
Recruiting and deploying effective teachers

BRIEF 1

Teachers

Conditions of employment for teachers

Recruiting enough effective teachers and deploying them properly to schools is vital for increasing student learning.

Education systems need effective teachers at all levels in order to ensure students learn as much as possible. It is important to recruit an adequate number of highly effective teachers into the profession and strategically deploy them throughout the country.

Issues and Discussion

Predicting the Number of Teachers Needed: Knowing how many teachers are needed in a system is crucial to advancing its success. Predicting the number of teachers is based on estimated demand for schooling, considering the school-age population, gross enrolment rate, and average pupil-teacher ratio.(10) It is then necessary to estimate the number of new teachers needed as a result of additional positions and teacher attrition, including both private and public schools.(10)(15)

A rough estimation for a system with six years of primary school is 3,400 to 4,700 teachers per million of total population.(10) However, projections for secondary school are less consistent because they depend on the specialisations of teachers and specific requirements of the education system.(10)

Barriers to Recruiting Teachers: Demand for education has created a teacher shortage in many countries, and some policies place additional barriers to recruiting enough teachers. For example, high costs to be trained as a teacher and low teacher salaries can discourage strong candidates.(11) Moreover, overly strict qualification for applicants can reduce teacher supply. A third issue concerns the low status of teaching as a profession and the limited degree of autonomy teachers possess.(12) The shortage of teachers is also closely related to teacher attrition. These and other factors vary considerably by national and local contexts.

Attracting Effective Teachers: Teacher quality is one of the most important factors related to student performance, but there is debate about predicting which teachers will be skilled and effective. Teaching credentials and qualifications alone have not been correlated with teacher quality.(6) Some research suggests that teachers with higher cognitive abilities and scores produce higher learning outcomes among students.(9) Other factors include teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, or ability to teach a specific subject. Improving teaching conditions (e.g., higher

salaries, more planning time, lower pupil/teacher ratio) can also help recruit and retain quality teachers.(2)

Alternative Routes to Teaching: A wide variety of alternative programmes exist in many countries for attracting teacher candidates, but have yielded mixed results.(13) Paraprofessional contract teachers, who may have minimal training, are common in many countries as a means to fill a teacher shortage, but this approach has received mixed results and is not a viable long-term option.(3)(10) In general contract teachers are most effective when they receive support and careful monitoring, in addition to their initial training.(11) It may also be beneficial to create alternative routes for untrained teachers to become trained and fully qualified.(13)

As secondary education continues to grow around the world, there will likely be high demand for secondary teachers, especially in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects. Therefore, alternative approaches may be useful in attracting STEM teachers who have industry experience outside of teaching.(10) However, these teachers may be particularly difficult to retain for more than a few years.

Teacher Deployment Systems: Teachers in all countries must be hired and placed or deployed in schools. Teacher deployment processes vary widely across contexts because some systems make deployment decisions centrally, others regionally, and others by school.(11)

However, all systems benefit from careful tracking and planning of teacher deployment. In many developing countries, the teacher deployment system is weak and teachers are reluctant to teach in rural locations because they face more challenges than in urban contexts.(15) Policies may therefore mandate or encourage (through such means as additional salary, free housing, and free transport) teachers to teach in undesirable locations. Both approaches have been successful in some contexts but not in others.(11)

Regardless of the system, it is important to have experienced and strong teachers evenly distributed across all schools to ensure all students have good teachers. Because beginning teachers often lack teaching skills and also struggle most in isolated locations, more experienced teachers may do better in these locations if they can be convinced to stay.(7)

Approaches to Equitable Teacher Deployment: A number of approaches can be used to ensure equitable teacher deployment. Pre-service programs can ensure trainee teachers are adequately prepared to teach in under-resourced and isolated posts through special modules about teaching in these locations.(14) Posting teachers to schools in their home region may increase their success and ultimate likelihood to stay in that school because they know the local culture and, in some cases, the language; though this is not always effective.(17)

System management strategies that improve working conditions in rural locations may encourage teachers to accept and remain in undesirable posts. For example, using mobile phones for payment systems rather than requiring teachers to come to urban centres to collect salaries can reduce the challenges of rural locations.(3) Finally, the best approaches to teacher deployment are systematic. A comprehensive and consistent approach has the most potential to improve teacher deployment.(15)

Inclusiveness and Equity

Disadvantaged schools: Schools with disadvantaged student populations are most in need of highly-skilled teachers; yet they are also often the least desirable teaching posts. Efforts to improve the motivation and status of teachers may be particularly important in these contexts.

Gender: In many contexts it is necessary to consider gender in the recruitment and deployment of teachers.(1) For both cultural and safety reasons female teachers may be unwilling to accept rural teaching posts or may desire to transfer as quickly as possible.(14)(16) The lack of female teachers in rural schools has the potential to influence both the enrolment and academic achievement of girls in those schools.(11)(16)

Teachers with Disabilities: Many countries now have policies about inclusive education. Yet, there is little consideration for empowering teachers with disabilities, who can serve as powerful role models for their students.

Policy Examples

- Bangladesh [[PDF](#)] (pp. 9-10; 14-15)
- Bhutan [[PDF](#)] (pp. 16-36)
- Nepal [[PDF](#)] (pp. 37-41)

References and sources

1. Adedeji, S., & Olaniyan, O. 2011. [Improving the conditions of teachers and teaching in rural schools across African countries](#). Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa, UNESCO.
2. Bennell, P., & Akyeampong, K. 2007. Teacher motivation in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (No. 71). London: DfID.
3. Bramwell, D., Anderson, S., & Mundy, K. 2014. [Teachers and teacher development: A rapid review of the literature](#). Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
4. Dai, C., Sindelar, P. T., Denslow, D., Dewey, J., & Rosenberg, M. S. (2007). [Economic analysis and the design of alternative-route teacher education programs](#). *Journal of Teacher Education*, 58(5), 422-439.
5. Fyfe, A. 2007. [The use of contract teachers in developing countries: Trends and impacts](#). Geneva: International Labour Organization.
6. Hanushek, E. [The economic value of higher teacher quality](#). Working Paper No. 56. Stanford: National Centre for the Analysis of of Longitudinal Data in Educational Research.
7. Hedges, J. 2002. [The importance of posting and interaction with the education bureaucracy in becoming a teacher in Ghana](#). *International Journal of Educational Development*, 22(3), 353-366.
8. Kang, N., & Hong, M. 2008. [Achieving excellence in teacher workforce and equity in learning opportunities in South Korea](#). *Educational Researcher*, 37(4).
9. Meroni, E., Vera-Toscano, E., Costa, P. 2015. [Can low skill teachers make good students? Empirical evidence from PIAAC and PISA](#). *Journal of Policy Modeling*, 37, 308-323.
10. Mulkeen, A. 2010. *Teachers in Anglophone Africa: Issues in teacher supply, training, and*

management. Washington: World Bank Publications.

11. Mulkeen, A., Chapman, D., DeJaeghere, J., & Leu, E. 2007. *Recruiting, retaining, and retraining secondary school teachers and principals in Sub-Saharan Africa*. World Bank Working Paper No. 99. Secondary Education in Africa (SEIA), Africa Region Human Development Department. Washington DC: World Bank.
12. OECD. 2005. *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing, and Retaining Effective Teachers*. Paris: OECD.
13. OECD. 2011. *Building a high-quality teaching profession: Lessons from around the world*. Paris: OECD.
14. Thomas, M.A.M., Thomas, C., & Lefebvre, E. 2014. 'Dissecting the teacher monolith: Experiences of beginning basic school teachers in Zambia'. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 38, 37-46.
15. UNESCO. 2010. Methodological Guide for the Analysis of Teacher Issues. Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa (TISSA) Teacher Policy Development Guide. Paris: UNESCO.
16. UNESCO. 2014. Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all. Education for all global monitoring report 2013/4. Paris: UNESCO.
17. UNESCO. 2015. *Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and challenges*. Paris: UNESCO.

[print](#)