

Structure of the Interview

Question 0 (Optional - although this question was included to "break the ice" at the beginning of the interview):

I would like first of all to thank you for taking time to give us an interview. According to your view, what kind of actions does your educational system take in order to improve the quality of education?

Note: In case that the interviewee gives examples of actions associated with a specific factor of the model raised by any of the questions 1 up to 7 then move to this question first and then to the rest of the questions dealing with factors that are not mentioned.

Question 1a:

Firstly we would like to know which policies and actions are taken in order to encourage primary teachers and schools to maximise teaching time in your educational system. Teacher absenteeism can be seen as an aspect concerned with the use of teaching time. Is there any national policy on how teacher absenteeism should be dealt with?

Question 1b:

Let's move now to students' absenteeism. Is there any national policy about students' absenteeism or any guidelines given to schools on how to develop their own policy on student absenteeism?

Question 1c:

What about the dropout phenomenon ... to what extent this is a problem in your country? What actions are taken by the system to reduce drop out?

Question 1d:

What is the official national policy in relation to the long and short term planning?

Follow up question: Does the system take any other action beyond those that you have already mentioned in relation to the maximization of the teaching time?

Question 2a:

We would like to know whether your system has any policy in regard to quality of teaching in primary schools. For example official pedagogy, guidelines offered by advisors or other professional groups.

Instructions: Please put a tick on the points that are mentioned by the interviewee. Some interviewees may describe practices included in the checklist, without using the specific words. Where you are not sure about the aspects that are referred by the person, please ask additional questions to clarify their views.

Question 2b:

Are there in place any standards of teaching? And if so, which aspects of teaching are considered as characteristics of effective teaching?

Checklist:

Structuring

Orientation

Application

Questioning

Management of Time

Classroom Assessment

Strategies for learning

Establishment of the learning environment of the classroom:

- a) Teacher – Student interactions
- b) Interactions among students
- c) Dealing with misbehaviour
- d) Competition
- e) Cooperation among students (cooperative learning)

Question 3a:

We would like to know which policies and actions are taken in order to encourage teachers and schools to provide learning opportunities to their students. Could you please refer to the national curriculum of your country and specifically to:

- a) its structure,
- b) the aims,
- c) the suggested methods – pedagogy and
- d) student assessment - evaluation methods and techniques

Question 3b:

When did the last curriculum reform take place and which procedures were followed in adopting the specific curriculum reform?

Question 3c:

To what extent differentiation of teaching is taken into account in developing your national policy on provision of learning opportunities? For example, we would like to know if the curriculum promotes differentiation in teaching and how.

Question 3d:

Which is the official policy about textbooks in your country? Are there official nationally prescribed textbooks or teachers have to choose their own material?

Question 3e:

What about the national policy on extracurricular activities or the type of guidelines that may be given to schools on providing extracurricular activities?

Question 3f:

Please refer to the official policy and the actions are supposed to be taken by the schools in order to provide sufficient learning opportunities to students with special needs.

Question 4a:

We would like to know whether your system has any policy aiming to encourage teachers to collaborate for improving their teaching

Question 4b:

To what extent the schools in your country are encouraged by the policy makers or other actors to cooperate with each other?

Question 5a:

What kind of educational resources is provided to schools by the Ministry of Education?

Question 5b:

To what extent the active participation of the parents is encouraged?

Question 5c:

We would like to know who is offering initial training to teachers serving in your country and whether the system attempts to monitor the quality of initial teacher training.

Question 5d:

We would like to know who is offering in-service training to the teachers and whether the system attempts to monitor the quality of in-service teacher training.

Question 6a:

Partnership is another factor that we like to examine. Could you please tell us if your educational system encourages schools to establish close relations with the parents and if so, tell us what actions are taken to encourage partnership?

Question 6b:

Does the system expect or even require the schools to provide information about school policy and curricular activities to the parents?

Question 6c:

Does the system expect the schools to organise learning activities for the parents?

Question 6d:

What kind of actions the system takes in order to encourage schools to establish close relations with the community?

Question 6e:

To what extent the schools are encouraged to use facilities available in the community for their teaching and/or to use the expertise in the community to support teaching?

Question 7a:

Please refer to the mechanisms that are available in your educational system about teacher and school evaluation.

Question 7b:

Which actions are followed for the establishment and the evaluation of the reforms that take place in your country? Can you give us an example of a recent reform which was evaluated and what kind of evaluation was conducted?

Question 7c:

It would be useful if you give us information about the dominant practices that are followed for the evaluation of the system.

How frequently evaluation projects are undertaken?

Sources of data (e.g., views of different stakeholders, impact on learning) used in evaluating the national policy

Focus of evaluation on investigating:

- a) Perceptions of different stakeholders about the appropriateness of the policy
- b) Abilities of stakeholders to implement the policy
- c) Impact of policy on student learning

Period at which the evaluation data are collected: Is there a continuous evaluation system or a cross-sectional approach is used?

Process that are used in order to control the validity of evaluation instruments

Follow-up question (7d): To what extent policy-makers review their evaluation mechanisms and adapt them in order to improve the quality of the evaluation data?

Follow-up question (7e): Please tell us whether depending on the situation of your system, more emphasis is given to conducting evaluation for a specific reason. For example if there is a problem with drop out then you concentrate on it.

Closing question:

Finally, I would like to thank you for your support and for taking time to talk with us about the educational policy in your country. I would like also to ask you whether you have any other comment about the educational policy in your country and the actions which are taken in order to help schools improve their effectiveness.