

**RECOMMENDATION No. 36**  
**TO THE MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION**  
**concerning**  
**PRIMARY TEACHER TRAINING**  
(1953)

The International Conference on Public Education,

Convened at Geneva by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Bureau Of Education and having assembled on the sixth day of July, nineteen hundred and fifty-three for its sixteenth session, adopts on the fourteenth of July nineteen hundred and fifty-three, the following recommendation:

The Conference,

Considering the needs resulting from the extension of compulsory education, as dealt with in Recommendation No. 32, concerning Compulsory Education and its Prolongation, which the Conference adopted in 1951;

Considering that all children throughout the world have the right to be educated by primary teachers whose health, intelligence and character meet the required standards, and who have had a good general education and a satisfactory professional training;

Considering that the professional training of primary teachers should be to an increasing extent supported by a general education of an equivalent level to that required as a minimum for admission to a university;

Considering that no person should be appointed to teach, even in a temporary capacity, unless he possesses recognized professional qualifications;

Considering that primary teachers have to take an active part in the cultural and social activities of the community, and should be given training for the purpose;

Considering that the progress made by the educational sciences (genetic and social psychology, psychology of the emotions, experimental and comparative education, mental hygiene, etc.) can give primary teachers ideas and information which help them to improve their professional competence;

Considering that countries with different geographical, demographic, social, historical and cultural conditions, should bring forward, although sharing similar aims, varied solutions to the problems of primary teacher training;

Submits to the Ministries of Education of the different countries the following recommendation:

#### **Organization and administration of primary teacher training**

1) The evolution and extension of school education call for the continuous study of primary teacher training and its periodical adaptation to newly emerging circumstances and needs;

2) In view of the increasing complexity of teacher training problems, it is advisable to have one specialized body (a directorate, department or service) responsible for the coordination of all administrative, financial and technical questions concerning such training;

3) For the solution of problems coming within its field of competence, such specialized body should be assisted by consultative committees on which teacher training and primary teaching staffs are represented;

4) One of the main tasks of such specialized body would be to estimate and train the numbers of teachers needed for meeting the expansion of education, due regard being paid to factors such as population changes, prolongation of compulsory education, reduction of the size of classes, and rate of resignation and retirement;

5) In countries where compulsory education is not yet in full operation, such specialized body would also be responsible, in consultation with the bodies directly interested, for drawing up short-term and long-term plans for training sufficient numbers of primary teachers to permit the extension of compulsory education measures by stages, and similar plans for diminishing as quickly as possible the number of inadequately qualified teachers;

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6) Even when responsible for the organization of primary teacher training programmes and the control of primary teacher training establishments, such specialized body should allow these establishments the autonomy and latitude necessary for the efficient management of any educational establishment, particularly in regard to methods and curricula;

7) It is desirable that teachers and students of a primary teacher training establishment participate as much as possible in its internal management, to which they can make a valuable contribution;

8) Whatever their precise form, financial appropriations for primary teacher training should be sufficient to maintain the establishments needed to train the required number of primary teachers, to pay adequate salaries to the training staffs, to provide premises which conform to the required material and educational standards and which include where necessary boarding accommodation for the students, to supply all necessary equipment (library, laboratories, workshops, playing fields, etc.), to establish demonstration schools attached to the training establishments, and to provide students with free tuition and adequate living allowances;

9) In order that the necessary funds may be readily available, it is desirable that the press, the public, members of Parliament, and those responsible for the allocation of financial appropriations be fully informed of the importance of the primary teacher training establishments;

10) In deciding whether primary teacher training should be at secondary level (with or without boarding accommodation for the students), at an intermediate level, or provided by university institutes or faculties, each country or State will with advantage choose the system or systems which afford the most adequate training possible and which are compatible with its geographical make-up, financial resources, and possibilities of recruitment and remuneration; the ideal to be gradually reached is training at university level;

11) It is desirable that primary teachers should have every facility for pursuing their studies at university level, that the number of faculties or institutes of education should be increased, and that the diplomas awarded by them should give access to teaching posts at secondary level;

12) The adoption within a given country or State of two or more systems of primary teacher training differing as to age and other conditions of admission duration and level of course, and standing of certificates awarded may be justified, but too great a variety of systems

has disadvantages, especially in regard to equality of salaries of practising teachers;

13) In countries where differentiated training for urban or rural primary teachers exists, it is important that the courses as well as the diplomas awarded should be equivalent;

14) In addition to a common core of training for all students, provision should be made for special, or parallel or complementary, training for students intending to teach in nursery-infant schools, schools for mentally and physically handicapped, and maladjusted children (the ideal here being the award of a special diploma), or senior primary schools and complementary classes; it is also desirable that the necessary training facilities should exist to enable serving teachers to transfer from one branch of primary education to another;

15) In countries where completion of secondary education is not a condition of admission to primary teacher training, every facility should be given to persons who have completed such education to secure teacher training which is not less advanced than the ordinary course of training;

16) Persons who find at a relatively mature age that they have the ability and desire to take up teaching, should also be given every facility to acquire or complete the necessary general and professional training;

17) Valuable work has been done by the primary teacher training establishments at secondary level that exist in some countries, and that afford an opportunity for general education to all comers, but steps should nevertheless be taken to transform them into training establishments reserved essentially for students intending to take up teaching.

### **Recruitment and conditions of admission**

18) Every possible endeavour should be made to attract into the teaching profession those persons who possess the requisite aptitudes but who may be tempted into other professions; it should be remembered that the decisive factor in any successful recruitment campaign is the improvement of teachers' social and material status;

19) Both sexes should have access to primary teacher training on the same terms;

20) The attention of primary and secondary teachers should be drawn to the contribution they can make to the recruitment of primary teachers by discovering the children who already show signs of possessing

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the requisite qualities for teaching, and by encouraging them to take up the profession;

21) Vocational guidance services can also make a valuable contribution to the recruitment of primary teachers by publishing and distributing, as they do for other professions, information sheets about teaching as a career, giving talks on the subject to pupils about to leave school, writing articles for the press, and making broadcasts;

22) In order to encourage recruitment of primary teachers from among all social classes, it is desirable to provide free training (tuition, board and upkeep), or scholarships, or remuneration;

23) When candidates for primary teacher training are required to agree to teach for a certain minimum of years, in return for the material assistance they receive during their training, such necessary agreement should be fairly elastic, especially in the case of women, so that the requirement may not discourage recruitment;

24) The minimum age of admission to primary teacher training establishments must naturally be fixed in accordance with the level (secondary, intermediate, or university) of these establishments; thus no one minimum age is applicable to all countries, but the danger of admitting candidates not mature enough to realise the responsibilities of the teaching profession or to cope with its difficulties should be borne in mind;

25) As simplification of admission procedures appears desirable, qualifications, certificates and diplomas should be taken into account when candidates seek admission to training;

26) Selection of candidates for primary teacher training should in no circumstances, however, be based solely on intelligence and knowledge, but should pay equal attention to such criteria as character mental and physical health, love of children, devotion to work, and social qualities; it is desirable that all candidates should undergo psychological examination immediately before and during training, with a view to eliminating those possessing anomalies of character or behaviour which are incompatible with teaching; entrance examinations can be with advantage supplemented by interviews and, if necessary, by short periods of probation;

27) Account should also be taken of mental traits, emotional balance, personal interests, and difficulties of adjustment; it is therefore desirable that all primary teacher training establishments should offer a course in mental health, given by a teacher to whom the teachers-in-training can turn for help in solving their personal problems.

### Curricula

28) Representatives of the principals and teachers of primary teacher training establishments and primary teaching staffs should participate in the elaboration and revision of teacher training programmes and curricula;

29) The duration of primary teacher training depends on the nature of the course, if it covers general education in addition to professional studies, it should be longer than would otherwise be the case;

30) In training establishments at secondary level, a balance should be achieved between general education and professional training;

31) The professional training of primary teachers should include not only psychology, education and teaching practice, but also a selection of special courses in such fields as social studies, domestic economy, hygiene, physical education, singing, drawing, handwork, and agriculture;

32) The psychological and pedagogical aspects of primary teacher training should include a study of the nature of the child and the learning process, the relation of education to society, the materials of instruction, and the methods of teaching, attention being paid throughout to both theory and practice;

33) The psychological studies of primary teachers should cover general and child psychology, and, in addition to the technique of testing, a qualitative study of children's intellectual development; formal teaching should be supplemented by direct observation and experiment on children's intellectual and emotional behaviour, as individuals and as members of a group;

34) The pedagogical aspects of primary teacher training should include principles of education, history of education and comparative education, experimental education teaching methods, school organization, administration and legislation, and educational problems pertaining to the country concerned;

35) In teaching principles of education and the history of education the aim should be to familiarize teachers-in-training not merely with accepted ideas to be found in all educational philosophies, but also with the way educational principles and organization have evolved; a study of comparative education should enable teachers-in-training to grasp the universal nature of certain educational problems, and at the same time to realize the necessity of adapting principles to national, regional and local conditions;

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36) Primary teacher training curricula should allot ample time to teaching methods, both those calculated to develop the growing personality, powers and initiative of the child, as well as those employed in teaching the different subjects, especially the methods of reading, writing, and arithmetic, and such instruction should be closely correlated with the psychological and practical training;

37) Formal pedagogical training should be supplemented by, for example, seminars, discussion groups, and individual research; primary teacher training establishments will for this purpose need to be fully equipped with all the necessary teaching and research materials and aids, and a well-stocked library of educational journals, classical and modern works on education, reference books, and textbooks;

38) As soon as circumstances permit, primary teacher training curricula should include non-compulsory subjects or options enabling the students to do advanced work in subjects in which they are specially interested;

39) Practical work is an essential part of primary teacher training, and must therefore be given ample time in the pedagogical part of the curriculum;

40) Such practical work should comprise not only observation of experienced teachers' work and a graded introduction to the actual practice of teaching, but also active participation in every aspect of school life;

41) Primary teacher training establishments should have under their authority one or more schools, preferably of the experimental type, where students can do part of their practical training;

42) The practical experience of teachers-in-training should not be limited to demonstration schools, but should also embrace experience in ordinary primary schools where they can meet all the problems in the school and the community (premises, equipment and size of classes, social environment, etc.) that they will in all probability encounter when they secure a post;

43) Teachers-in-training should have opportunities for practice in schools with different sizes of staffs, including one-teacher schools, and in schools situated in different localities;

44) In countries where primary teachers are required to teach adults in, for example, evening and fundamental education classes their training should include formal and practical instruction in this type of work;

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45) The training of primary teachers should also include courses on school hygiene, preventive health care of children, and protection against contagious diseases and epidemics; primary teachers working in isolated areas should themselves be able at least to safeguard their own and their family's health;

46) Primary teacher training should include formal and practical instruction enabling the students to understand the important social role they will be called upon to play in the local community; such instruction might usefully include, for instance, the organization of leisure-time activities and cultural events, and the improvement of local hygienic and economic standards;

47) Primary teacher training establishments need to foster the aesthetic sensibilities of teachers-in-training, if the schools to which the latter are ultimately appointed are in their turn to develop such gifts; the siting and installation of primary teacher training establishments should for this reason be the object of careful study, and musical, dramatic, literary and sporting events should be organized in such establishments or in the local primary schools;

48) Teachers-in-training should have opportunities of becoming acquainted with extra-scholastic activities such as school meals and clothing services, vacation camps, youth movements, and parent-teacher associations;

49) The general behaviour of the students of a training establishment depends to a large extent on the way the course is organized, the spirit in which the instruction is given, and, in boarding establishments the kind of accommodation; discipline should therefore be liberal and inspired by respect for human personality, and should stimulate the development of the individual's gifts; the instruction should be mainly grounded in the study of man, and should develop the students' civic spirit and sense of responsibility;

50) Because one of man's greatest unsolved problems is his relationship to his fellow men, the teacher should have the interests, the attitudes, the knowledge and the skills necessary to teach good human relations, tolerance and solidarity in class-room and home, and the local, national and world community; the training establishment should recognize the paramount importance of this problem and both through instruction and practice, qualify the teacher to teach good human relations and world understanding;

51) Special attention should be given to the selection of the staffs of primary teacher training establishments and demonstration schools,



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since they are the human beings called on to approach the ideal of the perfect teacher to be presented to the students;

52) The teachers of pedagogy and psychology should possess high theoretical and practical qualifications; the other teachers should be masters of their several subjects, and of the psychological, pedagogical and social aspects of them;

53) Every endeavour should be made to keep primary teachers in lasting touch with the primary teacher training establishments and prevent the beneficial contact being severed as soon as the students have left college;

54) Psychological and educational research institutes should be established to ensure, in collaboration with the primary teacher training establishments and also with the demonstration and other primary schools, the constant improvement of primary teaching methods and aids.

### **Further training and refresher courses**

55) It is highly desirable that primary teachers should have opportunities of further training throughout their career, and thus be enabled to keep abreast of new ideas and methods;

56) Further training of this kind is especially necessary for primary teachers trained through emergency courses and for those appointed before obtaining the qualifications normally required;

57) Further training courses should be available to raise the standard of primary teachers' work and encourage its accomplishment; these should also enable teachers to improve their qualifications and thus their salaries, wherever there is a relation between the two;

58) Whatever form further training may take (lectures, demonstration lessons, discussion groups, seminars, vacation courses, correspondence courses, broadcasts, etc.), prime responsibility for its organization should lie with inspectors, principals and teaching staffs of primary teacher training establishments, and groups or associations of primary teachers;

59) Where the education authorities do not themselves assume responsibility for organizing further training, funds should be made available for the purpose to primary teachers' associations and other appropriate bodies and groups;

60) Primary teaching staffs, especially unqualified staffs working in rural areas, should be given every facility, in the form, for example, of leave and allowances, for securing further training;

61) In addition to the provision made by the education authorities and other bodies for further training, the primary teachers themselves may with advantage be encouraged to form seminars or study groups on the theoretical and practical problems of education that interest them most;

62) Individual and group travel in their own country or abroad for study purposes is also one of the most effective means of improving primary teachers' standard of work and their grasp of educational problems and of stimulating them to apply new methods; numerous scholarships should be available for the purpose; teachers who have had such experience will pass on their discoveries to their colleagues;

63) The exchange of primary teachers with other countries is also an effective means of further training, and should be encouraged wherever linguistic and other conditions make it possible, on the lines suggested by Recommendation No. 29 concerning the International Interchanges of Teachers, passed by the XIIIth International Conference on Public Education in 1950;

64) Every encouragement should be given to the publication of books and journals dealing with primary teachers' specific problems and enabling teachers to keep abreast of developments in educational science and refresh their knowledge, and to facilities for the purchase or loan of such books and journals, for example through school and circulating libraries; the primary teacher training establishments, the educational documentation centres existing in many countries, and the research institutes recommended in Article 54, have an increasingly important field of activity in this connection.

### **Emergency courses**

65) The competent authorities should estimate the number of primary teachers that will be needed in the coming years, and make timely provision for their training by the customary establishments; if through unforeseen circumstances they are forced to abrogate the customary training and institute emergency courses, they should regard the latter only as a temporary measure, and make every endeavour to return to normal at the earliest possible date;

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66) When the institution of emergency courses appears justified on account of more or less sudden increases in the school population resulting from population changes or the implementation or prolongation of compulsory education, such courses should require a sufficient standard of general education from the students and ensure them adequate professional training before they secure appointments;

67) Primary teachers trained in emergency courses should have opportunities of completing their training, if they give evidence of possessing the necessary aptitude, so that they can be admitted to the normally trained grades.

### **Assistance from international organizations**

68) It is highly desirable that Unesco, the other specialized agencies of the United Nations, and the various regional organizations should furnish immediate moral, material and financial aid on a large scale to the countries experiencing great difficulty, especially as regards training the necessary primary teachers, in organizing or extending compulsory education.