



"Bamako + 5" Conference on Contractual Teachers

27-29 October 2009, Bamako, Mali

Co-organized by ADEA, the World Bank, Education International
and
the Ministry of Education of Mali

Concept Note

1. Context

The number of teachers needed to attain Education for All (EFA) goals in Africa has been estimated at 2.4 million (UNESCO Institute for Statistics/EFA). This is, however, a conservative estimate, as consideration of attrition rates varying from 5% to 8% under different assumptions would produce the following scenarios:

- 2.7 million teachers at an attrition rate of 5%
- 3.2 million teachers at an attrition rate of 6.5%
- 3.7 million teachers at an attrition rate of 8%

In addition to the challenge of supplying the required number of teachers, there is the question of whether the teaching force can meet the quality criterion. Africa faces a number of challenges/constraints that undermine national capacities to provide a sufficient number of qualified teachers. These constraints include:

- limited number of training institutions and limited human resources;
- a shortage of post-primary school leavers with the requisite educational background to take teacher training courses;
- very few training programs geared toward preparing school principals and school managers;
- limited fiscal capacity to pay decent salaries to teachers;
- paucity of innovative/alternative ways of preparing teachers and ensuring their professional development.

One of the major education policy issues that has emerged as a result of the situation described above is the recourse to contractual or community teachers to bridge the gap left by the shortage of teachers. In most cases, this new category of teachers obtains very

poor results, owing to their low educational attainment and insufficient training, combined with unattractive terms of employment. Instead of being a temporary stop-gap measure to cope with the shortage of teachers, recruitment of contractuels has intensified, and in some countries they now outnumber qualified teachers.

In November 2004, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), in partnership with the World Bank and Education International (EI), organized a conference in Bamako to address the recruitment and employment of contractual teachers in Francophone African countries. A consensus emerged from the Bamako Conference, now referred to as the **Bamako Consensus**, recognizing that:

“The use of contractual teachers offers a number of opportunities. All the countries that have taken this path have made very significant progress in enrollment. However, recourse to contractual teachers undoubtedly entails risks for the quality of the education provided and for the retention and effectiveness of teaching staff.

Countries need to meet certain minimum criteria for recruitment, training, contracts and working conditions. It is thus becoming increasingly urgent to implement a framework for resolving questions on the recruitment, training, social protection and career track of such teachers.”

The conference therefore recommended the development of a policy framework to assist governments in gradually integrating and providing professional development for contractual teachers in Francophone countries.

A follow-up workshop held in July 2007 in Dakar produced preliminary versions of two instruments designed to guide countries in their efforts to formulate policy in this regard:

- a policy framework for the recruitment, training and professional development of contractual teachers;
- a policy framework establishing career tracks, opportunities for advancement, guarantees of social protection, and the rights and obligations of contractual teachers.

In order to reinforce – through a participatory process – the thoroughly understood and shared idea that the use of contractual teachers constitutes a serious challenge in many African countries in regard to recruitment, training, deployment, professional development and support, to assess the progress made since 2004, and to promote the eventual adoption of the two above-mentioned policy framework documents in the eleven Francophone African countries and elsewhere, ADEA will organize a second conference on contractual teachers in Bamako (known as Bamako + 5) on October 27-29, 2009, that will bring together Francophone, Lusophone and Anglophone participants.

While the recruitment of untrained and unqualified teachers seems to be more pronounced in Francophone Africa, it is not limited to this group of countries. This

second conference is intended to mark an important milestone in the bid to address the teacher gap in all of sub-Saharan Africa. It will be inclusive in scope and participation, taking into account ongoing initiatives and programs to resolve the issues relating to the non-permanent teaching force.

2. Issues

Recourse to contractual teachers raised – and continues to raise – a number of questions concerning recruitment, training and working conditions. While most of the countries concerned have recognized the need for a minimum level of academic attainment to join the teaching force (diploma attesting to completion of four years of secondary education), the question of whether to raise this level is currently on the table, owing to the progress made in knowledge acquisition and enrollment as well as the deficiencies observed in the performance of this category of teachers. Given the pool of potential applicants for primary school teaching posts in the countries concerned, is it worthwhile and feasible to raise the required level of attainment today or in the near future? What consequences would this have? Another issue related to recruitment is that of how to select among applicants. Competitive examinations would seem to guarantee the objectivity and transparency of the selection process, as well as ensuring that the best applicants are hired. How then can we explain the persistence of questionable recruitment methods? Can we identify the best recruitment procedures and consider harmonizing them?

The lack or insufficiency of pre-service training for contractual teachers has been criticized by many, but the countries concerned have made perceptible progress in this respect. However, the length of pre-service training remains a subject of debate, with emphasis on longer pre-service training programs. Taking account of the parameters relating to emergency situations and to long-term prospects, what is the appropriate duration of such training today?

This question cannot be considered in isolation from those of the content and objectives of pre-service training. In this respect, it is necessary to consider the issue of the minimum or common core of professional skills that are indispensable for doing the job.

Few countries have a functional, efficient and sustainable system of in-service training. Traditional approaches – training courses, seminars, inspectors' visits – cannot meet the needs of countries, nor can they significantly change teachers' practices in the classroom. For this reason the thinking on teacher development processes is increasingly turning toward reflective practice, peer exchanges and peer learning, pedagogical support at local level, etc. Can we identify the most promising systems and processes in this area, those best suited to accompany and support teachers in their work?

In these new ways of looking at the problem, the leadership of schools takes on particular importance, in terms of creating a school environment favorable to efforts to improve performance through periodic evaluations, recognition of merit, quality circles, teacher groups and pedagogical advisors, school development projects, mobilization and

unification of energy and resources, etc. That being the case, what strategies should be adopted to promote such school leadership on a large scale?

The redirection of in-service training toward professional development also involves strengthening teachers' identity, ethics and motivation. The programs to be established must include systems of accreditation and validation of this training, and must consider the impact on career advancement. In the contexts considered, how should such systems be designed and implemented?

Disparities in the terms of employment, particularly between permanent teachers with civil servant status and contractual teachers, engender discontent. Most countries have pledged to eliminate such disparities gradually under the terms of a strategic plan. It seems that such commitments are being acted on slowly and are running into various obstacles - fiscal constraints in particular. It therefore seems necessary to foster broad-based consultations among all the stakeholders and partners concerned, including international partners such as the IMF and World Bank, to seek joint solutions.

3. Opportunities

The conference will make concerted efforts to shed new light on cross-cutting issues that contribute to or impede teachers' professional development. Initiatives aimed at lessening the impact of HIV/AIDS, the difficulties of provision in fragile situations, and gender prejudice are gradually changing the way we look at these issues. The latter is no longer considered as barriers but as bridges to encourage teachers to move forward. (I don't follow here...) Certain opportunities are clearly seen as such: the use of information and communication technology in education (ICTE) and the role of universities in training and in the various reforms.

Information and communication technology

Since 2004, distance training and ICTE have made it possible to develop innovative hybrid training systems that combine traditional training with distance training. Although these new systems ease the constraints of time and distance while also increasing teachers' capacity and supporting them in their work, such systems occupy only a negligible place in national training systems and in the teaching and learning process. Use of ICT remains a challenge for decision-makers, given its enormous potential for preparing training course content and teaching/learning resources that are suited to the context and consistent with the curricular reforms in progress.

Taking advantage of the expansion of Internet access which facilitates pooling of ideas at all levels (local, national, intra-African and international), the expertise of countries or groups of countries that have developed ICT-based training systems on a large scale is now available for purposes of sharing, collaboration or modeling.

Universities and teacher training

Universities today are expected to contribute to capacity building for primary and secondary education systems, in addition to educating students and producing knowledge. This expectation is well grounded because of the expertise developed in universities, particularly the contributions of the education sciences, will ensure the quality of teacher training, curriculum reform and pedagogical research, just as it will help in setting up accreditation systems. We must stop under-using or ignoring the advantages of synergy between universities and the other educational levels, particularly in Francophone Africa.

Gender

Achieving the EFA goals requires the presence and retention of girls in school, and is closely tied to the presence of well-trained, qualified women teachers at all primary levels. That is because a successful woman teacher is a powerful stimulant for girls, both as confirmation of the legitimacy of their own attendance at school and as a role model of the independent women that girls may become through schooling. It is therefore important to include the gender dimension in all questions relating to the teaching profession – training, professional development and career track – in recognition of the importance of women teachers' role as agents of development and change.

To do this, it is necessary to identify and promote training strategies and systems that facilitate the participation and the empowerment of women, taking into consideration their views and their specific needs and expectations in terms of content and of organization in space and time. Training course content should in particular proscribe stereotypes, which lead to discrimination and tensions, and strive to increase female leadership and present gender as a source of mutual enrichment. It is also advisable to take gender into greater account in recruitment and in training programs, to identify causes of career inequality, and to consider forms of compensation that promote equity. Lastly, efforts to produce statistical data broken down by sex must be continued, as such data are needed for action on gender issues.

Educational provision in fragile situations

Land disputes, ethnic conflicts, civil wars, political troubles and natural disasters can displace large proportions of the population of a given country or region. Providing education to displaced people requires special social know-how, in order to understand the needs of schools suffering from fragility and to meet them as well as possible. NGOs and civil society are taking increasingly bold initiatives to support teachers working in such situations. We must seize these opportunities to build the capacity of the teaching force in general and of contractual teachers in particular.

Coping with HIV/AIDS

Recent data and analyses tend to draw a less alarmist picture of the incidence of HIV/AIDS on teachers. It is undeniable, however, that the pandemic has been a terrible

scourge for all active teachers in Africa, particularly from the beginnings in the late 1980s to the early years of the new millennium. It is estimated that in high-prevalence countries, AIDS-related deaths of teachers can add 4% to 5% to annual attrition rates in the sector (Grant et al., 2004).

Education sector policies and responses to the pandemic in favor of infected and affected teachers are being introduced, as are civil society initiatives to form networks and pressure groups in order to demand appropriate workplace policies that protect HIV-positive people from stigmatization. We should also take advantage of the pledges and initiatives of the technical and financial partners, who are mounting awareness-raising campaigns about STIs/HIV/AIDS in training programs to educate the teaching force and the school community about prevention and responsible behavior.

4. Objectives

Apart from following up on the 2004 Bamako Conference, one of the key objectives of the Bamako + 5 Conference is to learn about the scale of the use of contractual teachers in the Anglophone and Lusophone countries of Africa, as part of the overall context of responding to the teacher gap to achieve EFA. The conference will include a panel forum to share good practice relating to the recruitment, training, use, professional development and career management of contractual teachers.

Specific objectives

The conference will seek to achieve the following:

1. Take stock of progress made in the eleven Francophone countries that participated in the 2004 Bamako Conference, and the difficulties encountered, to advance toward the adoption and implementation of the two policy and strategic frameworks on teachers' professional development and career management;
2. Share successful experiences and lessons learned;
3. Discuss collegially the policies and strategies to be promoted for appropriate recruitment of teachers, including control over the data on teacher supply and demand;
4. Promote dialogue on resource mobilization among the various stakeholders and partners;
5. Explore the new opportunities available for teacher training and development;
6. Promote consultation and coordination of existing initiatives to support teachers;
7. Promote and give incentive for good practice as regards harmonization of the status and career possibilities of primary school teachers, based on country experiences.

In order to achieve these objectives, there will be an exhaustive review of existing case studies and papers on policy concerning teacher development and career management. Some studies are now in progress, and their findings should also contribute to the

discussions at the conference. Lastly, various contributions are expected from the ADEA Working Groups, development partners, active practitioners of education, civil society, etc.

5. Expected outcomes

The conference is expected to produce a number of reference documents:

1. A documented review of the follow-up to the 2004 Bamako Conference;
2. An analysis of lessons learned from country experiences of the recruitment, training and development of contractual teachers;
3. Contributions toward finalization of the two policy frameworks proposed by ADEA on (i) the training and professional development of contractual teachers, and (ii) the career tracks, opportunities for advancement, social protection guarantees, and rights and obligations of contractual teachers;
4. Shared understandings on strategies and policies to raise resources for recruitment and training of teachers and for the inclusion of contractual teachers in the permanent teaching force (civil servant status);
5. Plans for networks or partnerships to exchange and share information on teacher development, notably through the inter-country quality nodes;
6. A report of the conference proceedings.

6. Participation and expected roles

Since one of the key objectives of this conference is to strengthen and expand the network of countries and development partners that support teacher development and career management, and noting that teacher development issues extend beyond the education sector to touch other sectors, the conference will bring together ministers of education with their counterparts from the ministries of finance, civil service and planning. Key stakeholders such as teachers' unions (at the sub-regional, regional and international levels), parent-teacher associations (PTAs), NGOs and other partners involved in teacher development and career management issues will be invited. They are expected to play the following roles at the conference:

Each country delegation will come to the conference with a report on the following:

- Context and rationale concerning recruitment of contractual teachers;
- Conditions for recruitment of contractual teachers (level of academic attainment, selection procedures, pre-service training, etc.);
- Management of contractual teachers (types of employment contracts, deployment, administration, payment of salaries, etc.);
- Terms of employment (salaries, career tracks, procedures for advancement, in-service training, support, etc.);
- Stock-taking findings (current number, impact on enrollment, positive outcomes, challenges, etc.);

- Role played by teachers' unions in the design and implementation of the new recruitment policy;
- Prospects (developments under consideration in terms of number, qualifications, socio-professional advancement, etc.);
- Progress and bottlenecks in the eleven countries that participated in the 2004 Bamako Conference;
- Other observations and remarks.

Participants will include 24 Country Delegations, Development Cooperations, African Research Networks and NGOs, Foundations and Representatives of Private Sector.

7. Date and location

The conference will be held on October 27-29, 2009, in Bamako, Mali.

In order to disseminate the messages, outputs and lessons learned from the conference and to attract the attention of policy makers and civil society at the regional and national levels, media coverage of this event will be organized.

This conference will be covered by the media. ADEA's Working Group on Communication for Education and Development (WGCOMED) will take advantage of the event to organize activities aimed at enhancing the professional development of African journalists.

The results of the conference will also be disseminated via publications and the ADEA website (www.adeanet.org).

8. Final report

A final report will be produced for extensive dissemination, containing the conclusions of the conference as well as the country case studies.