

The centrality of teacher management to quality education

Lessons from developing countries.¹



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In 2008, CfBT Education Trust, in partnership with Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO), published a research report 'Managing Teachers. The centrality of teacher management to quality education. Lessons from developing countries', which gathered together learning from primary research undertaken by VSO in 13 developing countries², as well as from other available national level research and international synthesis reports concerning the human resource aspects of quality education and in particular the role of teachers. The report details the causes, consequences and costs of poor teacher management, and provides detailed examples of good practice regarding strengthening teacher management systems from a range of countries, including some Commonwealth ones.

The headline message of the report, based on evidence from 25 of the world's education systems, including the top ten performers of which five are Commonwealth countries or provinces (Australia, Canada – provinces of Alberta and Ontario – New Zealand and Singapore), is that:

The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers (Barber and Mourshed, 2007, p.40).

Chapter 1

The first chapter of the report presents the argument that improvements to teacher management systems are central to the achievement of the 2015 Education For All goals. Good

management by effective school leaders has been shown to improve teaching and learning outcomes for children indirectly and most powerfully through its influence on staff motivation, performance and working conditions (VSO International, 2002; GCE, 2006; and Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007). Governments and donors that are supporting education in developing countries cannot afford the detrimental effects of poor management on the financing and quality of education systems. (See box 1)

Chapter 2

This chapter highlights how teachers' rights have not been consistently applied across developing countries. The 1966 ILO/UNESCO's 'Recommendations Concerning the Status of Teachers' were reiterated in 2006, 40 years after they were agreed: a sign that while significant progress has been made, the 'Recommendations' have not been effectively implemented in all countries. The chapter makes some observations on teachers' salaries, teachers' choice of workplace, academic freedom, teachers' responsibilities, the rights of all teachers, and professional dialogue between teachers and policy-makers.

Chapter 3

In the third chapter, the constraints and consequences of poor teacher management are outlined. In particular, constraints include the following:

Box 1 The key elements for improving teaching and learning

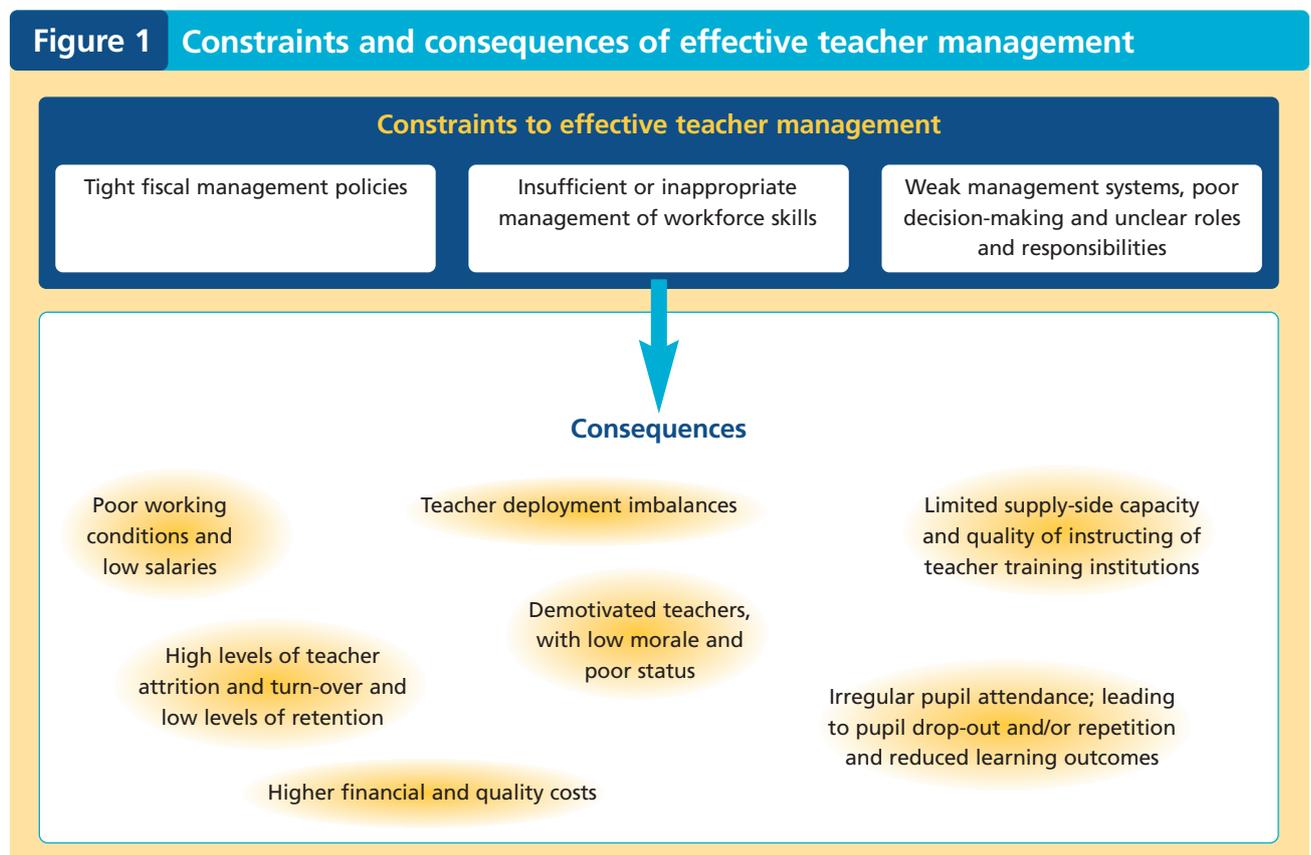
- **The role of headteachers is crucial** for improving teacher management and teacher motivation and ultimately for improving learning outcomes for girls and boys. The introduction of management training for school leaders would reap countless rewards, and should be prioritised.
- Management of education has many dimensions, but **the biggest investment of funds and human resources has always been and should always be in teachers**. With 18 million new teachers needed by 2015 (UIS, 2006), it is vital that governments and donors prioritise teacher management.
- **The quality of teacher training dictates the quality of teaching**. Moves to reduce the length and quality of

pre-service teacher training to cut costs and meet the demand for 18 million new teachers by 2015 are damaging the quality of teaching and learning. When teachers are not adequately trained, children are denied their right to a quality education.

- **Gender and inclusion should be addressed in teacher management and training systems**: to ensure that there are a representative number of positive role models for girls, boys, children with disabilities and those from other excluded groups; so that teachers enjoy equal pay and conditions; and so that girls and so-called 'hard to reach' children have a better chance of improved learning outcomes.

- (i) overly tight fiscal management policies evidenced from research in Cambodia, Kenya and Zambia (ActionAid, 2006; Education International, 2007; and GCE UK, 2008);
 - (ii) weak management of skills shown by research in Rwanda (Ndaruhutse, 2006);
 - (iii) weak education systems where headteachers do not have the responsibility for recruitment and deployment of teachers;
 - (iv) weak management systems for the recruitment and deployment of teachers and administrators;
 - (v) the lack or poor quality of training of all types – pre-service, in-service and continuing professional development (CPD) – for teachers, headteachers and administrative staff (Lewin and Stuart, 2003; VSO Ethiopia, forthcoming; Sida, 2002; and Ndaruhutse, 2006);
 - (vi) inconsistent appraisals for all these levels of education staff (Montgomery, 2002).
- Some of the consequences of poor teacher management are then explored. These include:
- (i) imbalances in teacher deployment mechanisms where specific issues outlined are: (a) rural-urban disparities with a shortage of teachers in rural areas found in Lesotho, Malawi and Sierra Leone (Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007); (b) disparities in class sizes, which are a particular problem in Mozambique, Cameroon, the Congo and Chad, as well as in urban primary schools in Ethiopia and Pakistan (UNESCO, 2005; and DFID, 2005); (c) gender imbalances with shortages of female teachers in Chad, Togo, Benin, Guinea Bissau, Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan; and shortages of male teachers in Sri Lanka, Botswana, Guyana, the Philippines, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan (UNESCO, 2005); and (d) discrimination against teachers with disabilities (Cambodia) (Thomas, 2005);
 - (ii) inadequate teacher terms and conditions evidenced from research by Education International (2008), which found that teachers were particularly poorly paid in The Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia. This finding was shared by stakeholders and teachers in the 13 countries VSO has researched and 12 case-study countries researched by Bennell and Akyeampong (2007). In addition, there is wide documentation of problems with the administration of payments whereby teachers receive salaries late (VSO International, 2002; VSO Pakistan, 2005; VSO Nepal, 2005; VSO Nigeria, 2007; and Education International, 2007);
 - (iii) poor living and working conditions for teachers and school leaders in Nigeria (VSO Nigeria, 2007);
 - (iv) inadequate or absent administrative support;
 - (v) weak capacity and quality of teacher training institutions (TTIs) emphasised in research by Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) and Lewin and Stuart (2003) in Ghana, Lesotho and Malawi;
 - (vi) high levels of teacher attrition where levels of turnover among teachers in rural areas were found to be a particular problem in Malawi, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Zambia (Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007) and more generally in Sudan

Figure 1 Constraints and consequences of effective teacher management



(Sommers, 2005), while a particular problem in the Caribbean was the migration of teachers from Guyana and Jamaica who were being attracted by more lucrative salaries to work in the United States, the United Kingdom, and other Caribbean countries (Education International, 2005);

- (vii) low motivation and morale of teachers and school leaders found across a spectrum of developing countries (Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007; VSO International, 2002; GCE, 2006; VSO Nigeria 2007; and VSO Mozambique, 2008).

The chapter concludes by stating that poor teacher management through the issues outlined above is likely to have three major knock-on effects: firstly, teacher migration and attrition; secondly, teacher absenteeism; and thirdly, irregular pupil attendance and high pupil repetition and dropout, all of which reduce attainment and learning outcomes. These all have significant financial and

quality cost implications to the education system that are generally negative. Governments sometimes justify them by highlighting the short-term cost savings. However, more often than not, these savings are at the expense of the quality of education being delivered (see Figure 1 on previous page).

Chapter 4

Here, examples and case studies are provided into how education managers, governments and donors are approaching teacher management in developing countries. The approaches cited have yielded positive results where they have been applied and the authors recommend that, with appropriate adaptation to the context and culture, they could be applied in other countries, and yield similar positive improvements in the quality of education children experience. The case studies cover:

Box 2 Recommendations

Recommendations to Developing Countries' Governments

1. Stronger management systems, better decision-making and clearer roles and responsibilities

Specific recommendations are for governments to: (i) develop and use effective Education Management Information Systems at central, local and school levels to enable better planning and management in the training, recruitment, deployment and CPD of teachers; (ii) encourage the active participation and involvement of teachers and headteachers in decision-making with clearly defined roles and responsibilities; (iii) strengthen systems for the training, recruitment and deployment of teachers, including the provision of appropriate incentives for teachers working in hardship posts; and (iv) work to reduce pupil-teacher ratios to the UNESCO recommended level of 40:1 (UIS, 2006) and avoid double and triple shifting unless different teachers are used for different shifts.

2. More flexible fiscal management policies

Specific recommendations are for governments to: (i) improve salaries, incentives, living and working conditions for teachers, including making adequate arrangements for maternity and paternity leave; (ii) invest in the capacity building of TTIs; and (iii) where the use of para-teacher³ schemes is necessary in the short- to medium-term, to attract and retain teachers in remote areas, ensure that appropriate levels of in-service support are given to para-teachers and that they are offered a career path that enables them to qualify as regular teachers in the longer term.

3. More sufficient and appropriate management of workforce skills

Specific recommendations are for governments to: (i) ensure that pre-service teacher training duration is at least one year or, if shorter, is coupled with adequate and formalised in-

service training of a comparable level and quality; (ii) provide all teachers with training and access to information about inclusion, focusing on gender and disability (and where appropriate on class, caste, language of instruction, HIV/AIDS or other context-specific dimensions of exclusion) as part of their pre- and in-service teacher training; (iii) provide effective CPD, leadership and school management training to ensure teachers, headteachers and educational administrators are adequately equipped and enabled to provide children with a good quality education; (iv) put in place transparent appraisal systems for teachers and administrative staff; (v) prohibit discrimination against women, people with disabilities and minorities in teacher recruitment, posting and promotion systems through the use of laws, guidelines, codes of ethics, and monitoring and evaluation systems; and (vi) encourage women, people with disabilities and minorities to enter or remain in the teaching profession, by providing appropriate incentives and allowances.

Recommendations to Donors, Intergovernmental Organisations and Teachers' Unions

4. More flexible partnerships with developing country governments

These flexible partnerships should help to support: (i) improved Education Management Information Systems to inform systems for the training, recruitment, deployment and CPD of teachers; (ii) improved salaries, incentives, living and working conditions for teachers and headteachers; (iii) improved capacity building for teacher and headteacher training, including ensuring that advice provided on teacher training issues does not negatively impact the quality of teaching and learning; (iv) capacity development of education managers in schools, and at district, provincial and national levels; and (v) effective appraisal systems for teachers and administrative staff.

- (i) effective decentralised teacher development in Namibia (Kay LeCzel and Gillies, 2006);
- (ii) teachers' voice in school management in Nigeria (VSO Nigeria, 2007);
- (iii) teacher allocation and deployment in rural areas in Botswana (Göttelmann-Duret and Hogan, 1998; and Bennell, 2004);
- (iv) management reforms related to teachers' salaries and working conditions in Nigeria (Adelabu, 2005);
- (v) the use of para-teachers and contract teachers and the controversy around quality and costs in India (World Bank, 2004) and Ecuador (Alcázar, Halsey Rogers, Chaudhury, Hammer, Kremer and Muralidharan, 2004; Duthilleul, 2006; Fyfe, 2007; Michaelowa, 2002; and Rogers, Lopez-Calix, Cordoba, Chaudhury, Hammer, Kremer and Muralidharan, 2004);
- (vi) in-service training in Malawi (Kunje and Chiremba, 2000; and Croft, 2002);
- (vii) cluster approaches to CPD in Guinea (USAID EQUIP1, 2004);
- (viii) integrated approaches to school-based management in Kenya (Andersen and Nderitu, 2002; Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007; and Palmer, Wedgwood and Hayman, 2007).

In conclusion, the authors argue that quality discussions that only focus on learner achievements and outcomes, without discussing education management, are incomplete. They maintain that although pre- and in- service training of education managers can be costly, the cost to the quality of education where such training is absent is much higher.

They also maintain that while many types of exclusion are context specific, gender- and disability-related inequality cuts across all countries. All governments and donors should therefore ensure that gender and disability are addressed comprehensively in their teacher training and management systems. The need to recruit and train 18 million new teachers (for primary education alone) presents an unprecedented opportunity to address long-standing imbalances in class sizes and teaching quality between schools in urban and rural areas and between male and female teachers. The opportunity should also be used to address the under-representation of teachers with disabilities, teachers from linguistic minorities and other context-specific excluded groups, in order to provide valuable role models for girls, children with disabilities and other currently excluded children, and importantly to encourage their parents not only to send their children to school, but to keep them there until they have completed their education.

Chapter 5

The final chapter provides a summary of concluding recommendations, all of which are outlined in Box 2.

A full copy of the report can be found at:
http://www.cfbt.com/evidenceforeducation/what_we_offer/resources/perspectives/managing_teachers.aspx

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Endnotes

- 1 This article is a summary of the report entitled 'Managing Teachers. The centrality of teacher management to quality education. Lessons from developing countries'.
- 2 Cambodia, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Guyana, Malawi, The Maldives, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda and Zambia.
- 3 The report defines 'para-teachers' as those who do not meet the minimum standard required to teach in their country. Typically, these unqualified teachers may have received little or no pre-service training and are employed on different terms and conditions to professional, qualified teachers. They are distinct from 'contract teachers', which can refer to either qualified or unqualified teachers who are employed on short-term contracts, not paid during holidays, and who do not receive the same benefits (pensions, paid leave, sick pay, maternity leave, etc.) as permanent teachers. 'Volunteer teachers' can refer either to: graduates that have been recruited on 'Teach First' type schemes, who are qualified in the sense that they have a university degree and sound subject knowledge; or to unqualified teachers employed by schools managed by community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations or faith-based organisations, on either a voluntary basis or on much lower wages than professional teachers.

SUSY NDARUHUTSE is CfBT Education Trust's Senior International Consultant. Her expertise lies in education policy, strategy and finance and she has worked with a range of developing country governments, donors and NGOs in a capacity-building context on short- and long-term assignments. She also undertakes policy-based research and is currently managing CfBT Education Trust's joint research partnership with UNESCO on 'Education in Conflict, Emergencies, Reconstruction and Fragile States'. In addition, she has undertaken research for the company's trustees on national education reform in resource-poor contexts; on grade repetition in sub-Saharan Africa; and, in partnership with VSO, on teacher management issues in developing countries.