger ethnographic study that was undertaken in 2011 on Zimbabwean education professionals in Kwa Zulu-Natal (KZN) (a coastal province in SA) who migrated to SA post-2000. The unit of analysis is Zimbabwean education professionals. Whilst the study seeks to understand the motives and nature of Zimbabwean education professionals' migration to SA and experiences in the host country, this article focuses solely on the reasons for the migration of Zimbabwean education professionals to SA. The study, in its entirety, thus contributes to the current body of knowledge on Zimbabwean migrants in SA. This article, consisting of three sections, has the following structure. The first section embarks on an examination of the

limited literature on South–South teacher migration in Africa and SA's attraction. The second section outlines the methodology used in the study, while the next section explores the push factors driving education professionals from Zimbabwe to SA. The article concludes with some suggestions for the South African national Department of Education and policy-makers in addressing Zimbabwean education professionals' migration to SA.

9.2 Literature review

The migration of teachers from Commonwealth countries in the South to countries in the North captured sufficient attention to warrant the development of a Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2004) and the 2010 emergence of the Commonwealth Advisory Council on Teacher Mobility, Recruitment and Migration. This trend was typified by teachers leaving developing countries such as the Caribbean, the Philippines and SA to pursue better opportunities in developed countries such as the UK and US. Laws (1997) has argued that people mostly migrate in search of economic opportunities (e.g. work). Increased economic globalisation has created attractive work opportunities abroad, which influence people to cross international boundaries. In the present global economy, some countries function as labour exporting nodes for long- or short-term migrants and others act as labour-importing countries. Morgan, Sives and Appleton (2006) identified SA as a sending country, with teachers migrating to the United Kingdom (UK). By contrast, Manik (2005) has suggested a circular and serial migration for the same SA–UK trend. Halfacree (2004: 239) has also called for 'a greater appreciation of non-economic issues' that impact on migrant behaviour. He is of the opinion that the complexities of migration should be under scrutiny in research. Lawson (1999) similarly argues that migration literature focuses on economics and thus has a tendency to eclipse other factors of influence in the decision-making process. Teacher migration studies in the context of SA have indicated multiple motives for exiting SA to teach abroad. These included finance, opportunities to travel and professional development (Manik, 2005; Morgan *et al.*, 2006). In addition, teachers had a desire for upward mobility and to escape poor leadership and management in selected public schools (Manik, 2005, 2010).[1]

9.2.1 South–South teacher migration

However, the South–South migration of teachers did not garner much international interest until recently, with the Sixth Commonwealth Research Symposium on Teacher Mobility, Recruitment and Migration focusing on Africa and the experiences of refugee teachers. Morgan *et al.* (2006) acknowledge Botswana as a receiving country of migrant teachers, with the Teacher Service Management (TSM) in the Ministry of Education being responsible for the recruitment and placement of all teachers, including migrant teachers.[2] Morgan *et al.* (2006) cite TSM statistics as at June 2004, which reveal that Botswana had 1,046 migrant teachers coming from 36 countries in total. The greatest numbers of migrant teachers in Botswana were from developing countries[3] such as Zambia (274), followed by India (138) and Zimbabwe (132). These teachers were located in secondary schools in pre-vocational subjects that had been newly introduced into the curriculum such as business studies, commerce, art and computer science. Their study indicated that a number of teachers were located in private schools and that there are numerous applications from Zimbabwean teachers. They also noted 'the problems of attracting teachers to remote, rural areas' despite TSM's policy on the recruitment and placement of teachers (Morgan *et al.*, 2006: 78). Their study of 382 migrant teachers revealed a higher percentage of male migrant teachers than female migrant teachers were coming from Zambia, Zimbabwe, India and Uganda, with the majority of teachers (85 per cent) being married. In government schools, the average age of teachers was 42 years, while in the private sector they were younger (35 years).

While there were some similarities in respect of the nature of teacher migration in sub-Saharan countries, there appear to be some differences when compared to studies undertaken of South–North teacher migration. Teachers indicated that the most important reason for migration (South–South) was a higher salary (Morgan *et al.*,

2006). Other reasons included better working conditions and professional development. These reasons were common to the findings of other South–North studies (Manik, 2005). An interesting finding, not foregrounded as an imperative to leave but as an experience abroad in South–North teacher migration (Manik, 2005), was that of a safer environment. Safety was provided as a reason by migrant teachers from Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Kenya in Morgan *et al.*'s study (2006: 90). They cite a Zimbabwean teacher who reveals: 'The environment is peaceful, one is free to express oneself without any harassment from the powers that be'. Kenyan teachers similarly noted the importance of peace and push factors such as 'corruption, civil war and internal problems in developing countries'.

9.2.2 Zimbabwean migration to South Africa: migrant characteristics and experiences

Cohen (1997: 1–4), working on the green paper for international migration in the context of SA, acknowledges that migration has taken new forms since 1970. He draws attention to six forms of international migration among which is 'refugee migration'. He suggests that this category refers to people who were forced to flee and hence it falls within the scope of involuntary or forced migration. These migrants are driven by the threat of persecution or political opinion. Cohen (1997) further distinguishes between an asylum-seeker and a displaced person. The asylum-seeker requests to be seen as a refugee but has not been confirmed, while the displaced person has had to flee as a result of war (including civil) or natural disaster. The other categories can be viewed as voluntary migrations. However, Eklund (2000: 7) maintains the view that 'it is not easy to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary migration'. How education professionals express their reasons for leaving Zimbabwe sheds light on whether they see their migration as voluntary or otherwise.

An interesting perspective and analytical lens on refugee migration in the developing world has come from work undertaken by Betts. He concedes that he is not 'an expert on teacher migration' (2010: 26), nor has he conducted any research on teacher migration but rather on international migration and its impact on the developing world, which has some interesting insights on 'survival migration'. Betts explains the concept of survival migration as focusing on:

> the situation of people who are outside their country of origin because of an existential threat to which they have no access to a domestic remedy – but who fall outside of the dominant interpretation of a 'refugee' under international law (2010: 26).

This definition encompasses people who have traversed national borders escaping the following: disaster of an environmental nature; a collapse in terms of their livelihood; or the frailty of a nation state. He notes the flight of Zimbabweans to SA as survival migration. He denounces state and international institutions' reliance on the 'economic migrant/refugee dichotomy' (2010: 27). Sisulu, Moyo and Tshuma (2007: 552) reveal that after March 2005, Zimbabwean politics exacerbated the socio-economic situation in the country. They argue that both observers and the opposition party noted a lack of 'freedom and fairness' in the parliamentary elections held at this time and this intensified the political crisis in Zimbabwe. Operation Murambatsvina in May 2005 was a campaign to 'clean up' the cities of Zimbabwe by enforcing bylaws, removing illegal traders and illegal settlements (Solidarity Peace Trust, 2010), but it extended to peri-urban and rural areas (Sisulu *et al.*, 2007). The UN report on this campaign confirmed that Zimbabwe was facing a humanitarian crisis with an overwhelming number of people (700,000) not having access to shelter, food, water, sanitation, healthcare and disruptions in their education. Indeed, the socio-economic and political events led Sisulu *et al.* (2007) to debate whether Zimbabweans in SA are economic migrants or political refugees. This remains a current debate. For example, scholars at a conference held in June 2008, which was sponsored by the Nordic Africa Institute, the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency and the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa, on the Zimbabwean diaspora highlighted key concepts and experiences related to the Zimbabwean crisis. In the discussions, they deliberated on the categories of economic migrant and refugee (Hammar, McGregor and Landau, 2010).[4]

Betts (2010) also provides conceptual clarity for the terms 'survival migration', 'refugees' and 'international migration'. He explains that refugees are survival migrants, but not all survival migrants are refugees; survival migrants are international migrants, but not all international migrants are survival migrants. Betts (2010) reveals that in his project, there were some issues that surfaced relating to teacher mobility that require development. For example, there were qualified teachers in the survival migrant population, namely Zimbabweans and Somalis in SA, Botswana and Kenya. Sisulu *et al.* explain that Zimbabweans 'have the unenviable distinction of having the fastest shrinking economy, the highest rate of inflation and the lowest life expectancy in the world' (2007: 533). They explain that because of the difficult conditions, Zimbabweans have been leaving particularly for SA. They note that many qualified professionals such as nurses, teachers, pharmacists and doctors go to the UK and SA, but SA attracts both skilled and unskilled migrants. They are of the opinion that different groups of migrants leave for different reasons, stating that prior to 2005, doctors, nurses and pharmacists left for economic reasons while teachers, journalists and the youth left for political reasons.

Betts also noted that:

> there was an absence of formal opportunities for teachers in destination countries … with little thought about how they could be brought into the labour market and informal teaching taking place without support from the state and international organisations (2010: 29).

He cites, among other examples, Zimbabwean teachers in the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg teaching Zimbabwean migrants in unhygienic conditions. Sisulu *et al.* similarly note that 'life is not as good as expected in SA, citing xenophobia, discrimination, police harassment, unemployment and a lack of basic services' 2007: 533). They berate the SA government for not acknowledging the extent of the crisis in Zimbabwe and responding to it. While Betts (2010) claims that his work does not constitute in-depth research, he does provide some interesting recommendations to the Commonwealth Advisory Council on Teacher Mobility, Recruitment and Migration. These include: 'the recognition of survival migration in teacher mobility, moving beyond the dichotomy of forced/voluntary migration and the identification of labour market opportunities for refugee teachers' (Betts, 2010: 29).

There has been a plethora of studies undertaken in SA highlighting the plight of Zimbabweans eager to earn a living (Rutherford, 2010), as there are large numbers of Zimbabweans in Gauteng, Limpopo, KZN and Western Cape (Sisulu *et al.*, 2007). However, these studies have been limited to unskilled migrants such as farm workers or skilled migrants such as doctors and nurses. Thus there is a dearth of research unpacking SA as a receiving country for migrant teachers. There has been little research and mostly anecdotal information on Zimbabwean teachers in SA (Sisulu *et al.*, 2007). Sisulu *et al.* (2007: 556) assume that the same reasons that health professionals provide for exiting Zimbabwe, namely economic, political, professional and educational, apply to teachers. Sisulu *et al.* (2007: 556) cite the Reverend Nicholas Mukaronda (2005), who prepared a report for the Solidarity Peace Trust saying that teachers are targeted for political violence as they are seen to be 'torch bearers for the opposition MDC'.

Zimbabwean teachers in SA are in extremely exploitative circumstances in private schools and colleges, either as a result of not being paid or receiving low salaries with little recourse for legal action as they lack legal status. They are 'occupying menial jobs, unemployed and destitute' (Sisulu *et al.*, 2007: 556). The interim chairperson of the Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) in SA stated in 2006 that an average of 4,000 teachers had left Zimbabwe per annum since 2000 and that the majority were in SA. That implies that there could be a significant number of Zimbabwean teachers in SA, but thus far there are no means of ascertaining the exact number. By contrast, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA, 2008, cited in Manik, 2009) does acknowledge that there are in excess of 1,000 Zimbabwean qualified teachers in SA, counting as the largest cohort of foreign teachers.

9.3 Methodology of study

The study sought to unpack a demographic profile of education professionals, the reasons for leaving Zimbabwe and migrating to SA, their personal and professional experiences in the host country and the duration of their stay. This article addresses two key areas of the study. It first provides a demographic profile of the migrant education professionals that participated in the study. It thereafter focuses on one of the critical questions of the study, namely: why are education professionals leaving Zimbabwe?

All participants were interviewed while they were in SA post-migration. The absence of a database of foreign migrant teachers coupled with a lack of knowledge on where they live or work made it impossible to locate a representative sample. The expense and difficulty of locating education professionals within the entire KZN province meant that the study was limited to three areas: Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Jozini. The first two are cities in KZN and Sisulu *et al.* (2007) have noted that Zimbabwean professionals tend to be located in urban hubs. Two sampling strategies were used: first, a form of purposive sampling, snowball sampling, where interviewees were asked to identify further likely respondents, was used with initial participants being drawn from a multi-site university in KZN and from a church in Durban that provides support to refugees. Second, to prevent a skewed sample, a fieldworker was sent to visit schools in Jozini, which is in rural KZN, to elicit the contact details of willing participants as anecdotal evidence indicated that many foreign teachers were holding teaching positions in rural areas. All participants were given pseudonyms and interviewed either face-to-face or through telephonic semi-structured interviews (n=13) by the researcher. The average duration per interview was an hour. Data gathered from the interviews were triangulated with data from a semi-structured interview and iterative dialogue with the Co-ordinator of the Refugee Council in Durban, KZN.

9.4 Findings of study

The biographic profile of the migrant education professionals interviewed (n=13) is as follows. There were eight males and five females. Eleven of the participants were married, one was widowed and one was divorced. The mean age of participants was 35 years. For the majority of participants (n=8), migrating to SA was their first migration experience, their having not previously emigrated from Zimbabwe. In respect of the minority (n=5) who had previously migrated, their destination had been other African countries close to Zimbabwe.

The professional profile of the participants is as follows. One participant had a PhD, six had master's degrees, two had honours degrees, two had Diplomas in Education, one had a Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree and one had been studying towards a BEd degree. There were two cohorts of education professionals in the sample: teachers and lecturers. However, these were not mutually exclusive categories since some participants had migrated to SA to teach, but after a period of time they accepted academic positions as tutors or lecturers in higher education institutions. At the time of the interviews, five of the participants were teachers and eight were lecturers. Four of the five teachers were maths and physical science specialists, while six of the eight lecturers were education specialists.

9.4.1 Motives for education professionals leaving Zimbabwe

The education professionals (both cohorts) were exiting Zimbabwe for multiple, interrelated reasons. The most frequent push factors were the economic situation in Zimbabwe coupled with the current political climate. The impact of the stated factors influenced education. Hence, a lack of education opportunities was also revealed as a reason for exiting Zimbabwe.

9.4.2 The political push

With regards to the politics, there were participants who revealed that being a teacher and involved with the opposition party (MDC) was not tolerated, as education is controlled by

the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and such teachers were asked to resign. Oden explained that 'Being a teacher, a civil servant and an activist, I was asked to resign. Education is controlled by the government. The district administration asked me to resign because of my involvement in politics. I am an opposition activist … I tried to go into business, but the economy has declined and businesses were closing down'.

Dan also alluded to this as a reason for exiting, stating that there is a view in Zimbabwe that 'teachers are connected to the opposition party', and this has a negative impact for teachers in Zimbabwe. Theresa similarly explains that although politics was not the only reason for exiting, she had decided to leave after her experience following the elections and teacher strikes of 2006–2007. She explained: 'The teachers assist in the elections. When the opposition wins that district, then it becomes a problem. There are people sent by ZANU PF who come to the school and to your home at night. I went through that experience one time and I decided to leave before they came the second time. I didn't resign, I just told the principal I was leaving'.

The above articulations are not new, or limited to Zimbabwe, with the Education For All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (GMR) (UNESCO, 2011) reporting that attacks on schools, teachers and pupils are not unusual. The report documents such occurrences in Gaza, three southern states of Thailand, Afghanistan and Pakistan. The EFA GMR chronicles incidents causing 'physical injury, psychological trauma and … the breakdown of family and community life…' (UNESCO, 2011: 27).

9.4.3 The economic push

Participant Rodney stated that both politics and economics were equally responsible for his decision to migrate. He explained, 'I was actively involved in the politics and economically – I couldn't look after my family'. Rodney's articulations are in keeping with what Kriger has stated in that many Zimbabweans are 'looking to find work to help their families at home to survive' (2010: 77).

Thus while some migrants perceived themselves to be escaping political persecution, there were others that saw themselves as economic refugees/migrants, omitting a political motive to their migration. However, in the interviews they did explain that the politics has destroyed the economy in Zimbabwe, leading to their flight. For example, Lewis says: 'I'm not a refugee by definition. I wasn't really escaping the politics. It's the economy of Zimbabwe: I can't do a PhD there, I can't get employment. I put myself into the category of economic migrant. I will go anywhere where there is a permanent job. The economic meltdown in Zimbabwe is something so bad that it has separated families'.

Scott also tries to define himself by saying: 'You could classify me as an economic refugee ... to keep my lifestyle, to advance myself education wise, for better prospects'.

It is interesting that the migrants appear to be struggling with finding the appropriate nomenclature to explain their migration to SA. The way in which they articulated their migration appears to be linked to their means of entry, as some had applied for asylum, as it is free and a work permit is costly, while others had initially come on a visitor's visa and then applied for a work/student permit. Indeed, Betts' (2010) definition of survival migration in this context appears to have currency for its applicability.

In respect of the economic climate in Zimbabwe, participants revealed that inflation was high, salaries were too low for a family to survive on, some were working without being paid a salary, and even when there was adequate money in terms of the salary, the shops did not stock essential merchandise for daily needs. This is in keeping with previous findings that migration behaviour is determined by 'economic factors such as employment and income' (Dodson, 2002: 71). Participants articulated their migration to SA as further outlined below.

Morgan came to SA to study due to the economics and politics: 'The situation was getting bad ... high inflation. I didn't mind resigning (from a teaching job) because working was whiling away time'.

Dianah left Zimbabwe to join her husband, who had accepted a job offer to teach maths and science at a university in KZN. She wanted also to enter the SA job market, as she was a physical science teacher. Reedi similarly explained that: 'The situation wasn't good for me, I needed to join my husband who was working in SA and especially the salary we were getting was too little... just imagine a family person earning US$100 per month'. Irene also articulated as one of her reasons for exiting Zimbabwe that she was not being paid what she deserved for her qualifications. Her articulations reveal 'relative deprivation', which is a facet of the theory of cumulative causation (Massey *et al.*, 1998), as she was aware through her husband (who is also located in education) that salaries are higher in SA.

Poor salaries and the repercussions thereof are a key incentive for migration, as Cody noted: 'The salaries in Zimbabwe are too low, I wasn't paid for three months, I couldn't afford my transport to work and I was trying to survive'.

In fact, many of the participants interviewed are not simply making decisions based on the present, but also how they view the future of Zimbabwe economically. John said: 'Teachers are not paid well and the economy is not promising'. Problems in the Zimbabwean economy surface in tangible ways, as Scott articulates: 'The meltdown in the economics; I'd have the money, but I'd go to the shop and nothing would be there. Also better prospects to advance myself education wise'.

9.4.4 A desire for educational advancement

There were also limited opportunities for further study in Zimbabwe. Seeking higher education was perceived as possibly leading to improved job prospects. For example, Lewis stated that his desire was: 'to study and seek employment'. Similarly Irene said: 'It was the economics and I wanted to do a Cambridge course, which was only available in SA'.

In fact, Sisulu *et al.* (2007) have revealed that two-thirds of the faculty of a dominant tertiary institution – the University of Zimbabwe – has been lost to migration. It is therefore understandable that Tanya says that as a student she exited to do a PhD (study). She was working for a government university and they did not have a PhD programme.

What is evident is that the politics has had a ripple effect on education in Zimbabwe. At times this link is direct. Cody was a political activist for the opposition party in Zimbabwe, and states that the politics prevented him from pursuing his studies: 'If you're in the opposition, they will chase you down; it's not conducive to studying, I couldn't complete my degree there'.

When asked if their migration to SA was temporary or permanent, a majority of migrants shared the same view of it being a temporary strategy. Two were not sure, but this could be because they had been in SA for just a few months. Four stated that the move to SA was permanent (one migrant was studying towards a PhD and one had a long-term contract of three years, but was still not permanent). Five migrants stated that it was a temporary migration because they had immediate family who remained in Zimbabwe and they were waiting for political and economic stability. In fact 'waiting for when things get better' in Zimbabwe appeared to be a common response by migrants.

9.5 Discussion and conclusion

As Sisulu *et al.* (2007: 552) have contended, since a democratically elected government came into power in 1994, SA has achieved steady progress and 'consolidated its position as the economic powerhouse in the southern African region and Africa'. Hence the migration of skilled professionals to SA should not come as a surprise, but the sudden increase in Zimbabwean immigrants is emblematic of deeper socio-economic and political problems facing SA's neighbour. The nature of Zimbabwean education professionals' migration to SA needs to be understood for its value in extending the current knowledge on South–South teacher mobility and migration in the African context. This paper revealed the reasons for Zimbabwean education professionals being in SA. The study has indicated that there are few similarities when comparing SA–UK teacher migration (as an exemplar of South–North teacher migration) to Zimbabwe–SA migration (as an exemplar

of South–South teacher migration). As earlier suggested, migration from Zimbabwe to SA is not a new phenomenon. Sisulu *et al.* (2007) refer to a 'third wave' of migration from Zimbabwe to SA occurring after 2000.

While economic benefits were articulated as one of the reasons for emigration, Zimbabwean education professionals also left their home country because of political turmoil that has had a knock-on effect on the economy and education opportunities. The education professionals articulated a tangible link between the economy and politics, which has also limited opportunities for further tertiary studies in Zimbabwe – clearly push factors from Zimbabwe. These findings affirm the assumptions made by Sisulu *et al.* (2007) that economic, political and education imperatives could be responsible for the migration of Zimbabwean teachers to SA. A key theme emerging from migrants' motives for exiting their home country is that of human vulnerability: both socio-economic and psychological, as migrants attempt to survive by pursuing work opportunities across the Zimbabwean border. Thus, Betts' (2010) claim of survival migration to explain Zimbabweans in SA has resonance.

By contrast Zimbabwe's neighbour, South Africa, has achieved economic and political stability since the first democratic elections in 1994. In addition, there is the education pull factor, namely the opportunity to pursue postgraduate studies that many participants have taken up, some immediately upon arrival in SA as was their intention. This pull factor is a facet that higher education institutions in SA could capitalise on, especially in terms of increasing the production of PhDs in SA, as the majority of the education professionals in this study were in receipt of postgraduate degrees (master's and honours). It should be noted that in time institutions known to individuals could constitute a type of social capital, which migrants can later use to enter foreign labour markets.

Many of the participants alluded to having either friends or family in SA, who supported their migration, or immediate family in Zimbabwe/UK. Migrant networks are cited as examples of social capital theory, as they convey vital information, provide financial assistance, facilitate employment and accommodation and provide forms of support. Hence, such networks reduce the costs and uncertainty of migration, and therefore facilitate it (Massey *et al.*, 1998). Social networks may therefore lead to migration having a multiplier effect, and the migrant education professionals did allude to having family facilitate their move or preparing for family to later join them in SA, particularly if they were successful in accessing formal job opportunities.

The contribution of Zimbabwean education professionals to development in SA and the education sector in particular should not be overlooked. While I cannot generalise from the small scale of this study, a common thread that seems to run through the interview data is that of the education professionals' high qualifications[5] and their numerous years of experience in teaching. SA is a country in dire need of qualified teachers, with provinces such as KZN articulating huge teacher deficits, particularly in rural areas (Wedekind, 2011). A majority of the migrant teachers interviewed were specialists in maths and physical science. Zimbabwean education professionals can be harnessed to fill the critical skills gap in the SA labour market at large, where presently maths and science teachers are needed at the school level. In fact, Limpopo province in SA has a bilateral agreement with Zimbabwe to provide teachers, and this could be extended to other provinces. With numerous lecturers being located in the education sector in a particular higher education institution in KZN, they are clearly filling a skills gap.

Thus, on a greater scale, there is a need to create or strengthen, where necessary, the mechanisms to support Zimbabwean education professionals' migration to SA. Hence, I concur with Betts (2010: 29) that 'the absence of formal opportunities for teachers in destination countries' needs to be addressed. Thus, the barriers to their entry into formalised job opportunities should be removed, since it is speculated that there are conservatively in excess of 1,000 Zimbabwean qualified teachers in SA, the largest cohort of foreign teachers within SA's borders.

Notes

1 It may not always be easily to distinguish whether the factors precipitating migration are voluntary or involuntary.
2 In Botswana, migrant teachers are referred to as expatriate teachers (Morgan *et al.*, 2006).
3 There were 26 teachers from developed countries in their sample of 382 migrant teachers.
4 Papers presented at the conference constitute a special edition of the *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 36, Number 2, June 2010.
5 This is in keeping with the contention by Kriger (2010).

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