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# Education and International Development

*An Introduction*

**Edited by Tristan McCowan  
and Elaine Unterhalter**

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that the illness takes many forms, that social and individual circumstances affect its incidence and treatment, and that the interplay between inputs, systems, relationships, care, and individual engagement and emotion are all significant parts of this undertaking. Connecting opportunities, outcomes and capabilities in thinking about equality in education is complex and requires policies, practices and research agendas that can work multi-dimensionally. There is still a long way to go to develop the understanding and experience to take this forward.

### Questions for discussion

1. Why is it easier to treat horizontal inequalities in education as vertical inequalities?
2. Why do inequalities in educational opportunities appear to be mirrored in inequalities in educational outcomes? What could change this process?
3. Consider how an education planner and a classroom teacher would approach addressing access and quality to reflect the three frameworks for thinking about addressing inequalities outlined? What would be similar and different in their approach to practice?

### Further reading

- Parkes, J. (ed.) (2015), *Gender Violence in Poverty Contexts: The Educational Challenge*, London: Routledge.
- Stewart, F. (2008), *Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: Understanding Group Violence in Multiethnic Societies*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

# 9

## Teachers and Teacher Education Policies

Gita Steiner-Khamsi

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### Introduction

The education of teachers and their effectiveness have become objects of academic investigation as well as applied policy learning. In fact, the area of teacher related policies has taken on such a monumental significance in educational research that it has tended to eclipse alternative explanations



for why some educational systems do better than others in terms of student achievement. Nowadays, policymakers are outward oriented and proclaim that they are keen to learn what has worked in other countries. Formulated differently, cross-national policy borrowing is nowadays the rule and not the exception. This chapter draws on the example of teacher policy to warn against the 'cargo-cult' (Cowen 2000) that has elevated the comparative preoccupation with isolating features of the educational system to undeserved notoriety.

In this chapter, I will identify three fundamental systemic differences that are relevant in the area of teacher policy.<sup>1</sup> Educational systems educate, manage and regulate teachers differently depending on whether the system

1. is decentralized or centralized,
2. hires and pays teachers based on the overall workload or based on the actual teaching hour and
3. conceives the teacher education degree as a pedagogical or a generalist degree.

Other differentiations apply but are not elaborated on in this chapter. For example, there are vast differences in what promotion criteria educational systems tend to use (performance versus experience) and what teacher accountability system they have in place (intrinsic versus extrinsic control). In an era of globalization, it has become common to use the method of comparison to emphasize commonality over difference. In this chapter, I draw on the full scope of the method of comparison and use it for the inverse purpose: I will stress difference over commonality in order to understand the particular logic or idiosyncrasies of educational systems. This chapter differentiates between universal challenges that all educational systems face and system-specific challenges that only similar systems share. Arguably, an international comparative perspective helps us to identify similarities and differences and, in this case, to develop a typology of system features that matter for teacher related policies.

## Global trends in teacher policy

There are several reasons why teacher education and effectiveness have attracted so much attention. First, the shortage of qualified teachers is a

global phenomenon. The High-Level Group on EFA found in 2008 that 18 million teachers are needed to achieve universal primary education by 2015. For example, South and West Asia would need an additional 3.6 million teachers, and countries in Sub-Saharan Africa would need to recruit 145,000 new teachers annually to increase primary enrolment to a universal level by the year 2015 (UNESCO 2009). Arguably, the non-availability of qualified teachers constitutes one of the greatest barriers to offering free and compulsory primary education in some countries and expanding schooling from ten to eleven or twelve years in others. The shortage in secondary schools is especially acute in specific subjects (Maths, Science, English). The 2006 PISA study mentions the shortage of qualified teachers in science subjects explicitly and attributes low student outcomes in science to the lack of qualified science teachers: in Kyrgyzstan, for example, 62 per cent of all schools report vacancies in science. Almost all of these schools (59 per cent countrywide) cope with this shortage by filling their vacancies with teachers who take on additional lessons in science or by assigning non-qualified teachers (that is, teachers qualified in other subjects but with no training in science) to teach science (CEATM 2008). The latter practice – redistribution of vacant hours to substitute teachers or non-qualified teachers – is the most common strategy used at the school-level to cope with teacher shortage.

Second, beginning with the EFA Fast Track Initiative (2002) and continuing beyond the development agenda of 2015, international donors and aid recipient governments alike have subscribed to performance-based criteria of aid effectiveness. Nowadays, the benefits to the 'end users' are at the core of aid effectiveness evaluations. Therefore, for educational reforms the question has become: how have students benefited from the intervention, or, more narrowly, have learning outcomes increased as a result of the reform or the project?

Naturally, IEA- and OECD-type international student achievement tests are increasingly used as policy instruments for learning lessons, adopting 'best practices', or for selective policy borrowing. More than once, the educational systems of Finland, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore and South Korea have been identified not only as the best performing educational systems in terms of reading, science and maths but also as the models for 'best practices' in recruitment into teaching and teacher education. The strong correlation assumed between teaching and student outcomes has led to a global race over how to maximize teacher effectiveness. Within a short period of time, teaching has become one of the most studied and most regulated professions with high expectations and yet a host of unsolved issues.



The third reason why teacher policy studies have raised such high expectations is related to finance: salaries constitute by far the largest item on any national education budget. In more than half of all developing countries, personnel remuneration absorbs 75 per cent and more of the national education budget (UIS 2013), leaving too little room for other important items such as teaching/learning supplies, maintenance of facilities, targeted support for poor students and for students with special needs and professional development of staff. The situation is even more precarious in fragile states where, besides reliance on donor-financed teacher salaries, there exist a host of other issues such as, for example, lack of a banking registration and distribution system (Dolan et al. 2012). Thus, it is also for financial reasons why teacher education and teacher effectiveness have been treated with priority in policy studies.

In sum, teachers have a significant impact on student learning yet their number is neither sufficient nor are they, in many developing countries, adequately paid. There is agreement on what needs to be done: a wide range of authors and institutions, ranging from OECD (2005) to McKinsey (2010), emphasize the importance of attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers. What the studies do not sufficiently identify, however, are the vast differences in educational systems that account for system-specific challenges and therefore call for system-specific rather than universal solutions for the effective recruitment, development and retention of teachers.

## Universal key challenges of teacher supply

Comparative methodology requires that we first identify commonalities between cases, contexts or systems before we subject them to a comparison. There exist in fact at least three key challenges of teacher supply that lend themselves as *tertium comparationis*. It is proposed here that all educational systems have to tackle the following three key challenges of teacher supply that are related to three factors: characteristics of the student body, teaching workforce and the school. From a comparative policy perspective, the questions become:

*Characteristics of the student body:* What provisions do educational systems put in place to ensure that all students, regardless of their

social, cultural and economic backgrounds, and with different abilities, needs and interests are taught by teachers with relevant qualifications.

*Characteristics of the teaching workforce:* How do educational systems ensure that the teaching workforce reflects the composition of the student body in terms of gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, political affiliation, sexual orientation, etc.?

*Characteristics of the school:* How do educational systems manage to equip schools in remote rural areas, in post-conflict areas and in other hardship posts with qualified teachers? There is a strong correlation between location of school and size of school: schools in remote rural areas are typically small and they cannot afford to hire one teacher per grade or one teacher per subject area. Therefore, for educational systems that operate with per capita financing, that is, where the school budget is affected by the size of the student body, the challenge of attracting and retaining qualified teachers to such areas can be nearly insurmountable. Small schools not only have a smaller budget available but they often represent schools where teachers are required to teach under more difficult pedagogical circumstances, notably teach in a multi-grade setting (primary school) or teach several subjects for which they were not initially trained (secondary school).

Needless to state, some educational systems are more successful than others in coping with these three key challenges of teacher supply. This chapter does not attempt to evaluate educational systems in terms of how they deal with these challenges. I also do not try to explain the reasons for the success or failure of equitably supplying all students and all types of schools in a country with a teaching force that is not only qualified but also diverse, reflecting the composition of the student body. This chapter rather explores the vastly different approaches to dealing with these three key challenges.

## Towards a typology of teacher policy systems

The argument made here is that several features of an educational system determine how it addresses the three key challenges of teacher supply. For reasons of illustration, I will confine myself to three fundamental system



**Table 9.1** System determinants of teacher supply

Key feature	At one end of the spectrum	At the other end of the spectrum
Employment	Highly decentralized	Highly centralized
Salary structure	Set according to weekly workload	Set according to weekly teaching hours
Teacher education	Pedagogical degree	Generalist degree

differences mentioned above that account for why there are different challenges, calling for different policy solutions, in varied educational systems. Table 9.1 presents them in an overview.

## Employment of teachers: Decentralized versus centralized

It appears at first sight that highly centralized educational systems experience fewer problems with teacher shortages in remote rural areas: they assign newly qualified teachers to a post and have policies in place that make a transfer from that post to another, more attractive location, nearly impossible. Rural-urban differences in living standards, notably access to electricity, safe water, transportation, are substantial in developing countries. It is therefore not surprising that many developing countries used to have highly centralized systems in which teachers, at times in combination with a service-rule regulation (e.g. mandatory service in a remote location for two years), were dispatched to teach at a school with low living standards. This used to be, in principle, an equitable solution that ensured not only that schools in rural areas had a constant supply of teachers but also that all schools, regardless of their location, could rely on the same type of qualified teachers.

There is a risk, however, that such systems produce unmotivated teachers and 'ghost teachers', that is teachers who, rather than taking up the assigned post, trade it internally with someone from the location or sub-contract the job to someone who is not qualified. Sub-contracting is such a common practice in South Asia, including in the teaching profession, that a specific term (Urdu: *theka system*) is assigned to characterize this particular feature of the system. These and other practices are captured in the term 'ghost teachers' that has unfortunately experienced inflationary usage because of

## Policy 2 Teacher Deployment in the Soviet Union

The Soviet education system (1922–1991) had a centralist governance structure of this sort in place which subscribed to equal access to education. The Ministry of Education assigned graduates of teacher education studies to vacant positions. Some were in remote rural areas at great distance from the region of origin of the teacher education graduates. All kinds of control and reward mechanisms were in place to ensure the 'new specialists' assumed their position and remained in post for the first few years after graduation. After the move from a planned to a market regulated economy, arrangements eroded for enforcing service regulation in remote areas. Higher education in former Soviet countries expanded exponentially throughout the 1990s partly because colleges and universities were permitted to charge for tuition. Two groups of students emerged: those that received a scholarship from the government budget ('budget students') and those that paid tuition ('contract students'). Up until the first years of the millennium, governments in the countries of the former Soviet Union tried to enforce the service requirement at least for 'budget students'. The scholarship was contingent on working for the first 2–5 years after graduation at a teaching post that was selected by the Ministry of Education, sometimes in an unattractive location. However, the outcome was mixed. A World Bank study on higher education reported a low university to work transition rate (Brunner and Tillet 2007, p. 119). In 1999, three-quarters of graduates did not show up at the assigned post. Only 24 per cent of the 'budget students' assumed the position the Ministry of Education had assigned to them. The ratio improved over the next few years as additional policies were put in place to compensate for the lack of control mechanisms available in a free market economy where graduates may choose the profession and apply for a position at a location of their choice. The struggle continues to find an alternative to the coercive deployment centralist governments tend to use. Policy responses range from depositing a sizeable amount in a savings account the new teacher may only access after the completion of the mandatory service requirement<sup>2</sup> to hiring underqualified teachers who undergo professional development while working in an unattractive school location.



the erroneous assumption that all ghost teachers cash their salaries without carrying out the job. The phenomenon is offered as an explanation for interpreting the incongruent information on staff records at school, district and central level.

In the UNICEF ESARO Study on Teachers in Swaziland, which I worked on, we compared teacher information at the school level ( $N = 96$ ) in two districts and at the central level (UNICEF ESARO and UNICEF Swaziland 2010). We found incongruent information between the various databases. The conflicting information related to very basic facts including the quota size (number of entitled positions) and the actual size of the teaching staff. The inaccuracy of information led to hiring freezes, delays with approving updated quota and other problems that could feasibly be avoided with a more effective management and deployment system. Very often, centralized systems are slow and entrenched in bureaucratic processes to the extent that schools, parents and communities – at their own expense – find ways to hire additional teachers, most commonly as contract teachers. These coercive measures damage the public image of teaching. In Malawi, the teaching workforce is predominantly male, except in the cities where most teachers are female. Female teachers successfully made the argument to the Teaching Commission that they should stay with their families, following their husbands to work in the city (UNICEF ESARO and UNICEF Malawi 2011). Transfer for ‘compassionate reasons’ is also discernible in Pakistan where transfer requests are more easily granted to female teachers who follow husbands to urban areas.

Centralized hiring practices, in which the district, rather than the school, hires teachers, implies that schools have no control over hiring, firing or managing teachers. This has negative impact on schools in rural districts. Thus, rural districts may end up paying for teachers who are then transferred to urban school districts and no longer work for rural district schools. There is a shortage of teachers in the rural areas even though official records at school, district and province level indicate the positions as filled.

Tremendous international pressure is currently being exerted on centralized teacher management and deployment systems to shift decision-making authority over hiring, transfer and promotion of teachers from the central to the school level. School-based management is a ‘travelling reform’ that has generated pressure on educational systems. Devolution of decision-making is considered to be more efficient because school principals, schools boards or school management committees are able to hire teachers directly, fill vacancies quickly and with fewer bureaucratic hurdles. However,

rather than assuming that one governance structure (e.g. centralized or decentralized) is more effective than another, I recommend we understand the idiosyncrasies of each type of system for addressing key challenges of teacher supply.

While school-based management allows schools to act more efficiently on issues related to human management, they also have to deal with other challenges: of inequity and corruption which they may be less well equipped to respond to. Since schools are in competition with each other over attracting the most qualified teachers by providing material and immaterial incentives (salary supplement, staff development options, work conditions, etc.), school-based management tends to work better in an affluent environment and in contexts where there is no sharp rural-urban divide. Unlike centralized systems, decentralized systems cannot issue an order to teachers to take on a post in an unattractive location. Rather, they resort to incentives and support structures to lure and retain teachers in schools considered difficult (Mulkeen and Chen 2008). Inequality becomes a major concern for decentralized, market-driven educational systems. Since rural schools cannot possibly keep up with their competitors in urban settings, decentralized systems have developed – often with the support of development partners – a series of pilot projects and policies to offset their comparative disadvantage. Several countries have set up branch campuses in rural districts. Others have actively promoted pre-service teacher education using blended learning, correspondence studies or distance learning so that pre-service teacher education students do not have to abandon their communities but rather complete their degrees while working as ‘student teachers’ in rural schools. Attempt to bring pre-service teacher education closer to a rural population – and overcome geographical, cultural and linguistic distance – should be interpreted as a positive sign of a policy that is pro-poor.

## Salary structure: Weekly workload versus weekly teaching load

A fixed, regular and predicable monthly salary for a teacher in a developing country often does not materialize; this is frequently the root cause of teaching being considered an unattractive profession. In 2006, the World Bank commissioned a study on teacher salaries in Mongolia as part of



the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (World Bank 2006). Working on this, we were surprised to find the salary structure fragmented, that is, composed of a low base-salary and supplemented with all kinds of items such as stipends for additional teaching hours, serving as a class teacher, grading student notebooks, managing a lab at school, etc. Since these supplements were not always paid in full but rather depended on the arbitrary assessment of the education manager of whether the teacher really properly graded student notebooks (the use of red ink was at the time mandatory to make supervision easier); effectively managed the class (supplement deductions were made for students that cut class); and took care of the lab (salary supplement deductions were made for broken equipment), teachers were not able to predict their monthly take-home salary.

Follow-up studies in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and a six-country study in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States region (UNICEF CEECIS 2011) confirmed the post-Soviet legacy in the region: all educational systems used to have a teaching load system (Russian: *stavka*) in place through which additional teaching hours helped boost the low base salary of teachers. In school year 2007/2008, the salaries of teachers in the post-Soviet region (EU accession countries excluded) ranged (in US dollars) from \$47–\$215 per month. The relative salary was not only low but also below the national wage average, ranging from 53 per cent to 92 per cent of what others with a similar level of education earned (Steiner-Khamsi and Harris-van Keuren 2008). As a result, teachers fight over who gets assigned additional teaching hours, regardless of whether these additional hours are in the subjects for which they trained or whether they substitute for teachers of other subjects on study, maternity or sick leave.

Figure 9.1 illustrates the complex salary structure in the post-socialist region, using Tajikistan as a case. Since the publication of the study, the salary structure in Tajikistan has undergone reform integrating the various supplements (over ten) into two (class teacher and notebook checking) (See Steiner-Khamsi 2007).

The fragmented picture in Tajikistan is indicative of the teacher salary structure in the CEECIS region where the base salary is low, the benefits of appointment as a civil servant attractive and dependence on additional income great. This can take the form of teaching additional hours through private tutoring, providing special classes or requiring unofficial contributions by parents. The fragmented salary structure is a legacy of the

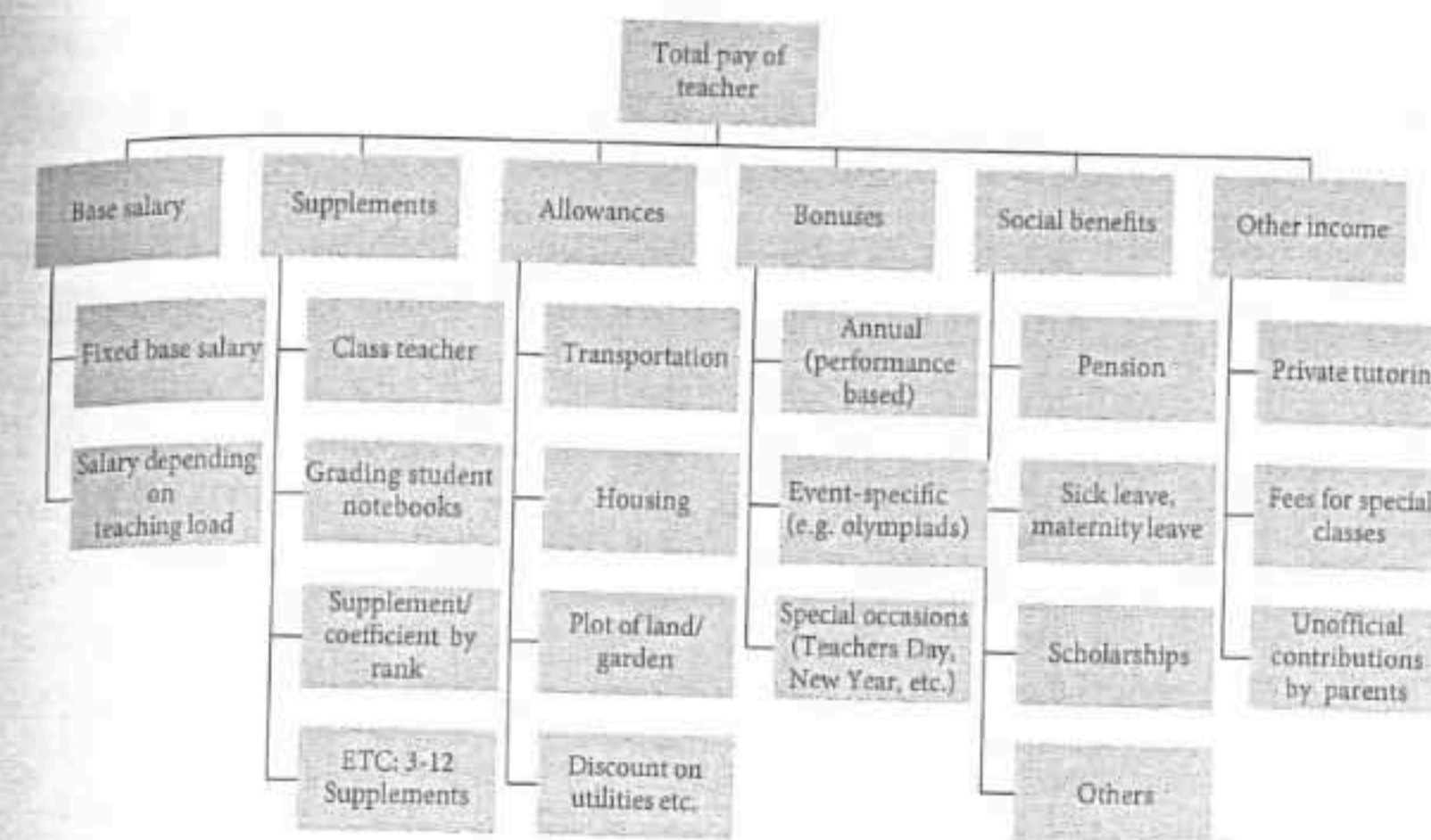


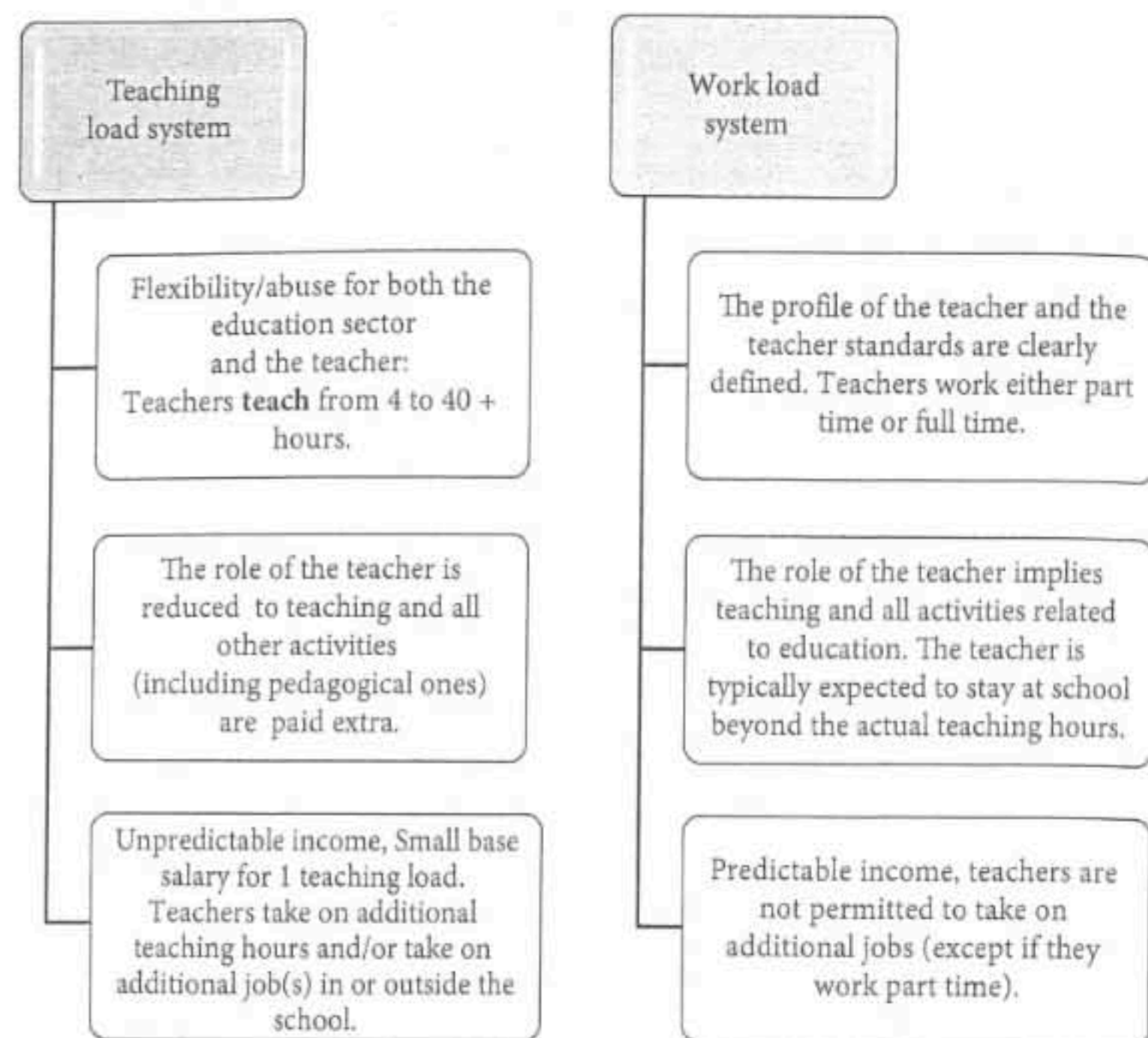
Figure 9.1 Total pay of teachers in Tajikistan

Source: UNICEF CEECIS (2011). See: [http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/UNICEF\\_teachers\\_web.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/UNICEF_teachers_web.pdf)

communist past where all workers were supposed to be paid equally and, depending on the actual work, would receive professional supplements. At that time all workers were considered public servants and received, from today's perspective, generous 'social benefits' including free housing and a plot of land.

Each approach to teachers' pay faces its own kind of challenges and calls for its own kind of solutions. The teaching load system, to which most post-socialist countries and many developing countries adhere, is flexible and allows teachers to work part-time at a school and part-time as a farmer or a merchant. Put positively, the teaching load system allows schools in rural areas to recruit qualified teachers part-time who would, otherwise due to better compensation, work outside the profession. The teaching load system also makes it possible to recruit teachers who only wish to work part-time because of family or household commitments or responsibilities for a second job. Put negatively, the teaching load system enables governments in developing countries to pay low salaries, enlist teachers for part-time positions, rely on teachers making money off additional teaching hours and seeking additional income from jobs outside school, collecting (official and unofficial) fees paid by parents and engaging in private tutoring. Such work conditions generate periodic or seasonal teacher absenteeism (especially during harvesting) and put great pressure on teachers to secure income from multiple sources. Figure 9.2 summarizes key features of the two different salary structures.





**Figure 9.2** The divide between salary systems

Source: UNICEF CEECIS (2011: 77). See: [http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/UNICEF\\_teachers\\_web.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/UNICEF_teachers_web.pdf)

It can be seen that in the Teaching Hours System (18–24 hours of teaching per week), carried over from the Soviet past, all additional activity is compensated separately; the workload system (35–40 hours of work per week including all activities at school) is currently in place in countries of the global North and West. Twenty years after the move to a demand/supply driven market-economy, several post-Soviet countries dropped the previous system and adopted the weekly workload system.

## Teacher education: Pedagogical degree versus generalist degree

An international comparative perspective brings to light fundamentally different curricula of pre-service teacher education: at one end of the

spectrum are educational systems that place great weight on pedagogical knowledge and at the other end systems that conceive teacher education as a generalist degree. It is also important to differentiate *within* a system: the curriculum of secondary pre-service teacher education tends to be more subject-specific and less pedagogical than the one that prepares students to teach at primary level. Unsurprisingly, recruitment into teaching is particularly difficult for secondary school because the curriculum is subject-specific and the teacher education students identify more with the subject-specific knowledge (e.g. Maths) than with the methodological-didactical elements of their studies (e.g. Maths education). Recruitment into teaching at primary level faces challenges of a different kind: so many primary school teachers are needed that colleges in developing countries tend to attract school graduates with low academic achievement who enrol because they lack more attractive study alternatives.

In many countries, regardless of whether they are low-income or high-income, more than half of the graduates from pre-service teacher education never enter the teaching profession. Furthermore, those who assume a teaching position are at risk of leaving the profession within the first few years. This also applies to OECD countries where the teacher salaries tend to be attractive. In the Canton of Berne in Switzerland, for example, 80 per cent of those who quit the profession do so in the first ten years of their service (Herzog et al. 2007). What is a cause for concern in Switzerland is not only the great attrition rate but also the negative selection of those teachers that stay: the motivation for those who remain in the profession is not so much related to pedagogical aspects of the work but rather the flexible work schedule. The option to work part-time appears to be especially attractive for women: 68 per cent of all female teachers in Switzerland work part-time as compared to 34 per cent of the male teachers. The teaching profession in many countries has become increasingly 'feminized' for all the wrong reasons such as, for example, flexibility of the work schedule or low pay.

The low transition rate of graduates from pre-service teacher education entering the teaching profession is specially pronounced in education systems where teacher education studies are considered a generalist degree. In these countries, recruitment into teaching is low. Figure 9.3 shows recruitment into teaching deals with the key stages of professionalization and covers a cycle from the moment school graduates apply to pre-service





**Figure 9.3** Key Stages of recruitment into teaching

Source: UNICEF CEECIS (2011). See: [http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/UNICEF\\_teachers\\_web.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/UNICEF_teachers_web.pdf)

teacher education through acceptance of a teaching position and the decision to stay in the profession.

Several research questions arise when the full cycle is examined:

- Who applies to pre-service teacher education, who chooses to accept a position as a teacher, and who stays in the profession?
- How difficult/easy is it to be admitted to pre-service teacher education as compared to other degree programmes in higher education?
- How selective is admission into pre-service teacher education?
- How many admitted teacher education students have 'survived' by the end of their studies?
- Of those who complete their degree, how many accept a teaching position and, of these, how many indeed show up at the assigned school?
- 2–5 years later: how many of the newly qualified teachers are still working in the profession?

From an international comparative perspective that is interested in understanding the logic of an educational system, it is important to note that the five indicators constitute a cycle (Figure 9.3). In this case it is a vicious cycle: governments tend to lower the admission criteria if the retention of qualified teachers at the workplace is low and if there is a great demand for teachers. This, in turn, negatively affects the public image of the teaching profession and contributes to the unpopularity of the profession.

## Measurement and indicators 8

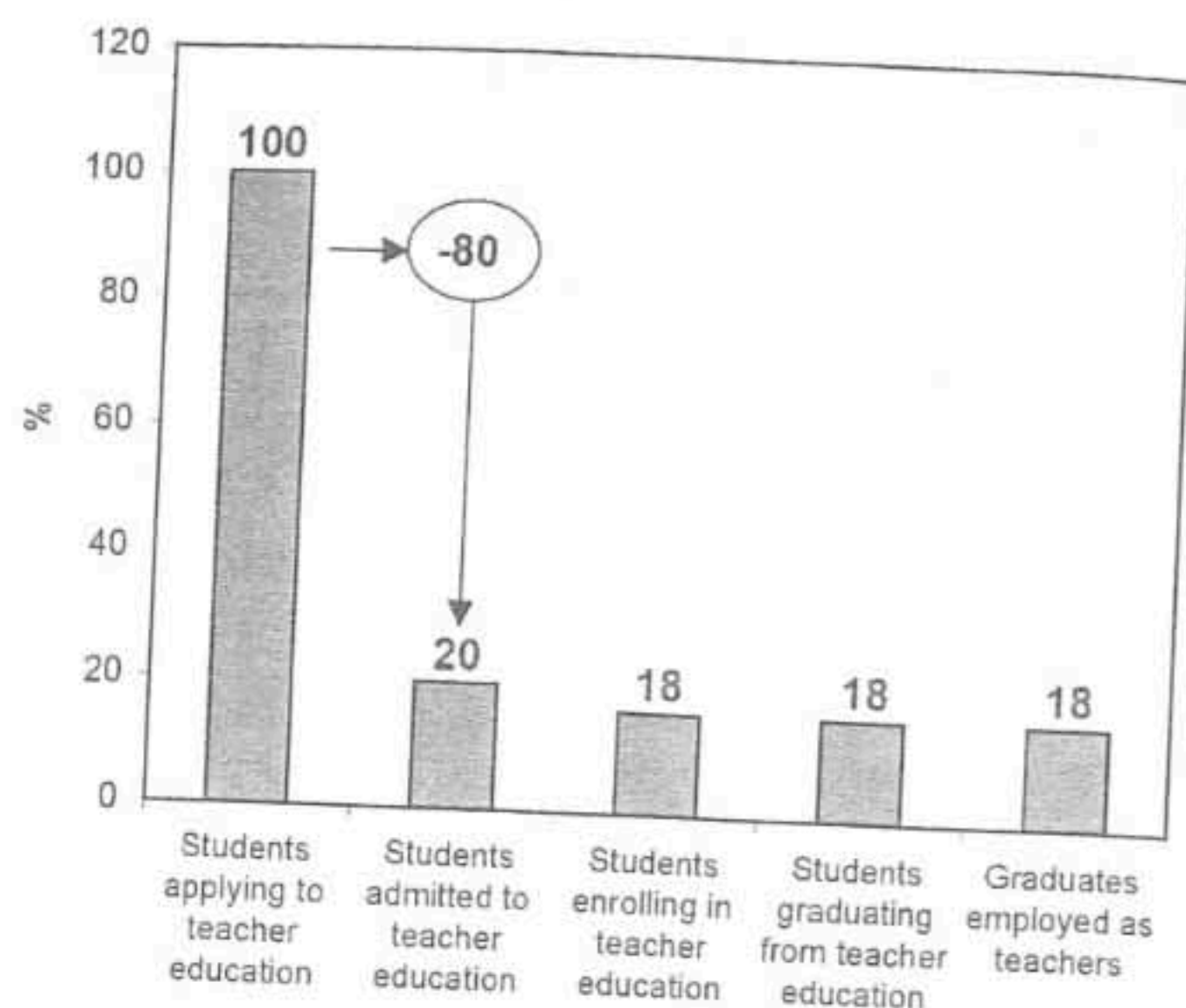
### Five Measures of Teacher Recruitment

In teacher education research, recruitment into teaching is a key variable used to investigate the effectiveness of teacher education and to shape effective teacher development strategies. Five measures are certain:

1. *Admission rate*: Number of applicants admitted to a teacher training diploma or degree programme.
2. *Enrolment rate*: Number of admitted applicants that actually enrol in a pre-service teacher training diploma or degree programme.
3. *Completion rate*: Number of teacher training students completing their three – or four-year training programme.
4. *Transition rate*: Number of graduates accepting a teaching position upon graduation from teacher training.
5. *Retention rate of newly qualified teachers (NQT)*: Number of NQTs that remain in teaching posts two years (or five years) after graduation.

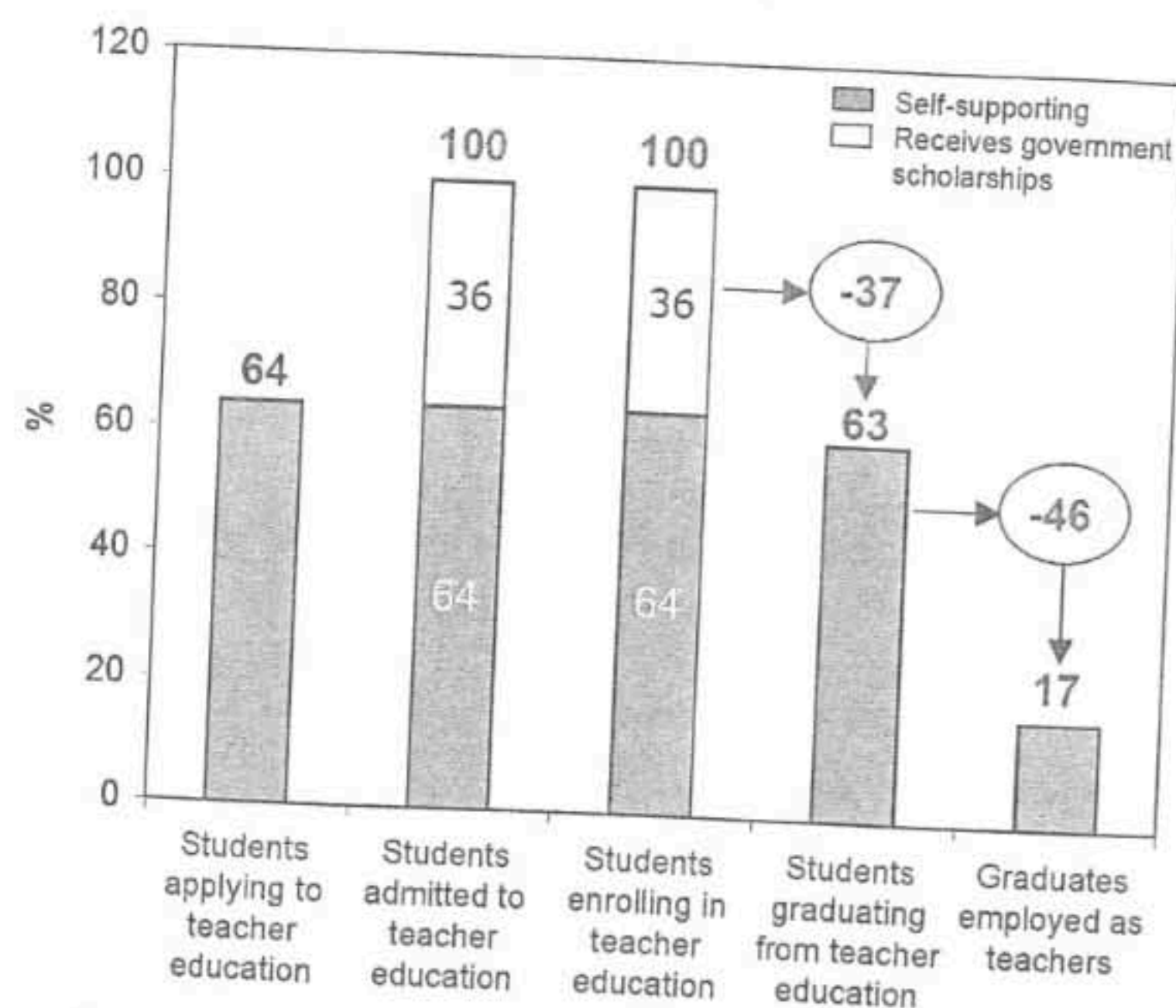
Although recruitment into teaching has been researched academically for many years, it has only in recent years drawn the attention of government officials and the general public. The two high-performing educational systems of Finland and Singapore are closely associated with effective recruitment into teaching: the admission criteria for teacher education are rigorous, the survival rate of those who actually graduate from teacher education is high and most graduates go on to become teachers. The educational systems of Singapore and Finland (league leaders in IEA and OECD studies) have received so many accolades for their teacher education systems that policymakers from other countries project features into these two systems that at times are only loosely related to reality. Naturally, not all nations have as rigorous a selection scheme for teacher education applicants as Singapore and Finland. Even fewer countries succeed in convincing their teacher education graduates to work as teachers. Figures 9.4 and 9.5 draw on the indicators (all except transition rate), presented above, and illustrate recruitment into teaching in Singapore and Kyrgyzstan.





**Figure 9.4** Effective recruitment into teaching (Singapore)

Source: McKinsey (2007).



**Figure 9.5** Ineffective recruitment into teaching (Kyrgyzstan)

Source: Steiner-Khamisi, Kumenova, Taliev (2008)

Singapore was ranked at the top in science and Maths in TIMSS 2003, and the Kyrgyz Republic scored at the bottom in PISA 2006 (ranked 57 out of 57 countries) and PISA 2009 (ranked 65 out of 65 countries). As Figure 9.3 illustrates, teacher education institutions are extremely selective in Singapore, and universities only accept 20 per cent of those that apply. Almost all those who enrol complete their course of study and then, upon graduation, start working as teachers.

The situation is entirely different in the Kyrgyz Republic. Figure 9.4 illustrates the high attrition rate during teacher education, pointing to a huge waste of resources. In an attempt to combat teacher shortage, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic treats the teaching profession as a priority and allocates a disproportionately large number of scholarships to university students in pedagogical specializations: 36 per cent of all teacher education students who are admitted receive government scholarships (that is, are 'budget' students). During the five-year teacher education diploma programme, 37 per cent of those enrolled either abandon their studies or switch to another programme over the course of their studies. Only 63 per cent of those who start teacher training actually obtain a higher education diploma with a teaching specialization. Of those that complete their studies with a teacher education specialization, very few (17 per cent) end up working as teachers.

It goes without saying that the contexts vary considerably. Teaching is an attractive profession in Singapore and, for a variety of reasons (low and fragmented teacher salaries, difficult working environment), an unattractive one in the Kyrgyz Republic. Teacher education institutions in Singapore closely collaborate with the Ministry of Education and admitted students already have a workplace guaranteed upon graduation. The curriculum is geared towards teaching and is therefore pedagogical in orientation. They can afford to be highly selective, whereas the same institutions in Kyrgyzstan only remain in operation because they use two negative selection criteria. First, they absorb students who were turned away in other degree programmes because they achieved low scores in university entrance examinations. Second, they attract those who depend on government scholarships. The pre-service teacher education curriculum is a generalist degree and focuses on general knowledge and subject-specific knowledge rather than pedagogical skills and competencies. Colleges and universities either do not require teaching practice, readily exempt students from completing a teaching practicum, reduce it to a few short visits in the



affiliated lab school, or have organized the practicum experience (up to ten teacher education students per class) so poorly that there is little to gain in terms of teaching competencies. Given the low transition rate of graduates, the focus of externally funded initiatives tends to be on in-service rather than pre-service teacher education. Understandably, international donors and NGOs prefer to strengthen in-service programmes for practicing teachers rather than investing in a generalist pre-service teacher education degree.

There exist of course a great number of educational systems that range between the two extremes: a pedagogical degree (Singapore) versus a generalist degree (Kyrgyzstan). In Pakistan, for example, the majority of teachers first complete a generalist undergraduate degree (2 year B.A. or B.Sc.) and only afterwards, if they do not secure a job, enrol in a professional teacher education degree (B.Ed.) to work as teachers (USAID 2013). This practice of 'life-long learning of teachers' or life-long accumulation of higher education degrees is manifested in the salary scheme, referred to as 'service rule regulation' in Pakistan. With every new degree, teachers are promoted to the next salary level.

In many countries, state-run teacher education has ceased to be the dominant form of professional development for teachers. At one end of the spectrum are standardized sophisticated teacher certification programmes (e.g. International Baccalaureate) and at the other end, a boom in modularized short certificate programmes (e.g. Teach for Chile, Teach for India and Teach for the Philippines).

Every educational system is a bounded system with a specific set of cause-effect relationships, its own logic and regulatory mechanisms that ensure the system logic is perpetuated. This logic may be undermined or subverted: in Pakistan, for example, the great value attached to qualification has led to an explosion of private colleges and universities that sell certificates and degrees or issue them with minimal attendance or performance requirements.

## Conclusion

By demonstrating some fundamental differences that exist between teacher policy systems, this chapter makes a case against uncritical transfer of reform packages from one context to another.

It extends an invitation to reverse the current homogenization trend and acknowledge fundamental differences rather than similarities between educational systems. I have done so in light of the busy global trade of educational reform packages that are catapulted and more and more (literally) sold from one corner of the world to another without any regard for already existing, more participatory and possibly more effective 'home grown' reform initiatives. The field of international educational development is fuelled with ignorance, misconceptions and prejudices about the capacity of 'locals' to bring their own educational systems in line with (vaguely or broadly) defined 'international standards'. Rather than understanding the logic of each educational system, international donors use standards developed in the global North as a yardstick to evaluate reforms in the global South. Examples are the export of school-based management, teacher reforms and a host of other reform packages that were blindly transferred regardless of context and despite already existing provisions in the local context (Verger et al. 2013). Not only were such imported reforms simply added on top of already existing local reform initiatives but worse they disempower local policy actors at the expense of global ones.

### Questions for discussion

1. Do differences in the types of institutions in which teachers are given initial training affect how they are viewed with regard to discussions of pedagogy and work conditions?
2. What are some of the effects of the transfer of policies regarding teachers between countries and organizations?
3. Explore some of the cultural, political and economic factors that explain differences in teacher management and salary systems.

## Further reading

- Landman, T. (2014), *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An Introduction (4th Edition)*, London and Oxford: Routledge.
- Verger, A. Kosar and de Koning, A. H. M. (2013), *Global Managerial Education Reforms and Teachers*, Brussels: Education International Research Institute.



## Notes

1. I greatly benefited from discussing the outline of this book chapter with Arushi Terway, doctoral candidate in the programme International Educational Development at Teachers College, Columbia University.
2. The World Bank actively promotes the 'Young Specialist Deposit Scheme' in former socialist countries that had ineffective, mandatory service requirements in place and therefore experienced massive teacher shortage in rural areas. The programme is expensive and therefore is seen more as an emergency measure that is not sustainable without external financial assistance.

# 10

## Family and Community Engagement with Education

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### Chapter Outline

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### Introduction

This chapter examines issues arising from family and community engagement with education policy, promoted by the World Bank and a number of other donors, particularly from the 1980s. The policy elicits strong responses, partly because of its association with a particular view of state responsibility and partly because of the way it has been effected.

In a number of low-income countries in the 1980s, high public sector debt levels resulted in Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) sponsored by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which required a reduction in the size and scope of the public sector (Burki et al. 1999, Manor 1999, Olowu 2001, Bardhan and Mookherjee 2006). The idea that families and communities should be considered as 'prospective actors' in education gained ground, propelled by trends towards decentralization