



# THE TEACHERS WE NEED FOR THE EDUCATION WE WANT: THE GLOBAL IMPERATIVE TO REVERSE THE TEACHER SHORTAGE

**Carlos Vargas**

Chief of the Section for Teacher Development, UNESCO  
Head of the Teacher Task Force Secretariat



# 44 million new teachers are needed

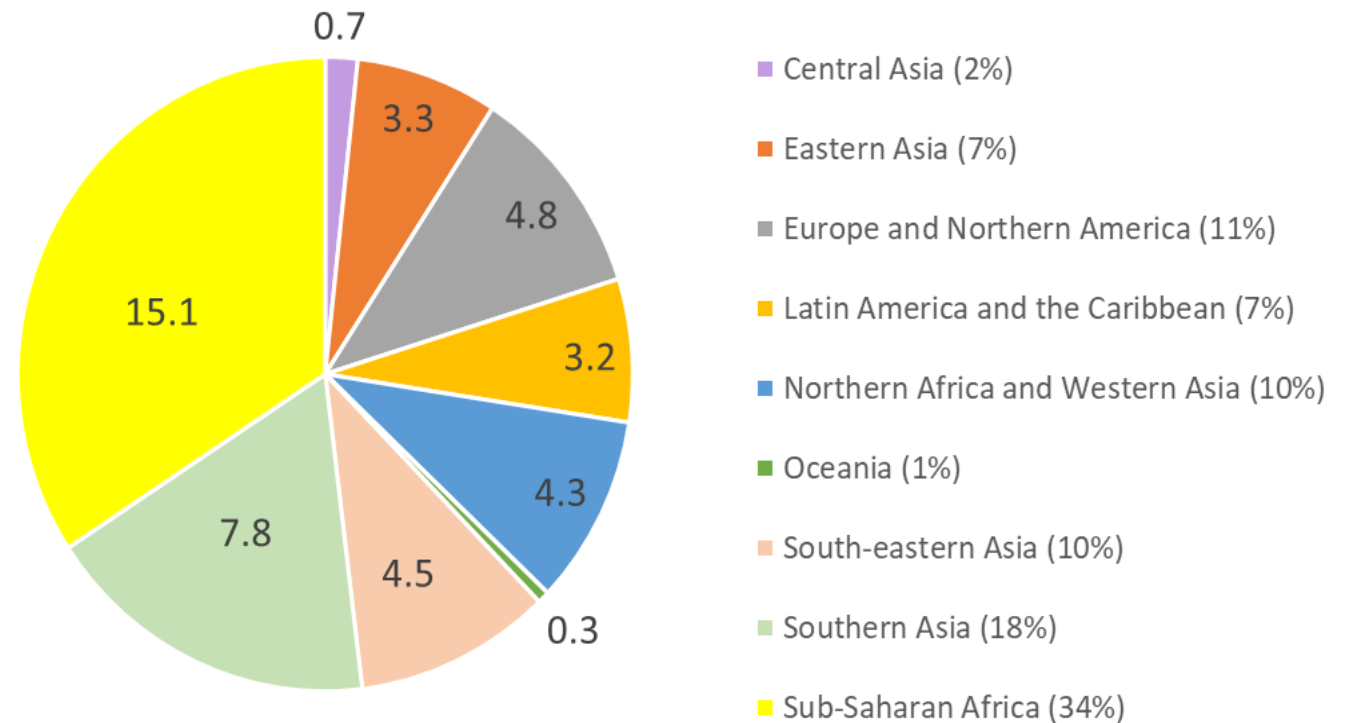
globally for universal primary and secondary education  
and to meet SDG4 – down from 69 million in 2016

UNESCO and Teacher Taskforce, 2023

# Teachers are more urgent than ever and recruitment targets are off track

- Almost halfway through the SDG era, recruitment targets are off track.
- Due to high birth rates, the greatest challenge remains in **sub-Saharan Africa**, which requires 1 out of 3 new teachers, or 15.1 million; a decrease by only 2 million since 2016
- **Southern Asia** has reported improvements, especially due to substantial teacher recruitment in secondary education and slowing population growth, however the region has the 2<sup>nd</sup> greatest need of an additional 7.8 million teachers.
- Challenges also remain significant in **Northern Africa and Western Asia** (4.3 million) and **South-eastern Asia** (4.5 million).
- **Europe and Northern America** has the third largest need of teachers of 4.8 million; however, given low birth rates this is mostly due to attrition,
- Similarly in **Latin America and the Caribbean** the majority of 3.2 additional million teachers are also due to attrition.

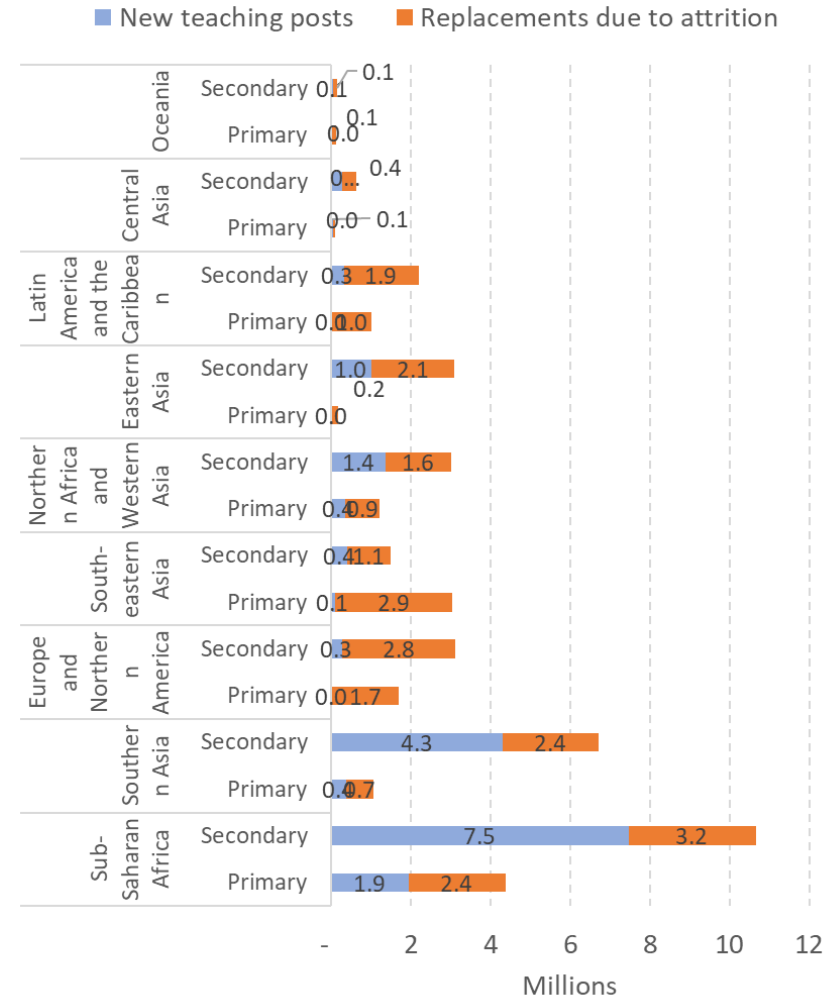
Recruitment targets for primary and secondary teachers for 2030 for UPE and USE, totals (millions) and by global proportion (%), 2022



# Secondary education has the greater need for teachers; attrition exacerbates gaps

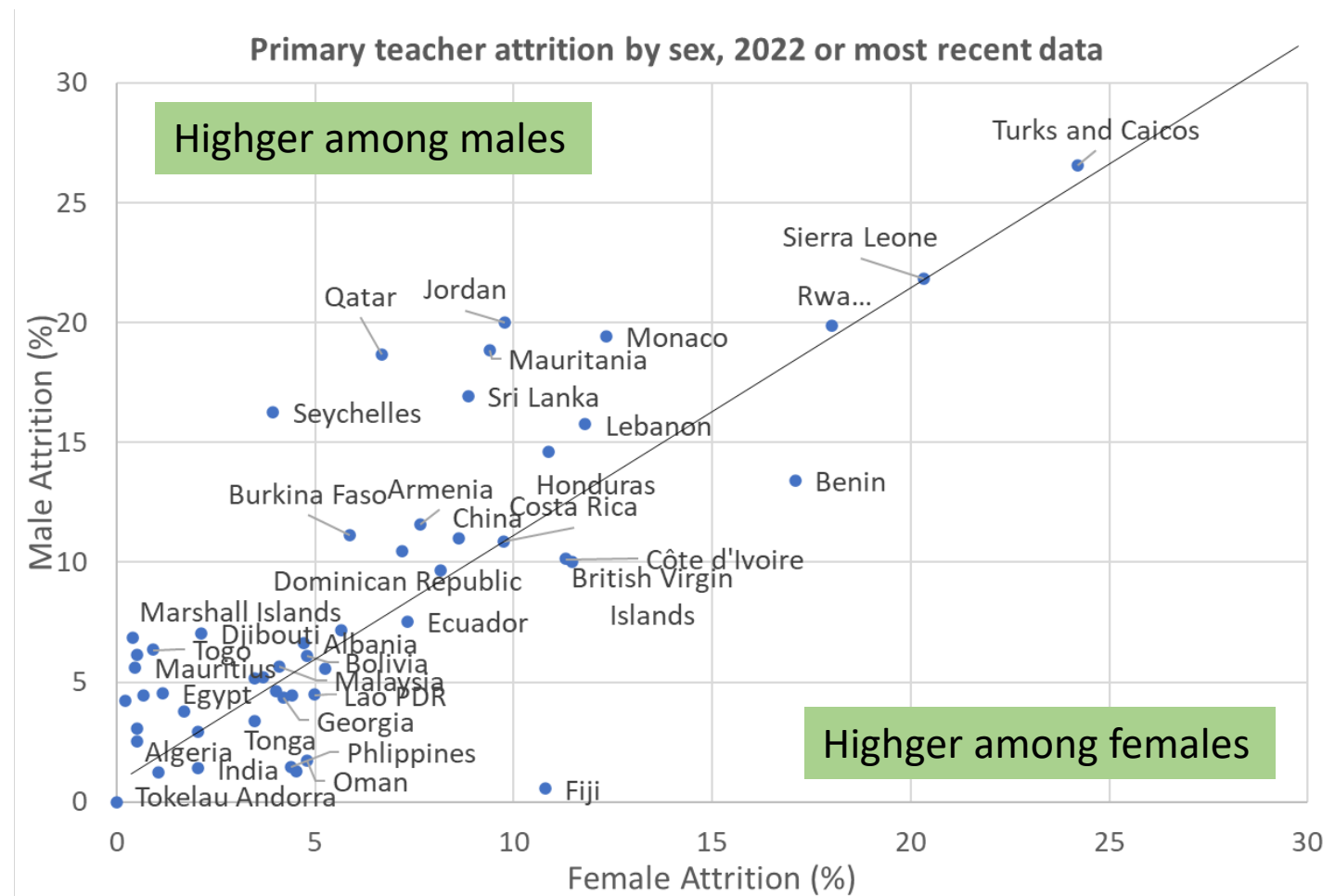
- Out of the additional 44 million teachers, secondary education needs to recruit 31 million compared to 13 million in primary education (or 7 out of 10) by 2030.
- The greatest needs for secondary education teachers are in:
  - Sub-Saharan Africa: 10.7 million
  - Southern Asia: 6.7 million
  - Eastern Asia 3.1 million
  - Northern Africa and Western Asia: 3.1 million
  - Europe and Northern America: 3.1 million

Teacher recruitment targets for 2030, by level, and by need, 2022



# Attrition is a critical challenge that undermines achieving targets

- COVID-19 pandemic tended to exacerbate pre-existing shortages in many contexts, resulting in a renewed emphasis in policy discussions on a global scale.
- **Globally, primary teacher attrition almost doubled from 4.62 per cent in 2015 to 9.06 in 2022**
- Attrition rates vary substantially between regions, countries, education levels and from year to year
  - Shortages due to attrition in Europe, Northern America, Latin America and the Caribbean
  - Sub-Saharan Africa: 5.6 million
  - Southern Asia, where 3.1 million
- **Gender:** male primary attrition rate in 2021 (9.2%) was more than double that of female teachers (4.2%)
- **In Rwanda,** STEM teachers were more likely to leave than other teachers.
- **Gender bias:** job opportunities for alternative employment and beliefs about the responsibility for the care and education of children. Housing and safety also play an important role for female teacher attrition.



# Attrition is costly and has impacts for educational quality

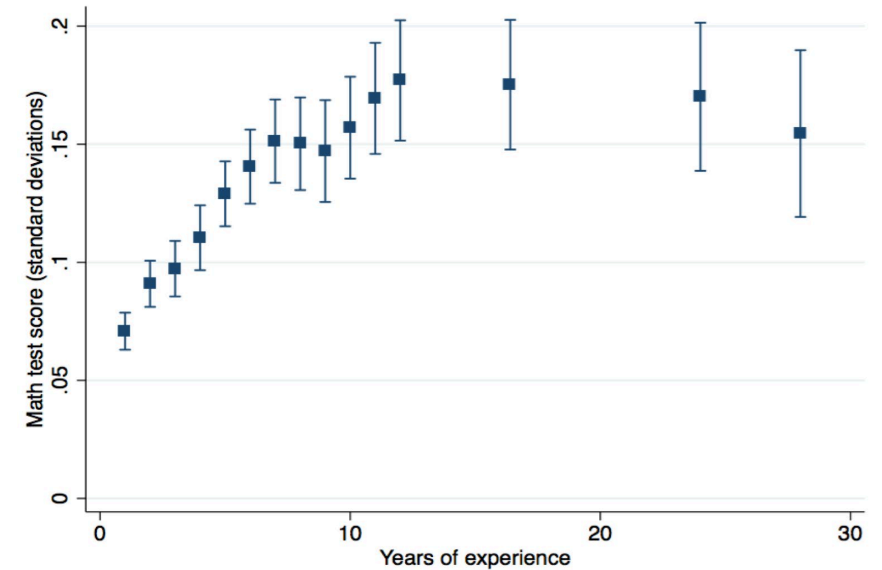
- Maintaining attrition below 5% is important, since it results in an average career of 20 years or more and key for building sustainability.
- Attrition is especially a challenge in the earlier years of teaching. About 13% of teachers aged 25-34 in Finland and 9% in Norway were lost to attrition compared to just 1.6% in Austria.
- Evidence shows that teachers with more experience produce better learning outcomes; therefore, high levels of attrition have implications for educational quality

## Teacher attrition rates in pre-primary to upper secondary by age range, 2016

	Aged 24 or below	Aged 25-34	Aged 35-44	Aged 45-56	Aged 55 or over
Austria	3.2	1.6	1.1	1.0	5.9
Chile	8.1	7.2	6.7	5.7	14.8
Finland	35.7	12.7	8.0	6.0	16.4
Israel	9.3	4.6	3.1	2.7	10.7
Norway	23.2	9.1	6.4	5.6	12.0
Sweden	33.8	7.0	4.4	4.1	11.2
Flemish Belgium	3.3	1.8	1.2	1.2	13.4
French Belgium	5.2	2.9	1.8	1.8	11.9

(Source: OECD, 2016).

## Effects on math scores by teacher experience at lower secondary level in US (2006-2011)



Source: [Ladd and Sorensen, 2015](#): 36.

- Attrition is costly to education systems that need to retrain and recruit more teachers. One estimate in the USA put costs at replacing a single teacher at \$20,000 USD or more for urban districts ([Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond, 2019](#)).



# There are various factors driving teachers away from teaching

The reasons that drive teachers away from the profession are multiple and complex

- **Uncompetitive salaries:** 50% of all countries pay primary teachers less than other professions requiring similar qualifications, while this decreases to just 30% in Europe and Northern America.
- **Lack of recognition:** In Australia teachers who were very satisfied with their working relationships were about 70 per cent less likely to leave their position than one who is very dissatisfied ([Cui and Richardson, 2016](#)).
- **Heavy and stressful workloads:** The 2018 TALIS report showed that teachers who experience 'a lot' of stress at work are more than twice as likely to want to leave teaching in the next five years ([OECD, 2020](#)).
- **Family obligations:** In the US, survey data from 2013 found 'personal life reasons' such as pregnancy or childcare as the most common cause for teachers to leave the profession, with 37 per cent of voluntary leavers citing it as an 'extremely' or 'very important' factor in their decision ([Podolsky et al., 2016](#)).
- **Retirement:** In Europe in Italy and Lithuania, more than half of primary teachers are at least 50 years old (Eurostat, 2022).

Average teacher salary in primary education relative to other professions requiring a comparable level of qualification, both sexes, 2021

Country	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary
Hungary	0.48	0.48	0.45
United States of America	0.58	0.61	0.61
Luxembourg	1.66	1.78	1.78
Chile	0.77	0.77	0.80
Colombia	2.14	2.14	2.14
State of Palestine	1.66	1.66	1.66
Sierra Leone	0.57	0.63	1.36
Burkina Faso	1.36	2.18	2.18
South Africa	2.28	2.28	2.28

# Recommendations for improving attractiveness of the profession

- Holistic teacher policies
- Diversity of the teaching force to mirror communities
- Social dialogue with teacher organizations
- Teacher wellbeing and work-life balance
- Competitive compensation and incentives
- Teacher initial education and continuous professional development
- Promoting trust and respect for the profession (agency and autonomy)
- Recognition, appreciation and feedback mechanisms
- Adequate funding



# Thank you

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