



## SABER

# Teachers

2016

*Anywhere in the world, teachers exert an extraordinary influence on a child's future. Today, they are no longer just a source of information and knowledge. They must play an expanded role as they equip students to seek, analyze, and effectively use information so that they develop the critical thinking, problem-solving, and team work skills that are needed for healthy and productive engagement in society and the economy. SABER-Teachers gathers and analyzes data on teacher policies that govern public schools in education systems around the world.*

### Why do countries invest in teachers?

Student achievement drives economic and social progress, and teacher effectiveness is the most important school-based predictor of student learning. Given that improving teacher policies may be an important way to raise student learning, developed and developing countries have become increasingly concerned with improving teacher effectiveness.

### What challenges exist?

Despite growing demand for guidance on policies that raise teacher effectiveness, designing the right teacher policies for a given education system remains a challenge for several reasons:

- Evidence on the impact of many teacher policies remains insufficient and may depend on specific design features.

- The same policies can have very different impacts in different contexts.
- The effect of a specific teacher policy depends on policies already in place and whether these other policies reinforce, offset, or undermine the objectives of the new interventions.

The overarching issue is how to ensure that every classroom has a competent, supported, motivated, and caring teacher to help every student learn. Achieving this requires combining global evidence on what can work with detailed local knowledge of the context, challenges, and opportunities.

### What is SABER-Teachers?

Using new diagnostic tools and detailed policy information, the World Bank

Group's Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) platform collects and analyzes comparative data and knowledge on education systems around the world and highlights the policies and institutions that matter most to promote learning for all children and youth. SABER's detailed data-gathering and analysis are organized by "domains," or areas of education policymaking within an education system. These currently include levels of education (early childhood development, primary and secondary, workforce development, and tertiary), types of quality resources and supports (school finance, school health and school feeding, and teachers), areas of governance (engaging the private sector and school autonomy and accountability), information sources

(education management information systems and student assessment), and complementary inputs and cross-cutting themes (equity and inclusion, information and communication technologies, and resilience). SABER aims to give all parties with a stake in educational results—from students, administrators, teachers, and parents to policymakers and business people—an accessible, detailed, objective snapshot of how well the policies of their country's education system are oriented toward ensuring that all children and youth learn.

The SABER-Teachers tool gathers and analyzes data on teacher policies that govern public schools in education systems around the world, in both developing and developed countries. Drawing on an extensive global evidence base, SABER-Teachers empowers countries with information they can use to align their teacher policies in the eight key policy areas toward greater teacher effectiveness.

## What drives effective teachers?

Based on extensive research and global evidence on high-performing and rapidly improving systems, the World Bank Group has identified eight teacher policy goals that education systems need to fulfill:

**Setting clear expectations for teachers.** Expectations of what students should know and be able to do, and how teachers can help them achieve those goals, are important to guide teachers' daily work and allow them to improve instructional practice. Clear expectations also promote coherence among key system features like initial education, professional development, and evaluation.

**Attracting the best into teaching.** The structure and characteristics of the teaching career influence who becomes a teacher. Talented, mission-oriented individuals will be more inclined to enter teaching if entry requirements signal that it is a well-regarded profession, if compensation and working conditions are supportive, and if teachers have attractive career opportunities to develop as professionals.

### **Preparing teachers with useful training and experience.**

Equipping teachers with the skills they need to succeed is crucial. To support their students, teachers need subject matter and pedagogic knowledge, as well as classroom management skills and lots of early career teaching practice.

**Matching teacher skills with student needs.** Ensuring that strong teachers work in schools where their skills are most needed promotes both equity and efficiency. This requires recruiting and deploying

teachers to avoid shortages of qualified teachers at any given grade, education level, or subject, and to ensure that the most disadvantaged or marginalized students have access to great teachers.

**Leading teachers with strong principals.** The quality of school heads is crucial. Capable principals can act as instructional leaders and help attract and retain competent teachers by supporting teachers to improve instruction, creating a sense of community, and making teachers feel valued.

**Monitoring teaching and learning.** Assessing how well teachers are teaching and students are learning is essential to devise strategies for improving teaching and learning. Information about progress in learning and teaching is necessary to identify low-performing teachers and students, so that struggling classrooms can receive support to improve, and good practices can be identified and shared across the system.

**Supporting teachers to improve instruction.** Teachers and schools need to be able to analyze specific challenges they face in classroom teaching, have access to information on good practices for addressing these challenges, and receive external support tailored to their needs.

**Motivating teachers to perform.** Motivation is

essential for effective teaching, and systems need to find ways to motivate teachers professionally throughout their careers. This may mean providing opportunities for career development, rewarding teachers not just based on seniority but also based on their commitment and effectiveness, and supporting them consistently in the classroom.

## How is SABER-Teachers helping to improve education systems?

SABER-Teachers is supporting governments in their efforts to improve education results by:

- Providing a comprehensive framework based on a thorough review of global evidence and related diagnostic tools.
- Aiding countries in analyzing their education systems through diagnosis, dialogue, and reform.
- Enhancing the global knowledge base on effective teacher policies.
- Enabling cross-country learning and fostering informed dialogue and decision-making using a structured framework and methodology.
- Involving key system leaders and stakeholders in identifying reform priorities, leading to education policy reform and new program initiatives in several countries.

## How are countries and partner organizations using SABER-Teachers to improve teacher effectiveness?

**Tanzania.** Findings from the SABER analysis of teacher policies helped shape the government's current large-scale education reforms under its Big Results Now initiative. The SABER engagement in teachers helped identify underlying causes and key areas for reform in relation to entering the professional status and motivation of teachers. Using the World Bank Group's new Program-for-Results lending instrument for the first time in education, the Tanzanian Big Results Now in Education Program signed a US\$122 million IDA credit, to be disbursed as pre-agreed results are achieved in teacher policy and other areas. The governments of the United Kingdom and Sweden are also jointly supporting the government reforms.

**Uganda.** Uganda is one of the countries where SABER tools have been used to evaluate a large number of education system domains. Results from the application of these tools are being used in a series of studies prepared as part of technical assistance for the Ministry of Education. These studies are in areas such as early childhood development, workforce development, and

teachers. The task of technical assistance itself is helping inform a new strategy being prepared by the Ministry, as well as related future projects. The SABER analyses largely use household and other survey data, as well as findings from qualitative fieldwork, to specifically examine the implementation of policies and their educational outcomes, so that the diagnoses of policies at the national level are complemented by more detailed empirical work on practices and outcomes.

**Yemen.** Countries in the Middle East and North Africa were early adopters of the SABER-Teachers framework, carrying out a regional study based on simultaneous application of the framework in eight countries. Yemen used the results of the SABER analysis to include a comprehensive revision of its teacher policy framework in its Second Basic Education Development Project.

## SABER-Teachers Partners

From 2010 to 2015, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) supported SABER through the DFID-World Bank Group Partnership for Education Development. This support was instrumental in the development of the SABER-Teachers tool, as well as in applying the tool in many countries. The Education for All (EFA) Teacher

Task Force, a multi-stakeholder partnership, recently partnered with the World Bank Group to use the SABER-Teachers tools to analyze policies in 25 countries. Findings from the analysis will inform a global report on teacher policies. The countries are spread out around the globe and include a wide range of income levels,

from Namibia and Haiti to Italy and Norway. The Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is also a strong supporter of SABER and education systems research and has done much work to support the application of SABER globally. Other partners, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific

and Cultural Organization (in Myanmar) and governments of high-income countries (including Cyprus and the United Arab Emirates), have either applied the SABER-Teachers tool themselves or engaged the World Bank Group to apply it informally as part of a wider consultation on teacher policy.