

PASEC2024

DATA COLLECTED IN 2025



EDUCATION POLICY NOTE BASED ON THE RESULTS OF THE **PRIMARY** **SCHOOL TEACHERS** ASSESSMENT

Sub-Saharan Africa

Purpose of this note

With four years to go before the end of the Education 2030 Agenda, the teacher question is central to the education policies of most countries in the world, which are facing both quantitative and qualitative teacher shortages. It is now recognised that teachers play a central role in the quality of learning. Access to basic education has expanded rapidly in sub-Saharan Africa, but quality remains a challenge for all countries. The region will also need to recruit around 15 million primary and secondary school teachers by 2030, in difficult budgetary contexts.

For the first time, PASEC is devoting an entire international report to primary school teachers. In 16 countries, 23,254 teachers were surveyed in 2025. Their subject and didactic knowledge was measured directly in reading comprehension and mathematics on the content they are expected to teach their students by the end of primary school. A contextual questionnaire also documents several dimensions of the profession: sociodemographic characteristics, training paths, employment status, working conditions, declared pedagogical practices and teachers' perceptions of the school climate and recognition of the profession.

Intended for decision-makers, this note presents the main results of the assessment and the resulting courses of action. PASEC allows each system to situate the weaknesses of its teaching staff and to identify various levers on which to act, without ranking countries.

These results can thus support the development, implementation or transformation of evidence-based teacher policies.

It is important to note that the differences presented are statistical associations, not cause-and-effect relationships. The assessment observes students and teachers at a given time, without an experimental design.

Please cite this publication as: PASEC (2026). *PASEC2024 – Education policy note based on the results of the Primary School Teachers Assessment in Sub-Saharan Africa*. CONFEMEN.

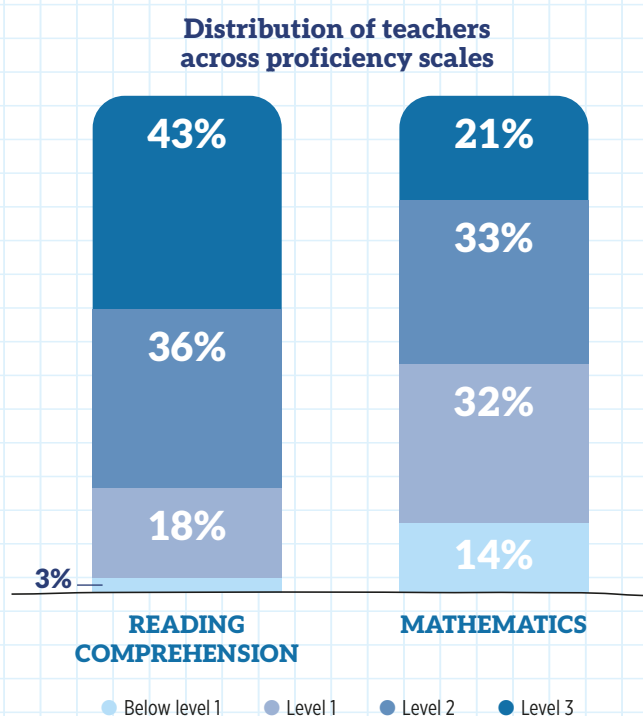
1

Key takeaways

A teaching workforce that needs to be strengthened.

In reading comprehension, 43% of teachers reach level 3 of the scale, which corresponds to the degree of mastery expected of a professional responsible for teaching this content. In mathematics, only 21% do so. Almost half of them (46%) do not exceed level 1, limited to factual knowledge and directly applicable procedures.

From one country to another, the proportion of teachers at level 3 in reading comprehension ranges from 8% in Madagascar to 73% in Senegal. In mathematics, it ranges from 4% in Nigeria to 45% in Benin. Within countries, the gap between the bottom 10% of teachers and the top 10% of teachers is nearly 250 points in reading comprehension in Nigeria and 268 points in mathematics in Gabon. When the average level is low and the dispersion limited, it is the entire teaching staff that must be strengthened. When there is a high degree of dispersion, the needs differ based on the groups of teachers.



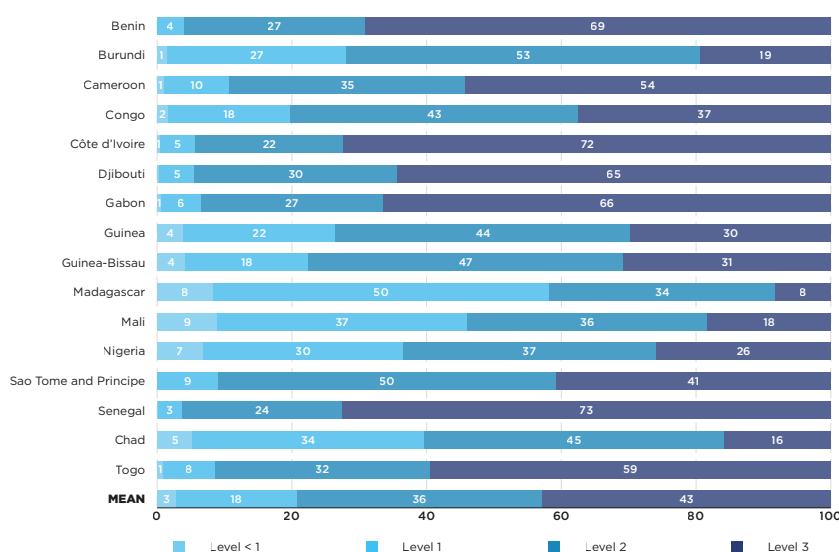
Key messages

- 1 **Teachers have a better command of subject contents in reading comprehension than in mathematics.**
The share of teachers at level 3 is higher in reading comprehension in 14 out of 16 countries. In mathematics, 46% of teachers do not exceed level 1, whereas the content assessed corresponds mainly to the content that teachers need to ensure their students acquire.
- 2 **Content mastery varies greatly from one education system to another and, within countries, from one teacher to another.**
Mean national scores range from 385.1 points in Madagascar to 545.4 points in Senegal in reading comprehension, a gap of 160 points, and from 396.3 points in Nigeria to 537.4 points in Senegal in mathematics. In mathematics, the share of teachers below level 1 ranges from 3% in Benin, Burundi and Senegal to 39% in Nigeria. Within countries, the gaps between teachers are particularly marked in Nigeria and Mali in reading comprehension, and in Gabon in mathematics.
- 3 **Teachers recognise didactic concepts better than they use them to analyse students' mistakes and plan teaching.**
In reading comprehension, they succeed on 62.9% of the items on didactic concepts, but 25.2% of those on the source of an error, a rate that does not exceed that of a random answer. Faced with a student's error in a proportionality problem, 35% choose the expected interpretation.
- 4 **The differences between rural and urban areas, and between public and private, are primarily due to the distribution of teachers.**
In reading comprehension, the urban advantage of about 30 points is greatly reduced when training, seniority and status are comparable. The advantage of the private sector, of about 14 points, is reversed after adjustment, to the benefit of the public sector (about 16 points). These results are consistent with the hypothesis that the differences between contexts primarily reflect the assignment of less trained, less experienced and more vulnerable teachers in rural areas.
- 5 **One in six teachers report that they have received no pre-service training, and one in four indicate that they have not received any in-service training in the last two years.**
The share of teachers without pre-service training reaches 61% in Madagascar and 26% in Togo and Burundi, but remains below 10% in six countries, including Senegal and Djibouti. The proportion of teachers who have received in-service training in the last two years ranges from 47% in Burundi to 90% in Djibouti.
- 6 **Within the same country, teachers have very different profiles depending on their employment status, the type of school (public or private), their practice environment (rural or urban) and their experience.**
Fewer than one in two teachers are civil servants (45.7%), from 6.1% in Madagascar to 89.0% in Burundi. Community teachers account for 14.6% of rural teachers, compared to 2.7% of urban teachers; in Chad, they account for 57.5% of rural teachers.
- 7 **Teachers' working conditions are difficult: overcrowded classes, irregular salaries in several countries and the accumulation of activities for nearly one in two teachers.**
The classes have an average of 47 students, and up to 65 in Chad. Nearly one in five teachers (18%) do not receive their salary regularly, and 47% have another paid activity.
- 8 **However, the countries that invest the most in primary education are not necessarily those with the most competent teachers.**
Togo and Guinea devote the same share of their wealth to each student (6.3% of GDP per capita). However, 85% of Togolese teachers reach at least intermediate level in both subjects, compared to 61.5% in Guinea.

Snapshot of teachers' proficiency by country

Figure 1

Distribution of teachers based on the proficiency level achieved in reading comprehension, by country (%)

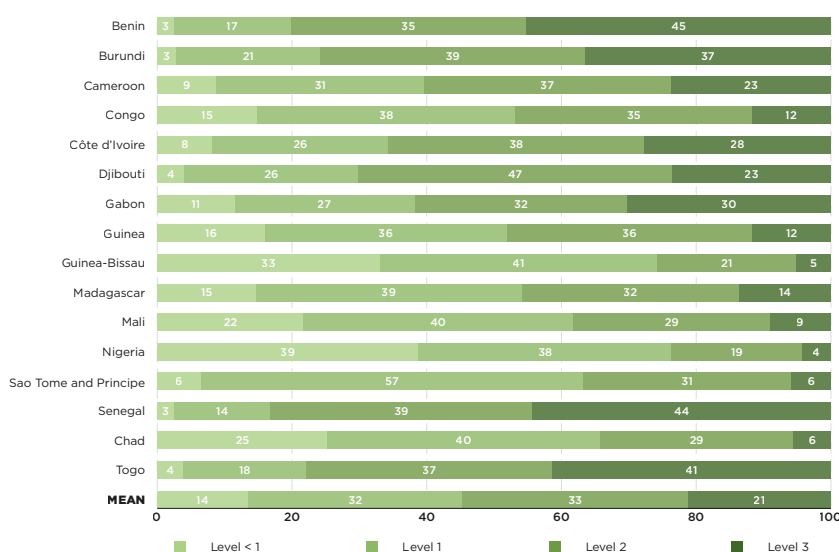


Women make up 45% of the teachers surveyed, a share close to the average for sub-Saharan Africa, but far from the 68% observed globally (UIS, 2026). In mathematics, 29% of male teachers reach level 3, compared to 14% of female teachers, and this gap persists with comparable training, seniority and context.

The teaching staff is young, with an average age of 38. In several countries (Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe), teachers with five years of experience or less are already in the majority, often as a result of accelerated recruitment.

Figure 2

Distribution of teachers based on the proficiency level achieved in mathematics, by country (%)



Less than one in two teachers are civil servants (45.7%); the rest work in the private sector (27.9%), as contract workers (11.4%) or as community teachers (8.3%). The most fragile statuses are concentrated in rural areas, where community teachers (recruited by local communities or associations) represent 14.6% of rural teachers, compared to 2.7% of urban teachers. Community teachers are also the most affected by salary irregularities (39%), and across all countries, 23% of rural teachers report irregular salaries, compared to 13% in cities. In Cameroon and Mali, community teachers score 33 to 56 points lower than civil servants, with comparable training and teaching environment.



All figures are taken from the International Report "PASEC2024 – The Skills of Primary School Teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa", available online: <https://pasec.confemen.org/en/results/pasec-24-report>

2

Paths for reflection and action

Supporting teachers' professional development

PASEC2024 results shed light on both the mastery of the content taught by teachers and the conditions in which they exercise their profession, two inseparable dimensions. The development of professional skills depends on training opportunities, material and institutional conditions of practice, support, relations within institutions and economic, social and security contexts. The results, therefore, do not point to a single response; they call for an examination of the conditions that promote the sustainable professional development of teachers.

1

Act in a coherent manner rather than in isolated measures.

Isolation bonuses, one-time mentoring programmes or relaxation of recruitment criteria can provide immediate relief. However, their effects erode quickly without deeper changes. In the 16 countries, pre-service training, employment status and teaching conditions are closely intertwined. Where there are many community teachers, their skills gap with civil servants reflects mainly differences in training. The differences between urban and rural areas are mainly due to the assignment of the least trained, the least experienced and the most precarious teachers in rural schools, where irregular salaries are also more frequent. Action on training that neglects recruitment, assignment and conditions of practice would therefore be limited in scope.

2

Develop skills taking into account the diversity of needs.

Nearly one in two teachers do not exceed level 1 in mathematics. For some teachers, moving from knowledge of a concept to its use in a classroom situation remains a challenge. These needs differ according to disciplines, proficiency levels and teacher profiles, which argues for differentiated training systems. Teachers with little or no training call for a special effort: when pre-service training is lacking, in-service training becomes essential, whereas it is currently struggling to support them.

4

Involve school actors.

The effectiveness of a reform depends on its appropriation by teachers, its adaptation to the realities in the field and its long-term implementation. Resistance is often due to the non-recognition of professional knowledge built in the field. The transfer of “good practices” designed elsewhere also presupposes a local translation and the collective work of appropriation. Relations within schools lend themselves to this: 90% of teachers consider their relations with their colleagues to be good, and 85% describe their team as close-knit.

3

Improve working conditions where they are most difficult as a priority.

Insecurity, isolation and lack of infrastructure affect teachers' presence and the continuity of their work. Electricity equips 85% of classrooms in Djibouti, but 3% in Chad. The same training policy can thus produce different effects depending on the resources actually available to teachers.

Further paths for reflection

These paths do not prescribe measures; their relevance is assessed in the context of each education system. They are aimed at political decision-makers, training institutions and technical and financial partners. They require regular dialogue with teachers and their representative organisations. Rural areas also call for priority attention, which is transversal to all the paths.

► Priority attention to rural areas

Place rural schools at the centre of teacher policies. In rural areas, nearly one in three teachers (32.7%) work under a vulnerable status (contractual, community, voluntary or in the process of being appointed), compared with about one in six in cities (15.6%). Community teachers are particularly numerous in Chad (57.5%), Congo (46.9%) and Madagascar (39.5%). In Chad, 30% of rural teachers have received no pre-service training, compared to 8.5% in urban areas. The selection, assignment, training and retention of rural teachers should be examined together. Specific support programmes for rural teachers, and in particular for female teachers, can affect the work conditions, access to professional development and career prospects. Local in-service training, organised through nearby schools or school networks, is a direct response to professional isolation, provided that it effectively reaches all areas.

Regularly pay salaries and supplement bonuses with decent living conditions. In rural areas, 23% of teachers report an irregular salary, compared to 13% in urban areas, and up to 66% in Chad. Targeted bonuses attract teachers to difficult areas, but their effects on retention depend on the regularity of payment, job security and career prospects. Housing, access to water, electricity and transport also weigh on the attractiveness of jobs. Among the permanent teachers who receive benefits linked to their status, 75% report housing and 58% transport assistance. Explicitly recognising service in rural areas in careers, for example through accelerated progression after several years of practice, could make it a valued stage in career pathways.

Review the assignment rules to stabilise rural teams. When assignment processes leave the choice of school to the most senior teachers, they contribute to an unequal distribution of skills between rural and urban schools. Initiatives that stabilise teams in these schools act on both shortages and equity. The development of training courses that allow candidates from rural communities to become teachers in their own environment can contribute to this.

► For policy-makers and Ministries of Education

Develop an integrated national policy for the teaching profession. Such a policy would articulate recruitment, pre-service training, integration, professional development, certification, career and retention. It would be based on a national competency framework, information systems for monitoring career pathways and prospective planning of needs. The pedagogical leadership of school principals, dialogue with teachers' organisations and coordination with the other administrations concerned contribute to this. The results of the PASEC can be used as a tool to monitor this policy from one assessment to the next, including by documenting the recognition of the profession as perceived by teachers.

Gradually professionalise teachers with little or no training. Where there are many teachers without pre-service training, progressive and certifying professionalisation paths followed while working would make it possible to fill this gap. In several countries, this deficit is more pronounced in rural areas and among community teachers. A national roadmap can set the stages of these pathways, with qualification thresholds gradually raised, and progressively link advancement to commitment to these pathways rather than simply to the possession of a diploma.

Strengthen support for entry into the profession. In countries facing massive waves of recruitment, support mechanisms are essential, because the first years of practice are the most critical period for teacher retention. School principals occupy a key position in this support: 82.6% of teachers indicate that their headmaster intervenes in their classroom at the pedagogical, administrative or disciplinary levels and, when they need help, they turn twice as often to the hierarchy (63.2%) as to their colleagues (32.8%). Strengthening the pedagogical leadership of principals, in particular through training in supporting beginners, would enable them to better support the integration of novices within the school itself. The expertise of experienced teachers can be put to good use in mentoring functions.

Make the profession more attractive to women. Women represent 45% of the teachers surveyed. Increasing the number of women in the teaching profession, combined with adequate working conditions, contributes to the equity of systems and helps to address shortages. Equality also involves the promotion of women to positions of responsibility, training and management.

Build a professional development ecosystem. Only 41% of teachers consider the training opportunities offered to them to be good, from 26% in Madagascar and Mali to 56% in Congo. In-service training would benefit from being part of a coherent framework, which extends pre-service training and is articulated with pedagogical supervision and classroom practices. Supervision visits are frequent (76.6% of teachers received one during the year) and combine inspection, advice and training. However, nearly one in two teachers have a negative view of the pedagogical (47%) and administrative (44%) support they receive. Several conditions favour this ecosystem: the reduction of certain administrative tasks, professional development based on groups rather than individuals alone, and management that is more decentralised than top-down.

For pre-service and in-service training institutions

Align training content with the needs measured in the classroom. The alignment of curricula with the pedagogical needs observed in primary schools and with a national competency framework is a first lever. In pre-service training as well as in in-service training, considerable emphasis would be placed on subject didactics and work on classroom situations: analysis of students' work, identification of errors and reasoning, design of learning objectives and choice of tasks consistent with these objectives.

Articulate pre-service training, integration and in-service training around the competency framework.

By defining the skills expected at each stage, a competency framework can serve as a common thread between pre-service training, professional integration and in-service training. Practical training and internships from the pre-service training, then supporting beginners as they go on, promote the retention of new teachers. Thought out as a continuity, these systems would make it possible to build progressive and certifying professionalisation paths.

Train those who train and support. These guidelines presuppose an ambitious policy of training trainers. Trainers whose background is essentially subject-based would themselves benefit from training in didactics and pedagogy. They would thus be better prepared to develop with teachers the skills that are less often mastered: analysing students' mistakes, establishing learning objectives and choosing coherent tasks. Training institutions in promoting research in educational sciences also have a role to play in training principals, mentors and other actors in local support.

For technical and financial partners

Coordinate support around national priorities. The proliferation of in-service training operators without overall coherence disperses efforts. A national coordination mechanism, led by the Ministry and involving partners, training institutions and teacher representative bodies, would make it possible to identify ongoing interventions, link them to the priorities of the national strategy and monitor the share of support effectively aligned with these priorities. The strategies, competency frameworks, training courses and certification mechanisms are intended to be established and managed by the countries. Regional spaces for reflection and sharing of experiences between education systems can enrich these strategies.

Strengthen national systems rather than creating parallel arrangements. Partners are called upon to sustainably support the financing and structural support of pre-service training, which are a prerequisite for the quality of the education system in the long term. Their support would benefit from channelling through national institutions and mechanisms: financing internships and training trainers, support for information systems for teachers, integrating in-service training financed within certification courses recognised by the State. The mechanisms supported would also benefit from remaining within the reach of national resources, so that educational teams can appropriate them and maintain them beyond external funding.

PASEC2024

DATA COLLECTED IN 2025

Assessing learning to transform education policies

Established in 1991, the CONFEMEN's Programme for the Analysis of Education Systems (PASEC) has become the reference instrument for steering the education systems of CONFEMEN member States and governments. Its purpose is to inform public decision-making by measuring changes in the performance of education systems, in order to guide the design, monitoring and evaluation of education policies and, through them, the improvement of the quality of education.

Its work goes beyond measurement. PASEC strengthens national assessment capacities, promotes the ownership and effective use of results by education stakeholders, and supports the development of education research. Through its assessments and analytical work, it provides decision-makers with reliable and comparable data as well as rigorous analyses, levers for higher-performing, more equitable and more efficient education.

Finally, PASEC contributes to the production of knowledge by supporting researchers and making its data and assessment frameworks available to them. It feeds into work that is useful both to education systems and to the academic community.

CONFEMEN – PASEC

Complexe SICAP Point E, Building C
3rd floor, Avenue Cheikh Anta Diop
BP 3220 Dakar, Senegal
Tel.: +221 33 859 29 79 / +221 33 859 29 91
Fax: +221 33 825 17 70
Email: pasec@confemen.org
Website: www.pasec.confemen.org

@CONFEMEN



© PASEC, 2026. All rights reserved.

