

Chapter 7

Final Remarks

The recommendations appearing throughout the report have been the direct responses to situations the authors encountered during the course of the research in the three countries. This chapter will look at the wider context, drawing on the literature review.

Teacher migration is an issue for the African continent as, with increasing globalisation, it happens almost everywhere. Migration, forced or voluntary, is not a new issue – it has happened for millennia and will continue to happen. In modern times there is a wish and an opportunity to manage migration.

Migration, even when it is forced, still reflects elemental human drives: to ensure security, safety, stability and predictability. Any attempt to manage or plan for migration must therefore take these elemental drives into consideration. The case of refugees who are teachers is no different, but just as national educational planners need to develop policies to, for example, provide incentives for their teachers to be attracted to remote locations to teach, so too they need to take into account the special circumstances facing refugee teachers. Planning also needs to recognise that a refugee may be a teacher only temporarily.

The emerging teacher recruitment protocol for Africa will provide a set of principles for the ethical international recruitment of teachers. The implementation of the protocol is intended to be supported by mechanisms, which, among other objectives, build capacity in the collection of data on migrant teachers, facilitate bilateral agreements between countries for the exchange of teachers, promote the recognition of teaching qualifications according to an internationally agreed comparability framework and ensure that the rights of migrant teachers are respected. This study has suggested that managing the migration of teachers is difficult, especially in an emergency, but also that governments could take concrete steps to improve the institutional framework affecting refugee teachers. It is hoped that these concrete steps will be reflected in the emerging mechanisms, and also that the particular refugee-related nuances of the issues faced by migrant teachers will be reflected in the protocol.

In order for this ambitious project to succeed, action will be required by a number of different actors. Unions could recognise the specific difficulties of refugee teachers, who will not know the system and whose experiences make them particularly vulnerable, offering them specific assistance in negotiating the system and support in claiming their rights. Unions could create a role of refugee teacher liaison officer, if they do not have one already. It is recognised that national teaching unions might wish to put national teachers first. Organisations such as Education International are doing much to promote the rights of all teachers.

Ministries of education could establish and resource emergency preparedness units, where they have not done so already. The units would be responsible for integrating contingency plans for emergencies into education programming, ensuring they reflect disaster risk reduction and conflict sensitivity, and liaising with other relevant ministries and non-state stakeholders to ensure a consistent, co-ordinated multi-sector approach to an emergency. However, the issue of planning for emergencies is a provocative one. Given the likely increase in forced migration due to increased environmental pressures and conflict, as, for example, reported by the Ramphal Commission on Migration and Development (Gamlen 2010; Hugo 2011; Thomas-Hope 2011), preparedness is key to ensuring that children are assured of as minimal disruption to their education as possible in the event of an emergency. As the 2011 Education for All Global Monitoring Report notes, 42 per cent of the world total of out-of-school children of primary age – 28 million children – are in conflicted-affected poor countries (UNESCO 2011), although the difficulty in capturing data on refugee children should also be noted.

It is recognised that the establishment of emergency preparedness units is a particularly ambitious recommendation, and that similar units have in the past not succeeded. However, this might be an appropriate measure for some countries for several reasons: first, is the greater profile given to education in emergencies in recent years; second, development partners have increased their involvement with conflict-affected countries; and finally, there is the potential support offered by initiatives such as INEE policy roundtables, which assist countries in developing emergency-responsive policies.

Where this recommendation is taken up, two points come out strongly: first, the need for greater co-ordination between ministries of education and ministries responsible for refugees; and second, the need for greater integration of planning for emergencies in education sector policy development. Regarding the first point, emergencies – especially complex emergencies – require a multi-sectoral approach, not just in the immediate aftermath but before and after. Regarding the second point, education planning for emergency preparedness for the first stages of an emergency could include provision for ensuring that refugee teachers are compensated with a remuneration and benefit package equivalent to that which could be expected by national teachers – government guidelines on remuneration would help this to become a reality, given that education in emergencies might be delivered by non-state actors. In conclusion, the authors emphasise the need for a greater awareness of the profile and needs of refugee teachers in order to integrate them into EFA strategies. Qualified and committed teachers are an essential element in providing good-quality education and refugee teachers have the potential to fill staffing gaps in countries like South Africa, which have teacher shortages. They should also be hired to teach in camp schools, on condition of being given adequate remuneration and support.

There have recently been initiatives which seek to understand more about education quality in emergencies. For example, INEE has established a Quality Education Task Team, and there are links between the INEE Working Group on Education Fragility

and the Learning Metrics Task Force. Emerging frameworks for quality teaching and learning, such as the Commonwealth Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders and the emerging Global Learning Standards should more explicitly address education in emergencies and education for refugees, to ensure that their particular needs and contexts are taken into account, and that quality standards are published and adhered to. Consideration could be given to establishing a competency-based rapid assessment tool to ascertain a teacher's fitness to teach. This would enable refugee teachers to teach temporarily while formal recognition of their credentials is obtained. Harmonisation of the various NGO training programmes and government accreditation processes might then be based on these international competency-based professional standards.

There is an obvious need for funding and co-ordination of training and/or certification. The nucleus of responses to the needs of refugee teachers are already taking various forms, such as initiatives in South Africa, where the Foreign Educator Internship Programme shows promise in integrating qualified refugee teachers into the host country's school system. These, and programmes like them, need to be evaluated and taken to scale in different settings. In recognition of the fact that teachers are increasingly mobile, but that career-long professional development is expected of them, opportunities for continuous professional development and promotion should be made available to refugee teachers.

Making refugee teachers part of Education for All strategies will necessarily involve adapting national EFA plans to take this into account. This is particularly important for countries in crisis or post-crisis recovery, whose educational systems are fragile. To this end, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the CTRP could serve as a liaison between efforts to support and benefit from refugee teachers and partners that could provide technical and financial support.

One of these partners could be the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), a civil society movement that aims to end the global education crisis. Its membership is composed of a great variety of national, regional and international civil society organisations, teachers' unions and child rights campaigners. The GCE national coalitions work to hold governments to account for the promises repeatedly made to provide Education for All. There are more than 80 education coalitions that have their own memberships, comprising teachers' unions, NGOs and other civil society organisations committed to education.

Certain Commonwealth countries could benefit from the multi-donor Education Program Development Fund (EPDF), which was set up to enable more low-income countries to access the Global Partnership for Education and accelerate progress towards universal primary education. The EPDF can provide technical support and build the capacity required to prepare a sound education plan in countries with weak capacity due to crisis conditions. It can also provide support to countries in the implementation of their education sector plans, by supporting knowledge generation through better monitoring and evaluation, and knowledge sharing across countries. The Commonwealth Secretariat together with INEE partners could provide guidance on adapting technical support and funding to educational development in emergency

and post-crisis reconstruction situations, especially in countries to which refugee teachers hope to return.

References

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