

2013/4 Global Monitoring Report: Making quality teachers a global priority

The [2013/4 Education for All Global Monitoring Report \(GMR\): Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All](#) sends two clear key messages to the global community: first, an education system is only as good as its teachers, and secondly, governments have failed to deliver on their commitments to provide funding for quality education. The report, launched today in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which annually monitors progress towards EFA, has rightfully chosen to focus on teachers and the extent to which policies to support them in their work have been implemented by national governments.

Teachers' qualifications and training, motivation and support are the basis for quality education. However, the GMR reveals that only a small number of countries have honoured the commitments they made in Dakar in 2000, and succeeded in "enhancing the status, morale and professionalism of teachers". Much remains to be done in achieving decent work conditions, adequate remuneration, and access to professional development for all teachers.

According to the report, "policies can only be effective if those responsible for implementing them are involved in shaping them" and teacher unions are crucial in this regard. However, in most contexts, teachers' experiences and expertise have not generally been taken into account, nor have teacher unions been adequately engaged in the development of strategies for achieving EFA.

The GMR underlines the importance of having a comprehensive teacher policy at the national level and identifies four key strategies that governments must adopt to ensure that all students have access to a good teacher: 1) attracting the most qualified candidates into the teaching profession; 2) providing them with appropriate skills through quality and relevant initial and in-service training, and access to continual professional development; 3) providing them with the appropriate incentives to teach where they are most in need and 4) implementing adequate measures to retain them in the profession. The GMR rightly notes that providing teachers with an attractive career path, not performance related pay, is an appropriate way of motivating teachers.

While EI welcomes the four strategies, it is regrettable that only a small number of national education plans have paid adequate attention to teacher education, attractive pay and career structures and an even smaller number of countries have succeeded in securing adequate funding to implement these measures. This is appalling as none of these strategies can be achieved without sufficient resources to implement them.

Insufficient domestic resources and a steady decline of development aid since the global economic downturn means that many governments have failed to provide sufficient resources to invest in quality education. The GMR notes that "had the rate of decline of out-of-school children between 1999 and 2008 been maintained, UPE [Universal Primary Education] could almost have been achieved by 2015". With regard to teacher policy, the GMR reports that only 2% of the global education aid budget was spent on pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes between 2008 and 2011. As a result, many of the poorest countries have not received the necessary financial support to train, recruit and retain qualified teachers.

As a consequence of the funding gap, the global shortage of teachers remains a major challenge; 1.6 million teachers are *still* needed to achieve universal primary education by 2015, and this number is

even greater when taking lower-secondary education into account. This includes the higher numbers of women teachers that need to be recruited in some countries in order to attract girls to school and improve their learning outcomes.

These challenges further stress the urgency for governments to develop and implement a comprehensive teacher policy. Worldwide, teachers work on precarious contracts, earn salaries below the minimum wage and lack the fundamental qualifications, skills and learning materials to teach. Teaching and learning continues to take place in unsafe and unhealthy environments without basic infrastructure and materials. Without the appropriate investments in teachers' motivation and skills through training and continual professional development, matched by adequate environments and tools needed to facilitate teaching and learning, quality education for all will not be achieved.