Unit 6: Teachers

“The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers” contains some truth but education systems support and can improve teaching. In this unit we examine the relationships between teachers and the systems of which they are part.

Education systems must effectively recruit, train, deploy, motivate and professionally develop their workforces in order to address the challenge of quality education for all. Teachers need leadership and support to be effective and to serve learners with a wide range of needs. ‘Teacher quality’ is therefore a result of a complex interplay of systemic and individual-level factors and is challenging to conceptualise and to measure. For example, observable indicators of teacher quality (like many other educational ‘inputs’) typically show only very limited predictive power in empirical modelling exercises.

In sub-Saharan African in particular, shortages of teachers and limitations of quality present a major challenge. Strengthening and reform of the education workforce in any particular context can be controversial and requires navigation of political economy as well as potentially new resources, data and management.

After completing the unit, students should:

- Understand the difficulties of defining and assessing teacher quality and the limitations of specific approaches to this
- Understand the importance of limitations of teacher supply (number and quality) in relation to the ‘learning crisis’ and the pursuit of SDG4 and the trade-offs that result from this in particular contexts
- Understand the importance of political economy with respect to systemic reform where the education workforce is concerned

Required Readings

https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/20488

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2015.07.001

https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/jep.31.4.185
Further Readings


