

## ABSTRACT

There is no clear answer yet on how to attract smart, ambitious people to teach in primary schools. The Syrian government tried to improve the quality of education through designing new schemes of teacher education. Still, many of the problems persisted due to social and systemic factors.

## TEACHING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- A job that is more suitable for females: less valuable and easy as it does not require sophisticated skills
- Work in schools for 4-6 hours per day
- Male teacher join in the hope of soon becoming school directors or get a second job
- Education reform (2000)

## EDUCATION REFORM

**Objectives:** to improve public primary education by improving quality of teaching and access to education

### Tools:

- new national curriculum
  - new teacher education university programme to attract and employ bright students: BA Class Teacher
  - Incentives: monthly stipend and promise of job after graduation
  - Student commitment to work in public schools for a specific period of time (normally 8 years).
- Extremely successful programme in attracting more students to study education. Only students with very good marks could apply.
- However, the vast majority of the students were still females.

## HAS THE POLICY ACHIEVED ITS INTENDED GOALS?

- Some areas in the country remained underserved
- The value of the primary teaching profession in society has barely changed: far more females than males are joining the BA programme; low teacher income; lack of opportunities for career development and lack of incentives.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Empower teachers to make difference in society: financial security and true engagement in decision making
- Acknowledge that teaching is a difficult job
- Gradually eliminate social and gender stereotypes about teaching (possibly through public education)
- Design strong rewarding and monitoring systems of teaching.