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Effective approaches to attract and retain teachers and ensure equitable deployment:

*A contribution from the Teacher Task Force
to the discussions of the High-Level Panel
on the Teaching Profession*



International
Task Force on Teachers
for Education 2030

Main messages

- The world faces a global teacher shortage threatening the aim of equitable and quality education for all students.
- A lack of teachers has an immediate impact on student learning, it worsens working conditions for other teachers with longer hours or larger class sizes.
- Systems need to employ holistic policies to raise the status and attractiveness of the teaching profession to better attract and retain more teachers.
- Steps can include raising salaries, improving working conditions or training and certifying contract, volunteer and community teachers.
- Additional measures can explore setting up or further structuring teaching careers, with options such as enhanced professional development, increased collaboration and promoting teacher mobility and career choice.
- Reducing gender imbalances requires providing safe and enabling working conditions for women and targeted incentives to get more women teachers into secondary, tertiary and leadership positions, and more men into pre-primary and primary education.

A global teacher shortage: What is at stake?

Providing quality education for all students requires a sufficient supply and equitable deployment of qualified teachers. And yet the world faces an ongoing teacher shortage that threatens the stated aim of SDG 4.1 to ‘ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education’ by the year 2030 (United Nations Statistical Division, 2021, p. 5). In 2016, the UNESCO Institute of Statistics released powerful data about the need to recruit 68.8 million teachers worldwide by the year 2030 to provide schooling for every student (UIS, 2016). More recent data have shown that persistent needs remain, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and for secondary teachers in Southern Asia (UNESCO and TTF, 2022).

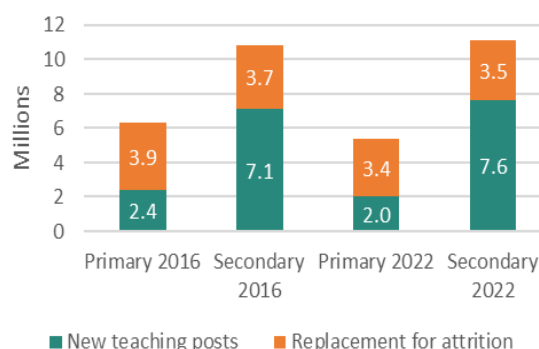
These two regions consistently have the largest need for teachers, as they have rapidly growing populations and are still working to achieve universal primary and secondary education. They accounted for over 75 per cent of new teachers needed in the 2016 report, not counting teachers required as replacement for attrition (UIS, 2016). According to new analyses, these two regions still need the highest numbers of new teachers to meet the 2030 Agenda’s universal education targets (See Figures 1 and 2). In fact, sub-Saharan Africa is now projected to need more secondary teachers than in 2016, as the number of students completing primary school has increased. Southern Asia has reduced its numerical needs significantly since 2016 (due

largely to lower fertility rates and gains of primary teachers in India and Bangladesh), but still needs approximately 7 million more teachers by 2030 (UNESCO and TTF, 2022).

In response to this UNESCO and the Teacher Task Force (TTF), the only independent global alliance working solely on teachers and related issues, will publish the first Global Report on Teachers to focus specifically on shortages.

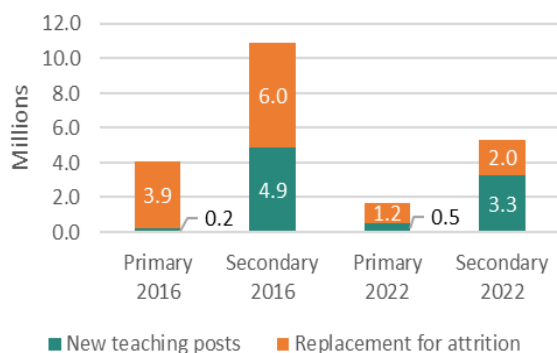
Recent trends have also seen higher income countries begin to face their own teacher shortages, especially as in-person schooling resumes post-COVID (UNESCO and TTF, 2022; See et al., 2020). The United States, Australia, Japan and countries across Europe have reported teacher shortages varying by region and subject (UNESCO and TTF, 2022). For example, Sweden predicts it will need to hire more

Figure 1. Projections for teacher needs in sub-Saharan Africa to meet Education 2030 targets



Source: adapted from UIS, 2016: 3 and UNESCO and TTF, 2022: 6

Figure 2. Projections for teacher needs in Southern Asia to meet Education 2030 targets



Source: adapted from UIS, 2016: 4 and UNESCO and TTF, 2022: 6

than 150,000 new teachers by 2035 while Italy has turned to some 150,000 contract teachers to fully staff its schools (Albert et al., 2022). Surveys of teachers from England and New South Wales in Australia found that nearly half plan to leave the profession in the next five years (The Guardian, 2022; Carroll, 2022). These reports show that teacher shortages are becoming a more universal problem affecting systems in all contexts around the world.

Why is it important to attract enough teachers and deploy them in an equitable manner?

Without enough quality teachers in a system, students are the first ones affected. Numerous research studies have highlighted the importance of quality teaching, determining that teachers are the single most important school-level variable for improving student learning outcomes (i.e. Bruns and Luque, 2014; Chetty et al., 2014). Without attracting and retaining enough quality teachers, systems simply cannot offer students quality education outcomes. On the other hand, if systems do not deploy quality teachers to all schools equitably, then disadvantaged schools or regions may have ongoing gaps in capacity to provide quality education.

Teacher shortages may also negatively impact those teachers that continue to actively work in schools. Lack of staffing causes higher pupil-teacher ratios (PTRs), which can in turn lead to larger class sizes or teaching more hours per week. These types of adverse working conditions can ultimately drive down retention numbers, as several studies have shown the importance of working environments to teacher morale (TTF, 2019; OECD, 2018a; Mulkeen et

al., 2017). Eventually, systems may enter a vicious cycle where they have chronic issues of attracting and retaining enough teachers without first improving working conditions.

From a broader perspective, global teacher shortages will result in missed policy targets at local, national and international levels. Achieving SDG 4, that is, providing quality and equitable education to every student globally; the foundations to engage in lifelong learning, sustainable development, global citizenship, gender equality and peace are all imperilled by chronic teacher shortages.

What can be done? Strategies from countries around the world

Policy-makers and education planners have a host of strategies they can use to improve teacher attraction, retention and equitable deployment in their countries. Even so, no single policy will act as a silver bullet to solve issues that lead to teacher shortages. Instead, research has begun to agree that holistic policies provide the best option in the long term (TTF, 2019; OECD, 2018a; Mulkeen et al., 2017). So, to address persistent teacher shortages and meet the aims of SDG 4, countries need to develop comprehensive approaches to both attract new teachers while retaining those already in the classroom. In conjunction with this, more equitable deployment of highly qualified teachers and the professionalization of the workforce will better ensure that all students, not just those in more advantaged locations, receive quality education.

Understanding needs using available data and tools

The first step to addressing issues around teacher shortages or inequitable deployment is to fully understand the nature of the problem. Planners and policy-makers have several options to utilise tools and data analysis to do this. Initially, systems can conduct thorough self-evaluations to better understand teacher and school needs (Falk et al., 2019; Bashir et al., 2018). Developing and utilising tools such as an Education Management Information System (EMIS) can also help planners better understand staffing issues and work to correct them more efficiently (Bashir et al., 2018). With a better grasp of challenges or gaps in their systems, policy-makers can develop more specific strategies that target the areas of greatest need.

Improving attraction and retention of teachers

Teacher shortages stem from numerous factors around the world, but a key issue usually revolves around the question of how attractive teaching careers are in a given context. The following strategies and country examples offer options as part of comprehensive plans for system leaders. While each addresses a specific aspect that may help reduce teacher shortages, taken together, they can build towards a more attractive teaching career in the systems that employ them.

Utilising and retaining contract teachers

To fill shortages, many countries turn to hiring contract teachers who typically have a temporary or fixed-term agreement with minimal pedagogical training or teaching certifications. For short-term needs, contract teachers offer high levels of flexibility allowing administrators to fill gaps quickly and relatively cheaply compared to hiring civil service teachers (TTF, 2020, 2019; OECD, 2019). However, more effective long-term strategies can work to retain contract teachers by providing training opportunities or certification testing to earn permanent positions. This retention process can also potentially raise motivation with those teachers while simultaneously increasing their quality of instruction (TTF, 2020, 2019; OECD, 2019; Bashir, et al., 2018).

Countries use contract teachers in different ways and at different levels of schooling, depending on need. While hiring large numbers of contract teachers solely for short-term service can help fill teacher shortages, it can also have drawbacks. For example, the Teach for America programme in the USA hires college graduates who want to teach in underserved schools and provides them with condensed teacher training (TTF, 2019). Yet, participants typically only spend one or two years in the disadvantaged schools. This causes constant teacher turnover, high replacement costs, and a never-ending cycle of recruiting new participants (TTF, 2019). Other countries such as Madagascar and Cameroon have faced issues with tensions between contract and civil service teachers over differences of pay and benefits (Bashir et al., 2018). Short-term contract teachers may also have fewer opportunities for professional development or promotion (OECD, 2019; TTF, 2020, 2019) and may cause teacher salaries to drop or stagnate (UNESCO and TTF, 2022).

A more effective long-term approach to contract teachers can involve offering opportunities to move out of a temporary contract and into the permanent teaching force. Countries use various strategies for this including requiring degrees or advanced training, offering a competitive application process, or allowing contract teachers to become civil service employees after serving for a set period (TTF, 2020). For example, Uganda allows contract teachers to

earn open-ended positions after completing proper in-service training (TTF, 2020). Indonesia has utilised large numbers of contract teachers — up to one million across the country — to fill high numbers of teaching gaps (TTF, 2019; Cabinet Secretary of Indonesia, 2021). To help solidify these positions, the government developed an initiative that will qualify up to one million contract teachers into the civil service if they pass recruitment exams, with several hundred thousand having already completed the process (Antara, 2022).

Increasing teacher pay

Raising teacher pay to a level competitive with professions that require similar training can be an important step in improving the status of the job (Crehan, 2016; OECD, 2018a, 2019). In many countries, teaching can be seen as a ‘profession of last resort’ due to low pay or low prestige surrounding a teaching career (Mulkeen et al., 2017, p. 26). Reflecting this, about 60 per cent of countries pay primary teachers less than professions with comparable qualifications (UNESCO and TTF, 2022). In high-income countries, only about one in six offer primary teacher salaries comparable to those of professions with similar qualifications. On the other hand, teachers in many low-income countries — especially in sub-Saharan Africa — have incomes too low to meet basic family needs (UNESCO and TTF, 2022).

Raising salary levels can then act as a contributing factor to improve the attractiveness of a career in teaching. In Thailand, for example (see box 1), the government passed legislation in 2004 that raised

Box 1 – Making teacher pay competitive: Salary increases in Thailand

In the years leading up to 2000, Thailand faced a declining level of prestige in the teaching profession. Other careers that required similar levels of schooling were more lucrative and only the weakest students typically applied to teacher training programmes. In 2004, reforms introduced a new career structure and higher pay for teachers to address these issues.

These reforms had a profound effect in several ways. By 2013, the gap in wages with other professions of similar qualifications and training had completely closed. Likewise, the number of teaching candidates for initial teacher training programmes approximately doubled from 2008 to 2012. Qualitative data from teachers also revealed a big difference. Interviewees ‘agreed that [salary increases] undoubtedly made the profession more attractive’ (Punyasavatsut, 2019, p. 24). Even so, ongoing measures will be needed to properly train, deploy, and retain the increased numbers of quality teachers.

Source: Punyasavatsut, 2019; Tournier and Chimier, 2019

teaching salaries and almost completely closed the income gap with professions with similar levels of qualifications by 2013 (Punyasavatsut, 2019). In Scotland, teachers received a 23 per cent raise in 2001 after an external review found that teachers were overworked and underpaid. Recent surveys have found that teachers are now better regarded and generally viewed with higher status (Crehan, 2019). Iceland increased teacher salaries and made the final year of teacher training a paid position, greatly increasing applicants to the profession (CEDEFOP, 2019). While salaries play an important role in attracting and retaining teachers, they are not a cure-all solution to fixing shortages. Research has shown that salary increases only improve teacher motivation to a certain point, after which other factors such as working conditions or enhanced collaborative opportunities prove more important (Tournier and Chimier, 2019). Evidence also remains mixed that increasing teacher salaries improves student performance. An often-cited example comes from Indonesia, where salaries doubled for teachers and led to higher job satisfaction but did not improve student performance (de Ree et al., 2018; World Bank, 2018).

Improving working conditions

Much like low salaries, poor working conditions can lower teacher motivation and reduce the overall attractiveness of the profession (World Bank, 2018; UNESCO IICBA, 2017; OECD, 2018b). Examples of poor working conditions can vary widely in what they entail from system to system. For teachers in conflict or crisis situations, it could mean a lack of safety and security or struggling to meet basic needs (Falk et al., 2019; TTF, 2021). Teachers in low- and middle-income countries may lack educational necessities such as desks, books, internet access, or other instructional materials (UNESCO IICBA, 2017; Evans and Yuan, 2018; TTF, 2021). Other issues could stem from a lack of infrastructure or sanitation needs, such as not having clean drinking water or single-sex sanitation facilities (UNESCO, 2019a). Teachers in any country may face issues such as long hours, large class sizes, or poor instructional leadership. These types of concerns can greatly frustrate teachers over time, especially if they face more than one at the same time. Eventually, this can cause drops in motivation and lead to poor performance, absenteeism, and leaving the profession (Evans and Yuan, 2018; TTF, 2021).

Planners and policy-makers can use various types of tools and data analysis to help identify these issues and direct their responses. For example, The Gambia utilised EMIS data to better allocate resources and school improvement grants (Jativa et al., 2022). By examining data such as enrolment rates and school report cards (a detailed profile of each school's performance data that allows for easy comparison), planners decide which schools need additional funding or training for teachers (Gomez and Bah, 2020). A programme in El Salvador utilised a survey which determined the well-being of

teachers by examining their levels of stress, emotional regulation and exhaustion (INEE, 2022).

Potential issues surrounding teacher shortages such as long working hours and large class sizes may take time to solve as a system enacts policies to improve attraction and retention rates. In the short-term, planners can work to improve teacher utilisation to help ease burdens and improve working conditions. Senegal introduced MIRADOR in 2013, which is an integrated human resources management system that tracks staff numbers and open jobs, career management, recruitment, and training. This allowed improved efficiency in teacher placement and management, as transfer times reduced from two months to only one or two weeks (IIEP-UNESCO Pôle de Dakar, 2017).

When teacher shortages are acute or in more rural and underserved areas, systems have several other options for improved utilisation. These could include multigrade or multisubject teaching or teachers covering their subjects in multiple schools (Mulkeen et al., 2017). Data is mixed about effects of multigrade or multi subject teaching impacts on student performance, but some best practices have emerged (Brown, 2010, Naparan and Alinsug, 2021). Research on multigrade teachers in the Philippines, for example, found that successful strategies for multigrade teachers included excellent classroom

Box 2 – Raising professionalism with the Teacher Career Pathways Programme in New York City

New York City sought to motivate its teachers by shifting from a single salary structure to offer teachers options for 'responsibility-based pay'. The Teacher Career Pathways programme then established three new roles, which are collectively known as Teacher Leaders. Each position allows teachers to remain in the classroom but offers greater levels of responsibility to include role modelling effective strategies, fostering collaboration or coaching sessions and providing input to school and district leaders. In this way, the programme provides multiple avenues to increase the professionalism of New York's teaching force.

The programme has proven quite popular, as Teacher Leaders have become more highly respected and involved in school-based decisions, raising their inputs and agency into the decision-making process. Recent data has also shown that participants in the programme stay at their schools at a rate of 94 per cent after two years compared to 82 per cent for non-participants. Longer term evaluation will be needed to determine if the programme has similar effects on attracting new candidates to the profession.

Source: Crehan et al., 2019; Tournier and Chimier, 2019; Rodriguez et al., 2022

management, collaborative learning environments, differentiated learning and flexibility (Naparana and Alinsug, 2021). These options can place heavy stress on teachers, however, and may work best in the short-term or with effective support and training structures in place.

Finally, systems can work to build a tiered system of support for their teachers, especially in stressful situations. This could include mentoring, instructional leadership, or simply supporting their well-being. An example comes from Palestine and Jordan, where a programme sought to 'support the supporters' by providing both professional development and mechanisms of self-care to teacher participants (INEE, 2022). Evaluation data showed that 74 per cent of teacher participants found the programme supportive and 84 per cent of female teachers in Gaza noted improvement in their daily work (INEE, 2022). This type of programming can prove invaluable to the motivation of teachers, especially if other necessary improvements are not financially viable in the short term.

Professionalising the teaching force

To continue to raise the prestige and attractiveness of the teaching profession in the long-term, systems can look towards strategies to increase the professionalism of the workforce. By offering professional development or collaborative opportunities, systems can greatly improve the motivation of their teachers which, in turn, can help improve attraction and retention rates (Evans and Yuan, 2018). However, it is important to note that unless basic requirements such as adequate pay and basic working conditions are met, the following strategies stand little chance of improving attraction and retention (Tournier and Chimier, 2019; Evans and Yuan, 2018).

One option for systems to raise the professionalism of teachers is to offer quality professional development opportunities. Research has shown that professional development is particularly effective in motivating teachers if it involves active participation and role modelling, utilises expert practitioners and provides opportunities for reflection and feedback (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; OECD, 2020; Jensen et al., 2016). Reflecting these characteristics, Viet Nam has developed 'subject groups', a form of peer-coaching that brings professional development into the daily lives of teachers. Subject teachers observe each other's lessons and provide engaging feedback on ways they can improve. This has raised both accountability and support among teachers, boosting their levels of professionalism (McAleavey et al., 2018).

In a similar fashion, building collaboration has also proved to increase the motivation and satisfaction of teachers (OECD, 2020; Tournier and Chimier, 2019). For example, systems in Denmark, Sweden, Chile, and Ontario (Canada) have all instituted policies that facilitate and encourage teacher collaboration

with good effect (OECD, 2020). Other systems, such as those in New Zealand, utilise school networks that connect teachers and school leaders within clusters to raise motivation and spread good practices (OECD, 2020).

School and system leaders can also potentially improve teachers' job-satisfaction and motivation by including teachers more often in decision-making processes within a school (OECD, 2014; Tournier and Chimier, 2019). In New York City (see Box 2), the Teacher Career Pathways programme establishes senior teachers in the roles of mentors with increased responsibility. In turn, these senior teachers felt they could discuss more issues and have more input on decision-making with school leaders, thus increasing their empowerment (Crehan et al., 2019).

To further improve motivation and encourage retention, many systems have begun to move beyond models of teacher career progression based solely on seniority. Instead, systems utilise career ladders, where 'teachers take on a new status or role after meeting the required standards to do so, with their pay reflecting the new position' (Tournier and Chimier, 2019, p. 14). This type of system can motivate teachers to improve their performance or seek professional development opportunities to gain promotions. This process builds towards teachers gaining mastery, which research has shown to improve motivation (Crehan, 2016). Singapore has developed multiple tracks that teachers can take for promotion — teaching, leadership, or senior specialist — allowing teachers a wide range of choices to earn seniority and higher pay (Jensen et al., 2016).

Equitable deployment

Whereas attraction and retention issues deal with employing enough teachers across an entire system, equitable deployment deals with more localised teacher shortages. Specifically, the following strategies aim to ensure systems do not perpetuate inequality by only assigning the best teachers to already high-performing schools.

Providing an equitable deployment of teachers across an entire system can have both quantitative and qualitative aspects to consider. With regards to quantity, this aligns with discussions about teacher attraction and retention above: in certain schools or areas there may simply not be enough teachers for every student. Many disadvantaged schools face issues regarding large qualitative gaps, however, especially among specialised subjects. Analysis of PISA data has shown that even though participating countries tend to send more teachers to disadvantaged schools, many of these extra teachers are less qualified or less experienced than those in advantaged schools (OECD, 2018b). Research found this exact type of pattern in remote schools in Sierra Leone, for example. They had enough raw numbers of teachers, but schools

lacked highly trained staff, especially in subjects like math and science (Mackintosh et al., 2020).

Like issues with attraction and retention, fully understanding the nature of the problem is the first step to address inequitable deployment. In a general manner, EMIS systems such as Senegal's MIRADOR may again prove an effective start to help identify and deploy staff (GPE, 2022; Bashir et al., 2019). Going a step further, other tools may help target more specific goals. As part of their SABER-teachersⁱ initiative, the World Bank developed a policy framework that asked guiding questions for planners to consider when attempting to deploy teachers more equitably (World Bank, 2013). In Sierra Leone and Malawi, spatial analysis tools have helped planners take a deeper dive into location data to assist in deploying teachers more equitably (Mackintosh et al., 2020; Asim et al., 2017). With a better understanding of what they need, countries can try several options in both the short and long term to improve equitable deployment.

Incentivising equitable deployment in the short term

The most common option for systems to try and deploy teachers more equitably involves offering some form of incentive to work in remote or disadvantaged schools. These could range from direct financial incentives such as increased pay or housing allowances to offering additional professional development opportunities or fast tracks to promotion (TTF, 2019; Mulkeen et al., 2017; OECD, 2019). The Gambia faced issues attracting qualified teachers to hardship schools, which they defined as schools more than three kilometres from a main road. To combat this issue, they introduced a hardship allowance equivalent to 30-40 per cent of a teacher's salary for volunteers to teach in these schools. Within a year of implementation, 24 per cent of teachers had requested a transfer to a hardship post (Mulkeen, 2010). In a similar approach, Chile paid high-performing teachers a larger bonus (about 16 per cent of their salary) if they worked in disadvantaged schools. This improved retention by about 20 per cent but had little effect on attracting more high-performing teachers to these schools (Elacqua et al., 2022).

Some systems have found innovative and low-cost measures to try and improve deployment to remote or disadvantaged schools simply through how they list job openings. Ecuador has piloted an initiative that lists disadvantaged schools first on a job application platform. When compared to a control group that simply listed postings alphabetically, teachers applied more often to disadvantaged schools in the experimental group (Ajzenman et al., 2021). A programme in Peru tested two successful methods of posting vacancies in disadvantaged schools. One sought to prime teachers' altruistic nature while the other clarified pre-existing monetary incentives. Both initiatives led to positive results, with the altruistic initiative especially

affecting high-performing teachers (Ajzenman et al., 2020).

Longer-term options for more equitable deployment

To develop more sustainable equitable deployment practices in the long term, systems have some additional possibilities. One option is to increase local recruitment in hard to staff locations. Past studies have shown that teachers tend to stay either close to home or near urban environments when accepting job offers (No and Nguon, 2018; Raju, 2016; Bertoni et al., 2019). Therefore, recruiting from hard to staff locations may prove more beneficial to retaining teachers in these areas. Papua New Guinea instituted an initiative that targets teacher candidates in remote locations. Upon completion of training, they must sign five-year contracts to serve in the areas they were recruited (No and Nguon, 2018).

Some countries have developed a system of teacher rotation, where teachers spend a specified number of years at a location before moving to another school. This allows a more equitable distribution throughout the country, especially among more experienced and highly qualified teachers (OECD, 2018a). In the Republic of Korea, they combine a rotational schedule with an incentive-based programme. Teachers rotate schools every five years within a town or province, and teachers working in disadvantaged schools can earn extra pay, have fewer teaching hours or gain more opportunities for promotion (Jeong and Luschei, 2019; OECD, 2018a). Statistical analysis showed that South Korea largely had equitable distribution of experienced teachers between rural and urban schools and with students of different socio-economic backgrounds (Jeong and Luschei, 2019).

Gender balance in teaching positions

Gender imbalances occur in the global teaching force in multiple ways. Teaching remains largely a feminine profession, especially at lower education levels. Women account for 94 per cent of pre-primary, 67 per cent of primary and 54 per cent of secondary teachers globally (UNESCO, 2022; UIS, 2022). At the same time, women remain greatly under-represented in higher levels of education, such as upper secondary and tertiary (UNESCO GEMR, 2020; UNESCO, 2019a). For example, recent data show that women account for just 43 per cent of tertiary academic staff worldwide (UNESCO, 2022; UIS, 2022). Men also tend to dominate certain subject areas, as well as school leadership positions (Bergmann et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2019a).

Regional disparities also highlight gender imbalances in both directions. In sub-Saharan Africa, women make up only 32 per cent of secondary teachers and 24 per cent of tertiary academic staff (UNESCO, 2022; UIS, 2022). In regions such as Europe and Northern America or Latin America and the Caribbean, men are more highly

under-represented than average, especially at lower levels (UNESCO and TTF, 2022). Men make up only 4 per cent of pre-primary and 13 per cent of primary teachers in Europe and North America, for instance, and those numbers are trending downwards (UNESCO, 2022; UIS, 2022).

Disaggregated EMIS data may provide planners with an initial step in honest and forthright self-

Box 3 – Community-based schools in Afghanistan

Security threats, cultural norms, and scarce resources in remote and rural communities create large gender disparities for girls and women in Afghanistan. This leads to shortages of female teachers and fewer opportunities for girls to attend school. To mitigate some of these issues, community-based education (CBE) had proliferated in 2020. The country had over 4,300 centres then. CBE classes were typically held in public buildings and employed local community members as teachers. The CBE system specifically targeted women from local communities in recruitment and helped increase the numbers and retention of female teachers.

A specific type of CBE, the Accelerated Learning Centre (ALC), targeted out-of-school girls and compacted six years of primary schooling into three years of instruction. Analysis of these ALCs found that student learning typically met or exceeded that of the nearest government school, giving some hope for girls' education. However, overall levels of student learning remain low for all students in Afghanistan and, since March 2022, 1.1 million secondary girls have been prevented from attending secondary school until further notice (UNESCO, 2023).

Sources: Kan et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2019a, UNESCO, 2023.

evaluation and data collection with regards to gender imbalances in a system (Bergmann et al., 2022). Additional tools can help systems take a more tailored approach when evaluating their workforce or making hiring decisions. The OECD's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), for instance, documents discrimination against women socially and economically on a scale of 1-100 for each country (UNESCO, 2019a). Other examples include UNESCO-IICBA'sⁱⁱ toolkit for building gender-responsive education and FAWE'sⁱⁱⁱ guide for gender-responsive pedagogy. Both resources include tools to help education managers and leaders include gender responsive staff selection and recruitment, as well as retention and promotion (UNESCO-IICBA, 2020; FAWE, 2018).

Recruiting women to higher level or remote positions

Different contexts have a shortage of women in their teaching ranks for varying reasons. Many countries struggle to attract female teachers in extremely rural or displacement settings due to issues around safety, sexual harassment or housing (UNESCO, 2019a). An initial step to address this challenge includes solving issues around basic safety and working conditions that may prevent women from seeking certain posts. One solution involves recruiting community members for support, such as in community-based schools in Afghanistan, in previous years (see Box 3). These schools increased education opportunities for girls and helped attract and retain more female teachers (UNESCO, 2019a; Rose et al., 2021). Other countries, such as Malawi, opt to build or provide housing for female teachers in rural areas (UNESCO, 2019a). This can eliminate one of the largest barriers to women teaching in very remote locations.

If basic working conditions have been met, systems can use other methods of recruiting female teachers to schools or areas lacking women. Many of the same incentives mentioned in the section on equitable deployment can be specifically targeted towards women. For instance, Sierra Leone attracts women into its teaching force by offering scholarships with the condition that recipients teach for at least two years after the completion of their university studies (CODE, 2021; UNESCO, 2019a).

To close the gender gap for higher level teacher and leadership positions, countries need to work to change stereotypes around women and girls entering certain careers (UNESCO, 2017). This especially holds true for subjects such as science, maths, engineering, and technology (STEM subjects) or vocational studies. Recognizing this, countries around the world have begun to focus on recruiting women to STEM programmes in recent years. For instance, Chile has introduced a scholarship programme for women entering a science or technological field (UNESCO, 2020). The National Training Institute in Costa Rica has established support groups for women in STEM-related areas of study, encouraging them to continue their education (UNESCO, 2020). UNESCO has also developed a resource guide (2019b) highlighting strategies and ongoing programmes around the world that encourage girls to pursue educations in STEM. By reducing gender disparities in these fields of study, countries can begin to reach more equitable levels of female secondary and tertiary teachers.

Recruiting more men to the teaching force

While access and equity for girls' schooling remains a priority globally, concern has also increased about boys' disengagement from education (UNESCO, 2022). A lack of male teachers at the primary and pre-primary levels has combined with gender

stereotypes to greatly contribute to this problem (UNESCO, 2022). To combat this, systems can focus incentives and recruitment campaigns to increase the number of male applicants to teaching positions, especially at the lower levels. Germany, for instance, instituted expensive campaigns to recruit men to early childhood teacher positions (MenTeach, 2012; UNESCO GEMR Team, 2020). While this effort more than doubled the number of men working in early childhood education over a dozen years of implementation (3.1 to 6.6 per cent), women still made up more than 93 per cent of this workforce (UNESCO GEMR Team, 2020). To combat these imbalances, countries will need to be patient and establish ongoing initiatives to overcome perpetual stereotypes against men in early grade teaching roles.

Policy implications

Any policy options to address attraction, retention, or equitable deployment of teachers should include holistic, comprehensive planning. In this way ministries can better raise the overall prestige and attractiveness of the teaching profession and ensure a quality supply of teaching candidates in the long term. The following implications can act as building blocks to help policy-makers develop these comprehensive plans.

Policy implications for improved attraction and retention:

- Codify tangible steps for the training and certification of contract, community and volunteer teachers to become civil servants.
- Allot enough funding to education to ensure teacher pay is competitive and all infrastructure and basic education needs are met. The SDG 4-Education 2030 Framework for Action recommends four to six per cent of a country's GDP as a starting point (TTF, 2021; Mulkeen et al., 2017).
- Develop and synchronize quality tools, such as EMIS data, to better track and distribute teachers.
- Survey teachers to identify needs and issues and develop support structures to provide ongoing assistance.
- Incorporate aspects of increased professionalisation into teacher standards and codes of conduct. This could include items such as more options for collaboration and quality professional development.
- Create career pathways for teachers, giving them options, agency and motivation in their career progression.

Policy implications for equitable deployment:

- Analyse all available data to better track schools or regions with inequitable teacher deployment.
- Provide targeted incentives based upon situational need to get high quality teachers into disadvantaged schools.
- Review teacher job postings for ways to better highlight positions in underserved schools.
- Conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation of all measures to ensure effectiveness and cost feasibility.

Policy implications for gender balance in teaching positions:

- Utilise tools and codify procedures to create a gender responsive system and hiring practices.
- Provide targeted incentives for hindrances specifically affecting women (i.e. housing, child care, etc.).
- Support girls and women in the pursuit of traditionally male-dominated careers through targeted scholarships, programming, or other initiatives.
- Develop targeted recruitment and incentive campaigns to attract more men to primary and pre-primary positions.

Further reading

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ⁱⁱ Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER)

ⁱⁱ UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA)

ⁱⁱⁱ 3 Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)

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Publication coordination and contact:
Ms Meritxell Fernandez Barrera
(teachertaskforce@unesco.org).

Written by Mr Dave Childress.
Contributors: Ms Fatou Niang, Mr Peter Wallet.