WORKSHOP 4

Quality Education and the Key Role of Teachers

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BACKGROUND PAPER

Quality Education: the teachers' key role

1.   Introduction

The World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 did not only emphasise the need to achieve education for all, but did also notice the need to improve the quality of education. The Forum made the following recommendation: "*Improve all aspects of the quality of education to achieve recognised and measurable learning outcomes for all-especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills*". (Dakar Framework for Action Article 7, World Education Forum, 2000). Article 28 of the Convention of the Right of the Child states the child's right to education and the State's duty to ensure that primary education at least is made free and. In article 29 of the same Convention the States are requested to recognise that education should be directed at developing the child's personality and talents, preparing the child for active life as an adult, fostering respect for basic human rights and developing respect for the child's own cultural and national values and those of others (United Nations, 1989).

Based on the recommendations in the Dakar Framework for Action and the Convention of the Right of the Child, as well as a number of other international conventions and recommendations, it can be concluded that everyone has the right not only to receive education, but also to receive education of a high quality. A quality education system must manage to provide all children and young people with a comprehensive education and with an appropriate preparation for working life, life in society and private life. This should be achieved without distinctions of any kind, such as those based on parents income, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the key role teachers play in providing quality education. The paper will start with a short discussion in section 2 on how to define quality and will then also discuss briefly in section 3 why we have experienced such an emphasis on quality in education in the discussions in recent years. Section 4 focuses on what can be described as a good teacher and section 5 on what teachers can do to improve quality in education. Section 6 will discuss what governments and education authorities can do to support teachers in their efforts to improve quality. Section 7 discuss what teacher unions can do to improve quality in education. Section 8 will then try to summarise the whole discussion.

2.   What is quality?

Whenever quality in education is discussed it may be important to reflect on what is understood by the term quality. Many educators, researchers and politicians have tried to define this term and a number of different definitions can be found in the literature.

2.1.   Different definitions

One almost classical definition is the way in which Coombs (1985) described quality in his book "*The World Crises in Education: The View from the Eighties*":
"*..qualitative dimensions means much more than the quality of education as customarily defined and judged by student learning achievements, in terms of traditional curriculum and standards. Quality (.....) also pertains to the relevance of what is taught and learned - to how well it fits the present and future needs of the particular learners in question, given their particular circumstances and prospects. It also refers to significant changes in the educational system itself, in the nature of its inputs*

(students, teachers, facilities, equipment, and supplies); its objectives, curriculum and educational technologies; and its socioeconomic, cultural and political environment." (Coombs, 1985, p. 105)

The World Band has also tried to define quality. In the report "*Priorities and Strategies for Education*" (1995) the World Bank dealt with education policy issues and made the following observation concerning quality: "*Quality in education is difficult to define and measure. An adequate definition must include student outcomes. Most educators would also include in the definition the nature of the educational experience that help to produce thus outcomes - the learning environment.*" (World Bank, 1995, p. 46).

There is also a large amount of other reports and publications discussing quality from a perspective of quality assurance and quality improvement. Spanbauer (1992) discuss the need for schools to have a quality policy. As an example he use Fox Valley Technical College Policy: "*It is the policy of Fox Valley Technical College to provide quality instruction and service consistent with the highest educational standards. We endeavour to provide precise, prompt, and courteous service and instruction to our students, to one another, and to the employers who hire our graduates and use our services.*" (Spanbauer, 1992, p.11). Morgatroyd and Morgan (1994) discuss three basic definition of quality:; 1) "*Quality assurance refers to the determination of standards, appropriate methods and quality requirements by an expert body, accompanied by a process of inspection or evaluation that examines the extent to which practice meets these standards.*" 2) "*... contract conformance, where some quality standards has been specified during the negotiation of forming a contract.*" 3) "*Customer-driven quality refers to a notion of quality in which those who are to receive a product or service make explicit their expectations for this product or service and quality is defined in terms meeting or exceeding the expectations of customers.*" (Morgatroyd & Morgan, 1994. p. 45 - 46). Morgatroyd and Morgan argue that the quality concept is undergoing a development from what has been referred to as "quality assurance" to "contract conformance" and most important to a "customer-driven" perspective. This type of approach is influenced by economic theories. It is often striking that this literature is not dealing with the content of the quality concept, but with methods and organisation models. We will come back to this issue in section 3 when the reasons behind the increased interest in quality in education are discussed.

Another aspect on the discussion about how to define quality in education is whether quality is only a matter of learning things well. It may be argued that it is also of crucial importance to discuss what you learn. From this perspective quality is to learn the right things and to learn them well. It is not good enough to learn the right things only half well, and it may be even worse to learn the wrong things well. It can be noted that education in many parts of the world do not deal with what is sometimes referred to as life skills. For many children, in for example Africa, a quality education would be an education which included knowledge about HIV/AIDS and how to protect yourself.

2.2.   A definition discussed among teacher unions

Also within teacher unions have the issue of quality in education been discussed. Education International has discussed this question at a number of conferences. A large part of these discussions from Europe have been documented in the ETUCE publication "*Quality in Education*" (2002). Based on a definition of quality in education elaborated by a working group within EI-Europe and ETUCE the following observations can be made:

- Quality in education is a concept which is rapidly evolving over time, but also has different emphasis according to different national, education sectors, cultures and different players in the education system – student, teachers, policymakers, the business community, unions etc.

- Education is always, in one sense or another, preparing persons for the future. Young people and children must be given through education the tools to deal with the different tasks that they will need to perform in their lives. They must be helped to prepare themselves for their

private lives, but equally be prepared to participate in economic life, cultural life and the political life of their societies. Education must help young people and children to develop themselves as persons. They must learn the necessary skills and achieve the essential knowledge that will make it possible for them to play an active part in economic life. As citizens they must learn to be critical and responsible. In today's world there is also a need to prepare young people and children to participate in and understand activities at an international level.

- It is important to recognise that the purpose for education is not only instrumental, to prepare individuals for the labour market and to be citizens, but that education also is a good in itself.

- The challenge to all education is to, lay the foundation for change and at the same time to maintain the best qualities of the present. Every new generation must learn how to improve and develop society, but at the same time be able to base these changes on the traditions and achievements already established in society. Education has to encourage the capacities of young people in a society that has to recognise all these capacities before using them. There is a complex interrelation between education and society. Education is in some ways a mirror of society, but at the same time a factor influencing the development of society.

- Quality education is the education that best fits the present and future needs of the particular learners in question and the community, given the particular circumstances and prospects. The quality concept also has to embrace the development of the potential of *every* member of each new generation.

- Quality cannot be seen as a static concept. Quality and standards are in fact *relative* matters - relative to the particular time and place and to particular learners and their circumstances. One important aspect of quality is the relevance of the subjects taught and the objectives of education. Quality education is an education that provides students with the tools to deal with and find solutions to the challenges confronting mankind. In a changing world this means that what was considered quality education yesterday might not meet the standard of what will be understood as quality tomorrow. This is particularly true at present if we take in to consideration the rapid changes created by new technologies. There is a need to discuss this concept continuously and to define and redefine it.

- Basic skills, such as reading, writing and arithmetic, have to be regarded as essential parts of all quality education. The attainment of basic competencies is necessary before further progression can be made within a quality system.

- Values, such as democracy and human rights must be understood as basic fundamentals for quality education. Teachers must teach about values not just through the substantive content of their teaching, but also by using teaching methods, which will integrate democracy, interaction, equality, respect and co-operation as parts of the work in schools/institutions. In these areas teachers must be role models. This is only possible when teachers' professional status is recognised and when they are given the appropriate support to fulfil their tasks.

- Quality education should not be regarded as a process of consumption, but as a process of interaction between teachers and students. Education must aim at giving the students opportunities for personal development and confidence to adapt to new situations as well as change these, when they find that necessary. Education can never be a neutral process; it will always be value based. The balance between objective "facts" and questioning these facts represents a great challenge to the professional teacher. (ETUCE, 2002)

3. Why this discussion on quality?

UNESCO's "International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century", (often referred to as the Delors-Commission after its chairperson the former EU Commissioner Jacques Delors) published in 1996 its report "*Learning: The Treasure Within*". In this report they concluded that : ".. *a greater focus on quality is desirable everywhere, even in countries where all children are enrolled in basic education*"(p.120). It can be noted that quality has since the 80´ become a key concept in the education discussion. Everyone wants to improve the quality in education. It is relevant to ask why quality has become the focus of so many educational discussions? There may be at least three reasons behind this:

- Some would say it is because education over the last decades has developed towards lower quality.
- Others would say it is an expression of an increased concern about education, the quality of education and the best way of spending money in education.
- Still others would say that the increased focus on education is a part of a process of restructuring the public sector, cutting public spending and introducing private solutions (Snyder, Fredriksson & Taube, 2004).

3.1. The need to improve quality

If we look at a number of reports concerning the quality of education in different countries we may get a picture of the present situation. Quality of education can of course be measured in many different ways and there are also many controversies about the best way of measuring the quality of education. A minimal requirement could be that children at least should receive basic and working skills in reading, writing and arithmetic.

In the SACMEQ (Southern Africa Consortium for Measuring Educational Quality) project, covering five countries in Southern Africa (Mauritius, Namibia, Zambia, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe), it was found that the level of reading skills among the students was very low. In only two of the five countries, Zimbabwe and Mauritius, at least half of the students achieved what was referred to as basic readings skills. Only in Zimbabwe, did more than a third of the students reach what was referred to as desired reading level (SACMEQ, 1998).

In Ghana the Ghanaian educational authorities organised, with the support from USAID (US Authority for International Development), an ambitious assessment project in English and mathematics. Based on the objectives in the curriculum a test was constructed and based on the judgement of a group of experienced teachers a kind of mastery level was determined which students should be able to achieve above in order to be considered to have reached the objectives of the curriculum. The first tests were administered in 1992. The tests were repeated in 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996. Each sample corresponded to about 5% of all students in grade 6 in primary school. The performance has been very poor. A very small number of students reached what was defined as mastery level in the two subjects. In 1992, 2 % reached this level in English and in 1996 5.5%. In mathematics the percentage that reached mastery level in 1992 was 1.1% and in 1996 1.8% (Quansah, 1997).

In Nigeria a study examined reading skills, mathematics knowledge and general life skills among students in grade 4 as a part of the MLA-Project (Monitoring Learning Achievement Project). On average the students could respond correctly to 32% of the tasks related to mathematics knowledge, to 25% of the task related to reading skills and to 33% of the tasks related to general life skills. One of the tasks was that the students should copy a five-line text. Only 8% of the students managed to do this correct, while 40% of the students could not copy a single word correct (Chiejine, 1999). In another study on reading skills among students in grade 1 in upper-secondary schools in Nigeria it was found that the results were not very impressive and that they where particularly poor in rural schools, which constitute a major part of all schools in the country (Tswanya, 1997).

The World Bank has in a report on primary education in India (World Bank, 1997) examined a number of recent research reports. The conclusion from these reports was that the quality of education in Indian schools was poor. Students in grade 5 had often only learned half of what they were supposed to have learned in grade 4. In the state of Mahdya Pradesh 70% of the students in grade 4 and 60% of the students in grade 5, in what was referred to as "privileged urban areas", had not achieved the level prescribed in the curriculum for grade 2 in Hindi and mathematics. The content of the curriculum was mainly transmitted through the textbooks and they were regarded to be too theoretical and of little relevance in the reality in which the students lived.

Also in Bangladesh studies have been undertaken to measure what the students really have learned in school. In a report (Greaney, Khandker & Alam, 1998) on basic skills among poor people in a rural area who had completed primary education it was found that 28% had reached the prescribed minimal requirements in reading, 13% in writing and 38% in mathematics. In a report from CAMPE (Campaign for Public Education) in Bangladesh it turned out that only 29.6% of the students reached the prescribed basic level in primary school (CAMPE, 1999).

There are also problems regarding the quality of education in industrialised country. An alarming factor is the number of pupils leaving education without a certificate, usually referred to as drop-outs. 10 - 12 % of pupils in the EU countries in the age group of 15 - 16 did not obtain any certificate at the end of compulsory schooling or did not complete their education in a normal way (European Commission/Eurydice, 1994). The level of basic skills such as reading comprehension is not sufficiently good among large groups of the population in several industrialised countries. In a report from OECD it is claimed that more than 20 % of adults in some of the richest countries in the world are unable to read or write except at the most elementary level (OECD/Human Resources Development Canada, 1997).

There are good reasons to believe that the situation is not much different concerning the quality of education in many countries other than those referred to above. It can be assumed that many children leave school without having developed sufficient basic literacy skills. According to the World Bank is lack of quality a major problem in many education systems: "*The quality of Education is poor at all levels in low- and middle-income countries. Students in developing countries have a mean level of achievement below that in industrial countries, and their performance shows a much greater variance around the mean.*" (p. 3). Whether this problem has increased or not is difficult to judge, but it is enough to notice that there is a huge need to improve quality in education in many countries.

3.2.   Quality, quality assurance and privatisation

Poor quality may not be the only reason for the discussion about quality in education. As mentioned above another reason for this discussion may also be to argue for fundamental changes in the education system. As was showed in the quotations in section 2 from Spanbauer and Morgatroyd & Morgan quality is sometimes discussed in terms where the students are described as customers and education as a product sold on a market. In this perspective there is a tendency not to talk about how to improve quality but how to assure a certain level of quality. References are often made to "*indicators*", "*benchmarks*" and "*benchmarking*". This can be related to what Power (2002) calls "*The Auditing Society*". According to Power, there has been a growing interest in the UK in "*a certain set of attitudes or cultural commitments to problem solving*" (p. 4). It is probably safe to say that this increased interest has also been visible in other countries. Central elements in this set of attitudes are accountability, evaluation, control and quality. Auditing practice in the public sector has "*received a decisive stimulus since the mid-1980s as programmatic commitments to the reform of the public sector administration*" (p. 52). Power underlines the important role of quality audit in this context: "*Quality audits are used because quality must be made measurable. As systems become the primary focus for inspectors and auditors, technical difficulties of performance measurement become invisible. A new market for assurance services has emerged which demands a tight coupling between quality*

performance, however that is to be defined, and processes to ensure that this performance is visible to a wider audience, whether this is the customer, the regulator, or even the customer as a regulator. 'Making quality auditable' is therefore a form of impression management in which the object of audit has shifted from operation to system control over operations. Without audit and the certification that follows from audit, quality remains too private an affair. One might conclude that there is no quality without quality assurance" (p. 60).

When quality is used in the way, which is described by Power, the purpose is often to introduce market oriented reforms and even privatisation. An argument in this context is often that private schools do better than public schools to a lower cost. Much of the "proofs" supporting this view are equipped with a fundamental problem – that in most cases the recruitment to private and public schools are very different. Public schools have to accept all children while private schools can pick and chose their students. In the MLA project it was noted: "*Private schools have traditionally produced higher-achieving pupils. School facilities are usually better, teachers are better trained (and often better paid) and family educational background is usually higher. At the basic education level in most countries, private schools tend to draw children from families with relatively higher socio-economic levels, and from urban or semi-urban areas*" (Chinapah, 1997, p. 76). In Chile, where the government decentralised and privatised the education system and introduced a voucher system, the student achievements in mathematics and Spanish were controlled in national examinations 1982, 1988 and 1990. The result of this evaluation was that the reforms contributed to greater inequalities without improving the overall quality (ILO, 1996, p. 32 – 33).

In discussions among teachers and within their organisations there is a strong view that education is a unique activity and that the relation between a student and a teacher can not be reduced to a relation between a customer and a salesman. A look at history shows that famous teachers in the past never regarded themselves as salesmen selling a product to a customer. Socrates did certainly not think about himself as selling education to his disciples, instead he regarded his teaching as a unique exchange between teacher and student contributing to the development of both. Quality education should not be regarded as a process of consumption, but as a process of interaction between teachers and students.

Teachers in most countries would strongly agree that the quality of education has to be improved. The ways to improve the quality is to be found in education reforms, which will allow well educated teachers to improve and develop their work in the classroom. The following sections will deal with different aspects of this issue.

4.   What are the characteristics of a good teacher?

Recalling the attempts to define quality of education in section 2 it is of crucial importance to reflect on what is needed of the teacher to provide quality education. There have been many attempts to list the characteristics of the good teacher. Sometimes such lists tend to give a picture of a kind of superman/superwoman and may be more discouraging for teachers than helpful. In spite of that risk it may be of interest to look at some of the more enlightened attempts to describe the good teacher.

4.1.   Different description of the good teacher

The OECD report "*Quality in Teaching*" (1994) defines teacher quality in five dimensions;
"   -   *knowledge of substantive areas and content;*
          -         *pedagogic skill, including the acquisition and ability to use a repertoire of teaching strategies;*
          -         *reflection and ability to be self-critical, the hallmark of teacher professionalism;*
          -         *empathy, and commitment to the acknowledgement of the dignity of other;*

-        *managerial competence, as teachers assume a range of managerial responsibilities within and outside the classroom."* (OECD, 1994, p. 13 - 14)

The report adds; *"These dimensions of teacher quality should not be seen in terms of narrow behavioural competencies, but more in terms of dispositions. Teacher quality should be regarded as a holistic concept, i.e. as a gestalt of qualities rather than as a discrete set of measurable behaviours, to be developed independently from each other. The integration of competencies across these dimensions of teacher quality is thought to mark the outstanding teacher."* (OECD, 1994, p. 14).

Another interesting approach to describe the good teacher is the ten competences identified by Perrenoud (1999):
- Organising student learning opportunities.
- Managing student learning progression.
- Dealing with student heterogeneity.
- Developing student commitment to working and learning.
- Working in teams.
- Participating in school curriculum and organisation development.
- Promoting parent and community commitment to school.
- Using new technologies in their daily practice.
- Tackling professional duties and ethical dilemmas.
- Managing their own professional development.

4.2.   Different perspectives on the good teacher

Quality can be regarded from different perspectives. For many students quality is a fair system where their skills are awarded and where their achievements are acknowledged (MacBeath et al, 1996). For example did a Scottish student in grade 2/3 think that a good teacher; *"is very clever, doesn't shout, helps you every day, is not bossy, has faith in you, is funny, is patient, is good at work, tells you clearly what to do, helps you with mistakes, marks your work, helps you to read, helps you with spelling and has got courage."* (MacBeath et al., 1996, p. 55). For parents quality is a school where the students are safe and where they can learn in a stimulating environment (MacBeath et al, 1996). For many teachers quality is a school where the students want to learn and where the working conditions are good (MacBeath et al., 1996).

4.3.   The good reading teacher

Taking into consideration that reading was mentioned in section 2.2 as an essential part of all quality education it may be of interest what characterise a good reading teacher. In the large research project *"Reading Literacy"*, which IEA (The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) organised in 32 education systems in 1990-91, factors of importance for supporting students developments of a good reading ability are analysed. Lundberg and Linnakylä portray a good teacher; *"A good teacher for 9-year-olds in this international sense is usually a female teacher. She has many years of teaching experience. Outside of school, the good teacher reads a lot, both professionally about education and also literature. She or he has stayed with the class ever since the children took their first step into school literacy, and has followed their progress carefully by informal as well as more formal assessment methods. The good teacher gives the students many opportunities to do independent, silent reading in a library, which is richly stocked, and she also often holds discussions with the students about the books they have read. The children of the good teacher are encouraged to read outside school and to use the library often. During reading lessons, the children are guided to interact actively with the text by relating their own experiences to what is read, by making predictions of upcoming events during reading and by making generalisations and inferences. The good reading teacher also takes the students' interest into account when selecting reading material. The student oriented approach with a clear focus on strategies for understanding does not*

prevent the good teacher from using phonics elements now and then in her teaching to meet particular students' needs or when unknown long words, like names, are encountered." (Lundberg & Linnakylä, 1993, p. 92).

When the characteristics of the good teacher is discussed it is important to keep in mind that no one is born to be an outstanding teacher. Good teaching it is a result of education, training and experience. In the next two sections it will be discussed what the teacher herself/himself can do to improve her/his work and what governments/education authorities can do to help teachers to improve the quality of education.

5. How teachers can improve quality

What can teachers do themselves to improve quality? In this section three issues will be discussed:
- quality awareness
- professional ethics
- professional freedom

5.1. Quality awareness and self-evaluation

Of general importance for teachers´ ability to improve the quality of education is the ability to reflect on their own teaching, critically examine the methods used and looking for alternative ways of teaching (as mentioned in section 4.1 above). To create an increased "quality awareness" among teachers and help teachers to improve their teaching methodology and skills may be of crucial importance to improve quality in education. One major way of doing this is to systematically evaluate the own teaching and its results. Evaluation is a general term used to describe any activity where the quality of provision is the subject of systematic study. There are different ways to organise the evaluation process in education in various countries. In some countries the main focus seems to be to evaluate the whole educational system, while in other countries the emphasis seems to be to evaluate individual schools or even individuals. There are several risks in relation to present developments in the area of evaluation. One main risk is that evaluation will be focused too much on easily measurable school achievement, without taking into consideration the complexity of the reality in schools. In relation to this, there is also a risk that teachers will be sidestepped in the evaluation process and made only objects of the process.

In order to make evaluation a tool which teachers can use to improve the quality of education there is a need to find and highlight alternative methods for evaluation which allow for the consideration of the complexity of the school environment and which give teachers a possibility to be part of the process. One concept that is often used is school-based evaluation, meaning a process by which teachers discuss their own school as a group of professionals in such a way as to improve the quality of education.

The EU Pilot Project on Quality Evaluation in School Education has played an important role to underline how teachers can be part of evaluation and use evaluation to improve education. It can be said that this approach was first tested at large scale when NUT (National Union of Teachers in England and Wales) commissioned John MacBeath, in 1995, to conduct a study on whether the self-evaluation model adopted in Scotland could operate in England and Wales. The report "*Schools Speak For Themselves*" (MacBeath et al, 1996) was published as a part of this work. The self-evaluation model had an enormous impact in England and Wales. Over 30 local education authorities adopted this approach in their schools as a way of head teachers and teachers gathering information and using it for school improvement.

In the school year 1997/98 EU launched a pilot project on quality evaluation in school education which was inspired by the projects in the United Kingdom (the project in Scotland and the NUT project in England and Wales). The project involved 101 secondary schools in 18 countries. At the beginning of the project schools were asked to rate themselves on each of the following twelve aspects: 1. Academic achievement; 2. Personal and social development; 3. Pupils destination; 4. Time as a resource for learning; 5. Quality of learning and teaching; 6. Support for learning difficulties; 7 School as a learning place; 8. School as a social place; 9. School as a professional place; 10. School and home; 11. School and community and; 12. School and work. This was done using a four point scale from positive to negative, and a change scale from improving to declining. On the basis of this exercise schools were asked to identify the issues, which they wished to monitor and evaluate in greater depth over the period of the coming year.

Schools received guidance from critical friends appointed from outside the schools. These critical friends offered support at an individual school level and, at a national level. They also encouraged networking among schools. As well as enjoying the benefits to be gained from networking within their own country the schools had the added value of exchanging good ideas and good practice with schools in other countries, through e-mail and Internet, and through a number of conferences within the project. In 1999 the project came to an end. EU organised a conference in Vienna in November 1998 on the pilot project and quality evaluation in school education. It was concluded that the project had raised the awareness of quality issues in the schools. It was also noted that the project had helped to improve the quality of education during the project period. The EU-Commission had worked together with the experts involved to summarise the experiences of the project and to draw up conclusions. A final report (MacBeath, Meuret, Schratz, & Jakobsen) was published in June 1999.

The European Education Quality Benchmark System (2EQBS) is a project that works with similar methods as the projects in the United Kingdom and the EU Pilot project. The objective of the project is to provide educators with tools for addressing quality in schools. Specifically the methods used in the project show ways in which schools can adapt the principles and philosophies of quality to serve as a guide for building learning environments that support youth development, rather than merely addressing inspection standards (Snyder, Acker-Hocevar, Snyder, 2000).

These examples show ways in which teachers actively can be involved in evaluating and improving their own work. An important part of the evaluation is the discussion about new methods to use in the teaching. The choice of the best teaching method is a very frequent discussion among teachers. One method is seldom proved to be much better than another in general. The efficiency of different methods seems to be very closely related to specific circumstances, the student and the teacher. The natural conclusion from this is that teachers must be given the right to try different methods in order to find out for themselves what is best in the specific teaching situation. This brings us to the next major topic in this section – teachers professional freedom.

5.2.   Professional freedom

The professional freedom of the teacher is of crucial importance in developing quality in education. Professional freedom does not mean that the teacher can do whatever he or she likes, but that the teacher, who knows the students, is the person best equipped to decide which methods to use in order to create an optimal learning situation. Professional and academic freedom for teachers is also of crucial importance in achieving teaching that is independent of any political, economic, ideological or religious influence, in order to preserve young peoples' right to and democratic exercise of critical creativity. There has to be a general thrust in the creativity of the teacher. How the teaching is done in the classroom should never be prescribed by persons outside the classroom reality. This does not imply that authorities should not suggest new teaching methods through in service training, professional development and other means. For teachers to be given different approaches and models for their teaching is important and necessary, but it must never turn into a process of dictating which methods to use.

At the same time as decisions concerning budget responsibilities in many countries are decentralised, in some cases the objectives in the curriculum are being more precisely and strictly formulated. Some governments have even tried to prescribe for teachers, which initial reading instructions method that should be used in the classroom. This can result in fewer opportunities for teachers to make their own decisions on how to transform curriculum objectives into practical classroom teaching.

A risk occurs in situations where some decisions concerning curriculum and syllabus are referred to different kinds of local authorities and school boards, as part of decentralisation processes. Local administrators and politicians might not be aware of the need to respect the professional freedom of teachers. In their eagerness to use the new rights to take decisions they might reach conclusions concerning courses, teaching aids, textbooks etc. without the necessary consultations with teachers and their organisations.

It may be important in this context to recall Article 61 in the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers: "*The teaching profession should enjoy academic freedom in the discharge of professional duties. Since teachers are particularly qualified to judge the teaching aids and methods most suitable for their pupils, they should be given the essential role in the choice and the adoption of teaching material, the selection of textbooks and the application of teaching methods, within the framework of approved programmes, and with the assistance of the educational authorities.*" (UNESCO, 1996)

5.3.   Professional ethics

Another important issue is the professional ethics of teachers. Teaching is becoming a more and more complex task. Teachers meet a large number of children and young persons from different backgrounds. In many education systems teachers have also been given more and more responsibilities. All these developments underline the questions related to the responsibilities and duties of teachers. This has also been reflected in a growing discussion on professional ethics among teachers.

In this context it is of special importance to relate the professional ethics of teachers to the Convention of the Right of the Child. Several articles in the Convention have direct implications for the professional ethics of teachers. It is important that the teaching profession through its organisations discuss and clarify how the provisions of the Convention should be incorporated into the ethics and professional standards of the teaching profession. For example what does it mean to take full account of the child's best interest in all actions concerning the child, to protect the child from interference with privacy, to protect the child from maltreatment, to protect the child from drug abuse or to protect the child from sexual exploitation.

Teachers deal with professional ethical questions in different ways in various countries. In some countries the rights and obligations of teachers are expressed in official documents issued by the government, in others there are agreements between governments and teacher organisations on such matters and in some certain professional standards are set by the teachers themselves. One way for teachers to set standards themselves is to agree within the profession on a code of ethics. Such a document is usually a set of basic rules for teachers to follow in order to guarantee certain standards of the profession. Regardless of how these things are dealt with in a country is it critical that the provisions in the Convention on the Right of the Child are reflected in the professional ethics of teachers.

The ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers refers to codes of ethics (paragraph 73); "*Codes of ethics or of conduct should be established by the teachers' organisations since such codes greatly contribute to ensuring the prestige of the profession and the exercise of professional duties in accordance with agreed principles.*" In recent years, many teacher organisations

have been involved in such discussions. This has also been the case at the world level where the EI World Congress in Jomtien in 2001 adopted the "*EI Declaration on Professional Ethics*" (Education International, 2001a).

A central paragraph in the Declaration is paragraph 1a where it is said that education personnel shall *"justify public trust and confidence and enhance the esteem in which the profession is held by providing quality education for all students"*. The EI Declaration indicates in its different paragraphs the commitment education personnel shall have towards the profession (paragraph 1), the students (paragraph 2), their colleagues (paragraph 3), the management personnel (paragraph 4) and the parents (paragraph 5). The declaration also refers to the commitment the community needs to have towards the teachers (paragraph 6). A special reference is made in paragraph 2 to the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the commitment of teachers to respect children's' rights.

Another issue related to the professional ethics of teachers, which have been increasingly discussed, is corruption. There is a need to increase the awareness about corruption among teachers, head teachers, principals and other employees in the education sector. Teachers have to reflect on what could be regarded as a corrupt behaviour and see that such behaviours are abandoned in the teaching profession. In order to eliminate corruption there is a need to find measures to monitor critical processes and to make communication and administration in general more transparent.

6. What governments can do to support teachers?

Quality education is not only a responsibility of the teachers. There must be a public responsibility to ensure all citizens the right to receive quality education. Such an important matter cannot be left to individuals, private companies or to the market. To create quality education it is necessary to establish a good practice and to meet demands at all levels (the classroom, the school/institution and the educational system in which classrooms and schools/institutions exist). It is not possible in the long run to establish good teaching in the classroom if schools and the educational system as a whole are functioning badly. Even if individual teachers are able to establish good classroom practice in spite of badly functioning schools/institutions and non-supportive educational authorities, this can only last for short periods. There are many examples of teachers trying to do their best in spite of lack of support from local and national authorities. Such situations too often end with stress and the burn-out of the teachers. There are also bound to be problems in a system with an excellent curriculum, but where teachers are not provided with the necessary moral and financial support needed to implement it.

In order to support teachers in their efforts to improve the quality of education governments and relevant education authorities must:
-    provide education and professional development of high quality to the teachers;
-    provide teachers and schools with the resources necessary to offer quality education;
-    see that teachers have a salary comparable with other professions requiring the same level of qualifications and responsibility; and
-    ensure that teachers receive the moral recognition appropriate to their level of qualifications and responsibilities.

6.1. Teacher education and professional development

The professional development of teachers is a key guarantee of quality education and must be linked to all phases of teacher education and educational research. In order to improve the education of teachers world wide, education authorities, governments and intergovernmental organisations must ensure that teachers receive a good initial teacher education at university level to prepare them for their work as teachers. All teacher education must contain four components; methodology, pedagogy, practice and curriculum areas. The best way to improve teacher quality will depend on conditions in

each country. The presence of all four components is however essential to achieving a balance between general theory and the professionally oriented training.

In a large number of countries a considerable part of all teachers do not have any teacher education or a teacher education, which is far from sufficient. A large number of European countries are experiencing a situation of teacher shortage. The reasons for the shortage situation may vary between countries, but there seem to be certain similarities in several countries. The number of retiring teachers has grown in recent years and these numbers will be even higher in the coming years. In many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America a large number of new teachers is needed to expand the education system in order to provide for education for all. In Africa the problem to recruit new teachers is even more urgent due to the fact that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is effecting the teaching profession very negatively. Large numbers of qualified teachers are expected to be victims of HIV/AIDS in the years to come and it will be necessary find new teachers with sufficient qualifications in order to fill the gaps. Top priorities must be to see that a sufficient number of young persons get a high quality teacher education, to establish programmes to up-grade all non-qualified teachers and to provide in-service training to all teachers on a regular basis.

Some reviews of the factors affecting the academic achievement of school children conclude that, in developing countries, the influence of school variables, like the education of the teacher, is of greater importance than in other countries. In a study of the quality of primary schools in four developing countries it was found that the quality of teachers was one of those factors, which made a difference between high-performing and low-performing schools (Carron & Châu, 1996). This would argue in favour of the significance of improving teacher training especially in countries in the Third World. One of the recommendations from the MLA project concerning education in Africa is: "*Special attention should be accorded to teacher working conditions, as well as in-service training needs and support of teachers*"(Chinapah et al., 2000, p. IX). Such a development would also support progress towards empirical learning instead of memorising and rote learning in many schools. In this context it should be kept in mind that one of the explanations given to the very good Finnish results in international test is the Finnish teacher education (Välijärvi et al., 2002).

Teacher education can not only be regarded as initial teacher education, it is also important that teachers receive in-service training and professional development within the profession in order to keep in touch with new findings in their subjects and to obtain continuous support for the improvement of their teaching methods. To teach is a life-long process of learning. Human knowledge is expanding, facts are changing and there is always a risk that the teacher will be stuck in old tracks repeating the same kind of instruction year after year. This is not a satisfying situation, either for the students or for the teachers. Classroom teachers must be given the support needed to seek for new methods, to test new methods and to identify new approaches. In order to allow teachers to do this in-service training and professional development designed to support teachers in their exploration of new teaching methods is crucial. The Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel noted in the report from its eight session "*that the relatively new governmental emphasis worldwide on learning throughout life seems to have largely bypassed teachers as subjects of such learning*" (Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel, 2003, paragraph 30).

In-service training offered to teachers must be of a high quality. It is not acceptable that teachers are offered in-service training that merely means routine meetings and conferences. To guarantee a high standard, in-service training must be organised in cooperation with universities, colleges or other appropriate institutions specialising in higher and further education. Educational research must be strengthened as an instrument for improving educational quality, and the results of such research should be communicated to teachers in a better way. In service training could be one of the major ways to communicate such findings to the teachers. The link between classroom teaching and research is extremely important. It must be a link operating in two directions; information to the teachers about the latest findings in educational, pedagogical and psychological research and information to the researchers about the problems in teaching experienced by classroom teachers. Action research in joint

projects between schools and universities might be one way to achieve this. To find different forums for the exchange of such views and experiences must be a challenge for all educational systems. Strengthened pedagogical research based on these premises could be an important step in improving educational quality.

There should be a variety of different kinds of in-service training offered to the teachers. Those who would like to improve their teaching methods must find suitable training as well as those who would like to get a deeper knowledge of their teaching subjects. There must also be possibilities for teachers to broaden their skills and knowledge in order to be qualified for teaching positions in other subjects or at other levels in the education system. The teacher should be given a large amount of freedom to choose the kind of training that he/she thinks is most appropriate. Finally the teacher herself/himself knows best her/his needs.

In-service training must be considered a fundamental right for teachers. If the importance of in-service training is to be properly recognised it cannot be left to the teacher to organise it in her/his free time. In-service training should be organised within working hours, with the possibility for the teacher to have reduced class contact hours while following a course. When teachers are asked to do in service training at the same time as they are supposed to give a full number of lessons the obvious risk is that they will not be able to do either in an appropriate way.

To make a profession attractive it is essential to offer a good education to those who will work in the profession. The number of applicants to the teacher education is in itself a good way to measure the attractiveness of the profession. To achieve an attractive profession there ought to be more applicants for the initial education then places available. An education that prepares the teachers in an adequate way to do their future job in a competent manner will be attractive.

To increase teachers' awareness about corruption, as discussed above in section 5.3, it is necessary to include issues related to how to fight corruption in teacher education. This means both in pre-service teacher education and in-service training. Those who are studying to become teachers have to be made aware of the problems related to corruption and how they can fight against it, but also those who are working as teachers need to be reminded and get support. In-service education should deal with anti-corruption issues, sometimes as a specific topic, but perhaps in most cases as an integrated topic when other issues are dealt with.

In a world where international relations and connections are getting more and more important and complex it is of crucial importance to make it possible for teachers to broaden their outlook and learn more about other countries through study visits and exchange programmes.

6.2.   Available resources

On behalf of UNESCO and UNICEF a group of researchers examined primary schools in some of the least developed countries and found that the schools very seldom had basic equipment such as a black board, cupboards, teacher's chair, teacher's desk, desks and chairs for the students. In Ethiopia for example, 72% of the students received their education in schools that needed basic repairs or had to be totally rebuilt (Schleicher, Siniscalco and Postlethwaite, 1995). In India the PROBE survey (PROBE, 1998) found that 31% of the schools visited did not have any acceptable classrooms. Only 16% of the schools were not in need of any repair. The MLA project noticed that resources and services enabling teachers to enrich their classroom teaching were lacking in many countries. The project recommended: "*that greater emphasis should be given to the improvement of access to teacher resources so as to empower teachers to positively influence the teaching-learning environment of children*" (Chinapah et al., 2000, p.44). The MLA project also noted: "*Critical problems such as scarcity of teaching and learning resources, multiple school shifts, large class size, long distance to school, and so on must seriously be re-addressed. Must of the 1999 African MLA countries surveyed suffer from a lack of such basic and fundamental needs that must be met to attain a reasonable quality of education for all*

in the 21ˢᵗ century"(Chinapah et al., 2000, p. 70). It is obvious that it is difficult for teacher to do a good work when they do not have the necessary resources available.

Postlehwaite and Ross (1992) have with the support from the findings in the IEA "*Reading Literacy*" project tried to describe what is required in the classroom to support the development of a good reading ability: *"The more effective school has a classroom library in which sufficient books are available for each student."* (Postlehwaite & Ross, 1992, p. 44). In the light of these observations there is a need to improve the quality of education by ensuring that all students will get at least one textbook and to increase the number of school libraries and provide schools with classroom libraries.

New technologies, if used in an appropriate way, could be a powerful support to develop the students' capacity for logical and critical thinking. Information and communication technologies can and should be used as tools for teaching and learning in all subjects - in arts, humanities and social sciences as well as in mathematics, science and technical subjects. New technologies must be regarded as complementary to the teachers and ways to find new teaching methods where both teachers and modern equipment are important components in the educational process. The teachers must be offered in-service training in this area to be able to use these technologies in the best way. The ways that new technologies can be used in education must be carefully evaluated.

The discussion concerning new technologies could be regarded as unrealistic and odd by many teachers in countries where the students do not even have books, papers and pencils. There is an obvious risk that the introduction of new technologies will increase the gap between the north and the south. If there is a sincere wish to avoid this there must be a joint responsibility among governments in the World to take necessary steps to transmit knowledge about new technologies to all countries.

Education authorities and governments must ensure that teachers have an adequate working environment, including the technology and resources necessary for their teaching as well as real protection in terms of occupational health and safety. Teachers must be offered to do their work in adequately equipped school buildings where the students, among other things, have access to a school library and/or on-line services.

6.4. Salaries

In a study organised by Education International on Ghana the following picture of the salary situation of teachers was given: "*The general picture is that few teachers manage on their salary to the end of the month .... . When all basic costs are paid, there is nothing left and in many cases the salary has already disappeared before these costs are paid. To manage, most employees in the education sector have to look for additional income and have little time left to concentrate on their job*" (Fredriksson, Fumador and Nyoagbe, 1999, p. 46,). VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas) could note in three case studies "*that poor absolute value of the teachers' salaries was a significant factor influencing their motivation*" (VSO, 2002, p. 25). It is crucial to see that all employees in the education sector have a descent salary on which it is possible to survive. Low salaries and bad working conditions are always feeding corruption.

Recently the World Bank has initiated a discussion about the level of teachers' salaries. Based on statistics from different countries the Bank has recommended that teacher salaries should not exceed 3.5 times GDP per capita (World Bank, 2002a; World Bank, 2002b). There are many reasons to be sceptical about this way of comparing salaries. A more reasonable way is to compare teacher salaries with salaries of other professions. Unfortunately, there is not much information available which makes it possible to compare teacher salaries with the salaries of other professional groups. One attempt to compare salaries and prices in different countries has been made by the Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS). The booklet "*Prices and Earnings Around the Globe*" has been published every third year since the late sixties. The latest was published in 2003. The survey contains, among other things, a comparison of salaries for different jobs in several big cities in all continents. One of the jobs for

which the salaries are indicated is a primary teacher. Figures are available from Nairobi for the years 1991 to 2000. In all years skilled industrial workers have salaries higher than primary teachers. In all years bus drivers have lower salaries than teachers, but the difference seems to have decreased. In 1991 the difference between the salary of a primary teacher and a bus driver was 1000 US$, while in all other years the difference has been 100 - 200 US$. Teachers in Kenya have a salary corresponding to 5.3 times GDP per capita, but they earn not much more than a bus driver and less than a skilled industrial worker.

In order to improve the status of all teachers world wide, education authorities and governments must ensure that teachers have a salary comparable with other professions requiring the same level of qualifications and responsibility and that it is possible for teachers to live with dignity on the salary from their work, and not to be forced to take on a second or third job.

6.5.   The status of teachers

The Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel concluded in the report from their eight meeting that "*there is limited evidence of any general improvement in the status of teachers and their overall conditions of service*" (Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel, 2003, paragraph 37).

Teachers have a key position in all kinds of education. No measures are possible to improve education if the teachers are not thought of. Most reforms and improvement strategies have to deal with what is going on in the classroom, which means the everyday work of the teachers. Advance in education depends largely on the qualifications and ability of the teaching profession generally and on the human, pedagogic and technical qualities of the individual teacher.

Research has pointed to the importance of the motivation of teachers towards their jobs (Carron & Châu, 1996; OECD, 1994). In a research report on teachers in developing countries, undertaken by VSO in 2002, one of the main findings was that teachers' motivation was fragile and declining. The report noted that "*There is a strong link between teachers' motivation and performance, and education quality, but improving teachers' motivation is not uniformly prioritised as a major concern of national and international policy-makers*" (p. 2, VSO, 2002). The report added: "*Addressing the factors that reduce teachers' motivation should be a major concern of policy makers. This will create conditions for the success of other education interventions*"(VSO, 2002, p. 2).

Of great importance to motivation is the ability to influence working conditions. Experiences from the project "Joyful learning" in India showed that many teachers had never been asked how education could be improved (Amaravati Zilla Parishad/ Department of Education Maharashtra/UNICEF, 1997). The VSO study on teachers' motivation came to similar conclusions. The study reported, "*Teachers' performance in contributing to learning is strongly influenced by teacher motivation*" (VSO, 2002, p. 2). This supports the establishment of democratic working structures that will enable teachers and their organisations to have real influence on working conditions and educational policies at a central as well as at a local level.

Education authorities and governments must ensure that teachers have the right to form and control their own representative organisations; have the right through their organisations to undertake comprehensive collective bargaining and where necessary industrial action and have the right to be consulted and to participate in the process of formulating educational policies.

The obvious relation between motivation and good working conditions is a strong argument for improving the status of teachers. In order to improve the status of all teachers world wide, education authorities, governments and intergovernmental organisations must ensure that teachers receive the moral and material recognition appropriate to their level of qualifications and responsibilities

7. What teacher unions can do to support quality in education?

The teachers' unions view of quality is informed by the principle that education must be relevant to the needs of individuals and of society; and must be available to all, at any age and whatever one's economic position, as a right. Unions also realise that there is a close link between the status of teachers, teachers working conditions and the quality of education.

7.1. A quality alliance between governments and unions

In recent years many unions have actively discussed how to improve the quality of education. In some cases have these discussions lead to ideas about creating a kind of quality alliance between government and unions. In a report on education and structural adjustment in Ghana (Fredriksson, Fumador and Nyoagbe, 1999) it was suggested that it could be important for unions to reflect on how they can improve the situation for their members and develop the education system in the long run. The report suggested that to do this it would be necessary to adopt a long-term programme.
"Such an approach includes formulating a vision of the desired development of the education system. Essential elements in such a vision are likely to be:
- *Education for all;.*
- *Equal opportunities;*
- *Improve the quality of education.*
- *An education system that improves the economic and democratic development in society.*
To begin realising this vision, it is important to analyse where unions and employers might have common interests. An example could be the improvement of the quality of education. From a union point of view, obvious areas where the government can act to improve quality are:
- *Salaries;.*
- *Teacher education;*
- *The working environment in schools.*
The unions can make the following contributions to the improvement of quality in education:
- *Promote an interest among teachers and education sector employees in improving their work.*
- *Teacher presence in the classroom;*
- *Attract projects that will improve quality"* (Fredriksson, Fumador and Nyoagbe, 1999, p. vi).

A similar line of reasoning was presented in one of background documents to the Education International congress in Jomtien (Education International, 2001b). The background documents argued:
"An alliance for education for all must be based on mutual commitments. What the government can do and what the teachers can do must be identified. The exact content of such an agreement will of course be different in different countries, but there are still some major ideas to be suggested.
First of all, the government must put in place a mechanism for information, consultation and negotiation between the teacher unions and the ministry of education. Without appropriate channels for discussions and mechanisms for conflict solving it will be very difficult to maintain an on-going dialogue. Secondly, it is crucial to solve basic problems concerning teachers' salaries and school equipment. Finally, ways of improving teacher education have to be considered in order to give teachers the tools to improve and expand education.
If governments can take the necessary steps to implement measures supporting these directions, unions on their end must give their contribution. Firstly, considering the link between quality and enrolment, there are several initiatives unions can take in order to improve the quality of education. Secondly, the unions can also negotiate transitional arrangements for the recruitment of teachers that will solve existing and up-coming emergency situations in such a way that will benefit the long term development of the education system. Finally, unions could also play a role in mobilising teachers for literacy programmes on a voluntary basis." (Education International, 2001b, p. 6).

7.2. EFA Flagship on Teaches and Quality of Education

An example at international level of the approach referred to above in section 7.1 is the programme "*EFA Flagship on Teaches and the Quality of Education*"launched by ILO, UNESCO, EI and WCT (World Confederation of Teachers). The objective of this programme "*is to achieve quality education for all learners through universal access, child centred learning environments and the fostering of a learning culture in schools and classrooms*" (ILO, UNESCO, EI and WCT 2001, p.1). The immediate objectives of the programme "*are to improve teachers' status, materially and socially, including teaching/learning conditions, through emphasis in policy, legislation, and administrative decisions on achieving and maintaining the professional nature of teaching, and through teachers' active participation in key EFA-related decisions in the form of institutionalized social dialogue in education*" (ILO, UNESCO, EI and WCT 2001, p.1).

The strategies which will be used in the programme to address these key issues are:
1. *Strengthen high quality, relevant, and professional standard initial teacher education and lifelong professional development;*
2. *Establish a sub-regional inter-ministerial, inter-sectoral process for enriching the quality of teacher education reform in sub-regions in which several ministries of education or higher education are engaged in fundamental reform of their teacher-education programmes to help meet Dakar goals;*
3. *Achieve adequate teacher salary levels comparable to skilled national salary levels and which are competitive in relation to professions requiring similar qualifications and responsibilities;*
4. *Ensure appropriate teacher recruitment and deployment to meet educational demand in all geographic areas, levels and subject areas, based on an equitable system of teacher placement and mobility, incentives to work in unattractive areas or shortage subjects, and targeted efforts to deal with the impact of HIV/AIDS and overcome gender in-equilibriums;*
5. *Improve quality teaching and learning environments, including adequate infrastructure, appropriate class sizes (teacher/pupil ratios) which strengthen professional teaching standards and child-centred learning, and sufficient teaching materials;*
6. *Raise and/or maintain high professional standards for teachers, including respect for codes of ethics;*
7. *Strengthen and institutionalise social dialogue mechanisms between education authorities and teachers' organizations so as to fully involve teachers directly, and through their unions or associations, in educational decision-making on EFA plans, implementation and monitoring.*
(ILO, UNESCO, EI and WCT 2001, p.2).

7.3. Fighting corruption

Another issue which teacher unions have to address, and which they increasingly have started to address, is how to fight corruption in education. Many teacher organisations make different in-service programmes available for their members. Some of these programmes are on trade union matters and others on professional issues. Issues on corruption in education could be integrated in both these types of programmes. There are also other ways in which teacher organisations can deal with these issues. Many organisations have, in recent years, been involved in discussions on professional standards and professional ethics. Fighting corruption is certainly a part of that discussion. It is important for teacher organisations to explore different types of actions, which can be taken in order to fight corruption. In general, three paths can be followed;
- promoting professional ethics;
- organise and support training activities; and
- push for the inclusion of anti-corruption education in the curriculum.

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