

ED/EFA/2009/ME/2
Original: English



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Eighth Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All

16-18 December 2008
Oslo, Norway

Task Force on Teachers for Education for All Action Plan

Task Force on Teachers for Education for All

Action Plan

1. Introduction

This Action Plan, as referred to in the Oslo Declaration at the Eighth Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All (EFA) held in Norway on 16-18 December 2008, is intended to provide a time-bound road map for the support of EFA-challenged countries in filling the teacher gap by 2015. It lays out key objectives and specific activities to be adopted by EFA partners in 2009 and beyond to meet the EFA teacher challenges.

The existing Task Force on 'Teachers for EFA' is an international alliance of willing EFA partners with the objective of enhancing the global effort to address the EFA teacher gap. As the designated vehicle to follow up on the High Level Group meeting with respect to teachers, it is mandated to ensure global coordination and monitoring of the abovementioned activities. To that end, an appropriate follow up mechanism linked to the international alliance will be created, supported on a voluntary basis by development partners.

Without adequate numbers of professionally qualified teachers, access, quality and equity of education suffer. Globally the recruitment, deployment and retention of 18 million additional teachers is needed by 2015 to reach the goal of universal primary education with a pupil-teacher ratio of 40 – 1. These numbers increase dramatically if trained teachers are considered and/or if teachers at other levels and types of education are included. Other 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 instead of more teachers would only have a marginal impact on the teacher gap and may have an adverse impact on quality. It is clear that the demand for qualified and motivated teachers is daunting in relation to present trends and the consequences of not dealing with this issue will be detrimental to reaching internationally agreed goals, in particular the Education for All goals and the Millennium Development Goals.

It is imperative to develop evidence-based policies regarding teachers, which comprehensively address issues such as attraction, retention and training of teachers; terms and conditions of employment, career prospects and professional development. Issues related to teacher salaries, status and working conditions are often noted as priority areas to address when dealing with the teacher gap. However, research shows that topics related to school management, support of teachers and development of teacher resource are of equal concern. Appropriate management must be put into place to provide leadership, help raise motivation, ensure lower absenteeism rates and ensure more efficient and equitable deployment of teachers in both urban and rural/remote areas. This will lead to more efficient use of existing teachers, and thus to an increased quality of education offered to learners.

To develop appropriate teacher policies, national governments and development partners will need to take ambitious measures to address both the financing gap and the capacity gap in terms of planning, recruitment, management and teacher support.

2. Platform/principles for action

This Action Plan reflects the principles of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action in the education sector and takes account of international standards on teachers (*ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers*) and principles of international labour standards:

- National ownership of policies regarding teacher education, recruitment, employment, deployment and support. These policies should be integrated into national education sector plans and be aligned with regional and global frameworks.
- National teacher-related policy formulation, implementation and assessments based on improved information systems including disaggregated data by gender, region and socioeconomic status with sufficient national capacities to manage the systems.
- Inclusive and transparent development and implementation of policies regarding teachers including mechanisms for consultation and negotiation between education employers and teachers' unions.
- Strengthening of domestic budget planning and capacities for long-term planning regarding teacher policies.
- Establishing of strong compact between national governments, teacher unions, international and regional organizations, development partners, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), communities, and the private sector to support effective policies to address the teacher gap.
- Accountability of actors including governments at all levels of the system.
- Development partners and financial institutions endeavouring raising levels of long-term and predictable support to developing countries, wherever possible, enabling those countries to develop medium/ long-term costed plans, including recurrent costs, as appropriate.
- Increased support to national implementation of teacher policies channelled through existing mechanisms as the first option wherever possible and using the 'most aligned systems'.
- Special attention to under-served areas and populations such as countries in situations of fragility, the poor, the rural, and the female population.

3. Main Lines of Action

The following are proposed main lines of action to be taken by EFA partners in 2009 and beyond to meet the teacher challenges by filling the gaps in policies, technical capacity and finance.

Policy gap

- **Development or reinforcement of national strategies and plans to fill the teacher gap:**
 - National governments facing challenges on teacher issues shall commit to develop or reinforce national strategies and costed plans concerning teachers, which are gender-sensitive and comprehensively address issues of teacher recruitment, training, employment, deployment, retention, management, careers and professional development and their conditions and status.
 - Development partners will commit to provide both technical and financial assistance to national governments in support of such efforts.
 - Moreover, EFA partners will conduct further research on existing policies and practices with regards to training and other issues to inform policy-making.
 - National governments will, as far as possible, ensure that teachers participate in education sector planning and policy implementation.
- **Ensuring that short-term provisions become sound long-term solutions with quality teachers, trained and recognized as professionals**
 - a) **In countries facing situations of fragility:**
 - When the capacities of national education systems are not sufficiently robust, development partners will offer to provide guidance and coordination, considering

the national context and in line with international standards and guidelines, taking a phased approach. Areas of support could include: 1) capacity development; 2) teacher recruitment, 3) conditions of work and remuneration; 4) training; 5) support and supervision to ensure that short-term teacher provisions become sound long-term solutions; and 6) planning and implementing. Development partners will further ensure close cooperation with ministries of education.

b) Other EFA challenged countries:

- National governments and development partners will strive to ensure carefully-designed, smooth transitions from short-term provisions to lasting solutions, within national strategies and plans. While recognizing that in certain particular contexts there might be a need for hiring non-qualified teachers, this must be done within the context of a time-bound plan for upgrading these teachers to professional standards based on dialogue with social partners.

Capacity gap

- **Developing national capacities for collection and/or utilization of data and information for evidenced-based policy-making and monitoring:**
National governments and development partners will collaborate to ensure that countries facing a teacher gap have the necessary capacity for collection and utilization of relevant data on teachers, disaggregated by subject taught, levels, regions, types of education and gender, including labour market analysis. Such data is key for evidence-based decision-making and formulation of strategies on teachers as well as effective monitoring. Such data should also relate to (i) information on teacher education intake (both private and state) by subject and gender as well as the drop out rate as an indication of the efficiency of the teacher education programme; (ii) information on flows from primary into secondary education.
- **Developing national technical capacities for policy-making, planning and management of national plans:**
 - Development partners to provide upstream technical assistance to committed national governments to develop national capacity for policy-making, planning and management of national plans concerning teachers.
- **Teacher training programs:**
 - Development partners will increase support to teacher training programs, both initial and in-service, aligned with national policies and national recognition, accreditation and certification systems.
- **Promoting South-South and Triangular Cooperation:**
 - Development partners will work with willing national governments to promote South-South and Triangular Cooperation as a means of addressing the capacity gap through technical cooperation and knowledge sharing.

Financing Gap

- **Increasing resources to hire sufficient numbers of qualified teachers**
 - National governments will explore ways of increasing public spending on education and of efficiently applying budgetary and extra budgetary resources to ensure implementation of their national strategies and policies concerning teachers.

- National governments, supported by development partners including international lending institutions, will review macro-economic policies so as to increase investment in education, and particularly resources for teacher salaries/retention. There is a need to reconcile the imperative of macro-economic stability with concerns about adequacy of funding to implement education and teacher policies.
- Development partners including regional and international financial institutions will increase official development assistance (ODA) for education, in particular for basic education, where possible, and honour their pledges made to support delivery of national teacher strategies as part of national education plans. Development partners including regional and international financial institutions will align their practices with national priorities and needs, and harmonize their actions in support of the implementation of national teacher strategies.
- Development partners will explore ways to increase aid to countries where teacher shortages undermine progress towards the EFA goals, in particular those that face difficulty in mobilizing an adequate level of domestic and external resources.
- **Using existing funding mechanisms for EFA including the EFA-Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) endorsement procedures, Indicative Framework and the Catalytic Fund**
 - It is recommended that the EFA-Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) secretariat undertakes an assessment of endorsed country Education Sector plans with a special focus on teachers. Based on the assessment, the EFA-FTI secretariat should consider if there is a need to strengthen the emphasis on teacher policies in the EFA-FTI Guidelines and if the Catalytic Fund can be made more long term and predictable, securing support for recurrent costs such as teacher salaries.
- **Exploring new and innovative funding initiatives**
 - National governments and development partners will explore new and innovative initiatives to mobilize financial resources to address the teacher gap in EFA

4. Maintain and strengthen the existing Task Force on Teachers for EFA

Following the decision by the High-Level Group on EFA, the existing Task Force will be mandated and empowered to work on teachers from 2009 to 2012 for the purpose of ensuring timely and efficient implementation and monitoring of this Action Plan and effective global coordination of EFA partners, more specifically for the following purposes:

- Collecting and sharing information, experience, and good practices
- Dissemination of policy-relevant analytical work on teacher issues
- Advocating for more support and financing for teachers as well as promoting policy dialogue
- Providing support for national capacity development on policy-making, planning and management.
- Monitoring global progress in addressing the teacher gap

The composition and mandate of the task force will be further explored after the HLG, based on the expressed interest of all relevant partners, drawing from experiences of similar initiatives in education and other areas. It is envisaged that the Task Force will, on a voluntary basis, expand into a broad global alliance to synergize the efforts of a variety

of EFA partners focusing on the teacher gap. It is nonetheless understood that such a task force would not seek to duplicate or overlap with existing structures and will uphold the principle of national ownership in all circumstances and seek to promote North-South-South cooperation as far as possible.

To enable the implementation of activities described in the action plan along the above described lines of action, a secretariat will be created on the basis of resources committed by willing development partners. The principle of voluntariness will underpin the activities of the global alliance and of the secretariat. The said secretariat will not be a funding mechanism but have as its prime function global coordination.