Supporting Adolescents with Improved Teaching

Mamisoa Lucia is a teacher at Tanambao public junior secondary school in Anosy. She was born into a family of teachers; her mother and two sisters also teach. Mamisoa graduated from secondary school in 2009; and, in 2011, after a one-year teacher training course, she received her professional diploma and began teaching.

She started working as a teacher in Tanambao in 2015 and is now in charge of teaching science for the second-year students at the lower secondary school. Although the school she teaches at has a relatively high success rate for the region, the school faces several challenges and nearly 30 percent of students repeat grades.

When Mamisoa started teaching at the school, she had a difficult time organizing her lessons, managing students with behavioral issues and handling the repeated absence of students and violence in her classroom.

In May 2017, Mamisoa participated in a UNICEF teacher training with 100 other colleagues in her district. The training was designed for practicing teachers who had little or no teaching qualifications and had never attended a teachers' college. During the training, participants received new copies of the school curriculum, which was a relief for Mamisoa who had previously shared an old and incomplete photocopied version of the curriculum with other teachers.

“As I did not have much training experience and was offered no such opportunity when I started working as a teacher, participating in this training program was so beneficial for me,” Mamisoa says. “Now I am really proud and grateful when I see my students being more interested in how and what I teach.”

The training program focused on the acquisition of core teaching competencies including planning, class management, pedagogy and learning assessment, as well as on the delivery of core subjects prescribed by the curriculum. These sessions also offered great opportunities for teachers to share their experiences, including difficulties and good practices. As the training took place during the academic year, Mamisoa had the opportunity to immediately apply her learning and newly acquired skills in the classroom.

Mamisoa explained the changes that she has made to improve her teaching practice as a result of the training: “I now realize that being a good teacher requires a lot more work on my behalf but it is so rewarding when I see the training I received translate into concrete changes in the way I teach and interact with learners.”

“I have also realized that I am not supposed to be purely an ‘educator,’ but more of a ‘guide and resource person’ to stimulate children and help them learn. It’s also clear to me that children learn well by themselves as well as through group work and investigative activities, which I enjoy facilitating. I can now perform a job that I love with more confidence while influencing the lives of my pupils.”

Following the training, the school principal already noticed some positive changes in classroom practice and class management.

“Each student has potential and it is important to invest in the teacher and in the pedagogical materials if one wants to see positive results and we are thankful to UNICEF for giving us the opportunity to help students in schools throughout Anosy,” the principal explains.