

## **Making *Education for All* a reality**

**Without radical education management reforms  
*Education For All* is a distant dream.**



Six years after the Dakar conference in 2000 at which the international community agreed on *Education for All* (EFA) there are 23 million<sup>1</sup> more children in school than before. However, in 2006 there were still 100 million primary age children not in school. To have all primary age children in school by 2015, the development target to which the international community has subscribed, a huge increase in the number of teachers and classrooms as well as teaching and learning materials is required. To recruit and train new teachers as well as retain existing teachers requires strengthening the existing administrative systems through employing motivated and well trained managers.

During 2006 many calls for long term planning and predictable funding for education were made, amongst them the African ministers of education who met in Abuja (Financing for Development: the Abuja commitment to action), Nigeria, in May. Although this funding should make it easier to deliver already agreed policies, and mean an improved and less adhoc distribution of resources, huge challenges remain if the international target of getting all primary children in school by 2015 is to be met: How can the money be used in systems that are weak? How can the transition of money from central government to schools be strengthened? What changes must be made in education management and administration to ensure quality education is delivered?

VSO's research in eight countries<sup>2</sup> across Africa and Asia during the last six years, reveals that the global crisis in the teaching profession is ongoing, not only with a shortfall of between 14-22 million teachers worldwide<sup>3</sup>, but also with existing teachers who are poorly trained and managed (if at all), who can barely survive on the low salaries they are paid, and who as a result suffer poor morale and low motivation. In some countries such as Guyana this is leading to high teacher migration in many countries, children as a result are not receiving quality education.

### **VSO is recommending that:**

1. Education reforms are better coordinated with more inclusion of education stakeholders' and in particular, teachers voices
2. Managers at all levels are recruited and allocated resources, trained and empowered to implement national policies and be accountable for them
3. National governments are recognised as having autonomy to increase spending in education.

---

<sup>1</sup> UNESCO Global Monitoring Report, 2007

<sup>2</sup> Guyana, Nepal, Malawi, the Maldives, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda and Zambia

<sup>3</sup> According to UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2006, 14-22 million teachers will need to be recruited and trained by 2015.

## **Declining teacher status, morale and motivation.**

**VSO research points to poor management and administration as one of the root causes of poor motivation and morale amongst teachers.**

VSO's research has pinpointed several key factors which have resulted in poor teacher motivation, status and morale. These are the exclusion of teachers from decision-making processes of which they should be a vital part, inefficient and ineffective administrative systems resulting in poor management of teachers, and poor terms and conditions under which teachers work.

### **1. Better coordination of reforms and inclusion of teachers' voices:**

VSO has found out with concern the lack of value governments and donors place on incorporating teachers' views when drawing up and implementing education plans and reforms. Yet teachers are those best able to articulate the problems of existing education systems and suggest improvements.

In all countries VSO surveyed, the exclusion of teachers from decision-making and reforms at all levels of the education system was one of the most demotivating factors for teachers, and one of the biggest blockages to effective policy reform. In schools, head teachers, managers and inspectors often ignored teachers' views instead handing down orders and instructions. At state or national levels, teachers' representatives were often denied a place at the table by governments and donors alike. Governments tend to decide education policies by employing expensive consultants or by following the advice of donors, the IMF, the World Bank or the UN agencies, rather than effecting rigorous consultation processes. At the district or local level, government education offices remain under-resourced in terms of both finances and human capacity, which results in inefficiency, regular system breakdown and a lack of capacity to implement effective two-way information, communication and monitoring and evaluation systems.

Information about education reforms can consequently fail to reach school managers and teachers at all. This is especially the case for managers and teachers in rural or geographically remote areas, who often fail to receive crucial information bulletins and newsletters because of dysfunctional postal systems, or a lack of capacity in district and provincial education offices to produce and circulate them.

Yet, in all education systems, teachers play a pivotal role in delivering education reforms. They are both recipients and deliverers of this change, and are thus better placed and better informed than any other stakeholders about what does and does not work in education policy. Teacher participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of policy initiatives is therefore essential if reforms are to succeed.

***India***

'Researchers at the University of Edinburgh concluded that lack of consultation led to the failure of India's "Operation Blackboard", a government programme that aimed to ensure that all schools had at least two rooms and two teachers, and that all teachers had a package of essential teaching aids. The researchers found that, in Gujarat, the programme fell apart because, "failure to consult teachers, or their representatives, at any planning stage contributed to demoralization, alienation and passive resistance"', (VSO, 2002:6)

Evidently, proper participatory consultation processes with all stakeholders at all levels of the education system, would serve to provide invaluable information for reviewing already implemented reforms and allow new reform proposals to be tested for popularity, realism and equity. Despite commitments made at the World Education Forum at Dakar in 2000, consultation process for including the voices of teachers through their union representatives and through civil society coalitions remains extremely weak or non-existent in many countries.

**2. Managers at all levels be allocated resources, trained and empowered to implement national policies and be accountable for them**

**Poor or non existent management training**

VSO has found out that there is no standardized way of training education managers and administrators, and in some countries it is absent. Yet the role of managers at all levels is critical to teacher motivation.

In some countries head teachers tend to be promoted from classroom teaching into school management positions with little organized training (other than having observed existing managers carry out their duties). Middle managers, supervisors and local level education officials similarly receive little or no management training. Moreover, teachers are commonly selected for management positions on the grounds of length of service rather than aptitude.

The lack of pre- or in-service management training for head teachers and other managers has a knock-on effect on classroom teachers, as their managers are consequently unable to provide them with the support, line management and appraisals they need. So teachers become de-motivated and unable to carry out their teaching responsibilities effectively.

***Ghana***

In Ghana teachers are often promoted to managerial posts on the basis of age and length of service rather than on merit. In the more remote districts where there are few trained teachers, the head, as the only qualified teacher, may in fact be fresh out of teacher training college. In some districts too there is high turnover of heads and in many cases the head is 'acting. Although newly-promoted head teachers in Ghana are supposed to have training on taking up the position, this does not always happen although. Other managers get little training for their new roles. Moreover, the concept of on-going support through continuing professional development and staff appraisal systems doesn't really exist. If managers are called for training it is more about disseminating information than developing their

professional skills; when they are visited by circuit supervisors, it is again more often on administrative matter. In this environment it is easy to see why education managers are demotivated and how this has a knock-on effect on they teachers and staff they themselves manage (VSO Ghana, 2006).

### **Ineffective and inefficient systems**

Years of budget cutbacks have left education management systems severely weakened. Teachers interviewed in the literature recount that administrative and bureaucratic systems are often unable to deliver teaching and learning materials, information about new syllabuses and curricula, or provide effective supervision, continuing professional development and fair promotion systems.

An incomplete decentralization process has also taken its toll in some countries.

#### ***Ghana***

Decentralization of education services was included as part of the Ghanaian constitution in 1992. Fourteen years later the process is still incomplete. This seems to be due to reluctance from the centre to relinquish power and responsibility, coupled with reluctance from the districts to accept it. A reason for this unwillingness on both sides is the lack of knowledge and skills at district level. However, systems and personnel in place at both levels has resulted in an extra layer of bureaucracy and a lack of clarity as to who is doing what. Moreover, since some wealthier and urban districts have moved further towards completion than others and can cite instances of positive change (such as access to funding and planning and budgeting that better addresses local priorities), while the system is incomplete, it remains inequitable. Poorer and more rural districts, which contain many disadvantaged children both in and out of school, are still under central or regional control where funding is often delayed and based on plans that rarely address local needs (VSO Ghana, 2006).

Due to the chronic under-funding common to poor countries, head teachers and other managers rarely have sufficient numbers of support staff to take care of administrative matters. Administrative duties, rather than teacher management and support, end up occupying the vast majority of managers' time. Where there are teacher shortages, or high rates of teacher absenteeism, head teachers may also have to cover for the missing teachers minimizing the time available for teacher management even further.

As a result, teachers become overloaded with work because of weak management and a gap appears between teachers' capacity and the unrealistic expectations of head teachers and managers. Such heavy workloads act only to intensify the demotivation of teachers.

#### ***Ghana***

Ghana has recently introduced a Capitation Grant of 30,000 cedis for each child enrolled at primary school. Although the grant has increased enrollment and led to more efficient funding, its administration is over-complicated and tedious. As part of the accounting process, Heads have to ensure that 8 forms are completed for each transaction, however small. "We need a form to keep track of all the other

forms” said one official. Moreover, these forms are copied on to paper bought from the same funds.

Heads also have to fill in all the information in a board ledger. They were initially given some training on this process, but most have little or no experience of financial management and no ‘on the job’ support at school level. Moreover, in some cases schools are experiencing 3 different audits of the capitation grant funds from the district, the region and the Bureau of National Investigation (BNI). Administration and management of the capitation grant is therefore taking up valuable head and teacher time, time that could otherwise be spent on supporting teachers and teaching children (VSO Ghana, 2006).

### **Poor Terms and conditions**

In all countries reviewed, teacher salaries and other incentives are either woefully inadequate or, because of malfunctioning salary payment systems, are paid late, paid partially or not paid at all. Yet without improving teachers’ pay or other terms and conditions of service as well many of teachers are forced below the (already too low) global poverty line of one US dollar a day. As teacher salaries often amount to over 80% of poor countries’ education budgets, donor funding must include long-term predictable funding to finance teacher salary rises, as well as urgently needed increases in teacher recruitment and the associated training costs.

Non-salary benefits such as subsidised accommodation, travel and health insurance, where available, are often inadequate or poorly administered. As a result, many teachers have to take second jobs (often as private tutors, or by engaging in subsistence farming or other jobs) to make ends meet, and end up demoralized and exhausted.

### **3. National governments are recognised as having autonomy to increase spending in education on management and administration**

The lack of autonomy to increase and allocate funding for education management and administration is a major constraint on countries’ ability to invest in recruiting and retaining sufficient numbers of professional teachers. Concern to contain inflation to very low levels (typically between 5% and 10%) has led many countries to declare caps on the public sector wage bill. As teachers make up the largest group of public sector workers within countries, this has direct consequences for the profession: governments must either stop hiring new teachers or freeze the wages of existing teachers – in some cases both. Thus, while countries are on the one hand encouraged, even cajoled, by donors to upscale their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), on the other they are held back by narrow fiscal concerns promoted by the IMF.

Donors and international financial institutions know and understand that the major cost of achieving the education MDGs will be the cost of paying teachers. An increase in the number of teachers and pupils in school will result in extra strain being put on the whole education system, and this needs to be taken into account. In 2004 in Zambia, the IMF congratulated the government for taking a strong stand and ‘limiting the wage bill to 8% and providing more room for...priority spending’ – despite the fact that this move had left 9,000 trained teachers unemployed while

the schools struggled with classes of over 70. It stated that 'the initial results of fiscal policy implementation were positive' (IMF, 2004).

Absurdly, this suggests that paying primary school teachers is not 'priority spending' and that 9,000 teachers unemployed could be considered a 'positive' result of fiscal policy implementation.

## **Solution: improve teacher motivation morale and status - the case for education management.**

Since 2000 VSO has extensively documented that the delivery of quality education to primary school children will only be possible with a larger and better motivated teaching force. The only way to obtain this is to improve teacher management and administration.

### **Training for education managers**

Key to achieving quality education is capacity building for education managers so that education managers at school, district and national level should be better at:

- motivational management of teachers, other staff, actively working with staff to develop their skills and enthusiasm
- facilitating continuing professional development of teachers and staff
- creating and maintaining transparent and fair appraisal, postings and promotion systems (including being sensitive to different needs)
- creating and maintaining effective distribution systems for teachers salaries and teaching and learning materials
- Ensuring voice and responsiveness in decision making and reform process by involving students, parents, teachers
- instigating downwards and upwards responsiveness and accountability between levels e.g. national, district, school and community
- whole district /school development and improvement including planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation

Therefore VSO is recommending that the introduction of management training and professional development programmes for head teachers and other education managers should become a high priority if these problems are to be addressed. Training should include approaches to managing a team, budgeting and planning skills, principles of supportive and motivational management, including conducting appraisals and whole school evaluation, and facilitating professional development activities for teachers and other staff. Professional development will help them to handle the changes in the education system and make them confident to do their job.

Managers, as well as teachers, need professional development opportunities to enable them to carry out their responsibilities in a reflective way. Opportunities need to be created for them to observe and learn from good practice in other schools and discuss management issues with their peers. Exchange visits to nearby schools and regular meetings with other managers in their district or region can help to provide space for such discussion and learning.

Head teachers and managers also need effective appraisal systems for themselves, which should include gathering feedback on their own performance from the teachers and others they manage, as well as from their own managers.

In addition to training and continuing professional development opportunities, head teachers and other managers need to be equipped with enough support staff to perform the required administrative tasks that otherwise take up a disproportionate amount of managers' time (VSO Nepal, 2005:41).

Head teachers and managers also need skills for communicating and consulting about school development with a wide variety of audiences (teachers, students, parents, school inspectors and other education officials). Managers need to be able to conduct participatory meetings with such stakeholders not only to communicate and implement government-led reforms, but also to gather feedback and ideas from school level stakeholders and communicate their ideas back up to provincial or national level policy makers for use in policy reviewing and planning.

### **Towards effective and efficient education systems**

One way to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of education systems is to improve promotion opportunities for teachers, national policy makers should ensure that schools include more promotional levels to allow teachers to progress up the pay scale and be rewarded for good performance. Continued professional development programmes should work alongside the promotion system to ensure development opportunities are provided for future educational leaders and managers.

Safeguards should also be put in place – in the form of laws, guidelines and monitoring and evaluation systems – to prevent discrimination against female, disabled, ethnic or caste minority, or teachers living with or affected by HIV & AIDS in promotion procedures and the allocation of privileged duties.

Where decentralization has already started, completing the process (which includes providing the necessary training for head teachers and other managers as discussed above) strengthens the system because staff at all levels are aware of the changes taking place and are prepared to implement the change. If governments and donors are not sure about decentralization and when it will start and finish it is better that they do not start it and work at improving the existing systems.

### **Involve Teachers in decision-making processes as partners in development**

Participation and involvement of teachers and their representatives – at all levels – in defining and revising policy reforms is the key to ensuring not only that their needs are taken into account and appropriately addressed, but that other educational reforms are successfully implemented. To address the problem of lack of teacher participation in decision making at the school level, the establishment of mechanisms through which teachers' views – as well as those of students, parents and other community members – are listened to and acted upon by head teachers and other school managers would greatly enhance the motivation and performance of teachers, and therefore the quality of education they are able to provide. For example, head teachers could call regular meetings of teachers and parents to address current issues and come to a consensus about school improvement plans

and budgets, so that they reflect the needs and aspirations of parents, while being grounded in teachers' experience.

This downward accountability at the local level can help to improve the delivery of education services because it can reduce corruption and improve the equitable provision of services. This will become even more important as the level of investment increases and significant as donors and governments shift towards direct funding to schools.

At the district, local and provincial levels, systems clearly need to be strengthened, funding increased and human resource capacity increased and developed, to enable education officials to perform their duties more effectively. There are no doubt also motivation and retention problems among education officials working in district or provincial education offices, which will need to be addressed with improved incentives, training, professional development and management.

At the national level, education policies, curricula content etc., should be developed with the participation of representatives of all stakeholders including, but not restricted to, teachers and their elected union representatives, and civil society education coalitions. Many countries now have highly active Global Campaign for Education affiliated coalitions – usually led by teachers' unions– that provide governments with convenient, ready-made mechanisms for dialogue with representatives from a broad range of civil society education stakeholders. Such coalitions can also provide invaluable monitoring and evaluation information for ministries of education. For example, the budget monitoring work of Malawi's Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education has provided the Malawi Ministry of Education with significant information about teacher absenteeism and textbook delivery systems. Participatory consultation processes serve not only to improve teacher motivation, but also help to make policies more realistic.

There are a number of other ways that teacher voices can be used to inform and strengthen national policy-making and ensure the implementation of reforms is effective. However, it is important to ensure that communication systems are not just about sharing information from the top down. Two-way communication mechanisms should be instituted to allow teachers and their union representatives, students, parents and parents' associations to feed in their ideas on policy proposals and on implementation successes and problems (VSO Nepal, 2005:51–2).

Governments must ensure that teachers have the right to form and control their own representative organizations and have the right to be consulted and participate in the process of formulating educational policies. Existing channels can be used for this purpose but where they do no organizations can be supported so that holistic positions are developed on issues such as:

- Teacher training and professional development
- Tackling HIV & AIDS issues and gender, disability and ethnicity discrimination in the teaching force and in classrooms
- Curriculum development and examination and assessment policies
- Teachers' participation in decision making at school, district/local, provincial and national levels.

Strong and active community support and involvement in the life of the school can also be a strong motivating incentive for teachers. Democratic, well-resourced parent-teachers' associations, mothers' associations, school management committees or other mechanisms for community involvement can go a long way to making teachers feel supported and valued, as well as helping teachers identify the needs and aspirations of the community so that the curriculum being delivered can be adapted accordingly.

**Better terms and conditions including a realistic salary**

Education reforms commonly tend to focus on improving teacher training and improving working and learning environments, and promoting greater decentralisation of education management: all of which can improve teacher motivation. Yet without improving teachers' pay or other terms and conditions of service as well, many teachers are forced to leave the teaching profession for other jobs in the same country or they migrate internationally to other countries that will pay them a better salary e.g. Guyana teachers leave for the US and UK.

If a government feels that it cannot afford to increase teacher salaries (however much it raises taxes, improves tax collection, or moves money from other sectors), **it should work with teachers' unions and civil society education coalitions to lobby donors to fulfil their promises to finance such increases.**

***Kenya***

'In 1991 the difference between the salary of a primary teacher and a bus driver was 1000 US\$, while in all other years [between 1991 and 2000] the difference has been 100-200 US\$. Teachers in Kenya have a salary corresponding to 5.3 times GDP per capita, but they earn not much more than a bus driver and less than a skilled industrial worker' (Fredriksson, 2004:15).

Paying teachers is a priority spending within education investment. **Long term predictable funding that does not take into consideration the cost of paying teachers is going to fail to delivery Education for All.** Professionally trained, well-motivated teachers are absolutely pivotal to accomplishing EFA and MDGs. All development partners should be working together to formulate realistic plans for reducing poverty, with teachers at the heart of them – so that every child can know a teacher.

Maintaining macroeconomic stability should also be a priority but this can be achieved without emphasis on single digit inflation. Advice given by donors and IFIs should be a guide that is flexible rather than rigid.

VSO has detailed recommendations in *What makes Teachers' Tick?* VSO 2002 and *Teachers for All*, GCE 2006, which can be accessed on-line using the internet addresses below.

**VSO therefore recommends the following:**

- Make funding available to education managers to enable them carry out their job of supervision, support and appraisal effectively and efficiently.
- Involve teachers and other stakeholders at all levels of decision-making process to ensure the voices of the achievers and users of education services.
- Improve the capacity of education systems to deliver quality education by paying teachers on time, making teaching and learning materials available improving monitoring and evaluation systems.
- Where adequate training and preparation has been delivered, decentralisation processes should be completed to ensure budget holding and decision making powers are devolved to school level, so that schools can be more responsive to local needs. Where training and preparation is inadequate decentralisation should not be started until systems are strengthened.
- Maintaining macroeconomic stability should also be a priority but this can be achieved without emphasis on single digit inflation. Advice given by donors and IFIs should be a guide that is flexible rather than rigid.

**References:**

IMF (2004), *Zambia: Request for Three-Year Arrangement Under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility—Staff Report; Staff Statement; Press Release; and Statement by the Executive Director for Zambia*. Washington: International Monetary Fund.

Fredriksson, Ulf (2004), *Quality Education: The Teachers' Key Role, Education International Working Paper*. Brussels: Education International.

VSO (2002), *What Makes Teachers Tick? A policy research report on teachers' motivation in developing countries*. London: Voluntary Service Overseas.  
[www.vso.org.uk/Images/position\\_papers\\_what\\_makes\\_teachers\\_tick\\_tcm8-2981.pdf](http://www.vso.org.uk/Images/position_papers_what_makes_teachers_tick_tcm8-2981.pdf)

VSO (2006), *Teachers for All: what governments and donors should do*. London: Voluntary Service Overseas.  
[www.vso.org.uk/Images/GCE\\_Teachers\\_For\\_All\\_tcm8-6873.pdf](http://www.vso.org.uk/Images/GCE_Teachers_For_All_tcm8-6873.pdf)

VSO Ghana (2006), *Research into education management and administration*. Unpublished.

VSO Nepal (2005), *Lessons from the Classroom: A Policy Research Report on Teachers' Motivation and Perceptions in Nepal*. Kathmandu: VSO Nepal.  
[vso.org.uk/awareness\\_action/take\\_action/education/valuing\\_teachers\\_nepal.asp](http://vso.org.uk/awareness_action/take_action/education/valuing_teachers_nepal.asp)

VSO is an international development charity that works through volunteers. For more information about the issues raised in this policy briefing please contact Chikondi Mpokosa at [chikondi.mpokosa@vso.org.uk](mailto:chikondi.mpokosa@vso.org.uk), +44 207 780 7511, VSO International, 317 Putney Bridge Road, London SW15 2PN, United Kingdom. [www.vso.org.uk](http://www.vso.org.uk)T