
[Motivate teachers to improve learning](#)

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Teacher improvement

How to motivate teachers to improve learning? This question is key in today's international development agenda.

Motivation plays an essential role in every part of a teacher's life, from choosing to join the profession to delivering their best in the classroom. Development opportunities, recognition, social status and remuneration are some of the aspects often cited by teachers themselves as elements affecting their motivation. Yet, indications that the profession has become less attractive over recent decades signal that these elements may have been neglected.

Motivation can be associated with many different factors but teachers often mention issues related to the organization and management of teacher careers. Two reasons can help to account for this. First, in order to expand access to education, many developing countries have increased their teaching workforce considerably, often by recruiting non-professional teachers. This has led to a certain 'de-professionalization' of the field, ultimately deteriorating its appeal. Second, in many systems, teacher careers are often associated with low salaries, flat pay structures throughout the career and lack of promotion opportunities, which also affect motivation once in service.

As a result, teacher career structures may represent a powerful leverage to improve teachers' motivation. According to the [EFA Global Monitoring Report Team](#), "The perception of teaching as a low status profession can adversely impact recruitment and retention". Improving the status of teaching is not only associated with better motivation and job satisfaction, it can also increase teacher retention and performance as well as student learning.[1] Where large numbers of teachers still need to be recruited without compromising on education quality, finding ways to make the teaching career more attractive to potential candidates and to motivate those already in post is a critical task for education planners and human resource managers.

Policy-makers reflecting on teacher careers may be seeking answers to a number of questions: What career model will attract the best candidates into the teaching profession and retain them over time? What career structures and promotion modalities can motivate teachers in their everyday work? How to achieve these goals in a context of a limited budget? Which career schemes can easily be managed? Many human resource managers in ministries of education face these dilemmas.

Turning to the existing evidence to explore various alternatives would be a logical answer. However,

it is difficult to find detailed documentation about the organization of teacher careers, how they are managed, and their effects. To make information more readily available, IIEP has launched a new [research project](#) on the management and organization of teacher careers. The project will aim to collect experiences on how different countries are approaching those challenges. It aims to shed light on different types of career organizations, management implications and perceived effects on attraction to and retention in the profession. The overall objectives are to generate knowledge and to identify key aspects to consider when organizing teacher careers.

The project will seek to clarify the different career models policy-makers can choose from. The truth is that the variety of options would surprise you. Alternatives vary from an annual individual bonus pay to multilevel career ladders. In addition, a number of choices exist for teachers' evaluation and promotion modalities. Different options can be mixed and matched to the extent that no two systems are comparable. Beyond the mere organization of teacher careers, management is no less important and can to a large extent determine success. The research will aim to document the implications and challenges of various teacher management options so that education planners can learn from other countries' experiences.

The results of this research should assist countries wishing to adapt their teacher career policies with a view of potentially improving teachers' motivation and ultimately learning. To kick off the project, IIEP will publish an extensive literature review. In a second stage, a mapping exercise will be carried out, drawing on the most innovative teacher career schemes, to provide a panel of choices for policy makers. Finally, more in depth case-studies will be conducted to learn from different actors' perspectives. For more information on the project, do not hesitate to contact us.

For more information on teacher careers research project: www.iiep.unesco.org/en/our-expertise/teacher-careers

[1] EFA Global Monitoring Report team, Background paper for the Oslo Summit on education for Development, 6-7 July 2015.

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