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UNESCO'S CONTRIBUTION TO TEACHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE

Abstract. *This article is based on an analysis of the leading UNESCO documents on quality assurance in teacher education (Teacher Policy Development Guide (2019), Reimagining our futures together – A new social contract for education (2021), The Futures of Teaching: Background paper prepared for the Futures of Education Initiative (2021)) focuses on the determinants for increasing the effectiveness of teachers' work. The reports also highlight the factors which make teachers more effective and satisfied in their work, create a positive attitude, increase motivation and improve pupils' success, as illustrated by the study of the education systems of various countries. They state that a comprehensive national policy for teachers backed by sufficient resources, the necessary political will and appropriate administrative skills is the most effective of all possible investments in education at the national level.*

The recommendations of the UNESCO International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 are reviewed. The UNESCO Teacher Policy Development Guide aims to foster professionalism and teaching excellence, including strategies for recruiting and training talented teachers. The Guide is intended to assist governmental institutions and structures responsible for education policy at the national level. The Guide aims to help educators and educational planners and policy-makers coordinate educational policies with national education sector plans and strategies. The Guide emphasises in particular that education policy should reflect the specifics of the country, but should also be based on the progressive experience of other countries and international organisations.

Key words: *teacher education, the teaching profession, teacher education quality, education policy, a teacher, professional development, the Sustainable Development Goals, UNESCO.*

ВНЕСОК ЮНЕСКО У ЗАБЕЗПЕЧЕННЯ ЯКОСТІ ПЕДАГОГІЧНОЇ ОСВІТИ

Анотація. *У статті на підставі аналізу провідних документів ЮНЕСКО щодо забезпечення якості педагогічної освіти (Посібник з розроблення політики щодо вчителів (2019), Майбутнє викладання: довідковий документ, підготовлений для ініціативи «Майбутня освіта» (2021), Пересмислюємо наше майбутнє разом – новий суспільний договір про освіту (2021)) наголошується на чинниках підвищення ефективності роботи вчителів, їх задоволеності своєю професією, формуванні позитивного настрою, підвищенні мотивації та успішності учнів, які виявлені на основі вивчення освітніх систем різних країн. У них зазначається, що проведення комплексної національної політики щодо вчителів, підкріпленої достатніми ресурсами, необхідною політичною волею та відповідними адміністративними навичками, є найбільш ефективною з усіх можливих інвестицій у сферу освіти на національному рівні.*

Досліджено, що в рекомендаціях Міжнародної цільової групи з підготовки вчителів ЮНЕСКО з розроблення ефективної освітньої політики розглядаються стратегії, спрямовані на забезпечення професіоналізму педагогічних працівників та високу якість викладання, у тому числі питання, що стосуються залучення, професійної підготовки та підтримки талановитих вчителів. Посібник покликає допомогти урядовим інституціям і структурам, відповідальним за освітню політику на національному рівні, а також посадовим особам у галузі педагогічної освіти в узгодженні освітньої політики щодо вчителів із загальними національними планами і стратегіями в галузі освіти. У посібнику, зокрема наголошується, що політика в цій галузі має відображати специфіку конкретної країни, але при цьому ґрунтуватися на прикладах прогресивного досвіду, накопиченого іншими країнами та міжнародними організаціями.

Ключові слова: *педагогічна освіта, педагогічна професія, якість педагогічної освіти, освітня політика, вчитель, підвищення кваліфікації, Цілі сталого розвитку ЮНЕСКО, ЮНЕСКО.*

Introduction. «It is an impossible profession where one can be sure of an unsuccessful result», was what Freud said about psychoanalysis, governance and ... pedagogy (Freud, 1937). The teacher's job is indeed challenging: he or she needs to impart knowledge, support the discipline in the classroom, stimulate interest in learning, develop social skills, and

educate future citizens, all at the same time. The situation is often aggravated by the fact that budgets are catastrophically insufficient, classrooms are overstaffed, and some of the tasks traditionally assigned to educators quickly lose their relevance (Defourny, & Bardou, 2019).

Unfortunately, the teaching profession today is experiencing challenging times: with the development of cognitive neuroscience and the active implementation of new technologies in education, the demands on teachers are changing, forcing teachers to regularly review their approaches and learn new ways of working. Moreover, while in the past this noble profession was held in high esteem, today teachers are often criticized and blamed for the ineffectiveness of the entire education system. In some cases, teachers may be subjected to bullying and even violence by their students and families. For all these reasons, young people are reluctant to work in schools and many of those who do decide to try their hand at this field give up work after a few years. A study of 50,000 educators in the USA found that an estimated 41% of teachers (pre-service to high school) change careers in the first five years of employment (Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey & Collins, 2014).

International influential bodies have traditionally identified teachers as one of the most influential and powerful resources in the process of ensuring equitable access to quality education, and they are seen as key to the global development of the education sector as a whole. This is the formulation of the teacher's mission, as UNESCO has stated in its Teachers' Day message, which is celebrated each year on 5 of October (International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, 2019). However, teacher training, recruitment, retention, approval of status and improvement of working conditions continue to be a source of concern for the influential international organizations to which UNESCO belongs.

Joint UNESCO, the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) documents state that without a new generation of motivated teachers, millions of students will not be able to fulfil their right to quality education (International, 2021). As a result, teachers remain underpaid and undervalued, attracting and retaining talent is a challenge. The performance of teaching staff worldwide is rising rapidly, partly due to over-qualified classes, insecure salaries and limited opportunities for continuing professional development. In addition, there is a lack of resources for teachers to work with children with special educational needs and disabilities, refugees and disadvantaged pupils. Yet no matter what statistics or

headlines tell us, there are those in the world for whom teaching is an imperative; those who persist in their chosen path despite difficulties, lack of material resources or overclassified classes; those for whom their work is a moral imperative and a daily struggle.

The aim of the study. This article reviews UNESCO's key documents (Teacher Policy Development Guide (2019), Reimagining our futures together – A new social contract for education (2021), The Futures of Teaching: Background paper prepared for the Futures of Education Initiative (2021)) to take stock of current global policy initiatives by an international organization to support its Member States in developing and implementing education policies for teacher training. The global community is committed to supporting Member States in the formulation and implementation of education policies for the training, deployment and evaluation of teachers, and the establishment of effective approaches to their professional development and career progression.

Theoretical basis and methods of research. On the basis of integrated analysis of scientific, educational and methodical literature on certain topics were reviewed, studied, analysed critically and synthesized literature to generate new conceptual ideas and perspectives of a research issue.

Results. What needs to be done to involve a new generation of motivated and qualified teachers in pedagogical profession? The search for answers has guided UNESCO's efforts to ensure the quality of teaching throughout the world for decades.

Research has shown that UNESCO's activities concerning teacher education quality assurance focus on five main areas:

- monitoring of international standard-setting instruments regarding the teaching profession;
- supporting Member States in developing and reviewing teacher policies and strategies;
- developing capacities to improve the quality of teaching and learning;
- improve the knowledge and evidence base for implementing and monitoring teacher-related targets and tasks in the global Education 2030 agenda;
- awareness-raising and knowledge-sharing to foster quality teaching (UNESCO, 2021, P. 79).

One of UNESCO's main priorities is seen to be capacity-building in teacher training and the development of a highly qualified teaching force. This objective is reflected in UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 4: Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and creating lifelong learning opportunities for all, which outlines key initiatives for achieving quality education by 2030. The document was launched at the UNESCO International Education Forum in Incheon, Republic of Korea, in May 2015. The Forum participants unanimously acknowledged the important role of teachers and their pedagogical practices for the organization of effective learning at all levels of education, which will contribute to the achievement of Goal 4. The participating teams thus «ensure that teachers and educators are adequately trained, qualified, motivated and supported within effective and efficient educational systems» (ILO, 2015).

The document shows that one of the main objectives of Goal 4 is to quantitatively increase the number of qualified teachers by improving their training, recruitment, retention and status as highly qualified teachers are an integral part of quality education. However, many schools currently have teachers who do not have the necessary pedagogical training. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, some 69 million new teacher posts worldwide are needed to provide universal primary and secondary education by 2030. In sub-Saharan Africa, teacher shortages account for 70% of the total, with 90% of these countries experiencing severe shortages in secondary education. Only 85% of primary school teachers worldwide have an educational qualification. However, there are strong regional variations within this indicator. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, only 64% of primary school teachers have the required qualifications, while in East Asia the figure is 71% (International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, 2019).

It has become clear that the task of providing a sustainable teaching resource in education systems cannot be realised without a contextualised and factual education policy for teachers and regulations, which must be developed with the direct participation of all those involved. To this end, in 2008, UNESCO launched a policy dialogue and a review of key trends in educational policy and practice. The

International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 was established in Oslo, Norway that year.

During the first days of work, the team pooled its resources to create a Teacher Development Policy Guide (International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, 2019). The main objective of the Guide is to support the implementation of teacher training plans in line with the priority objectives set by the Sustainable Development Goals and Education for the period until 2030, by placing at the disposal of the Member States and partners a tool to facilitate the formulation and review of a national policy to support the education workforce. The Guide is structured into five main sections, namely: Chapter 1 presents the objectives, rationale for effectiveness, and target audience; Chapter 2 outlines the need for a teacher policy within the sectoral plan and national development priorities; Chapter 3 discusses the most important aspects of teacher policy and their interconnectedness; Chapter 4 describes the stages of the process of developing teacher policy, and Chapter 5 is devoted to an analysis of the stages of national teacher policy implementation and the tasks that need to be solved.

A study of this document has shown that the Guide relies on the presence of qualified teachers as a key element in ensuring universal and equitable access to quality education for all. Research in education systems in various countries has shown that teachers have the greatest influence within the school environment in terms of student success and the quality of knowledge attained. The reasons why policy makers should take into account the importance of teachers are as follows:

- the importance of education as a priority for each individual and the dependence of learning outcomes on the interaction between students and teachers;

- evidence that the quality and success of teaching depends primarily on the professionalism and effectiveness of the teacher as a key determinant of learning outcomes and on the need to ensure a close link between effective teacher policy and educational development plans;

- the role of the teaching profession in terms of human resources and the education sector budget is significant: teachers are one of the largest workforce in any country, the backbone of the human resources of the edu-

cation system and a major contributor to the budget of any education institution; the international experience shows that a high level of professionalism of teachers and a high level of teaching excellence, ensured through a human resources policy, leads to the best learning outcomes and reduces the cost of education;

–the achievement of these goals and the successful implementation of reforms in the education sector depend on solving the problem of teacher deficit in appropriate cases and creating conditions for increasing teacher motivation and responsibility, – the key determinants of professional growth of an individual teacher, as well as the efficiency of the education system as a whole, and the involvement of teachers in the process of continuous improvement of the education system through the establishment of an appropriate social dialogue.

In developing this Guide, the authors have taken into account as much as possible a wide range of aspects that define the specificities of teaching activity, such as: the quality and relevance of teachers basic training and school management; continuous professional development and support for teachers; reward and material incentives for teachers; and the creation of a safe, healthy and supportive learning and teaching environment.

The process of formulating policies for teachers should be based on the widest possible participation of the main stakeholders in order to ensure their ownership and commitment to the successful implementation of the policy. The most important partners and stakeholders include: teachers, as they are involved in the teaching and learning process on a permanent basis; professional associations and teachers' professional organizations; teacher training institutions; organizations responsible for professional certification; policy makers and regulators; students, parents and representatives of local communities. All key stakeholders should be involved in the formulation of the main vectors of education policy through social dialogue mechanisms.

An analysis of the Guide has shown that there are nine key aspects that need to be taken into account in order to ensure the inclusive nature of education policy for teachers: 1) recruitment and retention of teaching staff; 2) teacher education (basic and advanced training); 3) deployment of teaching staff; 4) system of in-service training/career devel-

opment; 5) employment and working conditions of teachers; 6) remuneration and teachers' salary; 7) teachers' professional standards; 8) school management; 9) responsibility of teachers.

Let's look in detail at a few of the main aspects.

The recruitment and retention of teachers is a fundamental aspect of any teacher policy. An effective and efficient recruitment strategy is primarily distinguished by: evidence-based, based on actual and projected quantitative and qualitative needs; approaches to recruiting and retaining the required number of teachers with the necessary qualifications and willingness to commit themselves to teaching; encouraging the recruitment of professional teachers by raising the status of the profession and improving working conditions (some employers recruit teachers on temporary contracts to respond to specific needs or to provide an appropriate response to the current situation, e.g. to staff schools facing difficulties in filling vacancies); the existence of a licensing or certification procedure for teachers which ensures that the person applying for the position has the required knowledge, qualifications and attributes; have equal employment opportunities through a fair and transparent recruitment process which does not discriminate against particular groups or individuals; the establishment of equitable and effective school leaders who have the appropriate knowledge, qualifications and attributes.

A holistic system of teacher education should include three interrelated stages: initial teacher training (pre-service or in-service), induction and continuous professional development or in-service training. Initial teacher education is a prerequisite for a quality and effective teacher; this phase should conceivably be planned as an essential element of a pre-service teacher recruitment strategy based on current needs. Selection procedures should ensure that capable and motivated applicants for teacher education are identified. The content and curricula for teacher training should be tailored to local specificities and be consistent with national education strategies and take into account the specificities of a particular educational institution, e.g. language policy. In addition, education programmes should combine theoretical training with a significant number of educational practice

hours in the classroom and prepare self-motivated practitioners. The successful completion of the basic teacher training phase, including teacher practice, will result in the award of a qualification. The granting of teaching certificates or teaching licences to newly appointed teachers may be conditional on successful completion of the probationary (induction) period. Ideally, and regardless of compliance with these requirements, young professionals are required to attend a program of induction to the profession, within which they consolidate the acquired at the stage of initial teacher training knowledge, skills and abilities with the help of mentors from among the experienced teachers. Initial teacher training should be based on an inclusive and equitable approach, as students need to learn inclusive teaching methods and have a clear understanding of the problems underlying discrimination.

The effectiveness of professional development is ensured by consolidating the knowledge acquired during the basic education phase. Regular attendance at high-quality courses to upgrade qualifications thus increases the effectiveness of the work and motivation of the teacher and can be linked to career advancement and wage increases. In order to improve the quality of pedagogical education, qualification courses should be school-based; so that they have a practical orientation and a link with professional tasks the teacher has to deal with these in the classroom every day and also takes into account the changes occurring in the school system. The employer is obliged to provide teachers with time and opportunities to upgrade their qualifications, and the school budget should include a special cost item for this purpose. In some cases, unappreciated support for teacher

training is provided by non-state institutions. With proper regulation and control, the presence of diverse institutions that provide teacher training can contribute to the development of innovative pedagogical approaches and methods within the national system of teacher education (International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, 2019b).

Conclusions. It is clear that the analysed UNESCO documents focus on the factors that make teachers more effective, increase their satisfaction with their work and foster a positive attitude, raising the motivation and success of students as revealed by studying the education systems of different countries, particularly with high and low level of socio-economic development. They state that a comprehensive national teacher policy backed up by sufficient resources, the necessary political will and appropriate administrative skills is the most effective of all possible investments in education at the national level.

It is investigated that the guide on developing an effective educational policy for teachers discusses strategies for ensuring the professionalism of teachers and teaching excellence, including those relating to the recruitment and professional training of talented teachers. The guide is intended to assist state institutions and structures responsible for education policy at the national level. This manual aims to help educators and educational planners and policy-makers coordinate educational policies with national education sector plans and strategies as well as emphasises in particular that education policy should reflect the specifics of the country, but should also be based on the progressive experience of other countries and recommendations of international organisations.

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