
[Teacher recruitment and deployment](#)

[Teachers and teacher education](#)

Teachers are essential for improving the quality of education. Better teacher recruitment and deployment strategies can contribute directly to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all (UNESCO, 2016). SDG 4 acknowledges the importance of teacher recruitment through target 4.c, which seeks to ‘substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers’ by 2030 (United Nations, 2015: 22). Target 4.5 addresses equal access to education, which is a direct result of effective and equitable teacher deployment (United Nations, 2015).

What we know

Recruiting effective teaching candidates and deploying quality teachers equitably is vital to improving student learning. Effective teachers can represent the most significant in-school factor in improving student performance (Bruns and Luque, 2014; Bruns, Macdonald, and Schneider, 2019; OECD, 2018a). According to research undertaken for the UNESCO Global Monitoring Report, an analysis of the results of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study 2011 for Grade 4 in 45 countries found that the better the teacher quality, the less the incidence of low achievement (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2014: 233). Findings from the United States have shown that quality teachers can progress students up to 1.5-grade levels per year, while poor teaching may limit them to 50 per cent of expected learning outcomes (Hanushek and Rivkin, 2010). However, some countries struggle with their teacher management systems.

At the turn of the millennium, with the push towards Education for All (EFA), many countries faced difficulties in recruiting enough qualified teachers to meet increased student enrolment numbers (Symeonidis, 2015; UNESCO IICBA, 2016). With the launch of the SDGs and the expansion of universal secondary education, the challenge of recruiting trained and qualified teachers is amplified. Data show that the proportion of trained teachers in sub-Saharan Africa at both primary and secondary levels has trended down since 2000 (UIS, TTF, and GEMR Team, 2019). This has led to some countries lowering entry requirements for teacher training programmes, or employing contract teachers or paraprofessionals to meet demand (Education Commission, 2019; GMR, 2015).

Even when a sufficient number of qualified teachers are available, education systems can struggle to deploy qualified or experienced teachers to disadvantaged and rural areas and lower-performing schools. Analysis of Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2015 data showed that while most countries deployed more teachers to low-performing schools, those extra teachers were less experienced or less qualified in over one-third of the countries examined (OECD, 2018b). UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) Pôle de Dakar found that pupil/teacher ratios in primary schools and the number of teaching hours in secondary schools varied greatly between districts and regions within a country, with more experienced and trained teachers

tending to work in urban centres rather than remote locations (GMR, 2015; IIEP-UNESCO Po?le de Dakar, 2016; UNESCO, 2016).

Challenges

Knowing how many teachers you have

Recruitment and deployment decisions should stem from current staffing levels and projected attrition, yet many countries have difficulty maintaining accurate teacher numbers and struggle with system capacity issues, poor data collection and entry, and a lack of technical support (Custer et al., 2018). This can lead to the payment of 'ghost teachers' – teachers who are on payrolls but either do not exist or do not present themselves to teach (ESSA, 2020).

Predicting and deploying the number of teachers needed

Projection and planning sectors in some ministries of education are weak and lack coordination with teacher training institutions. This can lead to shortages of qualified teachers in specific subjects, especially mathematics and science, or an imbalance of primary and secondary teachers (UNESCO IICBA, 2016). On the other hand, some countries such as New Zealand and Armenia have the problem of too many qualified teachers graduating from university with no available jobs (Symeonidis, 2015).

Attract quality teaching candidates

Education systems in both high- and low-income countries have difficulty recruiting high-quality candidates to the teaching profession. Common causes include low pay, poor job prestige, unsatisfactory working conditions, lack of support, and candidates pursuing other career opportunities (Podolsky et al., 2016; Symeonidis, 2015; UNESCO IICBA, 2016). In OECD countries, systems are struggling to attract younger teachers to the profession, with only 13 per cent of primary teachers and 8 per cent of upper-secondary teachers under the age of 30 (OECD, 2019: 438)

Barriers in the recruitment process

IIEP-UNESCO Po?le de Dakar (2017b) found that many African countries allowed localities to determine teacher requirements but recruited from the central level, causing miscommunication and misaligned priorities. Research from India found inconsistent recruitment policies, with some states lacking proper processes to calculate the required number of teachers or their specific qualifications. These issues, combined with staggered recruitment drives that only occur every few years, led to many teaching candidates encountering long waiting times to find jobs (Ramachandran et al., 2018). Further barriers to effective teacher recruitment include positions being awarded based on political leanings, and overly academic requirements for entry to training programmes. These issues can further reduce the potential pool of quality teaching candidates, especially in locations already facing teacher shortages (Education Commission, 2019).

Alternative routes to teaching

While contract and paraprofessional teachers fill teaching gaps, they may also lead to a reduction in levels of professionalism and qualified teachers in the long term (Education Commission, 2019). The in-service training required to improve quality and effectiveness for large numbers of contract teachers also exceeds most government's financial capacities (UNESCO IICBA, 2016).

Equity and inclusion issues

Teacher deployment

With the most qualified and experienced teachers tending to work in urban centres and high-income areas, children in rural and disadvantaged locations may lack equal educational opportunities (TTF, 2018; UNESCO IICBA, 2016). Gaps between low- and high-income schools are widened when teachers with the highest qualifications and experience remain in high-income institutions (OECD, 2018b).

Gender

Female teachers are underrepresented in secondary and tertiary teaching positions, especially in low-income countries. Female teachers make up 88 per cent of pre-primary teachers in low-income countries but only 23 per cent of secondary teachers (UIS, TTF, and GEMR Team, 2019: 3). Other issues leading to female underrepresentation stem from safety and adequate housing concerns, especially in rural settings. Given that female teachers and school leaders can encourage female student retention and serve as important role models, this can lead to less equitable opportunities for girls (UNESCO, 2018, 2019a).

People with disabilities

There is little evidence to show that there has been any significant recruitment of people with disabilities into the teaching workforce (UNESCO, 2014). A lack of qualified and experienced teachers may also increase the likelihood that students with disabilities do not receive the support that they need in certain areas (Education Commission, 2019).

Policy and planning

Update teacher management systems

Planning effective teacher recruitment and deployment in any country requires the collection and analysis of data. Updating or enhancing Educational Management Information Systems (EMIS) and teacher databases can lead to improved decision-making and informed personnel choices (Custer et al., 2018; UNESCO, 2019b; UNESCO IICBA, 2016). Combining all education department databases, such as human resources, finance, and planning, into an integrated system can improve coherence and reduce duplications or inaccuracies in the data (IIEP-UNESCO Po?le de Dakar, 2017a, 2017b).

Improve requirements to enter the teaching profession

Teacher recruitment policies are the first step towards developing a qualified and competent teaching corps. Establishing baseline entry requirements for teaching candidates can help legitimize the profession and attract higher-quality candidates (UNESCO, 2019b; UNESCO IICBA, 2016). More than simply establishing rigorous standardized requirements, recruitment should also target motivated and committed candidates to ensure long-term successes (NCEE, 2016; UNESCO, 2019b). Soft skills, such as collaboration, communication, and interpersonal abilities, can be more indicative of quality applicants than simply high academic achievement (Education Commission, 2019; NCEE, 2016; OECD, 2011). Policies should also eliminate patronage or political appointments in the recruitment process to maintain clarity and the prestige of the profession (Education Commission, 2019; Ramachandran et al., 2018).

Recruit from diverse backgrounds and local settings

To help combat teacher shortages in disadvantaged and rural settings, recruitment campaigns can target members of underrepresented communities. Distance and accelerated training programmes, and ongoing professional development to recruit teachers locally can help ease teacher shortages (Education Commission, 2019; GMR, 2015). Recruitment procedures should be targeted to include candidates that accurately reflect the overall population; as such, they should include women, people with disabilities, and minority ethnic or other marginalized groups (UNESCO, 2019b; UNESCO IICBA, 2016). Even so, results of local teacher recruitment in terms of education quality have been varied; for instance, some locations where contract teachers, who may not hold formal teaching qualifications, have been recruited from the local community have found student results lagging when compared to areas where teachers are centrally recruited members of the civil service (GMR, 2015). However, programmes in Guinea, Mali, and Kenya that offer continuous training or community support to contract teachers have produced student outcomes equal to or greater than civil service teachers (GMR, 2015).

Incentivize and plan for distributing teachers to underperforming and/or remote schools

To better ensure equal access to quality education, deployment policies should specifically plan to distribute highly qualified and experienced teachers to low-performing schools. Different strategies to achieve this include monetary incentives accelerated career progression, free or assisted professional development and training, and free or subsidized housing (GMR, 2015; UNESCO, 2019b; UNESCO IICBA, 2016).

Plans and policies

- Bhutan: [Teacher Human Resource Policy](#) (2014)
- Cambodia: [Teacher Policy Action Plan](#) (2015)
- Nigeria: [National Teacher Education Policy](#) (2014)
- United Kingdom: [Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#) (2019)

Tools

- Rwanda Education Board. [Teacher management information system](#) (2020)
- UNESCO. [Teacher policy development guide](#) (2019)
- World Bank. [Systems Approach for Better Education Results \(SABER\) – Teachers](#) (2020)

References and sources

- Bruns, B.; Luque, J. 2014. [Great teachers: How to raise student learning in Latin America and the Caribbean](#). Washington, DC: World Bank Group.
- Bruns, B.; Macdonald, I. H.; Schneider, B. R. 2019. '[The politics of quality reforms and the challenges for SDGs in education](#)'. In: *World Development*, 118, 27–38.
- Custer, S.; King, E. M.; Atinc, T. M.; Read, L.; Sethi, S. 2018. [Toward data-driven education systems: Insights into using information to measure results and manage change](#). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Education Commission. 2019. [Transforming the education workforce: Learning teams for a learning generation](#). New York: Education Commission.
- ESSA (Education Sub Saharan Africa). No date. [Ghost teachers](#). Accessed 8 January 2020:
- Global Education Monitoring Report Team. 2014. [Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all: EFA global monitoring report, 2013-2014](#). Paris: UNESCO.
- GMR (Education for All Global Monitoring Report). 2015. [The challenge of teacher shortage and quality: Have we succeeded in getting enough quality teachers into classrooms?](#) Policy paper 19.
- Hanushek, E. A.; Rivkin, S. G. 2010. '[Generalizations about using value-added measures of teacher quality](#)'. In: *American Economic Review: Papers and Proceedings*, 100(2), 267–271.
- IIEP-UNESCO Po?le de Dakar. 2016. [Teacher allocation and utilization in Africa](#). Dakar: IIEP-UNESCO Po?le de Dakar.
- . 2017a. [Regional workshop on teacher deployment: Experience sharing for more effective teacher management in basic education in Africa](#). Dakar: IIEP-UNESCO Po?le de Dakar.
- . 2017b. [Teacher deployment in basic education in Africa](#). Dakar: IIEP-UNESCO Po?le de Dakar.
- NCEE (National Centre on Education and the Economy). 2016. [Empowered educators. How high-performing systems shape teaching quality around the world: Recruiting and selecting excellent teachers](#). Policy Brief. Washington, DC: NCEE.
- OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). 2011. [Teachers matter: Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers](#). Paris: OECD.
- . 2018a. [Effective teacher policies: Insights from PISA](#). Paris: OECD.
- . 2018b. [In which countries do the most highly qualified and experienced teachers teach in the most difficult schools?](#) PISA in Focus #85. Paris: OECD.
- . 2019. [Education at a glance 2019: OECD indicators](#). Paris: OECD.

Podolsky, A.; Kini, T.; Bishop, J.; Darling-Hammond, L. 2016. [*Solving the teacher shortage: How to attract and retain excellent educators*](#). Learning Policy Institute Research Brief. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

Ramachandran, V.; Beteille, T.; Linden, T.; Dey, S.; Goyal, S.; Chatterjee, P. G. 2018. [*Getting the right teachers into the right schools: Managing India's teacher workforce*](#). Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

Symeonidis, V. 2015. [*The status of teachers and the teaching profession: A study of education unions' perspectives*](#). Brussels: Education International Research Institute.

TTF (International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030). 2018. [*Strategic plan 2018–2021*](#). Paris: TTF.

UIS (UNESCO Institute for Statistics); TTF (International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030); GEMR (Global Education Monitoring Report) Team. 2019. [*World Teachers' Day 2019: Fact sheet*](#). Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO. 2014. [*Advocacy toolkit for teachers to provide quality education*](#). Paris: UNESCO.

———. 2016. [*Incheon declaration and framework for action for the implementation for sustainable development goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning*](#). Paris: UNESCO.

———. 2018. [*Global education monitoring report gender review 2018: Meeting our commitments to gender equality in education*](#). Paris: UNESCO.

———. 2019a. [*Global education monitoring report – Gender report: Building bridges for gender equality*](#). Paris, UNESCO.

———. 2019b. [*Teacher policy development guide*](#). Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO IICBA (UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa). 2016. [*Teaching policies and learning outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa: Issues and options*](#). Addis Ababa: UNESCO IICBA.

United Nations. 2015. [*Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development*](#). New York: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

[print](#)