

# What is happening to the ‘noble’ profession? Concerns about and threats to the teaching profession in high school in Zimbabwe – The Way forward

By

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## Abstract

*The teaching profession in this country used to be regarded as a ‘noble’ profession. It was a profession that most school-leavers wished to be associated with and happily joined after completing their Standard Six, Form Two (Junior Certificate) or Form Four (‘O’ Level). However the situation on the ground currently points to the possible ‘extinction’ of the profession, as there appears no one is willing to join the profession and those who have joined did it as a ‘last resort’ and are always looking elsewhere for ‘greener pastures’. Explanations ranging from historical to economic reasons have been advanced to explain the present predicament of the profession. This paper is therefore informed by a desire to contribute towards the preceding, regarding the ‘demeaning’ or ‘debasement’ of the teaching profession and suggest possible solutions. We therefore argue; if this situation is not addressed as a matter of urgency, Zimbabwe risks ending up with no teachers or with the ‘wrong type of teachers’, who, if they happen to be there, are merely ‘mercenary teachers’. We also argue for a paradigm in the shift in the manner prospective student teachers are selected and enrolled to train as teachers in colleges of education. We concede; while premium attention should be placed on academic excellence per se as seems to be currently the case, we think equal emphasis should also be placed on the character (hunhu) of prospective candidates so that we not only have high school teachers who are skilled and competent but more importantly committed and have good character (hunhu hwakanaka).*