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# Proposed UNESCO Global Monitoring Report, 2013

The UK National Commission's  
submission to the consultation

*June 2013*



United Kingdom  
National Commission for UNESCO

Policy Brief

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Focus your efforts on good  
high quality instruction  
– that is what the best  
performing systems  
show you.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Andreas Schleicher, OECD, *Times Educational Supplement*, 14 December 2012

# Executive Summary

Each year, UNESCO publishes an *Education for All Global Monitoring Report* (GMR)<sup>2</sup> reporting on the world's progress towards achieving the six 'Education for All' goals. Each annual report also examines a particular education theme. The identified theme for 2013 is 'Teaching and learning for development'.

The UNESCO GMR team has produced an overview of the proposed coverage of the 2013 GMR and is consulting on it.

This policy brief seeks to help shape the scope of the thematic section of the 2013 GMR, with a particular focus on the second part of the theme '*Teaching and learning for maximum impact*'. It concludes that:

- The proposed combining of two separate themes 'equity in education' and 'teaching quality' into a single report do not sit comfortably together. The focus of the report needs to be sharpened.
- There is a lack of connection between the UNESCO Teacher Strategy<sup>3</sup> and the proposed coverage of the 2013 GMR.
- The overview of proposed coverage for the 2013 GMR over-emphasises factors external to teacher and teaching quality, notably curriculum and assessment.
- There are significant factors influencing teacher and teaching quality which are omitted which need to be covered in the GMR.

It recommends that:

- The GMR should have a single focus – on the evidence *that the quality of teachers and quality of teaching* improves learning and thereby raises standards.
- The 'Equity in education' theme be not included as a focus of the 2013 GMR. It is significant enough for a separate publication in its own right.

<sup>2</sup> [www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport)

<sup>3</sup> [www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/education-building-blocks/teacher-education/strategy](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/education-building-blocks/teacher-education/strategy)

- The 2013 GMR should cover the themes relating to teacher and teaching quality included in the UNESCO Teacher Strategy 2012–2015.
- The GMR should give much greater focus to the following factors which influence teacher and teaching quality:
  - Initial teacher education
  - Continuing professional development
  - Leadership
  - Teacher status

# 1 / Background

Each year, UNESCO publishes an *Education for All Global Monitoring Report* (GMR) reporting on the world's progress towards achieving the six 'Education for All' goals. Each annual report also examines a particular education theme. The identified theme for 2013 is 'Teaching and learning for development'.

The annual GMR is produced by the GMR Team which sits within the Education section of UNESCO but is entirely independent of it. The GMR team uses data from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics as well as information that it collects itself from countries and organisations.

The GMR team has produced an overview of the proposed coverage of the 2013 GMR and is consulting on it. The overview proposes that the thematic section of the Report will look in more detail at the importance of teaching and learning for development and '*will be divided into two inter-related parts*'.

The first part of the proposed thematic section is entitled '*Education for development post-2015*'. The overview states:

*The first part will demonstrate why it is vital to place equity in education at the centre of the post-2015 development agenda. It will show that the failure of the Millennium Development Goals to do this is one reason they have not led to as much progress as intended. New data analysis will be presented to identify how overcoming inequalities in educational access and learning is needed if future development goals are to be successful.*

The second part of the thematic section is entitled '*Teaching and learning for maximum impact*'. The overview states:

*The second part will look in more detail at the types of policies and programmes needed to ensure equitable learning contributes to economic, social and political development, paying particular attention to teacher*

*reforms. This part will begin by providing a snapshot of the current status of learning inequalities, identifying whether and how these have narrowed in some countries over time. It will showcase countries that have managed to extend access to education while improving learning outcomes. It will then put the spotlight on reforms in teacher recruitment, deployment and governance needed to improve equitable learning outcomes. The Report will also look at the curriculum and assessment reforms needed to enable teachers to fulfil their role in ensuring all children and young people are equipped with relevant knowledge and skills to contribute to their countries' development.*

For each thematic section, the overview sets out a proposed coverage of issues.

**This policy brief seeks to help shape the scope of the thematic section of the 2013 GMR, with a particular focus on the second part of the theme 'Teaching and learning for maximum impact'.**

## 2 / Sharpening the focus of the 2013 GMR

The proposed first theme '*Education for development post-2015*' expresses a desire that any redrafting of the Education For All (EFA) goals post-2015 should place a greater emphasis on equity. Previous GMRs have shown that whilst progress in some countries towards EFA goals has been positive, this progress has not always been equitable or consistent within countries.

However, as currently drafted, the proposed first theme is a statement of the value of education generally and, more specifically, equity in education in promoting prosperity, health and social and political benefits. Few would disagree with these statements but it is questioned whether the GMR is the appropriate place for setting out a post-2015 agenda for EFA.

The proposed linking of the equity theme with the teacher quality theme causes confusion. Equity in education is a universally espoused principle underpinning the EFA Goals. It is not the exclusive preserve of teaching. Equitable learning at the classroom or school levels is only one aspect of equitable education systems. Equity in education is everything to do with respective countries' overall education policies. It goes without saying that improvements in teacher and teaching quality will contribute to improved development.

Thus the combining of two separate themes into a single report in the overview do not sit naturally together.

**It is recommended, therefore, that the GMR should have a single focus – on the evidence that the quality of teachers and quality of teaching improves learning and thereby raises standards. It is also recommended that the equity theme be not included as one focus of the 2013 GMR. The equity in education theme is significant enough for a separate**

**publication in its own right.** This could help consideration and redrafting of the post-2015 EFA Goals.

Linked to this, the title '*Teaching and learning for development*' can be read in a way which suggests that the GMR's focus will be coverage of *teaching about development* which is not intended to be the case. **It is recommended that further consideration be given to the title of the 2013 GMR report to convey that the report's thematic focus is on improving the quality of teachers and teaching.**

# 3 / Connecting the 2013 GMR to UNESCO's Teacher Strategy for 2012–2015

In October 2012, UNESCO launched its new Teacher Strategy for the three years prior to the 2015 headline date for the EFA goals. The main emphasis of the strategy is on supporting teachers for quality learning. Based on previous experiences and on the application of the Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa and other UNESCO teacher-related programmes, UNESCO has identified three strategic priorities with associated themes. These are:

- Teacher shortage: bridge the teacher gap in priority countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa;
- Teacher Quality: improve teaching quality; and
- Research, knowledge production and communication: inform the global debate about teaching with comparative evidence.

The stated purpose of the strategy is to “configure a teaching force that works in an environment that rewards professional improvement and that is committed to improve the opportunities for student learning with well qualified and duly supported teaching practices. The Strategy provides an overall framework for a new initiative on teachers, aimed at accelerating progress towards EFA goals.” The new initiative is provisionally called *Quality Teachers for EFA. The UNESCO Initiative for Teachers' Capacity Development in Priority Countries*. It is soon to be released as an additional document.

UNESCO's Teacher Strategy for 2012–2015 describes a number of actions, set out in the following table:

Priorities	Action lines	Activities
<b>1. Bridging the teacher gap</b>	1. Capacity development at country level	Reinforcing teacher training institutions and teacher educators
		Supporting teacher policy formulation, implementation and monitoring and facilitating feedback mechanisms so that teachers views can inform policies
<b>2. Improving teacher quality</b>	2. Qualifying teachers and promoting their professional development	Supporting teacher professional development through diversified strategies including ICT
		Monitoring, improving and sustaining teacher motivation
		Clearing house-dissemination of best practices in classroom teaching
<b>3. Research, knowledge production communication (Informing the global debate about teaching)</b>	3. Reinforcing school leadership	Teaching evaluation and support
	4. Monitoring instruments and promoting teaching standards	Professional development of school principals and managers as instructional leaders
5. Documenting progress		International reference frameworks and recommendations
		UNESCO standards for teaching which may lead to an International Board of Professional Teaching Standards
		Reporting on critical issues about the teaching profession

**There is a lack of connection between the UNESCO Teacher Strategy and the proposed coverage in the 2013 GMR. It is suggested that a more coherent approach to examining global progress in teacher quality would be for the GMR to follow all or some of the themes in the UNESCO Teacher Strategy 2012–2015.** Such a focus would also, in turn, bring greater benefit to the UNESCO Education Sector by providing it with a baseline of evidence of existing practice in teacher and teaching quality to help sharpen even further its strategy during the next three years.

## 4 / Improving the GMR's proposed coverage of teacher and teaching quality issues

### The centrality of the teacher

There is no more important resource to a country's education system than the well-qualified, well-motivated teacher.

The McKinsey Report '*How the World's Best Performing School Systems come out on top*' studied 25 of the world's school systems, including 10 of the top performers. The experience of these top school systems suggested that three things matter most:

- getting the right people to become teachers;
- developing them into effective instructors; and
- ensuring the system is available to deliver the best possible instruction for every child.

Just as significant for the purposes of this policy brief, is the report's claim that the best practices which develop the above "*work irrespective of the culture in which they are applied. They demonstrate that substantial improvement in outcomes is possible in a short period of time and that applying these best practices universally could have enormous impact in failing school systems, wherever they may be located.*"

## External factors – curriculum & assessment

In the overview's proposed coverage, there is an over-emphasis on curriculum and assessment policy. Whilst policy clearly can impact on teaching quality, the GMR's thematic focus on teacher/teaching quality will be obscured if it is interpreted too widely.

Innovations in curriculum ('what' is taught) are external to the process of *how* the curriculum is taught. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is a relationship between the curriculum and teaching – a purely knowledge-based curriculum may lend itself to didactic teaching and rote learning – it is still nevertheless the case that even enlightened curricula (where knowledge, skills and understanding are developed together), can be taught well or taught badly. This emphasises further the need for the GMR to focus on the quality of teachers and teaching.

Within the overview, there is similarly reference to countries' use of assessment to track student learning progress and improve education policy. Assessment outcomes and assessments themselves have a number of purposes– including formative, diagnostic, summative and evaluative. The GMR overview however suggests an over-emphasis on the assessment of learning rather than assessment *for* learning. Summative assessments are more useful for measuring whole group / cohort / country progress and tend to be of interest to governments rather than the issue of teacher quality. Assessment *for* learning provides learners with feedback on achievement and on the next steps they need for them to make progress. Assessments of this type and for this purpose are the assessment skills which teachers need and which ought to be the central part of the GMR's analysis of teaching quality. The statement in the overview that, "*Attention will be given to innovative classroom assessments to provide teachers and learners with information to improve outcomes*" is therefore welcomed.

## Consistency in terminology

There is a confused use of terminology in the overview as currently drafted. A number of terms are used interchangeably in respect of quality, including 'teaching', 'learning', 'quality of teaching activities', 'education quality', 'teacher qualities'. These mean different things. A sharper focus on what influences teacher and teaching quality is needed.

**The GMR should be firmly focused on factors which are central to improving the quality of teachers and quality of teaching and how this contributes to better learning and raised standards.** It should in the main, seek to exclude factors external to this central issue.

## Factors which influence teacher and teaching quality

Important factors which are not given sufficient attention in the overview as drafted are explored below. These aspects are reflected to varying degrees in the UNESCO Teacher Strategy 2012–2015.

The factors are:

- Initial teacher education
- Continuing professional development
- Leadership
- Teacher status

The following sections pose questions and areas for analysis that the 2013 GMR should explore in relation to the above factors.



## a) Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

**(i) Entry requirements** An oft-quoted phrase from the McKinsey Report is “*The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers*”. The report shows that recruiting the right people to become teachers is a key factor in successful education systems and goes on to say that teacher training entrants need to have a “*high overall level of literacy and numeracy, strong interpersonal and communication skills, a willingness to learn and the motivation to teach*”. How these essential skills and attributes of a teacher are identified and developed before and during ITE should be a fruitful area for the GMR to explore.

**(ii) Routes to a teaching qualification** The route to becoming a qualified teacher is, in most countries, through a Higher Education institution, however, there are education systems which enable persons who are in different occupations to re-train as teachers without having to lose an income. These routes vary from employment-based (on-the-job) training to distance learning. The GMR could usefully explore the contribution that different routes to a teacher qualification make and the impact that these have on teacher quality.

**(iii) The content of ITE courses** What is taught in ITE is central to the way in which teachers perceive themselves and their roles. The content of a programme of ITE can be determined by an individual government, can be left to an institution to determine or shaped by centrally established criteria. As well as subject knowledge, the content of ITE courses may include the professional values of a teacher, how pupils learn, planning, pedagogy, classroom management and assessment, recording and reporting. Either way, there will be a degree of correspondence and of divergence between the content of ITE courses between countries which can impact on the output (the quality of teachers). It would be useful for the GMR to compare, through examples, the differing content of ITE courses with observations on the way that this may impact on the degree of preparedness of teachers to undertake their roles.

**(iv) Quality assurance of ITE** Given the importance attributed to the initial teaching qualification, it is important that countries have systems in place to ensure that training and development is of an appropriate quality. Depending on the provision, this may be through HE’s own quality assurance systems or

through inspections, audits or professional bodies’ accreditations. The GMR could look at where quality assurance systems have improved ITE provision and thus led to improved student teacher preparation.

### The GMR should consider:

- What are the selection processes used by countries to ensure that the right people are recruited to become teachers?
- What evidence exists of different routes to a teaching qualification and what impact it might have on teaching and learning in the classroom?
- How does the content of ITE programmes influence the perception of teachers of their roles and their approach to teaching?
- How do countries ensure that their ITE provision is able to turn out teachers of quality?

## b) Continuing professional development (CPD)

Acquiring an initial teaching qualification is not the end but the beginning of a professional journey for a teacher. A teacher needs to be a learner themselves, constantly striving for improvement to better their knowledge, their understanding and skills. CPD is the means by which this can be brought about. Ranging from developing personal knowledge about a new subject responsibility to the pedagogic and assessment skills needed to get more from their pupils, the teacher is constantly faced with the challenge of how to improve their practice. Thus the ongoing development of the teacher is a key influence on teaching quality.

**(i) CPD provision** Opportunities for a teacher to develop professionally once qualified may vary greatly. Some countries may have available CPD programmes linked to HE or ITE institutions, others may have provision for in-service training provided by private education providers. For some, distance learning through the world-wide web is the means by which teachers can develop their skills. Other countries may have no provision for teacher CPD. Ideally, national CPD programmes need to be structured in such a way to allow a continuum of professional learning to take place in a progressive way. It would be useful for the GMR to highlight the contribution to improved teacher quality that the provision and availability of further training and development for teachers makes.

**(ii) CPD and developing peers** The professional learning of the teacher is a journey which commences with an initial teaching qualification and ideally progresses on through the teaching career – whether the teacher remains in the classroom or develops to become a school leader. Some CPD is carried out in small groups of teachers learning together in professional learning communities within a school or at regional events or networks between schools. In turn, these teachers may become models of practice for other teachers.

At the ITE level, it is important that teacher educators – who may also be the providers of teacher CPD – are able to pursue CPD opportunities for themselves, so that they remain up-to-date in their theory and have recent and relevant opportunities to practice as school teachers. It would be helpful if the GMR could illustrate examples of ‘teachers learning from teachers’ and any impact this has on improving teaching quality.

**The GMR should consider:**

- How on-going opportunities for teachers to develop professionally improve teaching quality and thereby impact on learners.
- Examples which illustrate the role that teachers who have developed their professional practice have played in developing their peers.

### **c) Leadership**

At school level, the headteacher should be the lead pedagogue, however, administrative functions relating to the running of the school can often become their foremost priority. School headteachers and principals should be the lead in setting the standards, learning environment, school culture and priorities for their teachers and pupils. Linked to the theme of teacher CPD, school leaders need particular sets of skills and attributes which help motivate and support other teachers to strive for constant improvement and for raised standards. They need to be able to exemplify best practice themselves.

At regional and national levels, education leaders need to support headteachers and schools in their primary function of being learning institutions. To do

this, leaders of school systems need a key focus on improving the quality of teaching both through policy and funding.

The GMR should highlight examples where headteachers and regional and national education leaders have focused on improving teaching quality.

**The GMR should highlight:**

- Examples where headteachers have successfully focused on improving teaching quality in schools and the impact on learners.
- Examples of effective regional and national leadership in education which have resulted in improved teaching quality and outcomes for learners in schools
- What examples exist of different approaches to developing effective schools leaders including through CPD?

### **d) Status of the profession**

Returning to the theme of recruiting the right people to become teachers, evidence suggests a strong correlation between the perceived status of the teaching profession in a country's society and recruitment to become a teacher.

**(i) Factors in determining status** Significant factors in evaluating the status of the teacher within a society include the starting salary of the teacher, entry requirements for teacher training / qualification levels of teachers and the career development systems in place. It would be helpful if the GMR considered the relative status of teaching as a profession compared to other professions. One way of doing this would be by comparing starting salaries of teachers with selected other professions by country.

**(ii) The role of professionally-led organisations** In some countries, there are professionally-led regulatory bodies which set and maintain professional standards. In these countries, this is achieved through teachers being required to be registered with the professional regulatory body, through Codes of Conduct and Practice setting out the expectations of teachers, and through the investigation and hearing by their peers of teachers in breach

of professional standards. Such bodies give the teaching profession in these countries a professional confidence that comes with professional status. They also contribute to teaching quality by encouraging individual teachers to adopt a personal set of professional values. These 'Teaching Councils' tend to be a feature of Commonwealth countries (including African countries) and there is a growing impetus in the Commonwealth grouping for the extension of such bodies, coupled with a desire to secure international recognition of teaching qualifications and registration. It would be helpful if the GMR could exemplify in what ways professional bodies have contributed to improved teacher and teaching quality.

**The GMR should:**

- Compare the relative status of the teacher with other professions by country.
- Highlight the role of professionally-led bodies in raising the status of teachers and the quality of teaching.

## 5 / Recommendations

1. The GMR should have a single focus on the evidence that *the quality of teachers and quality of teaching* improves learning and thereby raises standards.
2. The equity theme should be not included as a focus of the 2013 GMR. The equity in education theme is significant enough for a separate publication in its own right.
3. Further consideration should be given to the title of the 2013 GMR report to convey that the report's thematic focus is on improving the quality of teachers and teaching.
4. Coverage in the GMR should follow all or some of the themes in the UNESCO Teacher Strategy 2012–2015.
5. The GMR should give much greater focus to the following factors which influence the quality of teachers and teaching:
  - initial teacher education
  - continuing professional development
  - leadership
  - teacher status

## 6 / Acknowledgements

This policy brief was produced on behalf of the UK National Commission for UNESCO (UKNC) by Gary Brace, Board member of the UKNC with responsibility for the Education portfolio.

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*The views contained in this policy brief are those of the UK National Commission for UNESCO and do not necessarily reflect those of UK Government or the individuals or organizations who have contributed to this report.*

