DELIVERING ON THE TEACHERS OBJECTIVE: COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT THE STRATEGIC PLAN

For Input/Information

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to present a set of activities aimed at delivering on Strategic Objective 4 of the Strategic Plan 2012-2015 ("Improve teacher effectiveness") with the purpose of obtaining feedback from the Board of Directors on how to best collaborate on reaching this objective effectively.

2. RECOMMENDED DECISION

This paper is for input only and no decision is being sought at this time from the Board of Directors. The comments of the Board of Directors on the proposed approach will inform the work of the Strategic Plan Working Group in continuing to develop the implementation plan for the Strategic Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 At its meeting on 7-8 June 2012, the Board of Directors requested that the Secretariat develop a strategy for implementation of Objective 4 which aims to "Improve teacher effectiveness by training, recruiting and retaining teachers and supporting them to provide a good education" (BOD/2012/06-02).

3.2 Teacher quality, teacher availability and deployment of teachers to areas of need constitute the key barriers to achievement of the Education for All goals. As such, the Strategic Plan 2012-2015 has identified teacher issues, including teacher effectiveness, the recruitment of and retaining teachers, professional development and support mechanisms, as one of five main objectives for 2012–2015. The Strategic Plan sets out the following actions under Objective 4::

- Increase engagement of the teaching profession in Local Education Groups ("LEGs");

- Support education plans that focus on increasing the quality of teaching, along with the percentage and number of qualified teachers;

- Support the engagement of the teaching profession on standards of practice in GPE-endorsed countries; and

- Support improvements in the deployment, remuneration and working conditions of teachers, including reductions in pupil-teacher ratios.

3.3 Progress against this objective and successful partnership activity will be monitored and measured through the following two indicators:

- Proportion of education plans that adequately address the issues of teacher availability, quality, and conditions of employment; and

- Proportion of countries with agreed and applied teacher practice and professional standards.

3.4 As this technical area is new for the partnership, success will depend on leveraging and mobilizing the reach, skills, leadership and resources of its partners, as well as building on existing efforts. To this end, two partners in particular, UNESCO and Education International ("EI"), have expressed interest in collaborating on teachers' issues, skills, status, qualifications or accountability as partners within the partnership.

3.5 This paper has been collaboratively developed between the Secretariat, UNESCO, and EI. Carrying out these activities in partnership and in coordination adds to their reach and the ability of the GPE to deliver on Strategic Objective 4.

4. AREAS OF FOCUS

4.1 The following areas were identified as common interests of the Global Partnership in general, and UNESCO and EI as specific partners:

- Improving the technical and organizational capacity of teachers' organizations to participate meaningfully in LEGs.

- Improving teacher organizations' and country governments' capacity to analyze and discuss issues of salary scales, work conditions and standards of practice.

- Identifying, piloting and implementing innovative approaches to teacher in-service support mechanisms.

4.2 In addition, the possibility of using Global and Regional Activities ("GRA") funding to implement many of these activities has been discussed by the partners involved, in a scenario where UNESCO would serve as the managing entity. This paper therefore functions as an implementation roadmap for Strategic Objective 4 that could be fundable either as a set of coordinated but individual activities based on funding each actor would secure, or as a set of collective activities under GRA funding. As such, it proposes specific activities associated with each of the aforementioned common interest areas that UNESCO and EI would collaboratively undertake, along with coordination from the Secretariat, and delineates goals, outputs and outcomes associated with these activities.

4.3 The activities outlined below would be implemented only in countries where the LEG expresses demand for them, and would be coordinated with the Secretariat. Additional selection criteria would include: i) size of the country; ii) previous experience of the partners in the country; iii) and receptivity of teacher organizations to the proposed approach (influencing the likelihood of success).

Interest Area 1: Improving the technical and organizational capacity of teachers' organizations to participate meaningfully in LEGs

Rationale

4.4 Research suggests that proactive teachers' organizations that are fully engaged in policy dialogue, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation can play a key role in educational improvement[1] and that reform can only be truly effective when supported from the bottom up.[2] In other words, successful and inclusive education systems are those that tend to engage all stakeholders and civil society partners in educational policy development, implementation and evaluation. Such inclusion in turn engenders both engagement and ownership, which are particularly critical for reform processes. Normative frameworks also stress the importance of teachers' collective participations within educational systems, and their right to representation in policy

[1] J. Bangs and D. Frost. 2012. Teacher self-efficacy, voice and leadership: Towards a policy framework for Education International. Report for Education International Research Institute (Brussels: EI).
See also: B. Levin. 2010. "Let's stop blaming teacher unions" in *Education This Week* (US Edition).
[2] OECD. 2011. *Building a high quality teaching profession: Lessons from around the world*. Background report for the International Summit on the Teaching Profession (Paris: OECD).

development.[3] However, very few teachers' organizations participate in LEGs in GPE developing country partners,[4] and even where they do their participation tends to be limited to commenting on, or having some citizen oversight over policy implementation. Thus, there is both scope and justification for increasing the capacity of teachers' organizations to fully participate in LEGs.

Proposed activities

4.5 To increase the technical and organizational capacity of teachers' organizations[5] to participate in LEGs, the partners propose to conduct four-day training workshops for union representatives and members in selected GPE developing country partners.[6] These workshops will be both technical and procedural in nature. Specific education human resource issues that are germane to the country context and that are of interest to the teachers' organizations will be included in the workshop curricula. In addition, workshops will include mapping exercises of country-specific educational governance structures, processes and procedures (including social dialogue). These workshops will be designed to enhance participants' technical knowledge as well as their awareness of the overall educational context in which they operate.

4.6 These workshops will include a module on standards of teaching and standards of practice in which teacher organization representatives will become familiar with the two concepts and develop a framework for each that can be incorporated into their bylaws.

4.7 Subsequent to training, teachers' organizations will then be strategically introduced to LEGs over time, first as observers, then as commenters and finally as full participants. It should be noted here that the latter phase (i.e., as "full participants") will inherently comprise teachers' organizations' involvement in all aspects of policy development: conception, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and social dialogue processes.

[3] ILO/UNESCO. 1966. Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (Geneva: ILO/UNESCO). UNESCO. 1997. Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (Paris: UNESCO).
[4] Source: Informal conversation with EI, 29 Aug. 2012.
[5] Activity 2, below, includes governments and CSOs. The activity in this section is explicitly aimed at improving teacher organization's capacity to participate in LEGs, under the assumption that, given their lack of participation in the past, their current capacity is an important constraint.
[6] The scope and, hence, number of developing country partners targeted will depend upon the funding source for these activities. If the Board of Directors approves GRA funds, the number of countries is very likely to be greater. See also the sections on scope and funding, above.

Envisaged outcomes

4.8 These activities will increase the proportion of teachers' organizations that are meaningfully participating in LEGs in GPE developing country partners, which currently is extremely low. This will encourage the development of teacher human resource policies that are driven by evidence, characterized by broad stakeholder ownership and that cohere with contemporaneous classroom realities and experiences.

4.9 The process of training teachers' organizations to participate in LEGs will also inherently produce knowledge and lessons learned that can be shared at the regional and global levels. To this end, the partners will also develop a systematic guide to LEG participation which includes: i) best practices from countries where teachers' organizations already participate in LEGs; ii) lessons learned from the training programs in the aforementioned developing country partners; and iii) a holistic framework of LEG participation which comprises policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The latter could also serve as a rubric against which the full inclusion of teachers' organizations in LEGs could be assessed in other GPE developing country partners.

4.10 In parallel to this, teacher organizations will develop frameworks around standards of teaching and standards of practice, both of which can be incorporated into their bylaws. This will advance prior work conducted by UNESCO and EI on standards of teaching standards and standards of practice in these organizations and in GPE developing country partners. These outcomes are tied to the two indicators by which Strategic Objective 4 is to be assessed (i.e., proportion of ESPs that adequately address the issues of teacher availability, quality and conditions of employment; and proportion of countries with agreed and applied teacher practice and professional standards).

4.11 Teacher organization representatives and their constituents will become more aware of standards of teaching and standards of practice and will incorporate these into their existent bylaws. These standards will influence policy development and teacher practice in targeted countries. They can also be used to influence teacher practice standards in general, not just to inform organizations' by-laws, within the countries.

Interest Area 2: Improving teacher organizations' and country governments' capacity to analyze and discuss issues of salary scales, work conditions and standards

Rationale

4.12 The meaningful discussion between all relevant stakeholders of teacher human resource issues (e.g., salary scales, work conditions) requires relevant and recent data, knowledge of context, awareness of comparative cases and the ability to actively listen to the concerns of other stakeholders. The best policies are those that are driven and informed by evidence, and open to critique, improvement and reform. Teacher human resource issues, however, are not always analyzed and discussed in this way. Moreover, they are often sensitive and politically contentious issues. As such, effective social dialogue requires that all parties are privy to relevant information, analytically competent and open to others' perspectives.

4.13 Standards of teaching and standards of practice, given the increased demand for schooling and the global shortage of qualified teachers, are also fundamental tools for ensuring that all children have access to education of high quality, and that teachers are sufficiently trained to a nationally agreed level of competence.[7]

Proposed activities

4.14 The partners propose to carry out three inter-related, but distinct, activities. First, four-day training workshops, which are designed to follow on from those under interest area 1, will be conducted in a number of developing country partners[8] on teacher human resource issues selected by the participating organizations and governments themselves. As well as presenting technical knowledge and analytical research techniques to participants, the workshops will also involve opportunities for participants to become familiar with and to map out the processes (including social dialogue), structures and governance patterns inherent in their respective educational systems. A separate module on standards of teaching and standards of practice is included in this workshop wherein teacher organization and government representatives collectively

[7] EI and Oxfam-Novib. 2011. Quality educators: An international study of teacher competences and standards (Brussels: EI).
[8] The countries targeted here would be the same as those under interest area one. The same qualifications for the scope of activities (i.e. funding) apply.

develop frameworks around each concept that can be incorporated into organization and government bylaws.

4.15 Subsequent to these workshops partners will conduct formal analyses of the teacher human resource issue (or issues) selected for their workshop and complete a background report on the subject. In addition to being diagnostic and analytical, the reports should also be policy-centered; recommended policy interventions, backed by evidence or research literature, should be suggested for pilot programs. Issues related to salary scales and conditions of service will be discussed in the context of international labor standards and take existing mechanisms for determining teacher pay such as collective bargaining into account. These background reports, once finalized, will be shared with other relevant stakeholders within the national context. This research activity is a direct outgrowth of the previous training workshops discussed in this section: all relevant stakeholders in GPE developing country partners will employ the analytic training received to conduct analyses of teacher human resource issues.[9] In the national aggregate, this exercise of training, analysis and knowledge-sharing will produce a series of reports (dependent on the number of participant organizations and members) on pressing human resource issues, and engender an overall ethos of data collection, analysis and scientific inquiry to address these. These reports can then influence ESP elaboration and teacher policy, as well.

4.16 Third, a regional dialogue forum on teacher human resource issues, based on the analysis presented in the participants' background reports, will be convened wherein all relevant stakeholders will be encouraged to present and discuss findings, arrive at a shared diagnosis of the problems and identify possible solutions.[10] Time will be allocated for participants to break out into country groups to discuss issues and possible solutions. The purpose of the forum will also be action-orientated: to collectively decide on interventions to pilot in particular national or sub-national contexts, based on recommendations made in the background reports and the dialogue process, as well as methods of monitoring and evaluation.

[9] The activity under interest area two also feeds into that of teachers' organization participation in LEGs under interest area one. Both training workshops are targeted to teacher organization members and representatives who, as a result of their participation, will increase their technical knowledge of teacher human resource issues, relevant educational processes and structures, and their capacity to analyze teacher issues and inform their collective positions on these with evidence.

[10] This is one sub-activity that might permit outreach beyond the specific countries. Observer countries from the same region could be invited, in order to have a more general capacity-building result.

Envisaged outcomes

4.17 The training workshops will be designed to increase the technical capacity of both teachers' organizations and governments to analyze human resource issues in education. As such, a primary outcome will be participation and organizational representation in the workshops. However, increased organizational capacity to analyze human resource issues in education is better evidenced by the production of a background report for the national or regional forum and the proportion of organizational members involved in this exercise. Teacher organizations and GPE developing country partner governments will collectively develop frameworks around standards of teaching and standards of practice, both of which can be incorporated into their bylaws. This will advance prior work conducted by UNESCO and EI on teaching standards and standards of practice in these organizations and national contexts. Awareness of the importance of professional teaching standards will be raised, as will the capacity of teacher organization and government representatives to advocate for the strengthening of standards or to incorporate them into country ESPs and human resource development plans.

4.18 These outcomes are intended to lead to the better definition and treatment of teacher human resource issues in GPE developing country partner ESPs, more informed and inclusive discussion in LEGs, and, ultimately, the amelioration of teachers' pedagogic practices in the classroom. They are also tied to the two outcomes by which Strategic Objective 4is to be assessed (i.e., proportion of ESPs that adequately address the issues of teacher availability, quality and conditions of employment; proportion of countries with agreed and applied teacher practice and professional standards).

4.19 The training workshops will encourage teachers' organizations and national governments to employ appropriate methods of analysis to better understand their educational system, the surrounding context and particular human resource issues. It will also build their capacity to engage in scientific inquiry concerning these issues.

4.20 The background papers and the regional forum will provide opportunities for all relevant stakeholders to engage in constructive dialogue and will engender an ethos of (and skills with) evidenced-based argument and decision-making. These characteristics are not currently the norm.

4.21 Nationally agreed standards of teaching and standards of practice will hold both governmental stakeholders and teachers' organizations responsible for providing

sufficiently trained teachers of high quality for all students. The incorporation of these standards into governments' and teachers' organizations' bylaws will engender broad acceptance of these documents among all relevant stakeholders and will facilitate action toward reducing the number of untrained teachers in GPE developing country partners.

Interest Area 3: Identifying, piloting and implementing innovative approaches to teacher in-service support mechanisms

Rationale

4.22 The global teacher shortage is well documented. In 2012, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics estimated that 1.7 million additional primary teaching positions will be required by 2015 to meet EFA goals and 6.8 million more teachers will be needed to maintain the current workforce.[11] The subsequent need to expand post-primary phases in many contexts exacerbates current human resource and fiscal burdens.[12] Many developing countries have attempted to bridge the growing teacher gap by hiring untrained or contract teachers with little or no formal training.[13] This practice, while augmenting teacher numbers in the short term, also has the potential to create a quality-control gap within the teacher workforce that needs to be addressed, at least in part, through effective and innovative in-service training and teacher support mechanisms.[14]

Proposed activities

4.23 Partners will collaborate on three areas of activity to enhance knowledge production and sharing, as well as to pilot programs that enhance teacher in-service support mechanisms. First, the partners will prepare a series of research reports under two general themes: i) contract teachers; and ii) national teacher policies and teacher support strategies. These reports will employ both case study approaches and literature reviews to ascertain the current state of knowledge vis-à-vis these subject. The first theme (i.e., contract teachers) will concern innovative and effective pathways to formal teacher qualifications and best practices of integrating contract teachers into the formal education sector, paying particular attention to training, qualification and certification.

[11] UNESCO-UIS. 2012. The global demand for primary teachers – 2012 update. Information Sheet No. 10.
[12] L. E. Nordstrum. 2012. "A Sisyphean complex? Economic and cost constraints in filling teacher quantity and quality gaps" in R. E. Moon (Ed.) *Teacher Education and the Challenge of Development* (London: Routledge).
[13] UNESCO. 2010. Methodological guide for the analysis of teacher issues. Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa Teacher Policy Development Guide (Paris: UNESCO).
[14] The forthcoming GPE Monitoring and Evaluation report highlights this problem. The activity proposed here responds to the same concern.

The latter theme (i.e., teacher policies and strategies) will focus on the changing role of head teachers as instructional leaders, the evolving role of the inspectorate, continuing professional development for teachers and the use of technological solutions to facilitate professional networks between teachers.

4.24 UNESCO and EI have also expressed interest in scaling up work on a professional code of ethics and teaching standards, following on from EI's previous work on teaching quality and national competence guidelines[15] as well as the UNESCO-IIEP guidelines for teacher codes of conduct.[16] In this vein, one area for work under the second theme would be to explore possibilities of scaling up programs like Quality Educators for All program (Quality-Ed) and its ongoing efforts to upgrade the skills of contract teachers in Mali and professional development programs for teachers and school principals in Uganda and experiences from UNESCO's Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA), as well as professional development programs for teachers and school leaders. A further area of work would be to translate national professional standards of practice into a pragmatic teacher-oriented toolkit that would explain the national standards and render them both practical and relevant to teachers' daily experiences, showing clearly how they should impact on classroom practices and extra-curricular conduct.

4.25 Second, these reports, their findings and policy recommendations will then be disseminated through regional dialogue forums between education stakeholders (i.e., governments, civil society partners, teachers and their organizations). The purpose of these activities would be three-fold: i) knowledge-sharing and highlighting innovations; ii) disseminating best practices; and iii) identifying and piloting teacher policy interventions at the national or sub-national level.

4.26 Third, the partners will pilot innovative programs within a number of developing country partners. UNESCO and EI are particularly interested in identifying innovative best practices in employing head teachers as instructional and pedagogical leaders and technology-based solutions for teacher development, and adapting these to local contexts. Thus, the culmination of these activities will be an evidence- and outcomes-

[15] EI and Oxfam-Novib. 2011. Quality teachers: An international study of teacher competences and standards. EI and Oxfam-Novib. 2011. Guidelines towards a national competence profile for primary teachers.
[16] UNESCO-IIEP. 2009. Guidelines for the design and effective use of teacher codes of conduct (Paris: UNESCO).

based approach to address the issues of contract teachers and in-service support mechanisms.

Envisaged outcomes

4.27 The reports on contract teachers and policies for teacher support are tangible research outputs in themselves and are intended to take stock of current practices within countries (i.e., baseline data) and create consensus around the state of contemporary teacher policies, issues and innovative solutions. The regional dialogue forums will serve to identify national priorities through collaboration between all relevant stakeholders.

4.28 This sequence of activities is designed to identify innovative cases and best practices vis-à-vis teacher human resource and professional development policies, and to enhance awareness of them through knowledge products (i.e., research reports) as well as national and regional forums. In addition, the research reports and forums will stimulate the interest of national partners to pilot teacher policy interventions and monitor their effects. Thus, these activities are meant to facilitate an evidence-based policy cycle of research, knowledge-sharing and collaborative implementation, which will strengthen teacher support mechanisms and human resource professional development. National professional teacher standards will also be advanced and translated into relevant information that can impact teachers' daily practices at the classroom and school level.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR SECRETARIAT RESOURCES

5.1 To implement the approach highlighted in this paper, the Secretariat will require at least one full-time-equivalent staff person to play the coordinating role envisaged. Given the tasks in Interest Areas1-3, the staff person's work would include: i) support to and networking on curriculum development for the workshops; ii) agreement and collaboration on the terms of reference for the several studies; iii) co-designing of pilot experiences, adaptation of existing frameworks such as the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) and the General Education Quality Assurance Framework (GEQAF) as needed; iv) review of sector plans and coordination with the partners of which countries might be ready for this work (with set criteria); and v) research and providing to the partners current tools/methods of teacher quality assessment in the GPE developing country partners so that it can feed into the work.

5.2 It is important to note that the approach highlighted in this paper will also depend on the various partners' being able to secure funds to implement the ideas. Funding could come from the GRA or from other sources that the partners could independently secure.

6. NEXT STEPS

Following discussion and guidance provided by the Board of Directors at the November 2012 Board meeting, the content of this paper will be incorporated into the Strategic Plan implementation plan for final review and approval.