

## A systems approach to teacher careers: Choose and curate toward commitment to capable and committed (CCCCC) teachers

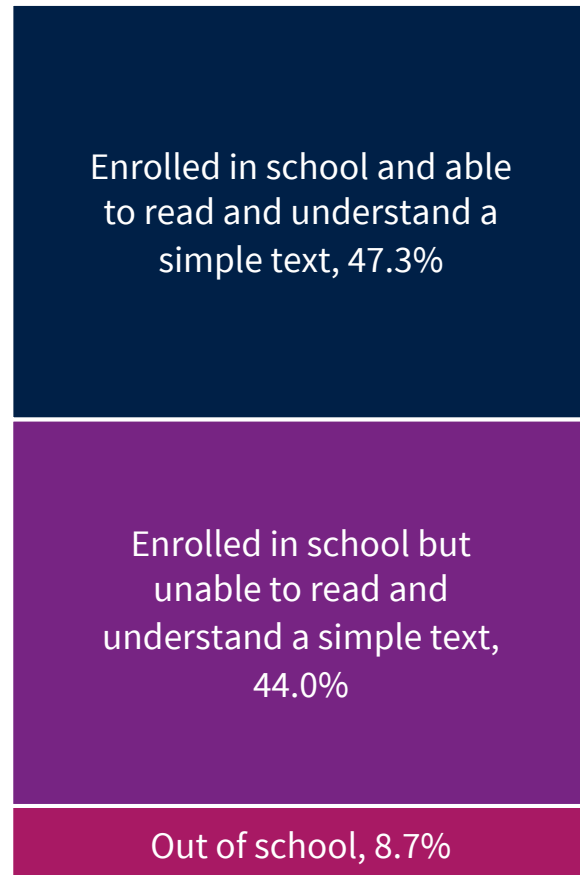
**Yue-Yi Hwa & Lant Pritchett**

RISE Programme, Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford  
CIES, 26 April 2021 (updated 5 May 2021)

Classroom teaching is complex  
—and so are the challenges  
facing it in low-performing  
education systems

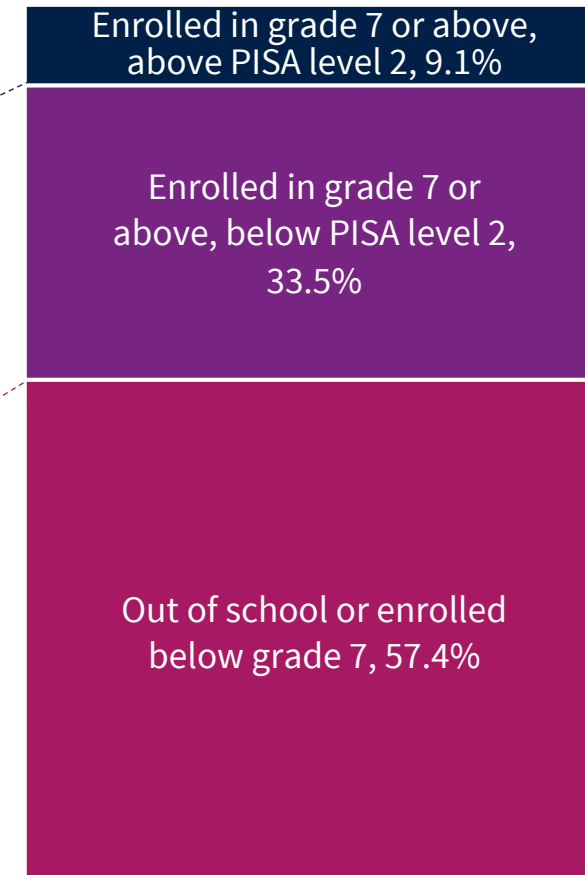
# In many developing countries, education systems fail to cultivate learning for many children, even those in school

## 10-year-olds in all low- and middle-income countries



World Bank, Learning Poverty (2015)

## 15-year-olds in 7 low- and middle-income countries



PISA-D (Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Cambodia, Paraguay, Senegal, Zambia, 2014–2016)

This is partly because education systems are failing to cultivate and support capable and committed teachers

In SACMEQ 2007  
for South Africa,

**74%**

of 6<sup>th</sup>-grade teachers  
had completed  
senior secondary school  
or above ...

... but only

**21%**

of these teachers  
demonstrated mastery  
of the maths content  
they were supposed  
to be teaching

Across the 8 African countries  
surveyed in the SDI, an average of










**40%**

of randomly selected teachers  
were absent from classroom  
during an unannounced visit

*Note: mean of country-level absence rates in Kenya, Madagascar,  
Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda*

To fix these complex, entrenched,  
large-scale problems,  
we need to think about  
**teacher careers as systems**  
(that are embedded in other systems)

# One level of systems thinking: the interaction between different design elements and phases of teacher careers

<b>Design elements of teaching careers</b>	 <b>Pre-service</b> <0 years	 <b>Novice</b> 0–5 years	 <b>Experienced</b> 5–25 years	 <b>Veteran</b> >25 years
 <b>Delegation</b> Who does what where?				
 <b>Information</b> How well are they doing it?				
 <b>Support</b> What would help them to do it better?				
 <b>Finance</b> Does compensation attract, retain, and motivate quality teaching?				
 <b>Norms</b> How should ‘good teachers’ act?				

Note: Adapted from the RISE framework. See Pritchett (2015), [https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP\\_2015/005](https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2015/005)

# Another salient level of systems thinking: the interaction between different sources of teacher motivation



## **Finances**

Money



## **Material Circumstances**

Stuff that money  
can buy



## **Personal Satisfaction**

Goal fulfilment  
& identification  
with a larger cause












## **Social Validation**

Respect  
& appreciation

# Some teacher reforms prioritise finances over all else—but other factors also shape motivation and performance



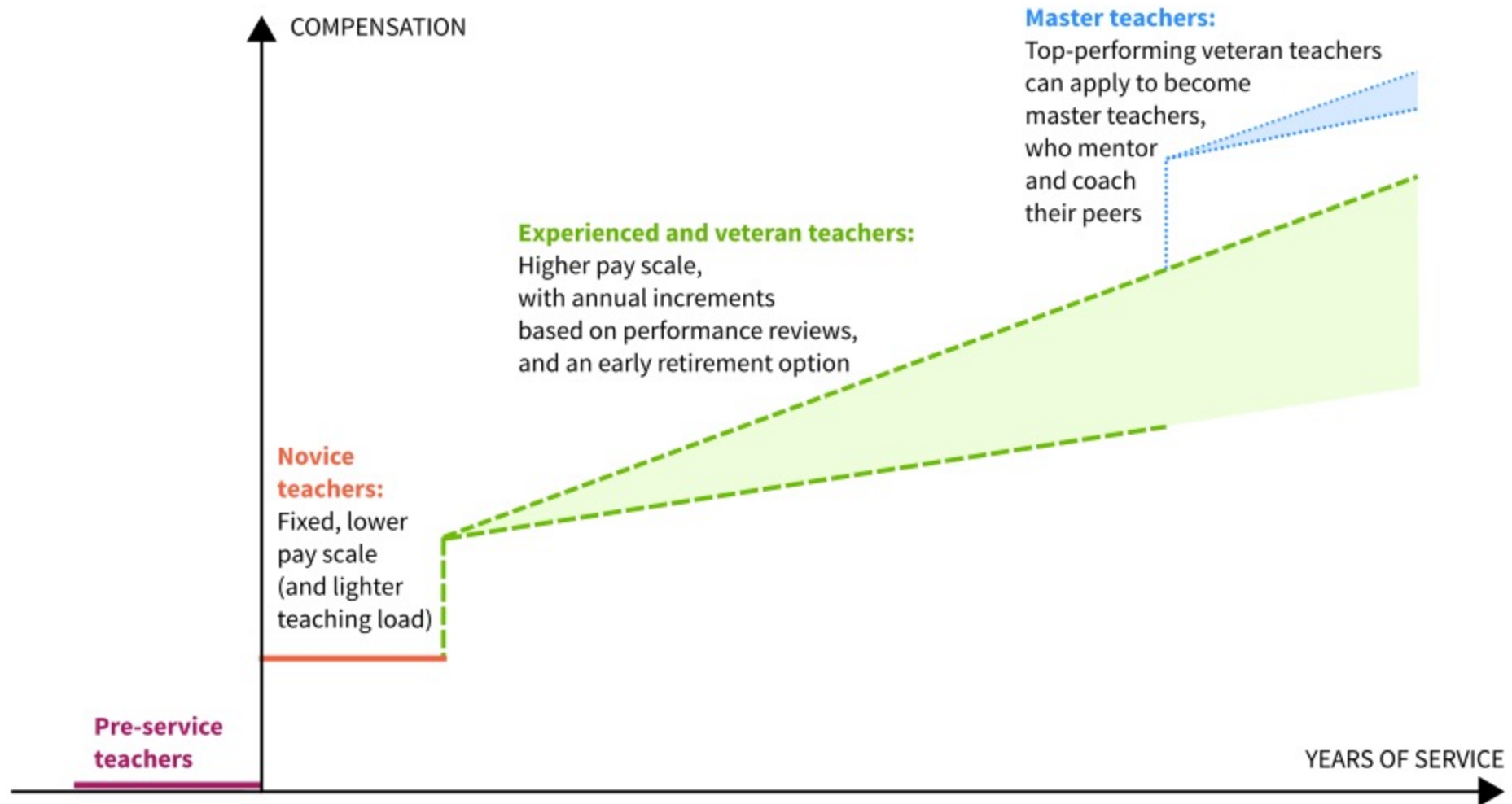
Design elements of teaching careers	 Pre-service	 Novice	 Experienced	 Veteran
 Delegation				
 Information				
 Support				
 Finance				
 Norms				



The CCCCC principles:

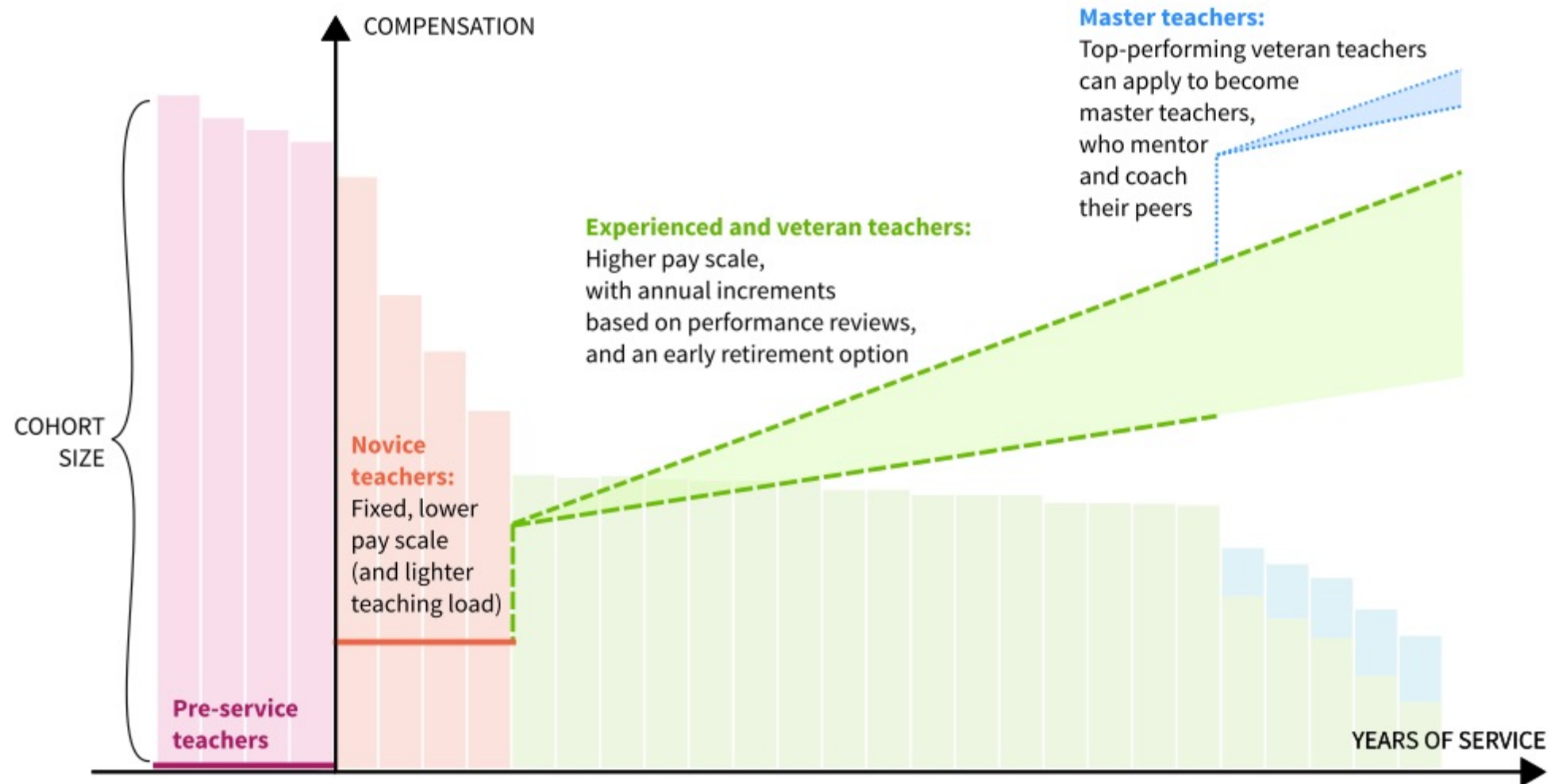
**Choose** and **curate**  
toward **commitment**  
to **capable** and **committed** teachers

# Choose and curate toward commitment to capable and committed teachers



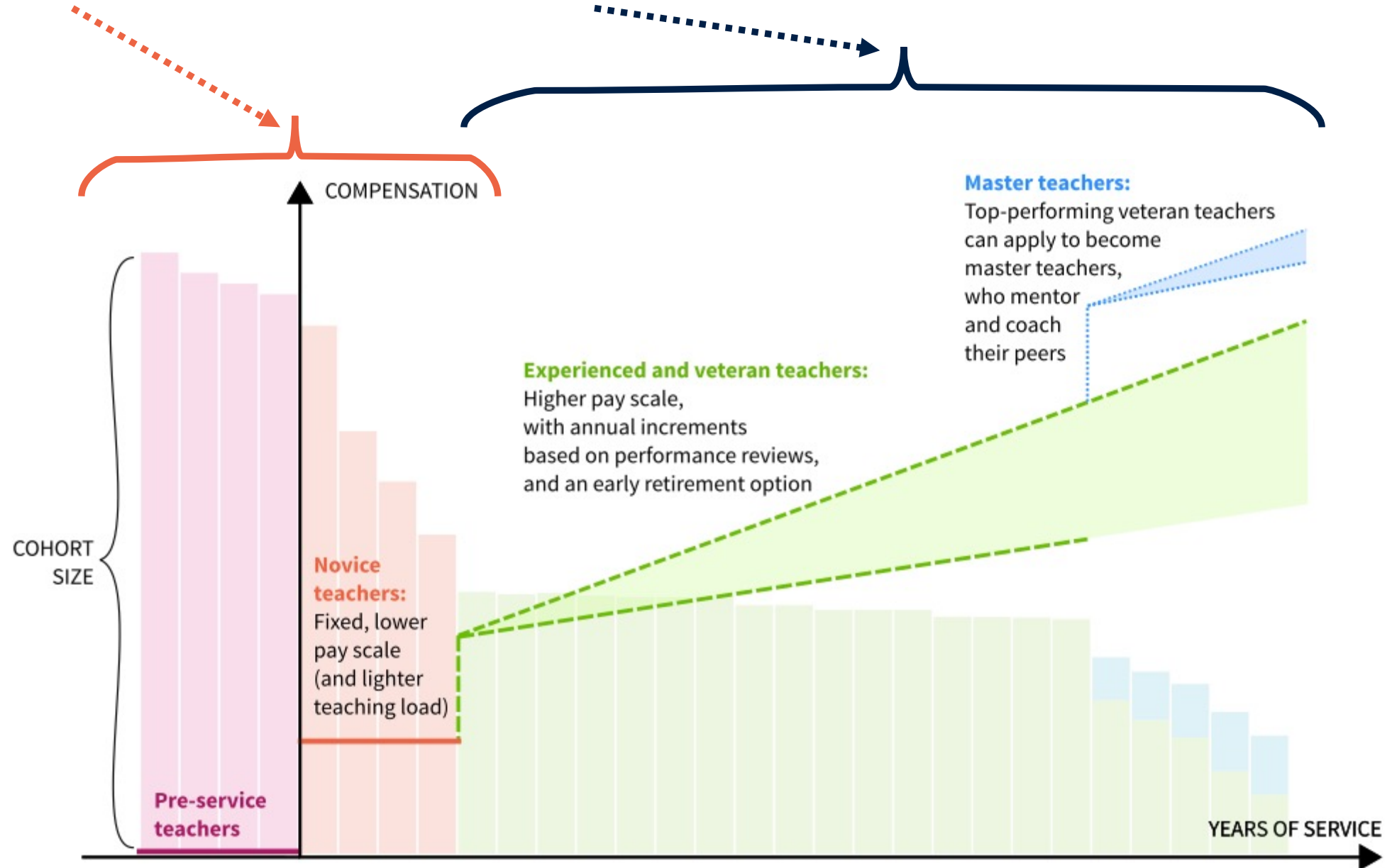
*Note: hypothetical example illustrating one of many possible instantiations of CCCCC. Adapted from Pritchett & Pande (2006).*

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# The CCCCC principles accentuate the complex interactions between elements and phases of teacher careers

Design elements of teaching careers		 Pre-service <0 years	 Novice 0–5 years	 Experienced 5–25 years	 Veteran >25 years
 <b>Delegation</b> Who does what where?	<p>“As things now stand, <b>most education sector plans create more fragmentation and less coherence</b>; they address teacher policy dimensions only partially and <b>do not systematically include all the major determinants</b> of learning success linked to teachers, i.e. recruitment; initial education; balanced deployment; continual professional development; decent salaries; career prospects; and working (teaching/ learning) conditions ...</p> <p><i>Teacher Task Force (2019), Teacher Policy Development Guide, p. 19</i></p>				
 <b>Information</b> How well are they doing it?					
 <b>Support</b> What would help them to do it better?					
 <b>Finance</b> Does compensation attract, retain, and motivate quality teaching?					
 <b>Norms</b> How should ‘good teachers’ act?					

# Why **curate**? Because indicators from outside of the classroom might not encapsulate teacher **capability** and **commitment**

A panel data study in Pakistan found that standardised indicators did not encapsulate much about teacher value-added ...

“ Although effective teachers increase learning substantially, **observed teacher characteristics\*** account for less than **5 percent of the variation** in TVA.

*Bau & Das (2020), p. 62*

*\*Observed teacher characteristics included:  
whether the teacher was local; teacher training;  
bachelor's degree completion; years of experience;  
contract status; and assessed content knowledge*

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... but schools and headteachers on the frontline could identify and reward effective teachers

“ ... a 1 SD increase in TVA is associated with (at least) 49 percent higher wages in the private sector. **Even in the absence of a formal testing regime, TVA is observable and can be rewarded**, but the public sector does not have a mechanism to do so. Finally, the TVA of public sector teachers on temporary contracts ... was at least as high as that of permanent teachers ...

*Bau & Das (2020), p. 64*





# Why **commitment**? Because continuous curation is costly—for ministries, schools, teachers, and students

“Teacher turnover affects the production of student learning not only indirectly, **through the stock of teachers’ skill and motivation**, but also directly, because it introduces **frictions in the allocation of teachers** to schools. ... head teachers faced with **staffing shortages** may be forced to allocate teachers to **subjects outside of their areas of specialty**, resulting in a patchwork of teaching assignments that adversely affects learning outcomes.

*Zeitlin (2021), Teacher Turnover in Rwanda, p. 82, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jae/ejaa013>*



# Why **commitment**? Because continuous curation is costly—for ministries, schools, teachers, and students

Sources of teacher motivation	Choose and curate toward <b>commitment</b> to C and C	<b>Careerlong curation</b> (contract teacher model)
 <b>Finances</b>	✓	?
 <b>Material Circumstances</b>	✓	?
 <b>Personal Satisfaction</b>	✓	?
 <b>Social Validation</b>	✓	?

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# Why **choose and curate**? Because a commitment-only approach misses key opportunities to build professional standards

“ **A probationary period** on entry to teaching should be recognized both by teachers and by employers as the opportunity for the **encouragement and helpful initiation of the entrant** and for the **establishment and maintenance of proper professional standards** as well as the **teacher’s own development of his practical teaching proficiency**. ... the conditions for its satisfactory completion should be strictly related to professional competence ...

*ILO/UNESCO (1966), Recommendation  
Concerning the Status of Teachers, para. 39*

# Why **choose and curate**? Because a commitment-only approach misses key opportunities to build professional standards

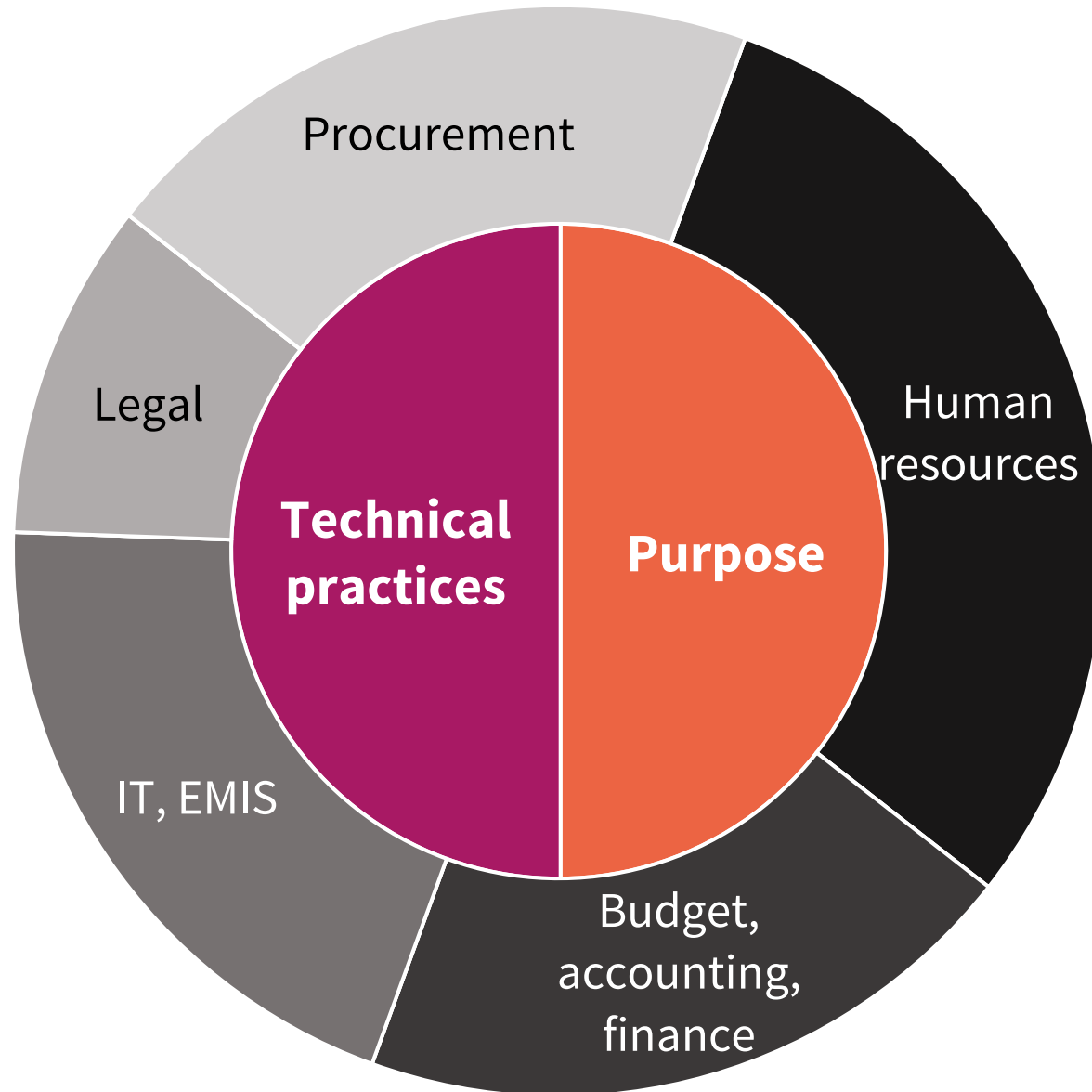
Sources of teacher motivation	Choose and <b>curate</b> toward commitment to C and C	Commitment <b>only</b> (typical civil service)
 <b>Finances</b>	✓	✓
 <b>Material Circumstances</b>	✓	✓
 <b>Personal Satisfaction</b>	✓	?
 <b>Social Validation</b>	✓	?

“A **probationary period** on entry to teaching should be recognized both by teachers and by employers as the opportunity for the **encouragement and helpful initiation of the entrant** and for the **establishment and maintenance of proper professional standards** as well as the **teacher’s own development of his practical teaching proficiency**. ... the conditions for its satisfactory completion should be strictly related to professional competence ...

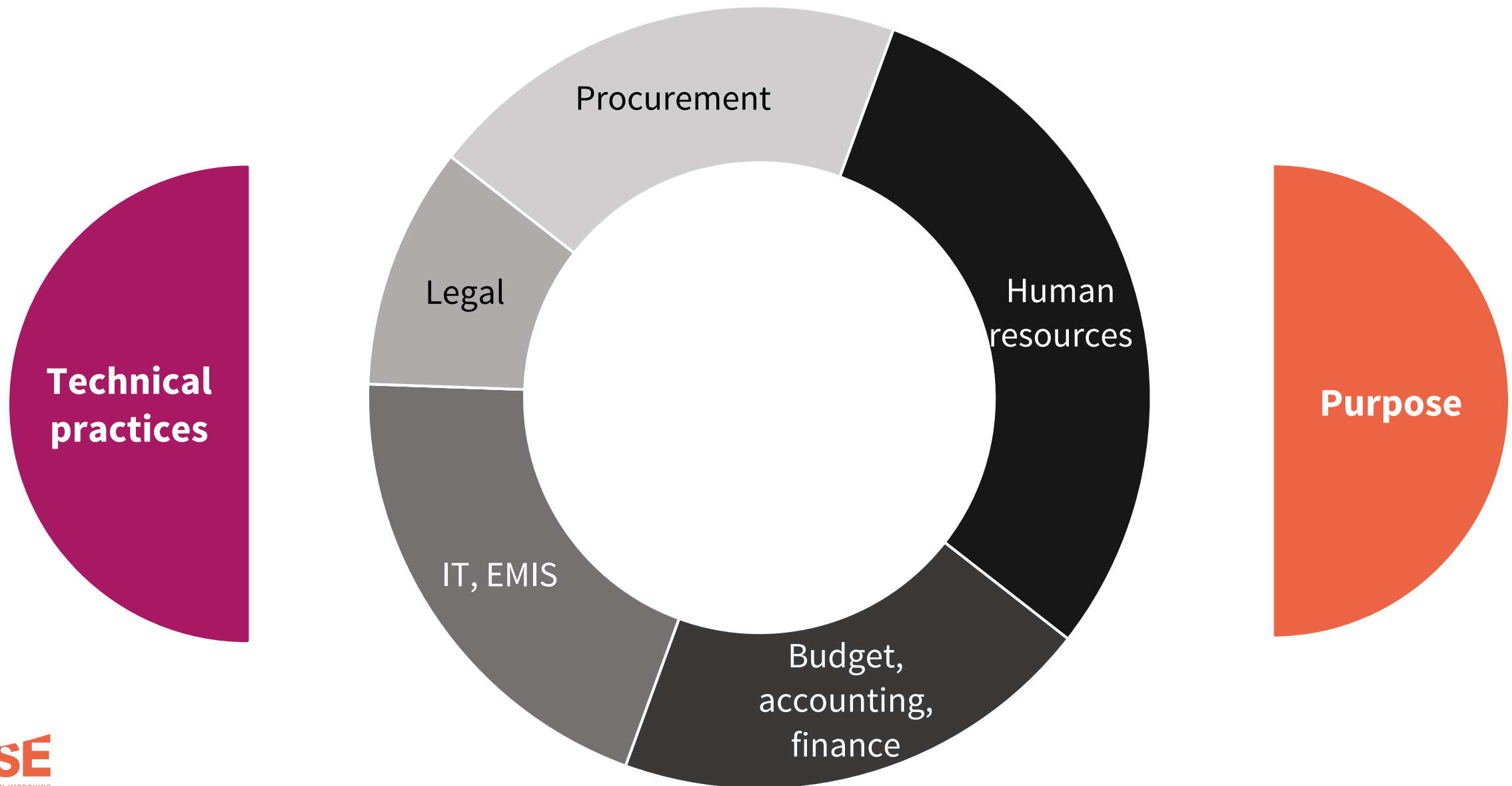
*ILO/UNESCO (1966), Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers, para. 39*

At the **core** of CCCCCC  
(and of any effective organisation)  
is **purpose** and **technical capability**

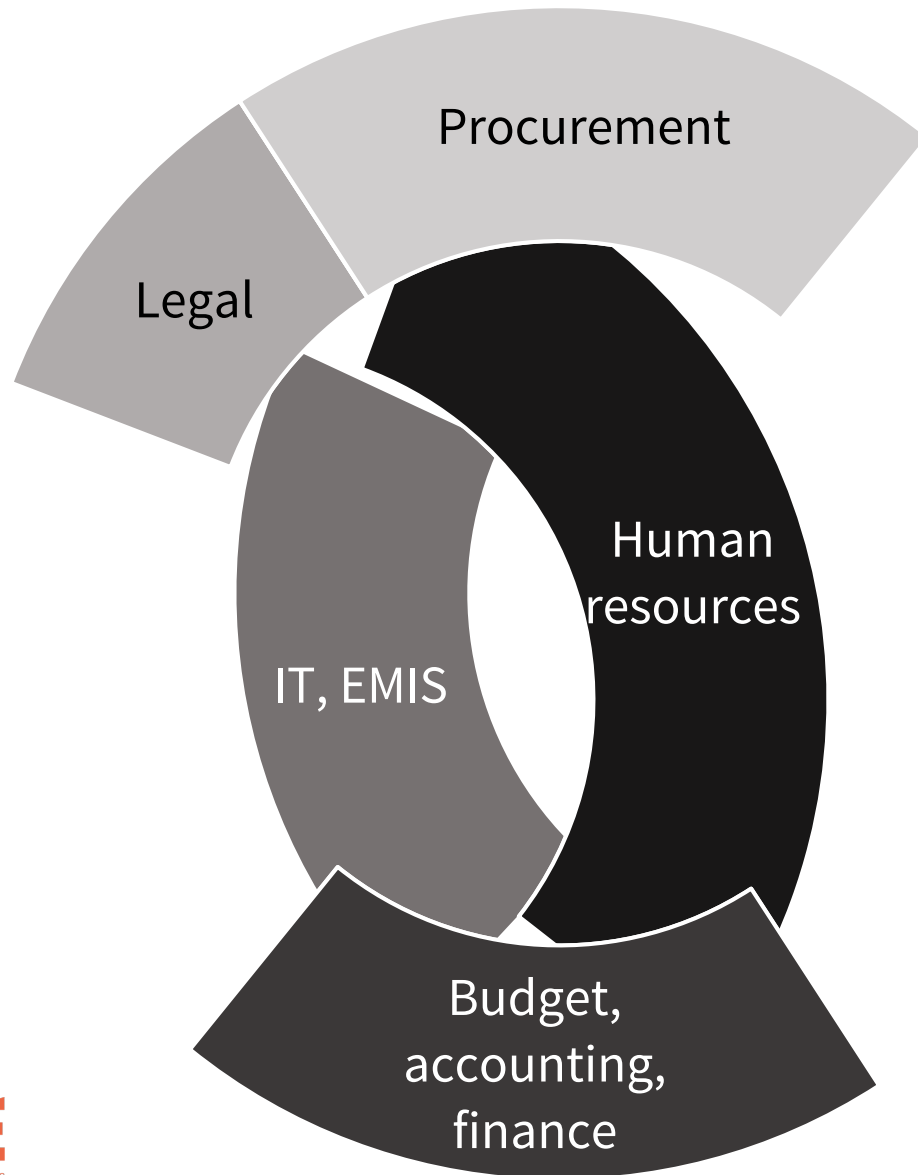
# Effective organisations are effective from the inside out—from their core purpose + technical practices advancing the purpose



If an organisation loses its core, it might continue functioning as a doughnut, but it will likely get co-opted for other goals



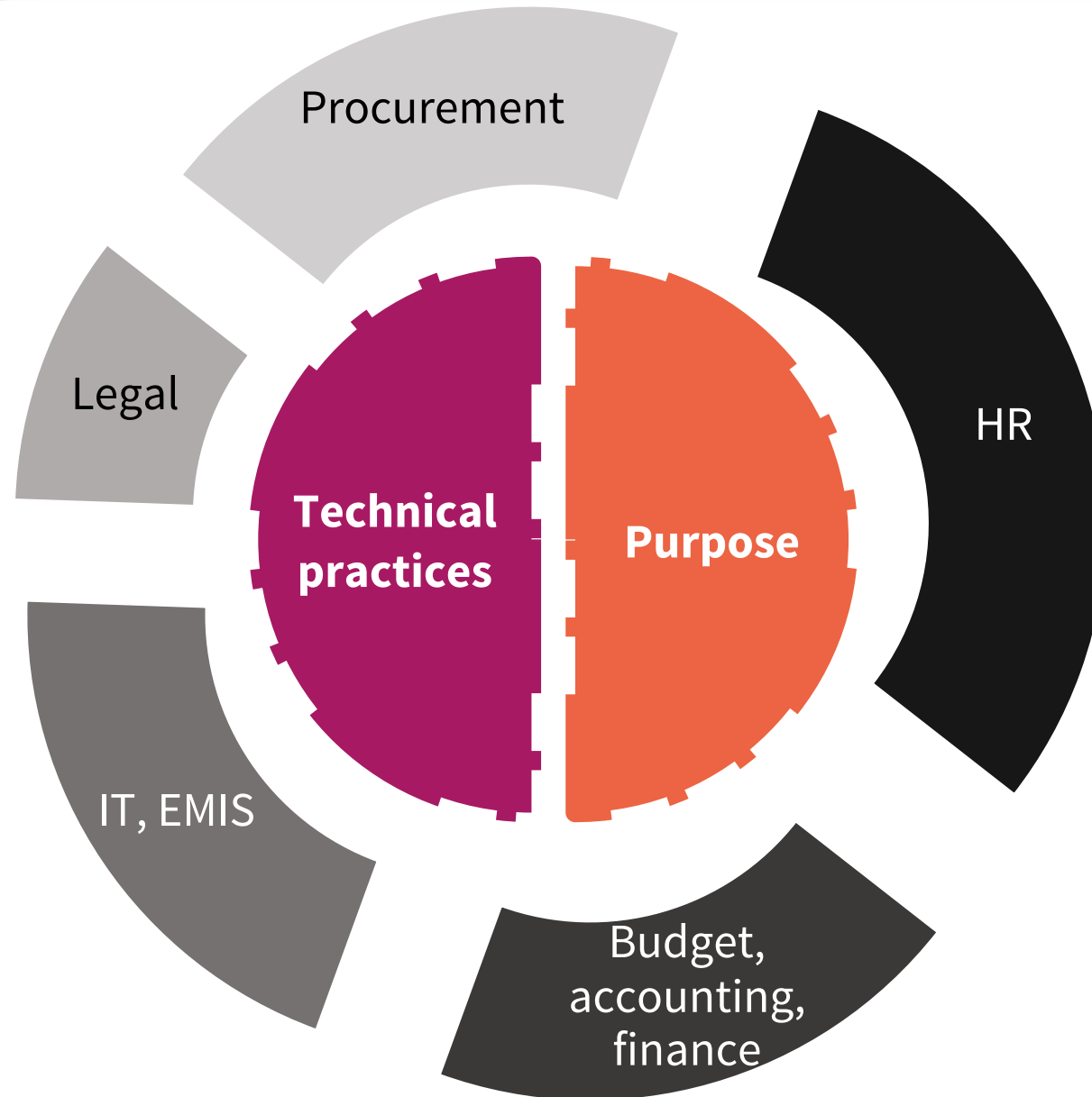
The CCCCC principles do **not** imply that a core-less system can be fixed just by fixing HR (or other support functions) ...



“ There is a lot of documentation work. We have to make a work plan and then upload it, get it printed. **There is so much paper work that** by the time some **teachers** figured that out they **had forgotten what was Shaala Siddhi itself**. I do all the documentation work at home because I have no time in the school.

*Headteacher at a school that was designated as an effective implementer of Shaala Siddhi in Madhya Pradesh, India; quoted Muralidharan & Singh (2020), p. 18, [https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP\\_2020/056](https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2020/056)*

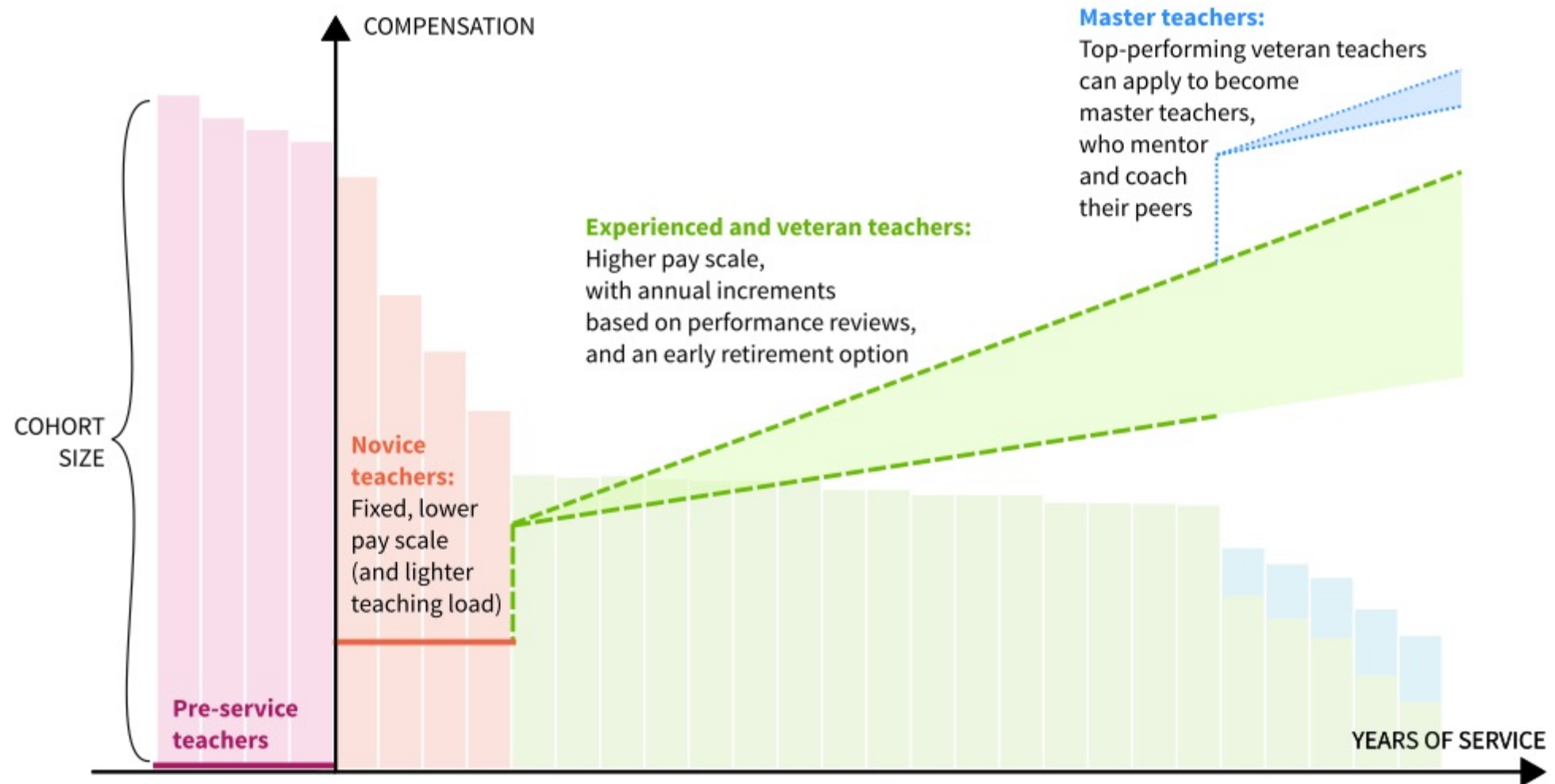
... but if HR and other support functions aren't coherent with the core, the core purpose has to compete with other priorities





# Why **capable** and **committed**? To give the core (technical quality + purpose) the priority that it warrants

**Choose** and **curate** toward **commitment** to **capable** and **committed** teachers



*Note: hypothetical example illustrating one of many possible instantiations of CCCCC. Adapted from Pritchett & Pande (2006).*

# Purpose is fundamental—at every level of the system



**Finances**



**Material  
Circumstances**



**Personal  
Satisfaction**



**Social  
Validation**

## Design elements of teaching careers



**Delegation**



**Information**



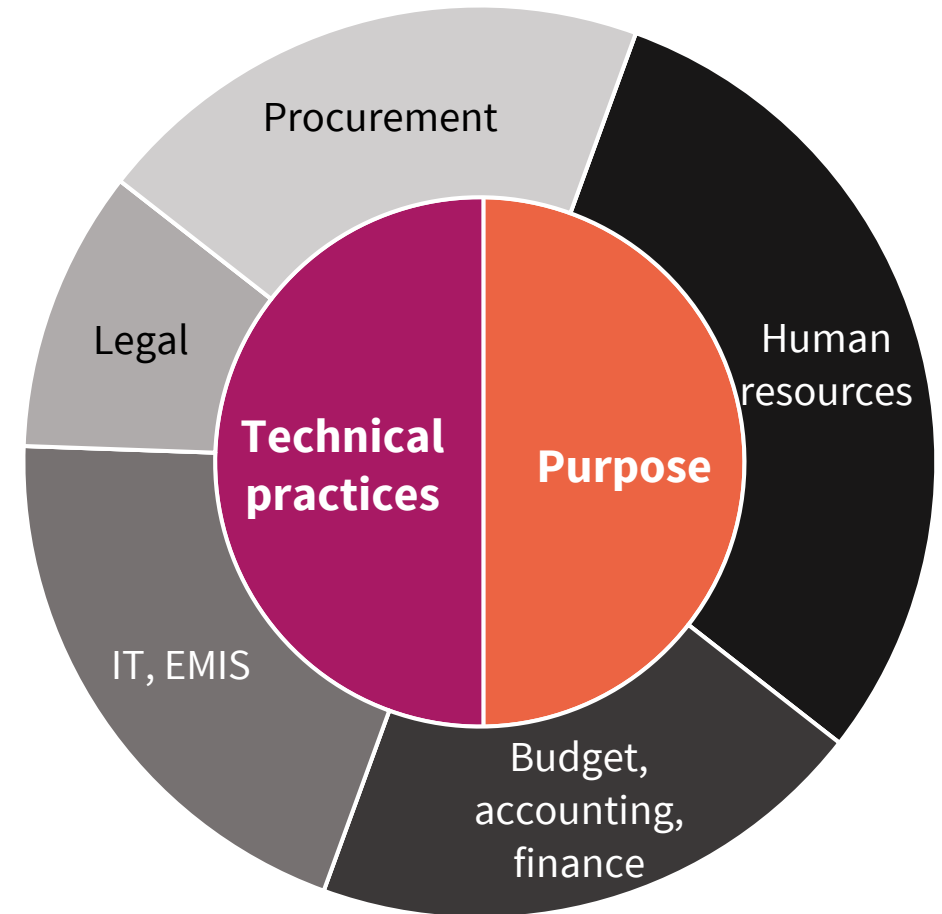
**Support**



**Finance**



**Norms**



# CCCCC is a set of principles—which can (and should!) be implemented differently in different contexts

We can identify elements of teacher careers that look very different on the surface, but similarly reflect aspects of **choose-and-curate-toward-commitment-to-capable-and-committed** teachers:

## Finland

**Choose:** intensive, two-stage screening for entry to pre-service training

## Singapore

**Curate:** ‘compulsory untrained teaching stint’ prior to pre-service training

## Brazil

**Committed:** municipal authority to tailor some elements of teacher careers to local priorities (e.g. Sobral)

## Peru

**Capable:** national-level test of teacher knowledge and accreditation of pre-service training

← LESS CENTRALISED (starfish)

→ MORE CENTRALISED (spider)

# RISE

RESEARCH ON IMPROVING  
SYSTEMS OF EDUCATION

## Thank you very much!

Stay in touch:



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