



# The politics of quality reforms and the challenges for SDGs in education

Barbara Bruns<sup>a</sup>, Isabel Harbaugh Macdonald<sup>b</sup>, Ben Ross Schneider<sup>c,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Center for Global Development and Georgetown University, United States

<sup>b</sup> Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, United States

<sup>c</sup> Department of Political Science, MIT, United States



## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

### Keywords:

Education politics  
Teacher careers  
Sustainable Development Goals  
Latin America  
Teacher unions

## ABSTRACT

Understanding the politics of education reform is crucial to assess the challenges facing the SDG of quality education. This article surveys the small academic literature on the politics of reform as well as a wide range of empirical research on reform experiences across the world, with an emphasis on recent reforms in Latin America. We focus on teacher policy reforms, which play a central role in raising learning in primary and secondary schools, but pose three special challenges. First, they are *contentious*, often threatening the institutional interests of well-organized and politically powerful teacher unions. Second, implementation is *opaque*, as impact depends on classroom-level change that is difficult for reformers to monitor. And, third, benefits are *long-term*, usually well beyond the political tenure of reform champions. A close review of all major stakeholders – teacher unions, business, NGOs, religious authorities, international development agencies, and others – is a crucial first step to understanding potential sources of opposition and support. Strategic issues in policy design and implementation include: consultation, sequencing, compensation, negotiation, communication, and sustaining reforms.

© 2019 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction: why politics matter

In many respects, the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to achieve universal primary education by 2015 met with surprising success. Over a 15-year period, the number of primary-aged children out-of-school fell by nearly half, and the primary completion rate in developing countries rose to 89 percent worldwide, driven by remarkable gains in low-income countries of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, especially for girls: girls' primary completion increased from 49 to 68 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa and from 62 to 96 percent in South Asia.<sup>1</sup>

School enrollment, however, has not brought commensurate gains in learning. Data from low and middle-income countries show that many students spend years in school without any improvement on tests or evidence of skill accumulation, leaving students far behind grade level and sometimes completing primary school before acquiring even basic literacy and numeracy skills (Pritchett & Beatty, 2015). A rising awareness that schooling does not automatically raise learning has turned the focus of governments, civil society, academics, and international organizations

from schooling access to the complex, thorny problems of education quality.<sup>2</sup>

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reflect this changing discussion around education. Rather than target additional enrollment gains, SDG 4 vows to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education” for all students. Unlike the MDG, which presented the largest challenges in Africa and Asia (the countries with the lowest primary completion at the start), the SDG's quality and learning goals are challenging for middle-income as well as low-income countries to achieve.

A shift from access to quality-oriented goals changes both the content of required reforms and the political challenges they pose. Access-oriented reforms typically enjoy wide political support, from the parents who benefit from new schools nearby, to the teachers who gain new jobs, to unions that gain new members (Corrales, 1999; Grindle, 2004, 6; Stein, 2005). Expanding access through new schools and higher enrollment is also easily measurable and quickly visible to voters, increasing the likelihood that success will be attributed to the politicians who deliver these reforms. The largest challenge in expanding access is finding the funding for an expanded system, a challenge that has been eased by global education donors; lending and grant commitments for

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [bbruns@cgdev.org](mailto:bbruns@cgdev.org) (B. Bruns), [iharbaugh@g.harvard.edu](mailto:iharbaugh@g.harvard.edu) (I.H. Macdonald), [brs@mit.edu](mailto:brs@mit.edu) (B.R. Schneider).

<sup>1</sup> <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/source/millennium-development-goals>, accessed 10/6/2018.

<sup>2</sup> For example, the World Bank's 2018 World Development Report focused exclusively on learning.

education-related projects were 40 percent higher from 2000 to 2015 than in the prior decade (OECD, 2018). Finally, a significant body of experimental research provides policy guidance on improving school attendance, notably through conditional cash transfers (Kremer, Brannen, & Glennerster, 2013).

Quality improvement, however, requires different policies. A wide range of measures – spending, infrastructure, curriculum, textbooks, school management, parent involvement, student assessment, and more – can all contribute to improved education quality, and reform programs regularly package many elements together.<sup>3</sup> Our focus is primarily on reform of teacher policy – the core set of policies that directly affect how teachers are recruited, trained, and motivated – because of the central role teachers play in education quality in primary and secondary schools. The effectiveness of individual teachers is the single most important school-level determinant of student learning outcomes, and the impact of much other education spending depends in large measure on how teachers deliver curriculum and use resources in the classroom (Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff, 2014; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2010; Bruns & Luque, 2015).

Teacher policy reforms face three major political challenges. First, they are typically *contentious*; policy changes aimed at raising teacher standards, incentives, or accountability for performance directly affect the interests of teachers, who in virtually all countries are an organized and often politically powerful labor group. Around the world, reforms aimed at raising teacher quality consistently trigger political opposition, in some cases to the point of violence (Bruns & Schneider, 2016).

Second, their implementation is *opaque*. Teacher policy reforms raise student learning by changing who gets into (or stays in) the classroom and/or changing their behavior. But change at the level of the classroom is notoriously difficult for reformers to monitor. The principal-agent problem is not unique to reform processes or to education; managers (principals) in all sectors face the challenge of motivating and monitoring their employees' (agents) compliance and productivity at work. But the core organization of education systems – one teacher alone in a classroom with dozens of students in a relationship of asymmetric authority – creates an environment where agents' performance has an unusual degree of isolation from superiors or even peers. Many education systems find it difficult to ensure that teachers are even present in the classroom; research studies using unannounced school visits have documented absenteeism of 20% or more across developing countries (Chaudhury, Hammer, Kremer, Muralidharan, & Rogers, 2006; Muralidharan, Das, Holla, & Mohpal, 2017; Worldbank, 2018, 81). Complicating matters, the key measure of teacher performance and reform progress – higher student learning – is also more susceptible to flaws and manipulation than the metrics for tracking access reforms, such as the number of schools built or children enrolled. These monitoring challenges mean that it is difficult to reward teachers who effectively implement reforms and to sanction those who resist. Quality reforms will be most effective if teachers endorse them rather than quietly undermining them, but achieving teacher buy-in is difficult in contentious reform contexts.

Third, the benefits of teacher policy reforms are *long-term*, taking years if not decades to produce clear impacts on students learning or employability. Impacts are generally positive, substantial, and beneficial for a broad array of stakeholders, but their extended time horizon makes it difficult to attribute political credit

and reduces the rewards for the politicians in power at the time of reform, especially compared with the immediate political costs of launching contested reforms. Appointing friends and followers to teaching positions is always attractive to clientelist politicians, part of education's special vulnerability to clientelism (discussed further in Section 3). Over the longer term, if pressures for clientelism grow in the political system, they can undo or significantly impair reforms to make teacher careers more meritocratic.

The Sustainable Development Goal in education will thus likely encounter much more opposition than its MDG predecessor and developing effective political strategies for reform will be more important to its success. Neither developing countries nor international donors appear to be focused on the politics of SDG attainment, or the fact that political failures in teacher policy reform are more common than successes. This article attempts to summarize a handful of lessons that can benefit reformers, drawing from both specific experiences in low and middle-income countries as well as prior academic literature. Existing literature is quite thin (Gift & Wibbels, 2014; Kingdon et al., 2014), and largely from developed countries (Busemeyer & Trampusch, 2011), although discussions on reform politics specific to education have increased in the last few years.<sup>4</sup>

To refine our scope, we focus on democracies where politics and non-governmental actors have stronger influence on policymaking. Reformers in authoritarian regimes such as in Vietnam, Rwanda, and Venezuela can enact reforms with less concern for the issues analyzed in the next three sections: potential opposition from the multiple stakeholders in education, and designing and implementing reforms in ways that minimize opposition and maximize support. Section 2 analyzes priorities, preferences, and strategic importance of the main insider stakeholders in education: teacher unions, education bureaucracies, private schools, teachers, teacher training institutes, and reform champions and their policy networks. Section 3 examines outsider stakeholders, including business, NGOs, international donors, parents, and clientelist politicians. Section 4 reviews some common strategies in reform design and implementation, focusing especially on consultation, sequencing, compensation, negotiation, communication, and sustaining reforms. Sections 2–4 weave in empirical examples from a range of developing countries though most empirical material comes from Latin America, especially Chile, Ecuador and Peru, where governments in the last two decades have significantly reformed teacher careers, and where students have made some of the largest gains in the region on international learning assessments (Bos, Elías, Vegas, & Zoido, 2016).

## 2. Insider stakeholders in education reform

Education reform, especially of teacher policies, provokes engagement by a wide range of stakeholders. Sections 2 and 3 aim to be extensive in covering the full range of protagonists identified in reform cases across the world and intensive in delving deeply into the interests, organization, resources, and influence of the most prominent stakeholders.<sup>5</sup> This section examines stakeholders inside the education system including teachers, teacher unions, reformers and personnel in education agencies, and others. The next section looks at outsider stakeholders.

<sup>4</sup> The new book by Hickey and Hossain (2018) contributes greatly to the sparse research on politics of education reform in developing countries, especially on Asia and Africa.

<sup>5</sup> This extended list could have value for technocratic reform teams that enter government with little prior political experience or contact with major stakeholders. Among recent reformers in Latin America, Harald Beyer (Chile), Nicolas Eyzaguirre (Chile), Aurelio Nuño (Mexico), Wilson Risolia (state of Rio de Janeiro), Jaime Saavedra (Peru), Gloria Vidal (Ecuador), and others lacked either prior experience in government and politics or prior experience and training in education.

<sup>3</sup> Masino and Niño-Zarazúa (2016) provide a comprehensive review of many interventions in “what works” in quality reform: covering inputs, altering incentives, and improving governance. However, they cover only interventions that can be isolated methodologically (experimental and quasi experimental studies) and thus miss remarkable systemic shifts to quality as in Ecuador. Nearly all the cases of successful teacher quality reforms come bundled with other interventions.

## 2.1. Teacher unions

In general, the pivotal stakeholders in education reform are teacher unions (Moe, 2011; Moe & Wiborg, 2017; Murillo, 2002). Across regions, their role in education policy varies, from Europe where unions are seen as key but independent partners in reform (OECD, 2015); to East Asia and the Middle East where unions are often controlled by the government and thus supportive of its policies; to the United States and Latin America, where unions are often strong and effective opponents to reform (Corrales, 1999; Grindle, 2004; Moe, 2011; Moe & Wiborg, 2017). The Hickey and Hossain (2018) volume covers quality education reforms in six countries and, confirming variation in roles of teacher unions, finds union opposition in South Africa and Bangladesh, union support in Ghana and Uganda, and union irrelevance in Rwanda and Cambodia. This wide variation means that a key analytic challenge for reformers (and researchers) is to understand how teacher unions gain and maintain political power and when they are most likely to oppose reforms.

Teacher unions are noticeably prominent both in regions where labor groups have only recently formed (Africa and the Middle East) and where unions have already declined in most industries (United States, Chile, and other OECD countries), which suggests that teachers are easier to organize than many other labor groups. A key factor facilitating organization is homogeneity – teachers have similar employment conditions and salaries (the salary scale is often compressed and accessed automatically with years of service) and often face a single, centralized employer (Olson, 2009). Teachers also usually enjoy tenure (or at least strong job protection) so, unlike workers in private firms, they have less fear of employer retaliation for joining unions.<sup>6</sup>

Once formed, teacher unions enjoy particularly strong power due to several factors. First, they are large relative to the size of workforce. In Latin America, teachers in 2012 represented 4 percent of the overall labor force and over 20 percent of technical and professional workers (Bruns & Luque, 2015).<sup>7</sup> Second, unions often have country-wide coverage and can rally support across rural and urban regions. Third, teacher strikes and protests are especially disruptive because they put children across the country out of school and affect a large proportion of voters.

The size and homogeneity of teacher unions often attract politicians and political parties, which can deepen unions' political role. In some cases, leftist and radical political parties have used the capture of key union leadership positions to build a political base via the union network (Corrales, 1999). In many other cases, unions become integral cogs of large patronage and rent seeking machines tied to clientelist parties, as political parties exchange union support for favorable regulation such as monopoly of representation, automatic membership for all teachers, and universal payroll deductions for union dues (on the order of one percent of salary in Latin America). These political exchanges sometimes lead to administrative prerogatives such as the ability to appoint new teachers (Zengele (2013) on South Africa), education officials (Bruns & Luque, 2015 on Mexico and Ecuador), or even the state legislature (Kingdon and Muzammil (2009) on Uttar Pradesh, India).

In simplified terms, teacher unions can be arrayed along a continuum from highly politicized (Mexico, Ecuador before 2009, parts

of India) to professional (Chile and much of Europe) (Schneider, 2018). On the professional end, unions are likely to defend employment security, but are not averse to negotiating other reforms to teacher careers, especially if salary increases are part of the package. On the more politicized end, unions often have influence over teacher hiring, which generates substantial political power for union leaders who can then credibly promise politicians electoral support (in exchange for government appointments or other political benefits for the union). Unions on the politicized end of the spectrum have both the most to lose from teacher policy reforms aimed at increasing quality and accountability and the most power to oppose them, at least in the short run.

These distinctions among unions help explain the strategies and outcomes of major reform experiences in Mexico, Chile, Ecuador, and the state of Rio de Janeiro. In both Mexico and Ecuador, unions were on the politicized end of the spectrum with close connections to political parties and influence over teacher hiring and promotions which allowed union leaders to mobilize teachers for elections, campaigns, and other political work. Union leaders in turn leveraged their political power to get union sympathizers appointed to top administrative positions in education ministries. Meritocratic reforms of teacher policy by design deprive unions of influence over teacher hiring and promotions, posing an existential threat to the political power of union leaders. In this context, reasoned negotiation over reforms is less likely than protracted opposition.

In both the Ecuador 2008 and Mexico 2013 reforms, newly-elected presidents responded to initial union opposition with aggressive actions to strip unions' resources (eliminating automatic dues collection) and influence (eliminating union control over teacher hiring, transfers, and promotions and leverage in ministerial appointments). Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto jailed union leader Elba Esther Gordillo on corruption charges. In Ecuador, President Rafael Correa rescinded automatic dues collection and later the union's legal registry. The teacher union in Ecuador has not recovered and subsequent major reforms of teacher policy now seem fairly consolidated. The future of Mexico's 2013 reforms now depends on Peña Nieto's successor who has promised to roll them back.

In Chile, the teachers' union, the Colegio de Profesores, played a much different role. Although Colegio leaders were active in party and electoral politics, they remained on the less politicized end of the spectrum with, importantly, no influence over teacher hiring or ministry appointments. Fairly exceptional in Latin America was the fact that a first wave of teacher policy reform in Chile, in the early 2000s, introduced periodic teacher performance evaluations that included classroom observation as the result of a consultative reform process between the Colegio and the Lagos government. Section 4 discusses negotiations over deeper reforms from 2014 to 2016.

Finally, the experience of Rio de Janeiro state offers a cautionary tale. A comprehensive teacher policy reform (merit-based hiring; bonus pay for school results; and proposals for individual performance evaluation and promotion based on performance) helped pull the state from the bottom of the national ranking of education quality in 2011 to near the top in 2015. The technocratic (non-political) state secretary Wilson Risolia enacted these sweeping reforms over the objections of the main teacher union. However, a subsequent, politically tenuous secretary and governor acceded to demands from the union and clientelist politicians and reversed most of the reforms.

In sum, teachers are almost everywhere well organized. However, variation across teacher unions is wide in their politics – how embedded they are in the political system – and how opposed they are to reforms to teacher careers. As the Rio case and other similar stories show, unions have long time horizons, and can wait

<sup>6</sup> However, Terry Moe (2017, p. 272), a long-time researcher on teacher unions, reminds us, "why teachers were so successful at organizing remains to be fully explained."

<sup>7</sup> In the 1990s, teachers ranged from 3 to 9 percent of formal employment across 12 countries in Latin America (Grindle, 2004, p. 125). In the United States, over three million teachers belonged to unions (Moe, 2011, p. 16). Globally, "Education International (EI), which represents around 30 million teachers and education workers in 170 countries, is the largest global union federation" (OECD, 2015, p. 175).

out reformers to reassert preferences and prerogatives in subsequent governments

## 2.2. Teachers

Separate from their unions, teachers are also core education stakeholders. Teachers play a critical role in communicating reforms to parents, students, and the broader community and can have a large impact on the attitudes of these groups. Even if teachers do not participate visibly in the politics surrounding reform negotiation, teacher buy-in is crucial for longer-term implementation and can have as much impact on reform outcomes as the actual content of the reform (Grindle, 2004, p. 119). Devising communication strategies to convince teachers of the merits of a reform in order to ensure their support for implementation is a crucial task (as discussed further in Section 4) (OECD, 2015, p. 174).<sup>8</sup>

Individual teachers may also engage in political activities independent of their unions, which can hinder the effectiveness of reforms and accountability efforts. In India, for instance, teachers who are members of political parties are much more likely to have unexcused absences, suggesting that politically active teachers leverage their personal connections to evade the consequences of absenteeism (Bêteille, 2009).

Reforms can trigger schisms between older and younger teachers – especially if the latter have begun to be recruited through a meritocratic process with higher standards. In Indonesia, older teachers preferred portfolio-based teacher evaluations, while younger teachers favored pay linked to competency testing (Tobias, Wales, & Syamsulhakim, 2014). In the 2005 Teacher Reform debate, the union championed the position of more experienced teachers (as is almost always the case). In Washington DC, a politically charged contract proposed by Chancellor Michelle Rhee in 2010 offered a doubling of salaries for teachers willing to give up tenure and submit to annual performance evaluations; union officials fought the contract bitterly, but in a final vote, the vast majority of younger teachers opted for the change and allowed the reform to proceed (HKS Case No. 1957). Reformers often consider distinct subsets of teachers in order to divide and conquer, or at least to solicit support from subgroups of teachers that are more open to reform.

## 2.3. School directors

Directors (principals in the United States or head teachers in small schools in south Asia and Africa) are pivotal stakeholders in resisting or promoting reform.<sup>9</sup> In initial stages, they can be important allies if reforms help them with overall planning or teacher motivation (Mizala and Schneider (2014) on Chile), if meritocratic reforms produce the appointment of a new cadre of reform-minded directors (Risolia, 2015 on Rio de Janeiro state), or if incentives for directors are aligned with reform objectives, for example, through bonus pay for improved school results. Directors' support is essential to overcome the opacity noted earlier and ensure that reforms impact teachers' practice in the classroom (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

However, if reforms imply new standards and recruitment processes for school directors or tighter accountability, pockets of

resistance can be expected. In the Punjab, Pakistan, a 2010 policy change introduced new academic requirements for head teachers, provoking backlash from leaders promoted under the old seniority-based system (Bari, Raza, Aslam, Khan, & Maqsood, 2013). Often, school directors will not express their resistance directly to reform champions, but instead work through teachers, parents, and the media to undermine changes. As discussed in Section 4 reformers can use outreach, new recruitment, and compensatory strategies to build support from this crucial group.

## 2.4. Private schools

In recent decades, the expansion of private schools in Latin America, South Asia, and parts of Africa has created a growing and influential group of education capitalists. Some of these entrepreneurs own only one or a few schools (the pattern in Chile), but in other cases own chains of schools with thousands of students. The Beaconhouse network of private schools, for instance, enrolls around 300,000 students across Pakistan, Malaysia, Oman, and five other countries. Large chains, some foreign owned, with hundreds of thousands of students are now common in tertiary education in Latin America, and in primary and secondary education across South Asia. By 2016, non-state schools comprised 18 percent of total primary school enrollments in low-and middle-income developing countries (up from 10 percent in 2000), and 27 percent of secondary enrollments (up from 20 percent in 2000). Among regions and levels, growth was fastest in South Asia where private enrollments reached 30 percent at the primary level and 50 percent at the secondary level in 2016.<sup>10</sup>

Most analyses of reform politics focus on public education, but resistance to reform from private school owners and their allies (often religious organizations such as the Catholic Church or Islamic leaders) can be as intense and effective as from teacher unions. In Chile, associations of private schools, including Catholic schools, were adamantly opposed to reforms of the voucher system in 2014, leading to a two-year negotiation before reforms were passed. Private schools' influence on teacher policy is typically indirect, by demonstrating the differential performance of teachers managed under private labor law and in competing for teachers with the public system. In systems with charter or voucher schools, private schools compete for public financing as well. Reforms to "privatize" schooling can provoke strong reactions in the public education sphere. In Pakistan, government funding for private (charter) schools sparked broad protests among public school teachers who feared the loss of public teaching jobs, which offer higher wages and job security.<sup>11</sup>

Although under-researched and theorized, the greatest long-term political impact of private education may be its indirect influence on parents as voters (discussed further below). When middle-class parents move to the private sector, it removes potentially influential political pressures for higher quality in public schools (Busemeyer & Iversen, 2014; Larrañaga & Rodríguez, 2016). This missing pressure from the middle class can make quality reforms in public schools more vulnerable to reversion.

## 2.5. Education bureaucrats

Education reforms are often designed by a relatively small group of technocrats at the top rungs of leadership. Bureaucrats at lower levels may have little voice in the reform process and

<sup>8</sup> The Second Curricular Reform in Shanghai was approved with little contention in 1998, but lack of teacher buy in and implementation planning led a reliance on past practices and limited change in response to the reforms (Tan, 2012). In other countries like Thailand, Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, reforms are generally "top down" with little teacher input, and changes are often only made on the surface level (Hallinger, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> This was one of the main recommendations of a World Bank's study of Indonesia's ambitious Teacher Law of 2005 (Chang et al., 2013, p. 23).

<sup>10</sup> UIS online data for South and West Asia, <http://data.uis.unesco.org/>.

<sup>11</sup> See for example, "Schools privatisation: Teachers warn to resist Punjab government move." *The Express Tribune (Karachi)*, 22 March 2016. Accessed: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1070143/schools-privatisation-teachers-warn-to-resist-punjab-govt-move/>

may be perceived as “disempowered cogs in a hierarchical administration that renders them powerless” (Aiyar & Bhattacharya, 2016).

Nonetheless, lower level bureaucrats may have a substantial impact on the way reforms are implemented. In Pakistan, an ethnographic study found that clerks and personal assistants to district education officers had significant power to enable or prevent teacher transfers and sanctions, and often operated complex patronage systems made possible by their longevity in the department and knowledge of policy loopholes (Bari et al., 2013). Building buy-in from administrators during the reform process may thus have a large impact on later implementation, as in the upcoming discussion on teacher consultations in Section 4.

It is important to have a political strategy if reforms will undermine powers currently enjoyed by lower level bureaucrats. For example, a key part of Rio de Janeiro state’s 2011 quality reform was a centralized meritocratic process for the selection of school directors, who were previously named by regional superintendents. The implementation strategy began by consolidating regional boundaries such that the number of superintendents was cut in half and new candidates had to be appointed. This cleared the way for the new selection process for school directors (Risolia, 2015).

### 2.6. Teacher training institutes and university faculties of education

Expanding access under the MDGs meant more teachers had to be trained, which had positive impacts for universities and non-university institutes tasked with teacher preparation. Reforms aimed at raising teacher quality, however, can have negative implications and lead to subtle or organized resistance. While rarely considered explicitly as a stakeholder group in education, these institutions have mobilized to derail reforms in numerous contexts.

Reforms to raise teacher quality often impose higher accreditation standards, student admission requirements, competition from new classes of providers, or even closure of institutions that were previously autonomous or largely unregulated. In Peru, a 2006 study by the Ministry of Education concluded that less than 22 percent of the publicly-funded teacher training institutes were of “optimum” quality (Sanchez Moreno Izaguirre & Training, 2006). This provoked the Ministry to set a national minimum academic standard for admission. New enrollments plunged from about 20,000 per year prior to 2007 to less than 1000 per year thereafter and threatened the viability of teacher training institutes in rural areas, which could not fill their programs with qualified candidates (Elacqua, Hincapié, Vegas, & Alfonso, 2018). These institutes mobilized and challenged the new standards as insensitive to Peru’s cultural and educational diversity. The ministry was forced to reverse the reform in 2010 and give teacher training institutions increased flexibility on admissions standards. Admissions have since risen significantly, with over 70 percent of applicants gaining admission.

In Chile, in 2006 fully 77 percent of teacher training students were enrolled in programs that did not meet the new national accreditation standards. The government responded by disallowing public financing (either grants or loans) for students in these programs, and the next several years saw a massive shift in enrollments towards accredited programs, but even in 2010, 34 percent of students remained in non-accredited programs. Under the 2016 law, these programs are not allowed to operate. Although Chile’s policy changes have had big effects on the market for teacher training, it appears that their gradual implementation (over ten years) has pre-empted the degree of resistance to reforms seen in Peru and Ecuador (Bruns & Luque, 2015; Elacqua et al., 2018).

In Taiwan, a 1994 quality reform gave all accredited universities the right to grant teacher training degrees, despite the best efforts of the formally-monopolistic teacher training institutes and their

allies in the ruling KMT party (Kuomintang, Nationalist Party of China) to block it. The training institutes and KMT leadership managed to stall reforms for two years until the KMT lost its majority in the legislature. Once enacted, the policy caused enrollments at single-purpose teacher training institutes to plummet, as students largely shifted to programs at regular, diversified universities (Fwu & Wang, 2002).

### 2.7. Government reformers and policy networks

The complexity, scale, and contentiousness of teacher policy reforms necessitate champions in government to drive them forward. These champions often comprise a small group of reformers in the education ministry or executive branch (Grindle (2004) for Latin America, Wales et al. (2016) on Cambodia). In recent reform experiences in Peru and Rio de Janeiro state, attracting economists from the Ministry of Finance and young people returning from graduate education abroad into reform teams broadened the policy network and technical support for implementation. In Jordan, the King appointed his brother to lead a series of reform efforts, bringing additional clout and impetus to the reforms. In Washington DC, the core team driving ambitious reforms was drawn almost entirely from outside policy networks, such as Teach For America and the New Teacher Project (Reed, 2018).

In most countries, reform champions are drawn from – and well connected to – a large policy network (Kaufman & Nelson, 2004: 262). Most people in these policy networks have graduate degrees and research experience in education. Many come from the education NGOs (described below); others are in universities, research centers, think tanks, and many have experience working in or with multilateral development agencies and international NGOs. This policy network is often active in public debates (as in writing op-ed pieces or participating in radio and TV talk shows) and can be a key ally in communication strategies (discussed later).

Policy networks usually span the insider-outsider divide, as some participants will be in various positions within the education system, while others are outside in think tanks, NGOs, and universities. The next section examines more of these outsider stakeholders.

## 3. Outsider stakeholders in education reform

In addition to groups within the education system, a number of outsider stakeholders typically support or oppose education reforms.

### 3.1. Business

As a major ‘consumer’ of the outputs of the education system, business should in principle have a strong interest in education reform, particularly to improve quality. Business also has more resources to influence the policy process than other stakeholders. However, business rarely engages deeply in education reform politics (Kaufman & Nelson, 2004, p. 267). In her oft cited review of major reforms in the 1990s in Latin America, Grindle found that, “parents’ organizations, business groups, or pro-education civic alliances were conspicuously absent from these stories of reform” (2004, p. 198). Business was also absent in more recent reforms in 2010s in Chile and Ecuador (Mizala & Schneider, 2018; Schneider, Cevallos, & Bruns, 2019). The six empirical chapters in Hickey and Hossain (2018) on Asia (Bangladesh and Cambodia) and Africa (Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, and Ghana), found no evidence of business playing a significant role in quality reform efforts.

Most business associations publicly espouse education quality, but active lobbying or close engagement in reform politics is rare. As one business person in Peru described it, association leaders in the main business association, Confiep, talk about education, but it is cheap talk (“*de boca para fuera*”) (interview with Confiep member, 19 January 2016). In Brazil, the national confederation of industry in early 2017 announced its 9 priorities for policy change; education was last on the list (Doner & Schneider, 2019).

An explanation for the lack of business engagement in Latin America is that many large-scale employers do not in fact rely on skilled workers (Schneider, 2013). Large firms can either train workers themselves or largely employ unskilled labor (as in basic assembly factories or food processing). A report from the InterAmerican Development Bank (IDB) summarized the view of many businesses in Latin America as ‘hire for attitude, train for skills’ (Bassi, Busso, Urzúa, & Vargas, 2012). To the extent firms devise private solutions to their training needs – often with tax breaks for training expenditures—they will be less concerned about the performance of the public education system. Surveys of businesses rarely rank skills as the greatest obstacle they face (Pagés, Pierre, & Scarpetta, 2009, p. 9).

Among developing countries, business engagement with education was greatest in the high growth economies of East Asia, especially Taiwan and Korea.<sup>12</sup> For Haggard and Kaufman (2008) and others, business interest in East Asia derived from their export orientation.<sup>13</sup> That is, firms operating in highly competitive international markets needed ever more skilled workers and lacked the slack to pay for providing the skills in house. Kosack (2012, p. 15) adds the further condition that labor markets must be flexible such that the entry of additional skilled workers lowers skill premia in wages. Such flexibility characterized Taiwanese labor markets but was rare in other developing countries. Kosack argues overall “that there are only limited conditions under which businesses will pressure the government to invest in mass education.”

Business preferences on education also vary with firm size. For some firms – often smaller or higher tech – skills are a major constraint (and private solutions are not possible). But small firms also face more barriers to collective action, making them less able to organize to push actively for education improvement. Turkey offers an important exception, however; in the 2000s small and medium enterprises (SMEs) allied with President Erdogan to promote technical and vocational education (Sancak & Özel, 2018).

Finally, as discussed later, numerous big businesses and wealthy individuals create foundations, think tanks, and NGOs devoted to education reform. However, these initiatives typically stem more from the social responsibility and charitable side of business than from organized business as producers concerned with the skill levels of the workers they recruit.

### 3.2. Organized civil society (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

Both developed and developing countries increasingly have a range of civil society and non-government organizations that advocate for education reforms, with a growing focus on education quality. Many such groups play a technical role in education by conducting research, piloting new initiatives, assisting with reform

<sup>12</sup> Business has been more engaged in education politics in Europe, especially in the coordinated market economies of northern Europe (Busemeyer & Trampusch, 2012), and in the United States (Rhodes, 2012). In the Middle East, business representatives were sometimes involved in reform councils (Gonzalez et al. (2008) on the UAE), attended education conferences, and were even brought in to direct reform efforts (Shenkar and Shenkar (2011) on Israel).

<sup>13</sup> See also Birdsall et al (2001) who tie exports to greater family investment and Doner and Schneider (2019) who find little evidence of a connection between technical education and exports in the 21st century.

design and implementation, and bringing more information about education quality into the public sphere.<sup>14</sup> Through their technical expertise, NGOs can lend credibility to education reforms and help rally broader public support. They can also play additional political roles by keeping education in public debate (Little (2010) on India), providing a critical independent perspective on both government education policy and teacher unions, bringing dispersed stakeholders together in public forums, and providing a conduit for business philanthropy to improve education.

From the massive Gates Foundation to many smaller NGOs, think tanks, and foundations, big business often invests heavily in organizations promoting education quality. In Latin America, some of the most active and influential groups are in Brazil and Mexico where they press government officials, sponsor research, engage the media, and mobilize other groups in civil society. Advocacy groups in Brazil played a lead role in the expert input and stakeholder consultations leading to the 2017 national curriculum reform (Barros, 2018). In Mexico, a sensational NGO-produced film exposing corruption in the Mexican education system (De Panzazo!) was a stimulus to the 2013 reforms. In poorer countries of Africa and Asia, international NGOs may also be important stakeholders, though more in research and actual provision than in advocacy and lobbying.

### 3.3. Parents

As stakeholders with a direct interest in the quality of their children’s education, the absence of parents in most reform politics is initially surprising (Grindle, 2004; Moe & Wiborg, 2017). Several factors inhibit parent involvement. There is a collective action problem of organizing individual parents into regional or national interest groups, when their concerns about education tend to be localized. Class differences further complicate collective action. In most developing countries, children of the elites attend private schools; thus the richest and most influential groups of parents have little stake in reforming public schools (Corrales, 1999; Kaufman & Nelson, 2004). Parents whose children remain in public school systems are typically less educated, less empowered, and have less time to mobilize politically in pursuit of reforms, leading to low parent involvement, particularly in low income neighborhoods and rural areas.<sup>15</sup>

Many parents also lack information about education quality; they may see a report card for their child but have little frame of reference for comparing their school to others. Nonetheless, there is some evidence that information can impact parent behavior without collective action. Researchers in Pakistan found that providing parents with comprehensive information about the relative quality of all the schools in a village led to parental decisions to shift enrollments that had powerful effects on the education “market” in rural areas, including closure of the lowest-performing private schools, downward pressure on private school fees, and higher

<sup>14</sup> For example, ASER and the PAL (People’s Action for Learning) network conduct rigorous tests of student learning across India, Pakistan and Sub-Saharan Africa, providing independent data to compare to potentially manipulated government tests. In the United States, Finger (2017) shows that state-level reforms progressed furthest where local NGOs were well connected with national-level NGOs. On Chile, Mizala and Schneider (2018) emphasize how policy networks including NGOs, think tanks, and foundations pushed quality reforms.

<sup>15</sup> Class-based differences in education preferences are core to social science theories that view education policy in distributive terms. In general, wealthier groups favor higher public spending on tertiary education; poorer groups prefer more spending on basic education (Ansell, 2010). Also, in societies with lower inter-generational mobility, richer families are the main support for higher quality public education, while in societies with high mobility, all class groups support high quality public education (Gift & Wibbels, 2014). These and other distributive theories would predict low interest by most classes of parents in education reform in developing countries.

overall enrollments and test scores (Andrabi, Das, & Khwaja, 2017). However, in most cases parents lack this type of information to hold schools more accountable.<sup>16</sup>

In the past several decades, school decentralization efforts around the world have attempted to provide parents with more authority to influence school operations, but researchers have found that even in these contexts, income and class disparities can prevent parents from challenging the views of school directors and teachers (Castro on Nicaragua in Ruiz de Forsberg, 2003) and that education quality may even worsen in low income areas due to weak administrative capabilities and low parental involvement (Galiani and Gertler 2008 on Argentina). School councils are also subject to politicization, as council leaders use them to push party ideas or enhance their own political ambitions (Ampratwum et al. 2018 on Ghana, Pherali et al. (2011) on Nepal).

Overall, despite potentially intense preferences, parents are rarely an organized force in reform politics.

### 3.4. International Development Agencies

Multilateral agencies such as the World Bank, the Global Partnership for Education, the Inter-American Development Bank and other regional development banks, as well as bilateral donors such as USAID, DFID, and GTZ are also sometimes important pro-reform stakeholders, both by providing technical assistance (and thereby joining the policy network) and adding resources (Kaufman & Nelson, 2004, p. 263).<sup>17</sup> In middle-income countries, donor funding and direct influence is relatively limited (Corrales, 2005, pp. 10–12), and countries only choose to accept funding when it aligns with their pre-existing priorities (Wales et al., 2016). However, because external funding is generally directed towards new policies and programs, rather than existing budget items like teacher salaries and school maintenance, the impact of this funding on reforms can be magnified, particularly where the domestic resources for education are constrained. Perhaps the greatest influence of the international development community has come through the increase in research evidence on the impact of different education reforms over the past 10–15 years, which can be linked to the diffusion of certain types of reforms, such as early grade literacy and numeracy teaching (or teaching at the right level), bonus pay, school-based management, and information for accountability.<sup>18</sup>

However, external agencies can also sometimes detract from reform efforts by generating a national or religious backlash against foreign intervention and ‘imposed’ educational models (see Fichtner (2010) on Benin, Findlow (2008) on the Middle East, De Young (2002) on Kyrgyzstan) as well as through disagreements and competition amongst themselves (Cifuentes (2012) on Ghana).

### 3.5. Religious authorities

Although rarely among the main protagonists in quality reforms, religious leaders are important stakeholders in education politics generally (more historically see Ansell and Lindvall (2013)). In Latin America, the Catholic Church runs many elite private universities and basic education schools and opposes regulations that might affect the autonomy and resources of their schools (interview, advisor to minister of education in Chile, 7

March 2016). In the Middle East and South Asia, religious leaders are particularly involved in curriculum reform, and can raise major opposition to entire reform packages if they perceive them as overly “Westernized” (Cook 1999 on Egypt, Abi-Mershed 2009 and Findlow 2008 on MENA countries, Chughtai 2015 on Pakistan).

### 3.6. Politicians and political parties

In principle, one or more political parties in democratic systems should have an interest in developing a reputation as advocates for education improvement. In practice, nearly all parties promise to improve education, making it difficult for voters – even those with strong preferences for education – to find the true education reform party. Moreover, parties are often weak, changeable, and amorphous in new democracies in developing countries (Bizzarro et al., 2018), so they rarely stand out as the main vehicles for connecting voters to reform policies. Chile offers a major exception both in that the major political parties are strong and institutionalized and in the fact that the 2014 election revolved around education, with the winning coalition campaigning hard on a platform of education reform (Doner & Schneider, 2019; Mizala & Schneider, 2018).

For many parties and politicians, the interest in education derives less from serving voters’ long-term interest in quality than their own short-term interests in the political jobs and patronage of one of the largest ministries in terms of spending and personnel (Kingdon et al., 2014). In addition to teacher hiring, education budgets fund large amounts of discretionary procurement (school construction, books, school feeding) and large national and subnational administrations, with many jobs open to political appointment. Trading appointments for clientelist support can benefit teacher unions, as noted earlier, or other party supporters, and contracts create opportunities for spoils-driven politicians (Wales et al., 2016, Pherali et al. (2011) on Nepal). For Corrales, “clientelism, patronage, and corruption are three of the most intense political forces that push states to expand education” (2005, p. 18). Compared to other large public services such as health or defense, education has a special vulnerability to clientelism because procurement is relatively unsophisticated and hiring unqualified political supporters does not have immediate or visible negative consequences (World Bank, 2018).

Expanding schooling access is popular with clientelist parties and politicians because it gives them opportunities to distribute new jobs and contracts. But raising teacher quality typically requires actions to depoliticize and professionalize teacher hiring and administration and sometimes to shift spending from central administration to schools. These reforms directly threaten the interests of teachers and bureaucrats hired through non-meritocratic processes, as well as the politicians controlling the contracts and hiring. Clientelist politicians can also wait out education reformers and return to business as usual once reformers decamp or are discredited as discussed earlier on the undoing of reforms in the state of Rio de Janeiro. Cases of major reforms launched by one presidential (or subnational) administration and reversed by a successive one are legion.

In sum, in most societies a significant swath of citizens and diverse groups have interests in how educational reform unfolds, but few of these groups are consistently active in the political process. Government reformers are usually the main protagonists and teacher unions the key antagonists. Given their innate, long-term interests in improved education quality parents and business potentially could be much stronger allies in reform processes, were they effectively mobilized. The next section turns to issues in design and implementation that can help reduce opposition and court support among these diverse stakeholders.

<sup>16</sup> See Lieberman, Posner, and Tsai (2014) on information in education and the lack of effect on accountability in Africa.

<sup>17</sup> United States Agency for International Development, Department for International Development (UK), *Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit* (Technical Cooperation Agency, Germany).

<sup>18</sup> In 2017, both the World Bank and the IDB devoted their annual flagship publications to education (Busso et al., 2017; World Bank, 2018).

#### 4. Designing and implementing quality reforms

As noted in the introduction, three key characteristics – powerful teacher unions able to contest reforms, the opacity of the classroom, and the long time for clear results – pose special challenges for the design and implementation of teacher policy reforms. All three raise issues of how to reduce opposition to reform and cultivate support. It is not enough for reformers just to enact change. Because of the opacity of the classroom, some teacher buy-in is essential to getting reforms implemented. And, because reforms can be overturned in subsequent years, reforms need at least partial union acceptance or strong enough support coalitions to resist longer term efforts by unions and clientelist politicians to undermine or reverse reforms. This section analyzes six interrelated issues in design and implementation that have been important to reform success: consultation, sequencing, compensation, negotiation, communication, and sustaining reforms.

##### 4.1. Consultation

While reforms are generally top-down in most Asian and Middle Eastern countries, broad consultations to discuss reform initiatives, priorities, and design have become popular in Latin America. Consultative processes offer several advantages. First, they can raise the salience of public and political debate on education and help identify areas of agreement and disagreement. In Ecuador, reformers used the last year of the outgoing president's term in 2006 to promote a nation-wide debate on the crisis in education, leading to a national referendum in support of reforms that gave the incoming President Correa an especially strong mandate to overhaul education (Schneider et al., 2019). Consultations can also generate new ideas or modify older ones. In Chile, twenty civil society groups launched a campaign in 2014 to solicit public input on the reform of teacher policy (Mizala & Schneider, 2018). The groups used country-wide meetings and online forums to compile a book with over 100 proposals which the government used to inform their agenda.

Lastly, consultations build buy-in from key stakeholders and help smooth the path for reform implementation. When pre-reform discussions do not occur, stakeholders can pose major obstacles. In Turkey, for instance, teacher training sessions for a curriculum reform were overrun by arguments and protests from teachers, who felt the reform did not take into account their on-the-ground perspective (Altinyelken, 2013). In Uruguay, teachers resisted a major curriculum reform developed without consultation and finally succeeded almost a decade later in reversing it completely (Vaillant, 2008). Consultations in these cases could have aired grievances and better incorporated teacher input into the reform content.

However, consultations have a downside; they can be time consuming just when reformers feel pressure to deliver results quickly. In India, a right to education bill took seven years to draft and pass through parliament, despite having general support from all parties, due to a desire to consult diverse constituencies (Little, 2010). Reformers often feel they have a short window of opportunity to pass difficult reforms, to use their high political capital immediately after an election or to take advantage of a burst of public attention (as after PISA scores are released), and consultative processes take time.

##### 4.2. Reform sequencing

One common form of sequencing is grandfathering – applying reforms only to new hires. This sequencing can sidestep confrontation with existing teachers and teacher unions, and give reformers

a chance to phase in implementation of new processes (for example, developing the tests and interview processes needed for meritocratic teacher hiring). Grandfathering also eases the fiscal strain of the increased salaries that typically accompany the introduction of higher teacher standards. Reformers used grandfathering in Colombia's 2002 reform of the teacher career, in the initial reform of the teacher career path adopted in Peru under Alan García, in Ecuador initially in 2008, and in Punjab, Pakistan in 2010 (Bari et al., 2013). In all cases, the new standards and meritocratic hiring processes applied only to new hires. The downside is the delayed impact on the overall teaching force, as new hires are rarely more than five percent of teachers per year. Even 15 years after its adoption, Colombia's 2002 teacher reform covered only about half of teachers (Figueroa et al., 2018). This slow progress encouraged reformers in both Peru and Ecuador to universalize the new policy within a few years, even at the cost of conflict with teacher unions.

A second sequence observed in Latin America is to move in the direction of stronger incentives for performance initially with school-based (group) bonus pay, which is more palatable to teacher unions than individual performance pay (Mizala & Schneider, 2014). Collective incentives can familiarize school directors and teachers with the upside of getting extra rewards for their efforts and even demonstrate that system-wide improvement is stimulated. This can help ease the introduction of individual teacher performance pay, as was the case in Chile, in the state of São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro state (proposed but never implemented) in Brazil.

A third strategy is “opt-in.” When Ecuador (2007) and Peru (2008) introduced core reforms to teaching careers, with a higher salary scale in exchange for performance-based promotion and possibility of dismissal, the new system was voluntary for existing teachers. In both cases, only a small share of teachers opted to give up civil service job protections for higher salaries. After a few years both countries made the systems mandatory – Ecuador in 2010 and Peru through new legislation in 2012. This approach gave reformers time to pilot evaluation tools and processes on a manageable scale before going system-wide. Having a teacher evaluation system up and running, even on a small scale, can help make a subsequent universal rollout technically smoother.

Sequencing also allows teachers and administrators to build capacity and new skills that will allow them gradually to take on new responsibilities. In Hong Kong, for instance, School Based Management was implemented gradually over a nine-year period, starting with a few pilot schools, then other schools who wanted to adopt it, and finally all public schools. This progression allowed schools to gain comfort and share learnings (Cheong Cheng, 2009). Incremental approaches avoid overwhelming teachers and school administrators with too many changes too fast, which can lead to uneven and ineffective reform implementation, or even paralyze it.

Another strategic decision that affects the timing of reforms is whether to pursue legislative – or Constitutional – enactment, which typically takes longer, or to push reforms via executive decree or administrative measures. In principle, the legislative route has benefits, even at the cost of delays. Cox and McCubbins distinguish generally between resolute policies which go through many veto points but therefore are sticky, and decisive policies (such as administrative decrees) which do not encounter any veto points and are therefore easier to adopt, but also easy to overturn.<sup>19</sup> For reformers with short or uncertain time horizons, decisiveness has obvious appeal. However, the large number of reforms diluted or overturned by subsequent governments suggests

<sup>19</sup> They argue, “As the effective number of vetoes increases, the policy becomes more resolute, and less decisive. The reverse is also true” (Cox & McCubbins, 2002, p. 27).



that resoluteness should be a higher priority. A key benefit of putting reforms in legislation or even in the Constitution (as in Mexico and Ecuador) is to raise costs for those who later want to undo reforms. However, it is still possible to undermine reforms without changing legislation (by reducing funding, for example), so complementary strategies to sustain reform are also important.

#### 4.3. Compensation

Reformers can package together measures likely to meet with union resistance, such as teacher evaluation, with measures that are likely to please teachers, such as increases in pay. Successful teacher policy reforms have almost always been accompanied by increased spending on education, both in general and on teacher salaries. In Peru, Minister Salas in 2012 bundled mandatory entry into the new teacher career path with the sweetener of a significant increase in base salaries and a higher overall salary trajectory. Peruvian Minister Saavedra in 2014 bundled implementation of the individual teacher evaluation program with much-increased spending on school infrastructure (popular with both teachers and parents) and school-based bonus pay.<sup>20</sup> Large salary increases also accompanied reforms to the teacher careers in Chile, Colombia, Washington DC, Indonesia, and Ecuador (where salaries more than doubled).

Governments can also offer attractive early retirement incentives to accelerate turnover. The Ecuadorian government offered early retirement bonuses worth a multiple of annual salaries (Schneider et al., 2019). Over four years 2008–2012, more than 40,000 teachers – almost one quarter of all teachers – chose to retire. Early retirement can smooth and speed the reform process as resistant teachers move on, and new teachers hired through meritocratic screening opt in. Ecuador's strategic use of compensation accelerated the achievement of visible reform impacts; reform architects believe this rapid turnover in the teaching force is one of the core drivers of Ecuador's impressive learning gains over the past decade (Schneider et al., 2019).

#### 4.4. Negotiation with unions

Negotiating with unions can be a strategy for both reducing opposition and building support.<sup>21</sup> Whether productive negotiation is possible depends primarily on the level of politicization of the union, as discussed in Section 2. The historical record varies enormously across countries.

On the compromise extreme of the spectrum, reformers in Chile engaged the teachers union in the collaborative design and negotiation of a series of ambitious reforms, beginning with school-based bonuses in 1998, individual teacher performance evaluations in 2002, and individual bonuses in 2004 (Mizala & Schneider, 2014). In the major reform proposals to universalize a new teacher career in 2015, the government consulted often with the teacher union. But the union initially opposed the final bill the government sent to Congress and went on strike for two months. The union

eventually returned to the negotiating table and reached a set of compromises that allowed the bill to proceed with union support (interview with Guillermo Scherping, 21 March 2016). Although sometimes contentious and disrupted by teacher strikes, negotiations in Chile have usually ended in compromise and a unanimous recommendation for new legislation that Congress then quickly passes.

On the other end of the spectrum, negotiations with politicized unions over meritocratic reforms that threaten the base of their political power may be impossible or break down easily. In Mexico in 2012, union leader Gordillo repudiated the reform package she personally had negotiated earlier with President Felipe Calderón. In both Peru and Ecuador, it was not possible to negotiate the recent (2010, 2012) major reforms of the teacher career path, and the new laws proceeded only after protracted strikes and violent clashes with the unions. In South Africa, an agreement on teacher reforms was only reached after top political leaders intervened outside of the formal negotiation process and eliminated many performance-related elements that teachers had resisted for over two years, leaving the union with the upper hand (Cameron & Naidoo, 2018).

#### 4.5. Communications

Many researchers stress the need for governments to develop communication strategies to defuse resistance and strengthen support (Corrales, 1999). In the initial reform stages, reformers often attempt to set the stage or prime the debate by emphasizing the crisis and dire condition of education and tying it to broader national concerns of international competitiveness and youth employment. National and international tests can support this effort by allowing reformers to make benchmarking comparisons that create a sense of urgency around change. In both Japan and Germany, surprisingly poor PISA scores in 2000—known as the “PISA shock” in Germany – drew near panic in the media and led to support for previously untenable reforms (Rothman, 2017; Takayama, 2008). In Peru, President Alan García released a 2006 evaluation that exposed a shocking share of 6th grade teachers unable to read or do math at the sixth-grade level (Cisneros, 2008). When Rio de Janeiro state (one of the richest states in Brazil) ranked 25th among 26 states on the national education quality index in 2010, media attention and public outcry gave the newly re-elected governor a political opening to name a new education secretary with a mandate for major change.

In Australia, Prime Minister Julia Gillard invested substantial time in outreach to both news media and the business community and had explicit strategies for both (Gillard, 2014). With the news media, she made a point of briefing them personally in advance of new proposals or actions; she also kept them supplied with school-level stories that put a human face and compelling narrative around a reform process that might otherwise sound abstract. With business leaders, she held regular “boardroom lunches”, and framed reform goals and results in language that would resonate, such as ‘education markets’ and ‘cost-effectiveness’. In Sri Lanka, the government planned conferences and public festivals to celebrate education, and distributed booklets to new elementary school parents describing the rationale for reforms, all of which helped support their implementation (Little, 2010).

Effective communications strategies were key to the adoption of major teacher policy reforms in Ecuador and Peru (Bruns & Luque, 2015). Presidents Correa and García staked substantial political capital on the teacher policy reforms and, as gifted communicators, were successful in mobilizing popular support in the face of protracted union opposition. García proclaimed: “We are in a process of transformation which hurts some interests, but I

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Jaime Saavedra, 18 January 2017. In Australia, Julia Gillard bundled the 2008 reform that sharply increased schools’ (and states) accountability for results with a substantial increase in education funding for disadvantaged schools, teacher quality, and numeracy and literacy training.

<sup>21</sup> In San Jose in the mid-1990s, the superintendent of schools met every Monday morning with union leaders for three hours (Barber, Moffit, & Kihn, 2011, p. 39). Close cooperation between the superintendent and unions leaders led to a plan for early retirement of 300 teachers and their replacement with new pro-reform teachers. The OECD came out strongly in favor of negotiation: “To conduct reforms in education, building consensus on reform objectives and actively engaging stakeholders – especially teacher unions – can lead to success” (OECD, 2015, p. 174).

govern for 28 million Peruvians, not for a group.” Within one year, opinion polls showed that 46 percent of respondents thought the teacher union (SUTEP) was negative for education and 74 percent believed García’s teacher reform would be good for students and good for the best teachers.<sup>22</sup>

However, the most critical communications challenge reformist leaders face is winning the hearts and minds of their teachers. Given the opacity of the classroom, teaching practice will not change without some degree of teacher buy-in and support. The most promising strategy is to establish direct lines of communication between reformers and teachers. As education secretary of Rio de Janeiro municipality (2009–14), Cláudia Costin was one of the first in the world to use Twitter to communicate directly, daily, with her 55,000 teachers. She also made a point of responding to critical feedback without defensiveness and publicly acknowledging and acting upon useful suggestions, which signaled to teachers that she was listening to them and built trust and support through a four-year process of progressive reforms. In reflecting on the sources of his success in raising test scores and graduation rates in the state of Rio de Janeiro, former secretary Risolia said his number one strategy was ‘staying close to schools’ – visiting schools constantly and simply listening to feedback from teachers, directors, and students (Risolia, 2015).

#### 4.6. Sustaining reforms

Negotiating, compensating, and communicating can all help implement reforms, but sustaining them requires two additional components: continuity in government and ongoing coalition building. Teacher reforms take a long time to produce large-scale results, while democracies are characterized by routine alternation of power in shorter cycles. Post-reform governments usually can easily modify or undo reforms, as has occurred in Mexico, Indonesia, and several states in Brazil.

It is hard to identify any case of major change in teacher quality achieved without notable continuity in the reform process across successive governments. Correa’s multiple reelections in Ecuador meant great stability in the ministry of education over his 10 years in power. In Peru, successive elections since 2008 have brought new parties to the presidency, but with continued commitment to the teacher reforms and high continuity in core Ministry personnel over a ten year period. In Chile, successive center-left governments (1990–2009 and 2014–2017) have implemented a series of teacher policies with a remarkable degree of core consistency.

Working to keep pro-reform stakeholders together can also help sustain reforms. As noted previously, two potential beneficiaries of education reform, parents and business, are rarely active in reform politics in large part because of the collective action and free riding problems that both groups face: business because it is so diverse across size, sector, and skill needs and parents because they are so numerous, dispersed geographically, and stratified socially. One effective countervailing strategy is to draw key stakeholders into high-visibility reform commissions or expert panels. In Israel, the government appointed a prominent tech entrepreneur to lead a reform committee, bringing business groups closer into the reform process (Shenkar & Shenkar, 2011). When the Chilean voucher system was under attack in 1998, the Brunner Commission comprised of business leaders, Catholic church officials, for-profit school operators, and national education experts forged a consensus that the voucher schools should remain but be complemented with a new

system of school bonuses and other reforms.<sup>23</sup> High-level panels and commissions enhance the credibility of reform proposals, leading to greater public support.<sup>24</sup>

Many analyses and reports from multilateral agencies conjure up leadership, political backbone, champions, and so forth. Certainly, charm and charisma help with any difficult government task. But urging will and leadership both obscures and evades more rigorous analysis of political costs and resources, underestimates the role of strategic choices, and can give a false sense of optimism. Education reform is more like Weber’s characterization of politics as, ‘the slow boring of hard boards.’

## 5. Conclusions

The first and most definitive conclusion of this survey is that academic researchers have largely neglected the politics of education reform and left a gap in the knowledge base that reformers need for the design of more effective strategies. Even as research evidence accumulates on interventions that can improve education outcomes, little research exists on system-wide reforms, such as changes to core teacher policies, that cannot be evaluated experimentally. System-wide reforms are challenging because they are politically contentious, must be implemented across thousands of classrooms that cannot be directly monitored, and take years to be fully realized and show results. Empirical research of all sorts is needed; from macro, cross-national assessments of how successful reform may be correlated with ministerial tenure, clientelism, union negotiation, and media support, to closer, micro, case-based process-tracing examination of successful strategizing and attention to implementation detail by reform teams.

New research is particularly important for understudied regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa and for stakeholder groups such as parents and business, where existing work is especially thin. Some of the most recent reform programs (in Mexico and in countries engaged with DFID’s innovative RISE program) are building in evaluation from the beginning, to analyze reform dynamics and to track whether, when, and how teacher policy reforms produce impacts on student learning outcomes.<sup>25</sup> The same must be done for reform politics, building in evaluation to generate evidence on how stakeholders’ resources, coalitions, and strategies affect reform design, adoption, implementation, and impacts.

Like the few existing political analyses (Bruns & Schneider, 2016; Bruns & Luque, 2015; Corrales, 1999; Grindle, 2004; Moe & Wiborg, 2017; Hickey & Houssain, 2018), this article emphasizes the central role of teacher unions in reform politics. What we have added is the crucial notion that additional political interests are commonly layered over or imbricated through teacher unions. Teacher unions are not only labor associations representing member

<sup>23</sup> Arne Duncan, head of Chicago schools (2001–08, and later national secretary of education) launched a plan to open 100 new (non-union) schools and close an equivalent number of failing schools. Close relations with the Chicago Business Roundtable provided crucial support in implementing this reform (Barber et al., 2011, p. 40). Julia Gillard in 2010 set up an expert panel chaired by a respected business leader, to conduct a review of Australia’s education funding. Drawing key stakeholders into panel (representatives of Catholic, NGO, and indigenous schools, opposition political parties and a noted economist), the Commission provided both technical ideas and political cover for a major reform. In the United States, states as diverse as New York and Georgia have commissioned expert panels to propose major reforms in the past five years.

<sup>24</sup> Although not involving teacher reform, an NGO-led process to create a common curriculum (*Base Comum*) in Brazil 2013–17 survived government turmoil and 4–5 ministers of education because civil society held the coalition together (Barros, 2018).

<sup>25</sup> The RISE (Research on Improving Systems of Education) is a six-year, \$30 million program funded by the UK that commissions joint national-international academic teams to carry out sustained, in-depth research on system-wide education reforms. Countries selected (through a competitive process) are India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Vietnam, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Nigeria.

<sup>22</sup> Andina (Peru News Agency) 2007. “Padres de familia instan a maestros a dejar de lado las medidas de fuerza” Lima, Peru. <http://www.andina.com.pe/Espanol/Noticia>

interests, but also partly incorporated into state functions, clientelist networks, and wider rent seeking. Analytically unpacking this organizational and political complexity is essential for reformers' strategy on how to deal with unions.

Our discussion of stakeholders also sought to go beyond previous studies and make the list as exhaustive as possible. Not all stakeholders will matter in every context, but it is useful to have a framework for thinking through possible hidden opponents (e.g., religious leaders and teacher training schools) and hidden supporters (e.g., school directors). A key function of policy entrepreneurs is to mobilize latent pro-reform constituencies, so it makes sense to start with as complete a list as possible.

Achieving the SDGs will require substantial progress on student learning in virtually all developing countries, including those that have not yet achieved universal access or in which access is hindered by extremely low teacher attendance. Insufficient attention has been given to the fact that the SDG reform agenda will be politically contentious, particularly in comparison with the education MDG focused on access expansion. We believe Latin America presents a microcosm of broad political challenges ahead for other developing regions over the next decade and a half. First, Latin America has shown the disconnect that can develop when education coverage advances rapidly but school quality and student learning lag. Second, the region has displayed many, often egregious, examples of the education system dysfunction that can arise in democracies when clientelist governments and large, powerful teacher unions find rent-seeking symbiosis.

But, third, and most importantly, the region's experience over the past decade offers some encouragement. Countries have launched and sustained major reforms to raise the quality of teachers and schools through higher standards, incentives, and stronger accountability for performance. Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, and states and municipalities in Brazil adopted reforms that directly threatened the interests of teacher unions and clientelist politicians and in several cases faced bitter, protracted opposition. Yet leaders persevered and demonstrated political strategies likely to be relevant elsewhere: consulting stakeholders, negotiating with unions, sequencing reforms, and using effective communications strategies to mobilize and sustain pro-reform coalitions in civil society and progressively build support among teachers.

### Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest.

### Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Anna Weissman for research assistance and to Guillermo Toral for comments on an earlier version. This article draws on a lengthier treatment of the politics of quality reforms in Bruns and Schneider (2016).

### References

- Aiyar, Y., & Bhattacharya, S. (2016). The post office paradox: A case study of the Block Level Education Bureaucracy. *Economic & Political Weekly*, 51(11), 61.
- Altinyelken, H. K. (2013). Teachers' principled resistance to curriculum change: A compelling case from Turkey. In A. Verger, H. Altinyelken, & M. de Koning (Eds.), *Global managerial education reforms and teachers* (pp. 109–126). Brussels: Education International.
- Andrabi, T., Das, J., & Khwaja, A. I. (2017). Report cards: The impact of providing school and child test scores on educational markets. *American Economic Review*, 107(6), 1535–1563.
- Ansell, B. (2010). *From the ballot to the blackboard: The redistributive political economy of education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ansell, B., & Lindvall, J. (2013). The political origins of primary education systems: Ideology, institutions, and interdenominational conflict in an era of nation-building. *American Political Science Review*, 107(3), 505–522. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055413000257>.
- Barber, M., Moffit, A., & Kihn, P. (2011). *Deliverology 101: A field guide for educational leaders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bari, F., Raza, R., Aslam, M., Khan, B., & Maqsood, N. (2013). *An investigation into teacher recruitment and retention in Punjab*. Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives (IDEAS).
- Barros, D. (2018). Pais mal educado: Por que se aprende tão pouco nas escolas Brasileiras. São Paulo: Record.
- Bassi, M., Busso, M., Urzúa, S., & Vargas, J. (2012). *Disconnected: Skills, education, and employment in Latin America*. Washington DC: Interamerican Development Bank.
- Bêteille, T. (2009). *Absenteeism, transfers and patronage: The political economy of teacher labor markets in India* PhD dissertation. Stanford University.
- Birdsall, N., Pinckney, T., & Sabot, R. (2001). Natural Resources, Human Capital, and Growth. In R. Auty (Ed.), *Resource abundance and economic development* (pp. 57–75). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bizzarro, F., Gerring, J., Knutsen, C. H., Hicken, A., Bernhard, M., Skaaning, S., et al. (2018). Party strength and economic growth. *World Politics*, 70(02), 275–320. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887117000375>.
- Bos, M. S., Elias, A., Vegas, E., & Zoido, P. (2016). *Latin America and the Caribbean in PISA 2015: How much did the region improve?* Washington DC: Interamerican Development Bank.
- Bruno, B., & Luque, J. (2015). *Great teachers: How to raise student learning in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- Bruno, B., & Schneider, B. R. (2016). Managing the politics of quality reforms in education: Policy lessons from global experience. *Background paper for the UN Commission on finance for education*.
- Bussemeyer, M., & Iversen, T. (2014). The politics of opting out: Explaining educational financing and popular support for public spending. *Socio-Economic Review*, 12(2). <https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwu005>.
- Bussemeyer, M., & Trampusch, C. (2011). Review article: Comparative political science and the study of education. *British Journal of Political Science*, 41(2), 413–443.
- Bussemeyer, M., & Trampusch, C. (2012). The comparative political economy of collective skill formation. In M. Bussemeyer & C. Trampusch (Eds.), *The political economy of collective skill formation* (pp. 3–38). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Busso, M., Cristia, J., Hincapié, D., Messina, J., & Ripani, L. (2017). *Learning better for an uncertain future*. Washington: IDB.
- Cameron, R., & Naidoo, V. (2018). When a ruling alliance and public sector governance meet: Managing for performance in South African basic education. In B. Levy, R. Cameron, U. Hoadley, & V. Naidoo (Eds.), *The politics and governance of basic education*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Chang, M. C., Shaeffer, S., Al-Samarrai, S., Ragatz, A. B., de Ree, J., & Stevenson, R. (2013). *Teacher reform in Indonesia: The role of politics and evidence in policy making*. Washington DC: World Bank. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-0-8213-9829-6>.
- Chaudhury, N., Hammer, J., Kremer, M., Muralidharan, K., & Rogers, F. H. (2006). Missing in action: teacher and health worker absence in developing countries. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 20(1), 91–116.
- Cheong Cheng, Y. (2009). Hong Kong educational reforms in the last decade: Reform syndrome and new developments. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 23(1), 65–86. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513540910926439>.
- Chetty, R., Friedman, J. N., & Rockoff, J. E. (2014). Measuring the impacts of teachers II: Teacher value-added and student outcomes in adulthood. *American economic review*, 104(9), 2633–2679.
- Cifuentes, M. (2012). Two sides of a public-policy innovation: The Kenya education reform. *Halduskultuur*, 13(1).
- Cisneros, L. J. (2008). "La prueba bajo examen" La Republica, March 30, <http://www.larepublica.pe/30-03-2008/aula-precaria-bajo-examen>.
- Corrales, J. (1999). *The politics education reform: Bolstering the supply and demand overcoming institutional blocks* (Education Reform and Management Series). Washington DC: World Bank.
- Corrales, J. (2005). The state is not enough: The politics of expanding and improving schooling in developing countries. *American Academy of Arts and Sciences*.
- Cox, G., & McCubbins, M. (2002). The institutional determinants of economic policy outcomes. In S. Haggard & M. McCubbins (Eds.), *Presidents, parliaments, and policy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- De Young, A. J. (2002). West meets East in Central Asia: Competing discourses on secondary education reform in the Kyrgyz Republic.
- Doner, R., & Schneider, B. R. (2019). Technical education in the middle income trap: Missing coalitions for skill formation. *Journal of Development Studies*. Forthcoming.
- Elacqua, G., Hincapié, D., Vegas, E., & Alfonso, M. (2018). *Profesión: profesor en América Latina ¿Por qué se perdió el prestigio docente y cómo recuperarlo?* Washington DC: Inter-American Development Bank.
- Fichtner, S. (2010). A laboratory for education reform or a battlefield of donor intervention? *International Journal of Educational Development*, 30(5), 518–524. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2010.03.010>.
- Figuerola, M., García, Sandra, Malonado, D., Rodríguez, C., Saavedra, A. M., & Vargas, G. (2018). *La profesión docente en Colombia: normatividad, formación, selección y evaluación*. Bogotá, Colombia: Universidad de los Andes.
- Findlow, S. (2008). Islam, modernity and education in the Arab States. *Intercultural Education*, 19(4), 337–352.
- Finger, L. (2017). *The politics of state-level education reform in the United States* PhD dissertation. Harvard University.

- Fwu, B. J., & Wang, H. H. (2002). From uniformity to diversification: Transformation of teacher education in pursuit of teacher quality in Taiwan from 1949 to 2000. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 22(2), 155–167. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0738-0593\(01\)00019-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0738-0593(01)00019-0).
- Gift, T., & Wibbels, E. (2014). Reading, writing, and the regrettable status of education research in comparative politics. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 17(1), 291–312. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-080911-131426>.
- Gillard, J. (2014). *My story*. Sydney: Random House.
- Gonzalez, G., Karoly, L., Constant, L., Goldman, C., & Salem, H. (2008). *Facing human capital challenges of the 21st century: Education and labor market initiatives in Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.
- Grindle, M. (2004). *Despite the odds: The contentious politics of education reform*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Haggard, S., & Kaufman, R. (2008). *Development, democracy, and welfare states: Latin America, East Asia, and Eastern Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hallinger, P. (2010). Making education reform happen: Is there an 'Asian' way? *School Leadership & Management*, 30(5), 401–418. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2010.502524>.
- Hanushek, E. A., & Rivkin, S. G. (2010). Generalizations about using value-added measures of teacher quality. *American Economic Review*, 100(2), 267–271.
- Hickey, S., & Hossain, N. (2018). *The politics of education in developing countries: From schooling to learning?* New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kaufman, R., & Nelson, J. (2004). The politics of education sector reform: Cross-national comparisons. In R. Kaufman & J. Nelson (Eds.), *Crucial needs, weak incentives* (pp. 249–270). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Kingdon, G. et al. (2014). *A rigorous review of the political economy of education systems in developing countries*. University of London.
- Kingdon, G., & Muzammil, M. (2009). A political economy of education in India: The case of Uttar Pradesh. *Oxford Development Studies*, 37(2), 123–144.
- Kosack, S. (2012). *The education of nations: How the political organization of the poor, not democracy, led governments to invest in mass education*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kremer, M., Brannen, C., & Glennerster, R. (2013). The challenge of education and learning in the developing world. *Science*, 340, 297–300.
- Larrañaga, O., & Rodríguez, M. (2016). Middle classes and education in Latin America. In A. Foxley & B. Stallings (Eds.), *Innovation and inclusion in Latin America* (pp. 205–228). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2005). A review of transformational school leadership research 1996–2005. *Leadership and policy in schools*, 4(3), 177–199.
- Lieberman, E., Posner, D., & Tsai, L. (2014). Does information lead to more active citizenship? Evidence from an education intervention in rural Kenya. *World Development*, 60, 69–83. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.WORLDDEV.2014.03.014>.
- Little, A. W. (2010). Access to elementary education in India: Politics, policies and progress. CREATE pathways to access. Research Monograph No. 44.
- Masino, S., & Niño-Zarazúa, M. (2016). What works to improve the quality of student learning in developing countries. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 48, 53–65.
- Mizala, A., & Schneider, B. R. (2014). Negotiating education reform: Teacher evaluations and incentives in Chile (1990–2010). *Governance*, 27(1), 87–109. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12020>.
- Mizala, A., & Schneider, B. R. (2018). *The contentious politics of reforming teacher careers: Conflict and negotiation in Chile*. Working Paper, MIT.
- Moe, T. (2011). *Special interest: Teachers unions and America's public schools*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution.
- Moe, T. (2017). The comparative politics of education: Teachers unions and education systems around the world. In T. Moe & S. Wiborg (Eds.), *The comparative politics of education* (pp. 269–324). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Muralidharan, K., Das, J., Holla, A., & Mohpal, A. (2017). The fiscal cost of weak governance: Evidence from teacher absence in India. *Journal of Public Economics*, 145, 116–135. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2016.11.005>.
- Moe, T., & Wiborg, S. (Eds.). (2017). *The comparative politics of education: Teachers unions and education systems across the World*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Murillo, M. V. (Ed.). (2002). *Carreras magisteriales, desempeño educativo y sindicatos de maestros en America Latina*. Buenos Aires: Flacso.
- OECD (2015). *Education policy outlook 2015 – Making reforms happen*. Paris: OECD.
- OECD (2018). ODA commitments for education (total) from all donors (indicator). Accessed from <https://stats.oecd.org/qwids/> (Accessed on 23 June 2018).
- Olson, M. (2009). *The logic of collective action*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Pagés, C., Pierre, G. L. B., & Scarpetta, S. (2009). *Job creation in Latin America and the Caribbean: Recent trends and policy challenges*. Washington DD: World Bank.
- Pherali, T., Smith, A., & Vaux, T. (2011). *A political economy analysis of education in Nepal*. UK Department for International Development (DFID).
- Pritchett, L., & Beatty, A. (2015). Slow down, you're going too fast: Matching curricula to student skill levels. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 40, 276–288. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.IJEDUDEV.2014.11.013>.
- Reed, D. (2018). *Getting over Michelle: Washington, DC and the structure of education reform* Working Paper. Washington DC: Georgetown University.
- Rhodes, J. (2012). *An education in politics: The origins and evolution of no child left behind*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Risolia, W. (2015). Management reforms for service delivery: How Rio de Janeiro turned around education outcomes. Presentation.
- Rothman, B. (2017). After the shock: The German education system in 2017. Retrieved June 24, 2018, from <http://ncee.org/2017/09/after-the-shock-the-german-education-system-in-2017/>.
- Sancak, M., & Özel, I. (2018). When politics gets in the way: Domestic coalitions and the making of skill systems. *Review of International Political Economy*, 25(3), 340–363. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2018.1455062>.
- Sanchez Moreno Izaguirre, G. (2006). *Construyendo una Política de Formación Magisterial*. Lima, Peru: Ministerio de Educación.
- Schneider, B. R. (2013). *Hierarchical capitalism: Business, labor, and the challenge of equitable development in Latin America*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Schneider, B. R. (2018). Teacher unions, clientelism, and the fraught politics of education reform in Latin America (Working paper, MIT).
- Schneider, B. R., Cevallos, P., & Bruns, B. (2019). The politics of transforming education in Ecuador: Confrontation and continuity, 2006–17. *Comparative Education Review*.
- Shenkar, M., & Shenkar, O. (2011). Labor conflict on the national stage: Metaphoric lenses in Israel's teachers' strike. *Comparative Education Review*, 55(2), 210–230.
- Stein, E. (Ed.). (2005). *The politics of policies*. Washington DC: IDB.
- Takayama, K. (2008). The politics of international league tables: PISA in Japan's achievement crisis debate. *Comparative Education*, 44(4), 387–407. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050060802481413>.
- Tan, C. (2012). The culture of education policy making: curriculum reform in Shanghai. *Critical Studies in Education*, 53(2), 153–167. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2012.672333>.
- Tobias, J., Wales, J., & Syamsulhakim, E. (2014). Towards better education quality: Indonesia's promising path. *Development progress case study*. London: ODI.
- Vaillant, D. (2008). *Sindicatos y la educación pública en América Latina: El caso de Uruguay*. Montevideo: Fundación Konrad Adenauer.
- Wales, J., Magee, A., & Nicolai, S. (2016). *How does political context shape education reforms and their success? Lessons from the development progress project*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Worldbank (2018). *World development report 2018: Learning to realize education's promise*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Zengele, T. (2013). The unionization of the teaching profession and its effects on the South African education system: Teacher unionism in South Africa. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 35(3), 231–239.