Teaching policies and learning outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa

Issues and Options

Summary

UNESCO
United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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IICBA
International Institute
for Capacity Building
in Africa

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Acknowledgements

Foreword

African education systems have seen massive transformations and expansion over the past two decades, with more children in the primary cycle than ever before, gender parity and near universal levels of primary education in many countries. However in spite of expanded access toeducation, the region has not been rewarded with a commensurate increase in the quality of schoolingand, more critically, higher learning outcomes.

National monitoring reports, regional and international assessments confirm significant gaps in learning achievements within and across countries- with large numbers of learners in the early primary grades lacking in foundational reading and mathematics skills, primary level drop-out rates still high across Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), and many children reaching adolescence without basic numeracy skills.

Looking to the future, the African Union recently launched the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2025)* which envisages a new generation of African citizens who are effective change agents for the continent's sustainable development. Teachers are situated at the heart of this strategy as part of "*qualitative systems of education and training [that] provide the African continent with efficient human resources adapted to African core values.*"

Yet in spite of significant investments in teacher recruitment and initial training programs across the region since 2000, countries are still experiencing critical teacher shortages, with Ministries of Education struggling to recruit enough qualified teachers to match the expansion in primary enrolments and to deploy them where they are needed most in rural and remote communities. As a result, young learners continue to be marginalized from a quality teaching in the most impoverished areas, and a wide gap between the supply and demand for teachers has opened up across the continent.

It is now clear that 'input' remedies to teacher's recruitment, training, deployment, career development and welfare have been insufficient conditions for improving the status and attractiveness of the teaching profession in Sub-Saharan Africa, or as an impetus toreal improvements in teaching and learning. An alternative, holistic and more integrated vision of teacher policy is therefore needed.

In a context of education crisis, it is crucial for national teaching policies to be more tightly connected with the broader education improvement agenda, as well as systemic and school-based efforts to monitor improvements in the quality of learning. At systems level, teachers and their representative organizations

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*   Adopted by the African Union Heads of State and Government during their Twenty-Sixth Ordinary Session on 31 January 2016 in Addis Ababa

must be drawn more meaningfully into efforts to increase the responsiveness of instructional practice, curriculum and assessment policy to local poverty contexts and in addressing systemic challenges as they affect teaching practice.

At the front line of educational provision, the vital role of teachers in driving and monitoring real-time improvements in learning outcomes also requires greater attention. Indeed, there is increasing country evidence around the world on the impact of rights-based pedagogic approaches and classroom-based learning assessments in achieving more equitable outcomes for the most vulnerable learners, and in improving the quality of schooling from the bottom-up. Until now, little attention has been paid to feeding such experiences in to the broader policy picture in the African context.

Finally, and with frequent reports that teacher motivation and morale are low across Sub-Saharan Africa leading to high levels of attrition, the policy discourse needs to extend beyond the narrow focus on recruitment drives and the quality of teacher training to include all other dimensions impacting on teacher's motivation and well-being and for all categories of teachers – both vertically from early childhood care and education (ECCE) to higher education, and horizontally from recruitment to retirement.

Much of the attrition problem is due, in large part due, to the daily challenges and pressures under which teacher's work, their remuneration and conditions of service and their lack of voice in shaping qualitative improvements. Country research demonstrates the need for greater institutional investments inschool-based teacher support and motivation frameworks, effective supervision and appraisal mechanisms and longer-term incentive structures and professionalization policies.

Teaching policy presents a complex of issues for policy makers which are not always captured by current indicators. Holistic, comprehensive teacher policies would consider all of the above issues and while there is still an obvious urgency in recruiting more **qualified** teachers to close the achievement gap in Africa's school systems, what is perhaps needed above all is more iterative, joined up thinking and policy making.

For too long, Africa's teachers have been divorced from constructive involvement in the dialogue around educational improvement.The empowerment Africa's teachers and school leadership to participate in the dialogue and to take up the new roles expected of them will indeed be critical to achieving SDG 4 and the goals of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa.

Dr. Yumiko Yokozeki
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I. Introduction

Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) have seen a massive expansion in their education systems over the past two decades as a result of the global drive to meet the Education for All (EFA) and the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Having endorsed the resolutions of the World Forum on Education for All in Dakar in 2000, governments across the region called for education to become 'national priority number one,' with Ministries of Education initiating national education action plans, strengthening public sector investments and mobilizing stakeholders across the public and private sectors and civil society.

Yet in spite of expanded access to education, the region has not been rewarded with a commensurate increase in the quality of schooling and, more critically, higher learning outcomes. National monitoring reports, regional and international assessments effectively confirm significant gaps in learning achievements within and across countries. Across Sub-Saharan Africa, one in two children will reach adolescence without basic skills in reading and mathematics (Brookings Institution, 2012).

And with so many children leaving primary and secondary school to look for work, or not seeing a value in furthering their education, it's clear that the lack of access to quality schooling deepens the marginalization of Africa's young people by excluding them from opportunities for upward social mobility through secondary and higher education.

More than ever, education strategies, support and monitoring mechanisms are needed to improve the quality of the educational experience for the millions of children who currently are in school, but not necessarily receiving an education of good quality.[1]

Envisaging a new African citizen

The global Education 2030 agenda and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) have re-focused international attention on the quality of education and learning and the necessity to ensure equitable learning outcomes for all learners.

The 2014 Muscat Agreement enshrined the idea that the post-2015 global education agenda should *"expand the vision of access to reflect relevant learning outcomes through the provision of quality education at all levels. It should take a holistic and lifelong learning approach, and ensure that no one is left behind."*[2]

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1   UNESCO Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education.
     Please see: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001778/177849e.pdf

2   Joint Proposal of the Education for All (EFA) Steering Committee on Education beyond 2015. Presented and discussed at the Global EFA Meeting (GEM) in Oman (12-14 May 2014).
     Please see: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002276/227658E.pdf

Signatories to the Incheon Declaration and Education 2030 Framework for Action, adopted at the end of the World Education Forum (WEF) in May 2015 and subsequently endorsed as Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), further agreed on a comprehensive vision for education which aims to "*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all.*"

Looking to the future, the African Union recently launched the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2025)[3] which envisages a new generation of African citizens who are effective change agents for the continent's sustainable development. Teachers are situated at the heart of this strategy as part of "*qualitative systems of education and training [that] provide the African continent with efficient human resources adapted to African core values.*"

Looking beyond the teacher shortage and input remedies

The policy discourse connecting teachers to the education crises in SSA is currently dominated by calls for countries to recruit more qualified teachers, to improve the quality of initial teacher training, to increase the efficiency of deployment strategies and to invest in career development and teacher welfare policies.

Yet, in spite of significant investments in teacher recruitment and initial training programs since 2000, countries are still experiencing critical teacher shortages. Indeed, Sub-Saharan Africa currently accounts for two-thirds of the 6.2 million new primary teachers needed globally by 2030 (UNESCO, 2015) with Ministries of Education struggling to recruit enough qualified teachers to match the expansion in primary enrolments and to deploy them where they are needed most in rural and remote areas.

It is now clear that 'input' remedies to teacher's recruitment, training, deployment, career development and welfare have been insufficient conditions for improving the status and attractiveness of the teaching profession in Sub-Saharan Africa, or as an impetus to real improvements in teaching and learning.

In the context of education crisis, it is crucial for national teaching policies to be more tightly connected with the broader education improvement agenda, as well as systemic and school-based efforts to monitor improvements in the quality of learning. At a systems level, teachers and their representative organizations must be drawn more meaningfully into efforts to increase the responsiveness of instructional practice, curriculum and assessment policy to local poverty contexts and in addressing systemic challenges as they affect teaching practice.

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3   Adopted by the African Union Heads of State and Government during their Twenty-Sixth Ordinary Session on 31 January 2016 in Addis Ababa

At the front line of educational provision, the vital role of teachers in driving and monitoring real-time improvements in learning outcomes also requires greater attention. Indeed, there is increasing country evidence around the world on the impact of rights-based pedagogic approaches and classroom-based learning assessments in achieving more equitable outcomes for the most vulnerable learners, and in improving the quality of schooling from the bottom-up. Until now, little attention has been paid to feeding such experiences in to the broader policy picture in the African context.

Finally, and with frequent reports that teacher motivation and morale are low across Sub-Saharan Africa leading to high levels of attrition, the policy discourse needs to extend beyond the narrow focus on recruitment drives and the quality of teacher training to include all other dimensions impacting teacher's motivation and well-being. This must be done for all categories of teachers – both vertically from early childhood care and education (ECCE) to higher education, and horizontally from recruitment to retirement.

Much of the attrition problem is largely due to the daily challenges and pressures under which teachers work, their remuneration and conditions of service and their lack of voice in shaping qualitative improvements. Country research demonstrates the need for greater institutional investments in school-based teacher support and motivation frameworks, as well as effective supervision and appraisal mechanisms and longer-term incentive structures and professionalization policies.

II. Improving the quality of policy making

Current guidance often presents country teacher policies as discrete interventions with particular goals of their own. But it may now be unhelpful to think of teacher policies in this way.

Improvements in teaching policy are usually the cumulative impact of many policy initiatives across education systems, and success in managing critical trade-offs across a series of mutually reinforcing dimensions related to teacher supply and recruitment, pre-service and continuous training, teacher remuneration and welfare etc.

In all cases, no single policy intervention can be considered in isolation from the overall system and challenges need to be looked at holistically, drawing on reliable information to see the bigger picture and fully weighing trade-offs.

Unfortunately, such information is often lacking in many African countries with poor education management information systems (EMIS) and resource constraints. When the connections are missing to the broader education improvement agenda, this has led to unrealistic teacher reforms and policy announcements.

Reducing the distance between the theory and daily reality of teaching

The lack of connection between the real conditions of schooling and policy making is another fundamental weakness in teacher policy formulation in SSA today.

Policy and decision makers at the highest levels of Ministries often view local school contexts as needing to be 'understood' or 'managed,' but they are essentially external to the policy process. As decision makers generally have little experience of teaching in local poverty contexts, they are subsequently unable to relate to the daily pressures and challenges experienced by teachers.

Bringing real world contexts closer to the policy process would involve listening to teachers and their experiences. But teachers effectively lack a voice and well-established systems for feeding their experiences through to policy making.

Unlike in high achieving countries where education ministers and regional education directorates engage in open, iterative discussions with teachers unions, councils and representative groups (and other concerned stakeholders) around education reform processes, the vast majority of African teachers will never have been involved in high level debates around emerging education priorities.

Mechanisms for participation and channeling teacher's voices and inputs through functioning School Leadership and Management systems, School Inspection and Supervision visits, or opportunities for participatory dialogue, are now needed across the continent.

Reviewing the policy cycle approach

The policy cycle approach, which mainly presents policy formulation as a logical flow between discrete phases, has lost much of its realism in relation to teaching policy in Sub-Saharan Africa. Across the region, experience has shown that teacher policies do not unfold in an orderly way. Policy challenges and solutions often emerge together, rather than one after another.

Given the complexity of teaching policy in SSA, there is a growing argument for applying more experimental forms of policy design. In middle to high achievement countries, prototyping, trialing and experimentation have helped to ensure that planned actions represent a realistic, viable means of achieving education policy goals by passing first through a 'quality control phase,' before scaling up to the national level.

To this extent, trialing puts the emphasis on teacher's voice and inputs and helps to identify glitches and make operational adjustments before the policy 'goes to market.' Most importantly, trialing may be the key to achieving the engagement and mobilization of teachers from the very early stages, generating consensus, validation and legitimacy through the process and feeding lessons back into policy design.

III. Teachers and the Education improvement agenda

Education infrastructure

In a large number of African countries, schools and education facilities have not been created at a fast enough rate to match enrolment and expansion. National Education Management Information Systems in SSA indicate that large numbers of schools in both urban and rural areas suffer from infrastructure backlog, with schools at the primary level often lacking desks, running water, functioning latrines and electricity.

One of the biggest problems is overcrowding. Schools that were built for the old intake are now far too small and the rate of expansion has led to overcrowded classrooms, especially in the early primary grades. In 2012, the pupil to teacher ratio already averaged 42:1 in SSA (UNESCO 2015),[4] well above recommended levels. In Nigeria, the pupil to trained teacher ratio is at least 150:1 in the 25% most disadvantaged schools.[5]

In countries such as Angola, South Sudan and Cote d'Ivoire, internal conflicts and crises left each education system with damaged and unsafe buildings or compounds. In South Sudan, for example, it has been reported that many schools do not have boundary walls and are unfenced, allowing vehicles to drive through them.[6]

Teacher recruitment and deployment

UIS notes that nearly 7 in 10 African countries are still faced with an acute shortage of teachers as governments struggle to cope with the rising demand from growing school-age populations. Indeed, the region will need to create 2.2 million new teaching positions by 2030, while filling about 3.9 million vacant positions due to attrition (UIS 2015).

Young people simply aren't joining the teaching corps at a fast enough rate due to poor career prospects, poor remuneration, the low level of social status accorded to the profession and the harsh working conditions. Teacher's salaries have not kept up with the rise in the cost of living over the past two decades, making life very difficult and exacerbating day-to-day worries of housing, transport, daily expenses and medical bills. University graduates are looking to other sectors for better comparable wages and more stable employment.

Where primary education systems have expanded rapidly and Governments have only been able to draw on a limited pool of entrants to Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs), countries pragmatic responses to the teacher shortage have been to:

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4   UNESCO. (2015). EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015 – Education for All 2000 – 2015: Achievements and Challenges (pp.18).

5   UNESCO. (2015). A growing number of children and adolescents are out of school as aid fails to meet the mark. (pp. 1). Policy Paper 22.

6   Global development voices: Africa's teachers. Please see: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/oct/31/voices-of-african-teachers-mdg2

I.   allow TTCs to lower entry standards to TTCs

II.   reduce the length of college-based training and

III.   recruit unqualified teachers to resolve supply and deployment issues in rural and under-served communities.

Lowering TTC entry standards has paid off in recruitment drives in a number of countries. UIS notes that Burkina Faso and Chad have managed to recruit 8% to 9% more primary teachers annually over the past decade as new recruits only needed to have a lower secondary education. In contrast, primary school teachers in Zambia are required to complete at least a short cycle of tertiary education, so the country has only managed to hire 4% more teachers each year. But there are also legitimate concerns about the quality of teacher recruitment.

Local recruitment of unqualified teachers has also provided a pragmatic solution to heavy teacher shortages in unpopular postings in rural areas and difficult-to-access areas. Where such recruitment takes place, recruits generally under-go a period of in-service training and are willing to work with low or minimal pay.

The pattern of recruiting unqualified primary teachers locally, and then providing opportunities for upgrading to qualified status through in-service training, has become a second path into the profession in much of Sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank 2009). Again, according to UIS, less than one-half of the teachers in classrooms are trained in Angola, Benin, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Niger, Senegal and South Sudan (UIS 2015).

However, the demand for in-service training far outstrips government resources and capacities in many countries and there are legitimate concerns about the detrimental impact of such practices on the quality of classroom teaching standards, especially in subject areas such as mathematics and science (World Bank 2009).

Given the large numbers of people currently employed as volunteer or 'contract' teachers, longer-term improvements would mean much greater investments in systems for in-service training. But countries are also still very much missing expanded systems for quality control of classroom teaching practice and regular monitoring to ensure that unqualified teachers meet minimum levels to effectively teach in the classroom. At present, teachers receive very little pedagogic support through school leadership and management, inspection or supervision systems.

The Curriculum – Instruction - Assessment nexus

Both the World Bank SABER Student Assessments and the UNESCO International Bureau for Education have underlined the importance of alignment between national learning goals, curriculum standards, instructional pedagogies and assessment instruments.[7] It is this alignment that not only lifts up the quality of education – but is central to ensuring that inclusion and equity are not marginal issues through their integration into instructional practice and assessment policy.

However, much of the teaching in classrooms in many African countries has little to do with this alignment and much to do with the resilience of teachers and how well they can teach in spite of the resources and support available to them.

Curriculum: What teachers are being asked to teach in African schools is often out of step with local economies and poverty contexts.[8] The curriculum tends to encourage dependency on rote learning and memorization, instead of nurturing children's practical life skills, resilience, creativity, talents and other non-cognitive and social skills. Even where curriculum contents have been modernized or brought up to date, there are too few teaching and learning resources that enable teachers to interpret the curriculum correctly.

Children in rural and remote areas are particularly affected by the scarcity of resources, with internet connectivity and the digital divide exposing even further the marginalization of Africa's learners. For example, the use of mobile phones and ODeL (Open and Distance e-Learning) platforms have expanded opportunities to access quality educational contents online and for learners to link up with other learning groups. But too few African schools are connected and even fewer teachers trained, or have the ICTs competencies, to fully reap the benefits.

Instruction: Teachers receive their pedagogical training in Teacher Training Colleges based on theoretical approaches to child development, pedagogy and learning and mainly without attention to the learner's social context or circumstances.

It is unsurprising then that instructional practice tends to lack sensitivity to the particular learning needs of children living in poverty, nor does it systematically encourage gender, rights-based or inclusive teaching pedagogy (GRP), including lesson planning, classroom setup, ICT use and language use etc.

Teachers also receive little training in behavior management skills which would help them to better cope with large class sizes, or in practices that could promote peer learning within large groups. The educational challenge of teaching is

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7   OECD. Evaluation and assessment frameworks for improving school outcomes. Common policy challenges. Please see. http://www.oecd.org/education/school/46927511.pdf Accessed 30.08.2014

8   Global development voices: Africa's teachers. Please see: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/oct/31/voices-of-african-teachers-mdg2

made even more difficult where instruction is not in the children's maternal language. In Ghana, for example, the curriculum, exams and assessments are in English, even though most students rarely speak English anywhere else but the classroom.

Initial and continuous training

National teacher education programs across SSA differ widely in terms of their entry requirements, contents and length of training. Nevertheless, some common elements can be identified.

Initial training: The quality of pre-service training and its heavy reliance on education theory is frequently cited as an issue in SSA. In too many countries, the contents of pre-service training are not aligned with the national curriculum and assessment policy leading to the poor preparation for classroom practice.

Where new curriculum contents are introduced in support of skills/outcomes based education, HIV/AIDs awareness or citizenship skills etc., teacher training does not often keep up with the changes. Nor are teachers typically trained to handle multi-grade classes, or classrooms with high pupil/teacher ratios.

TTCs prepare student teachers to work in classes with a maximum 30 pupils. As a result, they are generally ill-equipped to address classroom organization issues, or develop knowledge of alternative teaching methods for effective learning in large classes.

Continuous professional development and support: Across the continent, there is little investment in continuous professional development for teachers to enable them to support policy reforms or innovations and adapt to changes in curriculum and assessment policy. Indeed, the continuing professional development of teachers is one of the most under-resourced areas of teaching policy in Africa. In most countries it is left to the partners without any coordination and management of the contents and the way the trainees are chosen by the authorities and the Ministry.

A 2013 study in Tanzania[9] found that teachers wanted to improve their qualifications but were largely constrained by resource limitations. Only a few countries, such as Ghana, implement policies to upgrade teacher's knowledge of new subject contents and assessment practices through in-service courses or refresher programs.

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9   http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0738059312000041

Supervision and inspection

Across SSA, school supervision, inspection and quality control mechanisms tend to be generally weak. Visits to schools in some areas can be as little as once or twice per year and reports from inspection services tend to focus on the number of schools visited and administrative matters, as well as student attendance, school finance, the condition of the buildings and the presence of textbooks.

The use of inspectors as the agents for data collection encourages them to focus on this non-pedagogical work. Yet, while these are important functions, they take away from the capacity of inspectors to monitor teaching and learning (World Bank 2009).

Meanwhile, very few countries provide a routine summary of inspection findings to policy makers and teacher training institutions. In any case, the infrequency of external inspection and supervision reduces the effectiveness of these visits as a quality assurance framework.

IV. Monitoring improvements in learning outcomes

Support to the PASEC 2014 in francophone West Africa and the Uwezo annual assessments in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda illustrate the growing demand for accountability of learning results - both from the international community and from the bottom-up through citizen-based movements.

The success of Uwezo in particular, with its local credentials and champions, lies in its 'outing' of the poor quality of primary education to parents (Barret, AM 2013) and the generation of public pressure on local schools and governments to improve the quality of schooling.

Beyond accountability, data from credible measures of learning can be used by countries to generate clear and measurable education targets, to benchmark progress, to inform systemic improvements across education systems and to focus attention, investments and interventions in specific regions or on specific schools.[10]

These broader benefits are behind the increase in international support to regional large scale assessments and efforts to strengthen country capacities to collect reliable information on learning outcomes. But for learning assessments to have deeper impacts, they must not stay at policy or governance levels and be properly connected to teaching policy and well-grounded in classroom teaching practice.

Close working relationships are needed between assessment units, didactic teams and teachers to ensure that data can be transformed into useful tools that have pedagogic value, responding to the real conditions of teaching at school level and supporting teachers in improving learning in the classroom.

At global level: A more active role in global monitoring is already emerging for Africa's Teacher's Unions, teachers' councils and representative bodies. Across the region, the past 16 years have seen a changing role for these organizations - from mainly pay-bargaining or advocacy bodies to professional organizations involved in national policy dialogue and analysis, education monitoring and participation in the Global Campaign for Education (GCE).

More exploratory work still needs to be carried out to see how teachers could participate in the global monitoring effort directly from within their local the classroom through social media, mobile phone and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

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10   UIS website, 2015. Please see: http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/learning-metrics-task-force.aspx

<u>At classroom level</u>: Quantitative and qualitative evidence gathered in hundreds of research studies over the past four decades have demonstrated the impact of classroom-based, formative assessment practice (or assessment for learning) in improving pedagogy, the quality of instruction, student learning processes and ultimately raising levels of student achievement (Popham, 2001).

Embedded into the daily practice of teaching and learning, classroom-based assessments such as diagnostic tests, quizzes, portfolio work, self and peer assessment can help to connect teachers more closely to their students and open up valuable information about what worked, what didn't and what to do next in the teaching process (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

In the African context, large class sizes and the constraints of numbers and time make the application of learner-centered, differentiated and corrective learning pedagogies a practical impossibility. Individual feedback sessions with learners experiencing difficulties are extremely rare.

Nonetheless, opportunities can be opened up for teachers to reflect together on how they can generate their own simple, measurable and relevant queries for monitoring student learning and growth. Teachers should also be encouraged to reflect together on what the feedback from classroom assessments reveal, how to build on those revelations and how pedagogies can be adjusted in the local context to improve the quality of schooling.[11]

Teachers could then be supported in communicating this information to the local community and back up the chain to policy makers. Such discussions and reflections around contextualized teaching strategies may eventually contribute to the conception of continuous professional development programs and to thriving professional learning communities (Wiliam, 2007/2008). They should be considered an essential element of teacher motivation frameworks.

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11   Akom, 2010; Brookhart et al., 2010; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Fuchs, Fuchs, Karns, Hamlett, & Katzaroff, 1999; Garet et al., 2001; Guskey, 1994; Miske, 2003; Wiliam et al., 2004; Wilson & Berne, 1999.

V. Revisiting teacher policy formulation
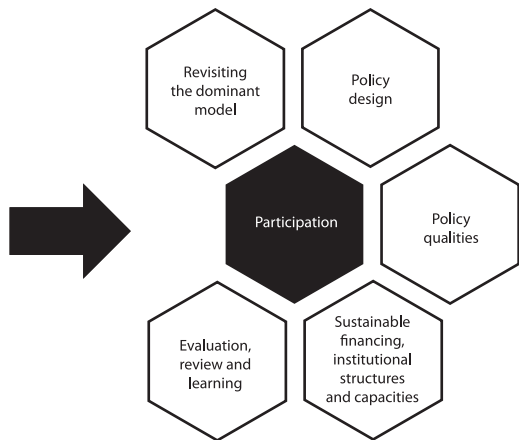
V.1 Revisiting the policy cycle approach

The policy cycle approach, which presents the policy formulation process as a logical flow between discrete phases, has lost much of its realism in the case of teaching policy. Teacher issues are complex, inter-connected and have not unfolded in an orderly way in the African context.

Across the continent, teacher policy challenges and solutions have often emerged together, rather than one after another. Strategies have been formulated in the different dimensions of teacher policy at the same time, or even before a need to act has been identified, sometimes leading to poorly conceived policies whose relationship to a policy problem is unclear.

As countries such as New Zealand and Finland demonstrate, 'directed exploration' and 'trialing', where ministers engage in an open, iterative discussion with teachers about how to achieve goals and resolve problems may be the way forward.

Indeed, current teacher policy processes greatly underestimate the value of policy design and trialing - to ensure that the planned actions represent a realistic and viable means of achieving the policy goals. Trialing would help to ensure that the policy problem has been fully reflected upon and the option fully tested before being scaled up to the national level.

V.2 Renewing policy design principles

Teacher policies need to be designed, not just conceived. As in business, teacher policies should be preceded by information gathering, research and quality control phases, before being trialed and finally going to market.

Research and data: Teacher policy should draw on well-informed research, gathering evidence that supports the use of different policy options, including evidence-based research, evaluation data and results from focus group discussions. In most countries there are extensive research gaps around the influence of teachers and instructional practice on learning outcomes and equity targets. Such research is important not only for improving the knowledge base for teacher policy, but as a way of introducing new ideas to schools and ensuring that teachers engage more actively with new knowledge.

Trialing: the complexity of modern governance means it is unlikely that policies can be designed perfectly, so that nothing will go wrong or need to be revised. Trialing, which helps to identify glitches and make operational adjustments, should be much more extensive and rigorous in the area of teacher policy in SSA.

As with the case of national monitoring frameworks in NZ, Finland and Uruguay, this means that numerous stakeholders should be consulted and mobilized to test the feasibility of a policy, including making full availability of resources, capacities and opportunities to adapt it to local or changing circumstances.

Trialing is also probably the key to achieving consensus and validation of the policy in a legitimate way. It prevents the policy from encountering 'push-back' due to being in conflict with the needs of relevant stakeholders. It also seeks to enhance ownership, coordination, participation and sustainability through capacity development.

Policy dissemination and knowledge management: The fact that few teachers are quickly aware of changes to teacher policy and education policy more generally points to the need to increase resources and capacities for policy dissemination.

Monitoring, review and evaluation: The effects of teacher policies are often indirect and take time to appear. There is also evidence that many of the effects of teacher policy interventions are unintended and sometimes even negative for other dimensions of policy.

Given the complexity of the teacher problems with which government deals, it may be unlikely that a policy will produce effects that are both measurable and attributable. What appears more important for policy improvement is that lessons feed back into policy design and lead to significant organizational learning. Again, trialing may offer a better opportunity for real-time evaluation and inquiry rather than performance management and evaluation.

Sustainable financing, institutional structures and capacities: Financing *must be considered for the* dimensions explored in the teaching policy, including decisions about teacher preparation, recurrent and capital training costs, should be linked to the national, local or school budget projections appropriately. Public budgetary allocation targets have to be developed for specific policy items, supplemented by other resources within an overall target or benchmark of national resources necessary for policy success.

V.3 Enhancing the qualities of policy making

Finally, how can African countries overcome systemic barriers to teacher policy where there may be a lack of capacities, few resources or incentives to innovate, or strong pressures to maintain the status quo? In contexts where significant reforms are very difficult to implement, aspects of innovation such as prototyping and experimentation should be encouraged.

At the same time, the gaps in education provision and teacher development, and growing public concern around education should be reflected in direct or indirect involvement of organized segments of civil society, NGOs and Community Based Organizations willing to make a difference. Partnerships and focused, non-bureaucratic responses to teacher support will require new types of management skills and training, social mobilization and effective political leadership.

BODY/ORGANIZATION	ROLES
TEACHERS AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES (e.g. Teacher Unions)	Provide practical experiences of teachers Represent teachers' concerns/needs Participate in drafting and validating a policy
TEACHER/TEACHING REGULATORY BODIES (e.g. Teacher Councils)	Provide forum for profession-led policy development/input
GOVERNMENT – including Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance (in federal states, regional/provincial/state governments must also be involved, particularly where they have concurrent powers over education and raise revenues.	Facilitate the process Responsible for ensuring policy is adopted and adequately resourced Facilitate needs assessment Lead the policy process
SCHOLARS AND RESEARCHERS, "THINK TANKS" (e.g. policy and research institutes)	Provide expertise, input and evidence to inform policy options Possible members of task force for situational analysis/drafting policy
SCHOOL LEADERS (head teachers and deputy head teachers)	Provide experiences and understanding of those involved in managing schools
PARENTS AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES (e.g. Parent-Teacher Associations)	Represent the needs/concerns of parents/local communities Act as a link to school communities
STUDENTS AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES (e.g. Student Representative Councils)	Often overlooked, attempts to develop education policies in general, and teacher education policies in particular, should include the learners
PRIVATE SECTOR	Represents the needs and interests of companies and businesses in policy development In many countries, they are education providers at all levels, including in some cases, providers of teacher education through private higher education institutions
INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES	May fund the process Provide accountability checks and balances Support drafting of the policy Technical assistance Capacity building

VI. Working tool: Advancing through the policy process

The guide envisages a systematic process for arriving at a holistic and coherent national policy framework for the teaching profession. The phases below involve different actors. A major assumption is that the country is ripe for initiating the policy development process, and relevant discussions have been taking place not only at the government, but at the public opinion levels. After achieving a sound policy framework, the following steps should be followed, including adoption, implementation, dissemination, monitoring and evaluation. Stages that are *discussed and designed* in the policy framework but within the domain of executive power are not described herein.

Stage	Actors	Actions
1. Building political will	Senior decision-makers, technical advisors	- Distil TTISSA findings plus other indicators; - Clarify the intent: Why do we need a Public Teacher Policy? Make a SWOT analysis of the current situation, identify aspects of teacher process that need decisions extending for the next 10 years.
2. Drafting technical support materials for discussion	Senior decision-makers, Technical committee/ specialists/ Teacher Educators	- Develop a rationale for the process of writing and implementing a Public Teacher Policy; - Choose the decisions that have to be made regarding: selection of candidates, inception/induction, training, curriculum, in-service, mentorship, facilities, quantity of teachers vs. demand, teachers duties, remuneration, teacher standards, etc.; - Explore international examples to broaden perspectives and identify global trends; - Devise a blueprint of the process (stages); - Define TORs for the participants who will be involved.
3. Discussing policy aspects with the input of relevant stakeholders	Technical committee / stakeholders	- Produce a coherent narrative about how policy elements interact to produce a first-class teaching profession; - Agree on a vision for the Teaching Profession; - For each policy element, develop a short synthesis and a small number (3 to 6) of concrete strategies to be pursued; - Receive opinion from stakeholders regarding each of the strategies.
4. Consolidating and balancing the contributions from stakeholders	Technical Committee	- Reframe strategies considering opposing views and government priorities; - Cross-examine the strategies to see if they overlap or contradict.
5. Establishing the financial and political consequences of policy components	Senior decision-makers / Technical Committee	- Explore financial consequences of envisaged strategies; - Check the draft policy with Senior Decision Makers to ensure political and technical sustainability.
6. Preparing a framework for implementing and monitoring the policy	Technical Committee	- Establish performance indicators for each policy strategy; - Define a time frame for implementation of each policy strategy; - Assign responsibility to adequate officers.
7. Enacting the policy	Appointed officers	- Produce the final version of the Public Teacher Policy white paper; - Submit the final version to Top Management for recommendations for approval.

The stages outlined in the matrix are clarified below. The purpose of this description is to ensure that all actors in the policy development process have a common understanding of the stages proposed above. It should be noted that the stages listed are not necessarily to be linear, but can be iterative with a back and forth movement depending on the circumstances.

VI.1 Building political will

Why? The first requirement in the process of policy formulation is achieving **political readiness** on the part of the competent authority to either launch the process itself or allow any other relevant body to begin the work of developing a new policy.

To achieve the readiness, the first step is the **identification of policy motivators**, meaning to define the vision for education, as well as identifying the main challenges or bottlenecks which should be tackled using the policy instrument to be developed. All the challenges should be taken into account including negative public opinions towards the education sector, as a policy can succeed only if it has public support.

The analysis of the situation must include possible ramifications as educational policies have implications of a wider nature; therefore, a holistic solution should be advised as the core tenet of policy formulation.

A clear, concise and forceful presentation of the problems is useful to obtain political support, awakening the interest of authorities and facilitating the required buy-in from them to deliver and enact a policy.

Problem formulation requires previous **gathering of evidence-based information** to ensure that the policy will address substantive challenges. Information gathering can be done through original research, or from second hand information secured from credible and relevant sources.

Who? Minister, Permanent Secretary (PS), Members of Parliament, Heads of Teacher Unions, Top representatives of School provision (private), Curriculum and Evaluation Agencies.

Meetings: As this is an initial stage, a focus group methodology may help in the selection of key problems and causes. Fishbone diagrams[12] and SWOT analysis[13] are useful in this stage. Some "Power Questions" could spark intuition and debate, e.g. "What do we need to do to fix or improve the teaching profession in the country? What do statistic data say? What could be the cost of NOT acting, in the medium term?"

Input: An evidence-based presentation should be the starting point for the process, e.g. a compilation of relevant TTISSA findings plus other indicators regarding the teaching profession in the country.

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12   See e.g. https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_03.htm

13   See e.g. https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_05.htm

Procedure: The facilitator should present the relevant information and propose the questions. All opinions should be registered, no criticism to personal positions allowed. Causes of problems should be offered and linked by means of the Fishbone Diagram. There is no need to offer solutions at this stage, as the group is still clarifying the problem(s). The facilitator will help then to clarify the goal through raising questions (e.g. "Why do we need a Public Teacher Policy?"). To formulate the opportunities and threats posed by the current situation, a SWOT analysis may help to identify aspects that need decision facing the next years.

After the process, the top management will see to the appointment of a Technical Committee or Task Force to move forward the process of policy design.

Outputs:

- A report of problems and causes;
- An evaluation of risks of not taking action;
- An executive decision to appoint the Technical Committee;
- A process schedule for the next steps;
- A budgetary provision for the process[14].

VI.2 Drafting technical support materials for discussion

The second stage implies to design the procedure for building up the policy. The technical committee (TC) will lead the process with frequent reports to high level management (to achieve legitimacy inside the ministry) and will produce a blueprint of the methodology for public dissemination (to achieve legitimacy with the general public).

Why? The need for public communication and validation has to do with earning legitimacy from the early start of the process. A written methodology will show that the available resources will be used wisely, as well as a commitment to deliver in time.

Who? The assignment can be carried out by a drafting team composed of teacher educators and experts from the Ministry of Education in teacher-related matters, under the supervision of the TC. Experts from other ministries such as planning, labour, civil service, etc., can be included in the drafting committee, as teacher issues are multi-sectoral in nature.

The drafting team might involve up to 10 people in charge of coordinating the policy development process, and its members will be required to have good skills for writing, research, processing information and planning ("hard skills") as well as diplomacy, capacity to balance tensions and steer productive dialogue sessions ("soft skills").

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14   Resources should be allocated for the consultation process before the writing of the policy, and the validation of it after it has been drafted. Events such as panel discussions, media interviews, promotional print materials, etc., both before and after the development of the policy, require a certain amount of funding. Cooperation agencies may contribute, if presented with a concrete plan including goals and deliverables.

The structure of the drafting team can include:

- a coordinator with experience in policy development processes and dialogue with authorities;

- 2 information officers with expertise in quantitative and qualitative analysis;

- a news agent, with solid oral and written communication skills;

- an ICT expert with command of relevant software to organize word processing, presentations, videos and web pages;

- several specialists in different issues linked to teachers. They can be experts in the Teacher Department of the Ministry of Education (MoE), relevant ministries such as Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Planning, Civil Service Commission (or Teacher Service Commission, where it exists), liaison officers with teachers' Unions and Teacher Training institutions;

- 1 administrator;

- 1 economist or sociologist.

All the participants of the drafting team would need training in group work methodology with necessary skills including how to deliver presentations, propose activities for working groups, summarizing contributions, keeping an agenda and avoiding disruptive behaviour in meetings. The capacity building process might be carried out through a series of retreats or workshops.

The work of the drafting team should be guided by terms of reference developed by the competent authority (the Teacher Department of the Ministry of Education, for example, as it is assumed that the MoE is a major stakeholder of a teacher policy). The terms of reference should include not only the major issues that it has to consider, but also the time limit within which it has to accomplish its task. It will ensure the production of a policy document within set time.

Meeting: The drafting team will meet regularly through the full policy development process, estimated in about 1 year. Some of the members may work part-time, but the Coordinator should be a full-time professional.

Input: Guidelines produced by the TC, time frame set.

Outputs: Joint work of the team has to deliver:

- Support materials for the research and consultation stages, e.g. a study of international examples to broaden perspectives and identify global trends, a thorough report about the status of the teaching profession selection of candidates, inception, training, curriculum, in-service,

mentorship, facilities, quantity of teachers vs. demand, teachers' duties, remuneration, teacher standards, etc., a study of investment feasibility (e.g. ten-year educational budget expansion provisions);

- a rationale for the process of writing and implementing a Public Teacher Policy;

- a planning schedule and agendas for meetings;

- facilitation of workshops and public auditions;

- TORs for the participation of stakeholders;

- Press releases for newspapers, radio, TV and a dedicated internet site.

VI.3 Consolidating and balancing contributions

Why? A sustainable policy is a document result of concessions and compromises arrived at through a process of finding the common denominator for a wider appeal. However, a policy cannot satisfy everyone; its guidelines are produced taking into consideration the common good, but sometimes the vision of the common good may differ among actors. In the end the government is the responsible actor for implementing the policy, and by representing the society it is entitled to the final say.

The drafting team will produce a white paper and a section with comments regarding the policy options that have received observations and remarks, especially negative ones, from specific stakeholders.

The drafting team has to organize diverse intentions and opinions in a way that ensures that everyone feels represented in the process, even if particular recommendations are diluted or not taken into consideration. The validation process should clarify the reasons of the choices and open a space for negotiation.

Who? Opinion leaders from all stakeholders' groups.

Meetings: A second round of consultation of the white paper with opinion leaders, discussing its implications, and the reasons for the policy choices.

Input: White paper and comments section.

Procedure: Consultation meetings should achieve clear endorsement or objections to each policy guideline.

Output: White paper, list of change proposals, map of objections.

VI.4 Anticipating the financial and political implications of the Policy

Why? While the above steps provide an overview of the process of policy development and the various actors involved in it, one other essential element to consider is availability of sufficient resources to cover the cost of the eventual implementation of policies, and political ability to manage the level of conflict that might ensue. This is very crucial as some of the provisions of the policy may require substantial financial outlay to be implemented, or could face stark resistance from specific sectors.

It might be the case that countries consider strategies to modify teacher salaries or general working conditions, including not only incentives but also accountability measures, establish quotas for entering the training institutions, or establish plans for deployment of graduate teachers to address imbalances. Many of the described possibilities have financial consequences as well as political consequences.

On the other hand, ongoing monitoring of the policy implementation, and periodic evaluation of its relevance and efficacy are tasks that also require allocation of resources.

The decision to provide the required amount of resources could possibly cause tensions with other government areas. Therefore, it needs to be justified clearly, spelling out the benefits of the several policy guidelines.

Who? Budget and planning experts from government sectors, experts in economy of education, international development agencies.

Meetings: At least a meeting in the middle of the process to let financial experts ask the relevant questions and point out the budgetary variables to explore, and a second meeting to estimate the budgetary impact of the policy in the expected time frame for implementation.

Input: Green paper (in the first round of consultation), white paper (in the second round of consultation).

Procedure: Participants engage in simulation scenarios, and provide advice on the relative cost of the different policy guidelines, estimating hidden variables such as the positive impact on the economy of a better education.

Output: Budget for implementation, medium term financial provisions, suggestions of decisions that can be prioritised and others to be postponed because of financial constraints.

VI.5 Preparing a framework for implementation

Why? After the conceptual and financial validation process, the policy document will be finalised by incorporating significant feedback and giving it its final shape. The feedback incorporation will be done by the drafting team as the final step of its work. The last element of the policy to include in the document will be a framework for monitoring and implementation.

The framework will distribute the policy actions in the period of time considered for the implementation, and will define indicators of progress and responsible actors/agencies for carrying out each action.

Who? A joint committee including members of the drafting team and principal decision-makers/educational planners.

Meetings: Working meetings will be held to study each guideline and propose concrete measurable progress indicators.

Input: White paper and budgetary analysis.

Procedure: Technical planning sessions to be carried out, resource persons with expertise in indicator formulation and policy planning needed.

Output: Final policy document for approval.

VI.6 Enacting the policy

At this stage the whole process shifts to political action, as what remains is the declaration of the policy by a competent legal entity such as the Ministry of Education, the Office of the Prime Minister or any other body that has a mandate to promulgate policy declarations. If the issue is given a higher profile, the policy may even be debated and ratified by the Parliament. Once this happens, the policy becomes a legal document, with inherent implications.

The following steps lie outside the policy formulation process which is the subject of this practical guide; for implementation a full set of bylaws, norms, regulations and guidelines shall be produced, and the relevant actors should be trained and supervised. The indicators shall be monitored by the relevant authority and corrective measures put in place in case of deviations.