

Timor-Leste



TEACHER POLICY

SABER Country Report
2013

TEACHER POLICY GOALS	STATUS
<p>1. Setting clear expectations for teacher There are clear expectations for what students and teachers are supposed to do and policies define the variety of teacher tasks and provide appropriate time to complete them all.</p>	<p>Established ●●●○</p>
<p>2. Attracting the best into teaching Starting teacher pay is competitive and teachers have opportunities to grow in their careers, but working conditions are weakly monitored to be attractive.</p>	<p>Established ●●●○</p>
<p>3. Preparing teachers with useful training and experience All teachers must complete some form of tertiary program. Teachers' entrants have classroom experience and beginning teachers take part and induction/mentoring program.</p>	<p>Established ●●●○</p>
<p>4. Matching teachers' skills with students' needs There are some policies to encourage teachers to work at hard-to-staff schools, but no policies exist to address teacher shortages by subject.</p>	<p>Emerging ●●○○</p>
<p>5. Leading teachers with strong principals Principals are expected to support and improve instructional practice by assuming several responsibilities, but policies do not ensure principals develop leadership skills.</p>	<p>Emerging ●●○○</p>
<p>6. Monitoring teaching and learning Policy recognize teachers evaluation based on multiple criteria, including classroom observation.</p>	<p>Emerging ●●○○</p>
<p>7. Supporting teachers to improve instruction Primary and secondary teachers are required to participate in professional development, but there is no recommended amount of time that teachers should devote to professional development activities nor professional development is assigned based on teachers perceived needs.</p>	<p>Latent ●○○○</p>
<p>8. Motivating teachers to perform Teacher performance carries career opportunities and has salary implications, but poor performance does not result in dismissal or finish open-ended contracts with public administration.</p>	<p>Emerging ●●○○</p>

SABER - Teachers considers two policy levers school systems can use to reach this goal: (1) expectations for what students should know and be able to do, and how teachers can help students reach these goals; (2) useful guidance on teachers’ use of time to be able to improve instruction at the school level.

prepare and improve their instruction although it may leave little time for those teachers who must attend training programs. High-performers such as Japan focus most of the non-teaching time on professional development and curriculum planning.

In Timor-Leste, there are clear expectations for what students and teachers are supposed to do. Timor-Leste has defined an education system framework that informs teachers about the objectives of each level of education and has set national standards for what students must know and be able to achieve at different grades. Additionally, the tasks that teachers are expected to carry out are officially stipulated in the teachers career regime, which was recently approved, including the diversity of teachers activities beyond instruction.

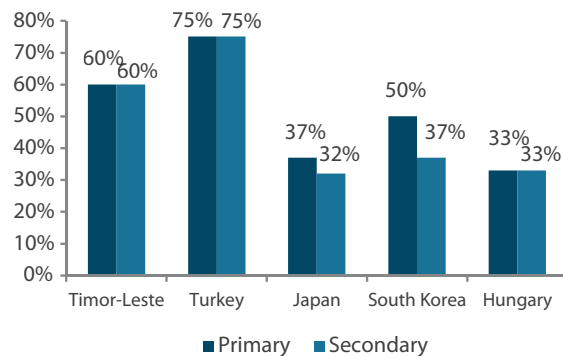
Policies define the variety of teacher tasks and provide appropriate time to complete them all. Teachers’ working time in Timor-Leste is defined as the number of effective days spent in school, which includes non-teaching tasks that teachers are required to carry out in school. Non-classroom tasks involve preparation of lessons, grading, mentoring other teachers, collaborating in school plans, administrative tasks, assisting in the curriculum design, take part of the internal evaluation activities of the school, attending training, as well as conducting extra-curricular activities and liaise with the community when needed.

Primary and secondary school teachers in Timor-Leste are expected to allocate 60% of the working time to teaching. This leaves enough time for teachers to

Figure 1. Official Teacher Tasks

Teacher tasks related to instructional improvement					
	Timor-Leste	Turkey	Japan	Shanghai	Singapore
Mentor peers	✓	✓	✓		✓
Collaborate on school plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Design curriculum	✓		✓		✓
Take part of evaluation	✓		✓		✓

Figure 2. Official Time Spent Teaching



SABER - Teachers considers four policy levers school systems can use to reach this goal: (1) minimum requirements to enter pre-service training and teaching; (2) competitive pay; (3) appealing working conditions; and (4) attractive career opportunities.

In Timor-Leste, teachers are required to have a tertiary education level of education. Primary school teachers are required to have at least a *'Bacharelato'* degree program which is a postsecondary program of three years that can be any general or more technical and occupationally specific designed to prepare teachers, leading to a ISCED 5B level of educational qualification. Secondary school teachers are required to have at least a *'Licenciatura'*, which is a bachelor's degree of four or five years (ISCED 5A level of educational qualification).

In addition, both primary and secondary school teachers are required to pass an assessment conducted by a supervisor based on the practical professional experience during a probation period of two school years.

In most high-performing systems teacher initial education takes place at the ISCED 5A level, on par with other rigorous requirements to become teachers. There is only one model of teacher initial education, which teaches subject knowledge and pedagogic skills relatively simultaneously. On entering an education program either *'Bacharelato'* or *'Licenciatura'* an entrant has already decided to become a teacher. However, an alternative path to the profession exists. This means that graduates from tertiary education programs, which are not designed to prepare teachers, can still apply to become teachers.

Starting teacher pay is competitive. Annual salary of first year public school teachers with the minimum education level required on the salary schedule established by teachers career regime represents more

than 80 percent of per capita non-oil GDP. Furthermore, a ratio of highest salary to initial salary of 2.3 reflects that the possibility for change over the course of a teacher's career exists.

Policies recognize variance of teachers pay based on performance. Teachers are subject to performance evaluations, which are taken into consideration in the degree of their salary.

Monitoring of working conditions aims to be more attractive to students and teachers. However, there are not standards other than basic infrastructure of schools. Data shows that about 60 percent comply with infrastructure standards in Timor-Leste. The lack of other standards such as hygiene and sanitation of schools together with very high student-teacher ratios, particularly at primary school, may contribute for working conditions not to be attractive to teachers and may suggest inattentiveness to other important issues.

Teachers have opportunities to grow in their careers. Advance in teachers' careers and promotion opportunities are mainly linked to their annual performance evaluation. In addition, teachers can apply to higher academic posts, administrative or management positions throughout a process of examination of their qualifications, competences and performance evaluation.

Figure 3. Opportunities for Teacher Advancement

	Timor-Leste	Turkey	Japan	Shanghai	Singapore	Korea
Principal	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Lead teachers	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Head of Departments	✓					

SABER - Teachers considers two policy levers school systems can use to reach this goal: (1) minimum standards for pre-service training programs; and (2) required classroom experience for all teachers.

In Timor-Leste, there are minimum standards for pre-service teaching education programs. Primary school teachers and secondary school teachers are required to have at least a post-secondary degree of ISCED 5B and post-secondary degree of ISCED 5A level, respectively. Comparatively, high performing countries such as Japan and South Korea require at least a ISCED 5A for all their teachers.

Teacher entrants are required to have classroom experience and beginning teachers take part of an induction/mentoring program.

Practical experience is a compulsory part of the teacher initial education programs, which is required to become a primary and secondary teacher. No official time stipulations exist to practical professional experience as part of the formal education. Once teachers have started their first job, they are required to participate

in a mandatory induction and mentoring program for beginning teachers to verify whether the teacher has the minimum competences to perform the job. Beginning teachers has to go through a mandatory probation period of two years and conclude it successfully. If fail in performance evaluation, teachers have an opportunity to repeat the probation period for a maximum of two more years and prove that their competences are adequate to the job. If fail again, beginning teachers can't advance in their careers as teachers and won't be able to apply again in the subsequent two years. This process has the potential to make teachers more effective in the classroom.

Figure 4. Minimum Education Requirements

	Timor-Leste	Turkey	Japan	Shanghai	Singapore	Korea
ISCED 5A	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
ISCED 5B	✓					
ISCED 4A		✓				

SABER - Teachers considers two policy levers school systems can use to reach this goal: (1) incentives for teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools; and (2) incentives for teachers to teach critical shortage areas.

In Timor-Leste, policies exist to encourage teachers to work at hard-to-staff schools. Teachers should receive a monetary bonus for teaching in hard-to-staff schools and payment for extra responsibilities if teachers assume other tasks such as lead teachers and supervisors. This may attract teachers to the most remote schools and ensure quality teachers are equally distributed. However, the type of benefits and conditions that should be used as a basis to permit teachers to work at hard-to-staff schools are not yet defined.

Teachers' transfers are allowed and other staff request may also occur based on the lack of teachers' adequacy to the job or discipline infringement.

Timor-Leste has no policy that identifies critical shortage subjects although there are critical shortage subjects. Respondents identified a shortage of teachers in geography, history, information technology, sociology, philosophy and Tetum. High performers normally monitor the supply of teachers in terms of subjects and use incentives to attract teachers of shortage subjects.

Figure 5. Teachers in Hard-to-staff Schools

Incentives for teachers in hard-to-staff schools					
	Timor-Leste	Turkey	Japan	Shanghai	Korea
Better promotion chances		✓	✓	✓	✓
Higher Basic salary			✓		
Monetary Bonus	✓				
Subsidized Education				✓	
Housing Support			✓		✓

SABER - Teachers considers two policy levers school systems can use to reach this goal: (1) education system’s investment in developing qualified school leaders; (2) decision-making authority for school principals to support and improve instructional practice.

In Timor-Leste, there are no formal programs to support the development of leadership skills. School principals are not required to complete specific courses or other training requirements designed for aspiring school principal. Schools principals may be recruited or appointed based on their teaching professional experience, qualifications equivalent to the ISCED 5A, performance evaluation and life-long training participation. Only senior teachers can become school principals and they have no opportunities to take part in an induction or mentoring program. While principals may have the experience of teaching, they may lack leadership skills needed to be effective. Some high performing systems require participation in mentoring or training specific courses to ensure teachers can perform effectively when assuming new responsibilities as school leaders. Furthermore, some high performing systems provide incentives for principals due the high responsibilities in improving school quality. Timor-Leste does not provide any such incentives. On the contrary, school principals who have less than ISCED 5A may be recruited as school principals due the lack of sufficient

qualified applicants. In this situation, there is a salary schedule different from the one that applies to public school teachers.

Principals are expected to support and improve instructional practice by assuming several responsibilities. Beyond administrative and management tasks, principals are expected to provide guidance for curriculum and teaching-related tasks. Principals are also required to participate in the teachers’ performance evaluation. Other responsibilities also include support and oversee teacher’s duties and responsibilities and represent the school at meetings and/or in the community.

Figure 6. Requirements for Principals

Investing in Qualified Principals						
	Timor-Leste	Turkey	Japan	Shanghai	Singapore	Korea
Specific coursework		✓		✓	✓	✓
Internship/Monitoring			✓		✓	
Monetary Incentives					✓	✓

SABER - Teachers considers three policy levers school systems can use to reach this goal: (1) availability of data on student achievement in order to inform teaching and policy; (2) adequate systems to monitor teacher performance; (3) multiple mechanisms to evaluate teacher performance.

In Timor-Leste, student achievement data are collected but may have limited use. Timor-Leste has national and sub-national assessments of student learning. An annual national examination is conducted at grade 9 and grade 12. Annual school-based assessments of student learning are also conducted for grades 7 through 12. In addition, quarterly school-based assessments of student learning are carried out for grade 7 through 12. However, student scores does not appear to be linked to individual teachers and then may not be used to inform teachers on the learning needs of their students. Timor-Leste participated twice in Lusophone Math Olympics. This may provide limited information on their international standing in student achievement.

Polices outline a system to monitor teacher performance, but further regulations are needed to have the system in place. Until very recently in Timor-Leste, evaluations of teacher performance were conducted under the rules of the civil service performance evaluation system. Such system applied with no distinction to all state employees, including teachers. A change in policy has occurred and in the

new teacher career regime, teachers are required to participate in a mandatory annual evaluation. Teacher performance has to be reported to national, sub-national and local education authorities. Although such information has potential to be used for policy decisions at different levels, the system has just started to be developed. The results of teacher performance evaluation may be tracked over time.

Multiple mechanisms can be used to evaluate teacher performance. In Timor-Leste, policies on performance evaluation include classroom observation. School principals participate in teacher assessments. Also, self-assessment by the teacher plays a role in the evaluation. Most of high performing systems use a diversity of criteria to assess teacher performance In Timor-Leste. Teacher performance includes subject matter knowledge and teaching methods.

Figure 7. Evaluations by Professionals

Criteria used to assess teacher performance						
	Timor-Leste	Turkey	Japan	Shanghai	Singapore	Korea
Knowledge of subject matter	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Teaching methods	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Methods to assess students		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Student achievement		✓		✓		

SABER - Teachers considers three policy levers school systems can use to reach this goal: (1) availability of opportunities for teacher professional development; (2) teacher professional development activities that are collaborative and focused on instructional improvement; (3) making sure teacher professional development is assigned based on perceived needs.

In Timor-Leste, primary and secondary teachers are required to participate in professional development, but no recommended amount of time that teachers should devote to professional development activities exists. There are official recommendations about the content of professional development for both primary and secondary. The content of professional development is focused on knowledge and understanding of subjects, understanding and teaching the curriculum, relating curriculum to meeting the required learning standards, classroom management and understanding of instructional practices in main subjects. However, it excludes topics such as teaching students with special learning needs, school management and multilingual instruction.

Teacher professional development is not collaborative and is not focused program on instructional improvement. In Timor-Leste,

professional development does not include observation visits, participation in networks or participation in school networks. Furthermore, professional development does neither include research nor mentoring or coaching. Rather, professional development priorities are based on urgent teacher needs in terms of minimum qualifications and competences that they must have to enter the teachers career regime. Therefore, professional development is currently positioned to enable teachers to have the minimum required qualifications and competences that they were never able to acquire before. However, there are some specific courses, such as numeracy and literacy, which are considered as part of professional development in Timor-Leste.

Teacher professional development is not assigned based on perceived needs. Teacher performance evaluations are not used to designate a supervisor for support, except for beginning teachers during their probation time. Also, teacher performance evaluations are not used to assign professional development to improve teaching methods. Again, professional development is currently filling gaps of teachers' qualifications.

SABER - Teachers considers three policy levers school systems can use to reach this goal: (1) linking career opportunities to teachers’ performance; (2) having mechanisms to hold teachers accountable; (3) linking teacher compensation to performance.

In Timor-Leste, teacher career opportunities are linked to performance. To ensure beginning teachers are adequate to the job, there is a probation period upon initial hires. Authorities may impede beginning teachers to advance in their career due lack of performance. However, beginning teachers’ performance on the job does not factor into whether teachers receive an open-ended appointments. If beginning teachers fail in their performance, they can be reallocated and assume other positions as civil servants and after two years they are allowed to apply again to become teachers.

Requirements to hold teachers accountable are established. Primary and secondary school teachers are required to take part in professional development activities and participate in an annual performance evaluation that is a compulsory requisite to remain in

teaching. Teachers can be dismissed for misconduct and child abuse, as well as for absenteeism. However, teacher incompetence or poor performance does not result in dismissal.

Teacher compensation is linked to performance. Internal performance reviews carry salary implications. Additionally, high-performing teachers can get a monetary bonus for good performance, as it is part of the teacher’s compensation package.

Figure 8. Reasons Teachers may be dismissed

	Timor-Leste	Turkey	Japan	Shanghai	Singapore	Korea
Absenteeism	✓			✓	✓	
Misconduct	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Child Abuse	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Incompetence or poor performance			✓		✓	

Summary of Key Policy Options

Policy Goal and Levers	Score
<p>2. Attracting the best into teaching</p> <p>Policies do not exist to ensure working conditions appeal for talented applicants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Timor-Leste could develop other standards than school infrastructure for example by ensuring that schools have available toilets and access to water. → Timor-Leste could develop mechanisms of lowering the pupil-teacher ratio. 	<p>Established</p> <p>●●●○</p>
<p>4. Matching teachers' skills with students' needs</p> <p>Policies do not exist to address teacher shortages by subject.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Timor-Leste could formally identify subjects of teacher shortage and adjust the overall supply of such teachers, including the opening of new education tertiary programs. → Timor-Leste should ensure that teachers' skills and competences match with the subjects they teach. 	<p>Emerging</p> <p>●●○○</p>
<p>5. Leading teachers with strong principals</p> <p>Policies do not ensure principals develop leadership skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Timor-Leste could develop a leadership program for teachers who want to become school leaders. 	<p>Emerging</p> <p>●●○○</p>
<p>6. Monitoring teaching and learning</p> <p>Policies ensure teachers evaluation based on multiple criteria, but do not specify each of the criteria to have an effective system in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Timor-Leste could develop further mechanisms to put teachers evaluation in place. → Timor-Leste should use students' assessments to inform teaching lesson plans and instructional practices. → Timor-Leste could empowering the school community to monitor teachers' performance and may also increase civil-service teacher efforts and subsequently student learning. 	<p>Emerging</p> <p>●●○○</p>
<p>7. Supporting teachers to improve instruction</p> <p>Teachers are required to participate in professional development activities, which are focused on providing teachers with a minimum of qualifications and competences, but should also be complemented by teachers perceived needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Timor-Leste should define an amount of time that teachers should devote to professional development activities. → Timor-Leste could develop significant professional development activities based on teacher perceived needs. → Timor-Leste should start focus its efforts on providing professional development in activities such as observation visits, participation in teacher networks, participation in school networks. 	<p>Latent</p> <p>●○○○</p>

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This report focuses specifically on policies in the area of workforce development.

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