EVIDENCE FOR SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION

TEACHERS IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED AND DISPLACEMENT CONTEXTS

Part 1: Teacher Management: Planning, Recruitment, Deployment and Remuneration

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The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) publishes background papers to disseminate the findings of work in progress and encourage the exchange of ideas about development issues. This is part of a larger effort by the GPE Secretariat to provide open access to its analytical work and contribute to discussions about evidence in education. The authors of the papers should be cited. The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in this paper are entirely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of GPE and its affiliated organizations, or those of the GPE Board of Directors or the governments they represent.

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For more information or to give feedback on this paper, please reach out to Ramya Vivekanandan, senior education specialist and thematic lead for Teaching and Learning, at rvivekanandan@globalpartnership.org.

1. Background

Education is a critical source of support for children living in conflict-affected and displacement contexts. Teachers are at the center of delivering high-quality education in any setting. The challenges of teacher management in crisis are often the same as in other settings, just more intense (Mendenhall, Gomez, and Varni 2018). In crisis contexts, sufficient numbers of teachers must be recruited and deployed where they are needed. Teachers in conflict-affected contexts need many of the same sources of support as other teachers—preparation and ongoing support that builds and refines their capacity to deliver high-quality instruction, consistent pay and so on, while also requiring specific pedagogical, psychosocial, and administrative and logistical support.

This brief reviews the evidence on teachers in conflict-affected contexts in relation to major teacher management areas: planning, recruitment, deployment and teacher compensation. A forthcoming companion brief will focus on teacher professional development and teacher well-being in crisis settings. While not discussed in depth in this note, teacher well-being is a critical consideration across every teacher policy area. Though focused specifically on conflict-affected and displacement settings, some of the considerations raised in this note can apply to teacher management more broadly in fragile settings.

Such settings may face the unique challenge of multiple state and non-state providers offering education, including nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and communities. This can complicate teacher working conditions and policy planning (Mendenhall, Gomez, and Varni 2018) as there may be more education providers and more institutions with varying degrees of formality that are hiring and overseeing teachers, often in a decentralized manner. For example, in many contexts of forced displacement, refugee schools are not managed by the national ministry of education, but rather local or international NGOs, UNHCR (the United Nations Refugee Agency) or other ministries. Depending on the political will to integrate refugees into national education systems, governments may have varying levels of interest as well as ability and capacity to try to regulate, or even count and account for these non-state providers, with implications for teacher planning and management in these contexts.

2. Evidence

This section reviews the evidence on teacher planning and management in conflict and displacement settings. Considerations for each policy area will vary depending on the nature of the crisis. Across the policy areas discussed below, teachers' own identities and demographics have major implications for policy design. In displacement settings, distinctions need to be made between displaced teachers and teachers working with displaced students. Whether teachers themselves are displaced—internally, as asylum-seekers or refugees—and whether they are working with students with refugee status or from a host community will have major implications for policies to support these teachers. Of course, not all crisis settings involve displacement, but recognizing the displacement statuses of teachers is important for designing effective policy.

While this brief and its companion brief are organized by policy area, it is important to recognize that teacher policy areas are interlinked and that policies need to be developed coherently across all of them (Teacher Task Force 2022). To this end, effectively developing a national teacher policy in conflict-affected and displacement contexts requires attention to a wide range of factors including working conditions, pre-service training,[1] professional development[2] (discussed in this note), consultation strategies for engaging teachers and so on. While such policy development is a ministerial responsibility (at least in contexts where the government holds authority), teachers, unions or other representative bodies also play an important role in developing and implementing crisis-sensitive teacher policies (UNESCO et al. 2020).

Teacher planning and recruitment

Poor (and/or fragmented) data, weak preparation and insufficient financing can limit effective planning and recruitment in crisis contexts. Such settings often do not have

[1] GPE. 2022. "Pre-service Teacher Training." Background paper, *Evidence for System Transformation,* GPE, Washington, DC. https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/evidence-system-transformation-pre-service-teacher-training.

[2] GPE. 2020. "In-service Teacher Professional Development." Background paper, *Evidence for System* Transformation, GPE, Washington, DC. https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/evidence-system-transformation-service-teacher-professional-development.

the necessary data to plan for teacher policy issues such as recruitment and teacher professional development, underscoring the importance of comprehensive preparedness and response plans that include attention to these areas. As an example of the challenges, according to the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards, reasonable pupil to teacher ratios should be used to inform recruitment, but such data may not always be easily accessible in crisis due to security concerns, limited access to certain areas, administrative barriers, governance issues and political sensitivities. This limits the ability to collect and use data for decision making and response planning. Likewise, strong planning for teacher recruitment, needs-based deployment and other teacher support in crisis is essential but not always considered before a crisis begins. Financing is also a major hurdle, particularly since many education investments are long term, but emergency funding tends to target the short term. Further, humanitarian funding often does not prioritize education, including data for decision making, because it does not always align with countries' political agendas, while education interventions may not always be regarded as lifesaving (Al-Samarai 2021). As such, many national education systems and humanitarian partners are not able to cover the cost of teacher compensation (Mendenhall, Gomez, and Varni 2018; Mendenhall, Telford, and Hure 2023). While compensation is covered in more detail later in this note, teacher payment can have implications for recruitment and retention.

INEE Minimum Standard on teacher recruitment and selection

"A sufficient number of appropriately qualified teachers and other education personnel are recruited through a participatory and transparent process, based on selection criteria reflecting diversity and equity" (Teachers and Other Education Personnel Standard 1).

To the fullest extent possible, teachers should reflect the communities in which they are working, including the language of the community. In displacement or conflict settings, teachers from the affected community may be most likely to understand the context and challenges in a given setting, and their recruitment should be prioritized, as feasible (INEE 2012). Of course, designing recruitment systems in this way requires data about both community and teacher demographics and needs.

Recruitment of *qualified* teachers can be particularly challenging in some fragile and crisis settings, leading to an underqualified teacher workforce. In remote and conflict-

affected settings, the population's education levels may be relatively low, making it more difficult to find qualified candidates. Volunteer teachers with limited skills or qualifications may be recruited by the community into nonformal positions without regular pay or formal support (Henderson 2023a). With this in mind, recruitment guidelines aligned to qualifications standards may be needed to facilitate rapid recruitment of teachers in some contexts (Teacher Task Force 2022).

In settings of displacement, teachers' qualifications and academic background, their previous educational context, employment conditions and displacement status all impact the conditions of teachers' work, with legal and administrative implications for teacher recruitment and qualification. Host-community teachers can typically teach in government schools (or other types of schools).

Teachers who are refugees often face particular limitations on their ability to work, as their legal right to work and recognition of their credentials is often strictly limited (Mendenhall, Gomez, and Varni 2018). This can prevent teachers with refugee status from being hired, reducing the pool of qualified candidates who could be recruited to teach. In settings where refugees are not legally authorized to work, they may sometimes be able to take up stipend, volunteer or assistant teaching positions (Mendenhall, Gomez, and Varni 2018), but such measures are still less complete than a full teaching role.

Supply constraints sometimes also mean that teachers who are refugees do still teach at times (at least in camp settings), even where policies restrict this work on paper. In Ethiopia, refugees' right to work is limited, and according to policy, refugee schools should be staffed by national teachers; teachers with refugee status can still work in schools for refugees due to supply and budgetary limitations, though only in the lower grades (Bengtsson et al. 2020). Even where refugees can teach under certain circumstances (for instance in camp schools), their qualifications from their home countries may not be recognized, limiting their range of work opportunities (Mendenhall, Telford, and Hure 2023; Shah 2023). In Kenya, for example, teachers who have been trained but are refugees are not recognized by the Teacher Service Commission as being qualified because they must be Kenyan citizens to register with the commission and need a certificate of good conduct from their country of origin (West et al. 2022). The absence of mechanisms to recognize qualifications of teachers who are refugees can be a waste of valuable assets, especially in contexts where teacher supply is a challenge (Mendenhall, Gomez, and Varni 2018).

Recognizing the qualifications of teachers with refugee status is one piece of the puzzle to ensure sufficient teacher supply in refugee settings. In refugee-hosting areas and beyond, policy makers may also consider developing alternative pathways to teaching to ensure sufficient teacher supply. This may take the form of accredited bridging programs, diploma programs or in-service certificates for unqualified teachers (Teacher Task Force 2022). Teacher qualifications and professional development are discussed in more detail in the forthcoming brief.

Where strategies for teacher planning and recruitment focus primarily on the short term, government must also plan for longer-term systems strengthening. For instance, where accelerated pathways to teaching are implemented, policy makers should also consider long-term strategies for building a capable and resilient teacher workforce alongside these more short-term efforts to upskill teachers. Likewise, in the context of multiple providers (such as NGO and community schools), systems may need to address the long-term implications of teacher recruitment by non-state actors (including communities and NGOs), including whether those teachers may eventually transition to civil service and what this would mean for their licensing and state budgets.

Deployment and retention

Recruitment processes must be coupled with efforts to deploy teachers equitably. In many settings, it can be challenging to deploy teachers to the most difficult, remote or dangerous areas. As with recruitment, the demographics of teachers may have an impact. For instance, teachers who are internally displaced may face administrative difficulties in being deployed, sometimes because they are still managed by their district of origin (Mendenhall, Gomez, and Varni 2018).

As in any setting, school-level data on teacher placements and needs (including schools with high pupil to teacher ratios) is an important component of effective and equitable deployment systems. Gender-disaggregated data on teacher deployment is also important for tracking the distribution of female teachers and designing deployment incentives for female teachers as needed. Moreover, given the prevalence of 'ghost teachers' and other challenges in some settings (including absenteeism), school-level monitoring-and-attendance data is needed to understand where teachers are indeed present and teaching, and where they are needed (see Kirk 2008 for more on ghost teachers in South Sudan). Collecting and

analyzing such data may be particularly challenging in crisis but is essential for ensuring that teachers are deployed where they are needed most. As discussed above, deploying teachers to contexts where they are a good match linguistically, socially and culturally for their schools and community is also an important consideration and one that requires up-to-date data, including on teacher demographics.

Deployment can also be complicated by teachers' willingness to be deployed to the most challenging settings. This can be a problem in any country, but given the particularly challenging conditions teachers in crisis-affected contexts may face, deployment processes need to consider how to incentivize and support teachers to work in particularly difficult schools and regions. Female teachers may be especially resistant to working in rural areas given security issues, lack of basic services and other challenges (Kirk 2008). Incentives are a common strategy for motivating teachers to deploy to the most challenging areas (Evans and Mendez Acosta 2021). In Nigeria, the Teacher Recruitment and Recertification Programme (TRRP) design included incentives both for teachers who had internally displaced students in their classes, and for teachers who were internally displaced and returning to conflict-affected areas (Mendenhall, Gomez, and Varni 2018). The previous government in Afghanistan considered various incentives to improve the distribution of female teachers to rural areas, including funding for housing, land lease and paying female teachers who moved from urban to rural areas three times the average salary (Kirk 2008). The effects of hardship incentives, however, can be mixed. Much of the evidence on deployment incentives is also from outside of crisis settings.

Even so, the broad evidence base raises useful considerations for deployment incentives. In Malawi, for example, more than 80 percent of teachers received the hardship incentive intended to encourage teachers to work in remote schools. With such large coverage targeting both moderately and very remote schools, the incentive had little impact (Asim 2019). As such, incentives need to be thoughtfully designed and tested to have their intended impact. It is also critical that deployment policies and incentives be well monitored to ensure that programs are being implemented and be accompanied by accountability mechanisms to ensure that the incentives are having the desired effect.

Financial incentives may be part of a strategy for deploying teachers to the most challenging areas in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, but they cannot be the

only strategy. Comprehensive support structures for teachers will also be essential for deploying *and retaining* teachers in hardship areas. This includes rigorous attention to teacher safety as well as support for their psychological well-being and professional development.

Maintaining a sufficient teacher workforce is critical for effective teaching and learning, but emergencies can reduce the workforce through barriers to recruitment and high attrition. In crisis, a number of factors can lead to teacher shortages and shortages of female teachers (already a challenge in some contexts; see brief on teachers and teaching for gender equality for more detail) may be particularly acute (Mendenhall, Gomez, and Varni 2018; Mendenhall, Telford, and Hure 2023). In the most severe cases, teachers may be injured, killed or displaced (Teacher Task Force 2022), sometimes even targeted because they are considered representatives of the state or because they are members of unions (Henderson 2023b). Where teachers are still in their postings, crisis can make it more difficult for them to physically reach their school if their travel to and from home becomes more dangerous (Teacher Task Force 2022). Variety in contract types for teachers, limited regulation, recruitment of underqualified teachers, large class sizes, poor pay and difficult working conditions can all also contribute to high attrition in the teacher workforce (Mendenhall, Gomez, and Varni 2018). Teachers' own trauma and the stress of living in crisis contexts, coupled with limited professional and psychosocial support, can lead to burnout. In the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya, for example, only four percent of host community teachers and less than one in five teachers who were refugees wanted to still be teaching in three years. Teachers who have been traumatized by their own experiences and recognize similar trauma in their students may doubt their ability to have an impact on their students, reducing their motivation and driving further teacher attrition (Henderson 2023b). While such challenges may be particularly acute in active crises, teachers working in the context of fragile government systems may also face many of these same challenges.

INEE Minimum Standard on conditions of work

"Teachers and other education personnel have clearly defined conditions of work and are appropriately compensated" (Teachers and Other Education Personnel Standard 2).

Remuneration

Global standards point to the need to pay teachers regularly and fairly. The INEE Minimum Standards highlight the need for appropriate, consistent pay for teachers with fair payment scales according to teacher levels and categories. The standards also note the need for coordination and alignment around teacher compensation among education authorities, community organizations and international actors.

Recruitment, deployment and teacher pay in Somalia

Somalia's partnership compact focuses on improved access to quality equitable education. Part of this includes an effort to recruit more trained teachers, especially female teachers, deployed to public schools, including rural areas, areas with a large number of students who are displaced and newly liberated areas. Increased recruitment will be financed through a combination of domestic financing and donor financing, with donor funding gradually transferred to the Ministry's budget.

Teacher compensation is a critical aspect of teacher well-being, often reported by teachers and experts as the top well-being issue for teachers in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. In Nigeria, for instance, many teachers report low teacher salaries as their biggest challenge (Igbinedion et al. 2017 as cited in Mendenhall, Gomez, and Varni 2018). For teachers who are refugees, compensation is foundational for teacher well-being as sufficient pay is needed for teachers to meet their basic needs (Jalbout and Bullard 2022). Insufficient and delayed payment can be a source of major emotional strain (Mendenhall, Gomez, and Varni 2018). As such, no education reform effort will succeed without sufficiently paying teachers—both national and refugee (Mendenhall, Telford, and Hure 2023).

Despite the importance of timely and adequate pay, many teachers in conflict, post-conflict and other crisis settings are underpaid, if they are paid at all. A variety of factors contribute depending on the context and nature of the crisis. Violence and displacement can make it difficult for teachers to collect their salaries as teachers may not be able to travel safely or the government may not be able to reach them. Where teachers are paid by the community, conflict can have economic consequences that limit communities' ability to pay and consequently, for teachers to be paid (Teacher Task Force 2022). In some fragile and conflict-affected contexts, such as Myanmar, community teachers tend to work in the most difficult settings but

tend to be paid less than other teachers (White 2022). In some fragile and conflict-affected states, compensation processes also may not be functioning efficiently, delaying salary payments. Weak or nonexistent banking systems, outdated payroll records and other logistical challenges may also contribute (Dolan et al. 2012). As noted above, in settings where teachers are refugees and restricted in their right to work, they may only be eligible for stipends or other more limited forms of payment rather than full salaries.

While the factors driving low compensation can vary depending on the nature of fragility and teacher demographics, inadequate pay is a critical concern across fragile and conflict-affected contexts and teacher types, both for the concerns this raises for teacher well-being and for the long-term implications for the education system as inadequate pay can drive teachers out of the teaching force (INEE 2009).

While teacher salaries are essential, teacher compensation can be impacted by a broader range of factors. Housing, allowances for living expenses, medical coverage, pensions and other factors can affect teacher compensation (INEE 2009). As such, policy makers should consider the range of benefits that could be provided to teachers while of course ensuring adequate and timely pay is part of the process.

Given the range of actors who may be involved in paying teachers in crisis, coordination is an important dimension of teacher compensation processes and policies in crisis. Policy around teacher compensation should start with data collection on salaries and other forms of compensation, numbers of teachers, their qualification levels and cost of living, salaries in other sectors and stakeholders' paying salaries, among others. Where non-state actors are involved in hiring teachers, teacher renumeration should be aligned with government salary scales to the fullest extent possible. And across provider type, monitoring is essential to ensure that teacher compensation is timely, fair and in line with compensation policy. Finally, as with all dimensions of teacher policy, teachers' associations and other stakeholders should be involved in the development of salary scales (INEE 2009). Given the importance of teacher pay, development and implementation of systems for paying teachers (and monitoring payment) across different providers and contract types is critical. Of course, developing such systems in the context of immediate crisis may be challenging, highlighting the importance of planning around teacher compensation and other teacher management systems.

Financing teacher compensation can be a major challenge as teacher salaries tend to be among the largest recurrent expenses in an education system. In crisis, governments may not be able to pay these costs for civil servant teachers. And of course, teachers employed by non-state actors are not paid by the state. Where other actors step in to pay teachers in the absence of government capacity, all stakeholders must recognize this is not a long-term strategy as teacher pay is ultimately a government responsibility. Pooled or individual donor funds may be a short-term solution to help pay teachers (INEE 2009), but planning, response and recovery efforts should all operate with the intention of a return to the state paying teacher salaries. There has been some international attention to this issue, including a salon hosted by Education International and Geneva Global in 2022 in which a pooled fund for supporting teachers in fragile settings including payment of teacher salaries was proposed—a recommendation that was subsequently endorsed by the UN High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession.

Teacher management in the Democratic Republic of Congo

The Democratic Republic of Congo's partnership compact includes an axis focused on revitalizing the teaching core with several action areas related to teacher management. To do so, the compact proposes incentives for working in marginalized areas, better social protection for teachers, efforts to recruit more female teachers and a code of good conduct for teachers.

In addition to actual financing of teacher salaries, donors may also contribute to strong compensation processes by supporting mobile banking infrastructure, the development of effective payroll systems and other enabling conditions to ensure teachers are receiving their pay (Dolan et al. 2012). Accessible mobile banking approaches and other approaches that reduce travel may help to ensure that teachers in insecure settings are not exposed to high risk while trying to collect their salaries.

Linked to the broader issue of employment, questions around teacher pay are often particularly challenging for teachers who are refugees. The stipends or other workarounds to provide teachers with refugee status some form of compensation in contexts where they are not legally eligible to work often fall short of both the financial needs and professional esteem that all teachers, including those who are refugees, deserve. Recognizing that teacher pay is viewed by some experts as the starting point

for the well-being and thus policy for teachers who are refugees, ensuring sufficient pay is an essential consideration for both education policy and refugee policy (Jalbout and Bullard 2022).

Employment conditions

Working conditions can be a major challenge in crisis contexts, often contributing to teacher attrition. Working conditions and pay may vary in places where a range of entities are hiring teachers (Shah 2023) which may lead to turnover as teachers seek out better roles with other education service providers.

Employment conditions for teachers in conflict-affected contexts should ensure teacher safety and well-being. As a starting point, teachers' physical and psychological safety should be protected by the state and other employers. Beyond this, teachers' employment conditions and salary scales should be decided in conversation with unions and other relevant stakeholders (INEE 2009). Policies and procedures to protect teachers who are refugees from discrimination, including citizenship discrimination, should also be put in place (Shah 2023).

Beyond salary standards and working conditions, unions should be engaged in policy dialogue and development. Given the need for both immediate and long-term planning in crisis and fragile settings, unions may have a particularly valuable perspective in what policies could be relevant and realistic. Unions can also play a valuable role in supporting teachers who are refugees. In settings where unions are very active, they have played critical roles in facilitating refugee access to support services and information about job openings (Jalbout and Bullard 2022). Unions and multi-stakeholder efforts will be crucial for realizing the ultimate goal that employment, payment conditions, and recruitment and deployment processes for teachers who are refugees be the same as those for national teachers (Shah 2023). In Uganda, for instance, the Uganda National Teachers' Union has been active in advocating for all teachers to be recruited, deployed and paid under the same conditions (Bates 2021; Education International 2022).

While they cannot solve all of the issues, codes of conduct should be established for teachers. Such codes should include requirements for teachers to ensure student rights and safety, that students consistently attend their classes, as well as prevent discrimination and violence, among other considerations. Enforcement mechanisms for such codes should also be considered (INEE 2012).

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