

RECOMMENDATION No. 57
TO THE MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION
concerning
THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE SHORTAGE
OF PRIMARY TEACHERS
(1963)

The International Conference on Public Education,

Convened in Geneva by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Bureau of Education, having assembled on the first of July, nineteen hundred and sixty-three for its twenty-sixth session, adopts on the twelfth of July nineteen hundred and sixty-three, the following recommendation:

The Conference,

Considering that the shortage of primary teachers and the recruitment crisis are felt in a large majority of countries,

Considering that the shortage of primary teachers constitutes not only a bar to the quantitative expansion of education but also injuriously affects the quality of education,

Considering that the shortage of teachers felt at the primary education level raises serious problems for all countries and particularly for those which have not yet reached the stage of compulsory education,

Considering that in the majority of developing countries the task of primary teachers is to be in the forefront of those working for community development in rural areas,

Considering that it is urgent to proceed to a thorough analysis of the many causes as well as the range and characteristics of the shortage in each of the countries affected,

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Considering the intensity of educational needs and the continuous growth of school population, which are becoming evident in all countries of the world,

Considering that among the steps to be envisaged in the solution to the problem of the shortage of primary teachers, it is desirable to resort in the first place to those which have the least adverse effect on the quality of education,

Considering its previous recommendations and especially Recommendations Nos. 36, 37 and 55, adopted by the Conference at its sixteenth and twenty-fifth sessions, which concern respectively primary teacher training, the status of primary teachers, and the further in-service training of primary teachers,

Considering that, despite similar aspirations, different countries will reach dissimilar solutions to the problem of the shortage of primary teachers,

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

Study of the Causes of the Shortage of Teachers

1) The measures taken to overcome the shortage of primary teachers should be based on objective data as revealed by scientific research and surveys devoted to the economic, social and cultural causes of the shortage as well as on the advantages and disadvantages, including especially the practicability and advisability of the various solutions envisaged.

2) In all countries where there is a shortage of teachers and particularly in those where it constitute a serious threat to the development and efficiency of primary education studies of this kind are indispensable and should involve the collaboration of all bodies capable of giving assistance.

3) In those countries having one or several educational planning authorities, such studies, together with an assessment of the steps required, should be undertaken or commissioned by those authorities.

4) In view of the complexity of the problem, a study of the nature and the evolution of the shortage of primary teachers cannot be restricted to research into causes of a purely educational nature but should take into account other factors which may also lie at the origin of the shortage.

5) The permanent or temporary character of each of the causes

discovered in this way, their inter-relationships and their probable trends — either to worsen, to stabilise, or to disappear — should also be established.

6) One of the essential points in all preliminary studies on the shortage is population trends; it is therefore necessary to evaluate up to what point the supply problem is related to variations in the birthrate and to population shifts, and to forecast the consequences of future population trends.

7) In countries where the principle of compulsory education is not applied in its entirety, such studies should also establish to what extent the lack of teachers may militate against or delay its fulfilment.

8) Countries where the extension of compulsory education constitutes one of the determining causes of the shortage should undertake an investigation into teacher requirements due to this extension.

9) Conditions of service for men and women teachers, and their frequently insufficient remuneration, are very often considered as principal causes of the shortage of primary teachers; studies comparing the status of teachers with that of other professions with equivalent qualifications and responsibilities should therefore be undertaken.

10) As the shortage may not be felt in equal proportions over a whole country, it will be necessary to study its distribution even within different areas as well as between urban or rural areas; it will be necessary furthermore to examine whether it is more marked as regards men or women.

11) Finally, it will be necessary to inquire into other causes, which, even if they are not so generalized as those mentioned above, can play a part in the teacher supply crisis in some countries; these include extension of candidates' training, decrease in the number of pupils per class, reduction in the number of hours of work, the desire to pursue higher studies, transfer of primary teachers to other duties to other levels or types of education as well as to other occupations.

Steps to Improve the Status of Teachers

12) So long as the living standards of primary teaching staff in some countries are not commensurate with their qualifications and responsibilities, recruitment difficulties or desertion from the profession must be expected; therefore among the steps taken to combat the shortage of teachers, an especial importance must be attached

to ensuring that their material conditions and social situation are at least as good as those of other members of the community with similar training and responsibilities.

13) An improvement of the material situation of teachers is justified in the eyes of those responsible for the financing of education, because in the general view, investment in education constitutes henceforth a fundamental element in the economic and social development of a people.

14) It is essential that in all countries teaching staff be given an appropriate status with respect to economic, social and professional conditions; this status will greatly contribute to ensuring for primary teachers their rightful place in the community.

15) It is moreover necessary that wherever the teachers' status and social security (sickness insurance, life assurance, retirement conditions, etc.) are unfavourable as compared to that of other categories in public services, this detrimental inequality should be removed as soon as possible.

16) In those countries where the shortage of primary teachers is particularly acute in rural or isolated areas, compensatory measures should be offered in favour of rural teachers; for example: special allowances, limited tour of service in isolated or unhealthy areas housing and catering facilities, free transport facilities, free health services for their families, boarding and study facilities for their children, and access to free school ground for cultivation, etc.

Steps to Facilitate Training and Recruitment of Teachers

17) Maintenance of the necessary balance between current and future requirements in teachers and the provision of regular training facilities must be a constant preoccupation of educational authorities, especially in those countries where the shortage of primary teachers is a sequel to the introduction, generalization or extension of compulsory education; every attempt should be made to create and develop progressively the training establishments necessary to provide the number of trained teachers needed to meet future requirements.

18) In view of the fact that it is more often in rural areas that the shortage of primary teachers is most in evidence, it is desirable that training establishments be opened in those areas, it being understood that their syllabuses take into account the environmental charac-

teristics of each area, but are in no way inferior in range and quality, to those of urban area training establishments. Wherever the facilities for opening such training establishments do not exist, mobile teams composed of school supervisors should be set up to facilitate the training and further training of rural teachers and of teachers in remote areas.

19) Where the number of candidates attracted to the teaching profession is not sufficient, it is desirable that authorities responsible for the recruitment of trainee-teachers as well as professional associations and teachers themselves should organize campaigns with a view to making known the characteristics of the profession; to this end, recourse can be had to the dissemination of publications, to discussion groups, lectures, press articles, radio and television broadcasts, school visits, even short periods of pre-entry teaching practice possibly with the collaboration of vocational guidance services.

20) The experiments made in certain countries to facilitate the access of workers and employees to pedagogical studies should be followed with the greatest interest, whether these are evening training schools, training centres with a special timetable, or correspondence or radio courses, seminars, demonstrations, practical exercises and courses, etc.; all the necessary facilities should be granted by employers, possibly with assistance from the State, to help this category of candidates for primary teaching.

21) Material assistance to trainee-teachers in its various forms appears to constitute one of the best means to encourage recruitment of candidates to primary education; these include free tuition and school supplies, granting of scholarships, reductions in hostel charges or free accommodation, allowances to compensate for lack of salary, pre-salaries, etc.

Emergency Measures for Accelerated Training, In-Service Training and Recruitment of Teachers

22) Despite its obvious shortcomings, accelerated or emergency training must be accepted in certain countries as a provisional solution, until numbers of regularly trained teachers are up to strength; moreover, teachers who have received such training should be encouraged to complete their full training at a later date.

23) In so far as is possible, entry requirements for candidates to accelerated training should not be lower than those for admission to the regular teacher training establishments.

24) It is mostly in regard to the duration of studies that emergency training differs from current pedagogical training; however, even if shorter, the period of training should not be reduced too much.

25) Particular attention should be paid to the formulation of curricula and syllabuses used in courses of accelerated training; a careful selection of the subjects taught, as well as their content, will permit the elimination of all matter considered as subsidiary, while retaining what is vital to the formative value of this type of intensive training. It is advisable that in view of the difficulties attached to this type of training, it should be entrusted to particularly capable and experienced teachers, both from the cultural and pedagogical viewpoints.

26) In many cases, education authorities have unfortunately been obliged to take teachers without any professional training. But it should be understood that this exceptional measure can only be a temporary expedient, especially in those countries having other means at their disposal in the struggle against the shortage of primary teachers.

27) When employment of staff without any previous professional training is unavoidable, great care should be exercised as regards the choice of candidates. In any event, it is essential that they should have a good general level of education and the required pedagogical capacities, and that they should feel drawn towards teaching. Such teachers should be offered regular in-service training opportunities in order to acquire necessary qualifications and attain the required professional level.

28) In matters relating to accelerated training for teachers without professional qualifications, educational authorities should choose that which is most suitable for their respective countries; for example, regular courses, holiday courses, correspondence courses, seminars practical work, demonstrations, etc. Every facility must be given to teaching staff who need them to make use of these means of further training provided that regular recruitment of teachers is not affected by these exceptional measures.

29) Teachers who have successfully followed accelerated training courses on a level comparable with regular courses should receive status and salary as regularly trained teachers. Those teachers who in taking accelerated training courses, do not reach the level of regularly trained teachers, but who correct their training deficiencies by appropriate further training courses, will be treated on an equal footing;

teachers without previous professional training who, while in service, have successfully followed training courses organized for them should also be granted status and salary equivalent to that of regularly trained teachers.

Other Measures

30) Where there is too marked a disproportion in the recruitment of teachers of one or the other sex, appropriate measures (information campaigns, for example) should be undertaken to remedy this. Among recommended measures to combat the shortage of primary teachers is that of offering married women teachers the opportunity of continuing in their posts or of readmittance in those cases where they had resigned; they should also be offered facilities such as transfer to posts near their husbands' place of work, or their homes.

31) The re-engagement of certain retired teachers, in so far as their intellectual capacities and state of health allow it, appears to be one of the measures which can contribute to remedy the shortage of primary teachers. In those countries with such a shortage where teachers can retire when still in full possession of their faculties it would be highly desirable to encourage them to remain actively employed.

32) There are certain measures of educational organization which can contribute to a more rational use of available teaching staff and which should be adopted where appropriate. These measures include especially the better geographical distribution of schools, amalgamation of small schools where pupil transport or the setting up of hostels allows this; opening of complete one-teacher schools where the enrolment does not justify the presence of two or three teachers; recourse to coeducation if the presence of both a man and a woman teacher is not required, etc.

33) In very urgent cases, primary teachers of specialised subjects should be given means to complete their training so that they can teach general subjects.

34) To remedy the shortage of primary teachers, consideration should be given to new methods of teaching which require a smaller number of teachers than traditional methods (i.e. programmed teaching and monitor system).

35) As in many countries, evening classes for adults could be taken by primary teachers, who would receive a special allowance which

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would contribute to an improvement in their material situation. Where qualifications are equal, the preference should be given to primary teachers already in service.

36) In those countries where the desire for the rapid generalisation of primary education has necessitated recourse to special measures (such as an increase in the number of pupils per class, or per teacher decrease in pupils' timetables, and adoption of the shift system), such measures should be considered as entirely provisional in view of the resulting disadvantages which they will cause for both teacher and pupil.

International Cooperation

37) All forms of technical and financial assistance which will allow the opening of new training establishments for primary teachers are among the most effective means of combating the shortage of teachers, especially in those countries where compulsory education for all is not yet in existence.

38) It is desirable that international education organizations such as Unesco should continue the experiments successfully carried out in developing countries which are suffering from a shortage of teachers by placing at the disposal of countries which ask for them experts to study the various aspects of the problem, and to suggest adequate means to resolve it. The organization of in-service training courses for insufficiently trained teachers and the production of teaching material adapted to the conditions in the countries concerned should be included among the tasks assigned to these experts. Technical assistance should also help in the supply of documentation dealing with experiments which have taken place elsewhere.

39) Technical assistance should place emphasis on the further training of teachers and on the necessity of each developing country meeting its own needs from its own resources. Although there are obvious advantages in the international exchange of teachers in cases where the employment of teachers from other countries is necessary, this measure should be accompanied by intensified training of teachers in the country concerned in order to avoid too great a dependence upon outside assistance.

Implementation of the Present Recommendation

40) It is important that the text of this recommendation should be widely diffused by Ministries of Education, the school authorities

for the level of education most directly concerned, educational documentation centres, national and international teachers' or parents' associations, etc.; the educational press, both official and private, should play a large part in the diffusion of the recommendation among the services concerned, the administrative and teaching staff, and the general public.

41) Unesco regional centres, with the cooperation of the ministries concerned, are invited to facilitate the study of this recommendation at the regional level with a view to its adaptation to the special characteristics of the regions concerned.

42) In countries where it seems necessary, Ministries of Education are invited to request the competent bodies to undertake certain activities, such as for example:

a) to examine the present recommendation and to compare it with the *de jure* and *de facto* situation in their respective countries;

b) to consider the advantages and disadvantages of implementing each of the clauses not yet in force;

c) to adapt each clause, should its implementation be considered desirable, to the requirements of the individual country; and

d) to suggest the regulations and practical measures which should be taken to ensure the implementation of each clause examined.