



# Improving teacher support and participation in Local Education Groups (LEGs) under the Global and Regional Activities (GRA) programme of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

(Synthesis Report)





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## Introduction

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This report offers an overview of the implementation of the program “*Improving teacher support and participation in Local Education Groups*”. It focuses on the activities undertaken by Education International (EI) in connection with the program’s thematic area 1 – improving the technical and organizational capacity of teachers’ organizations to participate meaningfully in Local Education Groups (LEG) – and thematic area 2 – improving teacher organizations’ and country governments’ capacity to analyze and discuss issues of salary scales, work conditions and standards of practice.

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the activities undertaken in the period October 2014 – April 2017, highlighting key issues emerging from the discussions between practicing teachers, school principals, pedagogical supervisors, administration and ministry of education officials. These discussions – whether on issues affecting teacher effectiveness, support for teachers and their participation in GPE-related dialogue and decision-making processes or the management of human resources in the education sector – were at the core of this program, built on the principle that effective social dialogue at the national level is fundamental to the sustainable improvement of national education systems.

Our goal is to reflect on achievements as well on challenges faced, drawing lessons and identifying preliminary recommendations to further strengthen the engagement of teachers and their organizations in GPE-related processes in the future.

## Phase 1: teachers' organizations embracing, promoting and enhancing teacher effectiveness

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In the period 1 October 2014 – 31 December 2015, EI worked to lay foundations for the project objective – increasing support and teacher participation in Local Education Groups. The first phase was dedicated to overcoming three chief obstacles preventing teachers' organizations from participating more effectively in discussions and decision-making on GPE-related matters:

- limited knowledge of the Partnership;
- limited opportunities to engage with GPE-related processes and activities
- poor sense of ownership of GPE-funded education reform;

These obstacles are closely linked and reinforce each other. The limited knowledge of the Global Partnership for Education stems from the fact that teachers' organizations in the 10 participating countries had never before been involved in capacity building activity that focused on the GPE. Consequently, they were largely unaware of the Partnerships' goals, objectives and functioning mechanism, despite the fact their countries have been implementing education sector plans funded through GPE's Education Sector Implementation Grants (ESPIG) for years. Disengaged from GPE-related activity in particular, the elaboration of the Education Sector Plan, teachers' organizations reported a poor sense of ownership of GPE-funded education reform.

To deepen teachers' organizations understanding of the GPE, EI carried out three-day capacity building workshops in the participating countries. Designed to foster ownership of GPE-funded education reform – in particular as regards enhancing teacher effectiveness by recruiting, training, supporting and retaining qualified teachers in the profession, the workshops had four key objectives:

1. To advance thinking on teacher effectiveness by engaging participants in a critical reflection of issues affecting the daily practice of teachers and education support personnel.

2. To determine elements that influence student achievement, both at school level and in terms of the broader education system.
3. To raise teachers' awareness of the Global Partnership for Education, its mechanisms for activating national education sector plans and the opportunities for the participation of civil society at GPE's national-level governance structure, the Local Education Group.
4. To identify preliminary policy reform priorities linked to the GPE's strategic objective on teachers, with a particular focus on teacher recruitment, training, support and retention.

We aimed to bring together a group of workshop participants representative of the education system. In view of that, the teachers' organizations involved were asked to select a group of at least 50 participants that captured as much as possible the diversity of experiences and practice in education across the country – young and experienced men and women coming from rural and urban areas, teachers working in both public and private institutions, school principals, supervisors and other relevant administration officials.

With a view to deepening teachers' organizations understanding of the GPE, the workshop covered key issues related to the Partnership. It provided an overview of the Partnership's history, from the creation of the Fast Track Initiative to the 2011 rebranding and creation of a new governance structure, introducing the LEG and teachers representation at the Board. Participants became familiar with and reflected on:

- The GPE's mission and vision
- The strategic plan and objectives for the period 2012-2015
- The governance processes – the role and composition of the GPE Board, the different committees and their roles, the Local Education Group
- The process and guidelines for development of an Education Sector Plan and Education Sector Plan Implementation Grant
- The grant application process



- The latest version of the Education Sector Plan
- The latest Education Support Plan Implementation Grants funded in the country

Sharing information and reflecting on the GPE was a significant aspect of the work carried out in Phase 1. For the purposes of this report, however, we will focus on highlighting some of the key issues related to the GPE objective on teachers that emerged in the national workshops. The discussions revealed a series of strengths and weaknesses of recruitment, training, support and retention practices and policies that can illuminate future ESP and ESPIG discussions.

### Recruiting, training, supporting and retaining qualified teachers: strengths and weaknesses

#### Recruitment

Needless to say, every national education system has unique features. The policies and measures related to recruitment, training, support and retention of teachers, even if sometimes similar in terms of principles and approaches, are affected by context. In this section, we reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of these policies, aiming to identify trends common to most countries as well as key differences between them.

Some of the basic principles for effective recruitment of teachers include ensuring equal opportunity that is free of discrimination with recruitment decisions based on professional competence. This seems to be the case in the majority of countries participating in the program due to the fact that national governments have put in place measures to curb the politicization of the recruitment processes.

In Benin, agreement by teacher representatives and ministry officials make these efforts particularly successful. In Uganda and Senegal, the recruitment process is perceived as more transparent and democratic than previously. Across all the participating countries, recruitment procedures for the public education sector involve competitive examinations. Particularly in Benin and Côte d'Ivoire, the fact that these examinations occur regularly helps create trust in the

system and adds to the perception that the national recruitment strategy caters to the needs of the system with regard to the quantity of teachers.

Although the increasing number of competitive examinations quantitatively meet the education system needs, the qualitative challenge remains. In fact, most countries have chosen to respond to this challenge by both adopting rules for participating in the competitive examinations required for entry into the teaching profession and by establishing minimum criteria. In Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, the DRC, the Gambia, Liberia, Mali and Senegal, there is a broad perception that the minimum level of qualifications demanded from potential teachers is satisfactory.

In Senegal in particular, there are measures to increase the level of required training. The process is now more demanding in terms of minimum qualifications and has had a positive impact on the quality of newly recruited professionals. In Haiti and the DRC, two systems that have many similarities in terms of high numbers of private schools, (often faith-based) an agreed strength of the recruitment procedure is valuation of the candidates' professional experience as an important criteria.

A common positive trend that can be seen across participating countries is a steadily evolving recruitment process coupled with an increasingly effective and efficient oversight role being played by those committees and bodies with the mandate is to organize and oversee the processes. Some particular aspects of recruitment procedures were identified as best practice in specific countries. These experience may eventually be of use to other countries with similar challenges. In the Gambia and in Mali, for example, the education sector trade union is engaged in the process and has a role to play to ensure that the information is disseminated properly and that the process runs smoothly. This contributes to strengthening the collaboration between ministry of education officials and trade unions and reinforces transparency.

As mentioned earlier, ensuring equal opportunity to access the teaching profession is fundamental. When competitive examinations occur at central level, often in the capital, potential candidates may be dissuaded from participating, due to the costs or difficulties related





to travelling. In Côte d'Ivoire and Mali, efforts to decentralize the procedure have been put in place, allowing for an increased participation of candidates from rural and remote areas. The Ivorian approach includes an increased use of use of information and communication technologies, which is seen positively.

The strengths above refer largely to the public education sector. Recruitment in the private sector in the participating countries is largely carried out without any supervision or control by government authorities. Only in the Gambia were measures taken to promote some degree of harmonization and to ensure qualified teachers are hired, reinforcing governmental oversight of private institutions. For that purpose, the Gambian education authorities established a Private Schools Verification Task Force.

Despite progress achieved in improving recruitment processes, many issues remain unresolved. One key problem common to all participating countries is the perception that regulations to enhance transparency and curb corruption, favoritism and political influence on recruitment of teachers are inadequately enforced. Too often, legal text is adopted, policies are developed, but implementation is not effective. One of the key issues identified is the poor enforcement of the minimum qualifications for hiring teachers. In the case of the DRC and Liberia, this is attributed to the insufficient pool of qualified applicants. Elsewhere, there is concern that there are no mechanisms in place to enforce the regulations and there is insufficient accountability. No one is held responsible if the regulations are not enforced and if unqualified or underqualified teachers are hired.

In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, there is concern that direct recruitment still occurs and principals are largely free to hire at their discretion, without due regard for established procedures. In Benin, though prohibited in 2007, local recruitment of teachers still occurs. One issue that also deserves attention is cross-border recruitment. There is widespread concern that there are no clear procedures to recognize and validate the qualifications and credentials of foreign nationals willing to participate in competitive examinations.



While direct recruitment that ignores minimum standards and criteria is considered harmful to the education system, there is an impetus for increased transfer of responsibility to local levels. Excessive centralization of the recruitment process is considered as a negative in most countries. In Uganda, for example, potential candidates willing to participate in examinations must register in person at the Ministry of Education, which means long distance travel and other costs of a journey to the capital for many candidates. Fees charged to undertake the competitive examinations are also an issue, as they are considered excessive and may be pushing potential qualified candidates away.

Another aspect common to most countries is the perception that communication from the governing authorities on recruitment procedures is insufficient, which is linked to the fact that trade unions are largely excluded from the process and could play a role in disseminating information concerning recruitment.

In Liberia in particular, the lack of information is seen as a major obstacle to an increased participation of qualified personnel in competitive examinations. In countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, where the responsibility for overseeing and implementing the recruitment procedures lies with two different ministries, poor communication and coordination undermine the efficiency of the process.

There is clear room for improving the organization of the competitive examinations. There is a perception that they do not occur regularly enough to meet the needs of the system in terms of quantity of teachers. This is an issue of particular concern in Benin and Nepal. The issue is not just the frequency of competitive examinations, but the nature and content of the examinations. The process is considered as too theoretical and narrowly focused on an exam often considered low quality. One element conspicuous by absence in the recruitment processes is teaching practice. In the Gambia, to move away from exclusive dependency on exams, face-to-face interviews were added to the recruitment process. But the interviews are conducted quickly and in great numbers, so the lack of adequate time has left the process widely considered unsatisfactory.

In conclusion, there has been progress in improving teacher recruitment rules, processes and procedures, but there is room for further fine-tuning. The lack of mechanisms to ensure that rules and criteria are respected is a key obstacle education systems are yet to surmount. This adds to the perception that corruption, favoritism and political influence are still undermining the efficiency of the recruitment process in the public education sector. In the private sector, the absence of regulations or close supervision by public authorities creates a quality control vacuum, as private operators need not abide by the regulations that apply to the public sector.

Whether in the public or private sector, what is clear is that considerable work is needed to attract young teachers and new entrants to the profession. There is a widespread perception there is no clear roadmap to enter the profession and that, more often than not, procedures are cumbersome, overly centralized and lacking in substance. The issue at stake is not just the recruitment, but what follows: most countries have no clear induction and probation programmes for new entrants to the profession, or, when they have them, they are not enforced. Young/new teachers often face a rather brutal entry into service, without adequate support and mentoring. This contributes to lack of motivation and high teacher turnover.

Finally, it is noteworthy that there is a disconnect between the GPE objective on teacher recruitment for the period 2012-2015 and the programmes funded by the Partnership. Measures to improve recruitment procedures were largely absent from Education Sector Implementation Grants disbursed in the period. Only in one out of the ten participating countries did the latest ESPIG include a clear reference to a specific intervention that aimed to enhance the “tracking” of the teacher recruitment processes. This does not mean that no measures are taken to improve recruitment, as they can be funded through domestic funds or be include in other existing programmes. But clearly, current GPE grants are not contributing to tackling the weaknesses identified above.

Training



Well-qualified and motivated teachers are central to the quality of education the system provides to children, youth and adults. Having a satisfactory pool of well-qualified teachers entails not only balancing supply and demand, but also poses the challenge of putting in place policies and measures related to the three stages in teacher development – initial training, induction and continuous professional development. This is an enormous challenge that continues to challenge most participating countries. Our discussions reveal a prevailing perception that there is no adequate training policy in place. The word that came up in every single discussion was “improvisation”.

Undoubtedly, the increase in the number of training centers and institutions delivering teacher education programmes is considered a major achievement in the participating countries. However, building or refurbishing training institutions will not suffice. Mindful of that, to attract students to teacher training programmes, some countries’ schemes include providing students with a scholarship to help them get through their studies. This has been particularly successful in Mali, where accommodation is also offered for teacher students. To cater for the needs of students living in rural or remote areas, distance education programmes were established, as in Senegal, where efforts were made to reinforce the offer of training institutions throughout the country.

When it comes to in-service training, there is a strong support for school-based collaboration. In Côte d’Ivoire, the DRC and Senegal in particular, this measure is considered a very effective, low-cost intervention that should be reinforced. Those involved in this kind of initiative argue that having the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues at the school, whether with or without external support, is key to improving their own practice and fostering a sense of collective responsibility for the quality of education offered at the school.

The challenges to the success of the training offer, however, are myriad. The content of both pre-service and in-service training is often criticized as out of date, not relevant or not adapted to the context. There is no ICT component, which is seen as a major omission. The training in national languages is either very limited or non-existent. Besides the issues related to content, the quality



of the pre-service and in-service training suffers from a perceived shortage of qualified teacher trainers and overall low levels of qualification of trainers. The duration of pre-service is deemed too short and in Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal, despite objections it has been reduced in the last years.

Further, there is a gap between the training materials and the pedagogical approach teachers are expected to adopt. Because there is no strong state regulation, there is also concern that the training curriculum is not harmonized and varies across the country. One issue that came across especially strongly in all the countries was that training does not prepare teachers to focus on students with special needs. This is a major gap in the current teacher education policies.

In some countries, pre-service training does not include a practice component. In others, such as the DRC, it is deemed too short. In Uganda, the concern is that there is no support and supervision for new teachers during their practice period. Ensuring that new teachers adhere to the standards and principles they learned during their training is a fundamental aspect of induction that is currently neglected in the participating countries.

Access to in-service training is not satisfactory. The recurring concern is that the offer is too limited and that the criteria for participation are either biased or unclear. There is a perception that there is favoritism and corruption in the selection of those who are eligible for the rare refresher courses available. One noteworthy aspect is the concern with the lack of monitoring and follow-up to ensure that in-service training leads to attitude change. The absence of a policy that aims to strengthen the link between training and improved teaching has engendered strong criticism.

Another issue that prevents teacher from further sharpening their skills is the cost of training, a consequence of the absence of fee-free state offerings or scholarships to attend fee-paying programmes. The prevailing view is that the public system offerings are limited. The private sector could compensate for these shortcomings, but its programmes are considered of low quality. In many countries, there is concern that private teacher training institutions do not



enforce minimum quality standards. Some operate without authorization, delivering diplomas that are not recognized by national authorities.

In view of the issues mentioned above, the prevailing view among participants from the 10 participating countries is that a sound, adequately funded teacher education policy is not yet in place. The current teacher education practices are producing, as many participants put it, “half-baked teachers”. Unlike recruitment, however, interventions to either provide teacher training or improve government’s capacity to deliver it have been included in the ESPIGs in most of the participating countries.

### Supporting teachers

Essential to ensuring adequate levels of motivation for teachers is to support their work. Professional support is mostly provided through pedagogical guidance and advice, mentoring and induction for new entrants to the profession or provisions of teaching aids and materials. Other types of support include measures to provide medical assistance and facilities or measures to meet the needs of teachers with disabilities, teachers with family responsibilities or those teaching in isolated communities. The discussions and reflections revealed great dissatisfaction with current practices and policies and significant room for strengthening support for teachers.

The reflection on practices to provide support to teachers revealed that measures allowing the school and the local community to be more engaged in decision-making that affects the functioning of schools are considered successful and need reinforcing. In the Gambia and Uganda, the distribution of school improvement grants was considered a success, contributing to improving support to teachers and allowing for school-level decision-making that responds to locally identified priorities. Such grants have increased the availability of teaching aids and materials or minor improvements to the school infrastructure.

In Senegal, one measure related to infrastructure enhancement increased the availability of teachers’ rooms, allowing for lesson planning and correction of exams.



Other measures seen as enhancing support for teachers include the introduction of prizes and incentives to reward effective teaching. There is widespread support for such initiatives, as they have positive impact on teacher self-esteem, contribute to higher levels of motivation, and help improve the community's perception of teachers and their school. Efforts to put in place school-based pedagogical support are also considered successful and fundamental to supporting effective teaching.

The prevailing perception however is that major challenges remain and that support for teachers is far from adequate. Resources, both human and financial, are limited and spread unevenly across the country, creating areas where support for teachers is neglected. The existing legal provisions, specifically in terms of pedagogical support and supervision, exist only on paper, without enforcement or accountability. Inadequate working conditions remain and take a severe toll on teacher motivation. Crowded classrooms are not conducive to effective teaching. Access to water and sanitation services is inadequate. Teaching materials are either lacking or not adapted to the context in which teaching occurs. Libraries are either nonexistent or poorly equipped. The poor or unequal distribution of books is a major issue. The teaching of science is undermined due to the lack of materials and laboratories. Access to ICT remains limited and very often the only computer available at the school is in the principal's office.

By most accounts, pedagogical supervision is rare. In many workshops, pedagogical supervisors reported that they are unable to perform their duties for the simple reason that they cannot afford the fuel to carry out the scheduled school visits. Many indicated they paid for the fuel themselves for an extensive period under a promise of reimbursement. Over time, the broken promise forced an end to the school visits. One key issue named by participants in every country was the low, or at least, perceived as low, supervisor-per-teacher ratio. Other than the inadequate frequency, there is concern with the fact that supervision often results in no feedback or feedback that is not constructive. Many teachers shared similar experiences, indicating that an external supervisor comes to the school, attends class, takes note and then leaves and the teacher never receives any written feedback.

In the absence of efficient external pedagogical supervision, school-based guidance and advice gain importance and can help compensate for the lack of constructive feedback on how to improve teaching practice. However, despite the widespread support for school-based reflection on pedagogy, there is room to strengthen mechanisms to promote peer collaboration. There is a perception that this type of practice is not fully, systematically supported and that it occurs at the principal's discretion. Finally, school-based support, mentoring and guidance for new entrants to the profession is conspicuous by absence, which is problematic, given the importance of offering this sort of assistance to inexperienced professionals.

### Teacher retention

Ensuring the sufficient recruitment of qualified teachers requires the mobilization of considerable financial and human resources, posing significant technical and economic challenges to any education system. Effectively recruiting teachers, however, is just one piece in a complex puzzle. The 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of Teachers emphasized that “improvements in the social and economic status of teachers, their living and working conditions, their terms of employment and their career prospects are the best means of overcoming any existing shortage of competent and experienced teachers, and of attracting to and retaining in the teaching profession substantial numbers of fully qualified persons”. Mindful of the time constraints, the difficulties and the costs of training and recruitment, policies to retain teachers in the profession should be a central concern of education policy makers. While some best practices were identified, the discussions in the 10 participating countries reveal that policies on teacher retention are largely neglected or an afterthought.

Policies to increase teacher retention are linked to teacher motivation and morale. They include not only measures related to improved working conditions and conditions of employment, but also the introduction of rewards and incentives, opportunities for continuous professional development, effective management and support.





In terms of working conditions and conditions of employment, positive examples of policies were common to the majority of countries. The existence of a teacher career structure, with a clear career advancement path is a notable example. It is considered as a successful policy to attract and retain teachers in the majority of participating countries. In some countries, teachers have a separate status as civil servants, as in Côte d'Ivoire and the Gambia, which helps attract new entrants to the profession. The adoption of regulations and a legal framework to enforce job security are also considered successful, in particular in Senegal. The adoption of policies related to teachers' social security, including access to health care and retirement pension, however, was less widespread. Only in Senegal and Uganda there is a perception that the current system has improved in the recent years and contributes to making teaching an attractive career choice.

The introduction of allowance procedures is considered a successful measure to retain trained teachers. These schemes are put in place in different forms. Some countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire, the DRC and Senegal, will offer a housing allowance to allow teachers taking up posts in other regions to find accommodation. In Benin, the Gambia and Mali, those teaching in remote and hard-to-reach areas get a "distance" or "hardship" allowance. Other types of allowance considered to have a positive impact on teacher retention are the research and documentation allowance – to be used for the purchase of books, newspaper subscriptions, internet access etc. In some countries, such as the DRC and Uganda, one measure to retain trained teachers in the profession that is valued positively is the reduction of school fees for the child/children of teachers.

In terms of increased prestige and professional credibility, successful measures include those to strengthen community support, as well as the introduction of prizes and incentives to effective teaching and increased opportunities for participation in education policy development.

There are trade union-led programmes and initiatives that also contribute to the attractiveness of the profession. Two remarkable examples are the Gambia Teachers' Union Credit Union – a teacher-owned bank that allows teachers access to various banking services, including loans,



even in parts of the country where no commercial banks have branches – and the creation of a teachers' health mutual plan in the DRC.

Despite the positive examples above, the prevailing perception among participants in the 10 workshops is that policies to promote the retention of qualified teachers in the profession have not been given due attention. There is an urgent need to put in place measures to boost teachers' morale . That will require tackling the factors that are causing teacher attrition and undermining motivation.

The working conditions of teachers in the participating countries are largely considered unattractive. Some of this dissatisfaction is linked to deficient school infrastructure – the heavy workload, the crowded classrooms, the shortage or absence of adequate teaching materials, lack of security, the absence of school meals programmes. Other issues are related to the terms of employment and the perceived absence of economic incentives attractive enough to be of interest to young talented professionals. While allowances, as mentioned earlier, help offset the low level of income for teachers, these schemes are often limited in coverage or time-bound, not ensuring a sustainable improvement to the situation of teachers.

In Mali, for example, the allowance to attract teachers to remote areas has not been increased for more than 40 years and is consequently not having any impact. In the Gambia, one noteworthy practice is the payment of an allowance for teachers willing to teach a double-shift. The problem is that this allowance is only 50 percent of the hourly rate, which means the teacher is teaching the same lesson at the same school but for half the salary.

In terms of social security, access to health care is limited or there is poor coverage of services. In Haiti and the DRC, teachers have no guaranteed pensions, which is a major source of concern for teachers, many of whom continue working for years past retirement age.

Poor pedagogical support also undermines an education system's capacity to retain trained teachers. A major problem that calls for urgent action is the absence of systematic induction or tutoring programmes to provide counselling and guidance to new entrants to the profession. The



lack of in-service training and the perceived disconnect between the training and the reality of teaching also takes a toll on teacher retention.

Many issues related to the management of human resources were identified as undermining teacher retention. The prevailing perception is that human resources are managed poorly and there is no clear policy in place.

There are various issues related to payroll management. The system performs exclusions, deletions and delays, leaving salaries of new teachers unpaid for months in some cases, and pensions unpaid. In one country, the same payroll system that deletes a given teacher from the payroll when he or she reaches retirement age takes up to a year to include the person in the pension payment list, leaving him/her without income.

Another contentious area is teacher deployment. There is a widespread perception that deployment is often punitive or forced and that it does not take into account the qualifications/training of the person being deployed and the system's needs. The poor or nonexistent enforcement of regulations and laws is, however, not exclusive to deployment. There is broad concern with the failure to respect career advancement procedures, which are all too often not linked to salary increase, meaning that a person can work for years performing additional duties without the corresponding salary increase. Poor enforcement of regulations leads to illegal dismissals and the failure to prevent discrimination on the basis of tribe, gender or religion, contributing to a perception of politicization of the system and of poor social dialogue.

Retaining qualified teachers is fundamental to any effective education system and in recognition of that, the GPE included teacher retention in its strategic objective for teachers. However, measures to promote teacher retention are conspicuous by absence in the Education Sector Plans and Implementation Grants of the majority of countries participating in the programme.

In Benin, while the ESP mentions "inconsistencies in teacher deployment" and the ESPIG recognizes it is a problem, no actions have been taken to minimize the problem. Nor are there any other actions tackling any of the major issues affecting teacher retention in the country.



There are measures to promote the retention of students, but not of teachers. In Côte d'Ivoire, the ESP and ESPIG are only concerned with the retention of teachers in crisis-affected areas, but there are not measures to promote teacher retention elsewhere. In the DRC, the ESP does not even mention retention of teachers and the ESPIG, while recognizing the problem, does not offer any concrete measure to promote teacher retention. It does, however, take measures to ensure the retention of students, of engineers and other technicians relevant to the implementation of the grant. In Haiti, Liberia, Nepal and Senegal, the ESP and ESPIG do not mention teacher retention at all. Clearly, policies and measures to promote teacher retention are not being put in place through GPE funding, despite the fact teacher retention is a GPE objective.

In conclusion, the reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of the education systems of participating countries, in particular with regards to the GPE objective on teachers for the period 2012-2015 reveal a significant disparity between the issues and problems identified by workshop participants and the solutions offered through Education Sector Implementation Grants. These disparities are also found in the very ESPIGs, which all too often describe issues and problems related to teachers in the country background section of the document but do not include any measure to tackle the problems described in the project objectives and activities.

Of the four elements embedded in the GPE objective –improve teacher effectiveness by training, recruiting and retaining teachers and supporting them to provide a good quality education — the one addressed by most ESPIGs is training. Recruitment, support and retention are largely neglected. Recruitment is peripherally addressed through some project components that build capacity at ministry level. Support for teachers and measures to promote the retention of trained teachers in the system are conspicuous by absence in the vast majority of ESP and ESPIGs, which are exclusively concerned with the retention of students. Measures to retain enrolled students in the system are fundamental to achieving quality education for all. They should, however, be accompanied by measures to retain trained, qualified teachers. Failure to do so raises the question of sustainability of GPE-funded interventions, as there are no concrete actions to ensure that the funds invested in training will yield the expected results.

The prevailing perception among those involved in the discussions is that the GPE-funded programmes are not doing enough for teachers. This perception is aggravated by the fact that with the adoption of the GPE 2020 strategic plan, which places improving learning outcomes as a priority, the objective on teachers disappeared. If little was done to support and retain teachers with GPE funds in the past, the notion that this objective will be adequately supported under the new plan seems more wishful than real. The reality can ultimately undermine the achievement of GPE goals.

## Phase 2: promoting social dialogue and analyzing human resources management issues

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The second phase of the programme focused on pursuing outcome 2 – increased social dialogue and a reduction in school days lost due to industrial action by teachers’ organizations. To achieve that, we aimed to bring ministry of education staff and teachers’ organizations together, offering them the opportunity to participate in an open, structured and forward-looking conversation about the management of human resources in the national education system.

Our goal was to strengthen collaboration between government officials and teachers’ unions and to increase the former’s capacity to analyze human resources issues and to promote exchange of experiences and best practices related to the management of human resources in the education sector. With that in mind, we carried out training workshops for relevant government staff - ministry of education, finance, planning - and representatives of teachers’ organizations in six countries – Côte d’Ivoire , Democratic Republic of Congo, the Gambia, Nepal, Mali and Uganda – and organized knowledge-sharing forum on teacher human resource issues.

The workshops served two key purposes: build capacity to analyze human resources management issues and reinforce dialogue and collaboration between government officials and teachers’ representatives. They were designed to engage ministry staff and teachers in

meaningful reflection that aimed not only to identify strengths and weaknesses of current policies and practices related to the management of human resources, but that helped participants define together steps they can take to reinforce successful policies, while developing new policies and modifying those less successful. The capacity building component was addressed by using the International Labour Office's *Handbook of good human resources practices in the teaching profession*<sup>1</sup> as the reference document for the workshop, providing the background for the discussions. The workshops sessions, following the Handbook's structure and content, introduced key principles, international norms and standards and examples of best practices related to a given element of human resources management. The topics addressed included:

- 1- recruitment processes: policies and management; professional licensing and credentials; probation and Induction; security of tenure; postings, deployment, rotation and transfers; service conditions; part-time service; replacements and substitutes; contractual teachers; teacher retention; school leadership
- 2- career development: career diversification and job classification; promotion criteria; leave terms; study and professional development;
- 3- professional roles and responsibilities: roles and responsibilities; professional freedom; teacher evaluation, assessment and feedback; codes of ethics and conduct; teachers' civic rights; disciplinary procedures
- 4- teaching and learning conditions: hours of work and workload; class size and pupil-teacher ratios; health and safety; ICT in schools;
- 5- salaries and incentives; salary policy: objectives, level, financing; salary criteria and scales; salary adjustments; merit or performance assessment and pay; rural, remote and disadvantaged areas;
- 6- social security: international social security instruments; branches of social security; current issues in scheme design and operation

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<sup>1</sup> 2012, ILO, Geneva.

- 7- social dialogue : ILO standards ; necessary conditions for social dialogue ; the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation and social dialogue ; social dialogue at international level ; social dialogue in national systems ; social dialogue at local and school level
- 8- initial and further teacher education and training: training policies; professional standards for entry into teaching and retention of credentials; teacher preparation institutions and programmes; further education and continuing professional development

Having reviewed key principles, international norms and standards as well as examples of successful approaches and policies adopted in other countries, workshop participants reflected on their national education systems and how it manages human resources. They identified examples of policies and measures adopted at national level that they consider successful as well as those that failed to yield the expected results. They reflected on the key issues at stake, identified areas for improvement and defined the next steps they can take together to improve policy. In the next section, we highlight some of the key points that emerged from the discussions.

#### Recruitment processes

Considering that the strengths and weaknesses of recruitment processes were earlier, we would like to focus particularly on the aspects of recruitment processes that can be improved and on the next steps that government officials and trade union representatives defined jointly as necessary to address the issues affecting the processes for recruitment of teachers.

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, the need to prevent direct recruitment of teachers was identified as a priority. This, along with reinforced accountability and the further engagement of teachers' representatives in the recruitment process is expected to enhance transparency and curb corruption and favoritism in recruitment. Measures to ensure the strict observance of regulations regarding medical checkups were also mentioned. To improve the quality of recruited teachers, the decision that reduced the duration of initial training from 24 months to 18 months should be



reversed and steps should be taken to improve pedagogical training for higher education personnel. There is consensus that the current minimum requirement for recruitment – a BAC diploma – should remain unaltered. To improve access and to attract more potential candidates, there is a call for reducing the fees of admission exams.

In **Nepal**, one of the key measures proposed to improve the recruitment process is to reinforce the teacher licensing system, which should include undergoing in-service training as a condition for the renewal of credentials. This would ensure that only licensed teachers are eligible to open vacancies in the public and private system. There is strong consensus that the processes and criteria for recruitment in the public and private sector should be harmonized. The need to develop better exams and establish clearer criteria for assessing the qualifications of candidates to take teaching experience into account, was also considered a priority.

In **Mali**, the adoption of measures to enhance the transparency of the recruitment process and to put in place mechanisms to promote the recruitment of women is a priority. A simple measure that could be adopted is to revise the timing of recruitment processes, with a view to ensuring it takes place prior to the beginning of the school year. Another important aspect of the recruitment process that can be improved in the country is probation and induction. Participants identified the need to develop a comprehensive policy for the induction of new entrants to the profession. This policy should put in place effective mechanisms to provide them with support and guidance.

In **the DRC**, the adoption of decisive measures to enforce existing regulations related to teacher recruitment and curb corruption and favoritism was considered as a top priority. Measures to improve the recruitment of school leadership were also identified, including the introduction of written tests and clear criteria to guide the review of the candidate's qualifications, including seniority and knowledge of school management procedures and regulations. In terms of teacher deployment and rotation, participants identified the need to strengthen dissemination of the existing regulations and to reinforce mechanisms to enforce them. Another aspect that was





identified is the need to put in place policies that offer incentives or facilities to attract teachers to remote areas.

In **the Gambia**, as in Mali, the discussions revealed the need to put in place more decisive efforts to recruit women into the teaching profession. Participants also identified that incentives should be offered to attract “specialist teachers”, in particular those trained in science, mathematics or subjects for which there is teacher shortage. There is broad consensus that the policy that established double-shift for teachers should be reviewed. The current teacher deployment policy – considered inadequate and incomplete – should be strengthened and include enforcement mechanisms, including the establishment of a committee or “Teacher Service Commission” that would oversee the recruitment and deployment process.

In **Uganda**, the key measures identified to improve the recruitment process aim to make the process easier for new entrants to the profession. They include streamlining the notification process, so that successful candidates are informed prior to the school year and can take their posts accordingly. Measures to improve the process for confirmation of new entrants and their inclusion in the payroll – which can take up to a year – were also identified. The current teachers’ process of service is to be reviewed to include stronger mechanisms to enforce its application, including a more strict control of teacher credentials and the centralization of review of documents to minimize fraud and the use of forged documents. Likewise, the current posting and deployment policy should be reviewed, to ensure issues such as health, age, family responsibilities and distance to posting station are taken into account.

#### Career development

In **Côte d’Ivoire**, current policies regulating the status of the teaching profession are regarded positively. They allow for professional mobility and include clear criteria for career advancement. There are, however, issues affecting its full enforcement. One such issue is the poor

dissemination of the policies and regulations, which call for concerted actions by both the ministry of education and teachers' organizations to communicate effectively with teachers on this matter. One of the key measures proposed is to adopt clearer regulations in the private sector, as currently, there is no career structure and the majority of schools do not offer teachers a career path. In terms of promotion criteria and procedures, participants identified the need to adopt measures to make advancement criteria clearer, so as to reduce the discretionary power of authorities. Currently, while access to higher grade positions depends on the outcome competitive examinations, appointments are largely at the discretion of the ministry, which adds to a perception of lack of transparency.

In **the DRC**, the legal framework establishing the procedures for career advancement is valued positively. The main problem, however, lies in the poor application of the regulations. On the one hand, there is a perception that the regulations are not well disseminated across the system and that the ministry of education and teachers' organizations can strengthen collaboration in this effect, raising administration officials and teachers awareness of the existing framework. There are three aspects of the existing regulation, however, that could be reviewed. First, the law does not establish clear criteria for promotion and career advancement and could be amended. Secondly, the current regulations do not ensure that seniority is taken into account when candidates apply for promotion. Finally, the current legal framework regulating the teaching profession does not include any mechanism to guarantee enforcement of regulations and does not establish accountability or sanction should the regulations not be enforced.

In **the Gambia**, teachers' career advancement is undermined by current regulations that establish different categories of schools according to the size of student population they serve and their location. The key issue affecting teachers' career advancement is, first, that the categorization of schools is not updated and does not accurately reflect the enrollment rates, which means that schools have many more students than the central authorities assume they do, and that prevents the creation of additional supervision posts, for example. Another issue is that the system currently in place does not reward those who have assumed higher grade positions. Almost half

of teachers currently in headship positions are ‘acting’, half of that number have been in acting position for a minimum of three years and are neither receiving acting allowance nor given any authorized document for the additional function of administration they perform. In short, they perform additional duties and assume increased responsibility without having the commensurate salary benefit. In view of these issues, the next steps include establishing the optimum school size to facilitate the reclassification of schools; revisiting the Teachers’ Scheme of Service and establishing positions to augment the Teachers Cadre; engaging the National Assembly Committee on Education, Training and ICT/policy and lawmakers and Education For All National Campaign Network (EFANet) to advocate for reclassification of schools and establishment of corresponding positions in the estimate; conducting a review meeting with stakeholders to review “Schedule 45” and develop strategies for improvement on the Teachers Cadre; conducting a survey to assess the situation of teachers in acting positions; and advocating for the establishment of a Teaching Service Commission.

In **Mali**, the need to establish a clear and comprehensive career path was identified as a key priority. The existing regulations related to career advancement establish that, based on seniority, teachers move up the salary scale automatically. However, there is concern with the fact that the current framework includes measures that prevent teacher mobility and make the career less attractive and should, consequently, be reviewed. For instance, a teacher is not eligible for a transfer or redeployment unless he or she has spent at least three years in the same post. Another issue is the need to reinforce measures to effectively harmonize the career path of teachers hired by the central government and those hired by local authorities. With regard to leave terms, two key measures were proposed. First, the adoption of measures to sensitize teachers and administration of teachers vis-à-vis the existing regulations related to maternity and paternity leave and the need to enforce their adoption. Second, it is proposed that the vacation period be used to put in place capacity building activities and refresher courses for teachers.

In **Nepal**, the legal provisions regulating career advancement establish that criteria such as experience and qualifications should be taken into account. Unlike **In the Gambia**, as described



earlier, the promotions are linked to salary increases. The issue in Nepal is that career advancement for teachers is not frequent and is often limited to moving up the career path ladder. One of the measures proposed to improve the system is to put in place mechanisms to promote both horizontal advancement opportunities – keeping experienced teachers in the classroom while recognizing and rewarding them – and vertical mobility path, increasing the possibility that qualified and experienced teachers can have access to deputy head teacher, head teacher, supervisor or other relevant positions. One key challenge remains: putting in place career advancement paths in the private sector.

In **Uganda**, there are a variety of career paths. The government has established the Teachers' Scheme of Service (TSC), which remains partially funded, covering only the primary education level. The current schemes allow for equal opportunity of advancement, provided one meets the criteria and standards. The current regulations have successfully put in place a system for promotions that is based on merit. However, the partial implementation of the TSC, due to inadequate funding, is an issue of concern. There is the need to further disseminate the new scheme of service, in particular for new entrants to the profession, by publishing booklets and including relevant information on the training curriculum. Another issue is that, while promotions or changes of categories are in principle linked to increased pay, there are significant delays and teachers work for months, sometimes over a year, assuming additional responsibilities and functions without being rewarded accordingly. There is the need to reinforce the horizontal advancement path, as there is concern that the current system is taking the best and most experienced teachers out of the classroom. Another issue that was identified is that horizontal advancement for primary school teachers is not linked to any incentives or rewards, while that is the case at secondary education level.

Professional roles and responsibilities: teacher evaluation, assessment and feedback;  
codes of ethics and conduct



In **Côte d'Ivoire**, there are two types of teacher evaluation and assessment currently in place. One is linked to pedagogical and academic performance, the other is rather focused the performance of administrative duties. The regulations are valued positively, as they include clear criteria and are performed by supervisors who are considered efficient and enjoy credibility and respect among teachers. The problem is twofold. First, that there is an insufficient number of supervisors, which makes school visits too rare. Addressing that issue is somewhat complex, as it entails increasing the number of supervisors and providing them with the resources required to perform their duties accordingly. Secondly, in the current evaluation system, the results of the performance assessment are not linked to career advancement. This creates a situation in which teachers do not see the added value of participating in the process. The fact that they do not have access to the final report also undermines the effectiveness of the evaluation process. In view of that, the measures proposed to improve teacher evaluation processes include reviewing the current regulations to include the obligation to share the results of the evaluation with the teacher, who should have time to reflect on it with his/her supervisors and develop a plan to put in place, if necessary, measures to improve his or her practice. The evaluation process should also take into account the students' view and feedback. Additionally, the criteria for the administrative evaluation should be reinforced, making them clearer, specific and measurable. In terms of codes of conduct, codes of ethics and codes of practice, while there is a code of conduct that was elaborated with the participation of teachers' unions, it is largely unknown and more decisive efforts are required to disseminate it. There is currently no code of practice and the need to develop it through an inclusive and participatory process was identified as a priority.

In **the DRC**, there are clear regulations pertaining to teacher evaluation and assessment. There is a well-established structure to perform periodic supervision and teacher appraisal duties, which include clear instructions and guidelines for grading. The issue, recurring in the country, is the perceived poor enforcement of the existing regulations, in particular in the countryside. This is due to the lack of supervisors and the inadequate funding accorded to them, preventing them from performing their duties. As in the **Côte d'Ivoire**, the results are not shared with the teachers, who cannot use the results of the assessment to improve their practice, and they are



not used for career advancement purposes. The need to increase the number of school visits is considered as a top priority. Another measure proposed is to reward the best performing teachers and link the results of the assessment to progress in the career path. In terms of codes of conduct, ethics and practice, **In the DRC** a code of conduct is in place. Its implementation is enforced by an organ created specifically for that purpose, the *Observatoire du Code de Conduite de l'agent Public* (OCEP). The issue is the poor dissemination of the code of conduct and the absence of sanctions to those who do not abide by it. The need to reinforce the OCEP, funding it accordingly, was identified as crucial to improving the dissemination and enforcement of the existing code of conduct.

In **the Gambia**, efforts were made to improve the how the system evaluates, assesses and provides feedback to teachers. The establishment of a Performance Management System (PMS) unit is evidence to that. This has led to the development and adoption of internal and external school monitoring policies. A classroom observation tool was developed and a system to carry out participatory performance monitoring is in place. The effectiveness of the measures, however, has been undermined due to the inadequate numbers of staff assigned to the different regions of the country. Because of that, there is a tendency to focus supervision on the capital city and surrounding areas, leaving school located in rural areas largely abandoned. Another issue identified is the need to review and simplify the classroom observation tool, along with strengthening the procedure to provide meaningful feedback to teachers in a timely manner. The next steps proposed include strengthening and decentralizing the PMS; improving the human resources database to have more accurate information on which schools and teachers have been supervised; strengthening in school monitoring, in particular in hard-to-reach areas and, finally, extending supervision to include private schools.

In **Mali**, the current practices for teacher evaluation, assessment and feedback are considered unsatisfactory. Though the results of the evaluation are disseminated to teachers, even if with considerable delays, there is the perception that in the absence of clear guidelines, the evaluation is largely subjective, which gives rise to concerns of favoritism in some cases. This is reinforced

by the existence of a quota, establishing a minimum number of teachers whose results are satisfactory, which can influence the results of assessment. It is proposed that this quota be abolished. There is, as in other countries, concern with the perceived lack of pedagogical assistance and supervision. To address that, the decentralization of the department in charge of human resources is proposed, alongside with the creation of an independent commission to oversee the evaluation process. With regards to codes of ethics, conduct and practice, while pre-service teacher training includes elements of professional practice and adequate behavior, there is currently no code of conduct adopted at national level. There are school level regulations, but no overarching document establishing procedures or sanctions.

In **Nepal**, the policies and regulations related to teacher evaluation are considered satisfactory. They are results-oriented and account for the qualification and skills of the teacher. They also provide students with an opportunity to share their views on the performance of teachers, which is considered a good practice. Nevertheless, there is concern with the poor use of feedback and the absence of stronger mechanisms to ensure the recommendations stemming from the evaluation are put in place.

In **Uganda**, the existing teacher performance appraisal mechanisms include inspections carried out by the Directorate of Education and Standards. Additionally, teachers receive support and feedback on their practice by Coordinating Centre Tutors, who are based in colleges but work closely with schools, providing mentoring and professional support to teacher and head-teachers in terms of lesson planning, use and development of teaching materials. The CCTs play a key role in helping teachers and head-teachers reflect on their daily practice, reviewing and approving overall work, lesson plans and teacher records, so as to ensure quality standards are met. One of the strengths of the Ugandan model is that feedback is provided to teachers in a timely manner. While efforts have been made by the DES to put in place a robust appraisal tool, the perception is that the current tool is too bulky, making the appraisal process too time-consuming. The financial resources to support the process are inadequate there is a need to reinforce the existing inspections grant scheme. There is the need to sensitize teachers vis-à-vis the importance and



mechanism of the evaluation, as there is currently some resistance by teachers to engage in the process. This could be done through workshops and increased in-school collaboration. The reinforcement of orientation and counselling for young teachers is also a priority.

### Teaching and learning conditions

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, the mechanisms to define teachers' hours of work take into account the specific needs of the different sectors and levels of education. Total hours of work are determined in accordance with the school programme and clearly communicated to teachers in advance of the start of the school year. The mechanism to monitor compliance with the designated hours of work assigned are considered effective. The problem is that the actual workload is not considered and there is the need to reinforce the mechanism, so as to make it account for the total number of students in class. The current system does not factor in whether a teacher has 30 or 60 students in a classroom and the workload this represents in terms of lesson planning, correction of materials, exams, assignments, counselling and guidance. There is a need to put in place measures to either compensate teachers for the extra ours or to assign a certain number of hours for tasks performed outside the classroom. In terms of promoting health and security at schools, efforts have been made to enhance the infrastructure of schools, offering medical services at school level and enhancing access to safe water and latrines. Onesuccessful measure prohibits the opening of bars next to schools, even if in some areas this regulation is not fully enforced. In certain schools, there are social services but a wide majority remain without such services. It is proposed that a comprehensive plan be developed to promote health at schools and establish school canteens and meal programmes.

In **the DRC**, the total hours of work are fixed at 1200 per year at primary level and 960 at secondary. These are established by the ministry of education, which put in place a mechanism for ensuring the regulation is respected. This mechanism is considered insufficient and in need of strengthening. One of the key issues related to the definition of teachers' hours of work is that the work performed outside the classroom is not taken into account when the teacher's schedule





is set. Thus, lesson planning, correction of exams and other non-teaching tasks are not remunerated. There is an urgent need to review the system to ensure that non-contact hours are remunerated or establishing a fixed number of hours per week that are assigned to tasks other than teaching. In terms of health and security at schools, the introduction of subjects linked to health and life skills in the programme is valued very positively. Efforts have been made to enhance the infrastructure in schools, improving access to water and separate latrines for boys and girl in schools, securing access to the school compound and establishing more strict control of vendors, but large numbers of schools have not benefitted from such initiatives to date. The need to establish school infirmaries was identified as a top priority.

In **the Gambia**, there are regulations establishing the total number of instructional hours per year. However, while there are clear rules fixing the number of hours of instruction students need to attend, there are no clear procedures to define the number of hours a teacher is expected to work. There is no minimum nor a maximum number of teaching hours per week. It is proposed that a comprehensive study be carried out to map the situation of working hours and workload, with a view to identifying possible interventions to address the issue. One measure that was adopted that is considered to have yielded positive results is the introduction of flexible hours, allowing teachers to find additional teaching hours in other schools. The introduction of double-shift teaching is somewhat more controversial. While it allows teachers to fill up their teaching schedule in the same school, thus avoiding travelling long distances to another school, the double-shift is paid at 50% the usual hourly rate, as mentioned earlier, and the need to review the double-shift scheme is considered as a priority. In terms of health and safety at school, various positive measures have been adopted. They include the adoption of regulation and minimum standards for the school premises; the adoption of a policy to prevent sexual harassment; the improved distribution of first aid kits; the certification of cooks and foods vendors based inside school facilities or nearby. There is the need, however, to improve the monitoring of health and safety in both public and private schools. The development of a comprehensive school health and safety policy is recommended.



In **Nepal**, the teacher's workload is fixed at six teaching hours a day. However, the work done outside the classroom is not remunerated and it is proposed that the system be reviewed to address the issue. In terms of health and safety at schools, efforts have been made and most schools offer access to safe water, toilets and basic health services. In the rural areas, however, progress in this regard has been slower and there is a need to scale up efforts. One fundamental pressing issue is the need to construct schools that are earthquake resistant.

In **Uganda**, significant efforts have been made to improve teaching and learning conditions in particular and to reduce the number of students per classroom. To achieve that, a teacher/pupil ratio policy was adopted, more classrooms were built and more teachers were recruited, despite the government's ban on teacher recruitment. These teachers who are not include in the government's payroll are paid for by parents' and teachers' associations. As In the Gambia, a double-shift teaching scheme was introduced, but its implementation is not considered successful and needs to be reviewed. One of the priority measures proposed is to eliminate the recruitment ban and make the ceiling on staff numbers at district levels more flexible. There are calls to reduce the pupil/teacher ratio in primary education from 53 to 45 students (the same ratio as for secondary) and establish stronger mechanisms to ensure the ratios are enforced. In terms of health and safety at school, Uganda has adopted comprehensive policy guidelines on these matters. To improve the infrastructure, efforts have been made to increase the number of latrines available. Some schools have established health clubs and pilot health-related initiatives—offering sanitary towels to girls, providing meals, operating immunization programmes – but these remain peripheral and the vast majority of schools has yet to adopt similar measures. The proposed next steps include further dissemination of the existing policies and the monitoring and supervision of their implementation.

## Social security

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, public officials, including teachers and their families have the right to be covered by a mutual fund “La Mutuelle Générales des Fonctionnaires et Agents de l'Etat de Côte d'Ivoire” for free consultations, medical and dental care and free transfer of medications. The national education sector benefits from an established health council that provides equal access to healthcare for all public personnel and a systematic retirement management system that includes retiring teachers and education support personnel. However, major issues remain concerning timely payment of pensions, reduced contribution to the housing and transport allowances, and weakly regulated mutual funds. The proposed next steps include raising awareness among teachers and education support personnel about the importance of joining a mutual fund and inviting the state to pay its share to the implementation of the “Couverture Maladie Universelle (CMU)”.

In spring 2017, the government of Côte d'Ivoire finally launched the experimental phase of the “Couverture Maladie Universelle (CMU)” which aims to improve the quality of life and learning of students, and to provide universal medical coverage to all Ivorian people regardless of their economic situation. If successful, the initiative is set to launch nationwide in January 2018.

In **the DRC**, the Institut National de Sécurité Sociale of the DRC provides the social security services in the country. The constitution, the labour law, the orders 231 and 234 all have a provision on social security regulations. But the regulations are undermined in actual practice through non respect of the existing texts, unavailability of first aid, regulations limiting the number of people in charge and the non-payment of holiday bonuses. The next steps include sensitizing the teachers about the importance of contributing to the social security fund and establishing a social security fund for teachers similar to INSS.

In **the Gambia**, during the training, the module on social security was presented to the participants by the trainer, but the participants opted to work on different thematic areas.



In **Mali**, the freedom of speech and the presence of administrative tribunals are regarded as sound teacher protection mechanisms. The teachers and the education support personnel have access to the social security fund and the social housing programmes. Despite, existing mechanisms, the retired teachers have difficulties accessing their pensions initially, insufficient coverage and management for work-related accidents. The next step include advocacy for more systematic management of social security funds with a wider coverage.

In **Nepal**, the very encouraging fact was the feeling of closing the gender equality gap and provision of financial and psychological support to teachers and students especially after the Gorkha earthquake in April 2015. Despite the progress, centuries old traditions and cultural practices are still very much embedded in Nepal's society including perspectives that make the advancement of decent work and provision of equal opportunities to both male and female teachers and education personnel hard and inaccessible. Aspects identified for further improvement include sensitization of individual responsibilities and advocacy for children, women and other marginalized groups.

In **Uganda**, the government provides a pension to all public employees. Teachers in private schools receive contributory pensions schemes. The major loophole in the social security includes the absence of medical coverage and the non-inclusion of social security in the collective bargaining agenda of teachers. Because of that, next steps should include inclusion of social security in the collective bargaining agenda and optimization of the period to receive benefits upon the termination of the employment contract.

### Social dialogue

In **Côte d'Ivoire** , the Conseil National du Dialogue Social Ivoirien, an autonomous organ in the Ministry of Labour and Public Services, is in charge of consultations, mediation, arbitration and negotiation between the government, employers and the workers in the country. The system is decentralized, in which case, the Conseil consultative de l'Education nationale and the teacher unions address the sector specific issues and concerns. Unfortunately, such meetings are held

irregularly and certain recommendations lose significance. The next proposed steps include establishing a similar framework for higher education sector and ensuring proper functioning of such structures at national levels.

In **the DRC**, the importance of social dialogue is highly regarded in all forms and domains due to the fragile nature of the political system. The international community provides extensive support to the government of DRC in partnership with civil society organizations in the development of sound education policies. The very existence of Observatoire du Partenariat Educatif, national and provision education commissions - the COPA (Comité des parents d'élèves) and COGES (Conseil de gestion) - contribute to continuous communications at all levels, despite corruption among education officials, the lack of political will and the manipulation of participants during negotiations. The proposed measures include reinforcing the quality of the negotiations, fighting against the manipulation of participants during negotiations and consultations and advocating for the enforcement of decisions.

In **the Gambia**, during the training, the module on social dialogue was presented to the participants by the trainer, however, the participants opted to work on different thematic.

In **Mali**, the social dialogue is institutionalized in a number of laws and legal documents including the constitution of the country Article 25 and the Labour code Article L 5. Teachers and education support personnel are often times left out of the decision making process even though the decisions are taken regarding the new curriculum and pedagogy. This indicates a need to advocate for increased efforts to involve teachers at all stages of the process from inception to the implementation of decision and involvement of larger stakeholder groups in the decision-making process.

In **Nepal**, at the government level, the committee in charge of social dialogue discusses the occupational issues. It is important to mention that this committee is not an independent committee and is not a legal entity. The committee covers very little if any issues related to the education sector and meets on an irregular basis. The committee structure needs further review



and potentially institutionalized with a concrete mandate and independent status. The meetings should be regulated and involve important stakeholders including teachers and their representatives, in this case, the teacher unions in consultations to exchange ideas and opinions.

In **Uganda**, social dialogue is embedded in a number of legal documents including the Labour Union Act of 2006, Article 20 and 40 of the national constitution and in National Tribunal IDEA, Functional Industrial Court, National Consultative and Negotiating Council under Public Service and the Joint Ministerial Committee which addresses teacher issues. In each of these legal entities, there are existing challenges that include inadequate funding of the industrial court, government failing to respect the agreed position during social dialogue, misconception of social dialogue by supervisors and stakeholders and the classic case of attempted intimidation during the consultation and negotiations process of the employees. There is a need to sensitize all stakeholders about the benefits of social dialogue, translating and simplifying labour laws and standards into local languages and most importantly, institutionalizing social dialogue at all levels.

#### Initial and further teacher education and training

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, the current practice of teacher training has been identified as a strength in the system. Initial training is two years followed by a probation period to acquire practical experiences. Those wishing to continue their professional development are required to pass a public contest for scholarships. . Areas regarded as much needed for improvement include modernization of the training curricula, the use of new teaching methodologies and availability of financial resources to undertake continuous professional development. The next proposed steps include training of trainers, reinforce the capacity of training centers to welcome additional new teachers and closing the physical distance between the training centers and the locations of new teachers.



In **the DRC**, the current policies of teacher trainings are regulated through national laws and legal entities at all levels of education and are well regarded. The main concerns were the non-application of the existing laws and regulations in practice and the use of outdated and inadequate training curricula. Therefore, the current training curricula should be revised in consultation with teachers, and the programs should be adapted to be relevant to the current social context and needs.

In **the Gambia**, teacher education and training policies cover a versatile group of teachers, have a regulated system of training with an effective follow up, and monitoring and observation of trainees by trained and experienced teachers. The policies provide for trainee teachers with a stipend as a motivation and the trainees are accompanied by experienced and qualified teacher. The concern of the system is to ensure an equal distribution of the trained teachers in the regions and create sufficient infrastructure to meet educational needs. The proposed next steps include provision of incentives for teachers and updating the entry requirements for training.

In **Mali**, training policies cover all levels of professional development of teachers, from initial to continuous, reinforced through the training programmes of Communauté d'Apprentissage of teachers, and involvement of school management committees. The policy on training should further update the training curricula, put in place a competence profile for teachers, keep a track record of trained teachers in a database, improve the training standards for contract teachers and those outside of the public system, including community teachers, and put in place a better follow up mechanism.

In **Nepal**, teacher education and training policies prioritize need-based training. Teachers in urban areas have greater access to initial teacher training than those who live in rural Nepal, where they rely heavily on traditional teaching methods. In addition to unfair employment practices in both public and private sectors, teachers in Nepal are subject to outdated training programs and methodologies and poor training facilities and supervision. The government should regulate and update the training practices and curricula in order to make them relevant, useful



and accessible to all teachers, and to ensure the provision of adequate financial means for teachers to continue their professional development.

In **Uganda**, teacher education and training policies cover from early childhood education to tertiary education with specific provisions of minimum qualification requirements and clear guidelines on required training and experience. The government provides limited sponsorship for training and the applications are subject to a competitive process to gain admission to the trainings provided by the teacher training centers. Despite this, limited financial provisions for training and outdated methodologies leave little room for improvement for teachers and their subject knowledge. The next steps include involving of teacher organization in the policy formulation process, updating the training curriculum and methodology to equip teachers with practical skills as well as capitalizing on a retired teachers pool to train teachers for specific skills.



## The closure forum: reflecting and thinking forward

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The Regional Dialogue Forum on Human Resources Management in the Education Sector took place in Dakar, Senegal, on April 26-27. It brought together more than 100 ministry of education officials and education sector workers from nine countries<sup>2</sup> involved in the Global teachers' effort for better education project to reflect on the key issues affecting human resource management. The meeting objectives were to promote an exchange on good practices and lessons learned, identify priority issues and areas for improvement and get participants to jointly decide next steps education stakeholders can take to establish human resource management policies that lead to improved quality of education.

In the next section, we will highlight some of the key issues that emerged from the discussions.

### The Local Education Group: fragile progress

The discussions aimed to take stock of how the Local Education Group is functioning, its strengths and weaknesses and potential improvements. In some countries, the LEG was created during the implementation of the project. While in some countries the LEG is an informal body, in others, it was created by a decree and has a somewhat clear mandate and set of operational guidelines.

In **Benin**, the LEG was established by a decree in June 2015. Involved in the broader education sector policy dialogue, it brings together relevant stakeholders from the government, education community and civil society in meetings every three months.. There is, however, a perception the dissemination of information related to the activities of the LEG needs to be strengthened and that too often partners are not available for the meetings. Other measures identified to improve the LEG include reinforcing the engagement in discussions and ownership of education reform and the need to further focus on improving learning outcomes.

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<sup>2</sup> Benin, **Côte d'Ivoire**, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Nepal, Uganda and Senegal.



In **the Gambia**, the LEG also meets quarterly. It brings together local and international NGOs, government officials, donors and multilateral development agencies. Its current arrangements are considered effective – including the rotation of the chair, which gives partners the opportunity to assume responsibility for running the meetings, strengthening engagement and ownership. Not only has it done GPE-related work, reviewing ESP and ESPIG, preparing and putting in place Joint Sector Reviews, but it has extended its collaboration to preparing and reviewing bilateral grants funded by other donors such as GIZ-Germany.

In **Liberia**, the LEG is in place and meets once a month. It brings together ministry of education staff, the National Teachers' Association of Liberia, local NGOs such as the Youth Coalition for Education in Liberia, the Coalition for Transparency and Accountability in Education, the Liberia Technical Committee on Education for All, international NGOs such as ActionAid USA, Concern Worldwide, OXFAM, Plan, and multilateral development agencies – World Bank, UNESCO, and UNICEF. The current arrangements for the LEG are considered functional and allow for meaningful discussion on sector policy.

In **Senegal**, the LEG was only created in January 2017, even though the country is a GPE partner since 2006. The newly formed LEG is rather large – 93 members – and includes representatives from 12 different ministries – from primary higher education, to health and social security, employment and agriculture – and relevant stakeholders such as the private sector, civil society, student and teachers' associations. Its first assignment was to review and validate the interim implementation report of the first phase of the PAQUET, Programme d'Amélioration de la Qualité et de la Transparence. This has been the only meeting of the LEG so far and it is, consequently, too early to judge whether the arrangements will have positive impact on improving sector planning and dialogue.

In **Uganda**, the LEG is in place and is expected to meet quarterly. It brings together representatives of the ministry of education and finance, the Uganda National Teachers' Union, the Forum for Education NGOs in Uganda and relevant development partners. The functioning of the LEG is considered moderately satisfactory. The group was somewhat dormant and

following meetings organized by EI, UNESCO and donors, there was renewed interest in strengthening collaboration. To achieve that, partners identified the need to reinforce the frequency of meetings and to promote more timely sharing of information and to intensify research efforts and the use of evidence in sector planning and analysis.

### Human resources in the education sector: good practices and areas for improvement

The discussion held in the Forum aimed to identify good practices in terms of management of human resources in the education sector as well as areas that require attention or improvement. In this section, we highlight some of the key issues emerging from the discussions.

In **Benin**, best practices include the adoption of codes of conduct and codes of practice. The current promotion criteria and the improvements made to the salary and incentives policies are also considered to have positive impact in retaining qualified teachers in the profession. However, the policies to promote a better teaching and learning environment are considered less efficient. There is the need to reinforce policies to promote health and safety at schools. The areas where the least progress has been achieved are the definition of class size; teacher evaluation and rewards for performance; teacher deployment; induction and probation on new entrants to the profession and the training and recruitment of school leadership.

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, the most successful measures put in place over the last couple of years have reinforced leave terms – parental and study leave – and professional freedom. The measures adopted to specifically meet the needs of teachers working in rural and hard-to-reach areas are also valued positively. Policies that have had more moderate success include those linked to codes of ethics, conduct and practice; promotion criteria; social dialogue; social security; teacher credential and certification; deployment and rotation; recruitment processes, strategies and policies and teacher probation and induction. The policies related to class size, the promotion of health and safety at schools have not yielded the desired results. As in Benin, the recruitment and training of school leadership is an area that calls for further development.

None of the current human resources management policies in place in education sector in the **Democratic Republic of Congo** were identified as best practice. While there was moderate appreciation of the existing laws and regulations, there is great concern with the weak mechanisms to enforce their application. The prevailing view among the Congolese delegation is that the current policies, the low salaries, the absence of allowances or incentives and the lack of a pension scheme are “turning teachers into beggars”.

In **the Gambia**, the most successful practices identified were the adoption of codes of ethics, conduct and practice. The policies related to social dialogue, leave terms and those that protect teachers’ professional freedom are largely valued positively. Policies that have been moderately successful are those linked to teacher education and training policies, the definition of class size, teacher recruitment and deployment. The policies that need to be strengthened or revised are those pertaining to teacher’s conditions of service and retention and the promotion of health and safety in schools. As in Côte d’Ivoire and Benin, the existing policies to train and recruit school leadership are considered ineffective.

In **Liberia**, as In the DRC, no policy on human resources management currently in place was identified as a best practice. The measures and programmes to improve teachers’ continuing professional development and access to social security are considered as moderately satisfactory. The areas where the least progress has been achieved are the definition of class size, as crowded classrooms remain a largely unresolved issue. The policies related to conditions of service – specifically the definition of hours of work, teacher evaluation, assessment and feedback – and teacher retention are considered unsatisfactory and reviewing them is a priority.

In **Mali**, the changes made to the teacher recruitment policies, having strengthened the process and established clear objectives to limit the recruitment at local level, are considered as a best practice. Also, the adjustments made to the teachers’ salaries and incentives policies have had positive impact, even if there is the need to strengthen the teachers’ merit and performance pay element. On the other hand, the existing policies and procedures to define the number of



students per classroom are considered as largely unsatisfactory and have not succeeded in tackling the crowded classroom problem.

Unlike Liberia, in **Nepal** certain policies and measures were identified as very successful. These include efforts to upgrade teachers' qualifications, even if there is a perception that teachers working in the rural areas did not enjoy the same opportunities as those in urban areas. Another measure that has yielded positive results is the reinforced effort to attract women and members of marginalized communities to the teaching profession. The policies that have failed to produce tangible results are linked to pedagogical support, which remains limited and inefficient. The need to reinforce and review existing policies that aim to make the profession attractive to youth is a key priority.

In **Senegal**, the policies to improve access to social security and to promote health and security at schools are considered as best practices and have had significant positive impact for teachers and students alike. The improvements to the teacher recruitment policies are valued positively, as are the measures to streamline the teacher evaluation and feedback process. However, the policies to improve the attractiveness of the profession have been less successful and there is the urgent need to step up efforts and strengthen the policies to reduce the number of students per classroom and improve the working conditions of teachers.

In **Uganda**, the improved social dialogue between the Ministry of Education and the teachers' union is the result of good policies that have reinforced collaboration to identify and sort out challenges affecting the education system. One particularly successful policy was the introduction of an improved system to manage teachers' payroll, which has significantly reduced the delays that for years caused great concern for teachers, especially in rural and hard-to-reach areas. The policy that imposed a ban on teacher recruitment is considered largely unsuccessful, as it aggravated the problem of crowded classrooms and pressured school principals to identify alternative funding sources to hire additional teachers.



## Identifying concrete steps for change

The identification of successful and less successful policies triggered a reflection by ministry of education officials and teachers' representatives regarding the steps necessary to achieve improvements in priority areas affecting teacher effectiveness and the management of human resources.

The discussion focused on determining improvements that could be envisaged within the next 6, 12 and 24 months' period, identifying joint actions required by the ministry and by the teachers' union, what kind of, if any, external support would be needed and from whom.

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, the priorities for the next six months include improving the security of schools and starting a process to review the teacher training policies. In terms of human resource management issues, the priorities include improving the existing regulations affecting promotion criteria and setting up a structure within the DMOSS – Direction de la Mutualité et des Œuvres Sociales – dedicated to the higher education sector.

To achieve these improvements, the Ministry of Education will take the lead on promoting discussions that engage the teachers' unions, with a view to having a better understanding of their concerns regarding the shortcomings of the training policies. The trade unions will sensitize their members on the issues so that they can collect evidence and present their views. The ministry will explore ways to provide de school management committees with additional resources to improve security of schools. With regards to improvements on promotion criteria, the ministry will launch a process to review and establish clearer criteria and regulations. The collaboration of the ministry of economy and finance, the public service and the higher education and research ministries – Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances, Ministère de la Fonction Publique, Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique – will be essential to achieving the expected results.

In **Benin**, there are two key priorities for the coming six months: putting in place refresher courses for teachers prior to the beginning of the new school year and reinforcing teacher recruitment.



The ministry of education and the teachers' unions will collaborate to identify teachers who will benefit from this refresher courses and define a timeline for the elaboration of the content and mobilization of resources. With regards to recruitment, efforts will focus on mobilizing local level administration, head teachers and teacher to identify the needs and put in place the competitive examinations.

In **the Gambia**, the priorities for the next six months include improving the procedures for defining the hours of work and workload of teacher, the policies regulating teacher postings and deployment and teacher probation and induction. Additionally, the ministry of education and the Gambia Teachers' Union will seek to improve the teachers' Performance Management System and to further the reflection on the human resources policies in place. Together, the ministry and the GTU will organize consultative meetings to engage key stakeholders and set milestones for the achievement of the desired changes. The ministry will take the lead on strengthening the PMS and completing the human resources policy. It will explore ways to reduce the number of teachers working double-shift and set the foundations for a teacher induction programme. The GTU will mobilize its members in the different regions of the country to consult them and obtain their views on these matters. The Personnel Management Office and the Public Service Commission will be involved in the process.

In **Liberia**, efforts will focus on enhancing the effectiveness of the human resources department of the education ministry. The ministry and NTAL will strengthen collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including the Civil Service Agency and the Ministry of Finance, to continue to identify "ghost teachers" and improve payroll management, which will contribute to freeing up funds to properly meet the needs of existing teachers through the provision of adequate instructional materials and incentives to motivate teachers to perform well. NTAL will take the lead on stepping up efforts to disseminate the existing code of conduct for teachers and school administrators, publishing and distributing at least 5000 copies.

In **Mali**, the ministry of education and the Syndicat National de l'Education et la Culture will join forces to improve the planning and management of human resources in the education sector,



with a particular focus on achieving more equitable deployment of trained teachers across the country. Together, they will engage other relevant actors in quarterly consultation meetings, including the ministry in charge of higher education and research, the ministry for professional education and training and representatives of local government – communautés territoriales. Efforts will focus on further disseminating existing regulations and sensitizing local authorities on the need to enforce them.

In **Senegal**, the focus will be on exploring ways to address the high pupil/teacher ratio and improving the management of human resources. To achieve the former, recruiting and better deployment of teachers will be required. One of the key obstacles to overcome is the low interest of youth in the teaching profession. The ministry and the teachers' unions will work together to sensitize students and raise awareness of the importance of the profession, with a view to attracting new candidates. Improving the attractiveness of the profession will be a key element of these efforts and to achieve that, there is a need to re-energize the commission in charge of human resources management and make it more democratic. To this end, the union and the ministry will launch a process to finally adopt a draft agreement reached in 2015 among the different ministries in charge of education, whose signature is still pending.

In **Uganda**, the ministry of education and the Uganda National Teachers' Union will endeavour to improve the teacher recruitment and deployment policies; to improve support and supervision of teachers and to streamline the management of the payroll system. An improved deployment of teachers will require the strict observance of existing guidelines. To this end, the ministry of education will take the lead on fostering dialogue and collaboration between district level authorities and head teachers. To enhance the support and supervision of teachers, a situational analysis will be carried out, aiming to identify current challenges and opportunities. The goal is to expedite the restructuring of the DES, map the Coordinating Centres and streamline the allocation of funds allocated to inspection and supervision purposes. This will require the collaboration of the DES, CCTS, PTCs, associate assessors, DIS and DEO.



## Committing to improved social dialogue

Recognizing that the discussions held during the implementation of the programme contributed to reinforcing the collaboration between the ministry of education and teachers' union, identified concrete steps both parties can take to improve sector analysis and planning and paved the way for more effective social dialogue at the national level, the Dakar sessions concluded with the adoption of a declaration that demonstrate the commitment of parties to continue to take steps to build bridges and avoid conflict.

The declaration, unanimously adopted, reads as follows:

Meeting in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2017, we, representatives of governments and education sector unions from Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Nepal, Senegal and Uganda:

- Reaffirm our commitment to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- Emphasize the central role of education in promoting social and economic development;
- Underline the critical role of teachers and education support personnel in the provision of quality education for all;
- Recognize the various challenges facing our education systems;
- Acknowledge that the educational needs of our nations' children, youth and adults are best served when educational authorities, teachers and education support personnel collaborate effectively;
- Underscore that mutual accountability and collective responsibility are key to improving our education systems;
- Recall the principles enshrined in the ILO/ UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) concerning the participation of teachers in educational decision-making ;
- Emphasize the importance of institutionalized social dialogue for fostering harmonious industrial relations, strengthening our education systems and achieving quality education for all;

- Express our intent to reinforce collaboration and implementation of agreements between educational authorities and education sector unions;
- Affirm our commitment to participatory, evidence-based education policy making that is country-led and responds to nationally identified priorities;
- Commit to fostering a culture of respect and trust among educational authorities and education sector workers;
- Resolve to take the necessary steps to engage in meaningful, informed dialogue and avoid conflict.

Education International will engage the signatory countries in a process to develop and establish a mechanism to follow up on the implementation of the declaration.

## Conclusion: lessons learned and the way forward

During the implementation of the programme, Education International aimed to support the participation of teachers' organizations in Local Education Groups and build the capacity of teachers' representatives and ministry of education staff to analyze human resources management issues in the education sector. While every national education system is unique and generalization regarding education policies are of limited value, this experience revealed that there are critical points in common in the countries involved in this initiative, both in terms of participation in LEGs and human resources management.

With regards to the participation of teachers' organizations in Local Education Groups, we found four key barriers: structural, cultural, political and capability.

Structural is concerning the ineffective functioning of the LEG, characterized by the absence of regular meetings and a clear work plan. In many countries, the LEG was created during the implementation of the programme, often after the workshops and meetings organized to bring together relevant actors – teachers, ministry staff and donors representatives. If the structure is

not functional, teachers' organizations, while involved by definition, are not meaningfully engaged.

The second barrier is cultural. The dialogue at LEG level reflects the culture of dialogue in the country. If effective social dialogue is not in place, it is very unlikely that the LEG will provide an effective platform for exchange. Additionally, in various countries, there is the perception that it is not the role of teachers' unions to engage in the kind of sector analysis and policy development that the LEG is expected to perform. All too often we heard ministry staff and donors say that the conversations are too technical for the unions to contribute or that the LEG does not deal with salary issues. At the same time, the clear majority of the participating unions had never engaged in this kind of policy dialogue and efforts to shape the use of foreign aid for the sector. Reviewing grant applications and reflecting on issues such as recruitment or retention policies was a challenge for many of them.

The political barrier involves the lack of political will to engage unions in LEG discussions and on broader sector policy analysis in most countries. All too often we hear that there are too many unions and that it is hard to determine which should participate. Therefore, all are excluded. However, the same is not true of civil society organizations and the LEG often includes various NGOs, even those not working with education. There are many cases in which teachers' unions report that they attended one LEG meeting, but as they asked questions or made comments that were not necessarily in line with the views of the ministry, they were not invited back.

The fourth barrier is capability. The participation in a platform such as the LEG requires capacity to analyze complex policy issues and make sound proposals on issues that are often new to the union. To develop a policy proposal or to make informed contributions on the elaboration of a sector plan, the union needs to be able to consult its members, explain the issues at stake, get to know their views and then formulate policy. If the system prevents them from collecting membership fees and maintaining a functional office, if there are restrictions that prevent the union from having full time staff, if the organization does not have the capacity to communicate with members, then it is unable to adequately perform its role as a partner.

In view of these barriers, to support the participation of teachers' organizations in Local Education Groups and on the broader sector dialogue, governments and partners need first to recognize and acknowledge the significant role of the unions in a systemically successful process.

It is fundamental to facilitate as large a participation of education sector workers in policy discussion as possible, as they are the eyes and ears of the ministry of education across the country. They are the ones that see first-hand the results of a given policy. They are the best placed to judge whether the training offered is relevant and if the follow-up measures in place are effective. To achieve that, we need to overcome the reductionist view that unions only care about salary issues.

The unions must step up to critical and often new areas of responsibility in this process, by further engaging their membership on broader policy discussions, reinforcing their communication with grassroots members. International partners can play the role of brokers or facilitators in this process, by promoting open, frank, meaningful and systematic dialogue at the LEG. This in turn, can help improve the conditions for broader social dialogue.

In terms of human resource management, there are three key findings that are common to all the participating countries. The first is that existing legislation and regulations are poorly enforced. While there is recognition that, in principle, the legal framework responds to the needs of education sector workers, in practice they are not implemented accordingly. This is, to a significant extent, due to the absence of resources, but not exclusively. The legal framework does not embed effective mechanisms to guarantee its application and there are no measures to enforce accountability. There is, therefore, the need to review existing regulations pertaining to human resource management to strengthen control systems.

The second finding has direct impact on the quality of education: teacher support is conspicuous by absence. Whether it is provided at school level or externally, in all participating countries the prevailing view is that support is insufficient and mostly limited to urban areas. In various countries, teachers and head teachers with long careers reported that their schools had never



been visited by a supervisor. All too often, when there are school visits and inspections, the teachers and school principals do not receive any feedback they can use to reflect on their practice. This is a clear waste of limited resources. If external evaluation or assessment does not provide meaningful, timely feedback, then it is unlikely that it will have any positive impact on the quality of education. There is the need to reinforce school-based support and collaboration among peers, making it systematic, creating opportunities for sharing and for supporting colleagues with lesson planning.

The third finding is that policies that aim to promote the retention of trained teachers in the profession are, more often than not, an afterthought. This undermines the attractiveness of the profession. It is not merely a question of low salaries, but also of the absence of incentives, of clear career advancement opportunities, of poor access to health care and absence of pension schemes. The fact that work done outside the classroom is not rewarded is not only a source of frustration, it detracts from the quality of lesson planning and ultimately affects the quality of education.

Current working conditions are a key obstacle to attracting new entrants to the profession. The absence of teaching aids and materials, the crowded classrooms, the lack of in-service training and professional development opportunities taking a heavy toll on teachers' motivation and effectiveness. When, despite the difficulties, young professionals join the profession, the lack of induction, counselling and guidance programmes is a major factor of dissatisfaction. There is a pressing need to take decisive steps to review the existing measures and to adopt new policies that aim to reinforce the attractiveness of the profession.

In view of the difficulties identified earlier, the way forward is not an easy one, but the journey will be easier if some simple steps are taken.

First, it is important to build on the momentum created by this initiative, establishing a mechanism to follow up on the implementation of the decisions that ministry of education staff and teachers' representatives have made together. Secondly, if we create additional



opportunities for both parties to collaborate, with external facilitation, and reflect on the reality of the education system, with a view to identifying national solutions to national problems, we will not only foster ownership of education reform, but will build stronger bridges between ministry of education staff and education sector workers.

Finally, it is only by reinforcing a culture of dialogue, supported by concrete action at national level, that the essential partners of the education sector can prevent conflict and industrial action, foster a unified vision of quality education for all, and ensure the growth and sustainability of genuine reform.