



Fourth International Policy Dialogue Forum

Teacher Challenges for EFA in India

New Delhi, India
29-30 May 2012

Final Report

I. Executive Summary

As part of India's commitment to international cooperation for Education for All (EFA), an invitation was issued by the Government of India to the Task Force on Teachers for EFA (TEFAS) to hold its fourth international policy dialogue forum in New Delhi, and to use a focus on India's successes and challenges as the springboard for an exchange on six themes: professional development; decentralization; gender; public-private partnerships; inclusion; and monitoring and evaluation.

The road map laid out for the forum in the opening addresses was one of a relatively unified diagnosis of the crucial issues, and of the need for multiple entry points to treat the problems. Committed and effective teachers are at the forefront of positive educational change. They have to be involved in designing the education of the future, as they will be predominant in shaping it.

India is faced with a number of paradoxes concerning **teacher professional development** that are present in other countries as well. It has articulated strong rights-based policies in favour of education, yet it does not have, nor is officially developing, a clearly-articulated description of quality. Shortage of qualified candidates means that qualification standards for entry to the profession are not respected and competency standards are weak or non-existent. Pedagogical reform is necessary but slow to come. Forum recommendations focus on strong policy frameworks, international collaboration to establish evidence of good practice, and improving the standards for qualification and practice of teachers.

With **decentralization**, it is important to note that not all decentralization is positive or conducive to equality. When resources and capacity building do not follow decentralization, there can be diminished quality and resistance. Finally, research, monitoring and evaluation must accompany decentralization to control for results. Recommendations stress policies that are based on needs analysis, coherent application and consultation with stakeholders.

There is a positive correlation between increased numbers of female teachers and access to primary education, especially for girls. However, some perverse effects can be noted. There appear to be links between lower salaries, lower status, and increased feminization of the teaching profession, each trend feeding the other. **Gender** policy must not be seen as exclusively meaning girls and women. If gender policies are to improve educational outcomes, they should frame a way of looking at issues of equality and equity in society in general. Recommendations include the need for gender sensitivity to be a priority at the highest levels of government, emphatically included in the vision of the right to education in an enabling and safe environment.

There was general agreement that lumping all private activity in the area of education under the label **public-private partnerships** is not helpful. Distinctions need to be made between for profit and not-for profit activities. Strong government regulation and quality control are essential for PPPs to contribute effectively to education provision and quality. Recommendations underscore the role of government and the need for

international collaboration for the development of policy frameworks and methodologies for monitoring and evaluation.

All elements of **inclusive education** are fundamental for quality education for all and for children in general. Inclusion is a process, not an event. As in other countries, in India there has been a progressive shift in thinking from special needs as a medical issue to making it into a rights issue. It is a matter of adapting the environment, the pedagogy, the curriculum, and rhythms of education in order to take into account the individual needs of all children. Recommendations include reinforcement of teacher education to prepare all teachers for inclusive education, more public reinforcement and reward for inclusive actions, and research on what works to raise awareness among teachers.

In spite of wide recognition that there is need for better information about teacher training, teacher performance, and the teacher variables that have impact on learning outcomes, much remains to be done to connect policy to practice to evaluation of learning outcomes. **Monitoring and evaluation** of innovations, including the use of ICTs for teacher training, is currently insufficient for informed national or sub-national policy reforms. Recommendations focus on improving the policy environment by more policy-oriented monitoring and evaluation and enhancing international collaboration.

II. Introduction

Teachers are the cornerstones of all education systems; the quality of the cornerstones determines the strength of the edifice. Yet, in many countries the teaching profession has low status with correspondingly inadequate pools of applicants and many poorly-motivated teachers. Tackling this negative reinforcement is the challenge of policy-makers everywhere. It is particularly acute in countries that are struggling to meet the EFA goals by 2015.

The Dakar World Education Forum in 2000 pledged to achieve six Education for All (EFA) goals by 2015¹. Teachers in sufficient numbers, with good professional skills and motivation, are central to achieving all those goals. With the encouragement of the EFA High Level Group, The Task Force on Teachers for EFA (TEFAS) was established in early 2009 as a voluntary global alliance of EFA partners. It carries out studies, provides technical assistance to countries for assessment and policy development, and has held a series of high-level policy dialogue forums. Previous forums were held in Amman, Jordan (6 – 7 July 2010) Nairobi, Kenya (19 – 20 January 2011) and Bali, Indonesia (13 - 14 September 2011).

India is the second most populous country in the world. While it ranks seventh in the world in numbers of out-of-school children² it ranks 143 in the percentage of out-of-school children, in the company of countries such as Australia, Finland and Luxembourg. Nevertheless, the government of India is keenly aware of the fact that too many children who are enrolled in school are learning little if anything. After universal access, the next

¹ Expand early childhood care and education; provide free and compulsory primary education for all; promote learning and life skills for young people and adults; increase adult literacy by 50 per cent; achieve gender parity by 2005, gender equality by 2015; improve the quality of education.

² According to the latest figures available from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics.

major challenge will be to raise quality for all. The Right to Education act (RTE) of 2009 and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All) movement are part of a national push to complete universal enrolment and also to ensure all children acquire basic skills and have a positive learning environment in school. Teacher shortage is acknowledged to be a crucial challenge to the success of these initiatives. As part of India's commitment to international cooperation for EFA, an invitation was issued by the Government to the Task Force to hold the fourth international policy dialogue forum in India, and to use a focus on India's successes and challenges as the springboard for an exchange on six themes: professional development; decentralization; gender; public-private partnerships; inclusion; and monitoring and evaluation.

This forum, with broad international participation, facilitated a rich exchange with participants from countries all over the world. Each theme was illustrated with examples from India, and an overview from an international expert.

III. Highlighted speakers and summaries

The forum was officially opened by Hon. Shri Kapil Sibal, Minister of Human Resource Development of India. His central message consisted of an ardent defense of the teaching profession. He emphasized that there are numerous education dilemmas facing a country the size of India with its 400 million children under age 14. Although India is decentralized, the central government must ensure that the needs of a diverse population are met while ensuring equality and quality. He sketched out some of the policy priorities for improving quality of teaching and learning. These include a variety of tools and incentives for changing pedagogy: learning resource banks, increased use of electronic materials for teaching and learning, and improving the pool of applicants for the teaching profession. He reminded us of the importance of a new pedagogy, of the crucial role of examinations in driving educational practice, for better or for worse, and of the increasing importance of technologies in modernizing educational management and practice.

Prof. R. Govinda Vice Chancellor, National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA), stressed in his keynote address the spectacular progress that has been made in the last twenty years in India, both in demand for education and the response to it in terms of access and gender equality. Behind that progress, he stressed, there is a "silent" exclusion, that of children who attend or complete basic schooling with no visible benefits. The challenge of quality, therefore, is the major one of the years to come. He highlighted some of the issues related to teachers that are crucial for meeting the quality challenge, notably in the Indian context. Teacher education for the elementary level is isolated from both higher education and school reality, focused on the teaching of generic knowledge and skills. This needs to be changed. In addition in-service training is not closely linked to actual classroom practice and needs, nor to professional development and career growth of teachers. This means that teachers are weakly motivated for such courses. Teacher performance assessment is not based on any standard instruments, and the development of these instruments is an urgent need.

Other opening speakers spoke about these themes, as well as about the significance of reinforced partnerships—both national and international—and the need for an array of opportunities for aspiring and practicing teachers to learn and perfect their skills.

The road map laid out for the forum in the opening addresses was one of a relatively unified diagnosis of the crucial issues, and provided multiple entry points to treat the problems. Committed and effective teachers are at the forefront of positive education change. They have to be involved in designing the education of the future, as they will be predominant in shaping it.

IV. Session highlights

Each of the six themes was the subject of both a plenary session and a working group. The following synthesis brings together analysis, diagnosis and recommendations emerging from each. The full text of the recommendations of the working groups are available as separate documents on the TEFAS website, and are summarized here to highlight those that are particularly pertinent for TEFAS and its partners.

Theme 1. Professional development of teachers

India is faced with a number of paradoxes concerning teacher professional development, as described by the presentations of Janaki Rajan, and Poonam Batra. It has articulated strong rights-based policies in favour of education, yet it does not have, nor is officially developing, a clearly-articulated description of quality. The objective of the government is to increase teacher qualification and competency. Yet, professional development of teachers is in the initial stages carried out almost entirely by private institutions that do not fall under government control. Although there are formal requirements for numbers of years of education for teachers at each level, shortage of qualified candidates means these are not respected. The government does not have competency standards for teachers, and because of shortages an estimated one million teachers have been hired without adequate qualifications. There is no clear plan for rectifying this situation. Lastly, while both officials and practitioners are emphatic about the need for more interactive, pupil-centred pedagogies, there is very little system-wide policy or practice to move in that direction. Several of the introductory statements and presentations of the first session had already flagged these paradoxes, and speakers hoped that teacher education would soon move high on the agenda for education reform.

Several participants pointed to efforts to revitalize the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) to enable them to serve as individual hubs for nearby teacher training institutes as well as providing institutional links and synergies with universities.

Dr Abdurrahman Umar (Commonwealth of Learning), in an overview of world-wide trends and of CoL's own work, stressed the need to tackle shortage and under qualification of teachers on several fronts, making training available through multiple channels and at various career stages. Inequalities within countries need to be addressed. Quality training materials for candidate teachers are in short supply. Open and distance learning (ODL) has proven potential and is cost-effective, yet is still mainly confined to upgrading rather than initial training.

Recommendations:

1. Each country should establish a national policy framework for the teaching profession. In India such a policy should include an increased government role in teacher education through strong accreditation mechanisms, linkages of teacher education with higher education and measures (upstream and in-career) to enlarge and enhance the pool of applicants for the profession.
2. Countries and international organizations should collaborate to develop and maintain evaluation and reporting capacity on deployment, innovations, good practice and quality improvements.
3. All countries with significant numbers of underqualified teachers should raise training requirements for qualification, make practical internships mandatory, and increase availability of blended qualifications (based on a combination of in-service and distance learning).

Theme 2. Decentralization: challenges and opportunities

Worldwide, decentralization has become an important issue and policy tool. Bringing decision-making closer to the people whom the decisions affect is generally seen to be a necessary arm of democracy. Where teachers are concerned, decentralization can relate decisions about professional careers and working conditions to local conditions, making them pertinent for teachers and for learners. However, decentralization has to be carried out with clearly-formulated objectives, and means must be matched to these objectives for it to produce positive change.

Several themes emerged from the presentations on decentralization. Participants insisted that there needs to be reflection about the optimum level at which decisions should be made: not all decentralization is positive or conducive to equality. There is often resistance to accepting responsibility for decentralized implementation of decisions when not all resources previously associated with programmatic actions are also decentralized. In addition, decentralizing actions that have been managed at a more centralized level may happen in an environment where experience and capacity are lacking, therefore reducing quality and causing confusion and resistance. Capacity building or partnering to develop capacity during a transition period is a very important part of any decentralization process. Finally, research, monitoring and evaluation must accompany institutional change, including decentralization. This provides the baseline for corrective measures and assessing level of success or additional needs.

Seshu Kumari gave an overview of some of the challenges facing teacher training, and 2009 legislation decentralizing responsibilities for teacher training and recruitment. Distribution of teacher training institutions in India is uneven, notably for minorities and in tribal areas. Infrastructure is often poor, and the administrative chain of command can be confusing and overlapping. With decentralized responsibility, meeting standards can be problematic: large numbers of private colleges operate at low academic levels and controls are weak. Ora Kwo examined a more localized issue around decentralization, that of teacher and institutional autonomy. Ultimately, teacher autonomy should result in empowerment and higher levels of engagement by teachers. Excellent examples exist of success, for example the recipients of the UNESCO-Hamdan Prize for Outstanding Performance in Enhancing Teacher Effectiveness. Nevertheless, weakened controls can

result in imbalances, less attention to the most vulnerable, and persistence of unsatisfactory performance in classrooms. More and better in-service teacher education can contribute to better performance, as can linking teachers and teachers in training through local mentoring processes.

Decentralization is of a different nature according to the nature of the activity, whether training, education materials, or plant. More research is needed on methodologies and what works. Finally, consulting local actors, including teachers, is very important.

Recommendations:

1. Countries should take care that decentralization involves both responsibility and the corresponding resources, otherwise local authorities and institutions will be reluctant to implement.
2. Education decentralization policies in countries should, whenever possible, be conceived and implemented by corresponding decentralization of services related to families and children, e.g. health, family, child and employment services.
3. Each country has to allow for locally specific applications, reflecting diverse backgrounds and needs.
4. Decentralization should not be used as an indirect way to privatize basic education services.
5. Consultation with all stakeholders is essential for avoiding resistances and management problems.

Theme 3. Gender issues in the teaching force

As governments, including the government of India, adopt rights-based approaches to education, there is noteworthy progress in access of girls to education, although much remains to be done. Female teachers are now in the majority at basic education level in all regions except South and West Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. There are, however, significant variations between countries in all regions and within countries, notably India. Percentages of female teachers are consistently highest in urban areas and in private schools. However, female teachers are everywhere in the minority in science and maths subjects. Women are rarely seen in high-level management positions, or even as school heads in many areas.

Although gender statistics are currently the main measure of feminization, numbers tell only part of the story. Qualitative issues are very important, in helping understand both the positive and the perverse effects of feminization. Both Fatimah Kelleher and Vimala Ramachandran insisted on these qualitative issues.

There is a positive correlation between increased numbers of female teachers and access to primary education, especially for girls. However, some perverse effects can be noted. There appear to be links between lower salaries, lower status, and increased feminization of the teaching profession, each trend feeding the other. Increased numbers of women in the teaching profession do not necessarily lead to improved gender attitudes among teachers and students and in teaching and learning. In addition, boys are falling behind in education outcomes in some countries and regions, and we do not know enough

about the reasons. Dipta Bhog reminded participants that gender must not be seen as exclusively meaning girls and women, but as a way of looking at issues of equality and equity in society in general.

Increasing female teacher recruitment needs to take place in a policy environment that does not view women teachers as a low-wage solution to the numbers dilemma, and that uses the opportunities presented by large numbers of women teachers to enhance positive gender attitudes. This includes addressing the increasing reluctance of men to teach in primary schools, as well as encouragement for girls and women to teach science and mathematics.

Recommendations:

1. Gender sensitivity starts at the top: to be effective, national policies should be formulated and owned at the highest levels.
2. Gender issues must be embedded in all aspects of teacher training and then teaching and learning, through pertinent initial training and then in-service training.
3. Governments should promote gender sensitivity across the board as a key feature of the right to education, and of safe and positive school environments.
4. TEFAS should put greater emphasis on advocacy for broad-based gender policies.

Theme 4. Public-private partnerships: innovative approaches to address the teacher gap

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have both significant potential and significant possible difficulties. Hriday Kant Diwan gave an overview, based on the Indian model, of the role and potential of non-governmental institutions (NGOs). In many countries, India included, NGOs play a crucial role in filling education gaps in terms of teachers, institutions, materials, and building of capacity. Some deliver services to learners and some are training, academic or research institutions. Still others function as private providers of service directly to governments. In a country like India, private not-for-profit and for-profit institutions are the principal providers of teacher training. They have potential for innovation and tailored responses to specific problems. While basic education is fundamentally the responsibility of the public authorities, various kinds of new partnerships have demonstrated that they can provide innovative ideas and services, some new resources, and complementarity with the public sector in reaching particular populations. However, government regulation and quality control is essential for this model to work properly. Caution must be exercised concerning sometimes over-enthusiastic hopes for the contribution of the corporate sector to public education: the public sector will always have final responsibility for ensuring equity and equal access. Furthermore, the net monetary contribution of the corporate sector is modest in all circumstances.

Dilip Ranjekar and Alexandra Draxler both presented overviews on the role and place of public private partnership, with many pros and cons. Several messages came through, including the need for strong government and clear government policy objectives in

establishing PPPs, the need to regulate PPPs, and the need to distinguish between not-for-profit and for-profit partners.

The ensuing discussion elaborated on these notions with an emphasis on the driving role of governments and the essential place of careful negotiations with private entities. There was general agreement that lumping all private activity in the area of education under the label PPP is not helpful, and distinctions need to be made between for profit and not-for profit activities. In India, for example, there are many NGOs doing valuable work to provide education and education-related services at lower cost than what the government can provide for the same. These institutions need stable support, including capacity-building. However, PPPs and privatization are not panaceas: they cannot replace governments in the establishment of policy and in regulation. One of the biggest issues in India is the need for more productive monitoring of private teacher education colleges. Another issue is how to mobilize adequate government support for institutions that are complementing government action.

Recommendations:

1. PPPs can contribute to EFA only when national or local governments have clear policies and determined implementation.
2. Governments are responsible for regulating and monitoring the pertinence, quality and cost-effectiveness of PPPs. They should establish and make public both criteria and implementation guidelines.
3. PPPs should be established in consultation with people who are ultimately affected by them.
4. International organizations should contribute to clearer policy frameworks and methodologies for monitoring and evaluation of results.

Theme 5. Inclusive education: Teachers for children with special needs

The presentations provided an eloquent panorama describing needs and examples of inclusive education. Each panellist emphasized that all elements of inclusive education are fundamental for quality education for all children in general. Inclusion is a process, not an event. As in other countries, in India there has been a progressive shift in thinking from special needs as a medical issue to making it into a rights issue. It is a matter of adapting the environment, the pedagogy, the curriculum, and rhythms of education in order to take into account the individual needs of all children.

Although there has been progress on some fronts, the vast majority of disabled³ live in locations where services are scarce in any case, and where there are no services or support tailored for their needs.

The Indian government has policies in place for inclusive education, that follow on naturally from its rights-based education policies. Mithu Alur has been working with special needs children and adults (notably those with cerebral palsy) since 1972. Special services are available in 18 out of 31 Indian states today for people with cerebral palsy. There are now training courses for teacher and therapists, facilities for early childhood education and support for parents and personnel.

³ This is the term predominantly employed in India.

Advocates and practitioners have succeeded in mobilizing significant public opinion for an education that does not define people with disabilities or special needs through the lens of a medical issue but as an issue of social inclusiveness. The panel stressed that when education is inclusive, all participants benefit, not only other individuals or groups that suffer discrimination such as girls or minorities, but also teachers. Teacher training is moving from the preparation of teachers specially to teach those with special needs to the preparation of all teachers for taking into account special needs, at least in principle.

Researchers and practitioners have developed principles and templates for inclusive education. Anita Jhulka presented some of these, that are designed with the whole community in mind, from the classroom to the family to the larger community. These take into account the entire environment, the individual needs of learners, and all available resources.

Recommendations:

1. Teacher education, including those for special educators, should be unified under education ministries, and all teacher education (both pre- and in-service) should prepare for inclusive education.
2. Synergies between Government organizations and non- governmental organizations (civil society working in the field of education & teacher education) should be developed both at the central and grass root levels, including government financing of successful organizations.
3. National campaigns, including awards and incentives for excellent practice, have shown good results and should be encouraged at national and international levels.
4. More research is needed, nationally and internationally on how to enhance teacher awareness and excellent practice for inclusiveness.

Theme 6. Monitoring and Evaluation of Teacher Policy Reforms

India has, over some twenty years, developed a series of policies on most subjects related to EFA. It has good quality statistics on many aspects of education. It is implementing the creation of District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) that are the focal points and implementers of policy and of teacher training. The UNESCO Institute of Statistics, in addition to a regularly updated survey on teacher gaps, is now developing, notably in Asia, sets of data concerning teachers, including some related to classroom performance.

However, in spite of wide recognition that there is need for better information about teacher training, teacher performance, and the teacher variables that have impact on learning outcomes, much remains to be done to connect policy to practice, on one hand, and monitoring to evaluation of learning outcomes, on the other.

A.K. Sharma presented an overview of the contemporary policy environment in India, and the implications for teacher education of the Right to Education Act of 2009. There are a series of challenges. Pre-service teacher education is overwhelmingly private, and isolated from higher education institutions. In-service teacher education is spotty and does not make the best use of technologies. DIETs need to be subject to more systematic evaluation to ensure they conform to standards and play their roles. Teacher performance

evaluation is weak. Professional organizations do not play a strong enough role in supporting performance. According to Rama Mathew, the challenge for policy makers is to ensure that monitoring and evaluation reaches the ultimate objective of improved learning. This means putting into place systems of professional development that encourage individual growth, career paths, and good classroom performance. Pranati Pandi gave a historical overview of policies. He then presented an overview of the profiles of practicing teacher today by gender, background, training and professional profiles. Policy changes are needed in recruitment and training, preparation and continuing education, performance indicators and standards, and career development. One key element of developing a high-quality corps of teachers has to do with their professional and social status: when the profession has high status, as for example in Finland and Singapore, recruitment and training are facilitated.

In spite of both policy commitments and advocacy for the use of open and distance learning for teacher pre-service and in-service training, evidence is lacking for what works. Similarly, evidence is lacking concerning the impact of short training courses on classroom practice and on their outcomes.

From both the presentation and the discussion it emerged that for effective monitoring and evaluation, it is essential to understand clearly what elements of teacher performance affect learning and how to evaluate them. In consequence, better research and better dissemination of research is needed.

Recommendations:

1. Countries should carry out and use dedicated evidence-based research to inform teacher policy reforms. Design of relevant instruments is essential to ensure that contextually-appropriate and action-oriented research can be carried out.
2. Countries should develop comprehensive frameworks for monitoring and evaluation of teacher policy reforms, including measurable performance indicators.
3. International organizations should develop tools that can help countries evaluate teacher policies.

V. Conclusions

The Head of the Task Force, Edem Adubra, and co-chair Steve Passingham both noted, in differing ways, the critical challenge of developing a better evidence-base for policies that can directly impact learning outcomes. With the perspective of a shrinking resource base for education, marshalling evidence and communicating effectively to decision-makers is essential. The presentations and working group reports indeed focused on action-oriented recommendations, and provided a model for future meetings. The recommendations, in particular, should be widely disseminated and their implementation monitored, they stressed.

Anshu Vaish gave a concluding address in which she reminded the audience of the central purposes of education: the acquisition of ideas, attitudes and capabilities. The role of teachers is to nurture this acquisition in safe and enabling environments.

In India, as in many other emerging countries, there are many children from very diverse backgrounds who are making up the first generation of school-goers. These children need to feel valued and encouraged by their teachers, who in turn have to be both able and committed to these tasks.

The conference wrapped up with many participants expressing appreciation for the format: specific country examples used as a lens for discussing a wide range of issues. In addition to the themes covered by the programme, it was noted that some common concerns might be addressed in future such forums: corruption, the role and place of unions, and new pedagogies. The role of such gatherings and of international cooperation in general is a powerful stimulus for adding to the knowledge base and stimulating innovation.

VI. Sources and further reading

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VII. Acronyms

CoL	Commonwealth of Learning
DIET	District Institute of Education and Training
EFA	Education for All
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ODL	Open and distance learning
OER	Open education resources
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (The Education for All Movement in India)
TEFAS	Task Force on Teachers for EFA
TESSA	Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa
TT	Teacher training
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organisation

(A. Draxler, consultant, 02/09/2012)