

**SEND my
FRIEND
TO SCHOOL**

**ALL MY
FRIENDS
NEED
TEACHERS**



All My Friends Need Teachers



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Executive Summary

Education is every child's right. It has the power to protect and transform lives and it is the foundation for sustainable development.

In 2021, building on earlier manifesto commitments to help realise every girl's right to education, the UK Government hosted the replenishment of the Global Partnership for Education and made education a central component of its G7 presidency. Notably, it introduced two ambitious global targets for improving access and learning in low- and lower-middle income countries. The targets are: to get 40 million more girls into education, and to increase the number of girls' reading by a third, by 2026.

To realise these global targets, the UK Government sought endorsement of its 'Declaration on Girls' Education' – a progressive call to tackle the greatest barriers to girls accessing a quality and inclusive education. The targets and Declaration were endorsed by all leaders during the 2021 G7 summit in Cornwall.

Achieving these targets, as with SDG 4, must mean prioritising and supporting those who are at the chalkface, day after day: the world's teachers. Investing in qualified, well-trained, and well-resourced teachers is one of the greatest investments we can make in children's futures. However, children in low- and lower-middle-income countries are too often taught by under-trained and inadequately supported teachers. Moreover, too many children experience class sizes well above agreed benchmarks due to chronic teacher shortages.

This report is a response to the UK Government's welcome commitment to "take a fresh look at how to train, recruit and motivate teachers, and support

teaching strategies and policies proven to work well for all poor and marginalised children, but particularly for girls".¹ This commitment is timely: children and their teachers are experiencing unprecedented pressures. Even before COVID-19 hit, education was in crisis and now the pandemic has combined with other barriers to learning, such as conflict and climate change, to create a triple threat to children's education.

This report sets out the centrality of teachers to the UK Government delivering on its global education agenda with particular consideration for inclusive education and education in crisis contexts. The G7 Girls' Education Declaration targets, the ambitions of the UK's Girls' Education Action Plan more widely, and SDG 4, are simply unachievable without a step-change in the recruitment, retention and training of teachers. The UK Government must support the national governments of low- and lower-middle income countries in advancing system-specific solutions that ensure that all children, including the most marginalised, are able to access qualified, well-trained, well-supported teaching professionals and a quality, inclusive education.

If the UK Government, alongside G7 counterparts and the wider international community, is to get 40 million more girls into school by 2026, then it must support the national governments of targeted countries to recruit and train 1.8 million new teachers. To buttress the UK Government's global education ambitions, this report calls for a new Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office strategy on global teacher policy; in the words of Send My Friend to School's campaign champions, "all my friends need teachers".

RECOMMENDATIONS

To support all children to access a trained teacher, realise its G7 global targets, and catalyse progress toward SDG 4, the UK government should:

CHAMPION INVESTMENT IN, AND SUPPORT FOR, TEACHERS BY:

- Mobilising the G7 and wider international community to back national governments in the recruitment and training of 1.8 million new teachers by 2026, as a minimum, to progress the global education targets endorsed by the G7.
- Developing a new, clear strategy on global teacher policy that reflects the recommendations set out in this report.
- Driving global commitments to prioritise resources that address the chronic under-provision of qualified, well-trained, and well-resourced teachers in low- and lower-middle income countries, paying attention to diversity of the workforce, including women and people with disabilities.
- Recognising teacher trade unions as global partners in the recruitment and retention of teachers, policymaking and in enhancing the status of the teaching profession.
- Working with Education International and its affiliates globally to promote high-quality initial teacher education, continuous professional development and the status of teachers.

DEFEND EDUCATION FINANCING AND FUNDING FOR TEACHER POLICY BY:

- Providing support for low- and lower-middle income countries to meet agreed education financing benchmarks: 20% of national budgets and 4-6% of GDP towards free, inclusive, quality education. This should include supporting progressive taxation, amongst other measures, to expand the size of public purses.
- Restoring UK ODA to 0.7% of GNI and increasing education's share of the ODA budget to 15% and monitoring progress using OECD DAC disability and gender markers.
- Delivering an ambitious and increased pledge at the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) Replenishment Summit in 2023 and championing support for teachers in ECW's new strategic plan.
- Targeting the strengthening of public education systems, recognising this as the only equitable and sustainable route to strengthen the teacher workforce and realising education for all.
- Continuing to fund inclusive teaching programmes, such as the Inclusive Education Initiative's TEACH programme, to improve knowledge and evidence of best practice to support teachers in the classroom.

PLACE TEACHERS AT THE CENTRE OF INCLUSIVE, GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION BY:

- Defining specific targets for disability inclusion for the two global education targets and confirming that 10% of the 40 million girls reached in its global target will be girls with disabilities (since 10% of women worldwide have a disability).
- Redoubling efforts to recruit and retain women teachers through measures that address their specific needs and circumstances, recognising that the shortage of women teachers acts as a barrier to girls' education.
- Recognising the role that teachers can play in tackling gender inequality in and outside of the classroom by including training on gender transformative education in flagship girls' education programmes.
- Listening to teachers' expertise, experiences, and opinions, by including them in decision-making bodies and programme design and implementation, and research efforts.
- Working with teachers, young people, families and civil society to develop a toolkit on disability inclusive and gender transformative pedagogy for teachers, ensuring the removal of gender stereotypes from curricula.
- Ensuring UK-funded programmes on education incorporate teacher recruitment, retention and inclusive training, and address intersecting barriers to education for girls, including girls with disabilities.
- Building evidence on the effectiveness of teaching by improving data collection and analysis on recruitment and retention of teachers, especially teachers from minority groups, female teachers and teachers with disabilities.

1. Teachers and Global Education in Context

Delivering Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) must involve prioritising and supporting those on the frontline: the world's teachers. Investing in teachers is one of the greatest investments we can make in children's futures. Qualified, well-trained, properly resourced and decently paid teachers, who are respected as trusted professionals, are critical to securing high-quality, inclusive education. There is a growing body of evidence that teachers are the most significant determinant of the quality of children's learning experiences.²

Despite this, a lack of qualified teachers represents one of the greatest barriers to universal primary and secondary education in low- and lower-middle income countries. Teachers are in short supply and are too often poorly trained and resourced. Moreover, UNESCO estimates that 69 million new, qualified teachers must be recruited by 2030 to achieve SDG 4,³ while the current supply of educators need better resources, training, continuous professional development, pay and working conditions if they are to be able to deliver quality, inclusive education.⁴

Globally, even before the pandemic, 258 million children were out of school and hundreds of millions more in school but experiencing conditions that prevent their learning.⁵ For example, an estimated 335 million girls attend primary and secondary schools that lack basic menstrual hygiene management, and many countries lack sanitation facilities that are accessible.⁶ Children who are already the most marginalised, including girls with disabilities, refugee children and the internally displaced, have been disproportionately affected.⁷ Without urgent action, minimal headway – and possibly negative progress – is anticipated.

The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed existing inequalities in global education, revealing systemic failures in the delivery of inclusive provision and compounding challenges for teachers, students and their communities.⁸ 1.6 billion learners and 100 million educators have experienced disruptions to teaching and learning during the pandemic and the most marginalised pupils have fared the worst.⁹ For example, UNESCO estimates that up to 11 million girls will never return to school,¹⁰ while children with disabilities - who were already 2.5 times less likely to go

to school than children without a disability - have been disproportionately affected and many will now not return to school.¹¹ The scale of the impact of the pandemic has fallen disproportionately on low- and middle-income countries with the World Bank estimating that learning poverty is set to rise from 50 to 70%.¹²

Moreover, during the pandemic teachers were often left unprepared and under-resourced to provide remote learning when schools closed and unsupported in helping students make up for lost learning when schools reopened.¹³ This was particularly acute for the most marginalised children who lacked access to electricity, the internet, or accessible equipment and learning content.¹⁴

Equally, in many cases, teachers were ill equipped to protect their own health.¹⁵ The pandemic had a detrimental impact on teachers' mental and physical wellbeing, exacerbating existing concerns regarding the wellbeing of educators.¹⁶ Since teachers continued on the front line, they were more at risk than the general population to catch COVID-19 and therefore more at risk of serious illness.¹⁷ As a result, thousands of educators died during the pandemic.¹⁸ As well as a concerted effort to recruit and train more teachers and improve working conditions, governments – including donor countries – must increase the links between health and education services for teachers, including the provision of psychosocial support.

The dual shock of school closures and economic crises instigated by the pandemic have exposed and exacerbated challenges already facing teachers, while simultaneously presenting new ones.¹⁹ As teachers are those on the frontline of educational delivery, mitigating barriers to children's learning must involve accelerating and prioritising policies that support, strengthen and empower teachers. In sum, achieving SDG 4, and the UK's flagship global targets, requires urgent action to progress SDG 4.c, the target to substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, with teachers placed at the centre of all efforts by policymakers.

The Scale of the Challenge

In many low- and lower-middle income countries, teacher recruitment and retention in recent decades has not kept



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pace with growth in pre-primary, primary and secondary enrolment. A mismatch between the rise in pupil numbers and the supply of teachers by governments means that teachers in low- and lower-middle income countries regularly face class sizes that exceed UNESCO's recommended benchmarks (40:1 primary, 25:1 secondary).

Achievement of the Girls' Education Declaration targets in 2026, and SDG 4 more broadly in 2030, is simply not possible without a significant increase in the supply of qualified teachers. UNESCO estimates that in low-income countries, average pupil/trained teacher ratios (PTTR) stand at 53:1 in primary, 34:1 in secondary, and 67:1 in pre-primary.²⁰ Moreover, 76% of the 69 million teachers that UNESCO estimate must be recruited by 2030 to achieve SDG 4 are needed in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia alone.²¹

For example, in sub-Saharan Africa the scale of the challenge cannot be overstated. Despite slight improvements in the 'pupil / teacher ratio' during the last two decades, the 'pupil / trained teacher ratio' is almost double the global average.²² To adequately staff schools, it is estimated that 15 million teachers need recruiting

in the region by 2030: 8.7 million new posts to keep pace with growing enrolment and 6.3 million to counter attrition.²³ Countries such as the Central African Republic, Chad, Malawi, and Niger, which already face high levels of learning poverty, need to increase the recruitment of secondary teachers by a minimum of 15% per year.²⁴

Within countries, teacher shortages are not experienced equally by all pupils. This is because teacher shortages tend to concentrate in the most marginalised communities and rural areas, particularly impacting girls, children with disabilities, and refugees and migrants. This is particularly acute in education in emergencies and protracted crises. For example, Kenyan refugee camps such as Dadaab experience large class sizes including at pre-primary (120:1) and primary (56:1) levels.²⁵

In sum, in many low- and lower-middle income countries, class sizes are far too large, there are too few qualified teachers, and the distribution of teachers is unequal. Achieving the Girls' Education Declaration targets, the ambitions of the UK's Girls' Education Action Plan more widely, and SDG 4, requires a step-change in the recruitment, retention and training of teachers, with governments and donor countries advancing system-

specific solutions that ensure that all children, including the most marginalised, can access qualified, well-trained, well-supported teaching professionals.

Investing in the Education Workforce

The largest investment in any education system is teacher salaries. In over half of all low- and lower-middle income countries the cost of the education workforce accounts for 75% or more of the national education budget.²⁶

In countries such as Djibouti, Malawi, Namibia, Senegal, South Sudan, Togo and Zimbabwe, 95% or more of the national education budget is spent on teacher salaries.²⁷ Further, although staffing costs dominate education budgets, insufficient budgets for education overall means that teacher pay still often remains too low and/or irregular, sometimes below the poverty line, exacerbating challenges within education systems.

This problem is being compounded post-pandemic by austerity measures impacting on public service budgets. A recent report from ActionAid, Education International and Public Services International warned that the demands of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to cut public sector employee costs was undermining progress on education and other public services.²⁸ The report stated that the IMF's advice to cut government spending in the global south has wiped nearly \$10 billion from public sector wage budgets in 15 countries - the equivalent of cutting more than three million essential jobs, such as teachers, despite the growing need for such professionals during the pandemic.

In Zimbabwe, teachers' salaries (around ZWL\$28,666, or US\$335 per month) are less than the total consumption poverty line, the amount needed to buy enough food and non-food items to support a family of five each month. The report quotes a teacher from Zimbabwe who states:

"Our wages feel like slave wages, teachers are facing so many challenges. We are suffering from stress and surviving teachers feel as if they have become beggars. Morale is at its lowest."

"We have become a laughingstock in society, living from hand to mouth. We go to work in tattered clothes, and we are living in squalid conditions. I have heard of marriages breaking down. But through this all we are still reporting for duty."²⁹

Overall Investment in Education is Insufficient

Investing in the education workforce to improve recruitment, professional development, and retention requires sufficient, sustainable and consistent financing. However, the failure to allocate sufficient, equitably distributed financing to education in many low- and lower-middle income countries results in teacher shortages, overcrowded classrooms, and poor conditions for teaching and learning.

Between 2014 and 2019, 48 countries missed both education financing benchmarks of 4-6% of GDP and 15-20% of public spending that were agreed in the Incheon Declaration.³⁰ Pressingly, to achieve SDG 4, UNESCO has estimated that education spending in low- and lower-middle-income countries needs to increase from an average of 3.5% to 6.3%.³¹

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased pressures on education financing. Even before the pandemic, an annual financing gap of \$148bn needed plugging if SDG 4 were to be achieved.³² However, it is now estimated that two-thirds of low- and lower-middle income countries have cut their education budgets.³³ Economic recessions, and the prioritisation of scarce resources to the health sector and social safety nets, threaten to create downward pressure on education financing. The annual financing gap is now expected to rise between \$30-45bn.³⁴ This means that despite many positive commitments to domestic education financing, including those made at the Global Education Summit in 2021, are in jeopardy - even if they are maintained, smaller public purses overall will result in reduced funds for education.

Raising sustainable funds for public education requires increasing education's share of expenditure, increasing the size of overall budgets by improving tax-to-GDP ratios, removing harmful tax incentives, and tackling crippling debt servicing.

Strengthening the Existing Education Workforce is Critical

To improve children's learning experiences, strengthening the existing teacher workforce must be an urgent priority. However, stretched and inadequate national education budgets leave little scope for investment in continuous professional development, training on inclusive practices, teaching equipment, inclusive learning materials, and teacher wellbeing support.



Photo: © Plan International / Quinn Neally

For example, in one-third of low- and middle-income countries, teacher salary costs at the primary and secondary level exceed the amount of government spending on education at all levels, indicative of a strong dependency on ODA to finance recurrent education costs and minimal capacity to invest elsewhere.³⁵

Continuous professional development for teachers, including on inclusive practices, is integral to improving the quality and inclusivity of education. However, too often teachers do not receive this support. For example, in 2018 across 10 francophone sub-Saharan African countries, just 8% of grade 2 and 6 teachers reported receiving in-service training in inclusive education.³⁶

More education financing should be targeted toward continuous professional development, ensuring it is available to all teachers. Evidence suggests that this is most effective when subject-specific, tailored to local need, and supported by opportunities for peer-to-peer coaching and collaboration.³⁷ Further, a range of approaches should be utilised, including no-tech, low-tech, blended and online.

In contexts where there are high numbers of untrained teachers, including at both primary level (23% in Southern Asia; 38% in sub-Saharan Africa) and secondary level (55% in sub-Saharan Africa),³⁸ strong evidence exists for the effectiveness of structured,

continuous professional development on learning outcomes.³⁹ To strengthen motivation, professional development and progression, quality pre-service and in-service training must be readily available, designed around what works, context specific, and accessible to people with disabilities and other marginalised groups.

Overall, the education workforce is any education system's biggest investment. Yet too often financing is insufficient or poorly targeted, often resulting in inadequate recruitment, development, and retention of teachers and leaving many unprepared for inclusive, quality instruction. Improvements to the leveraging and targeting of domestic resources, in addition to ODA, are therefore required to better recruit, retain and train teachers, ensuring that they are adequately remunerated and qualified to deliver quality, safe, inclusive education.

Public Education as the Route to Quality, Inclusive Education for All

Some low- and lower-middle-income countries, and donor countries including the UK, have promoted a privatisation agenda, including so called 'low-fee private schools' (LFPS), with a view to decreasing costs. However, evidence of their merits is limited⁴⁰ and significant concerns including those relating to quality, inclusion, cost, teacher working conditions, and negative impacts on public education exist.



Photo: © Plan International / Quinn Neally

It is every government's responsibility to fulfil children's right to education and the Abdijan Principles underline the responsibility of the state to fulfil the right to free public quality primary and secondary education for all children.⁴¹ However, funding and operating a parallel private system has frequently been seen to undermine public education and the duty of the state as a provider of education.⁴²

LFPS have also been found to frequently use unqualified and untrained teachers, often on short term contracts and extremely low wages.⁴³ For example, salaries have been found to be one eighth to one half of government teacher salaries, sometimes below the minimum wage or even the poverty line, in LFPS across India, Kenya, Pakistan and Nigeria.⁴⁴ Moreover, teachers in private schools in Jordan, Madagascar, India, and Nepal were among those who were laid off and who went unpaid during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴⁵

In contexts where low-fee private schools do achieve comparably better learning outcomes, this often results from student selection – including students coming from wealthier families.⁴⁶ Beyond this, there is minimal evidence of LFPS delivering meaningfully better learning outcomes, while there is also a dearth of evidence to suggest that private schools are effective in reaching the most marginalised.⁴⁷

The most marginalised, including children from low-income households, children with disabilities, and those living in rural areas, can often be particularly disenfranchised by privatisation.⁴⁸ In countries such as Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Tanzania, evidence indicates that private provision is unaffordable for most low-income households.⁴⁹ Similarly, LFPS were found to heavily burden the already stretched finances of low-income families in Kenya.⁵⁰ Moreover, cost and geographical distribution of LFPS are potentially exacerbating inequality and inequity.⁵¹

Ultimately, properly resourced, public education systems are the only way of guaranteeing a quality education for all children.

Teachers' Working Conditions are Children's Learning Conditions

Too many teachers and pupils in low- and lower-middle income countries are routinely expected to teach and learn in substandard conditions. Poor quality buildings, lack of access to sanitation facilities and clean water, insufficient teaching supplies, inadequate equipment, overcrowded classrooms, high workload, stress, suppression of education unions, and low status of the teaching profession, all contribute to poor teaching and learning conditions.⁵²

In many cases, teachers and young people are learning in difficult environments that do not meet their basic needs. Hundreds of millions of girls attend primary and secondary schools that lack basic menstrual hygiene management while many schools also lack adequate sanitation facilities, and many of those that do are inaccessible.⁵³

In 29 countries, extreme temperatures have a negative effect on education attainment. In Southeast Asia, a child experiencing temperatures 2 standard deviations above average is predicted to attain 1.5 fewer years of schooling than those experiencing average temperatures.⁵⁴ This is typical of the wider threats to education as a result of a changing climate: nearly 40 million children and their teacher experience disrupted education due to extreme weather events.⁵⁵ Further, the safety of teachers and their pupils is too often compromised by infrastructure that is not climate resilient.⁵⁶

Insufficient, irregular and unpredictable pay is a particular challenge and often considered a primary cause of teaching being considered an unattractive profession. Evidence suggests that teacher wages in many low- and lower-middle income countries, including most in sub-Saharan Africa, are often poor and even below the poverty line or cost of living.⁵⁷ This is hugely damaging for recruitment, retention, motivation and the overall attractiveness of the profession.

Teachers receiving low pay and experiencing poor working conditions has been linked to increased stress and ill-health, increases in absenteeism, negative impacts on education quality, and teacher attrition.⁵⁸ Poor working conditions during times of crisis also exacerbate stress, precariousness and frequently result in teachers needing to seek alternative employment, further undermining continuity of learning.⁵⁹ For example, multiple crises in Lebanon - including a devastating

economic crisis - have caused severe disruptions to education.⁶⁰ Scarce public finances to pay teachers' salaries has further undermined access education, while the currency losing 90% of its value has made public teachers' salaries worth between 1 and 2 USD per hour.⁶¹

Poor teaching and learning conditions are particularly acute in displacement and refugee contexts where pupil needs are complex, teacher shortages high, financing severely low, teacher compensation challenging due to inefficient infrastructure, and pupil / teacher well-being compromised.⁶² In 2020, there were 102 signatories of the Safe Schools Declaration, yet attacks on education institutions continue to kill, injure, and traumatise children and their teachers, exacerbating student dropouts, teacher shortages, and school closures. Similarly, victimisation, harassment, lack of respect, and violations of trade union and human rights, including the right to join and be active in a trade union, are commonplace in some parts of the world.⁶³ In Colombia alone, 35 teachers have been killed since the start of 2018 and many others have been threatened or forced from their homes and workplaces.⁶⁴ Attacks on education premises and personnel are frequently cited as issues causing teachers to leave the profession.

Ultimately, when teachers work in poor and unsafe conditions, children learn in poor and unsafe conditions. This disproportionately impacts the most marginalised groups including girls, children with disabilities, rural communities, and refugee and displaced communities. The challenges facing teacher policy - including recruitment, retention, training and professional development - are multi-dimensional, but policies which address the conditions in which teachers and pupils work and learn, including safety, pay, professional autonomy, supplies, school infrastructure, wellbeing, and trade union recognition are integral to making teaching an attractive profession.

CASE STUDY

Uganda: building a stronger teaching force

Teachers form the backbone of the education system, and skilled teachers can unleash the potential of their students, leading to better learning and opportunities for children.

In Uganda, many teachers lacked adequate content knowledge and/or pedagogical skills, particularly those teaching the early grades. In 2013, a survey conducted by the World Bank found that 4 out of 5 primary school teachers in Uganda did not have the minimum knowledge in English, maths and pedagogy. Additionally, teacher absenteeism was high with teaching time loss estimated to be in the range of 30 to 40%. Without a qualified and motivated teaching force, children in Uganda faced the risk of being deprived of a quality education.

To overcome these challenges, GPE allocated a US\$100 million grant to the government of Uganda to build a stronger teaching force and ultimately improve learning outcomes. The GPE-supported program, which ran between 2014 and 2020, aimed to improve teacher effectiveness in the public primary education system. The three-pronged intervention focused on: training teachers in pedagogical approaches, providing teaching and learning materials and developing an inspection system to better supervise teachers.

The programme also aimed to improve school effectiveness by training primary school leaders and members of school management committees in target districts to effectively supervise their schools, while improving school facilities to enhance the learning environment. At the end of the programme, 14,500 teachers and 2,500 head teachers in 29 districts with low reading outcomes had been trained in early grade reading methodologies. Over 1,500 tutors from 46 primary teacher colleges, which train up and coming

teachers, were also trained in this methodology to ensure they can apply sound pedagogy methods as soon as they enter the workforce.

Better qualified teachers have led to a positive impact on student reading ability. An early grade reading assessment (EGRA) evaluated a cohort of students who were in grade 1 in 2016, grade 2 in 2017 and grade 3 in 2018, and were taught at each grade level by teachers who had received the GPE-supported training.

Weak leadership and management practices at schools also undermined the quality of primary education in Uganda. To address this, the GPE program funded training for 1,200 head teachers and 1,200 deputy head teachers in 26 districts. Over three months, they attended face-to-face training in school supervision, assessment, evaluation and planning, human resources management and payroll issues. In parallel, over 5,500 members of school management committees attended training to learn about school development planning, managing budgets, and monitoring teacher and student performance, and also attended, where relevant, technical training to supervise school construction activities.

These leadership trainings enhanced school management and will continue to improve school effectiveness. With GPE's support, new classroom and administration blocks, separate latrines for girls, boys and teachers, on-site housing for teachers and water harvesting tanks were constructed in 145 primary schools. The schools were also supplied with new furniture.

With better qualified teachers paving the way for improved learning, Uganda is on its way to transforming its education system and leaving no child behind.

This case study was provided by the Global Partnership for Education.

2. Inclusive Teachers for Inclusive Education

Well-trained and supported teachers are crucial to fostering inclusive education systems. As global leaders in girls' education and the founding government of the first ever Global Disability Summit, the UK is in a unique position to push the criticality of inclusive education.

Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) states the need to train all teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms and reinforces the importance of improving teacher education.⁶⁵ The article further outlines how states should interpret inclusive education in practice, including taking a whole school approach, and a holistic multi-sectoral approach to inclusive education.⁶⁶ However, when teachers lack the necessary teaching materials, resources, skills and motivation to teach inclusively, children with disabilities are excluded from learning and are more likely to have poorer educational outcomes.

Globally, nearly 240 million children have a disability, yet they are disproportionately denied their right to an education.⁶⁷ Almost half of all children with disabilities in low-and-middle-income countries are out of school, especially those with multiple or severe disabilities. Children and youth with disabilities are 2.5 times less likely to go to school than their peers without a disability, and are more likely to achieve lower levels of attainment.⁶⁸

Girls with disabilities are less likely to enrol in education and have lower rates of attendance and completion, making disability and gender two of the most prominent intersecting factors in educational marginalisation.⁶⁹ While approximately 44% of 20-year-old women in lower and middle-income countries have completed secondary school, this is the case for just one-third of women with disabilities.⁷⁰

Inclusive education systems allow for the full participation and achievement of all children, including children with disabilities, ensuring their full development, sense of dignity and self-worth. Inclusive education is a means of realising other human rights and the primary way by which persons with disabilities can lift themselves out of poverty and participate fully in their communities. Inclusive teaching strives to serve the needs of all students, regardless of background or identity, fostering a culture and environment of diversity and participation that benefits all.

COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted children with disabilities⁷¹. Teachers have often been left unsupported and unprepared to respond to the unique challenges that remote schooling presents for children with disabilities. Student engagement during remote learning requires not only internet connectivity, devices, and accessible software but also support tailored to learners' communication abilities and educational activities. Yet, many countries did not resource or support teachers to obtain the digital skills needed to deliver pedagogical and technological support to students with disabilities⁷² -thus increasing the digital divide.⁷³

Where education systems have adopted inclusive adaptations during the pandemic, these should be embedded into recovery efforts and expanded to 'build forwards better', placing inclusion at the heart of COVID-19 recovery policies. In this process, digital technology can serve as a tool for educational equity if teachers and students receive relevant training on accessibility and assistive technologies.⁷⁴ Where technological solutions aren't an option, low-cost alternatives must be designed to be disability inclusive.

To reduce marginalisation of children in the classroom and promote inclusion, more teachers with disabilities should be trained and recruited. In Mozambique, for example, the government has been running education programmes for visually impaired primary school teachers for more than ten years. Communities have become familiar with their children being taught by



Photo: © Plan International / G.Van Buggenhout

visually impaired teachers, resulting in a positive change of attitude and helping to create a more welcoming environment for teachers and students with disabilities.⁷⁵

Support for Teachers

With the right support, teachers can adopt inclusive learning practices and improve learning outcomes for children with disabilities. Only when teachers and schools are given the training, resources and specialist advice and support – all of which require appropriate funding – to meet the needs of a diversity of learners can we hope to realise the goal of ‘inclusive and equitable quality education’ for children with disabilities.

The UN’s Framework for Disability-Inclusive Education indicates that to strengthen educational service delivery, teachers require both pre-service and in-service training, ongoing pedagogical support and classroom support.⁷⁶ However, the limited availability of teachers trained in inclusive education and special educational needs (SEN), compounded by issues of retention, indicates a considerable gap in implementing inclusive pedagogy.

Additionally, a lack of teacher training in inclusive education results in poor learning outcomes for children with disabilities, pushing children to repeat classes beyond age appropriateness. This is significant as the effects of improved teaching methods, provision of learning material and remedial help for those who fall behind can, when combined, potentially improve learning outcomes by 25% to 53% in inclusive education settings.⁷⁷

The presence of trained, additional staff in the classroom to support pupils has been demonstrated to improve learning conditions for all.⁷⁸ Likewise, access to specialist advice can be invaluable in supporting teachers and improving pupils’ learning opportunities, and teachers should be supported to provide both gender responsive

and disability inclusive learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom. This is most critical for the learning of girls with disabilities, who are the most excluded group of learners due to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination based on their gender and disability.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that education provision must be comprehensive and multisectoral.⁷⁹ Children with disabilities require specific and targeted interventions, as well as being included in the everyday learning of the school, which are delivered by teachers. Additional social welfare and protection mechanisms need to be built into emergency provisions and plans for education, alongside basic health screening and functional assessment, mental health, and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) strategies. If adequately supported, teachers can help to forge these links, strengthen referral pathways, and support re-enrolment strategies. School closures also highlighted the importance of fostering relationships between teachers and parents of children with disabilities in developing deeper understanding of children’s needs.⁸⁰

The UK can help fulfil every girl’s right to 12 years of quality education and ensure children with disabilities are not left behind in those plans. The UK has already committed to ensuring future policies and programmes are fully inclusive to meet children’s diverse needs, including targeting out-of-school children and children with disabilities. It has also shown its commitment to inclusive education through the introduction of the first Global Disability Summit, commitments in the Girl’s Education Declaration and in the Girls’ Education Action Plan. It is critical that the UK Government continues to push efforts towards strengthening education by ensuring the systems are fully inclusive, with adequate financing and provision of disability specific interventions that maximise the academic and social learning of all children.

CASE STUDY

Inclusive teacher training in Nigeria

Building a truly inclusive education system is the only way to respond simultaneously to the current learning crisis and to ensure no child is left behind. The Nigerian government has ratified the United Nations Convention of the Right of the Child (CRC) and the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). This includes commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals, including SGD 4 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Despite these policy agreements, children with disabilities and special needs in Nigeria still face significant barriers to equal participation in education.

Nigeria has the highest number of out-of-school children in the world. Despite free and compulsory primary education, approximately 10.5 million children aged 5-14 years are not in school, many of whom are children with disabilities. As 15% of the Nigerian population live with a disability there is a clear need for the education system to respond to the needs of children with disabilities to ensure inclusion and improved learning outcomes for all children.

To support the Nigerian government in its efforts to deliver on SDG4, Sightsavers and partners initiated a new community-driven project in Kaduna State to promote an innovative approach to inclusive education, Support Mainstreaming

Inclusive Education to all Learn Equally (SMILE). Sightsavers collaborated with the Nigerian Teachers Institute (NTI) to develop, publish and implement inclusive education training for primary school teachers.

Through the SMILE initiative, investments were made to further strengthen institutional capacity and sustain inclusive education. All staff of the NTI Academic Services Department were trained to facilitate the training for 100 primary school teachers and administrators. They will receive continuous professional development support until 2023 to create inclusive learning environments in their schools. Their experiences are intended to guide future inclusive education policy and practice in Nigeria.

Dr Grace Bila, Sightsavers' Inclusive Education Advisor summarises the importance of the training:

“When inclusive education is fully embraced, we abandon exclusion and the idea that children with disabilities have to become ‘normal’ in order to participate in developing the society. By promoting diversity and adapting classroom practices to the different learning needs, ultimately all children benefit.”

This case study was provided by Sightsavers.

CASE STUDY

Inspiring others: the deaf teacher who is breaking down barriers



In Indonesia, there was a shortage of more than 1 million teachers in 2019 according to data from the Indonesian Teachers Association. Low salaries, ineffective recruitment drives, and low status of the profession push many people to choose other jobs. However, Vivi did not let these obstacles hold her back from training to become a teacher.

As a deaf young woman from West Nusa Tenggara, Vivi wanted to become a teacher so she could help other children and young people with hearing impairments reach their full potential. While studying for her degree in Special Education at Malang University, Vivi discovered that the higher education system did not properly support deaf people in the learning process.

“We were unable to fully understand and participate in the study session due to the limited communication between hearing and deaf students, this hindered us from learning. If the course was more accessible, we could study better,” explains Vivi.

Many of Vivi’s hearing friends did not understand sign language, so whenever there were discussions in class, Vivi was unable to contribute. It quickly became apparent to Vivi that the teacher’s role is significant in helping deaf people access education and they should be capable of understanding sign language or have a sign language interpreter present in class.

“These communication barriers are the cause of unequal and un-inclusive education. Moreover, discrimination hinders people with disabilities from going to college. It stems from the assumption that people with disabilities are not capable of achieving anything,” says Vivi.

Vivi is determined to prove that the negative assumptions about people with disabilities are wrong. Not wanting to be a burden to her parents, she is funding her university course herself from the income she earns as a make-up artist specialising in weddings. She hopes that when she graduates that she will be able to find work as a special needs teacher and be financially independent.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Vivi collaborated with Plan International to develop a transparent face mask for the deaf community. The clear masks enable people with hearing impairments to be able to lip read so they can continue to communicate with the world. Vivi concludes:

“Skills are a form of independence for people with disabilities. With my teaching skills, I hope that I can help other people with disabilities improve their abilities,”

This case study was provided by Plan International.

3. Education in Emergencies

The prevalence and recurrence of crises, conflict and emergencies are making it much harder for children and young people to access quality teaching. Around the world, climate-related shocks, health epidemics, and conflicts all pose grave threats to children's safety, wellbeing, and their right to learn: 75 million children and youth are in need of educational support in contexts affected by crisis.⁸¹ In many instances, COVID-19 has created a crisis on top of a crisis and exacerbated existing inequalities in education.⁸²

When a crisis hits, teachers are the first education responders. Teachers are often, alongside parents and communities, the only educational resource available to children during times of emergency and are usually left to find ways of continuing children's learning without adequate support, training or infrastructure, and often at risk to their own safety and wellbeing.

The UK has already demonstrated commitment to education in emergencies through its support for Education Cannot Wait and commitments in Get Children Learning and the Girls' Education Declaration. Yet support for teachers in crisis contexts, including specific support packages for their unique needs and challenges, must be strengthened if these commitments are to be met.

Education Under Attack

Between 2015 and 2019 there were more than 11,000 global reports of attacks on education or of military use of educational facilities.⁸³ In conflict settings, teachers often put themselves at risk in order to continue teaching, either delivering lessons from unsafe buildings or areas, or taking risks in order to continue doing their job. Schools are too often targets for violence, with teachers themselves at high risk of attack or reprisal, despite international law. For example, in north-eastern Nigeria, there were an estimated 700,000 internally displaced school-age children as a result of violent attacks by Boko Haram.⁸⁴ The terrorist group has destroyed 1,000 schools, displaced 19,000 teachers, and by 2017 had killed almost 2,300 teachers.⁸⁵

Increasingly, teachers can be the targets of attacks on education and there are a range of motives for this. For

example, teachers are frequently targeted for reprisal when 'resisting recruitment of children from schools into armed parties, for teaching girls, or for covering particular topics in their lessons'.⁸⁶ Thus, more must be done to provide secure learning environments that protect students and teachers from threat, danger, injury or loss, and a safe environment that is free from physical or psychosocial harm.

The Role of Teachers Beyond Education

Children need adequate support at the onset of an emergency. In addition to continuity of teaching and learning, teachers have important safeguarding responsibilities. This is particularly critical for the most marginalised children – girls, children with disabilities – where teachers work with parents and primary caregivers to play a key role in identifying appropriate interventions.

Teachers, alongside parents and family members, can be trusted adults for vulnerable children. For girls in emergencies, who are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school in conflict-affected countries compared to girls in other places,⁸⁷ a teacher can be the difference between staying in education or dropping out permanently. This is especially true if a teacher understands issues surrounding health and hygiene, reproductive issues, or pressure and threats from issues such as sexual exploitation, child marriage and FGM. Where women teachers are available, this factor becomes even more important, with evidence indicating that girls' education in crisis contexts can be improved with an increase in the presence of female teachers.⁸⁸ This is indicative of the ability of teachers, if well-supported, to recognise and respond to children's individual needs. Providing crisis-sensitive training will help teachers better respond to this information.

Challenges Facing Teachers in Crisis Contexts

Teacher shortages are acute and intensified in displacement contexts: the average teacher to student ratio is estimated to be above 1:70.⁸⁹ Despite the complex needs of refugee students, their teachers rarely receive adequate training, remuneration, language assistance or support. Teachers also face barriers to employment due to non-recognition of refugee teacher

qualifications and denial of refugees' right to work in host countries. In many countries, from Uganda to the UK, refugee teachers are not allowed "teacher status" until they have gained host country certification. Instead, they must settle for teaching assistant status, and therefore receive lower pay.

The reasons listed above contribute to many teachers in refugee contexts lacking even the minimum 10 days of training required by UNHCR. In Ethiopia, for example, only 21 % of teachers of refugees had a professional teaching qualification.⁹⁰ Lack of training and support

for teachers working in such complex classrooms puts the learning opportunities of students in jeopardy and exacerbates teacher well-being issues.

The social, emotional, and mental wellbeing of teachers influences the wellbeing of their pupils. However, the risks that teachers often take and conditions in which they work to ensure continuity of learning in crisis contexts can have significant and adverse impacts on their wellbeing. In such situations teachers are often also experiencing challenges including psychological trauma, bereavement and poverty with virtually zero quality support available.

CASE STUDY

ECW supporting teachers in South Sudan

Ayom Wol is a newly-trained teacher, preparing for tomorrow's lessons. His school principal says he has to prepare while at school because there is no electricity at home.

The 29-year-old Wol teaches English and Science in Mitor Primary School in Gogrial West County of Warrap state. The school is among hundreds benefiting from a Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP) funded by Education Cannot Wait (ECW).

Wol is among the teachers who have received teacher training with ECW funding, and the training has greatly improved his skills and capacity to prepare lesson plans and teaching materials.

Education Cannot Wait is the United Nations global fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises. In January 2020, it launched the MYRP in collaboration with the South Sudan government and local and international aid and development agencies. The MYRP programme focuses on building resilience within education in South Sudan.

"With one of the lowest school enrolment rates in the world, children and adolescents in South Sudan continue to bear the heavy burden of the years

of conflict that ravaged their country. Girls are disproportionately affected. They represent three-quarters of the out of school children in primary education, and it is even worse at the secondary level," says Yasmine Sherif, the Director of Education Cannot Wait.

"Together with our partners in the government, communities, civil society and the UN, Education Cannot Wait's investment in safe, inclusive quality education for the most marginalised children and adolescents in the country can finally turn the tide for the next generation of South Sudanese to thrive and become positive changemakers for their young nation."

Even though he has taught for nine years, Wol says, he became a better teacher after attending training supported through the MYRP:

"I now know how to prepare a lesson plan and a scheme of work for any subject," Wol says. "I have also learned from the training how to support children who are living with disabilities."

This story was originally produced by IPS News in partnership with Education Cannot Wait.

Unlocking Education in Emergencies Through Teachers

In sum, when a crisis hits, teachers are the frontline of the education response and their role in providing continuity of learning cannot be overstated. To unlock education in emergencies, children need well-supported, well-trained teachers. However, during crises, support to teachers is sporadic, uncoordinated, and of varied quality.⁹¹ Furthermore, those working closely with teachers – most notably their supervisors and school leaders – receive insufficient professional development to create a positive school climate that would enable teachers to effectively carry out their work,⁹² nor do they recognise the significant impact living through crisis can have on a teacher's personal life, including their own family.

In countries where a crisis is increasingly likely, extra support for teachers in emergency contexts needs to be at the heart of any education resilience planning. Teacher agency and voice must be central with educators best placed to understand the specific needs of their children and schools. Mechanisms and structures should therefore

be provided to ensure that the voices of teachers are heard by decision-makers and policymakers in emergency planning and responses, including through teachers' education unions.

If children's right to education is to be upheld through times of crisis, then teachers must be supported from the very onset of an emergency, through to recovery and development, with investments in infrastructure, remuneration and training prioritised. Further, robust data collection must be a priority so that the number of teachers, their needs and their geographical distribution can be effectively monitored and responses mapped accordingly.

Moreover, international cooperation with organisations such as ECW should be prioritised to ensure that teachers are a key priority and stakeholders in any emergency education response. Donors will have the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to this approach at the next ECW replenishment moment in 2023 and work alongside teachers, children, civil society and others to deliver an ambitious target for the sector.

CASE STUDY

Teachers' experiences amid crisis in Lebanon

Lodi Chahin, teacher with Save the Children in Lebanon:

This has been the most challenging time for education in Lebanon that I've witnessed. The economic crisis and COVID-19 pandemic have combined to create an incredibly difficult situation for both children and teachers.

Because of the lack of electricity and fuel, our classrooms are dark and cold. Online is no better – even assuming there are no power cuts that day, many children and teachers don't have access to electronic devices. The economic crisis has also led to a lack of books and stationery in schools, and of course most families can't afford to buy these themselves.

I'm noticing more issues with parents, perhaps because of the difficult financial situation they are in. Many of them weren't able to go to school, and so can't help their children with homework, or even with devices to get online. More worryingly, many of my students work to support their parents, which leads to absences and dropouts. I think we need better training for parents, on the importance and value of education.

All of this has made it particularly difficult for us to make sure education is inclusive for all. I believe strongly in this, but there are many obstacles in Lebanon at the moment, especially a lack of inclusive spaces and access, and technology.

Teachers need more support amidst this deteriorating situation, including a comfortable and appropriate work environment, a better work-life balance, the right technology, and updated training and curricula.

Education is so crucial, especially in a humanitarian crisis, as it helps to spread knowledge and information. I'm proud of being a teacher and of supporting my community, despite the challenges.

Nada Fakheridin, teacher with Save the Children in Lebanon:

The state of education in Lebanon is in crisis. The continuing impact of COVID-19 is affecting us all, and teachers are very much on the front line: every day I go to an overcrowded classroom, which makes it impossible to socially distance.

I would feel safer if we went back to online education or blended learning, but this has its own challenges. Many teachers aren't comfortable with technology, and need more training. It is also difficult to teach students when we can't see their reactions, and this sometimes ends up taking more time and effort than face to face classes.

In any case, neither online nor face to face will solve the education crisis, as Lebanon is in the middle of an economic depression as well as the pandemic. There are constant power outages and internet issues which mean that both children and teachers can struggle to get online. Even when they can, many families only have one phone or laptop for various children to share.

Teaching in a classroom is also challenging because no one can afford books or stationery. Many of us can barely travel to school, because rising fuel costs combined with the devaluation of the Lebanese pound have made it too expensive. We also suffer from a lack of insurance or social assistance, and many teachers are going on strike for this reason.

Even with all of this, I enjoy being a teacher. I love helping children with their self-confidence, especially those with special needs. Inclusive education is a priority and I will often repeat activities or lessons for a child in my class who has speech difficulties. I also give her extra support and encouragement, and am very happy that her pronunciation is improving.

Going forward, we need better training for teachers, and economic support for both children and teachers. Otherwise, this crisis will continue.

This case study was provided by Save the Children.

4. Teachers and the UK Government's Global Girls' Education Targets

In 2021 the UK Government co-hosted the Global Education Summit and prioritised education at its G7 and COP26 presidencies. The Girls' Education Declaration, devised under UK leadership at the G7 and endorsed by all G7 leaders, offers clear policy commitments to get girls into school and learning.⁹³ These include tackling gender-based violence, providing access to sexual and reproductive health rights, ending early or wanted pregnancy, and prioritising the most marginalised children, including increasing targeted support for children with disabilities.

The two global targets included in the declaration: 40 million more girls into school, and increasing by 20 million the number of girls reading by age 10 by 2026,⁹⁴ if delivered and taken alongside other urgently needed measures, will be a welcome impetus for the global community to accelerate progress toward SDG 4 in 2030. However, if the UK Government is to deliver on its commitments, including its 2019 manifesto commitment to support 12 years of quality education for all girls, more must be done to address gender inequality and the unique barriers that girls face due to their age, gender and other characteristics.

Barriers to Girls' Education

Even before COVID-19 hit, there were over 130 million girls not in primary or secondary school.⁹⁵ Estimates suggest that 5 million of those who were enrolled may never return after the pandemic.⁹⁶ The reasons for girls being out of school vary between countries and contexts, including poverty, inequality and harmful social norms. In many countries, girls and young women are discriminated against simply because they are girls and young women.

Girls can be marginalised within education systems for several reasons: prioritisation of boys' education in households where resources are scarce; a disproportionate burden of domestic responsibilities; early and forced marriage; adolescent pregnancy and early motherhood; social discrimination against disability, and unsafe or inadequate learning environments, including lack of sanitation facilities for girls or risk of gender-based

violence in and around education spaces.⁹⁷ Moreover, conflict exacerbates vulnerabilities: 54% of the world's out-of-school girls are in crisis-affected countries and teenage pregnancy can increase by as much as 65% during an emergency.⁹⁸ This situation is even more stark for girls with disabilities who often face double discrimination. The costs of educating girls with disabilities is often considered too high, and girls with disabilities often contribute to the economic survival of the household through begging or performing domestic chores.⁹⁹

To unlock girls' potential, we need education systems to become 'gender transformative'. Prioritising gender equality in and through education has the potential to transform societies and bring about gender justice, climate justice, economic justice and social justice. This needs to start right from early childhood when ideas about gender identity and expression start forming. This is even more critical for girls with disabilities who are the most excluded group of learners due to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination based on their gender and disability. Gender Transformative Education is about inclusive, equitable, quality education (SDG 4, particularly target 4.7) and nurturing an environment of gender justice for children, adolescents and young people in all their diversity (SDG 5, particularly target 5.1).¹⁰⁰

The Role of Teachers in Unlocking the Girls' Education Agenda

Qualified, well-supported and well-trained teachers can be change agents and role models for children. Teachers are girls' gateway to an education system, so it is essential that they are trained and supported to both understand and respond to the unique needs and challenges that all girls face in accessing education. With relevant training and support, teachers can actively promote gender equality in the classroom and foster an inclusive learning environment that helps challenge gender inequality. Further, it is essential that teachers are supported to examine and challenge their own gender biases to reduce discrimination and truly a gender-transformative education systems.

**Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP):
Forum for African Women Educationalists,
UNICEF, and UNGEI**

This toolkit targets teachers and all other practitioners who engage with students. The GRP model trains teachers to be more gender aware and equips them with the skills to understand and address the specific learning needs of all genders. It develops teaching practices that engender equal treatment and participation of girls and boys in the classroom and in the wider school community. A practical guide, it can be adapted to any context and is also a useful resource for researchers, school-parent committees and governing bodies, civil society organizations, community leaders and education policy makers.

The gender of teachers can have a significant impact on whether girls go to school and how well they are able to learn. In contexts where people believe girls should not be taught by a male teacher, particularly after puberty, adolescent girls will have little chance of completing their education if female teachers are not readily available.¹⁰¹ The presence of female teachers often makes parents more willing to send their daughters to school and keep them there.¹⁰² They can also serve as role models for girls.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education plays a crucial role in promoting the health and well-being of children and young people and should be delivered by well-trained and supported teachers in school settings as well as being offered to out-of-school children and young people.¹⁰³ Adequate support and training for teachers is an essential part of delivering a high quality, scientifically, gender transformative curriculum. Without this, school-based programmes delivered by poorly prepared teachers can

be detrimental, delivering information that is incorrect or reproducing harmful values and attitudes towards gender, sexuality, and rights. While evidence shows that many teacher-training initiatives exist, coverage is low in many countries and teachers report a lack of knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver diverse topics or use the appropriate participatory pedagogies needed.¹⁰⁴

Despite the links between female teachers and girls' enrolment and learning outcomes, the numbers are at an all-time low. In sub-Saharan Africa, less than half of primary school teachers and only a quarter of secondary school teachers are women, and enrolment figures for girls are low.¹⁰⁵ In contexts of emergencies, protracted crises and attacks on teachers, the numbers of female teachers are even fewer as they flee insecure areas. During the Ebola outbreak in Liberia for example, only 14% of primary school teachers were women, the lowest proportion of female teachers in the world.¹⁰⁶ During disease outbreaks, female teachers have to cope with the double burden of managing the personal impact of disease alongside caring for children and sick relatives, which increases their chances of leaving the profession altogether.¹⁰⁷

In extreme cases where female teachers are not available, as a last resort, recruiting women from the community as teaching assistants should be prioritised. Addressing the teacher shortage crisis in low- and lower-middle income countries, with particular emphasis on recruiting and training more female teachers, is therefore fundamental to unlocking the girls' education agenda. However, this cannot be achieved in silo to other policies impacting women. This would need to be tackling gender inequality in communities; addressing women's health issues in the workplace, such as menstrual health; eradicating gender pay gaps; family friendly work practices; and leadership programmes for women.

CASE STUDY

Addressing gender differences in Sierra Leone's classrooms

The lack of female teachers in certain regions of Sierra Leone often prevents parents from sending their daughters to school. To tackle this and encourage more girls into the classroom, Plan International launched a project to enrol young women onto teacher training courses to ensure there is a better balance of male and female teachers. Fatmata is one of 400 young women who took part in the project.

"I became pregnant at the age of 19. It was not planned, and the father of my child left me with my baby. Abandoned and alone, I was stranded and had no means whatsoever to move forward. My aging mother was also looking to me to help her. I borrowed a little capital and started making soap, but the small income I got could not meet our ever-increasing needs.

When I heard about Plan International's teacher training programme, it was like a dream come true. I learnt about it from the local radio station. I knew with determination and hard work I could pass the examination with flying colours.

Studying was not easy. I had to study and take care of my infant baby, my mother, and my soap business. I took all the modules seriously. I did all I could do to prepare for the exam.

When I heard that I had passed I was overjoyed. I started envisioning my future. It would be a new story. I was going to have hope and impact the future of girls and boys in Sierra Leone. Joining the programme also meant that I got an income to support my child and my mother. I was happy that their needs were going to be met. It was a proud and fulfilling feeling.

I now teach Science, Social Studies and English at school. Through this initiative, I often meet students who needed my support. I remember

I had a female student who was not living with her biological parents. She was living with a distant relative and had no close parental care. I noticed she used to sleep in class. She always appeared frail and slept through her lessons. When alone, she was often seen crying.

I took notice of these behaviours and befriended her. When she finally trusted me, she confided in me. She said that she was having a difficult time at home. Her caregivers used to give her all the house chores to do before she went to school. When she returned from school, she found more house chores waiting for her, and the earliest she went to bed was midnight. To add salt to the injury, she was rarely given any food at home. She used to beg food from other children when she came to school.

I committed to visiting her caregivers and advised them that she was a talented and intelligent girl. I also convinced them to employ a maid to do the house chores so that the girl could concentrate on her studies. They also promised to ensure that she received food at home and had enough to take to school.

It was incredible how the intervention changed her life. Her grades improved, and her caregivers were glad to always receive good reports about her work at school. I mentored her until she completed her studies. She is now waiting for the results of her final exams. We are all optimistic that she will shine.

I hope to see a future without violence towards girls and women. I hope to see women in positions of influence in this country. They will shape our future. I see them stronger in the future with the support of organisations such as Plan International."

This case study was provided by Plan International.

The Need for UK Leadership

The national governments of low- and lower-middle income countries will need to be supported in recruiting an additional 1.8 million teachers by 2026 to enrol 40 million more girls in primary and lower-secondary school and deliver the global targets endorsed by the G7 (see Annex 1).

Ambitions to enrol more girls into school and to improve learning outcomes are welcome, but without adequate focus on teachers and teacher policy, including tangible accountability mechanisms and financial investments to train, recruit and retain teachers, particularly increased numbers of female teachers, it is unlikely that global commitments will be met. This includes the global targets endorsed by the G7, the UK Government's manifesto commitment, and SDG 4 more widely.

If 40 million girls enter education systems where class sizes are high and there is a shortage of qualified teachers, then the quality of their educational experience will be poor. To improve both access and quality, the UK must lead G7 and other donor countries to focus on the sizable challenges facing the education workforce in low- and lower-middle income countries or risk missing its targets.

The commitment made in the Girls Education Action Plan (GEAP) to "take a fresh look at how to train, recruit and motivate teachers, and support teaching strategies and policies proven to work well for all poor and marginalised children, but particularly for girls"¹⁰⁸ is therefore welcome.

The FCDO must now streamline its efforts, recognising teachers as one of the greatest levers for delivering global education ambitions, and commit to a new, clear strategy on global teacher policy.

Simply, the UK Government cannot achieve its agenda on girls' and inclusive education without leading and championing investment in good teaching: supporting low- and lower-middle income countries to recruit, train, and retain teachers, and invest in their safety and working conditions, is one of the most efficient and effective routes to quality, inclusive education for all children, particularly girls and children with disabilities.

Achieving the global targets endorsed by the G7 – and improving the recruitment, retention, and training of teachers – will require sufficient education financing. This requires the FCDO to support low- and lower-middle income countries to increase domestic resource mobilisation by improving education's share of public financing to benchmarks agreed in the Incheon Declaration, in addition to taking steps to support countries to improve the size of the public budget overall through measures such as progressive tax bases that improve tax-to-GDP ratios.

Moreover, without adequate international financing, there is serious risk that the UK's commitments and ambitions will not be met. This is a risk which is heightened by the UK government reducing its aid budget from 0.7 to 0.5% of GNI, a cut of almost £4bn, and cutting its education spending in 2019/20.¹⁰⁹ This move has undermined the UK's ability to deliver its global education agenda and its diplomatic ability to persuade other countries to target domestic financing or ODA toward education. It must be reversed.

A new FCDO strategy on global teacher policy should:

- Recognise that the quality of an education system cannot exceed the extent to which it supports, sustains, and invests in the ongoing status of its teachers.
- Support the recruitment and retention of teachers in low- and lower-middle income countries, prioritising countries with the highest number of out-of-school children.
- Focus on improving the quality of teaching by supporting the strengthening of pre-service and in-service training that is accessible for all teachers, including those with disabilities and other marginalised groups, ensuring it is context specific and designed around effective, evidence-based practices.
- Target the recruitment, training, and leadership progression of female teachers - including those with disabilities - recognising the transformative impact they can have on girls' enrolment in school and the number of years of education they receive and in promoting gender equality in education systems and in wider communities.
- Recognise the intersectional dimensions of gender, disability and other social characteristics that inhibit access to learning for girls, including girls with disabilities, to ensure their full inclusion.
- Commit to championing policies that improve education's share of national budgets, improve the size of public budgets overall, reduce debt servicing, and resist austerity to help deliver necessary domestic financing for the recruitment, retention, and training of teachers, and realise obligations to quality, inclusive education more widely.
- Supports mechanisms and structures that ensure teachers' voices can meaningfully influence education policy, ensuring that teachers and education unions are heard and responded to by decision-makers and policymakers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To support all children to access a trained teacher, realise its G7 global targets, and catalyse progress toward SDG 4, the UK government should:

CHAMPION INVESTMENT IN, AND SUPPORT FOR, TEACHERS BY:

- Mobilising the G7 and wider international community to back national governments in the recruitment and training of 1.8 million new teachers by 2026, as a minimum, to progress the global education targets endorsed by the G7.
- Developing a new, clear strategy on global teacher policy that reflects the recommendations set out in this report.
- Driving global commitments to prioritise resources that address the chronic under-provision of qualified, well-trained, and well-resourced teachers in low- and lower-middle income countries, paying attention to diversity of the workforce, including women and people with disabilities.
- Recognising teacher trade unions as global partners in the recruitment and retention of teachers, policymaking and in enhancing the status of the teaching profession.
- Working with Education International and its affiliates globally to promote high-quality initial teacher education, continuous professional development and the status of teachers.

DEFEND EDUCATION FINANCING AND FUNDING FOR TEACHER POLICY BY:

- Providing support for low- and lower-middle income countries to meet agreed education financing benchmarks: 20% of national budgets and 4-6% of GDP towards free, inclusive, quality education. This should include supporting progressive taxation, amongst other measures, to expand the size of public purses.
- Restoring UK ODA to 0.7% of GNI and increasing education's share of the ODA budget to 15% and monitoring progress using OECD DAC disability and gender markers.
- Delivering an ambitious and increased pledge at the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) Replenishment Summit in 2023 and championing support for teachers in ECW's new strategic plan.
- Targeting the strengthening of public education systems, recognising this as the only equitable and sustainable route to strengthen the teacher workforce and realising education for all.
- Continuing to fund inclusive teaching programmes, such as the Inclusive Education Initiative's TEACH programme, to improve knowledge and evidence of best practice to support teachers in the classroom.

PLACE TEACHERS AT THE CENTRE OF INCLUSIVE, GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION BY:

- Defining specific targets for disability inclusion for the two global education targets and confirming that 10% of the 40 million girls reached in its global target will be girls with disabilities (since 10% of women worldwide have a disability).
- Redoubling efforts to recruit and retain women teachers through measures that address their specific needs and circumstances, recognising that the shortage of women teachers acts as a barrier to girls' education.
- Recognising the role that teachers can play in tackling gender inequality in and outside of the classroom by including training on gender transformative education in flagship girls' education programmes.
- Listening to teachers' expertise, experiences, and opinions, by including them in decision-making bodies and programme design and implementation, and research efforts.
- Working with teachers, young people, families and civil society to develop a toolkit on disability inclusive and gender transformative pedagogy for teachers, ensuring the removal of gender stereotypes from curricula.
- Ensuring UK-funded programmes on education incorporate teacher recruitment, retention and inclusive training, and address intersecting barriers to education for girls, including girls with disabilities.
- Building evidence on the effectiveness of teaching by improving data collection and analysis on recruitment and retention of teachers, especially teachers from minority groups, female teachers and teachers with disabilities.

Annex 1: Methodological Note

Background

Even before the pandemic hit, the world was already facing two pre-existing emergencies: learning povertyⁱ and the alarmingly high rates of out of school children.ⁱⁱ Teachers are key to tackle both crises, but low- and lower-middle income countries are plagued by teacher shortagesⁱⁱⁱ. Given the UK government's priority on girls' education in international development and following its G7 pledge to have 40 million more girls in school^{iv}, we estimate how many teachers low- and lower-middle income countries would need to recruit to achieve the goal of having 40 million more girls enrolled by 2026.

Assumptions

Before delving into the concrete steps of our analysis it is in order to lay out some assumptions underpinning our work. First, we chose to divide the 40 million girls into 20 million girls to be enrolled in primary school — as it would be impossible for girls to enrol in school at a more advanced level of education without having completed the previous one — and 20 million girls to be kept in lower secondary school. Thus, our analysis estimates how many more teachers would be needed to enrol 20 million new girls in school and to keep 20 million girls in school.

Secondly, when it comes to teaching, estimates on quantity cannot be independent from considerations around quality. With this in mind, we calculate the number of teachers based on international guidelines on acceptable pupil-teacher ratios, by level of education. This is 40:1 for primary school and 25:1 for secondary school, highlighting the practical importance of the former assumption on the final figure.

Methodology

Our estimate relies on available data on net enrolment rates, gross enrolment ratios, teacher attrition rates, (school-age) population, and number of teachers. Most indicators are sourced from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics^v, but data from the World Bank is also present. For a complete overview of each indicator, inclusive of definition and source, please see the section 'Data overview' below.

Our methodology follows several steps. First, we estimate the number of teachers for each country based on country- and regional-level data on number of teachers and country population. When country-level data on number of teachers is missing, we apply a principle of proportionality. For instance, if country X in region Y is home to 10% of the population of region Y, we assume that teachers in country X will also account for 10% of the teacher workforce in the region. In addition, because our estimate covers a period of 4 years (2022-2025), we project changes in the number of teachers over this time using regional trends in population to predict future changes as those are available and cover total population.

Secondly, we combine data on school-age population, gross enrolment, and number of teachers to calculate the existing pupil-teacher ratio. For country-level data, we use the latest available datapoint from 2015 onwards; however, if that is not available, we fill the gap with the relevant regional value. This also allows us to calculate the number of additional teachers needed to give pupils already in school an acceptable pupil-teacher ratio.

Next, we 'assign' the additional 40 million girls to low- and lower-middle income countries. To do this, we need to first calculate how many girls would be in school if net enrolment were 100%. The purpose of this step is two-fold: a) we confirm that the number of to-be-enrolled girls (40 million) does not exceed the existing gap; b) we calculate the extent of said gap for each country. We then distribute the 40 million girls accordingly in a proportional way based on country population as a share of regional population (as opposed to a greatest-need basis, e.g., proportionally to out-of-school rates). We repeat the distribution to avoid surplus, so that no country is 'assigned' more pupils to enrol than how many it needs to enrol.

Finally, we calculate how many more teachers each country would need to recruit to accommodate the additional 40 million students. If the pupil-teacher ratio is lower than the acceptable value, it is left as is, otherwise a maximum ratio of 40:1 is applied for primary school and 25:1 for lower secondary school. Because the enrolment effort stretches across years, we also factor in the teacher

attrition rate, i.e., how many teachers leave the profession every year and therefore need to be replaced.

According to our analysis, low- and lower-middle income countries have a gap of 1.11 million teachers (for enrolled pupils, at all levels of education, in 2022) and will need to recruit 1.78 million teachers to enrol and keep in school a total of 40 million girls by 2026.

Key stats

For low- and lower-middle income countries, for which data is available, in 2022.

	Total	Primary school	Lower secondary school
Number of teachers	31 million	15 million	8.7 million
Out-of-school girls	106 million	25.7 million	26.1 million
Gap in number of teachers for pupils already in school	1.11 million	0.49 million	0.52 million
Gap in number of teachers to achieve 40 million more enrolments by 2026	1.78 million	0.7 million	1.08 million
Pupil-teacher ratio		32:1 (mean), 4:1 — 75:1 (min-max)	24:1 (mean), 2:1 — 94:1 (min-max)

Data overview

Indicator	Source	Definition	Coverage	Disaggregation	Notes
Total net enrolment rate	UNESCO Institute for Statistics	Link	Global, country and regional	Level of education and sex	
Gross enrolment ratio	UNESCO Institute for Statistics	Link	Global, country and regional	Level of education and sex	
Teacher attrition rate	UNESCO Institute for Statistics	Link	Global, country and regional	Level of education	
School-age population	UNESCO Institute for Statistics	Link	Global, country and regional	Level of education and sex	Replaced with World Bank population data when missing
Number of teachers	UNESCO Institute for Statistics	Link	Global, country and regional	Teaching level of education	
Country population	World Bank	Link	Global, country and regional	N/A	

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Send My Friend to School is a UK civil society coalition of international development NGOs, teachers unions and charities. The campaign undertakes a range of activities designed to increase community awareness of the state of education internationally and generate the political will necessary to ensure the UK plays an active and effective part in efforts to secure education for all. Send My Friend to School is the UK coalition of the Global Campaign for Education movement which is present in over 80 countries around the world, and aligns its work with the organisation's mission and aims.

The Campaign's UK members are:

CAFOD	Plan International UK
Christian Aid	RESULTS UK
Deaf Child Worldwide	Save the Children UK
Humanity & Inclusion UK	Sense International
International Parliamentary	Sightsavers
Network for Education (IPNEd)	The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)
Leonard Cheshire	The Steve Sinnott Foundation
NASUWT	UNICEF UK
National Education Union (NEU)	University and College Union (UCU)
Oxfam GB	World Vision UK

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