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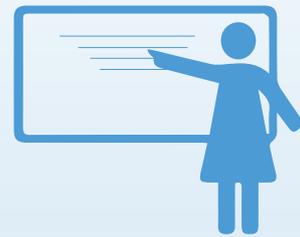**Education Initiative**

Situation Analysis of SDG 4 with a Gender Lens

Target 4.C

By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States.

Teachers play a critical role in delivering high-quality education and learning outcomes. Indeed, the quality of an education system cannot exceed that of its teachers (OECD, 2010). Target 4.c recognizes this fact by calling on countries to increase the supply of qualified teachers. East Asia and the Pacific does not have enough trained and qualified teachers, particularly in remote and impoverished areas where children are most in need of high-quality education. Moreover, the gender distribution of teachers is uneven across the education system, in teaching and administration. While integrating Target 4.c into national education policies and sector plans, governments should develop specific strategies to ensure that teachers are trained, qualified and deployed in an equitable manner.

1 Analysis and Overview

Female and male teachers are not equally distributed from pre-primary to upper secondary education

In 2016, East Asia and the Pacific 25 million teachers were employed from pre-primary to upper secondary education, which accounted for almost 33% of the global teacher supply (UIS Data Centre). Female teachers represented 65% of this number (ibid). However, the gender distribution of teachers is uneven across different levels of education. For example, more women are found in pre-primary education, but their numbers decline in upper levels. In 2016, female teachers accounted for 97%

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of the teaching force in pre-primary education, 67% in primary education, 55% in lower secondary education and 50% in upper secondary education (ibid). Some countries in the region deviate from this trend. In Tuvalu, female teachers represented more than 95% of the teaching force up to lower secondary education. In Myanmar, more than 80% of teachers from pre-primary to upper secondary education were female (**Figure 1**).

Concerning school leadership, there is a growing awareness of the importance of having more women in decision-making roles in school (UNESCO, 2009; Sperandio, 2011). Female school principals may serve as a role model for female students, as they are active in community committees and decision-making in local governance. Moreover, they can contribute to gender-sensitive school-based management (UNESCO, 2016). In reality, however, men heavily dominate school management, and women continue to be under-represented in decision making at school (Kirk, 2006; UNESCO & UNICEF, 2012). For instance, in Cambodia, female principals represent 1.5% of the workforce (MoEYS, 2017).

## Female and male teachers are equally trained, but not qualified

Teaching encompasses a range of tasks, from developing lesson plans to managing diverse needs in the classroom. Teachers must also be equipped with training and qualifications that allow them to guide and direct the learning experience of students from diverse backgrounds and with different learning needs. In East Asia and the Pacific, there are some countries, such as Cambodia and Viet Nam, where both male and female teachers are highly trained and qualified (**Figure 2**). This is not the case

Figure 1: Percentage of female teachers by level of education in selected countries, 2016 or latest
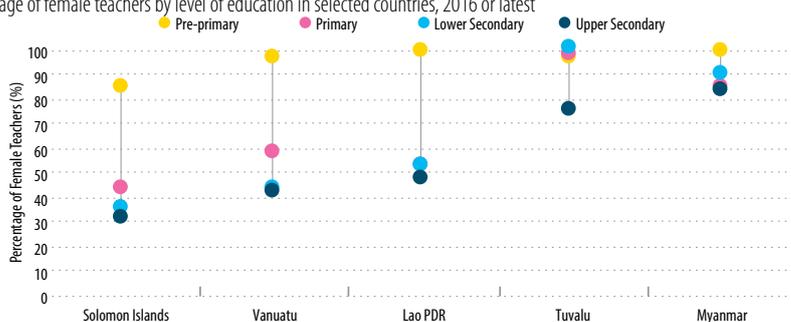
Note: Data for Myanmar refer to 2014.
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) database, http://data.uis.unesco.org, [March 2018].

Figure 2: Percentage of trained and qualified teachers by sex and level of education, 2016 or latest available data
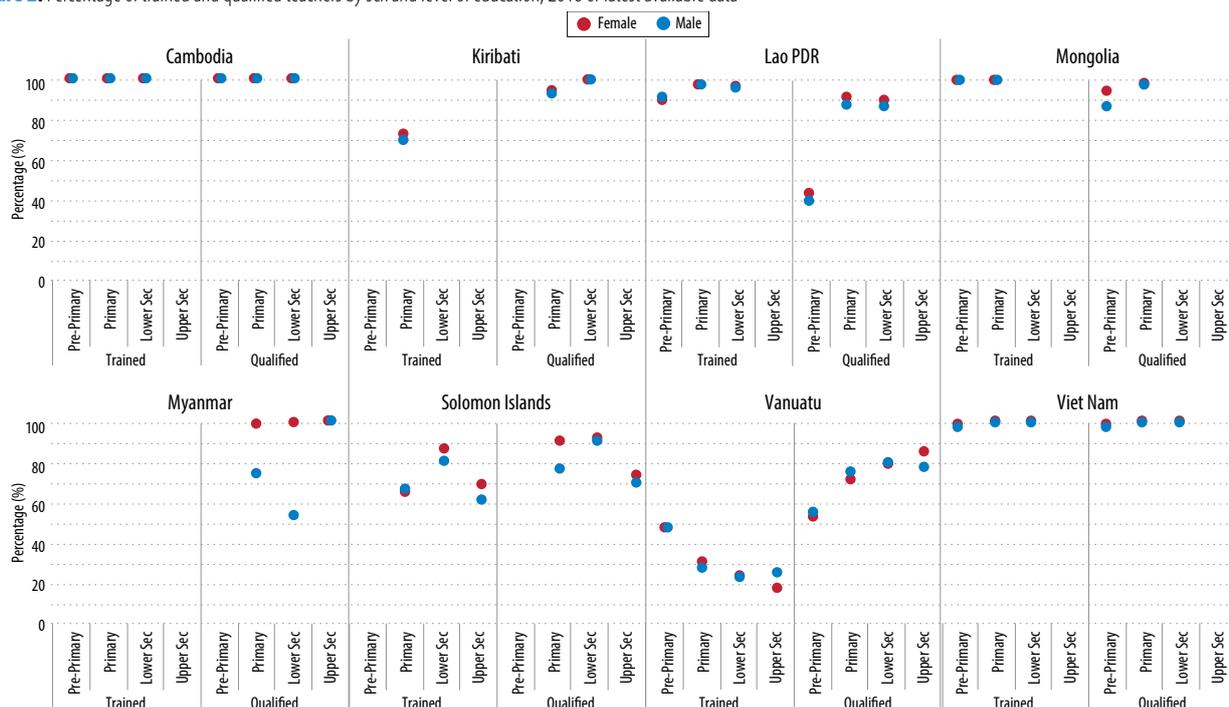
Note: Data for Myanmar refer to 2017, Solomon Islands (upper secondary), Vanuatu and Viet Nam to 2015
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) database, http://data.uis.unesco.org, [March 2018].

in all countries. Moreover, the level of training and qualification may differ by gender.

In most countries in Figure 2, for example, male and female teachers have nearly equal amounts of training. In particular, Lao PDR and Mongolia highly-trained teachers are present in most levels of education, and the gender differences are negligible. Gender gaps emerge in secondary education, especially in the Pacific countries, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Gender disparities are more pronounced among qualified teachers. In general, there are more qualified female teachers than male teachers. For example, in Myanmar, female teachers are fully qualified from primary to upper secondary education. However, only 74% and 53% of male teachers in primary and lower secondary education, respectively, meet the qualification standards.

Female and male teachers are not equally deployed

Ensuring that female and male teachers are deployed equally across provinces, districts and communities is a critical step toward maintaining equality of opportunities and realizing the right to a good quality education for all children throughout the country.

In some countries, the national average suggests that female and male teachers are almost equally available. However, a closer look at provincial data reveals that there are large disparities in the distribution of female and male teachers across the country. For instance, in Lao PDR, female teachers dominate pre-primary education, including crèches and kindergartens, in all the provinces with data (MoES, 2017). At the primary level, a different picture emerges (**Figure 3**). Provinces

located in the central and southern regions tend to attract more female primary school teachers. The capital, Vientiane, has the highest gender disparity. Only 36 male teachers are employed at the primary level for every 100 female teachers. In the northern provinces, male teachers are more likely to be available. For instance, in Houaphan province, there are 198 male teachers for every 100 female teachers. In secondary education, male teachers are more likely to dominate the teaching force, especially in the northern provinces, such as Bokeo, Houaphan and Oudomxay. In the central regions such as Khammouane, Savannakhet and Vientiane the gender gap at the secondary level is slightly less pronounced.

Female teachers in public school tend to leave the profession early

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), approximately 6.5 million teaching posts have to be filled to achieve universal primary education by 2030 in East Asia and the Pacific. Of 6.5 million, 99% of posts will be vacant due to attrition (UIS, 2015). In Lao PDR, the attrition rates are generally higher for male teachers from pre-primary to secondary education (UIS Data Centre). Female teachers are more likely to leave the profession early if they are employed in public schools. While 1% of male teachers working in public primary education left the profession in 2012, the figure was 6% for female teachers. The same trend is observed in the Solomon Islands, where 29% of female and 10% of male primary teachers in public school resigned in 2015 (ibid). In Timor-Leste, in 2013, 13% of female teachers in public upper secondary education resigned compared to 7% of male teachers (ibid).

Figure 3: Gaps in male-female teacher ratio in primary and secondary education in Lao PDR, 2017

Source: MoES, 2017

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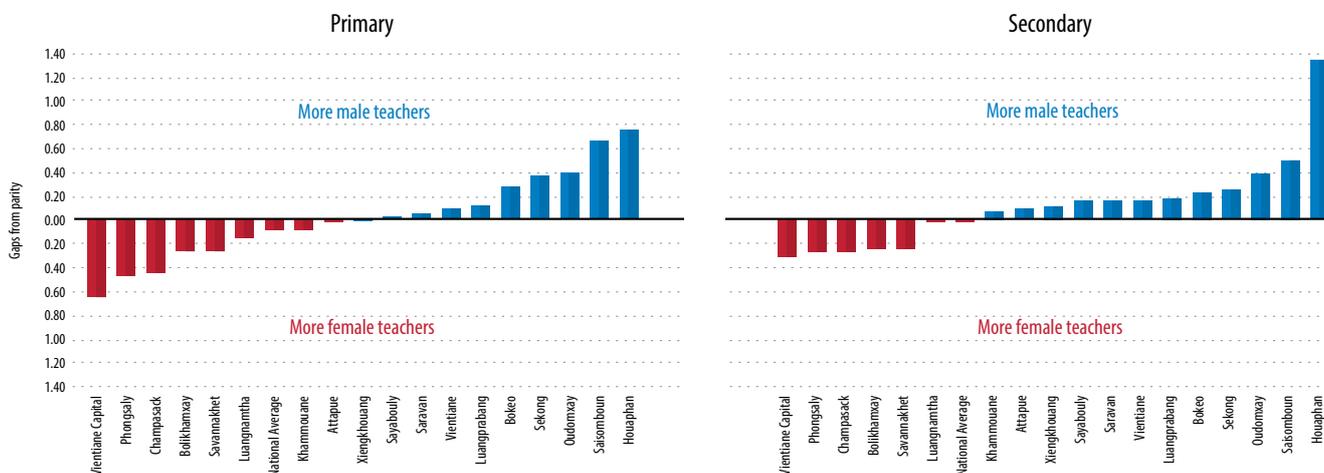
2 Issues and Challenges

Gender imbalance in the teaching force

There is no consensus on how a teacher's gender affects the participation and performance of students at school (UIS, 2006); however, gender does influence, to some extent, the enrolment and achievement rates of male and female students (Kirk, 2006). For this reason, a gender-sensitive learning environment for all students, both boys and girls, is crucial to the pursuit of quality educational opportunities, especially in areas where children struggle to access and complete schooling (Thomas, 2010).

In reality, female and male teachers are not equally distributed across the country. These gender imbalances can be linked to various factors. For instance, female teachers may be reluctant to work in challenging areas due to the lack of basic infrastructure, bad accessibility and safety concerns (UNESCO, 2014a; UNESCO, 2014b). Moreover, in some areas, there may not be enough women available to work in the profession. For instance, in rural communities, where the education level of the female population may be low, the pool of potential recruits will be limited (UNESCO, 2014b).

Data collection and monitoring for teacher management

Equitable management of the teaching force relies on an effective monitoring mechanism. However, data collections often do not cover all aspects of the teaching force. The absolute number of female and male teachers only reveals the tip of the iceberg of what requires monitoring. In-depth data on the quality of teacher training, working conditions and deployment will help support the supervision of the teaching workforce, foster greater teacher effectiveness and determine the allocation of teaching resources.

3 Recommendations

Promote gender-sensitive professionalization of the education workforce

Gender balance should be considered when recruiting and deploying teachers and administrators at various levels of education. Provisions should be made to have both female and male teachers undergo appropriate training and obtain qualifications.

Mainstream gender in teacher training and development

Gender responsiveness is a critical competency for teachers. The principles should be integrated into both pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes.

Develop a gender-sensitive professional development system

Strategies to further motivate teachers to engage in teaching and learning should be devised through incentives. For example, additional compensation, rewards, and improved school facilities would help attract female teachers and administrators to remote and difficult-to-work areas.

Ensure sex disaggregation of data at all levels

A well-maintained data management system to track teachers and their training and qualifications would contribute to more effective decision-making and teacher management.

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These data sheets are a first step in strengthening the gender lens in analyses of data. More disaggregated and nested analyses can result in more specific and nuanced recommendations.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

Sustainable Development Goals