

The previous chapters looked at teacher policy issues and challenges in the broader context of achieving universal primary education (UPE) in Africa. The different perspectives adopted aimed at providing the reader with an overall vision of the subject to enable him/her assess the scale of the challenge to be taken on by African countries.

Chapter 5

Towards an overall vision of teacher matters

Chapter 1 showed that the dynamics at work since the early 2000's give reason to be relatively optimistic about the possibility for a large number of countries to address quantitative teacher needs and so meet the challenge of UPE. Nevertheless, Chapter 2 recalled the burden of financial constraints on the countries

Chapter 5

*Towards an overall vision
of teacher matters*

and pointed out that the significant progress made in the early 2000's could to a great extent be attributed to aggressive salary cost erosion policies generally backed up by the introduction or the development of new categories of teachers: community teachers, contract teachers and less qualified teachers. As salary expenditure constitutes by far the largest share of the cost of primary education, this is obviously one of the key parameters for all countries on their way to UPE. The development of these new teacher categories is therefore a direct result of this heavy constraint on the education systems. This was indeed taken into account by the different partners in education (ministries of education, teachers' unions, parents and international organisations) at the Bamako Conference in 2004. Yet, these recruitment policies have been highly criticised and accused in particular of contributing to the deterioration of school learning achievements. As noted in Chapter 4, this accusation is not corroborated by the research conducted on this aspect even if, from a general point of view, educational quality in African countries is still problematic. However, the question of the sustainability of these urgently defined policies must be raised.

The main consequence of these recent developments is the restructuring of the teaching profession, which, in most countries, now comprises several categories of teachers with very different profiles. The arrival of these new teachers has completely disrupted traditional approaches to teacher policy and justifies rethinking the latter. This is all the more true as the challenge is still sizeable given that the countries will have to recruit, train, deploy and monitor the careers of a growing number of teachers in the coming years. These teachers are expected to deliver quality education to their pupils and thus make it possible to totally reach the goal of good quality UPE as defined in Dakar in 2000. Urgent solutions must now give way to medium-term policies that take into account the financial constraints but also all the requirements of a genuine teacher policy.

The purpose of this chapter is to go over the main components of a teacher policy: recruitment, training, deployment, management of absenteeism, and professional development of teachers. Research and field experience results are utilised in an attempt to identify the avenues to be explored. It would of course be illusory to think that there exists a miracle formula to be applied in all countries. Diversity in country situations is the rule and any excessive generalisation is to be avoided. Asking the right questions is already a first step, and discussing the answers, both those already known and those to be invented, is a second step where everyone will hopefully find food for thought. The ambition here is to simply discuss the principal issues of a teacher policy, putting them into perspective to provide an overall vision.



1. Teacher recruitment

The challenge is to hire competent motivated individuals to teach in schools. The question of the attraction of the teaching profession for potential candidates cannot be ignored but as this point was already discussed in Chapter 2, we shall not go over it again now. The issue here will be rather to analyse the recruitment process and focus on the different stages of that process. The discussion should take into account the existence of different modes of recruitment that have prevailed in the African education systems over the last two decades. Indeed, traditional forms of recruitment handled by the government and featuring pre-service training must be considered as well as direct recruitment by the government or communities when new recruits are sent directly into the classrooms.

1.1. Some considerations for the recruitment and selection of future teachers

The very first step to be taken when looking at recruitment is the estimation of teacher needs. As indicated in the first Chapter of this study, each country must be capable of estimating its needs in teachers and of planning their recruitment on an annual basis. It is not only a matter of identifying overall needs but also and more importantly of projecting the number of teachers to be recruited each year, which implies, amongst other things, arranging for their admission to training institutions and taking them into account in the budget allocated to the ministry of education. This therefore constitutes a complete and demanding planning exercise to be carried out annually in the ministries of education (which presupposes that there are competent people on hand assigned to the task).

This first step is obviously essential but does not tell us anything about the profiles of the future teachers or about how they will be recruited, which brings us to the second step. The research work presented in Chapter 4 can be put to use to address these two points. As far as the academic level of teachers is concerned, while everyone agrees that there is a minimum academic requirement for teaching, there are often diverging opinions about what that minimum is. The studies conducted on the African continent and presented earlier generally argue in favour of a minimum threshold corresponding to 10 years of certified schooling for a primary school teacher. Naturally, the information available for each country must be considered here, as there may be differences from country to country. Also, we know that, on the one hand, the knowledge of individuals may vary significantly for a given academic level and that, on the other hand, social expectations rise along with the level of education and can sometimes have a negative influence on individual motivation. These two elements cannot be ignored and require a pragmatic approach. In this respect, it is no doubt preferable to define a minimum requirement corresponding to a lower secondary

Chapter 5

*Towards an overall vision
of teacher matters*

qualification. However, the level of schooling cannot be taken alone, as people who have qualified from lower secondary education have different levels of knowledge that may not always be satisfactory for teaching. It is therefore important to assess the candidates' actual level with the aid of tests.

Although more delicate, the dimension of individual motivation must also be taken into account. The recourse to interviews already relatively common in other fields, could be applied here. Additional techniques can also be envisaged such as a written examination during which candidates would explain their choice. The combination of a minimum recruitment level of lower secondary completion with tests to ascertain the candidates' actual level and motivation makes it possible to address the principal constraints observed in the field. Testing the candidates' level is relatively common in African countries but interviewing candidates about their motivation is much more unusual if not to say virtually inexistent.

Another dimension to be taken into account in this hiring process is that of gender. The results presented in Chapter 4 show that women prove to be as effective as their male colleagues in the teaching profession and also that they have more specifically a positive impact on keeping girls in school (Mapto Kengne and Mingat, 2002). Thus, the argument of effectiveness in pursuing the goal of UPE should be added to the argument of equal treatment for men and women. Giving special attention to the recruitment of female teachers must therefore be an integral part of the teacher strategy for UPE. Naturally, it is not possible to be very much more precise in view of the diversity of country situations, but this point should be noted here.





The process of candidate selection must of course be rigorously respected and this is one of the important aspects to be taken into account in recruitments. The processes should be assessed on a regular basis to ensure that they are still relevant and to allow for their improvement in line with the changing educational context.

The second step, just described, concerns recruitment for access to professional training, not for access to the teaching profession. The distinction between the two may not be so clear since it is often observed that once the candidate has passed the entrance examination for professional training, he/she is virtually certain of becoming a teacher. The main issue for candidates seems therefore to be for them to successfully pass the examination giving access to teacher training, rather than acquire the knowledge and skills needed to be a teacher. However, teaching does not only require a satisfactory academic level and the necessary motivation but also specific pedagogical skills. Knowledge is not enough: teaching skills are also essential. It is therefore advisable to proceed with the final recruitment after an assessment of the skills specific to teaching. This means that the candidate should be evaluated during training and at the end of training, but also, practically, in the course of teaching. In professional trainings, the assessment of theoretical knowledge cannot replace the assessment of practical skills. A doctor is expected not only to know of the different diseases, their symptoms and the treatment likely to cure them but above all to be able to look after us when we are sick. The same is true for a teacher since it is not a question of his/her knowledge of the different pedagogical theories or classroom practices but of his/her ability to teach using effective practices that are adapted to a particular context. Theoretical knowledge is not to be neglected but should rather be considered as fuelling teacher practice. The key to an effective professional training probably lies in the successful articulation between theory and practice. However, as highlighted in Chapter 4, there is still much to be done in the area of research to determine the contours of appropriate professional trainings. The fact remains that the ultimate evaluation lies in the ability of the teacher to enable pupils acquire the knowledge and skills indicated on the curriculum.

The said evaluation of professional skills proves particularly delicate. In this respect, education systems usually base their evaluation on the observation of the teacher's classroom practice. In this case, an outsider (trainer, inspector, etc.) attends one or several of the teacher's lessons. This person's judgment will constitute the reference for evaluation. Nevertheless, this practice has several limitations. First of all, the teacher may adapt his/her behaviour on the day of the assessment to what he/she thinks is expected of him/her and thus not necessarily show what he/she does, or will do, in the classroom but what he/she is capable of doing⁵⁷. This problem is particularly accentuated when the observation is limited to one lesson, in a class not belonging to the teacher being evaluated. This may be the case for student teachers in the course of professional trainings. Another limitation concerns the judgment made, which, in spite of the use of rigorous assessment models, can vary tremendously from one individual to another, given the relatively diverse representations of good pedagogical practice in the world of education. Thus, there is a share of subjectivity, which can

⁵⁷ This risk can be limited by analysing the pupils' exercise books if the teacher has full responsibility for the class.

Chapter 5

*Towards an overall vision
of teacher matters*

jeopardise the legitimacy of the evaluation. One way of limiting the scale of the problem is to use several evaluators for each teacher. For example, three evaluations could be envisaged: one conducted by a trainer, the second by an inspector and the third by the head teacher of the school where the student teacher is working. Alternatively, one of the evaluators could be an experienced teacher. A committee could then examine these evaluations and pronounce the final decision. There are a multitude of possibilities; in any case, assessing the professional skills that give access to the teaching profession cannot just be limited to a one-off classroom evaluation during training. While this is essential, it is not sufficient for pronouncing a definitive judgment on someone's professional skills⁵⁸. Moreover, this evaluation also serves the purpose of helping student teachers to improve their skills.

To make an evaluation of a student teacher in a real-life situation, he/she must have complete responsibility for a class. One possibility is to consider that the first year of teaching is still a year of training, as in Guinea for example. Besides, this is not inexact since the student teacher continues to benefit from close training support from a tutor teacher who supervises him/her in the school and the visit of trainers from the institution in charge of teacher training. This is a broader concept of teacher training that has the merit of placing the accent on the professional dimension. In this frame, the student teacher could be assessed in a real-life situation throughout the school year by different evaluators as mentioned earlier. Still, the problem of the subjectivity of this type of evaluation, even with several people involved, does deserve special attention. Reviewing practice by peers is a relatively common practice in many professions and is therefore not specific to teaching. It is however more difficult to evaluate the result of the teacher's work just by observing him/her in his/her class. It is preferable to measure what the pupils have actually learnt with this teacher but this involves relatively complex and costly assessment devices that are still the subject of debate as to their methodological value (Mac Affrey *et al.*, 2003). However, the rare studies that compare pupil learning achievements and how school heads have evaluated teachers' work do show that the two are relatively coherent (Murname, 1975). It is not really surprising that the person responsible for a school who observes the teachers' work on a daily basis may have an enlightened opinion on the subject. That certainly suggests granting special importance to the head teacher's appreciation without at the same time calling into question the need for a multiple evaluation. Peer review therefore comes across as a reasonably effective means of evaluation for the education systems. At the present time, the assessment of professional skills is not really a determining factor for gaining access to the teaching profession in many countries. It is nevertheless of importance if the aim is to recruit teachers while granting professional skills a central role.

⁵⁸ Marginally, it can help to identify people whose shortcomings are too severe for them to teach.



We have just gone over the principal steps to be taken into consideration for the traditional recruitment of teachers. The first one is to do with determining teacher needs annually. The second concerns access to teacher training and aims at ensuring that candidates have the necessary knowledge and motivation. The third step concerns evaluation during and at the end of professional training. Finally, the last stage consists in the assessment of the professional skills of the individual in a working situation. Recruitment, training and evaluation thus appear to be closely connected.

1.2. “Direct” recruitment

The previous section was devoted to the “traditional” method of recruiting teachers, or at least how we would like to see all teachers recruited. Nevertheless, parallel recruitments have developed in African education systems, as noted in the previous chapters, either as a government initiative (non-civil servant and/or untrained teachers) or as a community initiative to counter teacher shortages. By massively introducing teachers with little or no professional training into the education systems, these recruitments have very much reshaped the teaching profession in some countries and raise serious questions for educational policy.

Community teachers are recruited locally, directly by the pupils' families. There are no recruitment criteria other than the availability of someone with the highest possible level of schooling in the community. The level of schooling of community teachers can therefore vary tremendously and is not always adapted to the demands of the teaching profession. In many countries, aggressive teacher policies attempt to train these teachers and sometimes even to integrate them. The examples of Madagascar and Central African Republic (CAR) have already been mentioned in Chapter 3. This can be a huge challenge, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Some of these teachers do not have the minimum academic standard required; it is thus not just a case of providing them with professional training to bring them nearer to minimum standards. Finding global solutions to these situations, the scale of which is not always easy to measure, seems relatively complex. Assessments to determine teachers' academic levels and so their training needs are lacking. Some countries like Mauritania are however taking steps in this direction and it is to be hoped that many others will follow suit since it is very difficult to make effective remedial proposals without a precise diagnosis.

The issue is similar for teachers recruited by the government and sent directly into the classrooms without any true professional preparation (short training courses or even no training at all). The principal difference with the recruitment of community teachers lies in the fact that these recruitments generally have a minimum academic requirement of at least a lower secondary qualification. Even so, this does not mean that all teachers recruited in this way do have the required level. The problem can however be expected to be less critical than for teachers recruited directly by the communities who may have a much lower level of schooling.

Chapter 5

*Towards an overall vision
of teacher matters*

Taking the above into account, it is clear that any professional training aimed at enhancing the qualifications of these urgently recruited teachers must be adapted to their academic level and to their professional experience. In some cases, it will be necessary to bring teachers up to standard before offering professional training⁵⁹. That said, the people concerned have often been exercising in the teaching profession for several years and have consequently gained experience that cannot be ignored. It is probably not very appropriate to provide them with the same training as for people who have never taught before. Moreover, if, over and above training, the aim is to incorporate them in the formal system as is the case for school masters in Central African Republic, then training must lead to certification corresponding to at least one of the teacher categories. An additional constraint is not to remove these teachers from their classrooms for training purposes in order to avoid exacerbating teacher shortages. Different formulas are being, or have been, experimented to address these needs. There are two major options, distance education, and training during the school holidays. Some English-speaking countries such as Malawi have opted for distance education whereas others like Central African Republic have opted for several sessions of conventional training during the holidays.

Whatever the type of training selected, if it is to lead to professional certification, it must comply with the evaluation criteria mentioned earlier, i.e. an evaluation combining the knowledge gained from training and practices in a classroom situation. The advantage here is that these people have teaching posts and can therefore be evaluated in their class.

⁵⁹ It cannot be ruled out that in some cases the level of knowledge may possibly be too low to follow adequate professional training.



2. The challenge of teacher training

The question of professional training has already come up through the issue of recruitment in the previous paragraphs. The aim here is to put into perspective the challenge of the number of new teachers to be trained in the coming years in order to reach UPE and ensure quality education. The challenge is two-fold: (i) train the growing number of new teachers needed for schools and (ii) train the teachers already in teaching posts who have not received adequate pre-service training. There are thus two categories of training to be considered, pre-service training and training for upgrading unqualified teachers. However, the challenge is not only quantitative; in many countries, it is not a matter of doing more than what is done normally but rather to further develop existing training courses and sometimes to even create new ones. Chapter 4 has shown that questions are raised as to the effectiveness of professional training and that the duration of training is not a guarantee of quality.

2.1. Developing and enhancing pre-service training

The most common form of initial training for new teachers takes place in specialised institutions (teacher training colleges, *écoles normales d'instituteurs*, etc.). This type of training is delivered by public or private structures and is sometimes subject to fees. Training is of variable duration, generally lasting from one to three years. This usually includes a period of practical experience in the classroom, which may last from several weeks to two years (cf. table 5.1).

There is significant variation in training content (in the balance between the subjects taught and the development of teaching skills), the way classroom practice operates (with or without a mentor, in reference schools, in rural areas, etc.), and in support for those coming out of training when they take up their teaching duties. In many cases, newly trained teachers find that they have to cope without any real support from the school head or from the tutors at the training institution.

In general, admission to training is barely selective. If a candidate has the required academic qualification, then he/she is accepted. Candidates must have completed lower secondary or upper secondary education and be in possession of their diploma (lower secondary *Brevet*, *Baccalauréat*, O levels, COSC, MSCE) with, for the English-speaking system, a minimum number of passes or grades⁶⁰, particularly in English and mathematics. In Eritrea and Guinea, females and members of linguistic minorities are accepted with lower qualifications with a view to attracting them to the profession. Amongst the countries considered in table 5.1, only The Gambia has a more complex system of selection, with an entrance examination and interviews, in order to assess whether the student is really motivated to teach.

⁶⁰ A grade is higher than a pass.

Chapter 5

Towards an overall vision of teacher matters

Table 5.1 : Some characteristics of the pre-service training system for teachers in some English-speaking countries

	Eritrea	The Gambia	Ghana	Lesotho	Malawi	Uganda	Zambia
Entry level	End of secondary (grade 12)	End of lower secondary (O Level)	End of lower secondary (O level), 5 credits	End of secondary, 4 credits (to include English)	End of secondary/ MSCE credit in English, a pass in maths	End of lower secondary (O Level)	End of secondary with a pass in English and maths
Duration	1 year inc. classroom practice (2 weeks and 1 month)	1 year + 2 years in classroom	2 years + 1 year in classroom	3 years	1 year + 1 year in classroom	2 years + 6 weeks in classroom	1 year + 1 year in classroom
Selection	On academic grades	On academic grades/ entrance exam/ interview		On academic grades	On academic grades	On academic grades	On academic grades

Source: Lewin (2004), World Bank (2007a-g)

The additional needs for qualified teachers are going to further accentuate pressure on the pre-service training systems and the latter will have to multiply their supply of trained teachers by two, three or even four. Thus, in many countries, two or three-year training courses in specialised institutions will prove to be incompatible with the education systems' needs for teachers. However, full-time initial training over a period of two or three years is in fact just one of the options. Alternatives based on shorter periods of introductory training followed by periods of work experience interspersed with subsequent training inputs building on the base acquired from school experience could be more effective by offering a better balance between theory and practice (Lewin, 2004). It is thus possible to envisage short pre-service training in training institutions linked to school holiday workshops, supported by distance learning and in-class support. This kind of thinking is not only in line with the need to address the constraint of training more and more people but it also shows a genuine will to enhance the performance of the training system.



To rise to the challenge, and increase recruitments from around 700 teachers per annum to around 2 000, Guinea has made radical transformations to its pre-service training system by shortening the duration of training and putting the emphasis on its professional nature⁶¹. Initially, two training formulas were set up: the first was based on a three-month training course at the teacher training institute, followed by one year in the classroom with support from the school, then another three months at the teacher training institute; the second consisted in nine months of training at the teacher training institute followed by a school year in the classroom. This has enabled two cohorts to be trained annually instead of one and a significant increase in the number of teachers trained. Moreover, evaluations conducted by the CONFEMEN Programme for the Analysis of Education Systems (PASEC) on the pedagogical capacity of these new teachers to enable their pupils make progress have proved encouraging since their results are equivalent to, or even better than, those of teachers who had benefited from three years of training.

Current thinking, as illustrated by the example of Guinea, tends to put the emphasis on reinforcing the professionalisation of teacher training. Special attention is given to the junction between theoretical and practical training. Reforms are ongoing or expected in a large number of countries and these should be accompanied by evaluations of their effectiveness and adjustments made, as appropriate. There are still too few factual elements available to fuel the considerations of decision-makers.

2.2. Training untrained teachers already in posts

This type of upgrading training for untrained teachers already in posts is relatively recent in African education systems but is destined to develop rapidly if each teacher is expected to have benefited from some professional training. Indeed, as seen in Chapter 3, there are still a lot of teachers who have had little or no training in some countries, especially in post-conflict countries.

The dual constraint of this training, that is to say the heterogeneous levels of the people concerned and the need to reduce to a maximum their absence from the classrooms during training activities, has already been mentioned in the section on recruitment. The latter constraint implies the organisation of distance education or training sessions during the school holidays, or a combination of both. Table 5.2 provides examples of upgrading training in three countries. Different modalities can be observed. These involve training sessions during the school holidays and support from tutors at school level in The Gambia, and mixed-mode systems comprising a distance learning module and conventional study sessions in Lesotho and Zambia.

⁶¹ This is Guinea's pre-service teacher training programme (FIMG) launched in 1998.

Chapter 5

Towards an overall vision of teacher matters

This type of mixed training consists of distance education (delivered via distance learning aids), and college-based training during the school holidays, and sometimes at weekends, combined with support from tutors at school level. Conventional study sessions are usually decentralised and organised close to the teacher's workplace. The duration of training varies, ranging from 18 months in Zambia to 3 years in The Gambia. This training is intended for teachers who have had little or no training and who have already been teaching for at least two years. The curriculum is generally along the lines of full-time pre-service training curricula, but with the emphasis on practice (Lesotho) and adapted to the learners' needs (Eritrea). These training programmes must take into account the experience already accumulated by the learners, as this is definitely an advantage. There is still the difficult issue of the teachers' heterogeneous academic levels already highlighted. This argues in favour of modular training programmes.

Table 5.2 : Characteristics of training for untrained teachers (distance and work-based learning)

	The Gambia	Lesotho	Zambia
Prerequisites	At least 2 years of teaching	At least 2 years of teaching and 5 passes in the examination at the end of secondary education	/
Modalities	Tutor system at school level; conventional sessions: 9 weeks of lessons distributed throughout the year	Distance learning module; decentralised conventional sessions: 2 weeks and weekends	Distance learning module; tutor system at school level; local college-based conventional sessions at holiday time
Duration	3 years	/	18 months
Qualification	Examination: Certificate	Diploma	Certificate/diploma

Source: World Bank (2007b,c,f), Lewin (2004)

There again, implementation of these new types of training must be accompanied by evaluations in order to appreciate their impact, particularly in terms of learning quality, and to make any necessary adjustments. There are at present virtually no research results on these topics to guide future initiatives.

Teacher training is bound to undergo considerable changes to address the challenges of UPE. It is not only a question of duration or the appropriate time for training, but training content and the very concept of training itself are to be reconsidered.



3. Improving coherence in teacher allocation to schools

Once teachers have been recruited and trained, they must then be allocated to schools. This is a common management problem, which is particularly critical in a context of teacher shortages. If there are not enough teachers to cover the needs of the education system, it is all the more important, for both reasons of efficiency and equity, that their allocation to schools address educational needs in the best possible way. In the interests of efficiency, it is indeed important to ensure that the education systems have the necessary mechanisms for the judicious and coherent allocation of teachers across schools. In the interests of equity, it is important not to deny rural, remote or disadvantaged areas an adequate number of teachers. Due to the weight of salary expenditure in the education budget, the way in which teachers are allocated influences equity in the distribution of public resources. In this respect, the analysis of teacher distribution throughout the territory informs on the degree of efficiency and equity of the deployment systems used.



Chapter 5

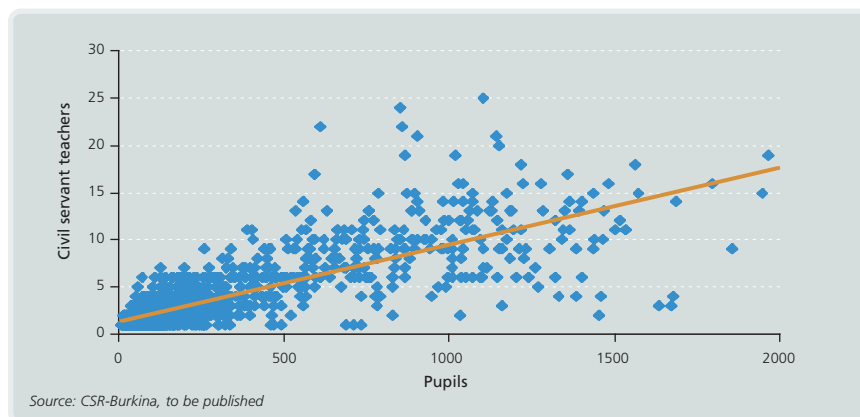
*Towards an overall vision
of teacher matters*

3.1. Coherence in teacher deployment throughout the territory

The analysis of coherence in teacher allocation throughout the territory is based on the simple principle of considering that the number of teachers in a school should be connected to the number of pupils. The more pupils in a school, the more teachers there should be and, consequently, schools with the same number of pupils should have roughly the same number of teachers. We need therefore to look at the relationship between the number of pupils and the number of teachers in a school.

Firstly, this can be represented graphically as in graph 5.1 for the case of Burkina Faso. Generally speaking, the expected relationship, as represented by the straight line on the graph, can indeed be observed in the set of countries studied. However, it is often seen to be far from perfect. Thus, among schools with 400 pupils in Burkina Faso, some have eight teachers while others only have four. Similarly, among schools with 10 teachers, enrolments can vary from 210 to 877 pupils. It is therefore obvious that there are problems of coherence in the allocation of teachers to schools. This phenomenon is not specific to Burkina Faso and exists in a great many African countries.

Graph 5.1 : Relationship between the number of pupils and the number of civil servant teachers in primary schools in Burkina Faso





Secondly, to analyse the problem of coherence and establish international comparisons, an indicator is generally used in order to appreciate the quality of the relationship between the number of pupils and the number of teachers. This is the determination coefficient or R^2 , which has a value of between 0 and 1: the closer to 1, the stronger the relationship. The inverse of this R^2 ($1-R^2$) can be interpreted as the share of the phenomenon of primary school teacher allocation connected to other factors than the number of pupils actually in the schools. The higher this figure is the more marked are the problems of coherence in teacher allocation. Table 5.3 presents the share of the phenomenon of teacher allocation to public primary schools not connected to the number of pupils for 15 African countries. This table presents the figures for teachers directly allocated by the government (column 2). However, some countries use community teachers who are not allocated by the government and who are recruited by the communities to compensate for the government deficit. It therefore seems appropriate to present the results including community teachers too (column 3) for the countries where information is available; this gives some idea of how this kind of community involvement can restore the balance.

Among the countries where information on the share of teachers allocated by the government not attributable to the number of pupils, is available for a fairly recent year, the variation ranges from 7% in Guinea to 54% in Benin. The average is 30% meaning that, on average, for the countries considered in this sample, 30% of the phenomenon of teacher allocation by the school administration does not depend on the number of pupils but is related to other factors. Countries like Central African Republic, Burundi and Benin, with figures of over 45%, have huge problems of coherence in teacher allocation. However, in the case of Benin and Central African Republic, when community teachers are taken into account, this results in a sharp decrease in values (to 39% and 24% respectively). In these countries, efforts by pupils' parents to compensate for the deficiency in teacher allocation by the government have been positive. However, this raises questions of equity since it is the parents who often have to finance these teachers directly⁶². As a whole, results suggest that progress is possible and necessary in most countries in the region for better distribution of teachers to schools through more equitable and more coherent allocation across the different schools. Significant gains can be made, as demonstrated by the situation in Lesotho, Niger or Guinea.

62 In the case of Benin, community teachers are subsidised by the government but parents contribute too.

Chapter 5

Towards an overall vision
of teacher matters

Table 5.3 : Share of primary teacher allocation not attributable to the number of pupils (1-R²) in 15 African countries (years between 2002 and 2007)

Country	(1-R ²) in teacher allocation by the government	(1-R ²) in teacher allocation by the government + community teachers
Guinea (2004)	7	NA
Lesotho (2003)	18	-
Niger (2003)	19	NA
Guinea-Bissau (2006)	20	-
Burkina Faso (2007)	22	-
Mauritania (2004)	22	-
Ethiopia (2002)	28	-
Chad (2004)	33	34
Malawi (2007)	34	-
Congo (2005)	38	35
CAR (2005)	46	24
Burundi (2004)	50	-
Benin (2006)	54	39
Cameroon (2002)	NA	45
Mali (2004)	NA	27
Average	30	34

Source: CSRs

The above elements provide us with a global vision of teacher allocation and enable international comparisons. It is also possible to look at coherence in teacher allocation from a national stand by comparing differences in pupil-teacher ratios⁶³ (PTR) between the different provinces, districts and other administrative subdivisions. This is a very interesting perspective and of direct use to education system management since it highlights any imbalances.

Map 5.1 provides a visual illustration of the differences that can exist between different provinces in the same country through the example of Benin. Thus, it is clear that districts like *Littoral* and *Ouémé* are much better off than districts such as *Borgou* and above all *Couffo*. The important role played by community teachers is also clear. Thus, in *Borgou*, the PTR would virtually be over 80 without community teachers, whereas it is in fact between 45 and 50.

⁶³ This is the average number of pupils per teacher.



Map 5.1 : Pupil-teacher ratios (PTR) with and without community teachers in Benin, 2005-2006

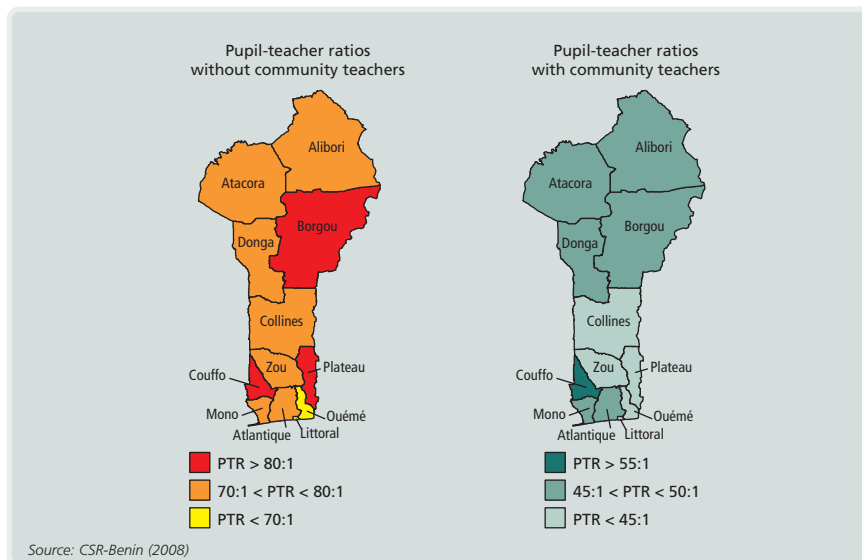


Table 5.4 gives information on pupil-teacher ratios in a number of countries, indicating in each case: the lowest and the highest PTRs observed in the provinces, the gaps between these two ratios and the average ratio. It is to be noted that there are important limits to the information collected: it was not always possible to distinguish between civil servant teachers and community teachers or even teachers from the private sector. As such, it is not possible to make comparisons across countries or to pass a judgment on the allocation of teachers by the public authorities.

In the countries considered here, the spatial distribution of teachers is uneven and distinctly unbalanced. There are often considerable gaps. The case of Central African Republic illustrates, as in Benin, the important role of community teachers in the education system. Without them, “virtual” PTRs would vary from 109 to 575. Uganda and Malawi are also facing highly contrasted situations from one district to another. Thus, in Malawi, the average number of pupils per teacher varies considerably, ranging from 36 to 120 between the two extreme districts. There are 10 districts with an average PTR of over 90 while in 5 districts the PTR is under 55. Among these five districts, four are in urban areas (World Bank, 2007d). In Uganda, the PTR varies from 32 to 93 according to the district. The lowest pupil-teacher ratios are observed in the district of *Kalangala*, which is characterised by a scattered population requiring small schools. On the other hand, the highest PTRs are observed in districts in the North, which have been affected for many long years by armed conflict (World Bank, 2007e).

Chapter 5

Towards an overall vision
of teacher matters

Table 5.4 : Variation in pupil-teacher ratios at provincial level for some sub-Saharan African countries

Country	Pupil-teacher ratio			
	Lowest	Highest	Average	Gap
Benin (2005-2006) without community teachers	55	92	74	37
Benin (2005-2006) with community teachers	/	/	47	/
Burkina Faso (2005-2006)	45	56	50	11
The Gambia (2005-2006) lower secondary	36	49	41	13
Eritrea	30	53	48	23
Lesotho (2005)	38	47	42	9
Malawi (2006)	36	120	80	84
Uganda (2006)	32	93	48	61
CAR (2006) without community teachers	109	575	199	466
CAR (2006) with community teachers	78	109	92	31
Tanzania (2006)	40	69	52	29
Zambia (2006)	46	79	64	33
Zanzibar (2006)	23	54	33	31

Source: CSRs, World Bank (2007a-f)

In the other countries, although the differences in the number of pupils per teacher from one area to another are less significant, they still neighbour on 30, which is in itself high. The smallest gaps are observed in Burkina Faso, The Gambia and Lesotho, registering at 11, 13 and 9 respectively. In these countries, there seems to be a fairly egalitarian distribution of teachers across provinces; however, this situation can conceal considerable variations within provinces. Thus, in The Gambia, one quarter of *Region 2* schools have a PTR of over 58, whereas in another quarter of them, the PTR registers at under 35 (World Bank, 2007b). In Burkina Faso, an analysis of the proportion of schools with normal teacher allocation within the different provinces (cf. table 5.5) reveals relatively low proportions: from 13.7% for the Eastern province to 30.5% for the Centre-South province. That means, amongst other things, that the main problem in teacher allocation is distinctly more pronounced within the provinces themselves than across the different provinces (CSR-Burkina, to be published).



Table 5.5 : Average pupil-teacher ratio by province and coherence of teacher allocation within provinces in Burkina Faso

Province	Average pupil-teacher ratio	% of schools normally allocated	% of schools under-allocated	% of schools over-allocated
Boucle du Mouhoun	49.3	26.8 %	33.6 %	39.6 %
Cascades	51.3	19.8 %	37.8 %	42.4 %
Centre	48.8	26.9 %	32.9 %	40.2 %
Centre-East	52.4	24.8 %	35.0 %	40.2 %
Centre-North	55.6	26.4 %	33.3 %	40.3 %
Centre-West	47.1	27.1 %	32.7 %	40.2 %
Centre-South	51.6	30.5 %	32.7 %	36.8 %
East	46.9	13.7 %	36.3 %	50.1 %
Hauts-Bassins	52.8	22.5 %	34.1 %	43.4 %
North	53.1	23.7 %	36.9 %	39.4 %
Plateau central	47.2	24.2 %	34.4 %	41.4 %
Sahel	45.0	17.3 %	33.4 %	49.3 %
South-West	44.9	21.5 %	31.5 %	47 %
Overall	49.8	23.5 %	34.2 %	42.3 %

Source: CSR-Burkina (to be published)

Note: Normally allocated schools are schools where the pupil-teacher ratio is situated within more or less 10% of the average pupil-teacher ratio in the province. An under-allocated (or over-allocated) school is one where the pupil-teacher ratio is over 10% higher (or lower) than the average ratio in the province.

Considerable differences are thus observed across provinces but also within provinces. Moreover, these differences do not necessarily correspond to administrative areas. Instead, rural areas tend to be systematically at a disadvantage compared to urban areas. Results of analyses carried out in the different CSRs show, indeed, that urban areas are systematically at an advantage. On average, they benefit from 0.2 (Guinea) to 1.9 (Niger) teachers more than a comparable school located in a rural area. In Cameroon, disparities are even more marked according to the degree of urbanisation: large cities with a population of over 200 000 have almost two teachers more than a school of identical size in a rural area; as for small towns, they benefit from 0.4 teacher more on average.

The low appeal of rural locations leads to a situation where schools established in these contexts have difficulty in attracting, retaining and maintaining their personnel and often see themselves neglected to the benefit of city schools or schools located in privileged areas. Thus, there are urban areas with excess teachers and areas where many positions remain vacant, often for long periods of time, in rural and remote areas. It is true that conditions in rural areas can sometimes be quite difficult (cf. box 5.1).

Chapter 5

Towards an overall vision of teacher matters

Rural areas are of particularly limited appeal to women. In most countries in the region, women are less inclined to accept posts in rural areas. As far as countries studied by the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) are concerned, while almost half of all teachers are women, they represent 42% of teachers in rural areas, compared to 66% in urban areas (even so, there is considerable variation from one country to another). In West and Central Africa, the proportion of female teachers is very variable, but generally lower than in East Africa, ranging from 14% in Chad to 65% in Niger. However, like their East African counterparts, women in the sub-region are systematically less represented in rural areas. In Chad, they hardly account for 4% of teaching staff in rural areas, compared to 31% in urban areas. Women are also poorly represented in rural areas in Mauritania (12%) and in Togo (15%) (Bonnet, 2007).

The existence of social barriers limits sending women to rural areas; in fact, it has been reported that it is considered unacceptable for women to live alone in some communities. In other locations, the arrival of unmarried female teachers can be a source of anxiety for local women who consider that they represent unfair competition in the search for men due to their higher status and pay (World Bank, 2007d). In many countries, unmarried female teachers have expressed their concern of not finding an adequate husband from the same socioeconomic background, or even of being obliged to marry an illiterate farmer under possible pressure from the community. Added to these arguments are those connected to safety or, for married women, of being separated from their husband (Hedges, 2000, quoted by Mulkeen, 2006). It has also been put forward that it is easier for men to engage in complementary agricultural activities than for women, while for the latter there are more opportunities for an additional job in towns—in private education or in commercial activities (Mulkeen, 2006). These difficulties often drive the departments in charge of teacher deployment to limit sending women into rural areas, to avoid a rejection on their part or a premature request for transfer.



Box 5.1: Specificities of rural areas

Mulkeen (2006) has identified a series of characteristics to explain the low appeal of remote rural areas:

- The quality of life may not be as good as in urban areas. Aside from the problem of finding decent accommodation in permanent structures, which is at the heart of the concerns of teachers posted to remote areas, the absence of leisure activities is sometimes mentioned as a constraint.
- The distance from public services in general, and health services in particular, may be of major concern, especially for teachers with chronic disease or with HIV/AIDS. Some countries have made arrangements for teachers who are sick to be transferred to towns, e.g. Uganda, or close to health facilities, e.g. Malawi or The Gambia (World Bank, 2007b,d,e). In Ghana, health problems are registered as the first cause of early transfer to towns (Hedges, 2000, quoted by Mulkeen).
- The working environment is generally more difficult in rural areas: school facilities of poor quality; lack of textbooks and other teaching aids; overcrowded classes; limited or little pedagogical support and monitoring; children and parents less sensitive to schooling.
- Similarly, opportunities for refreshing or upgrading skills are more limited for teachers living in rural and remote areas, as are opportunities to do further study, reducing their career prospects and possibilities of geographic mobility.
- As highlighted by Akyeampong and Stephens (2002, quoted by Mulkeen), primary school teachers generally come from higher than average socioeconomic backgrounds and are often from urban areas, making it more difficult for them to accept postings in remote or rural areas, which are also considered as less prestigious. Problems of local languages may complicate and curb the deployment of non-local teachers.
- Finally, for some teachers, urban areas provide opportunities for supplementing their income with private tuition or in private education.

Knowing that the challenge of UPE is first and foremost a rural challenge, decision-makers, and the educational community as a whole, must give very serious attention to these staff deployment problems. The following section focuses on the different avenues to be explored to meet this challenge.

Chapter 5

*Towards an overall vision
of teacher matters*

3.2. Teacher deployment issues

The problems of teacher deployment brought to light in the previous section could jeopardise the generalisation of primary schooling. It is therefore appropriate to identify the causes of these problems. Three different interlocking causes can be distinguished. The first concerns practices whereby political or administrative personalities, at central or local level, intervene in the allocation process of individuals. The second is to do with the absence of an effective system of teacher management. Finally, the third is connected to individual issues: reluctance to go to certain areas, family reunification, etc.

It is relatively frequent in many countries for people in positions of political or administrative responsibility to exert an influence on teacher allocation processes (Hallak and Poisson, 2006). Whether a matter of favouritism or purely and simply of corruption, these practices considerably detract from effective teacher deployment. Teachers benefiting from socio-political networks are the ones who generally request interventions, in order to influence the choice of the school they are to be assigned to. In some countries, corruption is common knowledge and teachers know that they will have to pay certain people to obtain a new posting (UNESCO, 2008). This problem is not specific to centralised management systems and also exists at local level. Thus, in some countries, it is relatively common to hear those in charge of education locally complaining about local administration influencing teacher assignments. Their interventions naturally correspond to very different criteria from those related to the coherent and effective management of human resources. School level management by parents and head teachers also has its shortcomings, since cases of recruiting family members or friends as teachers have been observed in West Africa (De Grauwe *et al.*, 2005). It is obvious that, for the vast majority of teachers, these practices are unfair and discouraging since they do not take into account objective criteria. They are not necessarily connected to a particular management mode but take advantage of a common characteristic: the lack of transparency in teacher allocation procedures. This is a serious problem of governance (Hallak and Poisson, 2006), which is able to develop due to the weakness of existing regulation systems. Solutions are not necessarily easy to apply since they require strong political determination; however, they are based on simple principles. Firstly, the criteria and modalities of teacher assignment must be made transparent and secondly the responsibilities in the decision-making chain must be clearly identified.

The lack of transparency of the staff management system as well as its lack of effectiveness has a direct effect on the allocation of teachers to schools. There are several types of teacher management systems in African countries and these have to be examined to appreciate their advantages and limits. The most common deployment model in the region is the centralised one. This generally corresponds to a two-tier system of teacher assignment in public education, with deployment initially made from central to provincial level followed by a second allocation from provincial level to the schools. Mostly, teacher allocation at provincial level is based on



information coming from the schools on enrolments, the pupil-teacher ratio and/or the number of classes. To be effective, this type of centralised model requires efficient information systems, which are often lacking in African countries. It is generally characterised by a lack of reactivity and a less effective system of control unable to address local needs as made clear in the previous analyses.

The lack of qualification of the personnel in charge of managing the education systems can also be mentioned. Indeed, in many countries, most of the personnel are not true administrators but are very often teachers untrained for these duties, which is not likely to make for more effective management.

The negative remarks on centralised management can however be moderated by highlighting the fact that the setting up of “post-based” systems has proved relatively effective in some countries. The principle consists in deploying teachers on the basis of posts granted to each school. If the posts are correctly defined at each school level, especially according to enrolments and their growth, this system can avoid the volatility observed in a traditional centralised system. Indeed, if for example a school is granted five posts and one of them is vacant, then only one teacher can be assigned to this school, significantly reducing incoherence in allocation. In Madagascar, rules have been developed, alongside the massive recruitment of non-civil servant teachers, to determine the number of subsidised non-civil servant teaching posts school by school, based on existing pupil-teacher ratios and number of classrooms (EFA, 2008). Post-based recruitment was also applied in Benin for a period of three school years (2004 to 2006) in the framework of contract teacher allocation. In spite of the positive impact of this type of deployment, the recruitment of contract teachers has once again been based on the old method (i.e. at central level with deployment throughout the whole territory) since the 2007-2008 school year. Post-based recruitment also seemed attractive to Malawi with a view to modelling teacher deployment on the basis of the number of posts defined for each school, attempting in this way to avoid over allocation in urban areas. It is however unlikely that such redeployment, from over-allocated to under-allocated areas, could be implemented without some opposition: redeploying teachers is a difficult task that could lead to a high level of teacher attrition in case of forced relocation (World Bank, 2007d).

Decentralisation of part of the recruitment process to local administration level, while enabling an acceleration in recruitment and better addressing local needs for teachers, has however suffered from local pressure of influence, limiting the rational deployment of teachers (Mulkeen, 2006).

Finally, the so-called “market” system, where teachers apply for posts advertised by the schools, is a third way of managing teacher deployment. The case of Lesotho is interesting in this respect. Teachers apply directly for vacant posts advertised by the school itself but financed by the government. This practice has the merit of reducing

Chapter 5

Towards an overall vision of teacher matters

management procedures at central level. It also provides the schools with greater autonomy in teacher recruitment and management, and enables most vacant posts to be filled, even in the less attractive areas. However, it does have its limits (Mulkeen, 2006). Indeed, this practice tends to give preference to local recruits rather than to outsiders, which can be exacerbated by pressure from influential personalities on the school recruitment committee. In the end, it is not always the most qualified individuals who obtain the posts. In addition, it was also observed that the least attractive areas found it difficult to recruit the most qualified teachers, as the salary was not attractive enough. To be effective, such a system must set up transparent recruitment procedures and ensure that schools located in the most difficult areas are in a position to offer incentives to teachers with a view to attracting and keeping them (OECD, 2005). Ultimately, that implies the effective centralised management of information, which brings us back to certain difficulties mentioned earlier.

Whether deployment procedures are centralised or decentralised or whether they are market-based, problems of imbalance in teacher allocation subsist, particularly in the most remote areas. The difficulty experienced by the authorities to assign teachers to where they are needed tends to weaken and discredit the deployment system as a whole, and contributes, as highlighted by Gottelman-Duret and Hogan (1998a), to the sentiment that nothing can be done to rectify these inequalities. It is true that the authorities are particularly powerless, lacking means of control and sanctions, and so of means of pressure to impose allocation decisions. When sanctions do exist, they are rarely applied and with some difficulty. In Malawi or in Zambia, for example, forced assignment has led to teachers purely and simply abandoning their jobs. By way of illustration, in the Eastern province of Zambia, out of the 1 116 teachers





recruited in 2006, 83 failed to arrive at their teaching post. In Malawi, to limit refusals and avoid resignations, a teacher is not forced to take a post if housing conditions are inadequate (World Bank, 2007d). It is considered preferable to post the teacher to an area where teacher needs are lower rather than take the risk of him/her resigning. Transfers in the course of employment further accentuate the gaps. In Zambia, after two years of teaching in a rural area, teachers can ask to be transferred to less isolated areas, as long as a post has become vacant. The most desirable posts, primarily in towns, are filled rapidly, while the least popular posts remain vacant, often for long periods. In addition, due to the number of vacancies in some districts, a teacher can be transferred even before the end of the two-year posting. In Eritrea, this type of transfer is also possible. However, due to the shortage of teachers, most candidates for relocation stay in their posts for very long periods.

Chapter 5

*Towards an overall vision
of teacher matters*

3.3. Addressing the challenge of assigning teachers to disadvantaged areas

The countries have introduced a number of measures to address the difficulties mentioned above. Some of these, such as post-based or school-based recruitment, have already been referred to but we have seen that they do not suffice to provide the most disadvantaged areas with teachers. Other, often more specific, measures have been introduced.

One of the most widespread measures, in Africa as in other world regions, is to send new recruits to rural locations and to difficult areas. This option was adopted in Madagascar and seems to have borne fruit. In fact, over the last three years, new teacher postings—whether civil servant teachers or not⁶⁴—have mainly concerned the most remote rural areas. While posts in areas where teaching conditions are the least attractive are still difficult to fill, these postings have however allowed a more coherent teacher distribution throughout the territory (EFA, 2008). Deployment of new recruits in rural areas is also practised in Eritrea where, after a time of teaching, teachers can request transfer to more attractive areas. Malawi is moving in the same direction: on applying for a place in a teacher training institution, applicants are informed that they will be assigned to remote areas. In principle, this should ensure that most future teachers would be ready to accept a post in a remote rural area. The disadvantage of this practice is that it is systematically the least experienced teachers who go to the most difficult areas. Moreover, to be effective, it is advisable for rural postings to be a transitory measure and a natural part of the career plan (Gottelmann-Duret, 1998): it is important for teachers not to feel “stuck” in these posts for their whole career but to see them as a way of obtaining a more desirable job eventually. It is also important to ensure that not only the least qualified and/or least experienced individuals apply for and accept these posts. Setting up a system of mentoring by more experienced teachers and head teachers could be an effective mechanism for managing these teachers. In all cases, implementing such a system requires sound management practices, which are still lacking in many countries in the region.

Another practice consists in giving preference to the recruitment of candidates coming from the place of the assignment. In this case, candidates are targeted on the basis of a number of characteristics such as where they come from, or their ability to master local languages, which can facilitate their recruitment in the difficult areas where they are from. In this respect, Malawi envisages establishing quotas per district amongst teacher training college applicants. The deployment of newly trained teachers to their home locality could be facilitated in this way, and remove *de facto* the problem of “house-hunting,” which is the principal obstacle to accepting a post in rural areas. However, as highlighted by Azam (2001, quoted by Mulkeen, 2006), educated members of a disadvantaged minority group may view their education as a means of social mobility, and may have no desire to remain in their original

⁶⁴ The Malagasy government subsidises community teachers.



community once qualified. In Malawi, teachers have expressed the fear of seeing their social obligations becoming more pronounced once back in their community. Rather than their home village, teachers prefer to be assigned to their home district (Mulkeen, 2006). Moreover, there are not necessarily teachers home to all the villages where teachers are needed; this is even one of the characteristics of the remotest areas. It may nevertheless be easier to allocate individuals to these schools when they are originally from that particular province. The example of Central African Republic is quite interesting in this respect. The authorities came up against the difficulty of assigning young teachers trained in Bangui to the provinces, even when they were originally from those areas. Indeed, most young people prefer to stay in the capital where there are more opportunities. As a result, it was decided to set up provincial training centres that recruit locally; the individuals who join these centres know that they will necessarily be assigned to that province. This has made recruitment easier in the provinces.

Community teachers have been recruited on a wide scale in some countries in response to the needs of disadvantaged areas. Community teachers are generally recruited locally, and paid, by parents. While the communities are at the origin of these recruitments on account of the incapacity of governments to recruit teachers in line with schooling demands in some areas, they are now an integral part of the educational policy in some countries (Benin, Madagascar, Chad, etc.) and subsidised by the governments. This is a pragmatic approach to addressing teacher shortages in some areas. Still, this type of recruitment is very much dependent on the dynamics of each community and cannot replace a policy of educational supply enabling every child attend school. The use of community teachers also poses the problem of their qualification, as they are not always up to the minimum required academic standard nor are they trained. Their often-precarious salaries and status also constitute a limit to attracting and retaining people with the adequate profile. This practice is used as a last resort, with the definite advantage of providing schools with teachers and so of ensuring instruction for the pupils. However, it must imperatively be combined with a number of measures such as ensuring that community teachers have a minimum level of qualification and that they benefit from in-service training. It is fundamental to offer them career prospects at a later stage to keep them motivated. Madagascar provides an interesting example in this respect. In the coming years, the Ministry has decided to massively resort to community teachers (cf. Chapter 3), recruited by the community, to compensate for the deficit in civil servant teachers and address the growing demand for schooling. Community teachers must have the minimum required qualification (BEPC), and are offered qualifying training with a view to ensuring quality education and to encouraging them to stay in the profession. Their salary is covered by the Ministry budget and increases little by little according to a

Chapter 5

*Towards an overall vision
of teacher matters*

career plan (based on qualifying continuous professional training), without however arriving at the salary level of civil servant teachers (EFA, 2008). The Central African Republic is also envisaging the reclassification of community teachers, after a qualifying training course, in a new status category.

These different measures aim at facilitating teacher recruitment in disadvantaged areas but they come over as temporary measures and not necessarily as a permanent solution to recruiting and maintaining qualified teachers. As already mentioned, these areas run a fairly significant risk of being allocated with unqualified and inexperienced teachers and of having difficulty in retaining them. There is thus a need for additional measures in terms of training and pedagogical support. Financial incentives must also be envisaged to attract and/or motivate teachers. Incentives are a central element of the strategies of attraction and retention of teachers in remote rural areas. Several countries have introduced different incentive bonus mechanisms (hardship, transport or housing allowances, provision of housing), but with often limited impact. Bonuses are often too low to be attractive: in Lesotho, while the hardship allowance is the equivalent of 31% of an unqualified teacher's entry salary, it hardly represents 6% of a qualified teacher's salary. In Uganda and Zambia, it represents 15% and 20% of salary respectively. These levels are still considered unattractive. Moreover, bonuses do not always target the most isolated or rural areas and are not systematically distributed or are done so with some delay. An increase in the amount of the incentives is often offered, but for reasons of financial sustainability, this option may not always be feasible.

In such a context, precise targeting of the allocations becomes crucial both for the efficiency of the incentive system and for its sustainability. The Gambia has thus tested a progressive financial incentive system, based on distance from the main road as the main indicator⁶⁵: the bonus is all the higher the remoter the school, varying from 30% to 40% of basic salary. This mechanism seems to produce the desired effects insofar as an increase has been observed in demands from qualified teachers to go and work in the remotest areas. A survey conducted on teacher trainees showed that one quarter of them would be ready to accept a posting in areas offering a hardship allowance and 95% of them would accept such an assignment if offered upon completion of their initial training (World Bank, 2007b). In a similar perspective, Zambia is considering refining the basic terms of the distribution of hardship allowances, by distinguishing between rural areas and remote rural areas.

⁶⁵ This initiative, still at the pilot activity stage, is financed by the Fast Track Initiative Education For All Catalytic Fund. It seems effective in attracting and retaining teachers in remote areas. If maintained, it is anticipated that it should rectify the imbalance in teacher allocation in the country (World Bank, 2007b).



Different criteria such as distance from the main road, from the post office, the health centre or the nearest bank are proposed as indicators of school remoteness (World Bank, 2007f).

Beyond financial incentives, provision of housing is also an important factor in a teacher's decision to accept a post in a remote area. However, these measures are particularly costly and difficult for governments to cover. It may prove to be of interest to explore the possibility of partnerships with the communities and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Other types of incentive are possible, such as faster promotion for teachers working in the most difficult areas, higher or earlier salary rise, more consequent transport allowances with a view to facilitating travel in the district, etc. Whatever the nature of the incentive, its effectiveness depends on how it is targeted. One of the consequences observed in the countries that have set up or attempted to set up this type of policy is the rising demand from teachers to extend the incentives to other areas. Naturally, any extension of an incentive policy automatically reduces its impact: why go to difficult areas if one can receive very much the same bonus in an urban area? The fact that this would rapidly prove to be too costly for the ministry of education must not be neglected. This type of measure therefore calls for discussions upstream with teachers' representatives.

If financial incentives are to have the desired impact, then the problem of salary payments in remote areas must be resolved. Indeed, one of the characteristics of these areas is that teachers must travel long distances to collect their pay and it is not unusual for this to involve an absence of several days. This results in missed school days for pupils in these areas compared to their counterparts in urban areas. Progress is possible, even in a very difficult context, as shown by the example of the Central African Republic. Indeed, following the situation of conflict in this country, the banking system is inexistent with the exception of a few towns and it is therefore very difficult to pay salaries in the provinces, especially in rural areas. To get round this difficulty, the Ministry of Education has contacted different private entities with operations in the provinces. It turned out that these operators were found to be very interested since they were somehow confronted with the opposite problem, i.e. sending their funds to the capital city. Several mobile phone operators offer innovative systems of credit via mobile phones. To simplify, the teacher would receive a credit message equivalent to his/her salary⁶⁶ on his/her mobile phone that he/she

⁶⁶ These are secure payment procedures.

Chapter 5

Towards an overall vision of teacher matters

could collect at one of the phone operator's shops. This type of solution could enable unprecedented coverage of the territory. The Ministry envisages using these techniques starting in the school year 2009-2010. The spectacular development of the mobile phone industry, in fragile states too, could enable innovative and effective solutions to be found for the payment of salaries in rural areas in African countries.

In addition, financial incentives are probably not enough to keep up the motivation of individuals who find themselves in isolated areas and in harsh, poverty-stricken environments. Thus, it is important to ensure relatively effective close support, through the dynamics of the team of teachers at the school level first of all and also through fairly frequent visits from pedagogical advisors and inspectors; this implies specific resources for these areas. Bringing together teachers by area on a regular basis, several times a year, could also contribute to doing away with the feeling of isolation, by favouring exchanges of views with colleagues in similar situations and access to training. Finally, geographic mobility and career prospects, when directly connected to their work in these disadvantaged areas, can be an important source of motivation.

After going over the different existing measures, it very clearly appears that a considerable display of pragmatism and a series of strategies will be required to rectify the imbalance in teacher distribution and to attract and retain teachers in rural areas including the remotest rural areas. The challenge is none other than the generalisation of primary schooling in rural areas and so the achievement of UPE.





4. Teacher absenteeism

Absenteeism is not specific to education in developing countries but is a problem in many sectors, particularly social sectors. Teacher absenteeism is considered as a major problem in many countries in the region in spite of the approximate knowledge of the situation due to patchy data. Indeed, while cases of absenteeism are more or less well registered at school level, they rarely are at provincial level and virtually never at central level. In addition, even when the information is registered, it is rarely used by the school, which is not always obliged to transmit it to the higher administrative levels. Nevertheless, the few studies available on the subject show that teacher absenteeism is a very acute problem with harmful consequences on the education systems. It has first of all a negative impact on the quality of learning (Chaudhury *et al.*, 2006; Das *et al.*, 2005; Duflo and Hanna, 2005; Michaelowa, 2002). The annual number of hours of instruction is known to be a key factor for pupil learning, and absenteeism tends to significantly reduce the number of hours of lessons actually delivered. In addition, teacher absenteeism results in costs, estimated at between 10% and 24% of primary school education expenditure in developing countries. In Zambia, for instance, annual losses due to absenteeism were estimated at 17 million dollars, i.e. 0.31% of the country's GDP (Patrinos and Kagia, 2007). It is therefore necessary to consider this issue as an important dimension of teacher policy, but with one reservation: the causes of absenteeism are multiple and do not necessarily come under the individual responsibility of the teacher. The aim here is to give as complete a vision as possible of this issue on the basis of available information.

4.1. Empirical elements on teacher absenteeism

Specific surveys on absenteeism, like the PETS⁶⁷ surveys, have been conducted in a few countries in the region and provide fairly detailed information on this subject. They suggest relatively high levels of absenteeism, affecting between 13% of teachers in Ghana (World Bank, 2004) and 19% in Madagascar (World Bank, 2008) and Uganda (World Bank, 2007e; Habyarimana, 2006⁶⁸). PASEC and SACMEQ surveys also include questions on absenteeism. Based on the replies of the teachers (PASEC) or of the head teachers (SACMEQ), the resulting information is, however, less reliable than that obtained through the PETS surveys, which observe *de visu* the presence or the absence of the teacher. As recalled by Bonnet (2008), answers may be marred by imprecision⁶⁹ and by intentional poor representation, since teachers may be tempted to underestimate their absences. Even so, data show a high prevalence of absenteeism: during the month previous to the PASEC survey, almost half of the teachers in Mali and Niger had been absent for at least one day; this was the case of almost two-thirds of teachers in Chad, Guinea and Mauritania (Bonnet, 2007). In SACMEQ countries, the problem of absenteeism, as perceived by the head teachers, seems just as acute as in French-speaking African countries, although it is

67 Public Expenditure Tracking Survey.

68 In Uganda, a similar survey conducted in 2004, reported a rate of absenteeism of 27% (Chaudhury *et al.*, 2006).

69 Generally speaking, the time of the survey is likely to have a considerable influence on answers. In Madagascar, absenteeism is higher in the rainy season than in the dry season (World Bank, 2008). In Uganda, seasonal differences are also reported: absenteeism is higher at the start of the school year and at harvest time (Habyarimana, 2006, quoted by World Bank, 2007e).

Chapter 5

*Towards an overall vision
of teacher matters*

however not possible to precisely estimate the extent of the phenomenon. SACMEQ data show that over half of all pupils (55%) attend schools where the head teacher reports that the problem exists and 8% of pupils attend a school where teacher absenteeism is considered to be high. Some variation does however emerge from one country to another. The problem seems particularly acute in Uganda, where over 20% of pupils are in schools where absenteeism is considered high. Malawi, Mozambique and Seychelles seem also to be faced with a higher prevalence of absenteeism than the other countries in the sub-region (Bonnet, 2007). In West Africa, teachers declare they are absent half a week per month on average. Considerable variation is again observed across countries: the average number of days of absence in the month previous to the survey ranges from 1.4 in Niger to 4.7 in Senegal (Michaelowa, 2002; Bonnet, 2007). The case of Senegal is of particular concern, with teachers declaring to have missed almost one week of school on average during the month preceding the survey. In SACMEQ countries, the number of days lost due to events not connected to school was distinctly lower, at around six days per annum, ranging from 1.9 days in Botswana to 11.5 days in Tanzania (Bonnet, 2007).

4.2. The main causes of teacher absenteeism

It is helpful to recall here that absenteeism has multiple causes and that it does not necessarily fall only under the responsibility of the teacher. Different factors have an influence on absenteeism, some of which are connected to the teacher, others to the characteristics of the class or school, and even to the school environment or yet again to administration. The factors coming into play tend to vary from one country to another, making it difficult to generalise. The most frequently reported reasons for absence⁷⁰ are health problems, family reasons (including illness, death, marriage or birth), and strikes (Bonnet, 2007). Another reason often put forward is the time taken for teachers to go and collect their salary. Other reasons are to do with commitment to another economic activity to supplement their income, engaging in further study with a view to more qualifications, lack of motivation, or the fact of living far from the school.

⁷⁰ In PASEC surveys, head teachers were asked the question and had to choose a maximum of three answers from a series of proposals.



Thus, health problems are one of the main causes of absence in most countries. This is particularly true in countries or areas heavily affected by malaria or HIV/AIDS. While health problems represent almost one quarter of the reasons for absence in Madagascar (World Bank, 2008), in Zambia the rate rises to 35% and to 62% when the illness of close relatives and funerals are added (Das *et al.*, 2005). This problem is accentuated in rural areas, where a visit to a doctor and medical care in town may take several days. While it is still difficult to evaluate the actual impact of HIV/AIDS on absenteeism, it is a fact that it involves long periods of absence (treatment, healthcare for infected relatives, funerals). HIV/AIDS requires different types of measures that go beyond educational policy alone, such as better availability of healthcare locally, reinforced prevention programmes and, in another perspective, the development of a group of replacement teachers in order to ensure continuity of instruction (Das *et al.*, 2005).

Teacher absenteeism also appears to be encouraged by their involvement in secondary activities. PASEC data show that between 23% (Mauritania) and over 70% (Chad) of teachers engage in another moneymaking activity, which in many cases encroaches upon lesson preparation time and even on instructional time.

Table 5.6 : Percentage of teachers with a secondary activity in some PASEC countries

Guinea	Mali	Mauritania	Niger	Chad	Togo
30 %	51 %	23 %	24 %	72 %	28 %

Source: Bonnet (2007)

In many countries, collecting salary is an important cause of teacher absence, particularly in rural areas, even if, once again, it is quite difficult to actually quantify it. In Madagascar, it explains 13% of all absences and involves from between 1.4 days of absence per month in the dry season to 1.8 days per month in the rainy season, with considerable variation from one area to another. Thus in *Mahajanga* province, teachers are absent more than four days per month on average in the rainy season and this registers at slightly under three days in the dry season (World Bank/UNICEF, PETS November 2006 & May 2007). Poor means of communication, hard-to-reach areas and security problems make collecting salary difficult; this is indeed a crucial issue. A similar situation is observed in Lesotho where most teachers have to go and collect their pay at the end of each month; this involves absences of up to three days, sometimes leaving the school with only one, or even no, teacher (World Bank, 2007c). In Zambia, salaries are managed at district level. Teachers working in town have their salaries transferred directly into their bank account while those in rural areas are generally paid in cash at district level. This causes long periods of absence,

Chapter 5

Towards an overall vision of teacher matters

particularly in remote areas, due to problems of transport. In Eritrea, the pay departments are particularly decentralised enabling teachers to collect their salary without too much absence from school. Also, they have to do this job during their off-peak periods or after work. In Uganda, as in Malawi, teachers are paid directly into their bank account, reducing delays. However, in rural areas, it is not always possible to have a bank account close to the place of work. It is then necessary to travel to collect pay (World Bank 2007d,e). The situation is still more complicated when the payment of salaries is delayed. Finally, in Tanzania, the irregularity of salary payments poses serious problems. Salary transfers are often delayed at district level, leading to delays in paying the teachers. Furthermore, the fact that pay day is not always known in advance obliges teachers to wait for their salary, sometimes for a whole week, at the pay centre.

In addition, several studies have pointed out that civil servant teachers show higher rates of absenteeism than contract or community teachers. This is characteristic of many French-speaking countries in the sub-region (Bonnet, 2007; Michaelowa, 2002; World Bank, 2008). Michaelowa estimates absenteeism at between 1.5 and 2 days less for contract or community teachers per month. Several reasons can be put forward to explain this observation. First of all, these teachers are often recruited locally, which limits the need to travel for family reasons. Next, community teachers are hired and paid directly by parents; they are therefore under the direct supervision of their employer⁷¹ and do not need to travel to collect their pay. Also, as observed by Michaelowa (2002), a number of these teachers are very eager to change schools and may therefore be more rigorous in their work with a view to obtaining a transfer. One last reason is to do with the fact that contract and community teachers have been working as teachers for a shorter time on average than civil servant teachers and that they could therefore be more motivated and enthusiastic than their colleagues.

The case of unauthorised absences should also be mentioned, corresponding to the failure to adhere to school rules and regulations, and professional ethics. In Madagascar, unauthorised absences represent one quarter of the reasons the most often given to explain teacher absence. Moreover, there are reports of teachers being present at the place of work but not in the classroom in several countries. In Uganda, this concerns one third of all teachers (World Bank 2008, 2007e). These points bring to light teacher management and supervision problems at the school and community level. At the school level, it appears that head teachers are themselves often absent, sometimes more so than regular teachers. In Uganda, the rate of absenteeism for head teachers is apparently 50% higher than that of other teachers, and official obligations are given as the justification for half of the absences (World Bank, 2007e). However, even when they are on the job, head teachers do not always supervise the teachers' work. Besides, they rarely have any effective means of pressure at their disposal to ensure teacher presence in class. Their power may have been reduced in this respect since the payment of salaries directly into the teacher's bank account, as they can no longer withhold salaries in case of bad behaviour by the teacher. In most countries, procedures do exist to punish a teacher who has been repeatedly absent

⁷¹ Studies on the question generally establish a negative link between control by parents and the educational community (inspection), and absenteeism (Michaelowa, 2002; Habyarimana, 2006).



with no valid motive. In the vast majority of cases, problems of teacher behaviour are first managed at the school level by the head teacher: verbal warnings followed by a written warning should the teacher re-offend. In serious cases of repeated absence, formal disciplinary sanctions can be brought against the teacher. However, these are often long and laborious: in Uganda, they can take up to four years to be processed. The lengthiness of the process, besides being very laborious, tends to diminish the impact of the sanctions and more fundamentally that of supervision. Fears that such disciplinary measures could deteriorate relations within the school and foster conflict between the teacher and the community also limits their use. As a result, the application of formal sanctions is rare⁷²: in Mozambique, in 2005, 7 teachers were dismissed and 23 suspended, from a total teaching force of 46 000 (Mulkeen, 2006). In Malawi, 56 teachers were dismissed in 2006 from a total of 44 000, including 13 for deserting their posts (World Bank, 2007d)⁷³. In many cases, the head teacher prefers to have problem teachers transferred. In addition, in many countries, inspection is ineffective, with inadequate human and material resources for ensuring the regular control and monitoring of schools.

Finally, it is generally observed that parents and the local educational community are not always involved in questions of teacher management, either through lack of interest or of means of pressure. In Ghana, a study conducted by Care International in 2003 (quoted by Akyeampong *et al.*, 2007) showed that poor communities felt incapable of holding teachers responsible for their absences, considering them as “untouchable.” Through fear of the school not being allocated with teachers, they would also be reticent to lodge a complaint or report this type of problem to the educational authorities. Observations show that in a context of stronger local control (payment of the teacher directly by the parents, regular organisation of parent meetings, existence of financial contributions by parents to the school), absenteeism tends to be less pronounced. The involvement of parents and community could therefore partially compensate for the lack of monitoring and supervision by the educational authorities.

72 However, when sanctions are applied, they can even go as far as dismissal.

73 In Malawi, for the 2004-2006 period, the principal grounds for dismissing teachers were connected to problems of immorality (sexual relations with pupils) (80 cases out of 203), and desertion (50 cases out of 203) (World Bank, 2007d). In Zambia, the most common reasons for disciplinary measures were to do with alcoholism and absenteeism (World Bank, 2007f).

Chapter 5

Towards an overall vision
of teacher matters

4.3. How can absenteeism and its impact on the education system be reduced?

The multiple causes of absenteeism just mentioned show that there is no easy solution to the problem. Educational authorities can apply two complementary solutions: the first consists in trying to reduce absenteeism when it is connected to administrative measures, and the second in compensating for absences to avoid them harming the proper running of the education system. The latter solution is particularly important in countries facing pandemics.

Teacher absenteeism is a common problem faced by education systems. Of course, this phenomenon may be more or less pronounced according to the country, and the previous section showed that the problem is quite extensive in most African countries. One initial question is therefore to ask if the education systems are equipped with effective devices enabling teachers to be replaced in case of absence. Unfortunately, little information is available on this issue other than the reports of absence as mentioned above. A study conducted in Mauritania on a small sample of teachers, shows that in about 40% of cases absent teachers are not replaced (Jarousse and Suchaut, 2002). The authors also note relatively marked regional differences illustrating the fact that it is urban areas, where absence is in any case less common, which are most capable of organising the replacement of absent teachers. Information on how absences are managed is patchy but this aspect should be the subject of specific attention within the framework of teacher policy since it has direct consequences on the running of the system and its effectiveness.

Thus, different measures aimed at reaching the cause of absenteeism have been implemented in the countries in the region to reduce the phenomenon. Reinforcing the supervision and monitoring of teachers and head teachers is a priority in many countries. It is a matter of reinforcing control and supervision mechanisms at the school level by way of different measures: (i) capacity building of the different stakeholders, especially head teachers and parents, in teacher monitoring, (ii) increase in the number and quality of inspections, and (iii) awareness-raising for the local education community as a whole on the issue of absenteeism and its impact. In Madagascar, within the framework of the AGEMAD⁷⁴ programme, the Ministry of Education has experimented closer supervision of pupils and teachers in 15 school districts; it is planned to extend this to all 111 districts by 2010. The development of school improvement plans known as *Contrats programme de réussite scolaire* (CPRS) may also be a relevant tool in the management and control of teachers and pupils. The CPRS brings together all the actors in the school community—pupils, parents, teachers, school authorities, community—with a view to establishing a contract around the pupil's school achievements. The contract is established as a participatory process including a diagnosis of the situation of the school, discussions around the actions to be taken, and decisions as to the responsibilities of each entity. At yearend, the contract is evaluated and updated or redirected. The CPRS is thus a tool for mobilising the different actors in education and a programme device (EFA, 2008;

⁷⁴ AGEMAD is the application in Madagascar of the AGEPA regional initiative in Africa. This Programme aims at enhancing governance of the sector by establishing mechanisms to monitor and control the tasks to be carried out by the different actors (public, parents, etc.) in education sector operations.



UNICEF, 2008). As for The Gambia, it has set up “cluster monitoring” supervision units. These units systematically check the teacher attendance register kept up by the schools, on their visits. Each unit is in charge of a limited number of schools and has some means of transport at its disposal for making regular school visits. These monitoring units have greatly contributed to improving the situation: they constitute, in this respect, a conceivable solution for monitoring schools and improving quality (World Bank, 2007b).

In addition to this type of measures, it is also important to reinforce the statistical monitoring of teacher presence and of effective instructional time. At the school level, this means systematically registering absences and working hours. If they are to serve a purpose, these data must be analysed and monitored at the different hierarchical levels, from the school up to the central level. This requires management and information systems capable of capturing and handling this type of information on a regular basis. National PETS-type surveys can also be an effective monitoring tool for those in charge of education.

Applying sanctions for unjustified repeated absence can also be considered as an option. Withholding salary is used in this framework by some countries. In Zambia, the district authorities can temporarily block absent teachers' salaries, whether these are paid in cash or electronically. However, the introduction of direct transfers has limited the range of these sanctions, as several months are now needed for them to take effect. In The Gambia, for similar reasons, salary sanctions are rarely employed: in 2006, there were 295 cases for 2 400 teachers. However, the measure seems effective: once the salary has been blocked, the teachers at fault reappear (World Bank, 2007b). On a parallel, some people recommend developing codes of good conduct for teachers. These codes clarify expectations in terms of good conduct and performance. This type of document has been useful in making teachers more conscious of these issues in South Eastern Asia (Hallak and Poisson, 2005 quoted by Patrinos and Kagia, 2007).

Chapter 5

*Towards an overall vision
of teacher matters*

The subject of salary payment is still a major challenge, especially in rural areas. Operations have been centralised and bank transfers established in many countries to reduce delays. Other countries, like Madagascar, have opted for a device using postal cheques, due to an inadequate banking system (EFA, 2008). Even so, there is still the problem of remote rural areas. The example of Central African Republic, mentioned earlier, which is based on mobile phone technology could be of inspiration for other countries in managing teacher pay in rural areas.

Absenteeism is complex and has multiple causes. There is neither a single solution nor a simple solution to reduce its scale and consequences. However, some measures tend to produce interesting results, even though the information available is still too thin on the ground to have a full vision of the phenomenon. This important aspect of educational policy deserves special attention within the framework of the everyday management of the education system but also of additional studies for a better understanding of the issue.





5. Keeping motivated teachers in the education system

The extremely rapid emergence of new categories of teachers in African education systems has turned traditional teacher policies upside down. This restructuring of the teaching profession, which is a direct consequence of the countries' commitment to UPE in a context of stiff constraints, calls for new teacher policies. The issue of retaining teachers, especially the most competent teachers, is accentuated and becomes one of the key challenges for educational policies today. In the present context, marked by increasing pressure for quality education and an increasingly difficult working environment for teachers (with rising class size and the massive arrival of children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds), the questions of motivation and commitment take on a new meaning. While the subject has been little explored, the few analytical elements available show that the teacher's motivation, in the same way as his/her competencies and skills, is determinant for effective teaching. It is seen to have a positive influence on pupil learning achievements through the efforts the teacher puts into his/her work and by reducing teacher absenteeism (Bernard *et al.*, 2004; Michaelowa, 2002).

The general context of the restructuring of the teaching profession and the growing pressure on teaching staff suggests re-examining the prospects open to those joining the profession. How can it be hoped to keep motivated and dynamic teachers in the profession without a clear vision of their career prospects? The previous chapters have often pinpointed inadequacies in this area, which make teacher policies relatively fragile in some countries.

5.1. Teacher motivation

Teacher motivation therefore seems to be a key issue since it can have a direct influence on the quality of learning, teacher absenteeism and attrition. However, it is not easy to apprehend this aspect. Measuring motivation is indeed a fairly delicate exercise. PASEC attempts to appreciate this aspect through professional satisfaction. When asked the question as to which profession they would choose if they had to make a new professional choice, almost 73% of teachers in Guinea said that they would once again choose the teaching profession, compared to hardly 40% in Senegal and 46% in Côte d'Ivoire (cf. table 5.7). The situations are thus fairly different from country to country. Job satisfaction also seems lower among civil servant teachers than among contract or community teachers (Bonnet, 2007).

Chapter 5

Towards an overall vision
of teacher matters

**Table 5.7 : Indication of teacher satisfaction
in French-speaking Africa**

Country	% of teachers who would choose the same profession
Burkina Faso	57 %
Cameroon	56 %
Chad	60 %
Côte d'Ivoire	46 %
Guinea	73 %
Madagascar	65.5 %
Mali	65 %
Mauritania	54 %
Niger	59 %
Senegal	41 %

Source: Bonnet (2007), Michaelowa (2002)

Some students currently consider primary school teaching as a last resort, or else as a springboard towards teaching at higher levels or even towards other professions. A survey carried out at the teacher training college in Lesotho (Lesotho College of Education) showed that, of the students intending to teach in primary education, one third would have opted for secondary education or for another profession: they had to go in for primary education due to insufficient initial qualifications. In The Gambia, a similar survey showed that only 18% of future primary school teachers declared wanting to teach at this level initially. The vast majority of these students hope to further their studies to be able to teach at higher levels of education or even change to another profession (18%).

In addition, few of them envisage a long-term commitment in the profession: only 43% in The Gambia and 40% in Lesotho (World Bank, 2007b,c).

In one of the rare quantitative studies on this aspect in sub-Saharan Africa, Michaelowa (2002), using PASEC data⁷⁵, shows that teacher satisfaction is partly connected to working conditions. Indeed, having to teach in overcrowded classrooms, in rural areas and in schools without electricity all have a negative effect on teacher satisfaction. Moreover, as highlighted in the previous chapter, the teacher's level of studies after the general certificate of upper secondary education (*Baccalauréat*) has a significant and negative impact on teacher satisfaction. One plausible explanation is the gulf between the professional aspirations of these teachers and the reality of teaching. Another result is to do with the limited role of the level of salary on teacher satisfaction. Without overlooking the role of salary, this result does show that salary is not enough in itself for teacher satisfaction and therefore suggests that the subject of teacher motivation should be tackled from a broader perspective and more particularly within the framework of career advancement opportunities.

⁷⁵ These data concern Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar and Senegal.



5.2. The professional development of teachers

One way of impacting motivation and of reducing absenteeism and attrition phenomena is to provide teachers with attractive career structures. Aside from pay, which is still a major issue for social dialogue, the opportunities open to teachers for promotion and personal and professional development are also important. In this respect, specialists consider that the professional development of teachers should be considered as a continuous process starting with the teacher's initial training and ending when the teacher retires (Villegas-Reimer, 2003). This approach requires major changes to training and promotion policies for existing teachers.

The modern concept of a teacher's professional development is thus not limited to salary progression but encompasses continuing training possibilities throughout his/her professional career, with a multiple objective. Firstly, the aim is to enable the teacher progress in his/her professional practice and so enhance the effectiveness of his/her teaching. The fact of benefiting from a supportive framework shows the teacher that he/she is accompanied throughout his/her career and this can but have a positive influence on his/her motivation. Of course, the training courses that the teacher has successfully attended must be taken into account in his/her career progression to reinforce the motivating effect. It should not be forgotten that it is not only training that is important but also the implications of training on classroom practices. So, contrary to what is observed in the vast majority of countries at the present time⁷⁶, the quality of the instruction delivered by the teacher should be one of the key criteria when making decisions on promotion⁷⁷.

One of the major obstacles for teachers in their career is the lack of opportunity for promotion. Promotion is automatic within the same grade, but is rarely so from one grade to another and even less so for access to promotional posts (senior teacher, deputy head and head teacher, pedagogical advisor, etc.). The reasons are to do with the limited number of posts available and the promotion processes, which are in many cases competitive, even though the lack of transparency in these processes is a recurrent problem in many countries and the objectivity of decisions is sometimes questioned. There are a limited number of promotional posts due to the pyramidal structure of jobs in the schooling system. In Zambia, 83% of teachers in primary schools are employed at the basic level, 8% as senior teachers, 4% as deputy heads and 5% as head teachers.

It is probably not very appropriate to envisage access to administrative functions as the ultimate objective of the system of teacher promotion. After all it is preferable to consider the objective as being to retain motivated teachers in the classrooms. In this perspective, teachers can quite legitimately expect salary increases that take into account their experience, the rise in their qualifications and the work put in with their pupils. That implies that the salary scale should provide for progression

76 Zambia is an exception as teacher performance is an explicit criterion of selection. This country has a teacher evaluation system featuring an annual assessment by the school head and an officer representing the Ministry at district level.

77 The evaluation by several people, if well supervised, as for recruitment as presented at the beginning of this chapter, would provide a framework for this type of promotion.

Chapter 5

Towards an overall vision of teacher matters

according to precise criteria. At the present time, in most countries, teachers employed by the government are paid on civil service salary scales, composed of different grades and a series of echelons, generally between 7 and 10, within each grade. The initial salary level usually depends on the level of qualification: the more qualified the person, the higher is the starting grade for entering his/her post, and so, the higher the salary. The salary increases that follow do so automatically on an annual basis, until reaching the cap of that particular grade. The next step consists in a promotion for access to another grade, corresponding either to intermediary grades within the same status, or to posts of senior teacher, deputy head or head teacher. In the absence of promotion, there are no further salary increases once the cap has been reached. In most countries, the salary scale is fairly limited. Salary increases for a qualified teacher are low within the same grade, varying from 11% to 18% over a period of 7 to 10 years in 5 English-speaking African countries. The gaps are more significant when changing grades; thus a head teacher in the highest grade earns 2.4 times more than a qualified teacher in Uganda and 3 times more in Zambia. Malawi is an exception with a particularly open salary scale since a head teacher in the highest grade earns almost nine times more than a qualified teacher. It is obvious that this type of pay structure attracts teachers to administrative posts rather than encouraging them to stay in their classrooms. Teacher policies must be very attentive to this aspect since promotion in the teaching profession should encourage teachers to continue teaching.

Geographic mobility must also be taken into account as this represents a major management issue. Aside from the specific incentives (bonuses, housing, etc.) that teachers should benefit from in difficult areas, and particularly in remote rural areas, they should be allowed geographic mobility after serving a given time in the area (3 to 5 years), if so desired. Quicker career progression in the most difficult areas could contribute to making these areas more attractive. The difficulty of having teachers serve in remote areas has already been brought up in this chapter but it is useful to stress here the idea of taking into account in the teacher's career advancement the time worked in these specific areas.

Nevertheless, the most delicate challenge in terms of professional development is without doubt the continuous access to training for teachers. Taking into account the situation described in this study, it is clear that the training systems in force must be completely overhauled to reach this objective. It does indeed seem particularly difficult to provide training for personnel in posts in rural areas where efforts need to be concentrated. Possibilities do however exist, as explored in a number of contexts. Distance education is one of the priorities to be explored in terms of continuing professional training. Teacher networks are another interesting possibility; they consist in bringing teachers together to enable them share their professional experience and to benefit from training. Although teachers are often behind the initiative for this type of network in developed countries, it is easy to imagine that these networks could be organised and financed by the school administration at local level (school district/inspection). For teachers in remote areas, these meetings have the advantage



of putting an end to their isolation by giving them the opportunity to share their experience with teachers in similar situations. To be effective, the meetings must be regular (one per term) and so involve travel and subsistence costs. However, to avoid impinging on instruction time, they should preferably be held during the school holidays, which may prove difficult for teachers to accept. To make up for this downside, the training aspect of these meetings could be highlighted and taken into account in the teachers' career progression as mentioned above. It is of course essential to study the financial implications and perhaps target the areas for establishing these networks to avoid excessive costs at national level. In addition, this type of device can benefit from the input of experienced teachers who could take on pedagogical responsibilities for schools and administrative areas. These senior teachers or mentors, who have experience and if possible have followed specific qualifying training to support other teachers, would moreover open up a new path to promotion for the most dynamic teachers. Once again, countries should be pragmatic and combine a variety of measures. The different possibilities sketched out here are not new even if they have not necessarily been combined; it is their financing that has often been lacking.

Furthermore, it is becoming urgent, as already mentioned, to deal with the subject of career management for non-civil servant (community or contract) teachers. Although they carry out similar tasks to civil servant teachers, their employment conditions are much more precarious than their civil servant counterparts, whether in terms of pay, job security, opportunities for promotion, or access to training. By and large, little attention is given to their lot. It is essential to accompany these people and to "integrate" them through regular continuing training activities. Offering them genuine career prospects, as for civil servant teachers, is imperative to avoid their motivation from being progressively undermined. Initiatives are being taken in this direction in several countries. One example is the promising initiative launched in Madagascar by the Ministry of Education, which is working on a career plan for non-civil servant teachers with progressive levels of qualification and corresponding salary increases (without however reaching the level of salary of civil servant teachers). Starting 2012, salary increases will be a function of the credits obtained by the teacher in continuing professional training, of his/her seniority and performance.

Chapter 5

*Towards an overall vision
of teacher matters*

Governments must carefully monitor attrition rates for a correct evaluation of hidden costs resulting from teacher loss, particularly those connected to non-civil servant teachers for whom higher than average attrition rates are not always taken into account in cost/benefits analyses. In some countries, a 1% reduction in rates of attrition would suffice to obtain the additional number of teachers required to accomplish the goal of UPE. Providing good teachers with financial incentives so that they stay in the teaching profession would certainly be less costly than training lots of new teachers.

Teacher policies that tackle the profession of teaching as a whole are therefore required in order to attract and retain motivated teachers. It is up to each country to conduct the necessary reforms by counterbalancing resources with local needs (OECD, 2005). It appears clearly here that the professional development of teachers is not of secondary importance. Besides the fact that it addresses their professional ambitions and may therefore facilitate a social consensus in the often crisis-prone education systems, continuing professional development also comes over as a factor of effectiveness for the education systems contributing to the achievement of UPE.





6. The need for a global approach to teacher matters

The diversification of status categories, salaries and teacher profiles resulting from the policies implemented after the Dakar Forum in 2000 to achieve UPE in a context of heavy financial constraints raises the question of the social sustainability of teacher policies in the coming years.

This chapter has covered the principal dimensions of teacher matters: recruitment, training, deployment, absenteeism and professional development. There are many challenges for each of these dimensions in African countries where recent developments in the structure of the teaching profession have disrupted traditional approaches often inherited from colonial times. The necessary innovations will imply trade-offs to be backed up by evaluations of existing situations and of possible options. However, we can but observe the lack and above all the fragmentation of the information required for processing teacher-related decisions. It is therefore necessary to improve information systems while encouraging research on the setting up of new training and management devices. Local innovation should also be assessed in order to promote the most effective devices. The different examples given in this chapter illustrate that many innovative solutions have already been formulated to address the challenges of some aspects. In this respect, a pragmatic approach seems essential but demands a rigorous evaluation of innovation.

However, addressing teacher matters is limited at present by the fact that data is fragmented and so by the absence of an overall vision on the part of decision-makers. Now, not only are the different dimensions of teacher matters, as seen in this chapter, closely interconnected but also a global vision is essential to enable the emergence of new policies in line with the challenges. A simple example is that of pre-service training for teachers, which is generally the subject of much attention, particularly due to the increasing number of new teachers to be trained. If attrition is not taken into consideration, that is to say teachers who drop out of the profession, then this may result in a much more costly training policy than really necessary. Indeed, if 100 teachers are trained and 20 disappear in a few years time, 20% more people than necessary will have to be trained to have the desired number of teachers in posts; whereas it may be possible to resolve the causes of attrition, at least partially, via inexpensive management measures if one takes the trouble to analyse the phenomenon. To retain motivated teachers, it is also preferable for them to have attractive career prospects and also stimulating professional support with access to continuing training throughout their professional life. Moreover, geographic mobility may be a determining factor for young teachers who find themselves posted to remote areas at the start of their career. Handling the different aspects separately, as is currently the case in most African education systems, can only lead to little effective

Chapter 5

*Towards an overall vision
of teacher matters*

or even counterproductive policies in the perspective of UPE. In other words, in a difficult economic context characterised by a lack of resources in most countries, without an overall assessment of the impact and also of the cost of the different lever possibilities for educational policy, miracle solutions can hardly be expected to emerge to meet the teacher challenge.

It is thus urgent to promote a global vision of teacher matters. In this perspective, it would be most useful to develop overall teacher-related diagnoses at country level. This type of participatory diagnosis would provide a complete and shared vision of teacher matters and should give rise to new policies capable of meeting the challenges faced by African education systems on the road to UPE.