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Thematic Workshop IV
Background note



“ADDRESSING THE EFA TEACHER GAP”

BACKGROUND NOTE FOR THE WORKING GROUP ON EDUCATION FOR ALL

THEMATIC WORKSHOP IV

“Teachers are essential players in promoting quality education, whether in schools or in more flexible community-based programmes; they are advocates for, and catalysts of, change. No education reform is likely to succeed without the active participation and ownership of teachers” (69).

“Clearly defined and more imaginative strategies to identify, attract, train and retain good teachers must be put in place” (70).

- Dakar Framework for Action, 2000 -

Background

In 2000, on the occasion of the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, the international community set itself the objective of achieving six Education for All (EFA) goals by 2015. The Dakar Framework for Action adopted during this meeting entrusted to UNESCO the responsibility of coordinating and maintaining the collaborative efforts of EFA partners and establishing an annual meeting composed of the highest-level leaders from governments and civil society of developing and developed countries, as well as development agencies. The next EFA High-Level Group meeting will take place in Oslo, Norway in December 2008 and will seek to yield concrete ‘deliverables’ aimed at providing new impetus to the global achievement of the Dakar goals. One of these deliverables will address the dramatic shortage of teachers and related issues, recognized as the main obstacle to the achievement of EFA.

18 million teachers are needed before 2015

18 million teachers are needed before 2015 if we are to achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE) by this time. These numbers increase dramatically if trained teachers are considered or if teachers at other levels are included, e.g. early childhood, secondary, vocational/technical, and non formal education. Major challenges faced by national education systems also include teachers moving from primary to post-primary opportunities without proper qualifications; choosing to teach in another area that provides better salaries; or being recruited for other professions. Additionally, many teachers resort to ‘moonlighting’ in second jobs to supplement their income, which often affects educational quality. Health issues such as HIV and AIDS also continue to deplete the current teaching force. And not the least, although it is widely acknowledged that female teachers are a key element in girls’ schooling, they are generally underrepresented in the teaching force especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and in the rural areas where they are needed, and mostly confined to the lower levels of education (pre-primary and first/second grades of primary).

This shortage of teachers is recognized as a formidable barrier to furthering progress on the EFA agenda, both in terms of enrolment levels and learning outcomes. Recent studies show that there is no alternative to quality education to ensure countries’ development, and there is no alternative to quality teachers to ensure quality learning. Qualified teachers in sufficient numbers are therefore central in building countries’ abilities to harness and adapt knowledge to ensure sustainable human development and to realise national goals

An unprecedented situation calling for unprecedented mobilization

To address the teacher gap, there is a need for an unprecedented recruitment of competent male and female teachers on a massive scale. Adjustments such as settling for a higher average pupil-teacher ratio, increasing the number of paraprofessionals to support qualified teachers and/or providing additional educational material would only have a marginal impact on the teacher gap.

Faced with this need, many countries have taken courageous initiatives to ensure a sharp increase in teacher recruitment, with some of the poorest countries in Africa doubling teacher posts in six years, thereby placing great pressure on national budgets. Given that teacher salaries currently represent the largest share of national spending on education, ensuring that more children can be given an education has often meant creating new categories of teachers with far lower salaries. Non-civil servant teachers (e.g. contract or community teachers) now represent around half the teaching force in the most challenged countries. Moreover, many countries are faced with a relatively small pool of qualified, motivated applicants from which to select trainee teachers. Limited teacher training capacities have also resulted in the consideration of shorter training sessions or altogether different modalities of training (e.g. distance learning), but often shorter training is not even an option and untrained teachers are hired.

In such a situation, there is a need for countries, with appropriate support from the international community, to ensure that necessary short-term solutions lead on to sustainable long-term teacher policies, in particular by focusing on professional development of these teachers and on long-term quality assurance.

It is also essential, whenever possible, to increase and diversify (for example through public-private partnerships) national resources directed to education and to teachers within the education budget and to increase the fiscal space to recruit and reward teachers. It is absolutely necessary to ensure predictable foreign aid to education, including financing of teacher salaries, as and when required. In order to increase support for education, and for teachers within the education sector, at a time when many countries are facing financial difficulties, it is also crucial to search for innovative, new approaches to mobilizing funding for education.

To ensure that the financial effort called for, both internal and external, is effective, technical capacity has to be strengthened to plan for, recruit, train, and manage teachers. The first step is sound planning of the number of teachers needed at each level and in each subject, considering both new posts to be created and compensation for attrition. In this respect, some countries are particularly ill-equipped to address the teacher gap, as capacity is lacking to collect, analyse and use data as to current enrolment levels, pupil-teacher ratios, and/or the number and profile of the teachers, especially female teachers and community or volunteer teachers working in the most underserved areas. This is an important hindrance for sound teacher-related planning and monitoring. There is also a serious lack of data worldwide on some particular issues, most specifically attrition rates and their underlying causes in national contexts. These aspects are of particular importance when considering that a small underestimation of attrition rates can result in an underestimation of teacher needs by several millions of teachers.

The development of evidence-based, realistic policies within sector plans and regional frameworks is therefore essential for the achievement of the EFA and education-related development goals. Those policies need to be holistic and consider attraction, retention and preparation of teachers; employment conditions, career prospects and professional development; and management and support, and gender and equity issues. Indeed, while issues related to teacher salaries, status and working conditions are often noted as priority areas to address when dealing with the teacher gap, research shows that topics related to school management and support of teachers are of equal concern. Appropriate administrative and professional management can help ensure lower absenteeism rates, higher motivation and more efficient, timely and equitable deployment of teachers in both urban and rural/remote areas.

Way forward

Many efforts have already been undertaken in favour of teachers. In 2006, UNESCO launched the Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA) to support Sub-Saharan countries which wish to develop and/or enhance their teacher policies. The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) focuses on teachers through its Working Group on the Teaching Profession. Likewise, the International Labour Organization, the World Bank and other international and regional partners such as the African Union, the E-9, the Commonwealth Secretariat also have relevant programmes, and some donors are actively engaged in teacher-related actions in several countries in the world. However, there is now a need to synergize and increase existing efforts

In order for this to happen, the international community must act now. Many pledges and declarations have been made in the past, but action has not followed, despite the situation being critical and the teacher gap requiring our immediate attention. One means of catalyzing international action and ensuring follow-up would be to build upon the recently created *ad hoc* Task Force on 'Teachers for EFA' **to establish a dedicated network of development partners in the nature of a global alliance**

to support *Teachers for EFA*. The network would advocate at the highest level on teacher issues for more support and financing for teachers; promote policy dialogue; collect and share information, experience, and good practices; disseminate policy-relevant analytical work on teacher issues; provide support for national capacity development on policy-making, planning and management; as well as monitor progress in countries and report on it at the global level.

It is also necessary to ensure more effective, predictable and equitable efforts through an increased focus on priority areas, countries and populations. To that end, UNESCO has developed a tool (see *annex*) to support those efforts to bring special attention to EFA challenged regions, countries and communities which are most in need regarding teachers.

It is therefore our duty to use the High-Level Group meeting on EFA in Oslo, Norway, in December 2008, to provide a new impetus to the global achievement of the Dakar goals and teacher provision is one of the most promising ways forward. However without an unprecedented and urgent effort to meet the daunting shortage of teachers, through financial and capacity scaling up and an international alliance to bring together existing initiatives, ensure proper follow-up, clearer focus and innovative strategies, pledges in favour of teachers for EFA will remain empty words.

Annex 1: Teacher needs to reach Universal Primary Education by 2015 (UIS 2004 data)

The table below presents the additional number of teachers needed, region by region, to achieve UPE by 2015.

Region	Additional teacher posts (in 000s) in countries with expanding primary school enrolment	Additional number of teachers (in 000s) needed to compensate for attrition	Total additional number of teachers needed (in 000s) to meet attrition and UPE needs
Arab States	479	1361	1840
Central Eastern Europe and Central Asia	34	832	865
East Asia and the Pacific	32	3944	3976
Latin America and the Caribbean	21	1597	1618
North America and Western Europe	89	2369	2458
South and West Asia	414	3169	3583
Sub-Saharan Africa	1644	2140	3784
World	2713	15411	18124

Annex 2: A tool to identify most challenged countries

A tool has been developed by UNESCO to identify EFA challenged countries which are most in need of teachers, using a set of proposed quantitative and qualitative criteria.

The proposed set of quantitative criteria consists of the following:

- Projected % increase in the number of teacher posts needed to achieve UPE by 2015, from 2006.
- Projected absolute increase in the number of teacher posts needed to meet UPE by 2015, from 2006, in thousands.
- Projected total number of additional teachers needed between 2006 and 2015 to meet attrition and UPE needs (using a medium scenario where attrition is 6.5% of the teaching workforce).
- Percentage of female primary teachers in 2006.
- Survival rate to 5th grade of primary school in 2006.

The table below lists the 15 most challenged countries for each of the proposed quantitative criteria. In addition, the total number of teachers needed between 2006 and 2015 to meet attrition and UPE needs is also indicated.

Further data regarding progress achieved since 2000 and further efforts required to fill the teacher gap, to achieve gender parity, and to improve internal efficiency in primary education, as well as more qualitative aspects (Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers / United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, national Education Strategies /national EFA plans, financing, and national teacher-related programmes) is available in a longer version of this tool.

Top 15 countries or territories identified as quantitatively challenged for two different indicators					Top 15 countries or territories identified as qualitatively challenged for two different indicators				
Criteria 1			Criteria 2		Criteria 3		Criteria 4		
Projected % increase in the number of teacher posts needed to achieve UPE by 2015 from 2006		Projected total number of teachers needed (in 000s) between 2006 and 2015 to meet attrition and UPE needs (6.5% attrition level scenario)	Projected absolute increase in the number of teacher posts needed to meet UPE by 2015, from 2006, in 000s	Projected total number of teachers needed (in 000s) between 2006 and 2015 to meet attrition and UPE needs (6.5% attrition level scenario)		% female primary teachers (in 2006)	Survival rate to 5th grade of primary school (2006)		
Ethiopia	265 *	418	Ethiopia	294 *	418	Chad	11.5 *	Chad	33.2 **
Central African Rep.	241 ^T	22	D.R. Congo	205 ^a	387	Togo	12.1 ^a	Madagascar	42.3
Chad	209 *	62	Nigeria	158 *	548	Benin	17.4	Malawi	43.4
Afghanistan	205 *	159	Bangladesh	126 **	363	Côte d'Ivoire	24.5 ^a	Rwanda	45.8 (2003)
Eritrea	193	23	Afghanistan	106 *	159	Sierra Leone	25.7 ^a	Uganda	48.7 **
Niger	182	79	Pakistan	89	362	D.R. Congo	25.9 (2003)	Central African Rep.	49.8 *
Burkina Faso	159	76	U.R. Tanzania	89	199	Guinea	26.1 ^a	Nicaragua	53.7 *
Djibouti	143	4	Sudan	78	163	Mozambique	26.4	Togo	54.4
Mali	143	67	Mozambique	72	125	Mali	26.6 ^a	Niger	56.2 *
Guinea-Bissau	140 ^P	10	Uganda	71	176	Liberia	26.9	Mozambique	57.6 *
Mozambique	117	125	Niger	51	79	Djibouti	26.9	Lao P.D.R.	62.0 *
Papua New Guinea	97 ^R	26	Burkina Faso	48	76	Senegal	28.0 ^a	Cambodia	62.2
Malawi	96 **	72	Kenya	46 *	148	Burkina Faso	31.0 ^a	Mauritania	63.7
Côte d'Ivoire	94	80	Côte d'Ivoire	43	80	Timor-Leste	32.0 ^a	Ethiopia	64.4
Burundi	91	42	Chad	42 *	62	Nepal	32.0 ^a	Senegal	65.0 *

^P Based on Pôle de Dakar 2007 data. Estimated increases in teaching posts use projections for primary-school age progression between 2006 and 2015.

^T Based on TTISSA 2006 data. Estimated increases in teaching posts use projections for primary-school age progression between 2006 and 2015.

* Based on 2005 data. Estimated increases in teaching posts use projections for primary-school age progression between 2006 and 2015.

** Based on 2004 data. Estimated increases in teaching posts use projections for primary-school age progression between 2006 and 2015.

^a Based on 2007 data. Estimated increases in teaching posts use projections for primary-school age progression between 2006 and 2015.

^R Number of repeaters nil or negligible

(2003): 2003 data.

Quantitative projections are missing for small Island States (population > 100,000 inhabitants), for which population projections are not included in the UN Population databases. Data were also missing or too outdated to make projections for Haiti, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Somalia, Turkey, and Turkmenistan. Provisional data for Angola for the year 2007 could be obtained from national sources.

Below is a map of quantitative teacher challenges among recipients of aid to education

