

RISE

RESEARCH ON IMPROVING
SYSTEMS OF EDUCATION

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

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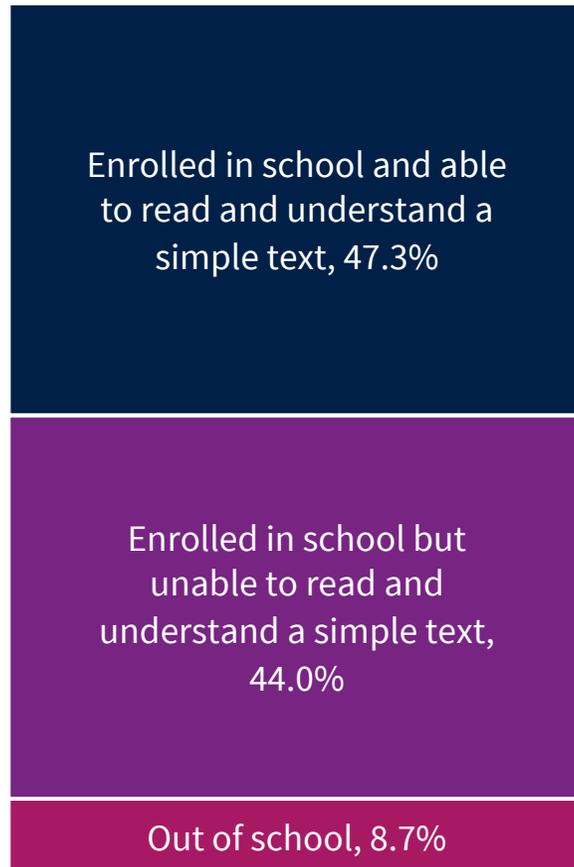
CIES, 26 April 2021 (updated 5 May 2021)



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

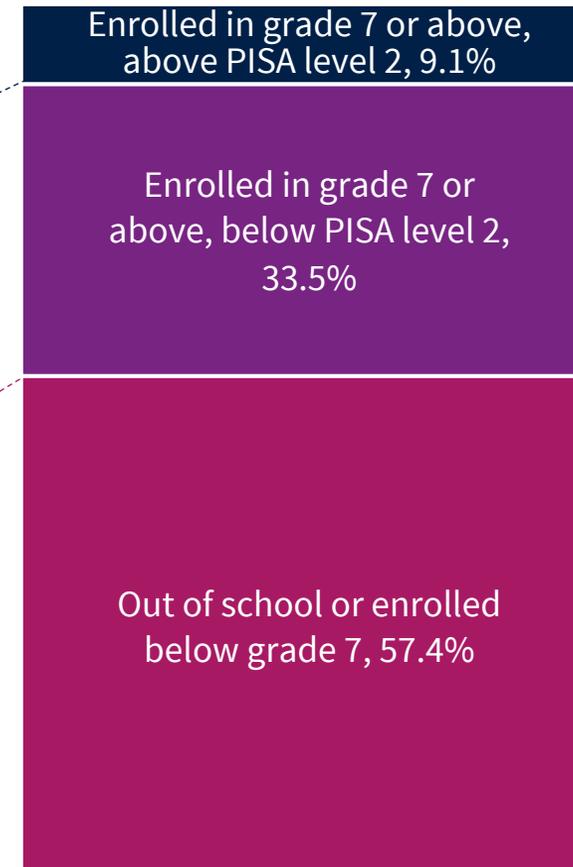
In many developing countries, education systems fail to cultivate learning for many children, even those in school

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)

Gaining years in school with some progress in learning

Gaining years in school without progress in learning

Out of school or far below expected grade level

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

In SACMEQ 2007
for South Africa,

74%

of 6th-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

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

Note: Adapted from the RISE framework. See Pritchett (2015), 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



Finances



Material Circumstances



Personal Satisfaction



Social Validation

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

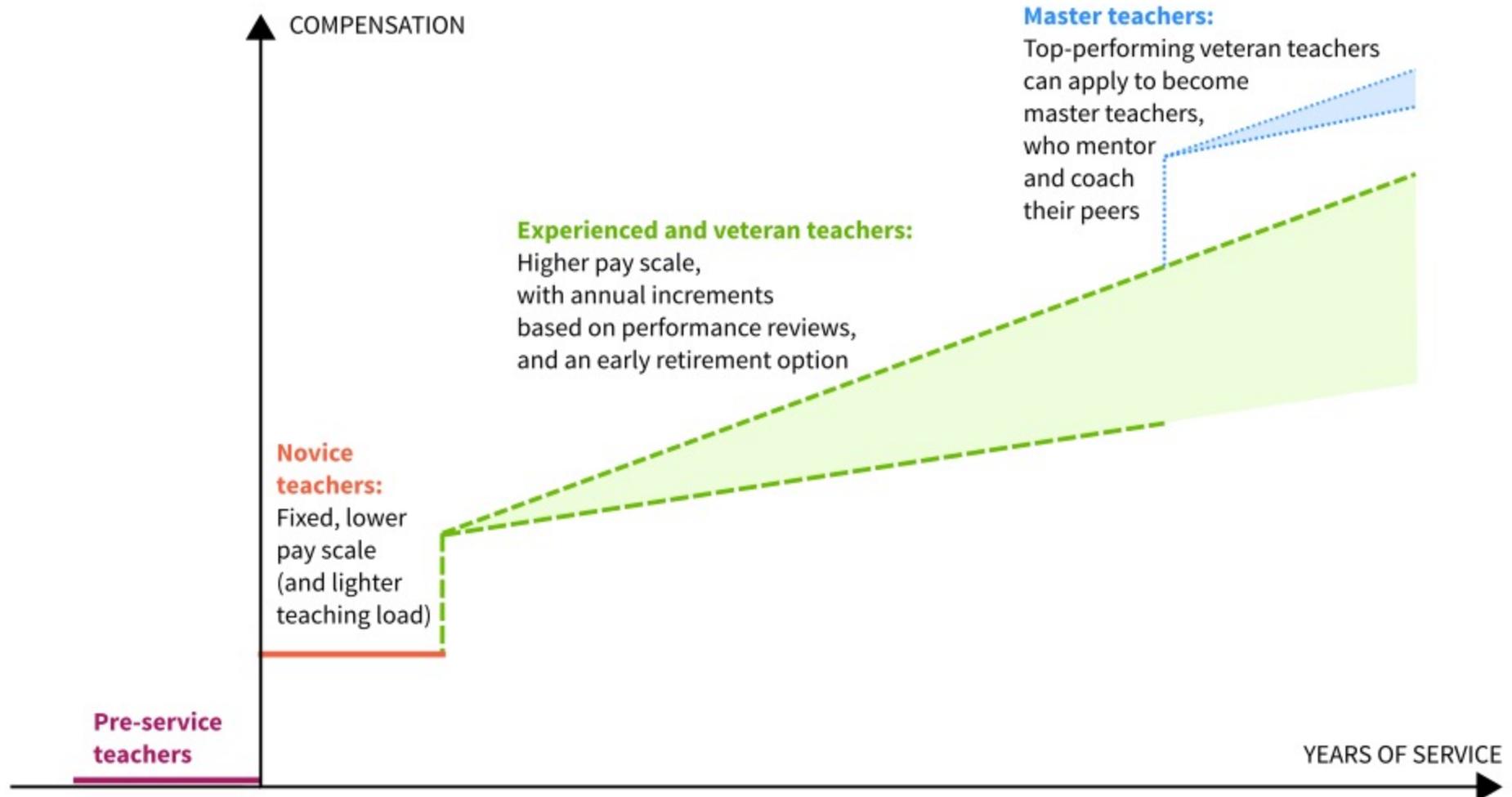
The CCCCC principles:

Choose and **curate**

toward **commitment**

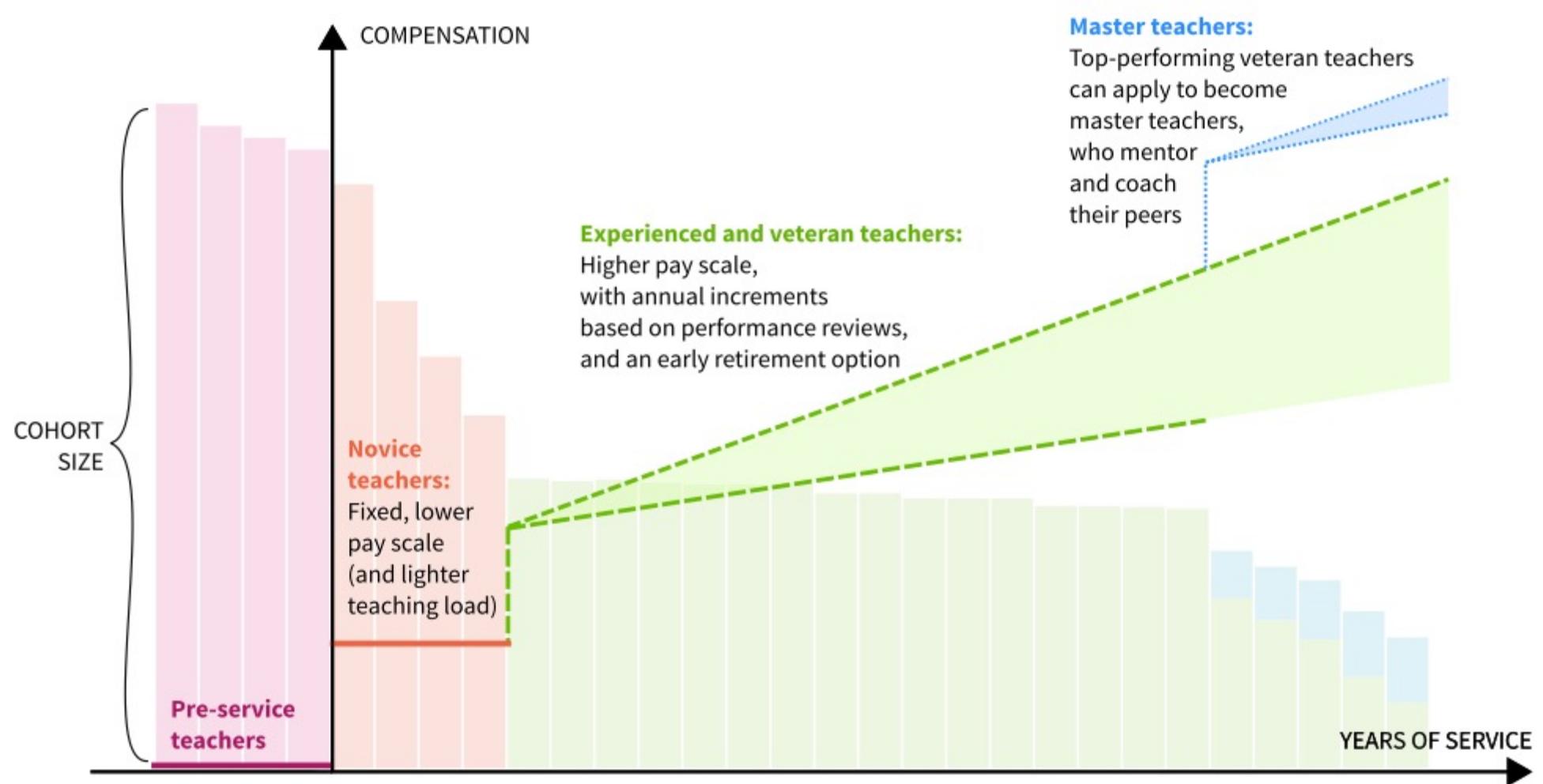
to **capable** and **committed** teachers

Choose and curate toward commitment to capable and committed teachers



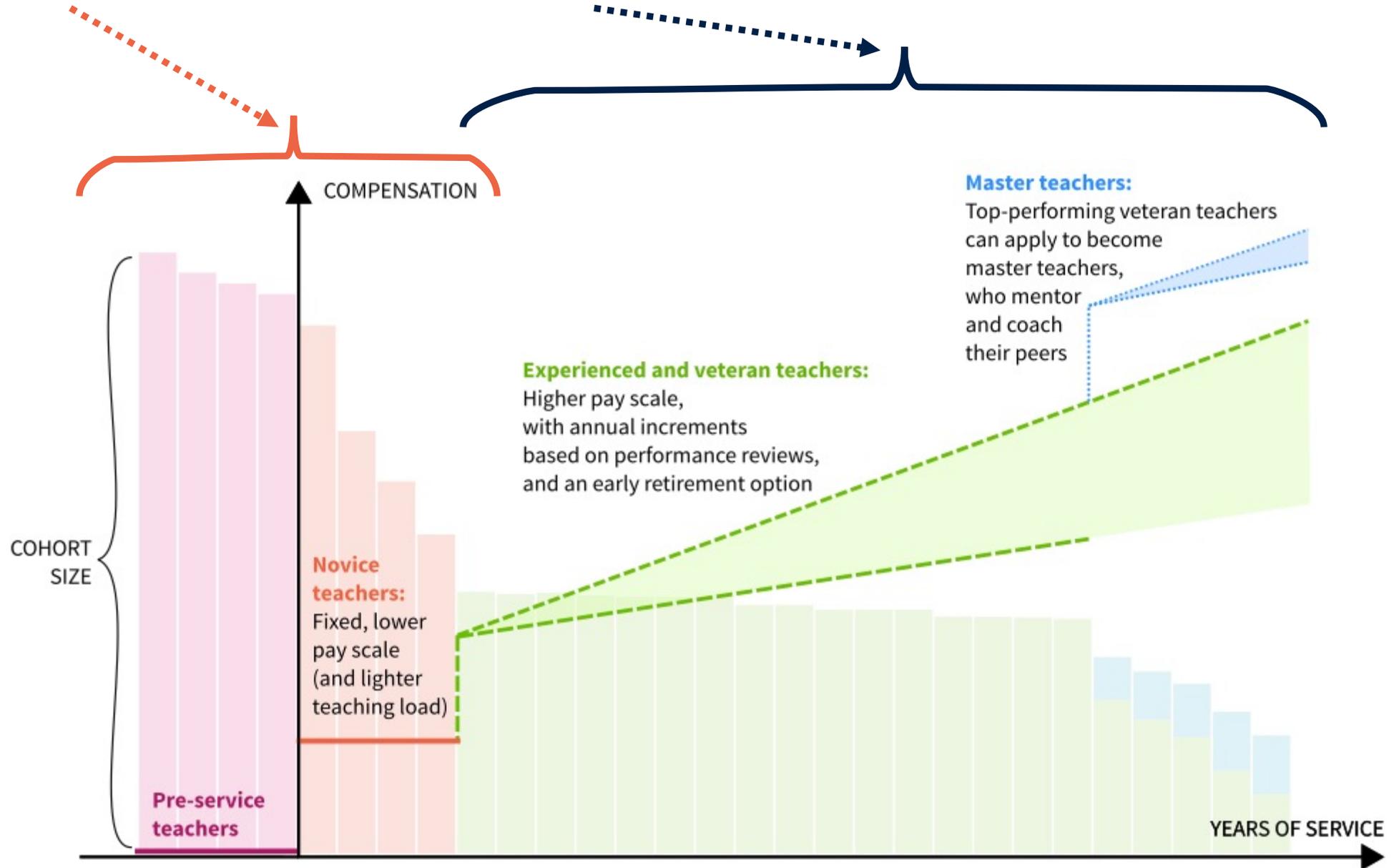
Note: hypothetical example illustrating one of many possible instantiations of CCCC. Adapted from Pritchett & Pande (2006).

Choose and curate toward commitment to capable and committed teachers



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Choose and curate toward commitment to capable and committed teachers



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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



Delegation

Who does what where?



Information

How well are they doing it?



Support

What would help them to do it better?



Finance

Does compensation attract, retain, and motivate quality teaching?



Norms

How should ‘good teachers’ act?

“As things now stand, **most education sector plans create more fragmentation and less coherence**; they address teacher policy dimensions only partially and **do not systematically include all the major determinants** 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 ...

*Teacher Task Force (2019),
Teacher Policy Development Guide, p. 19*

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>

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

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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

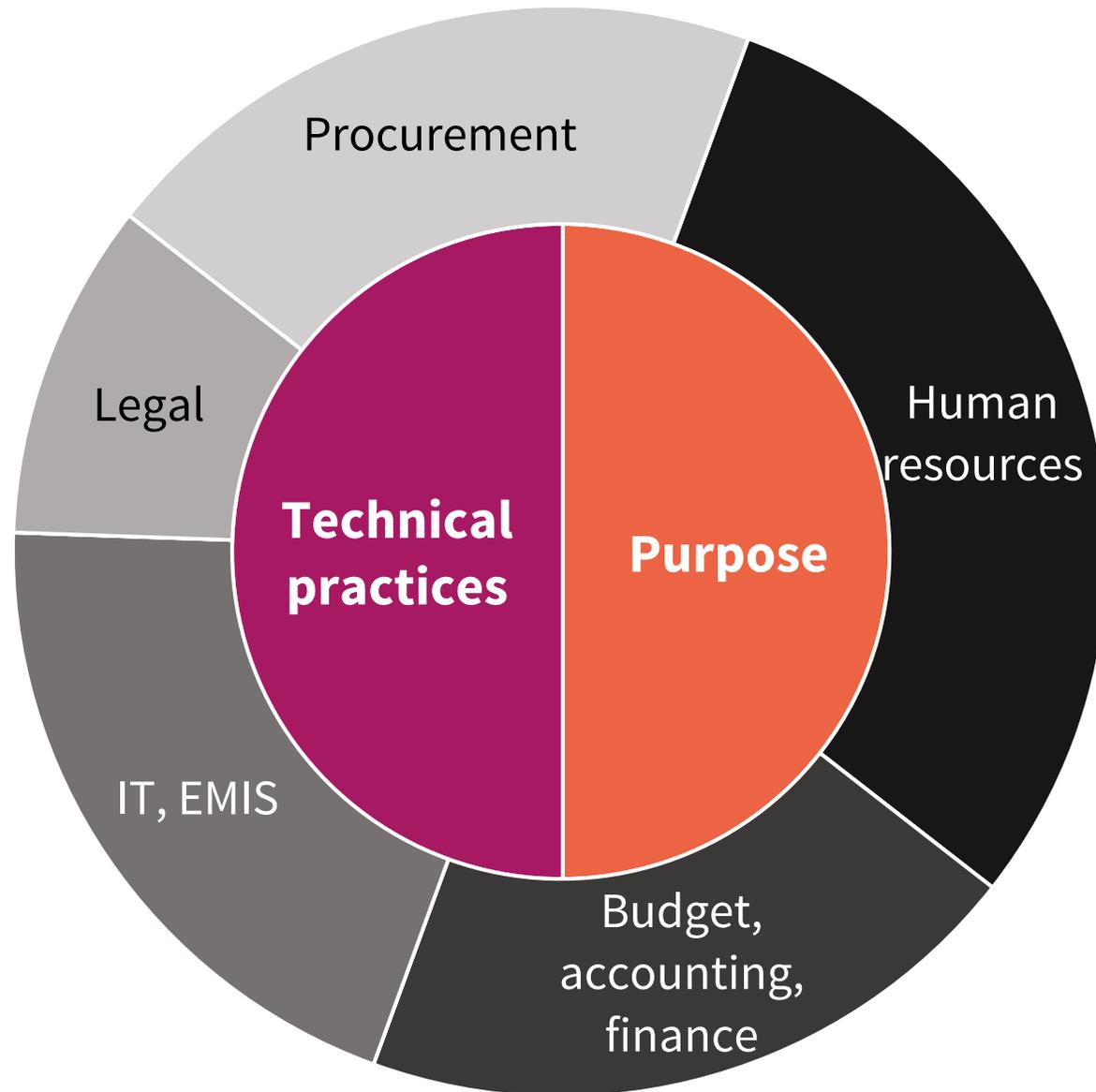
Sources of teacher motivation	Choose and curate toward commitment to C and C	Commitment only (typical civil service)
 Finances	✓	✓
 Material Circumstances	✓	✓
 Personal Satisfaction	✓	?
 Social Validation	✓	?

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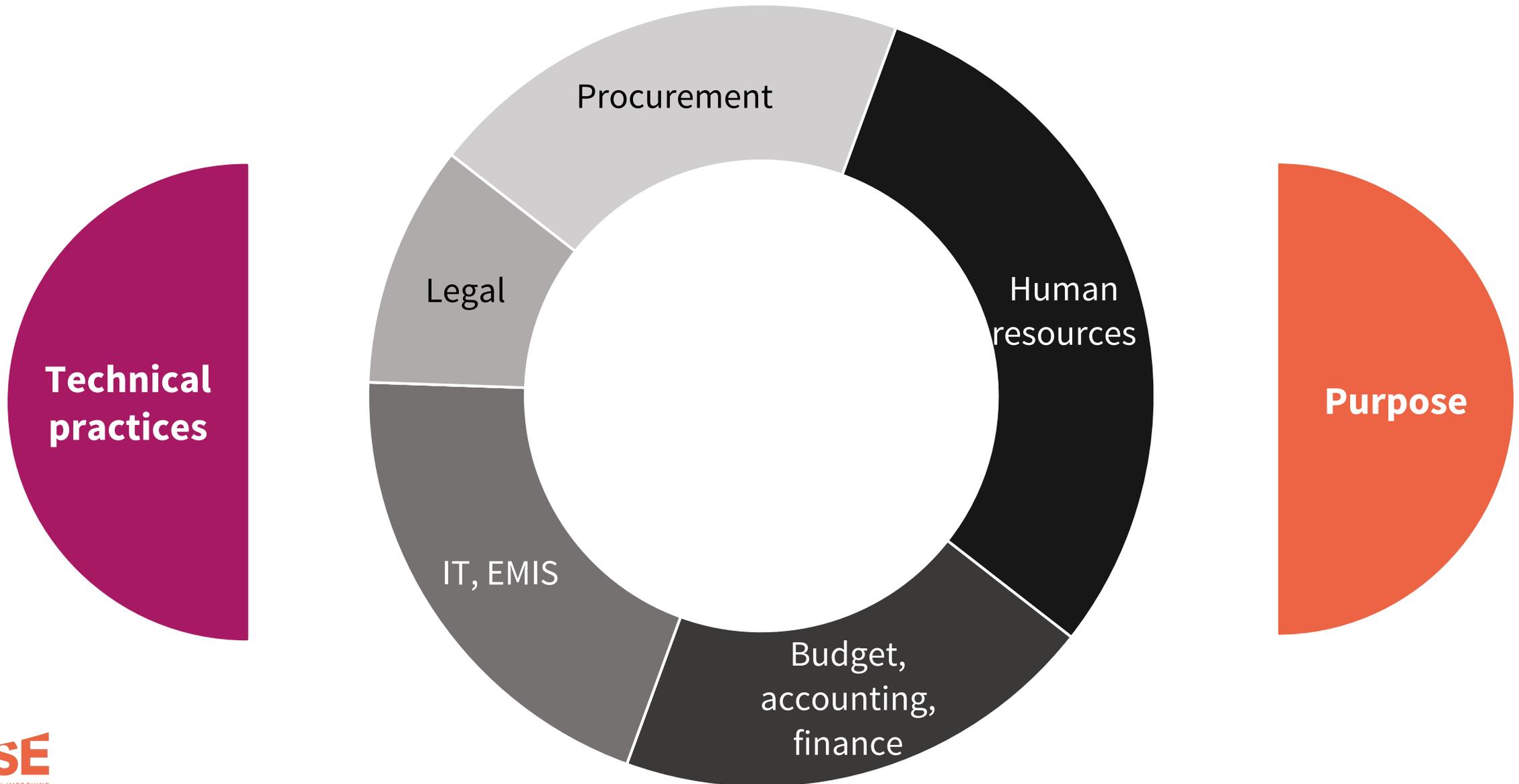
ILO/UNESCO (1966), Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers, para. 39

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

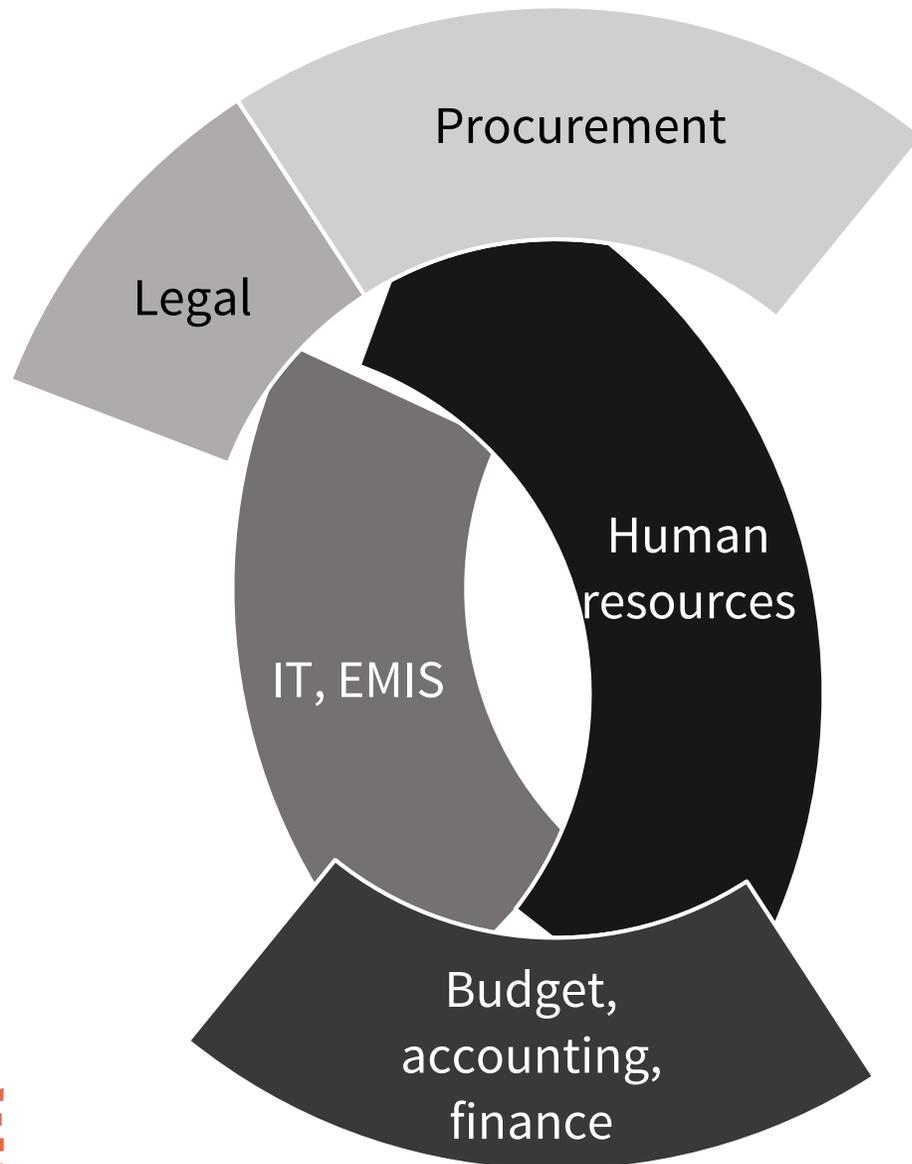
Effective organisations are effective from the inside out—from their core purpose + technical practices advancing the purpose



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



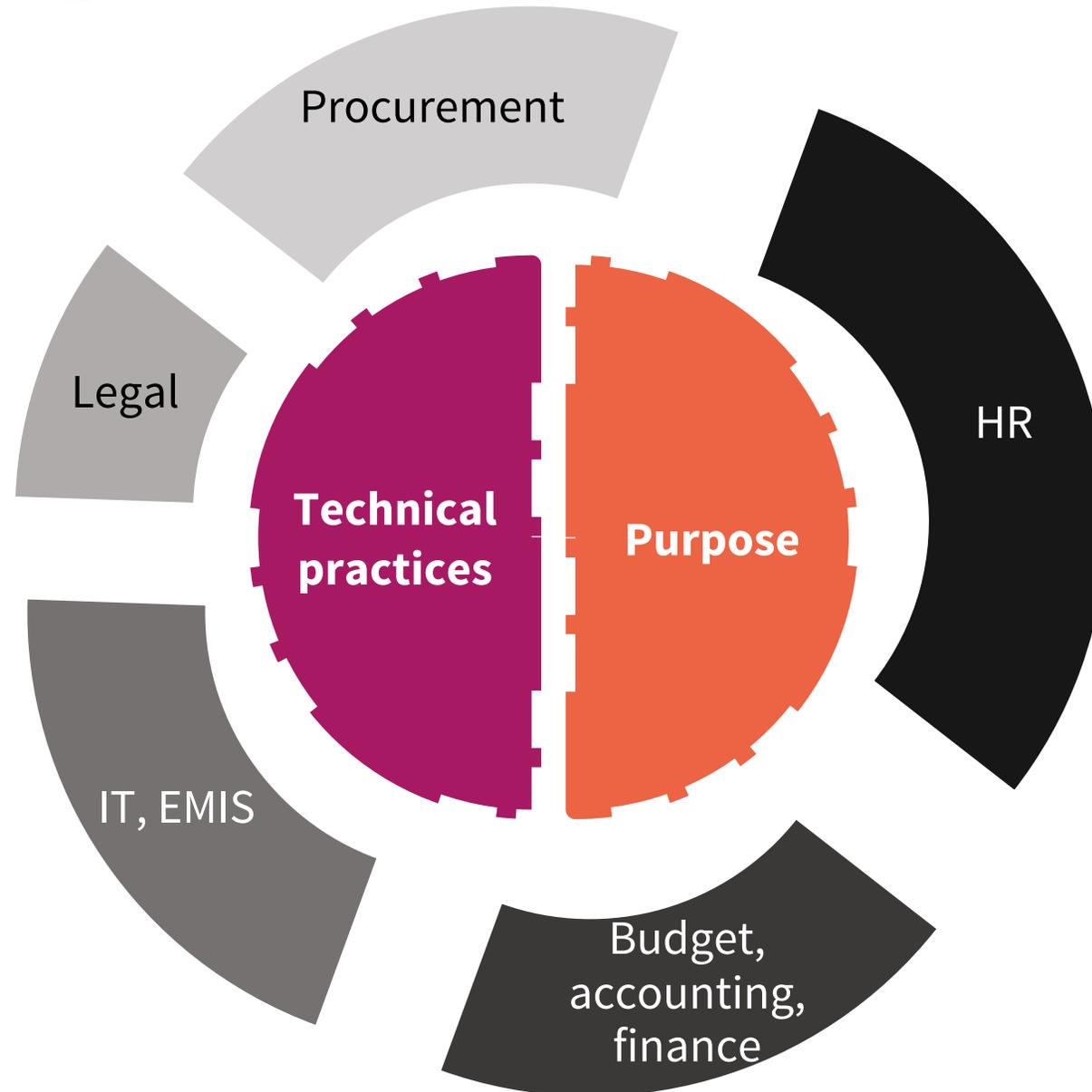
The CCCCC principles do **not** imply that a core-less system can be fixed just by fixing HR (or other support functions) ...



“ 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.

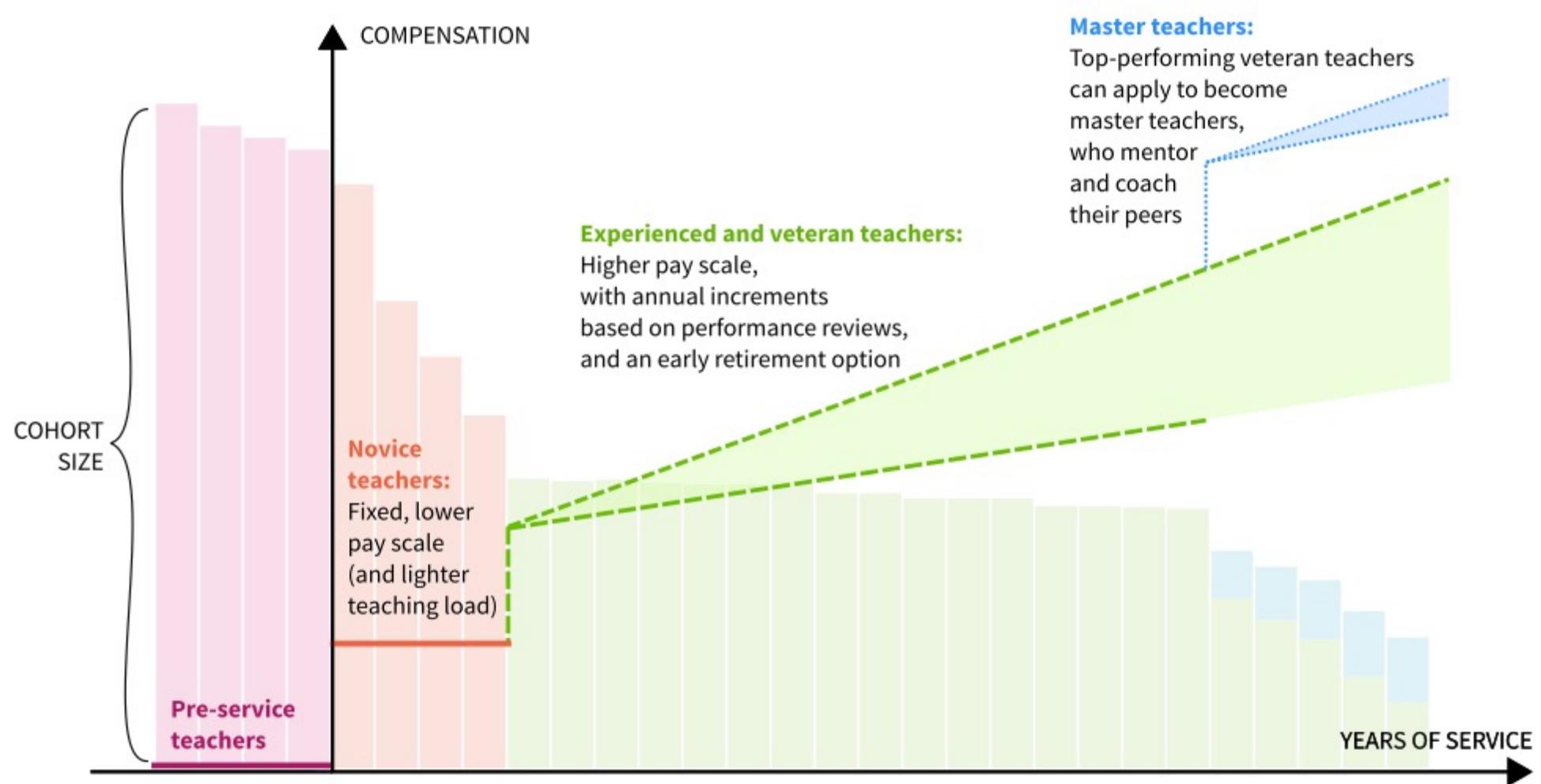
Headteacher at a school that was designated as an effective implementer of Shaala Siddhi in Madhya Pradesh, India; quoted Muralidharan & Singh (2020), p. 18, https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2020/056

... 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 CCCC. 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



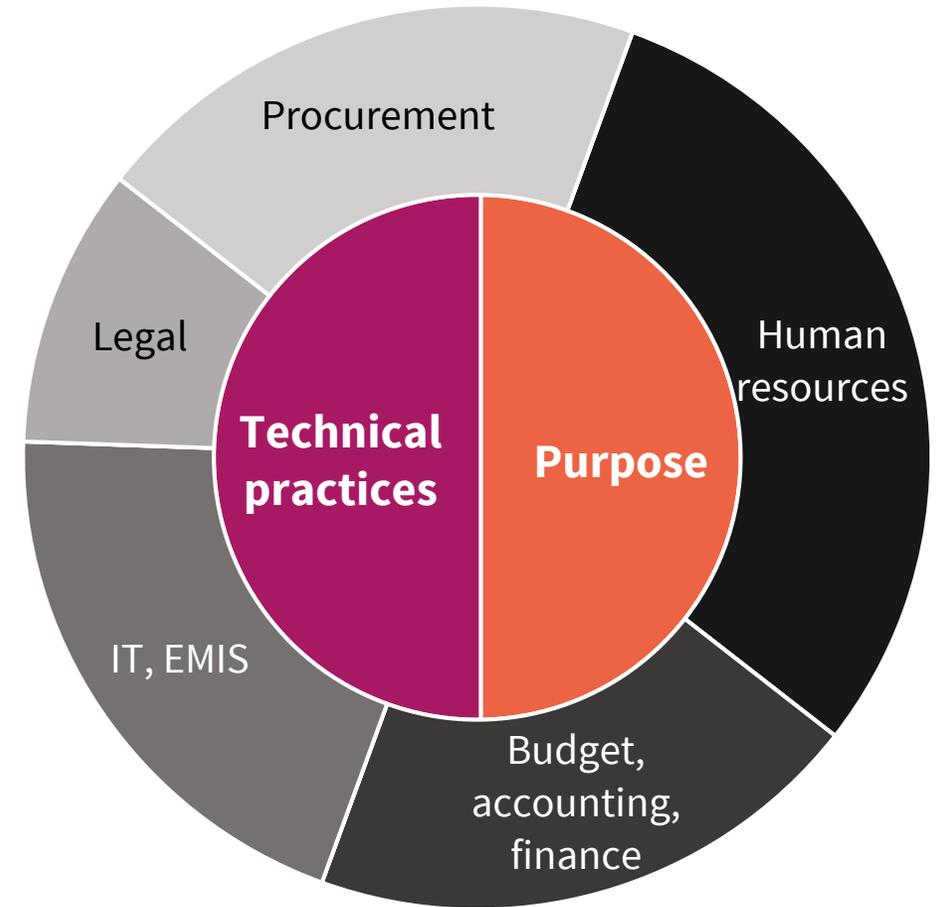
Support



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)

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Thank you very much!

Stay in touch:



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