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# CHAPTER 1

## GLOBAL EDUCATION REFORMS AND THE NEW MANAGEMENT OF TEACHERS: A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

Antoni Verger and Hülya Kosar Altinyelken

### INTRODUCTION

Over the last decades, a global movement of education reform has transformed education systems worldwide (Salhberg, 2006). The intensity of this movement is such that some observers even speak about an 'epidemic' of education reforms (Levin, 1998; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). This reform movement emphasises a mix of market and managerialist policy solutions as the most effective way to solve old and new educational problems. As a consequence, choice, competition, incentives, and accountability are becoming increasingly central policy principles in the global education agenda and in the re-structuring of educational systems all around the globe.

The main objectives of the current Global Managerial Education Reforms (hereafter referred to as GMERs or managerial education reforms) are to improve countries' competitiveness by upgrading students' learning achievement and, at the same time, enhancing the efficiency of education systems. These reforms aim to drastically transform the way the public sector operates in education by introducing private sector participation, incentives and a new culture of competitive performativity. Overall, GMERs suggest that the public sector should learn from the private sector managerial culture and adopt their rules, values and techniques. The manifesto, *The Teachers We Need and How to Get More of Them*, promoted in 1999 by conservative groups in the United States (US), illustrates quite well the rationale behind GMERs. In this manifesto, it is stated that:

*The good news is that America is beginning to adopt a powerful, common-sensical strategy for school reform. It is the same approach that almost every successful modern enterprise has adopted to boost performance and productivity: set high standards for results to be achieved, identify clear indicators to measure progress towards those results, and be flexible and pluralistic about the means for reaching those results. This strategy in education is sometimes called "standards-and-accountability"<sup>1</sup>.*

Some of the most well-known policies being implemented in the context of GMERs are school-based management and related forms of decentralisation, accountability policies,

<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.intellectualltakeout.org/library/research-analysis-reports/teachers-we-need-and-how-get-more-them>

teachers' evaluation, standards-based curriculum, target-setting and public-private partnerships (PPPs) in education. The main promoters of these policies into low-income contexts are international organisations such as the World Bank and regional development banks, but also bilateral aid agencies and corporate philanthropists. The last World Bank Education Sector Strategy, *Learning for All* (2011), or the book, *Making Schools Work*, published by the World Bank itself, depicts to a great extent the core beliefs and the main policy tools supported by the GMER movement (see Bruns *et al.*, 2011; World Bank, 2011).

GMERs aim at transforming education systems in many ways, however, among other effects, their actual and potential effects on teachers are remarkable. Managerial reforms do not necessarily target teachers' work directly, but might affect teachers by altering the regulatory and normative environment in which they operate. GMERs tend to modify the working conditions of teachers and their responsibilities, as well as how teachers' performance is assessed and judged by the state and society. Managerial reforms also challenge the professional status of teachers, and reshape teaching as a profession. To some extent, this is the consequence of the fact that the managerial focus of GMERs converts teachers into objects of intervention and assets to be managed rather than to subjects of educational change (Welmond, 2002; Ginsburg, 2012). As Stephen Ball (2003) argues, these types of reforms, due to their disciplinary character, do not only change what teachers do, but also who teachers are or are supposed to be.

Overall, GMERs advocates tend to hold teachers responsible for many of the problems education systems face. On certain occasions, they even do so in a grotesque way. For instance, on the front cover of *Making Schools Work*, there is an image of a teacher "asleep at his desk, sandals off, legs outstretched" that tries to transmit the message of teachers as the "main culprit failing children and their learning" (Robertson, 2012).

This volume is an attempt to understand, from an empirically grounded perspective, the nature, scope and dimensions of the new global trend of managerial education reforms, and specifically the relationship between this type of reform and teachers. The different case studies included here analyse reforms aimed at introducing teacher evaluation (Peru) and teacher accountability measures (Indonesia and Jamaica), competency-based curriculum (Turkey), public private partnerships (Uganda), contract teachers (India) and decentralisation (Namibia).

This introductory chapter is structured as follows. In the first part, we present the main characteristics of GMERs and review the key policies and ideas that constitute them. We also discuss how these types of policies transform the relationship between the state and education, and why and how they are being disseminated and adopted in many parts of the world. In the second part, we explore the main issues and controversies of this type of reforms in relation to teachers. Specifically, we highlight some of the main paradoxes of GMERs in the way they understand teachers' labour and aim to transform it. In the third and last part, we present the book's structure and content, and outline the main questions that it addresses.

## MAIN FEATURES OF GLOBAL EDUCATION REFORMS

The education reforms analysed here have a strong managerial understanding of what are the most important educational problems, how education change should be carried out and how educational systems should be organised. One of the main objectives of GMERs is to increase education quality standards, but without necessarily investing more resources in education systems. In fact, GMERs attempt to move the focus of education reforms further away from an inputs rationale to a reform agenda with measurable outcomes, governance and managerial solutions at its core. GMERs advocates insist that the relationship between spending and results in education is weak or that, instead of inputs, governance-driven solutions are the most appropriate way to address current educational problems, such as low efficiency and learning rates, that most countries face (Hanushek, 1997; Bruns *et al.*, 2011; WB, 2011).

The growing centrality of this type of approach to education reform needs to be understood in the context of broader public sector reforms that are affecting all type of policy sectors, not only education, and that are shaped by the so-called New Public Management. According to West *et al.* (2011, p. 43), New Public Management ideas have important implications for service delivery since they mean:

*A separation of purchaser and provider roles; a growth in contractual arrangements; increasing accountability for performance; increasing the flexibility of pay and conditions of staff; separating political and managerial processes; emphasising the public as consumer; increasing the role played by regulation; and changing the culture of public services towards a private sector culture.*

GMER focus on how schools should be managed, financed and made accountable, and on how conditional incentives should be introduced into the education system to reward or punish actors according to their performance. In particular, they are very supportive of school autonomy ideas, and of promoting competition between schools via standardised testing and demand-side interventions such as vouchers or other types of capitation grants. In general, GMERs are strongly framed by an economic rationality and assumptions coming from economic theory concerning families, principals and teachers behaving as self-interested and benefit-maximiser agents, and about the possibility of retrieving and sharing perfect information about schools' quality. The economic rationality behind GMERs is, to some extent, the natural consequence of the fact that the main carriers of this type of reforms are located in international development banks, in which most of their staff has a background in economics and, specifically, in neoclassic economics.

Interestingly, GMERs promoters' main aim is to improve the levels of student learning, but, in their analysis and prescriptions, they do not explore sufficiently how and why students learn. In other words, they want to transform education without engaging directly with the core business of education: the teaching-learning processes.

## The new role of the state in education: Neoliberal reforms, or something else?

Educationists usually qualify the managerial type of reforms analysed in this book as 'neoliberal' (see, for instance, Hill, 2009). There are different and competing definitions of neoliberalism; however, we do not think that the neoliberal label completely captures the type of phenomenon discussed here. Neoliberal reforms are, first and foremost, finance-driven reforms. They are committed with efficiency, above all else (Carnoy, 1999). However, the managerial change of education system is not necessarily more efficient than conventional education provision. Even when spending arguments are used to advance this type of policy, organising a public-private partnership or a school clusters framework can be very expensive since it requires several parallel services to be organised by the state to make these policies work (Levin, 2002). In Chile, for example, the voucher system that has been running in the country for more than thirty years is not cheaper than conventional public delivery because, with the passage of time, the private sector has been able to pressure the state very effectively to increase the amount of the vouchers.

GMERs advocates are enthusiastic about importing market rules and using market analogies when promoting their policies, as neoliberalism is, but this does not mean that they advocate the pure marketisation/privatisation of education, or the retirement of the state. In fact, this type of reform requires the state being more active than ever in education, although by adopting different roles. Thus, according to GMERs, the state should not provide education directly, and focus on the regulation and funding of schools –preferably, under demand funding formulas–, as well as on the evaluation and control of the performance of schools. Moreover, as many accountability policies establish, the state should use evaluations to inform society about schools' performance publicly, and reward and punish schools according to their progress.

Pure neoliberals, including libertarians such as James Tooley, tend to conceive state interventionism as a barrier for human beings to develop their entrepreneurial instinct (Tooley, 2005). However, the new managerial reformers do not think that state intervention is an issue for competition in education. Rather, they think that the state, through evaluation and 'sticks and carrots' policies, should be the one that actively promotes (and, to some extent, constructs) teachers, schools and other education actors as self-interested and competitive entrepreneurs.

To sum up, in contrast to neoliberal beliefs, global education reformers consider that the state should actively intervene in the funding and regulation of education systems. However, this does not mean that the state should be in charge of all type of educational activities. Far from it, the state should move away from direct education provision and rather focus on developing a range of managerial policy tools, including competitive funding and evaluation, to steer and control education at a distance. Paraphrasing Osborne and Gaebler (1993), according to GMERs, the state should become thinner, but simultaneously more powerful by focusing on "steering" rather than on "rowing" educational services.

## Why are managerial reforms globalised?

Managerial education reforms are not acquiring global status simply because of the dynamics of emulation between countries or because there is a general perception about how successful these policies are. In fact, to date, there is no strong evidence that GMERs work or, specifically, that they contribute to improving students' learning in a consistent way. Evidence is rather mixed in this respect and varies according to the policy in question and according to the way these policies are designed. Policies such as quasi-markets in education, school-based management, target setting, or merit-based pay for teachers have been extensively criticised for their uneven and even negative impacts, especially in terms of education equity (Luke, 2003; MacEwan and Santibañez, 2005; Muralidharan and Sundararaman, 2009; Thrupp and Hursh, 2006; UNESCO, 2008; Waslander, 2010). Even Diane Ravitch, a former advocate of managerial reforms such as testing and merit-based pay for teachers, and a signatory of *The Teachers We Need* manifesto, considers today that "it is precisely this policy mix of 'choice/ accountability/ private-sector participation/ teacher incentives' that (...) is 'making matters worse'" (Ravitch, 2010, in Robertson, 2012). Paradoxically, however, this has not prevented GMERs from being insistently disseminated around the world.

The fact that the managerial approach to education reform has been globalised is, to a great extent, related to the material and ideational power of the organisations backing them. These reforms count on persistent promoters strategically located in very influential and well-connected international organisations, the World Bank being the most outstanding. These types of organisations count on the necessary skills to frame managerial education reforms in an appealing way, as well as on the resources to promote them effectively via international seminars, well-distributed publications, highly-ranked web pages and so on. However, they also have the necessary resources to finance this type of reforms. A quick look at the educational projects funded by the World Bank, but also by regional development banks in the last decades, shows how components such as school competition, school-based management, decentralisation, private sector participation and, more recently, accountability have been disseminated to all world regions.

The global education reform movement benefits from the fact that, especially in developing contexts, governments feel increasing pressure to achieve the Education For All (EFA) goals. Today, EFA is working as an important window of political opportunity for reformers to promote and sell their policy alternatives in countries that are still far from achieving their international commitments. However, rich countries are not exempt from international pressure either. For instance, it is interesting to see how countries such as Germany and the US have reacted to their low results in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Martens *et al.*, 2010). In summary, due to the increasing international pressure stemming from international standardised tests, loan conditionalities, the EFA Action Framework and so on, more and more governments are open to experimenting with 'innovative' ways of education delivery and to adopting new managerial approaches.

However, GMERs do not have to be seen as an external imposition that always 'travels' from the global to the local in a unidirectional way. In many occasions, national governments are pro-actively interested in adopting them, and not necessarily to receive external funding or technical assistance. On occasion, adhering to global reforms, global commitments

and global educational discourses allows them to legitimise pre-established policy preferences and to make the case for education changes at home that would otherwise be contested (Grek, 2007). Also, from the point of view of legitimacy, GMERs could be seen as attractive for policy makers because they would allow them to distance themselves from the poor performance of the education system and make schools and teachers responsible instead.

Whatever the reasons are, the fact that managerial education reforms are being globalised does not mean that they take the same form everywhere they are adopted. According to Peck and Theodore (2010, p. 170), global policies “mutate during their journeys, they rarely travel as complete packages, they move in bits and pieces - as selective discourses, inchoate ideas, and synthesised models - and they therefore ‘arrive’ not as replicas but as policies already-in-transformation”. Thus, the final form that global education policies adopt in particular contexts is mediated by domestic history and politics, and by the complex interplay between global and local forces (Verger *et al.*, 2012). Comparative education literature is full of case studies that emphasise the mediating role of political and institutional factors in the re-contextualisation of diverse policies such as education assessment systems, teacher accountability or decentralisation (Benveniste, 2002; Rhoten, 2000; Steiner-Khamsi and Waldow 2012). Among these factors, the political ideology of the government of the countries (and the regions) in question, and the position adopted by veto players and key education stakeholders stand out (Martens *et al.*, 2010). As several chapters in this volume show, among other type of contingencies, the role played by teachers and teachers’ unions is critical to understanding whether external policies are actually adopted and enacted, to what extent and how.

## TEACHERS IN GLOBAL EDUCATION REFORMS

In a globalised economy, education, skills and knowledge are increasingly seen as key assets for economic competitiveness, and most countries and regions in the world aspire to become “knowledge economies” (Gouvias, 2007). As part of this aspiration, education becomes more central in the development strategies of governments and, in particular, “schools and teachers are being asked to do more than they have done before, but also in a different way” (Sahlberg, 2006, p.283). Overall, the international development community pays increasing attention to the key role that teachers play in the provision of quality education for all (Leu, 2005). To illustrate the growing structuring power attributed to teachers’ agency today, the UNESCO *Global Monitoring Report* (2005, p. 18) considers that teachers “are the strongest influence on learning”, and the 2007 McKinsey report emphasises ideas like that “the only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction” and “the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers” (McKinsey 2007, p. 4).

Similar ideas on the role of teachers are becoming central in both Southern and Northern countries’ education debates. In the US, in the last decade, there has been a strong political campaign to make teachers more responsible for the education problems of the country. According to the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, “what teachers know and can do is the most important influence on what students learn” (1996, p. 10). In fact, the role of teachers is expected to *determine* students’ achievement independently of whether they operate in socially unfavourable contexts. Conservative groups,

under the George W. Bush presidency and the No-Child-Left-Behind reform, famously coined the expression “no excuses” to maintain that “all children can attain academic proficiency without regard to poverty, disability, or other conditions, and that someone must be held accountable if they do not”. According to these education reformers, this “someone” is, of course, the teachers<sup>2</sup>.

As Carnoy *et al.* (2009, p. 47) state, “societies that seriously want to improve their students’ performance in school must improve the quality of teachers in schools”. However, acknowledging that ‘teachers make a difference’ is far from saying that teachers ‘determine’ students’ learning or that the socio-economic contexts in which teachers operate should be underestimated in our analysis of learning outcomes. In fact, the uni-linear arguments and, to some extent, educational optimism expressed in the “no excuses” campaign challenge decades of social sciences research in education in industrialised countries that points out the complex and mutually influential relationship between, on the one hand, socio-economic and environmental variables (such as school composition, urban and school segregation, socio-economic status, parents’ cultural capital, low level of expectations of disadvantaged students, etc.) and, on the other, teaching-learning processes taking place at the school level (Barone, 2006; Montt, 2011; Nye *et al.*, 2004; Sirin, 2005). They even challenge the most recent results of PISA that directly relate the levels of learning to the levels of education equity in countries (OECD, 2010). What social sciences research and, more recently, the OECD/PISA show is that, if education quality or learning outcomes are to be improved, society needs to take the equity between and within schools, as well as the social, economic and cultural conditionings that affect student learning more seriously. Unfortunately, managerial educational reformers tend to omit the importance of these types of elements when prescribing specific policy tools that aim at improving student learning (Verger and Bonal, 2012).

That being said, ideas such as those quoted above could be welcomed by teachers as they make teachers more visible and place them at the centre of the education debate. However, at the same time, and as outlined below, they make teachers more vulnerable and attribute more responsibilities to them, which are not always in their best interest (Klees, 2008; Tatto, 2009).

## Main paradoxes in the relationship between GMERs and teachers

Global education reformers join the international consensus about teachers’ performance as a key determinant of education quality and, very often, put teachers at the centre of their policy ideas and interventions. The policy interventions designed in the context of the GMERs movement have the potential to transform teachers’ work in several ways. Teacher evaluation and related accountability policies aim to enhance the visibility of teachers’ work vis-à-vis both the state and the rest of society; merit-based policies aim at regulating teachers’ salaries according to their performance; standards-based reforms detail what teachers have to learn and teach; PPPs favour the deregulation of teachers’ labour; and school-based management reinforces the role of teachers as both school managers and, to some extent, community workers. Thus, these types of education policies have the potential to alter the way teachers are paid,

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2012/mar/08/schools-we-can-envy/?pagination=false>



their duties and responsibilities, and the way their labour is regulated and evaluated. In other words, they have the capacity to alter the nature of teaching as a profession.

These policies are based on technologies that employ “judgments, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change – based on rewards and sanctions both material and symbolic” (Ball, 2003, p. 216). They are often designed under the assumption that teachers, above all those operating in the public sector, are self-interested actors who do not count on sufficient incentives to perform and give their best in the classrooms (Le Grand, 1996). Thus, contingent incentives and ‘sticks and carrots’ mechanisms, to sanction under-performance and award competitive behaviour, structure the type of policy interventions that global education reformers design. In these types of interventions:

*Teachers are presented and encouraged to think about themselves as individuals who calculate about themselves, ‘add value’ to themselves, improve their productivity, strive for excellence and live in existence of calculation. They are ‘enterprising subjects’, who live their lives as an ‘enterprise of the self’ (Ball, 2003, p. 217).*

Overall, the way teachers are perceived and treated in GMERs often involves a multitude of paradoxes and shortcomings. Below, we highlight the most evident of them.

The **first paradox** consists of the fact that GMERs continuously stress the importance of teachers and emphasise the key role they play in education quality, but simultaneously disempower them in several ways. Specifically, they do so in three ways: a) by not sufficiently taking into account their preferences in policy processes, b) by treating teachers as assets to be managed rather than as agents of change, and c) by undermining their autonomy in front of the state and students’ families.

- a) GMERs do not take teachers’ voices and needs sufficiently into account when designing policy interventions. Many countries that adopt managerial reforms generally work more closely with the international donor community than with national stakeholders, including teachers. Several chapters in this volume show how international organisations, even when they do not make policy decisions ‘in the name of governments’, are de facto very influential when it comes to agenda setting and benchmarking managerial policies. In contrast, the participation of teachers is limited at the moment of adopting and designing these types of policies (see, for instance, Gulpers and Broekman in this volume).
- b) GMERs usually conceive of teachers as objects of intervention rather than as subjects of educational change. As Mark Ginsburg (2012) concludes in his analysis of the *World Bank Education Strategy 2020*, the managerial approach to education reform is deeply problematic due to the fact that it perceives teachers as “assets” instead of as professionals, learning actors, or political agents. He does so by showing that in the World Bank’s new Education Strategy, 71 per cent of the references to teachers follow the notions of teacher as “human resources” (for student learning) and teachers as “employees” (to be managed). In contrast, there are no references to teachers as members of professional organisations and unions, and to teachers as learners/inquirers. It is worth

mentioning that this represents an involution in the World Bank conception of teachers in relation to previous Strategies in which the latter notions were not predominant, but at least were mentioned a few times (Ginsburg, 2012).

- c) GMERs disempower teachers in front of families and the state. Tatto (2009, p. 3) states that the policies being implemented under the umbrella of GMERs “seem directed at taking control of education away from teachers”. They often do so under efficiency arguments, by removing expensive structural measures that can contribute to teachers increasing education quality (labour conditions, high quality pre-service training, etc.), and by introducing conditional incentives and other contingent policies (Tatto, 2009). Another important source of teacher disempowerment can be found in the fact that, through GMERs, the state standardises what teachers need to do in the classroom and to which end. Thus, even when global reformers tend to adopt the rhetoric of active learning, autonomy and problem-solving (see Altinyelken, chapter 7 in this volume), they actually try to control what teachers have to teach in class via standardised testing, output comparisons, target-setting or competitive funding formulas (Ball, 2003; Feldfeber, 2007). Furthermore, managerial reforms, due to their pro-market bias, aim at enhancing client power (i.e. the power of families) above the power of teachers and schools (Delandshere and Petrosky, 2004; Brans, chapter 5 in this volume). Something similar happens with school-based management and similar reforms that involve the constitution of ‘community councils’ that give voting power and authority over budget and teaching personnel to parents (Gershberg *et al.*, 2012).

The **second paradox** relates to the fact that managerial reforms request more responsibilities from teachers but, at the same time, advocate their de-professionalisation. Teachers are supposed to do more things than before and in a different way, even when their preparation and work conditions might be poorer. On occasion, global education reformers directly vindicate the deregulation of teachers’ training and certification. For instance, the *Teachers We Need* manifesto (p. 2) states that:

*A better solution to the teacher quality problem is to simplify the entry and hiring process. Get rid of most hoops and hurdles. Instead of requiring a long list of courses and degrees, test future teachers for their knowledge and skills. Allow principals to hire the teachers they need. Focus relentlessly on results, on whether students are learning.*

GMERs advocates also support policies that make teachers’ recruitment more flexible, for instance, via contract teachers or charter schools, because they allow governments to expand schooling - and, tentatively, doing so without affecting education quality - in a cost-effective way.

*In those countries where public sector staff is paid high wages as a result of belonging to strong unions, [in PPPs] there is a cost saving associated with the contractor being able to hire nonunionized labor (Patrinos *et al.*, 2009, p. 11).*

*It is relatively common for private schools and charter schools to recruit teachers with qualifications equivalent to those of public school teachers while paying lower salaries or offering less job security (Bruns *et al.*, 2010, p. 144).*

Of course, there are different types of GMERs and, consequently, they do not have always the same implications for teachers' professionalism. In cases such as those outlined above, they imply a more radical de-professionalisation, while, in others teachers qualifications and pre-service and in-service training are taken more seriously (Müller *et al.*, 2010).

In any case, under new managerial reforms, teachers are losing something more than labour rights, since they are also losing their professional autonomy and their status in society (Sahlberg, 2006). This is the consequence of the teaching profession becoming more subjected to public blame and to often-intrusive external inspection. Furthermore, their activity becomes more firmly dependent on a pre-defined set of professional standards of practice and very prescriptive teaching materials (Hargraves *et al.*, 2007)<sup>3</sup>. These trends are in contrast to the professionalism paradigm, which has prevailed in most European countries for decades, in which families, but also the state, trust teachers and accept that they have the necessary knowledge and expertise to know what is best for children's learning (Le Grand, 1996).

In general, GMERs advocates do not believe firmly in the possibility of teachers behaving as professionals; in fact, they do not believe that such behaviour can prevail within the public sector more broadly speaking. They see teachers in public schools as employees who do not have the necessary incentives to perform satisfactorily and, on occasions, even as "free-riders" who do not put enough effort and attention in their work. There is no doubt that problems such as teachers' demotivation or absenteeism are severe in several locations (Alcázar *et al.*, 2006, Chaudhury *et al.*, 2006) and should not be disregarded, nevertheless they need to be addressed by the state on the basis of accurate diagnosis of the problem. Addressing this and other problems via surveillance and other deprofessionalising policies could have even more harmful implications for education quality in the medium and long term. To a great extent, this would be a consequence of the fact that, if the work conditions of teachers are undermined, teaching will not be an attractive profession to the most capable people in society. Furthermore, these types of policies, due to their universal vocation, could undermine quality by separating teachers from their specific problems and socio-economic realities (Welmond, 2002).

The **third paradox** is related to how GMERs advocates use evidence in a very 'selective' way. On the one hand, they promote managerial reforms even when they are aware of the fact that evidence of the positive impact of such reforms in learning outcomes is still inconclusive (Bruns *et al.*, 2011; Experton, 1999; Patrinos *et al.*, 2009; Vegas, 2005). On the other hand, however, they seem to ignore that the level of learning outcomes is higher in countries where their policy prescriptions are very marginal (or, in fact, have not been even implemented yet). Thus, education policies in countries such as Finland, Canada or Cuba - the best learning achievers in their respective regions - are very rarely considered as 'good practices' that could contribute to guiding education reforms in GMERs documents.

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<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, in many low-income countries, international organisations are promoting deprofessionalising policies, when teachers have never achieved the 'professionalisation' stage that has prevailed for decades in many western societies.

In fact, according to Ravitch (2010), most probably, the reason why managerial reforms advocates do not consider Finland, the best performing country in the world for the last decade according to PISA, as an example of international good practice is that the Finnish system does not use teacher evaluation, merit-pay, census-based standardised tests, or ranked schools.

Finland, Canada or Cuba are very different in geographic, socio-economic and political terms, but implement teachers' policies that have many points in common. In all of these countries, teachers' work is highly professionalised and their professional activity is not driven by conditional incentives; teacher training is very demanding and the teaching profession is very prestigious (becoming a teacher is as demanding and counts on the same status as, for instance, becoming a doctor, a lawyer or an architect); and teaching is understood as a collegial work in which teachers solve problems together, and more experienced teachers are in charge (and feel responsible) for the development of younger teachers starting their career (Carnoy *et al.*, 2007; Sahlberg, 2011).

In line with this argument, a recent OECD study on performance-based pay for teachers concludes that "countries that have succeeded in making teaching an attractive profession have often done so not just through pay [and merit-pay schemas], but by raising the status of teaching, offering real career prospects, and giving teachers responsibility as professionals and leaders of reform" (OECD 2012, p. 4).

One of the main concerns with merit-based pay schemas is that they can undermine cooperation between teachers and promote individualist values within the education system (Schleicher, 2011). Pasi Sahlberg (2006), who worked for the education division of the World Bank between 2003 and 2007 and is an expert on the Finnish case, is sceptical about importing market mechanisms into education systems as the most straightforward way of improving quality and 'activating' teachers. In one publication, inspired by the Finnish experience, he concludes that:

*Rather than competition between education systems, schools and students, what is needed is networking, deeper co-operation and open sharing of ideas at all levels if the role of education in economic competitiveness is to be strengthened (Sahlberg, 2006, p. 259).*

Other observers also challenge the idea of competition and 'pressure to meet targets' as quality education devices by arguing that these policies encourage schools to recruit the most able, and usually middle-class, students (Thrupp and Hursh, 2006). By adopting this type of strategy (commonly known as 'invested selection'), the schools in question might enhance their particular performance, but contribute to undermining the quality and the equity of the overall education system. When such dualisation of the education system happens, those teachers who are located in schools that do not select students have to teach in a more difficult and challenging environment.

The **fourth and last paradox** identified is that GMERs ask teachers and schools to assume new duties and more complex mandates, but without taking into account whether there are the necessary material and technical conditions to undertake them. Quite often,

GMERs are designed by international organisations on the basis of pilot cases that work usually because they generate high expectations and levels of motivation among the education agents, and are quite well resourced. However, they are very difficult to scale-up because it is not possible to provide the same level of resources and incentives and/or generate the same 'momentum' when policies are transferred to much higher territorial scales (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010). In other words, some GMERs policies may work well in pilot studies, but are difficult to translate into state policy.

An associated problem is found in the uncritical importation/ exportation of GMERs to very different territories with very different educational cultures and levels of economic development. Some types of managerial reforms are designed on the basis of past experiences that have been implemented before in rich countries, which count on technical and material conditions that are not matched in poorer countries. As Lewin (2007) warns in relation to quasi-markets in education, these types of policies are too often inspired by education models drawn from well-developed, very professionalised and coherently regulated education systems, and are not easily transferable to partly-developed, poorly-professionalised and largely unregulated systems.

In her *Literature Review of Teacher Quality and Incentives*, Ilana Umansky (2005, p. 49) highlights that incentive policies have uneven results because "teachers' logical behavioural responses are often quite different from those that policy makers had hoped for and analysts had predicted". Quite often, GMERs advocates, as many other education planners do, underestimate the challenges and the dimension of the problems they want to solve and, at the same time, overestimate the capacity of schools, especially of those schools operating within disadvantaged areas (Halpin *et al.*, 2004). They write policy in relation to the best of all possible schools, and do not sufficiently take into account the stress and tiredness with which teachers often struggle, the emotions involved in the teaching-learning process, and moments of cynicism and frustration with the continuous reforms and policy changes they are subjected to (Ball *et al.*, 2012). On other occasions, reformers underestimate whether teachers have enough preparation, resources or capacity to perform as successfully as expected in the context of new policy frameworks such as child-centred pedagogy reforms or the establishment of a new teaching career track. Thus, before countries consider experimenting with these types of policies, they would do better by investing in pre-service teaching training and on the upgrading of teachers' work conditions to make the profession more appealing (see Altinyelken and van der Tuin *et al.*, chapters 7 and 8 in this volume).

However, in many other cases, the main problem with GMERs policies is that they are based on weak and/or simplistic assumptions about teachers' motivations and identities. In fact, the assumption of teachers as self-interested agents or as free-riders that is implicit in managerial policy discourses does not match the identities and self-perceptions of teachers in their complexity. As Welmond (2002) shows in an in-depth case study in Benin, teachers have a multi-dimensional identity that includes: teachers as 'beacons' for the community, teachers as civil servants (with the social status this involves), teachers as dedicated and self-sacrificing persons, and teachers as efficient professionals (who are responsible for ensuring that students learn). Managerial policy discourses and specific reforms, such as contract-teachers policies, which were imported into Benin via the international aid community, were met with

strong opposition because teachers felt that they were not being treated with respect and that some important dimensions of their identities were being challenged. Welmond (2002, p. 65) states:

*Policy analyses based on purely technical evaluations, without an understanding of the pact between that state and the teacher, will generally lead to well-worn recommendations that have already proven their uselessness. In the case of Benin, any policy framework that does not include a coherent strategy for addressing teacher valorization or professionalization will not lead to the intended results.*

To sum up, GMERs advocates usually base their policy prescriptions on a very flat ontology of the nature of teaching and of the drivers of teachers' behaviour. And, on top of these premises, they aspire to build policy prescriptions with pretension of universality that, consequently, could 'work' in very different contexts and independently of the level of socio-economic development. The way GMERs usually treat teachers is profoundly paradoxical because, rhetorically, they conceive teachers as determinant agents for education quality and attribute new responsibilities to them but, at the same time, disempower them and undermine their professional status and autonomy. Moreover, GMERs ask teachers and schools to assume new duties and more complex mandates without giving enough importance to whether the necessary material conditions and capacities are in place to undertake them. Last, but not least, the evidence used to support GMERs overestimates their potential impact in education and, at the same time, ignores that the best performing countries in education according to international standardised tests regulate teachers' labour very differently to what they prescribe.

To a great extent, the paradoxes and shortcomings of global managerial education reforms pointed out in this section permeate and are reflected in the different case studies included in this volume.

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book aims at understanding, from an empirically grounded perspective, the nature, scope and dimensions of the new global trend of managerial education reforms and, specifically, how these types of reforms relate to teachers. The case studies presented in the book have been undertaken primarily by junior researchers as part of their research for a Masters in International Development Studies at the University of Amsterdam (UvA).

All chapters are grounded on original research and primary data, and analyse how a range of global educational policies, including PPPs, competency-based curriculum<sup>4</sup>, school clusters, teacher evaluation and teachers/schools accountability have been adopted, designed and

<sup>4</sup> *The case study on 'competency-based curriculum' is the only one in the book that does not fit in strictu sensu in the category of managerial education reforms. However, it provides the same elements of the other case studies to think about the globalisation and re-contextualisation of education reforms.*

implemented in a number of Southern countries. They specifically focus on how these reforms transform teachers' work and on whether and how teachers are included in the policy process. From Indonesia to Jamaica, from Peru to Namibia, from Turkey to Uganda and India, we will see how a similar education reform jargon and a similar set of rules and principles are being adopted, consented or resisted by teachers and other education stakeholders, and why. The book draws on fieldwork conducted in the mentioned locations between 2009 and 2011 by using a mix of qualitative (interviews, focus group discussions and observations) and quantitative (questionnaire) methods.

The focus of the chapters is not on the particular effects of GMERs on, for instance, students' achievement, school efficiency or education equity. In some of the countries analysed, GMERs have been adopted only very recently and, in some cases, only pilot experiences have been implemented. The chapters rather focus on the so-called policy process and trace how the policies in question have been conceptualised and introduced in global agendas, the particular form they have adopted in specific countries, and whether and how they are being implemented and enacted by key stakeholders, including teachers. Specifically, the main questions that this book aims at answering are:

- 1. How are global education reforms re-contextualised and translated into particular contexts? What are the mediating elements and institutions affecting the translation and re-contextualisation of GMERs to particular education contexts?*
- 2. What are the specific difficulties associated with the implementation of global/managerial education policies in local contexts? Specifically, how are they received by teachers and other local education stakeholders? To what extent are GMERs enacted or resisted by them?*
- 3. According to the key education stakeholders involved in the reforms, do GMERs bring about the intended results? What are the main challenges and opportunities of this type of reforms when it comes to achieve their expected outcomes?*
- 4. To what extent are the main assumptions and 'theories of action' behind GMERs substantiated by the actual facts, once the reforms are implemented and translated into specific educational practices?*

Overall, this book is openly explicit of the limitations of basing education reforms on the mix of managerialist and market ideas that GMERs represent. The different case studies the volume contains caution practitioners and policy-makers who might be seduced by global managerial discourses, or who are tempted to adopt 'sticks and carrots' policies as a magic bullet to solve the complex problems that education systems face, especially in poorer contexts. However, it should also be pointed out that this is not an "anti-reform" book. Rather, it is hoped that the different chapters provide elements to teachers, practitioners, aid agencies and other education stakeholders to reflect on educational change processes that could be, on the one hand, more in line with the education realities and problems prevailing in their particular contexts and, on the other, more participatory and respectful in nature with teachers' needs and identities.

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