

At the midway point for achieving the Dakar goal of universal primary education (UPE), teacher matters are a burning issue in Africa, as witnessed by the place taken up by this topic today in international conferences devoted to Education For All (EFA). Teacher matters are clearly at the heart of all considerations on the expansion of education systems, whether pedagogical considerations as to the quality

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of learning, social concerns related to the more or less equitable character of education provided in terms of quality and quantity, or questions raised as to the financial sustainability of the efforts still to be accomplished in terms of recruitment simply to reach UPE. The lag accumulated in enrolments, the still very high rate of demographic growth and the limited financial resources to be devoted to other urgencies in terms of human and economic development,

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make teacher matters the major challenge on the way to UPE. The elements included in this study have made it possible to trace the broader outlines of this challenge while revealing distinct country specificities.

Most countries will be able to meet the quantitative challenge, albeit considerable (2.4 million new teachers to be recruited from now until UPE in the 41 countries studied here), if they maintain the levels of recruitment observed from 2000 to 2005, throughout the whole period. In a context characterised by a multitude of physical, economic, financial and social constraints, this positive observation is in itself reason for hope. However, succeeding over a long period what was possible in the initial years following the Dakar Forum is still a formidable challenge. Indeed, the 2000-2005 period corresponds to an unprecedented expansion in recruitment and enrolments in Africa under the joint effect of significant government and donor mobilisation, but also of an in-depth reconsideration of teacher policies. While it was not possible to distinguish the effects of each of these two causes here, it was nevertheless possible to clearly point out the changes that have taken place in teacher policies, and especially the efforts made to significantly increase recruitments while striving to control the payroll. These efforts will therefore have to be prolonged both at national and international levels in order to achieve UPE. As already seen, it will not be enough to simply continue with the activities that were conducted in the face of urgency; the new directions taken thanks to the dynamics following the Dakar Forum have now to be translated in well constructed and sustainable policies.

Beyond country specificities that are to be kept in mind at all times, there have been two distinct trends in the two main linguistic areas. While English-speaking Africa has given preference to the recruitment of initially less qualified teachers, French-speaking Africa has massively recruited status categories outside the civil service under a variety of different names. Recourse to community teachers, enabling to compensate for low levels of recruitment during the periods of structural adjustment, opened the way for these new teacher policies at the same time as it became necessary to proceed with a massive relaunch of recruitments. This downward pressure on salary cost is the continuity of a long-term trend, especially in French-speaking Africa, of adjusting civil servant salaries to the realities of national economies. It also corresponds to the fact that teacher salaries constitute a major adjustment variable in education system expansion policies, on account of their weight in national budgets but also of their being incorporated in a more global trade-off where allocation levels are determined for other factors⁷⁸ affecting teaching conditions and the quality of learning and which have also suffered a great deal from budget restrictions in the 1980's and 1990's.

⁷⁸ Such as average class size, allocation of educational materials and also resources needed for financing administrative activities and pedagogical supervision.



The fall in (relative) average teacher salary observed today results from the coexistence of widely differing levels of salary reflecting the heterogeneity of status categories. At the two ends of the scale, there are community teachers who have particularly low levels of salary and traditional teachers recruited in the periods before the sharp expansion of the education systems as illustrated by civil servant teachers in French-speaking Africa. In between these two situations, there are categories of contract teachers, temporary teachers and volunteers, whose salaries, status and career prospects greatly vary from one country to another.

In each country, this heterogeneity is the cause of tension and it is worth attempting to reduce it. The new status categories, often introduced as a matter of urgency, have tended to account for the major share of recruitments in many countries meaning that these new teachers are in the majority in some countries. The coexistence of a variety of status categories, implying considerable differences in salary, is a major source of tension. Some governments are already questioning these policies under pressure from these new teachers who all aspire to the higher salaries of their colleagues. It is therefore clearly urgent to manage the issue of status heterogeneity, which is already at the origin of social conflict. The issue of the sometimes high number of community teachers, whose salary levels can be extremely low, must also be considered. Manifestly, while the current average (relative) salary for all categories taken as a whole more or less constitutes the reference for pursuing recruitment efforts needed to achieve UPE in many countries, the future challenge, with regard to this reference, is to succeed in defining genuine teacher policies that include these new teachers in a complete professional framework.

It is indeed urgent to rebuild the teaching force on a truly professional basis encompassing explicit selection criteria, clear definition of salary prospects, and possibly statutory prospects, but also professional training, which is the most neglected element of recent policies. The results referred to in this study on the evaluation of pupil learning do not provide any apparent key to standardising these different dimensions. It has however been noted that a rigorous initial selection of teachers is essential to avoid recruiting those who are clearly not up to minimum requirements. These results also demonstrate that recourse to non-civil servant teachers has not led, at least in the short term, to evidence of these teachers being less able to make pupils progress. They highlight above all the poor knowledge available on the effectiveness of the many alternative options for professional training. While the scale of the challenge sways more in favour of mixed forms of in-class training, distance learning and close supervision, factual elements are lacking which would enable a more precise definition of methods and content.

Conclusion

Generally speaking, the different elements of teacher policy seem poorly documented. Aside from the scarcity of evaluations concerning aspects likely to affect the pedagogical effectiveness of teachers mentioned earlier, teacher populations themselves are not well documented whether in terms of composition or progression. Estimations of teacher needs for achieving UPE come up more particularly against the relative lack of information on attrition rates and are thus based on fragile assumptions. In the same way, this study has also shown that it is difficult to precisely appreciate the existence of the necessary human resources for sustainable recruitment policies (existence of a pool) and even more difficult to situate proposed salary conditions, particularly within the framework of the new status categories, compared to those on offer on the labour markets. A better knowledge of the teacher population, their working conditions, the way they live and practise their profession, as well as their economic position compared to the other job opportunities they could aspire to, would no doubt constitute important ingredients for defining more effective teacher policies.

These analyses of teacher issues point to the need to work at the level of each country. Beyond the regional trends that may have been observed, there is seen to be considerable variation from country to country on all aspects affecting teacher matters. This is the case for the intensity with which new recruitment policies have been implemented and also for the concrete solutions adopted. It is obviously at country level that information can be mobilised for defining new policies. Fine analysis of the teaching population must enable the precise anticipation of recruitment needs but also allow greater control over factors that affect the attractiveness of the teaching profession. Better statistical monitoring of the teaching population must provide detailed information on attrition and its different components (retirement, resignation, sickness, etc.) and also contribute to studying actual assignments. Employment surveys must also be taken advantage of to look precisely into the acceptability of proposed salary conditions, although the fact that the expansion in enrolments in Africa now essentially concerns rural areas should be taken into account. In the same way, when anticipating future recruitments, the existence of a sufficient number of candidates must be precisely studied and special attention given to secondary education, which should be the source of supply in both quantity and quality. Finally, the dialogue necessary for the successful transformation of policies decided on as a matter of urgency into long-term sustainable policies ensuring the provision of motivated and trained teachers, must be initiated at country level.



This dialogue must be established on a transparent basis with the help of the information available on needs and the possibilities of national and international financing. International comparative data are obviously important for this dialogue since they shed light on general issues as well as on the specificity of solutions adopted by the different countries. Above all, in this perspective, country sectoral simulation models are an essential element in situating teacher matters within the overall needs related to educational policy. This is where the other key goals of EFA should come into play, such as pre-school education and adult literacy, but also those resulting from the development of post-primary enrolments; the intra-sector trade-off between expenditure connected to teachers and that related to the other factors affecting the teachers' conditions of service as well as the quality of learning can be tackled within the framework of these models.

One of these elements deserves special attention: the administrative and pedagogical management of teachers. Reinforcing the administrative management of teachers is clearly a priority with a view to setting up true teacher policies, which would define the conditions of recruitment, assignment, mobility and individual career management. Genuine progress is needed here as demonstrated by the incoherence in assignments in many countries, and particularly the excess staff frequently observed in schools in urban areas.

The improvement, or the implementation, of proper pedagogical management of teachers should also be high on the list of priorities in these new teacher policies. As seen in Chapter 4, the main factor for improving the quality of learning, beyond the professional characteristics of teachers, lies with the improvement of their routine activities. Better pedagogical effectiveness and a reduction in the class-effect through the continuous improvement of practices and activities must be a permanent goal for the supervisory body (inspectors and head teachers). Generally speaking, uncertainty as to effective practices, which make it difficult *a priori* to define professional training for teachers must lead to transparent and participatory research into pedagogically effective solutions. The implementation of new teacher policies should therefore go hand in hand with the promotion of national evaluation systems involving, through the local management of quality, all actors with the aim of defining the ways and means of raising the level of pupil learning.

Conclusion

There is significant international mobilisation around the question of these new teacher policies today. First of all, this comes in the form of advocacy designed to convince donors to pursue the efforts accomplished in the years following the 2000 Dakar Forum, and which are essential for simply maintaining the recruitment levels observed during that period. Such mobilisation, which is threatened by the present context of a global crisis, must at least be in line with the major transformations, and their social consequences, that many governments have implemented and that now require sustainable management. Beyond the financial aspect, there is clearly a need for technical support to develop the analyses and tools necessary for these new policies in each country. As already seen, this concerns improving knowledge about the teaching population and recruitment needs; it also concerns vital evaluation work to determine better administrative and pedagogical practices with the ultimate aim of improving learning achievements. This mobilisation should materialise at the level of the highest EFA monitoring authorities by the definition of an action plan coupled with concrete proposals, and a follow-up committee; it should also contribute to making the UNESCO Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA) more operational; this initiative could play a driving role in the promotion and sharing of knowledge on teacher matters.

The teacher-related measures set up as a matter of urgency as of the year 2000 to address the challenge of EFA now call for sustainable solutions. The tension observed in some education systems illustrates the limits of what are often piecemeal policies not capable of handling the issue of the professional development of teachers and of providing them with career prospects. Nor should the pressure of salary claims, which seem to prompt some governments to call into question a number of measures related to status, be under-estimated. More than ever, national and international consensus is needed on teacher matters to ensure that they drive rather than hinder the achievement of UPE. It will not be easy to build this consensus. Improving knowledge about teacher issues is without any doubt one of the principal avenues to be followed for promoting the necessary dialogue.