# Addressing issues and challenges regarding teachers and Teaching: The UNESCO General Education Quality Analysis / Diagnosis Framework (GEQAF)

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## Introduction

There is a clear similarity between the objectives of the Japan Education Forum and the Policy Dialogue forums organized by the Task Force. The focus of JEF 10 on teacher issues and the theme of the Panel perfectly reflect this commonality of purpose. Teachers/educators are indeed the major pillars in the teaching and learning process. The achievement of EFA goals is intrinsically linked to the provision of teachers in sufficient quantity and with adequate preparation and motivation to address the diverse needs of an increasing learning population.

This presentation aims to underscore the need to unpack the complex fabric of teaching and learning and the planning of this process. To this end, the paper will dwell on the two components of the UNESCO *General Education Quality Analysis/Diagnosis Framework (GEQAF)* that deal with the question. It will illustrate the pertinence of the questions raised with case studies drawn from work carried out by the Task Force network in the regions and countries.

The GEQAF recognizes progress made globally since the Dakar Forum (2000) in terms of access, but alerts on the ensuing quality imperative and how important it is to monitor it. The ultimate purpose of basic education for all has to be to ensure effective learning and skills development for further education, employment and sustainable livelihood.

## I. Teachers in the quality and equity debate: Some evidence from research

Without an appropriate focus on teachers, access, quality and equity of education for all is not feasible.

- The quality of teachers/educators has been found to explain significant differences in learning outcomes (OECD, EI, etc.)
- Equitable deployment of qualified teachers/educators also has a significant bearing on the distribution of learning outcomes and thus equity.
- There are clear indications that provision of quality education tends to have a greater impact on the most vulnerable or deprived students and thus providing quality teachers/educators to all schools and educational institutions is one important way to address the problem of inequity.

Consequently, as new and more complex roles are ascribed to teachers/educators, coherent and adequate selection, preparation and continuous professional development strategies must be in place to endow those entrusted with teaching with the required knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, and retain them in the profession.

**What does the GEQAF propose?**

The GEQAF has 15 Analytical Tools designed to help start the task of improving quality and equity. The tool on Teachers/Educators is particularly linked to the analytical tools on the Teaching and Learning processes. It's not a prescription of a particular choice, or of a particular method to analyze the issue of teachers/ educators and education quality. The purpose of the Toolkit on Teachers is to serve as a guide for reflection.

**Diagnosis and analysis questions**

The paramount question is: *to what extent the teachers/educators sub-system has been a major factor in explaining the quality problems faced in the education system*. This question can be addressed by a thorough analysis

and reflection on the systems and mechanisms that are in place for <u>attracting</u> individuals to the teaching profession, for <u>selection and preparation</u> of teacher/educator candidates, their <u>recruitment, deployment, retention</u> and their <u>effective management for the delivery of quality education</u>. At each of these critical stages, we need to pose some fundamental questions to identify the factors affecting the ability of our teachers/educators to deliver quality education to our learners.

**A. Entry into the teaching profession**

1. Who is attracted to the teaching profession and why? Do we have data on the profile of those applying for teacher/ educator training?

2. How well do our criteria for selection into training of teacher/educator (e.g. minimum qualification, attitudes and values, motivation) and selection modalities (e.g. exam, interview) reflect the type of teachers/educators we want to train?

**B. Training of teachers/educators**

1. What is the profile of the trainers of teachers/educators? How are they trained, recruited, remunerated? Does the financing of training institutions reflect the central role teacher/educator training plays for quality education?

2. How well does teacher/educator assessment reflect the competencies expected of new teachers/educators? Is practical training assessed? What are the modalities of assessment?

3. Has the efficiency of teacher/educator training programs been analyzed? Is there any analysis of the impact of trained teachers/educators on learners' achievements?

4. How has in-service and CPD program been effective in raising the quality standard of our teachers/educators? Do we have evidence of that?

**C. Recruitment, deployment and retention of teachers**

1. What mechanisms are in place to attract and retain the best qualified people to teaching? Have they been effective? What is the extent of teacher/educator attrition in our country? Why did these teachers/educators leave?

2. Are there mechanisms in place for the best teachers/educators to be recognized and rewarded for their teaching?

3. Are qualified teachers/educators deployed equitably throughout all educational levels, educational settings and in line with curriculum requirements? What are the mechanisms in place to ensure that teacher/educator deployment is equitable and the mechanisms are applied consistently?

**D. Management of teachers/educators**

1. What mechanisms are in place to support teachers/educators at all moments of their career? Do they foster a feeling of motivation and promote increased performance of teachers?

2. What forms of supervision and performance evaluation are in place and how effective have they been?

3. To what extent do teachers/educators participate in planning and decision-making at all levels of the educational system?

**E. Priorities for action**

1. What are the key areas and binding constraints to be addressed urgently to achieve major improvements in the quality of our teachers/educators current and future?

2. What are the knowledge gaps which need to be filled for an evidence-based policy and practice?

3. What are the required actions to deal with the priority constraints and the identified knowledge gaps? Who does what and when? What will be the coordination mechanism to effect the changes in a cohesive and systemic way?


## II. Teaching: Some evidence from research

Teaching is the most immediate process for supporting learning and for enabling learners to acquire expected

competencies. What happens within the classroom is of crucial importance for the quality of education. Teaching and learning processes are not only crucial to education quality and to the effectiveness of learning experiences but also to equity of education quality and of learning.

- Considering the profile of the teacher alone is not sufficient to determine what is really happening in the classroom: teachers and teaching are two separate, though closely interrelated, issues.
- Individuals learn differently. They should be taught differently. For learners to reach their full potentials, teaching methods, approaches and assessment modalities must be well understood by those entrusted with teaching and those making decisions about education.
- Adaptability to context matters as different countries and students may need different teaching contents (both in terms of subject matter knowledge and of medium of instruction) and different levels of structure tailored to students' profile. It is therefore important to critically assess the relevance of both current and planned objectives (in terms of the content, structure, and context of teaching) to the diverse contexts.
- Countries which have been successful in improving their education system followed a number of general principles but also tailored their intervention to match the current situation of their education system

What kind of teaching can be provided is shaped/constrained by the learner and the learning environment, the teacher and the teaching culture.

**Diagnosis and analysis questions**

The overall objective of the Teaching Tool is to support the analysis of how teaching processes contribute to the quality and equity of general education and to effective learning. The paramount question is: ***Do our teaching processes facilitate or impede the attainment of quality education and effective learning experiences for all our learners?*** The probing of this paramount question is facilitated by posing some key questions regarding critical factors affecting and influencing teaching.

**A. Understanding an effective teaching process**

1. What is our operational understanding of effective or quality teaching? Who defines this understanding? What is the role of research and innovation in determining this definition? How does this understanding take into account the diversity of our education settings, learners and teachers as significant factors in our definition of quality/effective teaching?

2. How do we collect information on core teaching methods and repertoires used in our general education system? How are these repertoires selected? How effective are they in facilitating learning effectiveness and the acquisition of desired competencies? What is the evidence of their effectiveness?

**B. Equity and effective teaching**

1. How do we ensure that all learners in our general education system are exposed to effective teaching? Where is the evidence of equitable exposure to effective teaching? Where there is inequity, what are our available remedial measures? How do we track the differentiated impact of effective teaching for diverse learners? What dimensions of diversity do we use to track differentiated impact?

**C. Monitoring and supporting teaching**

1. What mechanisms do we have for identifying and documenting ineffective teaching? Once identified, what remedial actions do we employ? How regularized and/or institutionalized are these remedial measures? How effective are these measures in supporting effective teaching?

2. Who evaluates teaching? How are stakeholders who evaluate teaching selected? How do we use feedback from the assessment of teaching effectiveness? Where is the evidence of this use?

3. How are outcomes from national, regional and international assessments utilized in our evaluation of the teaching

process?

4. How do we support and incentivize effective teaching? How do we sustain effective teaching?

**D. Conditions for teaching**

1. How do we operationally define environments that support and/or induce effective teaching? What are the key features of these environments? What are the most impactful features? How do they manifest across the diverse contexts of our general education system?

2. To what extent and how are ICTs being integrated in teaching and learning to achieve desired learning outcomes? Do we know if the introduction of ICTs has improved teaching effectiveness as we operationally define it?

**Priorities for action - Conclusion**

1. What are the key areas and binding constraints to be addressed urgently to achieve major improvements in the quality of our teachers/educators current and future?

2. What are the knowledge gaps which need to be filled for an evidence-based policy and practice?

3. What are the required actions to deal with the priority constraints and the identified knowledge gaps? Who does what and when? What will be the coordination mechanism to effect the changes in a cohesive and systemic way?

In conclusion, the GEQAF posits that the diagnostics will facilitate the identification of areas of strength to build on and areas of weaknesses and gaps to address. The diagnostic and analysis of both strengths and challenges should lead to *the formulation of action plans focusing on the most critical challenges which, if addressed, can unlock great potential for improving the education system to deliver equity and quality*.

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Edem Adubra currently heads the Secretariat of the International Task Force on Teachers for EFA. He joined UNESCO in 2003 in the Division of Secondary, Technical and Vocational Education where he helped coordinate the Interagency Working Group on Secondary Education. In 2006, Dr. Adubra transferred to Windhoek and lead UNESCO education programme in Angola, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland, coordinating the partnership in education between UNESCO and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). He was reappointed to Headquarters as the Chief of Section for Teacher Policy and Development. Prior to his career at UNESCO, Dr. Adubra spent over sixteen years as a teacher, a teacher trainer, and a high school principal in his native Togo. Dr. Adubra got his Bachelor of Arts from Université du Bénin (Lomé, Togo), his Masters in Linguistics from Lancaster University (UK), and a dual Doctoral degree in Educational Administration and Comparative and International Education from Pennsylvania State University (USA).