BRITISH COUNCIL

The Status of Teacher Education and Development in Nepal

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Abbreviations

B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
CEHRD	Centre for Education and Human Resource Development
CPD	Continuing professional development
ECED	Early Childhood Education and Development
EDCU	Education Development and Co-ordination Unit
ELT	English language teaching
ETC	Education training centre
FGD	Focus group discussion
GoN	Government of Nepal
KII	Key informant interview
LG	Local government
M.Ed.	Master of Education
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
PSTE	Pre-service teacher education
SESP	School Education Sector Plan
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan
TPD	Teacher professional development
TPS	Teacher professional support
TSC	Teacher Service Commission
VDC	Village development committee

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Many educational stakeholders in Nepal contributed to this study, and their co-operation is warmly acknowledged. Within the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, officials from the Centre for Education and Human Resource Development and the Statistics, Policy and Research section shared their expertise, while across all seven provinces this research benefited from insights provided by officials at the education training centres. In the three focal provinces for the research – Karnali, Madhesh and Sudurpaschim – perspectives on teacher education and development in Nepal were collected from a wide range of university lecturers and officials, schoolteachers, head teachers, and educational officers at district, municipality and rural municipality levels. We also thank staff and officials at Kathmandu University for additional insights into pre-service teacher education and all the teachers around the country who contributed to the online survey. The British Council in Nepal also provided valuable support throughout this project.

Executive summary

In the context of significant recent changes to the administration of education in Nepal, this report presents the findings of a research project commissioned by the British Council into the status of the initial teacher preparation (pre-service teacher education) and continuing professional development (CPD)[1] of practising teachers in the country. Whereas the teaching workforce was previously managed centrally, within the new federal political structure provincial and local governments have assumed responsibility for teacher CPD. Current provision takes two main forms – teacher professional development (TPD) training courses lasting 30 days and school-based development referred to as 'teacher professional support (TPS)'. A key goal of this study was to examine the functioning of the overall CPD system in the new federal structure.

However, an overall understanding of teachers' lifelong developmental journey also needs to include some attention to their initial preparation. Many of the challenges that CPD seeks to address originate in ineffective pre-service teacher education, and reform at this level can make an important contribution to the quality of teachers and teaching. This study did, therefore, also engage with universities who prepare teachers, in order to examine aspects of education programmes, such as curricula, teaching methods and assessment.

This study targeted basic education teachers and secondary teachers of three core subjects – English, mathematics and science – in community (public) schools. The objectives of the study were to:

1. Describe key features of pre-service programmes for secondary teachers in Nepal
2. Draw on international good practice to make recommendations for the development of pre-service teacher education in Nepal
3. Understand prevalent notions of CPD in Nepal
4. Describe the CPD that is provided by education training centres (ETCs) and assess the impact that the federal administrative structure has had on this
5. Understand the extent to which CPD results in practical change in the classroom and any barriers which limit this
6. Assess the extent to which current CPD provision (including TPS) is aligned with the vision defined by current educational policy in Nepal
7. Identify teachers' self-reported professional development needs and preferred approaches to CPD
8. Draw on international good practice to make recommendations for the development of CPD in Nepal, including TPS.

This mixed-methods study was largely qualitative but also included a more quantitative teacher survey. The core of the research consisted of case studies of teacher education and development in three provinces – Karnali, Madhesh and Sudurpaschim. In each case, focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with relevant stakeholders in order to address the objectives listed above; for pre-service teacher education, respondents included university lecturers and campus chiefs, while the CPD component of this work drew on contributions from schoolteachers, head teachers and educational officials at provincial, district and municipality levels. A total of 233 stakeholders contributed to FGDs and KIIs in the three focal provinces. Additionally, meetings were held with six representatives from Kathmandu University, ETC officials from the remaining four provinces and two Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST)

1. Nepal education policy documents such as 'The School Education Sector Plan 2021–30' refer to *continuous* rather than *continuing* professional development. In keeping with the teacher education literature, the latter is used throughout here.

officials. The survey was completed by 714 teachers working in 26 districts.

This analysis of initial teacher preparation in Nepal suggests that this is a sector that would benefit from further research and subsequent evidence-based reform. Education programmes are struggling to attract a sufficient number of capable applicants, and this is seen to reflect a wider decline in the status of teaching in the country. In terms of programme quality, graduates are unlikely to be acquiring the knowledge and skills that underpin effective teaching. There is a need for all areas of teacher preparation to be guided by a coherent national vision of graduate outcomes and teacher professional standards, in terms of knowledge, skills and professional dispositions. Teacher education curricula should be delivered (taught and assessed) in a manner that reflects beliefs about learning (such as the value of active learning) that graduates themselves are expected to develop. The practice of teaching, rather than non-pedagogical disciplinary concerns, also needs to be placed at the heart of pre-service programmes. Professional development support is required for teacher educators to enable them to develop the competences they need to contribute to reform in pre-service work and to effectively implement new programmes. Resources to support such reform also need to be allocated.

In relation to teacher CPD, the evidence presented here indicates that while at policy level clear distinctions exist between training and non-training forms of CPD, teachers' understanding of and preferences for CPD remain strongly linked to the provision of training. Thus, TPD training remains the dominant form of CPD in Nepal. Despite the transition to the federal structure, the content of this training has yet to be localised. Training budgets are also still managed at federal level. While many teachers feel TPD training has led to changes in their work, other teachers, along with head teachers and educational officers, were less positive about the extent to which any change was possible or sustained. Large class size was the barrier to pedagogical reform most frequently cited.

To give teachers access to ongoing school-based CPD, TPS is being promoted by the MOEST, and teachers in this study expressed interest in doing activities such as mentoring and action research. According to stakeholder feedback, though, TPS has not yet been established as a functioning system of professional development. Multiple factors are seen to be responsible for this, including the lack of incentives for teachers, limitations in the resources available to support local governments (LGs) and a lack of expertise among stakeholders.

Overall, while the new federal structures have created opportunities for more frequent and localised CPD for teachers, a consistent finding from the three focal provinces (and which was supported by the experience of ETCs in the remaining provinces) is that LGs need more support – budget, human resources and technical expertise – to realise the potential of TPS and to enhance the quality and impact of TPD training. The lack of a legal framework defining the roles and responsibilities of different levels of government in teacher CPD was also seen to be a barrier to progress.

The report concludes with 32 recommendations for policy, practice and further research in relation to initial teacher preparation and teacher professional development in Nepal. These call for further analysis and review of all aspects of pre-service programmes (curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and evaluation). There are also significant recommendations for improving the design, delivery and evaluation of TPD training and TPS. Among these, improving general expertise about CPD in the educational system, establishing stronger links between CPD and teaching and learning, and aligning planned CPD provision with the resources available are central.

1. Introduction

In the context of significant recent changes to the administration of education in Nepal, this report presents the findings of a research project commissioned by the British Council into the status of teacher education and development in the country. The primary focus is on continuing professional development (CPD), though, to contextualise what happens at in-service level, we also provide an analysis of initial teacher preparation. While the issues examined here are of broad relevance, the study targeted basic education teachers and secondary education teachers of three core subjects – English, mathematics and science – working in community (public) schools. The report starts by outlining the national context, with particular attention to recent changes in the political system and their implications for education and specifically for teacher development. This is followed by a brief review of insights from the literature into effective approaches to teacher education and professional development. The objectives and methodology of the research are then described, after which the results are presented for pre-service teacher education and CPD in turn. The report concludes with recommendations for both these sectors.

2. Educational context

Nepal is a landlocked Himalayan country between China in the north and India in the south. With a population of just under 30.5 million people,[2] it is very diverse, with over 120 ethnic groups and recognised national languages. The official language is Nepali, which (based on data from the 2011[3] census) is spoken by just under 80 per cent of the population as either a first or second language.[4] Nepal is classified as a lower middle-income country,[5] though it has set a target of achieving middle income status by 2030.[6]

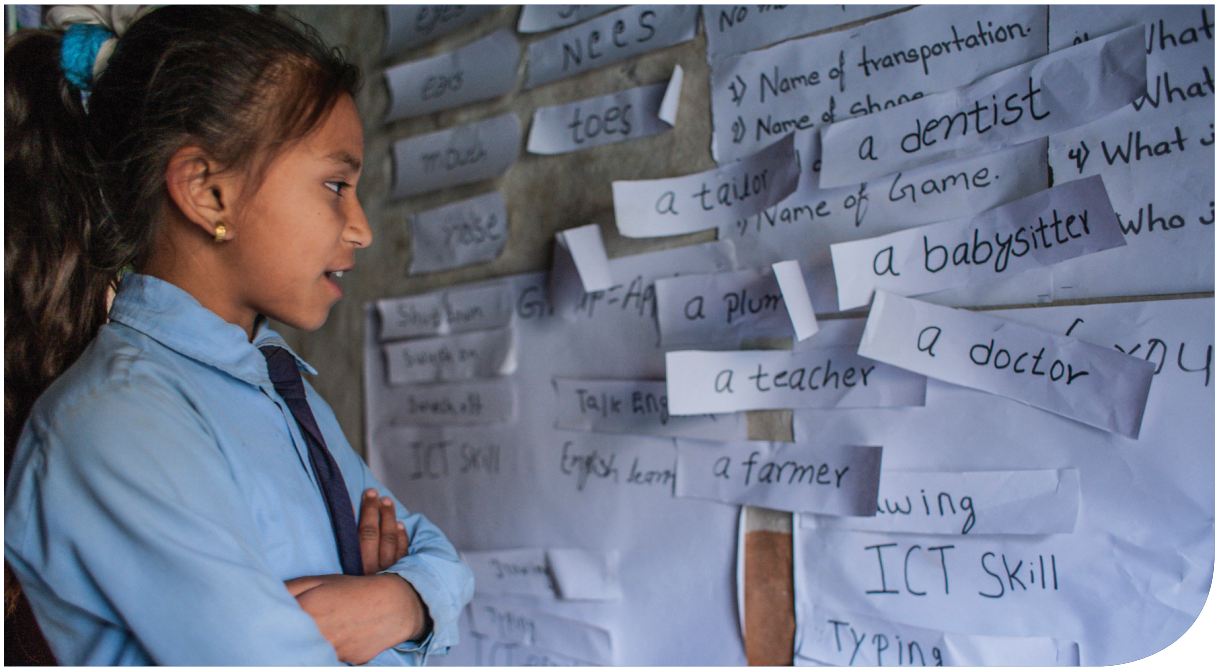
2.1 Education in the federal system

A historical analysis of education in Nepal is provided by Bhatta and Mehendale (2021).[7] More recently, following the introduction of a new constitution in 2015, Nepal has experienced the significant political change of transitioning from a constitutional monarchy to a federal republic. As a result, the country now has three levels of government – federal (central), provincial and local (municipal). There are seven provinces, each divided into districts, which in turn consist of multiple municipalities and rural municipalities – 753 in total across the country. Figure 1 summarises the differences between the pre-federal and federal systems of governance.

Unitary system of governance Pre-20 September 2015	Federal system of governance Post-20 September 2015
Unitary government	Federal government
5 development regions	7 provinces
14 zones	77 districts with district co-ordination committees
75 districts with district development committees	753 local governments comprising 6 metropolitan cities, 11 sub-metropolitan cities, 276 municipalities and 460 rural municipalities
3,400 village development committees (VDCs)	
Wards of VDCs	Wards of municipalities and rural municipalities

Figure 1: Federal structure in Nepal[8]

2. https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/nepal-population/
3. There was a 2021 census, but its results do not seem to be publicly available yet.
4. https://translatorswithoutborders.org/language-data-for-nepal
5. https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/new-world-bank-country-classifications-income-level-2022-2023
6. GoN (2021). Nepal Education Sector Analysis. Ministry of Education and Science and Technology, p.14.
7. Bhatta, P., & Mehendale, A. (2021). The status of school education in Nepal. In P. M. Sarangapani & R. Pappu (Eds.), Handbook of education systems in South Asia (pp. 639–664). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-0032-9_16
8. Adapted from GoN (2021). Nepal Education Sector Analysis. Ministry of Education and Science and Technology, p.28.



The introduction of the federal system has had significant implications for the administration of education in Nepal; school education responsibility has been passed to local government, and educational structures that were formerly managed centrally (such as over 1,000 now defunct resource centres) have made way for local mechanisms. The structures and responsibilities for CPD envisioned by federalism are summarised in Figure 2. Some of the units here, such as Education Development and Co-ordination Units (EDCUs), have wider responsibilities, but only those relevant to CPD are included here.

The logic behind the move to more local control over CPD is that 'LGs have the closest information of the specific need of teaching staff in the municipalities'.[9]

The education system[10] is divided into basic education (Grades 1–8, which is compulsory and includes one year of Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED)/pre-primary education) and secondary education (9–12). There are three types of school – community (government funded), institutional (private) and religious. According to official figures from 2021–22,[11] there were 58,436 teachers in secondary schools. Of these, 10,160 (17.4 per cent) were reported to be female. According to SOFRECO/FBC (2022), there is a shortage of 24,835 secondary teachers in the country.[12]

Level	Units	Responsibility
Federal	MOEST – CEHRD	Provide central funding for TPD training; set quotas for TPD training; design TPD curriculum and training manual.
Provincial	ETC	Deliver TPD training, plus customised training (needs-based) on cross-cutting issues and topics not covered in general TPD training.
District	EDCU	Co-ordinate between ETC and Local Education Units in the selection of teachers for TPD training.
Local	Local Education Units	Support the selection of teachers for TPD training in co-ordination with schools; deliver customised training using programmes designed by CEHRD; implement TPS by observing teachers in schools and providing feedback.

Figure 2: CPD in Nepal – structure and responsibilities

9. SOFRECO/FBC (2022). TA-School Sector Development Plan SSDP 2016–2021 Nepal – Final Evaluation Report, p.39.
10. GoN (2016). School Sector Development Plan 2016/17–2022/23, pp.6–7.
11. https://cehrd.gov.np/file_data/mediacenter_files/media_file-17-98334697.pdf
12. SOFRECO/FBC (2022). TA-School Sector Development Plan SSDP 2016-2021 Nepal – Final Evaluation Report, p.39.

Student–teacher ratios for secondary schools (based on approved teacher positions) for 2020–21 were 39:1 at secondary education (Grades 9–10), 80:1 at secondary education (Grades 11–12) and 49:1 at secondary education (Grades 9–12). In 2020–21, 11.6 per cent of the national budget was allocated to education, with a target of 20 per cent for 2022–23.[13] This equates to around 4.2 per cent of GDP.[14] Higher education consists primarily of bachelor's (3–4 years) and master's programmes (2 years), though research degrees such as PhDs are also available. While high levels of enrolment in basic education (over 96 per cent for Grades 1–5[15]) have been achieved, retention levels decrease progressively at higher levels of education[16] (for secondary Grades 11–12, net enrolment is under 36 per cent[17]). According to the 2022 Global Gender Gap Index, Nepal ranked 125th out of 146 countries in Educational Attainment,[18] with a score of 0.916 (where 1.0 means that gender parity in education exists). Regionally, though, it ranks second for its overall gender gap index score.

2.2 Becoming a teacher

Various qualification pathways are available in Nepal to individuals who wish to become teachers, and these vary depending on the level being targeted. For basic education (Grades 1–8), 'a proficiency certificate in education or Grade 12 or a proficiency certificate in other subjects and a 10-month teacher training course' and a teaching licence are required.[19] For secondary level teachers in community schools, the basic requirement is a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) plus a teaching licence which is obtained by passing the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) examination. The TSC is a general examination for teachers of all subjects, and its first paper consists of 100 multiple-choice questions across a range of topics such as mathematics, science, general knowledge, computer science, IQ testing, constitution acts and education policies. Only candidates who pass the first paper are able to proceed to Paper 2, which has more open-ended, subjective questions.[20]

Graduates holding a non-educational degree but who have passed the TSC can also become secondary teachers on condition that they obtain a one-year B.Ed. within five years of taking up their position. Where vacancies need to be filled urgently, exceptions to these general requirements can be made. In the teacher survey conducted for this research, 70.1 per cent of respondents held B.Ed. or M.Ed. (Master of Education) qualifications, while over 14 per cent also said they held either a Bachelor's or Master's degree, but no qualifications in the field of education.

Education programmes are provided by several universities, though the majority of students enrol in colleges affiliated with Tribhuvan University.[21] Universities define their own curricula, and assessment typically includes a combination of coursework and final examinations, with the latter often taking the form of either multiple-choice questions and/or short-answer questions. B.Ed. programmes include a period of supervised teaching practice, typically in the final year of study. Higher education was previously covered by the 2015 Higher Education Policy, but is now part of the 2019 National Education Policy.[22] Limited research is available into the effectiveness of initial teacher preparation in Nepal, though it has been noted in various reviews of education more generally that this is a sector with much scope for development. This is acknowledged in the SESP 2021–2030, which notes that 'current systems of teacher preparation … are not effective

13. https://cehrd.gov.np/file_data/mediacenter_files/media_file-17-98334697.pdf
14. 2020 World Bank figures – https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS?locations=NP
15. https://cehrd.gov.np/file_data/mediacenter_files/media_file-17-98334697.pdf
16. See https://edusanjal.com/blog/education-in-infograph/
17. https://cehrd.gov.np/file_data/mediacenter_files/media_file-17-98334697.pdf
18. https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2022.pdf
19. SESP 2021–30 (English translation), p.66.
20. See https://tsc.gov.np/ for sample papers.
21. SESP 2021-30 (English translation), p.66.
22. https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/nepal_education_policy.pdf

as they are not aligned with the type of teachers that are needed to implement the curriculum and undertake pedagogical functions' (p.20). A 2020 analysis of pre-service programmes for teachers of mathematics, science and languages in Nepal[23] also concluded that these do not reflect many of the features of effective teacher preparation programmes noted in the international literature (see Section 3.1 below). The same study also reported that education programmes from one major university in Nepal are not producing graduates with appropriate knowledge and skills and that the majority of them do not actually pass B.Ed. examinations and gain employment within community (government) schools.

A teacher competency framework for Nepal was created in 2016, though revising it is one of the goals of the 2021–30 School Education Sector Plan. The current framework defines eight domains of competence for teachers:

- Content knowledge
- Pedagogical knowledge
- Knowledge about children/learners
- Learning environment and classroom management
- Communication and collaboration
- Continuous learning and professional development
- Legal bases and professional conduct
- Information and communication technology.

2.3 Professional development

While teachers in Nepal may have access to development opportunities provided by non-governmental bodies such as the British Council and RELO (US Embassy),[24] our focus here is on the CPD that is provided directly by the educational authorities.

Three main kinds of CPD are provided by the MOEST/local governments for state schoolteachers in Nepal. The first is TPD training, which lasts 30 days and is divided into two 15-day blocks (Phase 1 and Phase 2). Each phase includes ten days of input (delivered intensively at a central training venue) and five days of classroom-based projects, including action research. TPD training manuals are available on the Centre for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD) website.[25] One education official we spoke to described the TPD training as follows:

> The in-service one-month certification training is conducted in two phases of 15 days each. The phases are further divided into two sub-phases of ten and five days. In the ten days of first phase of TPD training, the generic contents such as curriculum, lesson planning, evaluation framework are focused on, which is same for all kinds of teachers irrespective of level and subjects. After the completion of ten days' generic content-focused training, the teachers go back to their respective schools and complete project work of five days. The project work should be submitted to ETC within 45 days of reaching back to the school. The training is delivered in face to face mode (presentation, sharing and micro teaching). There are three sessions (each of one and a half hours) in a day. (ETC official)

According to the CEHRD TPD Phase 1 manual, teachers complete an examination at the end of the course. This carries 50 per cent of the final mark; the other 50 per cent is allocated to 'Regularity, participation and activeness' (10 per cent), 'Creative and innovative work' (20 per cent) and the self-study projects (20 per cent). It is unclear how the second of these is assessed.

Second, teachers have access to 'customized training' lasting up to five days, which focuses on more specialist topics not covered by the more general TPD training. Such training covers, for example, students' psycho-social counselling, implementation of the integrated curriculum and ICT.

The third kind of CPD available to teachers is teacher professional support (TPS), which

23. https://ncenepal.org.np/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/PST-report-final-copy.pdf
24. See the report 'English language teaching, learning and assessment in Nepal'. Accessed 12 January 2023 from https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/english-language-teaching-learning-and-assessment-south-asia
25. https://cehrd.gov.np/infocenter/29

consists of locally provided non-training development opportunities. According to a publication by CEHRD,[26] TPS may include:

- Support provided by head teachers or co-ordinating teachers
- Exchange of learning among teacher learning groups at school and local level
- Professional support through expert groups in the local level by local education unit
- Inter-school study tours organised by schools and local education units
- Observation of teachers and provision of feedback by the local education unit
- The use of information technology to provide virtual professional development for teachers.

A recent vision statement produced by the MOEST elaborates further on its plans for TPS (see Figure 3):

This is quite an ambitious range of activities which seek to make CPD more ongoing, school-based, teacher-led, collaborative and collegial.

The functioning of CPD within the federal structure has been addressed in various reports, with a range of challenges being highlighted. One general barrier that has been noted is that 'an overall legislative framework … has yet to be enacted to guide on how the three tiers of government coordinate and collaborate to accomplish various education functions'.[28] With specific reference to CPD, a recent report[29] has noted that:

The relevance of TPD and achievements has been severely affected by the reduction of Education Training Centers (ETCs) from 29 to 7 ETCs … There is a lack of both institutional and human resources in TPD, which is reflected in the quality of learning and students' learning outcomes. In addition, the lack of human resources, e.g. teacher trainers have influenced the progress in TPD.

1. Development of a dynamic system for teacher professional support
2. Establishment of Teachers Support Centres at the local level by clustering the schools
3. Formation of subject-wise teacher committees
4. Handover of responsibility for supporting teachers to experienced and competent teachers
5. Arranging of basic training, academic training, refresher training, workshops, seminars for teacher Continuous Professional Development
6. Facilitation of mentoring of newly appointed teachers by experienced teachers
7. Adoption and implementation of a system of research, action research and case study
8. Inculcation of professional support to teachers and principals through their work performance for self-responsibility in teaching and learning activities
9. Establishment of classroom-based support systems
10. Enhancement of teacher support system based on technology
11. Preparation of interactive digital education materials for enhancement of teachers' competency
12. Provision of training to the teachers for classroom management and use of technology
13. Implementation of the concept of mentoring
14. Initiation of regular and continuous communication between parents and teachers

Figure 3: MOEST vision for TPS[27]

Similar concerns are highlighted in a recent Asian Development Bank report:

Teachers' professional development is delivered by Education Training Centers (ETCs) to teachers that are selected and sent by the schools … However, teachers' professional development is hampered by capacity constraints of ETCs in terms of budget and human resources, poor quality and low relevance of training, and lack of school-based professional support, mentoring, and supervision.[30]

26. CEHRD (2021). Early Grade Teacher Professional Support Management Procedures, 2077 BS.
27. MOEST (2022). Education Vision Paper, Section 4.5.7 (Translation).
28. GoN (2021). Nepal Education Sector Analysis. Ministry of Education and Science and Technology, p. vi.
29. SOFRECO/FBC (2022). TA-School Sector Development Plan SSDP 2016–2021 Nepal – Final Evaluation Report, p.39.
30. ADB (2022). Supporting the School Education Sector Plan: Report and Recommendation of the President. Accessed 11 January 2023 from https://www.adb.org/projects/documents/nep-49424-002-rrp, p.3.

And a specific analysis of TPS implementation in Grades 1–3[31] reached these conclusions:

The understanding of TPS was found good amongst most of the local levels. However, the systematization of the practice needs strengthening ... The TPS stakeholders at federal, provincial, district and local levels clearly understand their roles. The Expert Group at the local level and teachers and HTs [Head Teachers]/BLCs [Basic Level Co-ordinators] at the school level were found not fully informed of their TPS roles as per the revised TPS guidelines ... The administrative challenges limiting the local level for dedicating time for school visits was one of the major problems. Finally, the training and orientation regarding TPS need to be done to enhance the TPS actors' capacity and ability ... The current reach of TPS has been sporadic and not available to all schools (p. V).

Head teachers are expected to play a central role in TPS; for example, according to the National Education Policy (2019):

Head teachers shall be made responsible for the continuous professional development of the teachers in the school level, linking the teacher's continuous professional development with the students' learning achievements.[32]

This overview of teacher education and professional development in Nepal suggests a need for further research into the effectiveness of these sectors.

3. Effective teacher education and development

To provide a theoretical context for the results that follow, this section highlights key points of relevance from the international literature on the initial preparation and continuing development of teachers. As explained in the Introduction to this report, the main focus on the research was CPD, but it was also pertinent to award some attention to pre-service teacher education given that many problems that CPD seeks to rectify originate in a lack of effective teacher preparation. In fact, while teacher preparation and CPD are often treated discretely at the level of policy, greater coherence within an educational system can be achieved when they are seen as linked stages, underpinned by common professional standards, in a teacher's career.

3.1 Effective teacher preparation

There is a substantial literature on teacher preparation,[33] and this highlights a fairly consistent set of characteristics of effective initial teacher education programmes. Darling-Hammond (1999, cited in Darling-Hammond et al. 2005[34]) identifies several of these:

- A shared vision of teaching that is consistent in courses and clinical work
- Well-defined standards of practice and performance ...
- A common core curriculum grounded in substantial knowledge of development, learning and subject matter pedagogy, taught in the context of practice
- Extended clinical experiences (at least 30 weeks)
- strong relationships ... between universities and reform-minded schools
- Extensive use of case study methods, teacher research, performance assessments and portfolio examinations that relate teachers' learning to classroom practice.

This list identifies several central dimensions of quality in teacher education, in particular

31. Vertex Consult (2022). EGRP II Report on TPS. Accessed 12 January 2023 from https://cehrd.gov.np/infocenter/23 (Report 7).
32. National Education Policy 2019, Policy 10.44.2.
33. See, for example, volumes such as Husu, J., & Clandinin, D. J. (2017). The SAGE handbook of research on teacher education. SAGE Publications Ltd.
34. Darling-Hammond, L., Hammerness, K., Grossman, P., Rust, F., & Shulman, L. S. (2005). The design of teacher education programs. In L. Darling-Hammond & J. Bransford (Eds.), Preparing teachers for a changing world (pp. 390–441). Jossey-Bass.

programme content, standards, assessment and pedagogy (i.e. how lecturers teach student teachers); additionally, the importance of coherence is also clear – i.e. an overall vision shaping all elements of a programme which are in turn consistent with one another.

A 2011 publication by USAID[35] reviewed a range of studies to identify eight principles for the design of effective pre-service teacher education (PSTE) programmes. These principles reflected to a large degree those listed above; for example, Principle 2 was 'eliminate fragmentation in the teacher education system', which emphasises the idea of programme coherence, while Principle 3 is 'Effective pre-service teacher education should be aligned with professional standards for teachers.' This list, though, did include two further institution-level principles which are important:

Principle 6. Teacher education institutions require sufficient infrastructure and resources to implement effective PSTE programs.

Principle 7. Effective professional development of teacher educators leads to better program development and implementation.

This latter point, about the competence of teacher educators, is often overlooked but it is essential; just as the quality of school education students receive is heavily determined by the ability of their teachers, the quality of teacher education is also strongly shaped by teacher educators' competence in both pre–service and in–service contexts. The British Council's CPD Framework for Teacher Educators, for example, highlights the range of knowledge and skills that effective teacher educators require. Eleven competences are defined and grouped into three domains:

Knowledge:
Knowing the subject; Understanding the educational context; Understanding teacher learning

Skills:
Planning teacher learning; Managing teacher learning; Evaluating teacher competence; Supporting ongoing teacher professional development; Adopting inclusive practices; Supporting remote learning

Development:
Taking responsibility for own professional development; Contributing to the profession.

The range of competences effective teacher educators required has been highlighted in other analyses too, such as the Flemish Teacher Educator Development Profile.[36]

A 2014 report from Australia[37] also focused on the characteristics of programmes that enable student teachers to become effective teachers. This report summary confirmed points already noted and also included the importance of 'explicit strategies that help students (1) confront their own deep-seated beliefs and assumptions about learning and students and (2) learn about the experiences of people different from themselves' (p.12).

1) Recruitment and entry standards;
2) The accreditation of teacher education programs; and
3) Transition and full entry to the profession' (p. xvi).

35. USAID (2011). First Principles: Designing Effective Pre-Service Teacher Education Programs. Accessed 10 January 2023 from https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADZ721.pdf.
36. https://velov.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/velov_bro_en_111206.pdf
37. ACER (2014). Best practice teacher education programs and Australia's own programs. Accessed 10 January 2023 from https://research.acer.edu.au/teacher_education/13/.

This analysis also concluded that teacher education systems in high-achieving countries[38] are characterised by 'rigorous quality assurance arrangements at three key stages in the preparation of teachers:

Global analyses of educationally high-performing countries also consistently highlight the emphasis they place on the quality of initial teacher preparation.

For the third of these points, the role of induction, including mentored support for new teachers, was emphasised. Regarding the first point, candidate selection is another important (though less researched) element in initial teacher education, especially the criteria which govern admission to education programmes. Academic criteria (such as school-leaving examination results) have typically been the main source of decisions, though there is increasing use of non-academic sources of evidence too, such as interviews and personal statements written by candidates (see Klassen et al. 2020[39]).

Overall, then, the literature provides consistent messages about the features of effective initial teacher preparation which can guide analyses of current approaches in Nepal.

3.2 Effective CPD

The literature on what makes CPD effective is extensive, but there is some degree of agreement on a range of facilitating features, as summarised in Figure 4:

CPD is likely to be more effective when ...

- It is seen by teachers to be relevant to their needs and those of their students
- Teachers are centrally involved in decisions about the content and process of professional learning
- Collaboration and the sharing of expertise among teachers is fostered
- It is a collective enterprise supported by schools and educational systems more broadly
- Exploration and reflection are emphasized over methodological prescriptivism
- Expert internal and/or external support is available
- Classrooms are valued as a site for professional learning
- Professional learning is recognized as an integral part of teachers' work
- Classroom inquiry by teachers is seen as a central professional learning process
- Teachers are engaged in the examination and review of their beliefs
- Adaptive expertise is promoted
- student learning provides the motivation for professional learning
- Teachers experience the cognitive dissonance that motivates change

Figure 4: Features of effective CPD (Borg 2015[40])

38. See also Darling-Hammond, L., & Lieberman, A. (2012). Teacher education around the world: Changing policies and practices. Routledge.
39. Klassen, R. M., Kim, L. E., Rushby, J. V., & Bardach, L. (2020). Can we improve how we screen applicants for initial teacher education? Teaching and Teacher Education, 87, 102949. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.102949
40. Borg, S. (2015). Researching language teacher education. In B. Paltridge & A. Phakiti (Eds.), Research methods in applied linguistics: A practical resource (pp. 541–560). Bloomsbury.

If we contrast conventional transmission (i.e. lecture-based) models of teacher learning with those that are more constructivist in nature (i.e. which emphasise learning through experience, interaction and reflection), the list in the figure 4 is more aligned with the latter approach; this does not mean that teachers should not receive input from trainers – this can be an effective form of professional development. What this more constructivist orientation implies, though, is an overriding concern to make professional development an active process for teachers which stimulates learning collaboratively, critically, in relation to practice and through processes of reflection and inquiry. Many contemporary professional development models (such as teacher communities of practice[41]) and practices, such as mentoring, lesson study and action research, can in fact promote professional development of this kind. But in many contexts, teachers will need appropriate support as they engage with such new forms of CPD. For example, if teachers are expected to conduct action research, structured support over time must be provided to help them understand what action research is and – most importantly – how to do it well. Similarly, mentoring requires both mentors and mentees to develop a set of essential competences. A British Council mentoring project in India, for example, provided mentors with targeted training to help them acquire appropriate questioning, observation and feedback skills. The training was found to have developed mentors' skills, but it was also found[42] that continuing on-the-job support was needed to enable mentors to develop their practical skills further.

More recent analyses of the literature on CPD confirm the importance of many of the points listed above. For example, Weston and Hindly (2019)[43] examined seven reviews of effective teacher development published between 2015 and 2018 and identified the following recurrent facilitative features:

- Professional learning should be iterative, with opportunities to apply learning in real practice, reflect and improve over time
- Professional learners should see the relevance of the training to their job requirements and to their professional goals and aspirations
- Development should be designed with a focus on impact on students, with formative assessment built in for participants
- Organisational leaders and facilitators need to create and protect the conditions for learning, e.g. time and space, while identifying and removing barriers such as workload
- Organisational leaders should demonstrate and encourage alignment between professional development and wider goals/approaches, actively encouraging and supporting the buy-in of participants. (p. 64)

Overall, then, effective CPD takes place over time, is structured and supported, promotes reflection, inquiry and collaboration, is relevant to teachers' contexts, supports improvements in teaching and learning, and is situated in schools and classrooms. Giving teachers some choice in the focus of CPD can also be beneficial. While these fairly consistent messages about effective CPD can inform the efforts of education systems seeking to enhance their professional development provision, it is also important to remember that there is no single approach that will work equally effectively in all contexts; it is important, then, to ensure that choices about CPD are also made in ways that are appropriate and feasible in the target context.

In addition to insights outlined above about the features of effective CPD, it is also important to highlight the role of broader governance structures in supporting teacher growth. These include, for example, ensuring that responsibilities for CPD

41. See, for example, Vangrieken, K., Meredith, C., Packer, T., & Kyndt, E. (2017). Teacher communities as a context for professional development: A systematic review. Teaching and Teacher Education, 61, 47–59. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.10.001
42. Borg, S., & Parnham, J. (2020). Large-scale teacher development through mentoring. The Teacher Trainer, 34(2), 2–7.
43. Weston, D., & Hindly, B. (2019). Professional development: Evidence of what works. In C. Scutt & S. Harrison (Eds.), Teacher CPD: International trends, opportunities and challenges (pp. 60–67). Chartered College of Teaching.

at different levels of government are clearly defined, that governmental units responsible for CPD are equipped with appropriate resources and expertise and that the efforts of these units (and related stakeholders such as teacher unions) are effectively co-ordinated. Such concerns are particularly relevant in contexts, such as Nepal, where responsibility for teachers is distributed across different levels of government.[44]

Overall, though, the literature provides clear guidance about the features of effective CPD which can guide analyses of current approaches in Nepal.

4. Methodology

4.1 Objectives

The objectives for study are listed in Figure 5. The first two addressed pre-service teacher education, while six further objectives focused on CPD.

Pre-service teacher education

1. Describe key features of pre-service programmes provided for teachers of English, mathematics and science in Nepal.
2. Draw on international good practice to make recommendations for the development of pre-service teacher education in Nepal.

Professional development

3. Understand prevalent notions of CPD in Nepal.
4. Describe the CPD that is provided by ETCs and assess the impact that the federal administrative structure has had on this.
5. Understand the extent to which CPD results in practical change in the classroom and any barriers which limit this.
6. Assess the extent to which current CPD provision (including TPS) is aligned with the vision defined by current educational policy in Nepal.
7. Identify teachers' self-reported professional development needs and preferred approaches to CPD.
8. Draw on international good practice to make recommendations for the development of CPD in Nepal, including TPS.

Figure 5: Study objectives

4.2 Research methods

This mixed-methods study was largely qualitative but also included a more quantitative teacher survey. The core of the research consisted of case studies of teacher education and development in three provinces – Karnali, Madhesh and Sudurpaschim. In each case, focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with relevant stakeholders in order to address the objectives listed above; for pre-service teacher education, respondents included university lecturers and campus chiefs, while the CPD component of this work drew on contributions from schoolteachers, head teachers and educational officials at provincial, district and municipality levels.[45] A total of 233 stakeholders contributed to FGDs and KIIs in the three focal provinces. Additionally, meetings were held with six representatives from Kathmandu University, ETC officials from the remaining four provinces and two MOEST officials.

A survey was also completed by 714 teachers working in 26 districts (urban, semi-urban and rural locations) across all seven provinces in Nepal. Over 70 per cent of respondents were male and between 31 and 50 years old. Over 70 per cent reported having education degrees, but only 53.6 per cent (most of whom were permanent teachers) had passed the TSC (pass rates varied significantly across provinces). Most of the teachers worked at secondary level.[46]

The fieldwork (including the teacher survey) was conducted largely in Nepali and mostly face-to-face, including for about 50 per cent of the survey respondents (the remainder

44. See also the discussion paper 'Teacher policy, governance and training: Issues and evidence to support programming' – https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/file/23095/download?token=Y6V1-zZo
45. We use municipality inclusively here to also include rural municipalities.
46. All research tools are available as a separate annexe to this report.

completed an online version). Vertex Consult was responsible for the fieldwork, with support from the lead researcher for this project (Simon Borg) and the British Council in Nepal.

With permission, all FGDs and KIIs were recorded, transcribed and analysed qualitatively using an inductive approach.[47] Case study reports (available separately) were produced for each province, and these were organised under a series of themes emerging from the data and which provide the basis of the results presented in Sections 5 and 6 below. The survey data was analysed using descriptive statistics, and selected results are included under relevant headings in Section 6 (the full survey analysis is also available separately).

4.3 Limitations

This largely qualitative study is informed by stakeholder perspectives; a wide range of education officials, head teachers, teachers and teacher educators were consulted, and the conclusions presented here represent their opinions, which may not always be representative of the status of initial teacher preparation and teacher development in Nepal more generally. These stakeholders also came largely from three provinces and, although the teacher survey drew on a national sample, this was non–random in nature and is not necessarily representative of the wider teacher population in the country. Overall, while the conclusions presented here are supported by the evidence collected, further, more detailed, study of specific issues – such as the delivery of initial teacher education programmes or the implementation and consequences of school-based CPD – would benefit from an observational component and more objective assessments of quality, in addition to stakeholder perspectives.

The link to case studies and survey analysis can be found here:
https://www.britishcouncil.org.np/status-teacher-education-and-development-nepal

or scan here:

47. Thomas, D. R. (2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. American Journal of Evaluation, 27(2), 237–246. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214005283748

5. Pre-service teacher education

The insights from the pre-service phase of this study are now summarised. The terms *lecturer* and *teacher educator* are used interchangeably here to refer to the individuals who teach on teacher preparation programmes.[48]

5.1 Status of teaching

University stakeholders felt that a career in teaching was increasingly a less attractive option in Nepal. Several arguments were cited to support these views – see Figure 6:[49]

Indicator	Illustrative comment
Parental aspirations	'Almost all parents say "My son/daughter will become a doctor. I wish my son would become an engineer." But nobody says "My son/daughter will become a teacher in future." This perception indicates how the education stream is being looked upon by the current Nepalese society'. (Lecturer)
Enrolments on education programmes are decreasing	'I have observed the situation of vacuum of availability of good teachers in some of the specific subjects at the school level. On the one hand, there is less enrolment of students in education faculty, and on the other, students have less interest in the teaching profession.' (Lecturer)
Education programmes are not students' preferred choice	'Students' attraction is low towards Education faculty which might be due to job insecurity after obtaining the degree. Teaching profession … in our context it is considered a low profile job. Nepalese society's mindset is that an individual becomes a teacher only after failing to enrol in other professions.' (Lecturer)
Education programmes are chosen by lower-performing Grade 12 students	'Another attitude is those with the lowest achievement in Grade 12 should go for the education faculty and others should go for high profile subjects such as science, management, etc.' (Lecturer)
Attendance and success rates on education programmes are low	'… our students are from a poor economic background. Therefore, majority of them are job holders … About 10–20 per cent of students are regularly absent. Only 40–50 per cent of the enrolled students continue till the last semester. And the success rate is also low (about 25 per cent).' (English department head)
Employment conditions for teachers are inferior to other civil servants	'The government itself has discriminated between teachers and civil servants in terms of facility and other motivational aspects.' (Lecturer)

Figure 6: Indicators of decreased status of teaching in Nepal

48. Locally, the term *college teachers* is also used, but we avoid this to avoid any confusion with schoolteachers.
49. Throughout the results, quotations from stakeholders are used to illustrate claims. These quotations have been selected because they reflect points which recur across the case studies and which were made by several stakeholders.

In relation to reductions in enrolment, in the three universities involved in this study, B.Ed. programmes in science (in one case) and both science and mathematics (in another) were not running due to a shortage of applicants. Given current low levels of interest in education programmes, concerns were expressed that the shortage of teachers in Nepal would become much worse in the years ahead:

> In the coming five years, large number of schools will be closed due to lack of teachers if the present situation of decreasing trend of teacher preparation continues and no immediate action is taken by the government. (Dean)

One feature of high-performing educational systems is that teaching is a high-status profession; this allows pre-service programmes to attract very capable students, apply rigorous admission criteria and enforce high standards of work. The evidence presented here suggests that Nepal is experiencing a decline in the status of teaching.[50]

5.2 Lecturer motivation

Generally (although the situation at Kathmandu University was seen to be more positive), lecturers said they did not feel a high level of professional motivation. One reason for this was that they felt their job was not given sufficient official recognition:

> I know people respect teachers and even obey them. But I realize only respect does not fulfil our needs and other requirements. We are devalued in comparison to other intellectual professions. The government is not able to utilize us in many aspects. In many cases, we are not prioritized for the activities which we are most suited. (Lecturer)

A lack of professional development opportunities was also noted by several stakeholders:

> I have been teaching in this campus for several years. Frankly to say, I have neither got any opportunity to enhance my teaching methodologies nor for other professional development. There is no favourable environment in the campus to adopt new methodologies and use of resources. I am totally demotivated with such circumstances. (Lecturer)

Insufficient staffing was another challenge noted and which was felt to interfere with the quality of education that students received:

> There are large numbers of students but no teachers in some subjects such as geography and political science … More importantly, we cannot recruit part-time teachers these days due to a lack of policy provision. Tribhuvan University does not provide us with any resources nor allocate sufficient budget. After all, there is serious impact for the teaching and learning of students in the campus. (Campus Chief)

Teacher educators are responsible for the next generation of teachers, and further analysis is required of the challenges lecturers face, their impact on the quality of pre-service programmes and how such challenges might be addressed as part of reform.

5.3 Education programmes

Universities set their own admission requirements, though these are typically linked to performance on the Grade 12 School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examinations or equivalent, plus further subject-related requirements depending on the specialisation chosen. Comprehensive data on the profile of students admitted to B.Ed. programmes was not available, though one university did confirm that for 2023, out of a total of 254 students, 158 (62.2 per cent) were female and 96 male. More detailed analyses of the profile of students joining and completing B.Ed. programmes would be an interesting additional area of research.

An analysis of education programmes, especially at B.Ed. level in two universities,[51] highlighted both similarities and differences. Differences were most obvious in programme content; for example, on the B.Ed. in English, one programme had 12 courses related to

50. Teacher salaries were recently increased – see https://loksewajob.com/salary-scale-of-government-school-teacher-in-nepal/. The glowing account of teaching given at the start of this article ('In Nepal, Government Schoolteacher job is considered one of the most lucrative jobs by position, prestige and money') is in stark contrast to the insights emerging here.
51. Kathmandu University only offers an M.Ed.

English language teaching (ELT), while the other had at most three (with other English courses focused on student teachers' own language development or non-pedagogical content). Both programmes included teaching practice courses. The sequence of particular courses was also interesting; in one case, out of 45 courses, the first ELT course was the 24th, while the foundational (for language teachers) course on 'Introduction to SLA' (second language acquisition) was 39th. The varying and somewhat random selection and sequencing of courses on the teacher education curricula we reviewed suggest that programme design is not guided by a national framework of graduate standards informed in turn by a shared vision of the competences that teachers of English require. A mathematics programme was analysed too; this also consisted of 45 courses, of which 30 focused on mathematics. This suggests a strong emphasis on the development of student teachers' subject matter knowledge. It was less clear, though, whether pedagogical skills for teaching mathematics were also being developed; a number of courses included 'for teachers' as part of their title (for example, 'Calculus for Teachers' or 'Algebra for Teachers'), which may imply a pedagogical focus. Overall, more systematic assessments of the levels of subject matter and pedagogical knowledge graduates achieve by the end of B.Ed. programmes are warranted.

Across education streams, there was greater similarity in terms of assessment, with both coursework and final examinations being utilised. For the latter, examples that were provided highlighted the prevalent use of multiple-choice questions (and hence a focus on assessing factual knowledge), with some use also of short-answer questions. Figure 7 shows an assessment format used for final examinations on one B.Ed. English programme. Overall, while closer study of assessment practices on pre-service programmes in Nepal is required, this initial analysis suggests there is scope for the use of a wider range of assessment strategies, including those which are performative rather than focused only on reproducing factual knowledge.

Question type	Number of questions	Marks	Weighting
Multiple choice items	10	10 marks	10 marks
Short answer questions	6 with 2 'or' questions	6x5 marks	30 marks
Long answer questions	2 with 1 'or' question	2x10 marks	20 marks

Figure 7: Assessment format for B.Ed. examinations

Lecturers were asked about their involvement in the design of the programmes they delivered. The consistent finding here was that, while curricula were periodically updated, teacher educators had no role in the process and were required to deliver the programme and

courses that were defined by their universities[52] (typically without any familiarisation or training). One lecturer explained that 'regarding curriculum design, we do not have any role and responsibility. We have to simply follow the curriculum designed by Tribhuvan University.' Others were critical of the scope of the curriculum (too much content) and the lack of relevant resources:

> We feel that the contents exceed by far the allocated time frame in the curriculum. The contents are so vague that we have to refer to several sources to teach a particular unit. Furthermore, the reference sources are not easily available. For better understanding and effective delivery of the courses, we lecturers should be given training by the curriculum experts. (Lecturer)

> In my opinion, the curriculum designers are guided by the ideology that the more content you put in the curriculum, the more knowledgeable the students will be. (Department head)

Links between B.Ed. programmes and schools were also felt to be lacking:

> There is no coordination between college teachers and schoolteachers. There is no common platform where we can interact with each other and discuss on the linkage between B.Ed. curriculum and schoolteacher preparation. (Lecturers)

This is an important observation given the emphasis in the literature discussed earlier (Section 3.1) of linking teacher preparation to the practice of teaching and what happens in schools.

Lecturers were free to select their own pedagogical approaches, though these were generally described as being lecture-based due to limitations in student ability and resources:

> Students' educational background is very weak and hence, they expect everything (reading notes/ materials) from teachers. No doubts other methods are in theory but in the context of Nepal, lecture method is still useful and mostly in practice as well. (Lecturer)

> The public campuses are not able to change as per the changed scenario. We are aware of the modern method of teaching and we can diligently use PowerPoint presentations and other modern methods. But we cannot implement them all in our classes due to lack of resources and unsupportive environment in the campus. So, we are compelled to use the same traditional lecture method whether the students have benefits or not. Mostly, we the lecturers of mathematics are suffering a lot. We cannot show the three dimensional figures to the students due to lack of modern tools. (Professor)

As noted in this last quotation, lectures were in some cases supplemented with PowerPoint slides, though limited evidence emerged here that technology contributed significantly to the delivery of pre-service programmes. This is another issue that merits closer attention; given the emphasis that the SESP 2021–30 places on the use of ICT in education,[53] student teachers should be able to witness in their courses effective examples of technology use.

The medium of instruction was generally Nepali (even for English programmes):

> I firstly try to make them understand in English. But they do not understand well. They get confused and cannot tell the gist. So, I again explain the same thing in Nepali. Then the students become happy as they understand exactly what I meant to say. (Lecturer)

> Regarding medium of instruction, first of all, it depends on the students' prior school level knowledge and capacity. In this connection, we have to use Nepali for making students understand. Students can answer in English but they cannot speak English. They do not talk in English with each other. Students' English proficiency is very low. (Lecturer)

Knowledge of subject matter is a critical component of teacher competence. If students on English programmes are unable to follow

52. For similar observations about the limited autonomy of teacher educators in Nepal, see Choi, T.-H., & Poudel, P. P. (2022). (Re)thinking initial teacher education curriculum: Toward equitable, crisis-ready TESOL. In R. Khan, A. Bashir, B. L. Basu, & M. E. Uddin (Eds.), Local research and glocal perspectives in English language teaching: Teaching in changing times (pp. 461–479). Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6458-9_29
53. SESP2021–30, Section 5.5.

lectures in English, this suggests that their own command of English (the subject they will teach) is low. Pre-service programmes for English, therefore, need to place more emphasis on improving student teachers' proficiency to ensure graduates have an appropriate level of English. Similar points apply more generally to the importance of subject matter knowledge in education graduates across subjects.

B.Ed. programmes include a teaching practice course in the final year, though its length and the number of lessons student teachers are required to teach varies (25–35). During the teaching practice, lecturers said they visit schools and observe each student (again, how often this occurred varied, but in some cases it seems that only one lesson was observed). Lecturers generally felt that teaching practice needed to be longer:

> The practicum courses should also be in earlier semesters instead of having them in the last semester only. This will help to make required correction in the university students' teaching practice and they become fully well-tuned till being graduated. (Lecturer)

Lecturers had differing views about the effectiveness of the teaching practice course; some felt it was beneficial, but others were more critical, noting that many students did not take the practicum seriously, did not teach as much as they are required to and were treated leniently when they were assessed. Some lecturers also highlighted head teachers' dissatisfaction with the commitment and performance of student teachers during the practicum. Further research is needed specifically into teaching practice on education programmes in Nepal – their length and structure, what student teachers are required to do, what support they receive and from whom, the training that supervisors and mentors are given, the role of head teachers, the quality of student teachers' lessons, the criteria that are used to assess these lessons, the kinds of feedback students receive, how teaching practice is linked to other courses on the programme, and the perceptions of all stakeholders involved about teaching practice and how to improve it.

5.4 Pre-service programmes and the TSC

As explained in Section 2.2, passing the TSC examination is a prerequisite for securing a teaching position in a community school. However, there was seen to be little alignment between teacher preparation programmes and the TSC (and candidates for the examination, therefore, must take a separate preparation course). As one teacher explained:

> For TSC examination, 50–60 per cent of the subject matter is in line with the things which we learnt in B.Ed. or M.Ed. But the remaining 40 per cent questions are related to ICT, Constitution of Nepal, General Knowledge, etc. which we did not study in college. TSC syllabus is revised frequently but B.Ed. syllabus is not revised accordingly. There were about 300 examinees for English subject but only 45 of them succeeded last year in Karnali province. This might be due to mismatch between the contents of TSC curriculum and English Education curriculum. (Teacher)

Some lecturers questioned the need for the TSC and felt that completing an education course at university should in itself suffice as a licence to teach:

> The compulsory provision of teacher license to appear in the TSC examination should be dissolved. Obtaining an Education degree itself should be considered as a kind of teaching license. The government needs to rethink on it. The education graduates are already well tuned with pedagogy and eligible for becoming teachers. (Lecturers)

6. CPD

Our focus now turns to teacher CPD, which is used here as an umbrella term for all those activities which teachers do to improve their professional competences. Thus, training courses (such as TPD training in Nepal) are a form of CPD and so are the various activities that in Nepal are included under TPS (see Section 2.3 above). During the case studies, and through the additional fieldwork that was conducted outside the three focal provinces,

including through the teacher survey, much insight emerged into the extent to which educational policies regarding CPD, and in particular TPS, were seen to be functioning effectively in the new federal structure.

6.1 The need for CPD

The importance of CPD for teachers was universally acknowledged, particularly given the modest levels of competence that education programme graduates are seen to possess:

> Pertaining to teachers' professional development, the challenge has been added to due to the education graduates with just pass division entering in the profession. In this connection, the only alternative is effective teacher training. (Educational officer)

> B.Ed. and M.Ed. are also a kind of teachers' training for the prospective teachers. They need formal training such as TPD to make them more practical and to transfer the knowledge they gained in university to the school classroom. (Vice head teacher)

6.2 Conceptions of CPD

Educational policy in Nepal makes a clear distinction between training (TPD) and non-training forms of CPD (such as TPS), though a traditional emphasis on training means that for many teachers this is seen to be synonymous with CPD. The use of 'TPD training' as the label for centrally delivered courses for teachers reinforces this idea that teacher professional development consists of training. Thus, when asked about professional development, many teachers only described the courses they had attended, for example:

> As a part of professional development, I have recently participated in two days' IC [Integrated Curriculum] dissemination. I have also received one-day training on psychosocial counselling for students. Now, I am again participating in four days' ICT training being conducted by EVENT project and Municipality Education Unit. (Teacher)

Others, though, showed a broader understanding of what CPD is:

> The activities which we can do for making ourselves skilled and competent teachers is professional development. For this, TPD training plays a significant role. However, it's only a medium. If we teachers discuss inside school regarding teaching methods, that is also a part of professional development. (Teacher)

> To discuss with senior and experienced teachers regarding teaching learning problems in the school is also a kind of professional development activity which we are regularly doing, though it's not a formal activity. We can search new materials from internet to increase our knowledge and become skilled teachers. (Teacher)

Educational authorities, too, were generally clear about the fact that TPD was just one form of CPD:

> For continuous professional development of a teacher, training is only one of the major components. The teacher should have self-learning and experience sharing with other teachers after returning to the school. (Educational Officer)

Just delivering training (TPD and customized training) does not account for overall professional development. Evaluation should be done and constructive feedback should be provided accordingly so that teachers can amend teaching methods and update themselves with new things. (Educational officer)

Nepal is an educational system where CPD has been traditionally linked to training courses. However, it is positive to see broader understandings of CPD emerging here, and educational authorities should continue reinforcing the message among teachers that training is just one kind of professional development. Of course, teachers will be persuaded not just by communications to that effect but by concrete measures; thus, for example, in addition to supporting non-training CPD (such as through TPS), ways of recognising such work in teacher performance and reward schemes are also needed.

6.3 TPD training

In the new federal system, ETCs are responsible for providing TPD training. They do not, though, have budgetary independence and must follow centralised decision making:

The training quota and budget everything is already decided by CEHRD. We have to just blindly follow the conditional framework of teacher training. Very limited budget is provisioned for education materials for a teacher participating in the TPD training. (ETC official)

For each phase of the training, teachers complete classroom-based projects and must submit these; some teachers we spoke to, though, complained that they never received any feedback on the project work they submitted. Also, trainers are given a training manual, but this is developed centrally and may not cater for varying teacher needs around the country:

A province-wise customized training manual should be developed. The training manual focusing and addressing needs of school in Kathmandu might not be suitable for the whole country. (Educational officer)

The continuing use of centrally developed training courses does to some extent actually work against the greater focus on locally defined needs-based training promoted by the devolution of responsibility to local governments.

Demand for TPD training outstrips supply due to limited resources and capacity in ETCs. However, teachers were often seen to be motivated to do the training mainly by the possibility of a better salary:

In Madhesh, TPD is regarded as a matter of formality by the teachers. There are many teachers whose intention is simply to achieve stipend and other facilities provided by the centre rather than learning new ideas. (Educational officer)

TPD training is just being delivered in the name of compulsory provision. The training centre should give training anyhow to teachers and teachers also should get training anyhow to get benefit of promotion in future. The core objective of TPD seems to be missing from both sides. If the score of TPD training were not used for promotion, we think most teachers would not

participate in the training. (Teacher)

ETCs were repeatedly described as understaffed. For example, in one training centre there were two trainers against an approved quota of eight, and in another the ETC head explained that 'we have only trainers of six subjects in the training centre. This number of trainers is really quite very few to train all teachers of the province.' The lack of staff meant that the planned training could not be wholly delivered and that the effectiveness of the TPD training could not be monitored:

There is no formal mechanism to monitor the effectiveness of TPD training. We could simply say how many teachers got the training but nobody can say what and how much change the training brought in the teaching and learning activities. (ETC official)

One aspect of the TPD training that one ETC training chief was dissatisfied with was the way certification was managed:

I am really disappointed with provision of TPD training certificate without mentioning the division on the certificate. Such provision does not motivate those teachers who really worked hard in the training. The final certificate without mentioning division indicates that all teachers' performance in the training was the same, which generally does not happen in reality. (ETC training chief)

Additionally, for some stakeholders, the current system, where TPD training is provided centrally, was not seen to be efficient due to the resources required:

There is wastage of government funds and time because of training centre based TPD training. The training centres are far from schools. The teachers have to stay there in a hostel during training. If such training centres are provisioned in some more locations, it would have been easier for nearby teachers and cost effective as well. (Head teacher)

6.4 Selection of teachers for TPD

The selection of teachers for TPD is meant to be co-ordinated among the EDCU, local education unit and schools: information about TPD should be relayed from the ETC to the EDCU, then to the relevant education unit in the municipality and finally to head teachers. However, education unit heads and head teachers complained that they were often uninvolved in the selection of teachers, and that this was finalised directly by the ETC. The selection process was thus not transparent or based on an understanding of which teachers needed training. Teachers who felt overlooked expressed frustration at the situation:

I have been teaching in the school for more than five years and not attended any training yet. I don't know when I would get my turn. It is said TPD is provided to the teachers based on priority. I have seen some of the teachers attending TPD more than twice. Such situation really makes me frustrated and demotivated. (Teacher)

Additionally, many teachers hold only temporary status and such teachers do not seem to have the same access to TPD as permanent teachers:

I have been serving as a temporary Science teacher for five years. I have not got any opportunity for any kind of professional development training so far. The TPD trainings are first targeted to permanent teachers. (Teacher)

I have been appointed as a subsidy teacher at secondary level. I have been teaching in the school for seven years. I have seen the Head Teacher recommending permanent teachers for TPD. But my turn has never come. (Teacher)

It's already been 15 years I have been teaching as a subsidy teacher in secondary level. I have taught thousands of students in this period. It's a matter of some disappointment that teachers like me never get the opportunity for training. (Teacher)

This raises questions about how equitable the provision of TPD training in Nepal is. The official position on this issue, though, was that only teachers whose continued employment was guaranteed should receive training funded by the government:

The government has to invest both funding and time to deliver training to teachers. There is no guarantee of continuity of jobs regarding the other kind of teachers. In such a situation, we cannot argue that all teachers should be provided equal opportunity. (Educational officer)

Teacher survey data for this study did confirm that permanent teachers were much more likely to attend TPD training (see Section 6.6). Head teachers did also confirm that priority was given

to permanent teachers. They also noted that they preferred to send active teachers to TPD because they would make greater efforts to share and apply what they learn:

While selecting the teachers, I tend to recommend the active ones. If I recommend the inactive ones, they tend not to implement in the classroom but the active ones will definitely share the knowledge with fellow colleagues and even in the classrooms. (Head teacher)

Another factor that affected teacher participation in TPD training was head teacher's willingness to release teachers, especially in secondary schools where teacher shortages already exist.

Overall, the priority for TPD given to permanent teachers means that a sizeable proportion of the teaching workforce are excluded; figures from 2021–22[54] indicate that, out of a total of over 58,000 secondary schoolteachers reportedly working in schools, about 13,000 (22.4 per cent) held permanent posts.

6.5 Teacher professional support

TPS is a key pillar in Nepal's current educational policy and through which less centralised, more teacher-led and more collegial and collaborative forms of professional development are being promoted. The evidence obtained from the three case study provinces suggests that limited

TPS is taking place. Teachers rarely provided examples of TPS they had been involved in, and their understanding of professional development was linked very closely to TPD training. Head teachers often admitted that no formal mechanisms for TPS had been established:

Normally, we keep on monitoring and evaluating the teachers in the classroom indirectly through the windows. We provide feedback to them whenever required. But frankly, we have not developed any formal monitoring and supervision mechanism to supervise and evaluate the teachers in the school. (Head teacher)

Some examples of current or past TPS activities, though, were mentioned, and they are presented in Figure 8; apart from the discontinued example of schoolteacher exchanges, the activities here emphasise support from the head teacher or discussion among teachers – two important elements in TPS.

'I sometimes do class observation … I discuss with teachers in general meeting regarding use of new methods of teaching to attract students in teaching learning activities. I also recommend self-reflection and self-exploration. There is provision of internet facility in the school free of cost. Those who want/ have will power, can definitely make an effort for professional development by being updated with new things.' (Head teacher)

'Generally, we keep on discussing with each other regarding any particular problem which we face in the course of delivering subject matter. But if the issue is of general kind, we put it in the general meeting where all teachers discuss and get a common solution.' (Teacher)

'We have subject-wise committees. There is regular meeting in the committees to discuss teaching and learning related issues.' (Head teacher)

'I frequently monitor their class and provide required feedback. We have also developed a system in which any trained subject teacher delivers the learning from the training to his/her colleagues in school. There is also trend of experience sharing in respective subject committee meetings. This has certainly helped other teachers who did not get opportunity for formal training so far. Thus, we are making some attempts for teachers' continuous professional development.' (Head teacher)

'Once, our municipality made a system of exchanging the subject teachers in nearby schools. Really, it was nice, and teachers had an opportunity to learn and share their expertise. As a matter of which some of our teachers were exchanged with other schools … Unfortunately, the system is stopped.' (Head teacher)

Figure 8: Examples of TPS

Stakeholders were asked to comment on the lack of TPS they reported, and they identified a range of barriers, which are summarised in

54. https://cehrd.gov.np/file_data/mediacenter_files/media_file-17-98334697.pdf

Figure 9. Time, resources and expertise are required for TPS to work effectively, so various questions arise here: Where will the time that teachers, head teachers and educational officers need to implement TPS come from? What resources are needed to support the activity and who will provide them? What skills and knowledge do all stakeholders involved in TPS (for example, in mentoring or action research) need to acquire?

Barrier	Illustrative comment
Lack of accountability	'Of course, it's my duty and responsibility to monitor classes and provide necessary feedback being a Head Teacher. I also provide some feedback to the teachers for better performance. But what I found is that they do not internalize the suggestions and keep on teaching in a conventional approach (more lecture-based teaching). To be very frank, they do not have any fear of the Head Teacher. And they know well that the Head Teacher does not possess authority to take any strict action against them.' (Head teacher)
Lack of legally defined roles	'Once I suggested that a teacher make some changes in his teaching to make it more effective and productive. He took it negatively. The next day, I received a call from the Head Teacher of that school asking me on which basis (clause of Education Act) I was permitted to give direction to a teacher. Since then, I am totally disappointed and left visiting any school. Not only me but also my colleagues in other municipalities are suffering from similar problems. Nobody wants to take a risk (by giving direction to teachers) as there is nothing clearly defined by prevailing law.' (Educational officer)
Lack of resources	'I was a district educational officer. I used to make visit of schools frequently with my staff. But now as a head of Education Development and Co-ordination Unit (EDCU), I do not have sufficient human resources and budget. Though I have a strong desire for school supervision personally, but I cannot do so due to lack of resources and policies.' (EDCU head)
Need for subject-specialist observers	'There is no doubt that the school inspectors used to visit schools but most of them were limited only in administrative supervision rather than providing technical support to the teachers by observing classes. This is also because of lack of subject knowledge with the school inspectors.' (Educational officer)
Heavy workloads	'We have extreme scarcity of required teachers in the school. Hence, the teachers have pressure of teaching many periods in a day. In such scenario, implementing strategies for supporting in their TPS and CPD is really challenging practically.' (Head teacher)

Figure 9: Barriers to TPS

Collectively, such perspectives highlight various ways in which the devolved governance of teachers in Nepal has created challenges for CPD. A lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities in teacher CPD, lack of expertise among local educational officers to support CPD and a lack of time for teachers and head teachers (particularly for school-based CPD) combine powerfully to stifle the ambitions of TPS.

6.6 Participation professional development

Teachers completing the survey were asked if they had done any professional development in the previous 18 months. Whereas 67.4 per cent (of 714 teachers) answered positively, almost one-third said they had not (it is likely many teachers were thinking only about TPD training even though the question started with a broad definition of professional development). In terms of teacher status, highest levels of participation in professional development were reported by permanent teachers (76.6 per cent) and subsidy teachers (72.8 per cent); in comparison, the figure for private resource managed teachers was 37.9 per cent.

Teachers who had participated in professional development were then asked about the kinds of activities they had completed. The activity

chosen most often (by 67.8 per cent of 481 teachers) was 'face-to-face meetings where teachers talk about teaching'; three other activities were chosen by over 40 per cent of respondents – doing action research (49.3 per cent),[55] participating in subject committee meetings (48 per cent) and reading books and journals about teaching (42.4 per cent). At the bottom of the list, the least frequently mentioned items were online training (17 per cent), mentoring (17 per cent) and keeping a reflective journal (14.6 per cent). Overall, these results suggest that this sample of teachers had experience of a range of professional development activities, though of course closer study is needed to verify what exactly teachers were doing and how effective it was. Only just over 30 per cent, though, said they had attended face-to-face training in the previous 18 months. Of these, 74.8 per cent were permanent teachers.

6.7 Preferred professional development activities

In the survey, teachers were also asked about the kinds of professional development they were interested in doing. They were again given a list and asked to choose a maximum of five preferences. Table 1 presents their responses in descending order of frequency.

Face-to-face training was by far the most commonly chosen item (by 70.9 per cent of teachers). Three items were selected by more than 40 per cent – online training courses, mentoring (support from a more experienced colleague) and face-to-face meetings to talk about teaching. At the bottom of the list, the two professional development activities least preferred by teachers were supervision visits and observing colleagues' lessons (more teachers, in contrast, wanted to be observed and receive feedback).

55. The high rating of this activity is surprising, and it cannot be assumed that many teachers are doing action research of the more formalised kind; it is, though, the focus of one of the compulsory classroom projects that teachers must do as part of the 30-day TPD training.

Table 1: Preferred professional development activities (N=714)

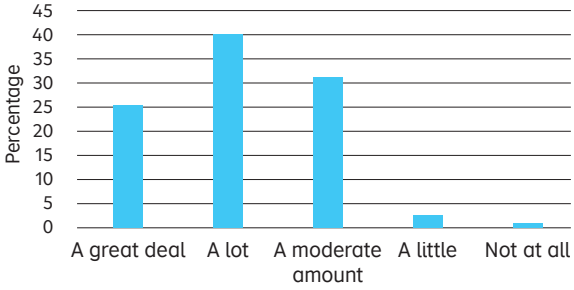
Professional development activities	N	%
Face-to-face training courses	506	70.9
Online training courses	331	46.4
Receiving regular support from a more experienced teacher in my school	304	42.6
Face-to-face meetings where teachers talk about teaching	292	40.9
Taking part in online groups where teachers talk about teaching	257	36.0
Being observed by colleagues and receiving feedback from them	251	35.2
Learning to reflect on my teaching	226	31.7
Planning lessons with colleagues	223	31.2
Doing action research in your own classroom	223	31.2
Reading books and journals about teaching	221	31.0
Receiving supervision visits and feedback from educational authorities	199	27.9
Observing my colleagues' lessons	163	22.8

The salience of training in teachers' preferences here is clear; of course, there may be different reasons for this preference, though the official recognition that comes from completing TPD training and the subsequent career benefits for teachers will undoubtedly be motivating factors. The relatively high interest in mentoring is positive given the contribution this can make to TPS, while further work is needed to enable teachers to understand the value of feedback from educational authorities and of peer observation.

6.8 Transfer of CPD to the classroom

In the teacher survey, respondents who said they had participated in professional development in the previous 18 months were asked about the extent to which this had impacted on their teaching. Figure 10 shows that the teachers were generally positive about this; almost 97 per cent said that professional development had had at least a moderate impact on their work, while for 65.7 per cent there had been at least 'a lot' of impact.

Figure 10: The extent to which professional development impacted on teaching (N=481)



Among the stakeholders who spoke to us, there were different views about the quality of the TPD and its impact on what teachers do in the classroom. Some teachers were positive:

> TPD is really very important for being a good teacher. Prior to receiving TPD, I felt I was an incomplete teacher but after training, I became a complete teacher/practical teacher. I energized myself. I used the concept of sharing, caring and learning following the TPD training. (Teacher)

> TPD worked a lot for me. After getting TPD training, I started using more student-centred methods while delivering classes. Earlier, I used entirely teacher-centred methods. As an example of what I learned from TPD training, for an example, when a student is unable to learn/understand something, I let other students facilitate to make him understand the subject matter. (Teacher)

Others, though, were more critical:

> There is nothing as such which makes us interested and more enthusiastic to learn from TPD. The general things are discussed which are of no major concern for us. Something like Action Research seems to be a little useful, otherwise we think TPD as such is of no use. (Teachers)

> I had a great expectation of learning some new ideas to excel in the teaching profession. I was quite eager in the first day. But all of my expectations went in vain when the trainer started training. I didn't find any new ideas other than simply some copy pasted slides from internet. I was expecting how to solve the problems of effective teaching in the classroom. But I could not find any of solution for that. (Teacher)

Regarding the transfer of CPD to the classroom, a few teachers said they were using training ideas in their lessons to some extent, but the majority said they faced constraints which did not allow them to do so. The major constraint they mentioned was large class size:

Due to big class size (70–80 students in a class) … we are all provided with a microphone and mini speaker … However, we cannot implement other teaching methods rather than focusing on lecture methods. (Teachers)

I understand the problem of secondary teachers who have to teach 70–80 students in a class. Their complaint can be considered to some extent that due to bigger class size, they cannot implement other methods of delivery rather than lecture method. (Head teacher)

It is difficult to arrange the benches for group division and group work. There is also a lot of noise during group work. In my subject (Science), practical teaching is very difficult due to lack of educational materials. So, I have to focus on teacher-centred method though I got TPD training on new methods of teaching. (Teacher)

We learnt about classroom management, students' seat arrangement, use of educational materials while studying Bachelor of Education. Moreover, we are taught about group discussion, presentation and student-centred method of teaching in TPD training as well. But it's a matter of sadness that we could not implement those things/activities in day to day classroom teaching due to extremely big class size and lack of sufficient educational materials. (Teacher)
The TPD training which we learnt is appropriate only for 20–25 students in the classroom, but we have around 50 students in a class. We are mostly adopting lecture based discussion method to teach our students. It's very inconvenient to divide students in group due to lack of space and furniture in the classroom. Therefore, we are unable to implement what we learnt in training. (Teachers)

In the teacher survey, almost 44 per cent of 714 respondents said they had on average over 40 students in class. At the same time, 38.6 per cent reported average class sizes of 30 or fewer. Overall, reported class sizes were higher in urban than in rural areas; for example, while only 7 per cent of respondents in urban areas reported average class sizes below 20, the equivalent figure in rural areas was 21.7 per cent. There were also variations in reported average class size across provinces; for example, while in Madhesh Province 59.2 per cent of teachers reported teaching classes of over 50, the equivalent figure in Gandaki Province was 3.7 per cent. Official figures (see Section 2.1) indicate that class sizes are highest in secondary Grades 11–12.

Teaching large classes is, surprisingly, not covered in the TPD training; a trainer did in fact acknowledge that it was not an issue he had previously thought about:

During the supervision in one of the schools, I saw a classroom with around 100 students which I had never thought during training to teachers. We simply train a small group of teachers but the real scenario in many of the schools in our context is totally different than we generally imagine. (ETC official)

Teachers also referred to the obligation to cover the curriculum and the limited time to do so as other reasons why they were unable to adopt more innovative approaches to teaching:

Almost all of us are teaching for 20 years but we hardly teach for 120–130 periods (one period lasts for 45 minutes). The curriculum anticipates 175 periods for successful learning but due to several holidays and other reasons, we cannot meet the target. Hence, if we keep on using different teaching methods which we learnt in the training, the courses could never be completed on time. Therefore, we cannot use different methods though we want. (Teacher)

We are taught about better teaching method in TPD training. But the final evaluation of basic and secondary education is still paper pencil based three hours' examination. Due to compulsion of completing course as per the syllabus for final evaluation, we could not implement different teaching methods rather than focusing on teacher-centred lecture method. (Teacher)

Lack of follow-up support in schools was also seen to work against pedagogical change following training:

Recently trained teachers have committed for

better performance and they did something new in the beginning as well. But, in absence of formal TPS mechanism, they slowly returned to the earlier teacher-centred lecture method. (Head teacher)

Regarding the limited effectiveness of TPD training, we provide the training and send the teachers back to schools without any additional support or teaching materials. It's just like sending the trained army in the war without weapons that cannot fight against the enemies. We have no control on the budget for training. (ETC official)

It was also felt that closer evaluation of teachers after training and higher levels of accountability were needed:

For effective use of training in the classroom, there should be a system of classroom teaching monitoring from local education units regularly and, accordingly, feedback and reporting mechanisms should be developed. (Head teacher)

Unless and until there is formal provision of reward and punishment in teaching sector, it would be very difficult to make good learning achievement despite provision of teachers training and other professional support. I find teachers are not using the things in classroom teaching which they learnt from training. (ETC official)

Those teachers who are permanent and have long years of experience do not keep themselves updated with new ways of teaching. Though they have received training, the majority of them do not utilize it in the classroom .... In private schools, the teachers have neither any such formal training nor other kinds of support from government, however, their performance in the SEE examination is far better than government schools. This is all due to provision of hire and fire policy. The teachers have to be responsible for students' weak performance. There is pressure from both parents and school management. So, teachers have to be accountable anyhow. But here in the case of government school, such provision is not in place. (Head teacher)

Education officials also felt that the lack of transfer of training was also due to the lack of incentives:

Regarding implementation of TPD training in the classroom, there is no provision of incentives for those teachers who really want to do something new/better. Although teachers learn many things well in the training centre, they do not apply those things in classroom. This is because of lack of motivation and incentive. (ETC official)

6.9 Impact of federal system on CPD

One of the key objectives in this study was to assess the impact that Nepal's federal structure has had on CPD. The evidence that has been presented so far indicates that a number of challenges have arisen, and these were discussed in further detail with stakeholders. At federal level, while a lack of resources for CPD at local level was recognised, there was a desire to present this transition to greater local autonomy more positively:

The local government and local education units are very close to the schools. They can easily understand the actual status of the schools. So, they should be equipped with a technically sound team for technical monitoring and supervision for teacher professional support (TPS). Of course, there is lack of adequate human resources at present but the scenario does not remain the same forever. It will be wrong to say that federalism has imposed challenges, rather I would prefer to say it has explored the opportunity of decentralization. So this should be exercised to the full extent. (CEHRD)

The opportunity that the federal structure provides for more effective localised support for teachers was recognised by some educational officers:

We are working for the educational development of schools at the local level. There has been establishment of ward and municipal level education committees. The important thing is they are properly functioning. We have been coordinating with such committees. We have a schedule of monitoring and evaluation of the schools and visit the schools regularly. During our visit, we monitor the school infrastructure and environment and the class observation of the teachers. We discuss among the teachers and suggest them for the improvement. (Educational officer)

However, the general view among the stakeholders we spoke to was that the potential of the federal education policy

to enhance teacher CPD was not yet being realised, and the main difficulties highlighted are listed and illustrated in Figure 11. While the nostalgia for pre-federal structures is clear, that in itself is not an argument against reform; the widespread perception, though, is that functioning alternatives characterised by clearly defined roles and priorities and supported with adequate resources have yet to be established.

Consequence	Illustrative comment
Loss of effective systems to supervise and monitor teachers	'Ultimately, the mechanism of supervision and monitoring part has been paralyzed and TPS as well as CPD are not seriously dealt with or over-looked.' (Educational officer)
Lack of resources to support local activity	'Regarding supervision and monitoring of effectiveness of the training, we do not have any mechanism in place. Thus, there is neither monitoring nor feedback for teachers support in school. Though the local government is made responsible by law for overseeing the secondary level education of the concerned municipality, they are not well equipped with adequate human resource and budget.' (Head teacher)
Only partial devolution of responsibility to local government	'All activities like teachers' selection, promotion, retirement, etc. are [still] done by the federal government. The local government is provided only with administrative responsibilities like recommendation of teachers for training, recommendation of teachers' salary, etc.' [56] (Educational officer)
Lack of well-defined roles	'Due to unclear education acts as well as rules and regulations, the concerned bodies roles and responsibilities are in limbo.' (Educational officer)
Limited involvement of EDCUs	'After the federal structure, the roles and responsibilities of the EDCU are quite limited … Actually, we have very limited roles for the overall educational development.' (EDCU head)
De-prioritisation of education	'The municipality mayor or rural municipality chairperson focuses on tangible aspects of development, i.e. infrastructural development such as construction of roads. Education hardly comes in the priority list.' (Educational officer)
Lack of trained officers	'Despite the lack of staff, we can try our best to mobilize our staff to some extent to visit schools and provide support to teachers. But for this, they should be trained to provide technical feedback to teachers by monitoring their classes. Otherwise, just sending them to schools for observation is meaningless.' (Educational officer)

Figure 11: Consequences for CPD of federal structure

Resource constraints and their implications for local governments' CPD work were repeatedly highlighted in our conversations.

56. It is envisaged that the forthcoming Federal Education Act will resolve many of these issues.

7. Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, recommendations for policy, practice and research in teacher preparation and teacher development in Nepal are now presented.

7.1 Policy level

1. A medium-term goal for the Government of Nepal (GoN) should be to reverse the decline in the status of teaching reported here. There is no single action which will achieve this goal; rather, it will be the outcome of a package of measures (managed federally and by LGs) over time which will include:

- Higher-quality initial teacher preparation
- Better employment conditions, including service-based criteria for permanent status
- Recognition that teaching is complex work requiring highly trained individuals
- Public acknowledgement of the value of teachers' work
- High-quality teacher induction
- Access to high-quality CPD
- Teacher evaluation mechanisms which provide rewards or support accordingly
- A degree of teacher professional autonomy
- Higher levels of teacher and school accountability for learning outcomes.

Improving the status of teaching will attract more able candidates to the profession; supported by more effective initial preparation and CPD, they will in turn contribute more effectively to education in the country.

2. It is important to expedite various goals defined in the SESP 2021–30 in relation to teacher quality, particularly the revision of the Teacher Competency Framework for Nepal. This will inform the development of teacher standards, which in turn should provide a unifying focus for the review of teacher preparation and CPD in the country.

3. While the three levels of government in the federal system are clearly defined, there remains much uncertainty about the degree of autonomy that LGs have and of specific local responsibilities in relation to teacher CPD. Finalising the new Federal Education Act is a priority, as this has the potential to resolve many of the ambiguities which are currently limiting the provision and quality of TPD and TPS.

4. While the federal structure creates opportunities for more localised CPD for teachers, a recurrent challenge noted by educational officials in this report is a mismatch between the aspirations of the federal government for the quantity and quality of devolved TPD and CPD and the capacity of provincial and local governments. CPD can only be managed effectively by ETCs and LGs when appropriate resources are available that enable them to do this. These include not only budget but also a sufficient number of staff equipped with appropriate competences for designing, delivering and evaluating CPD.

7.2 Teacher preparation

5. Universities responsible for teacher preparation should work together to develop a common vision for education programmes and a shared set of graduate standards (which should in turn be linked to national teacher professional standards). Graduate standards should be based on a close analysis of the skills, knowledge and other attributes (disciplinary and transferable) that teachers (generally and in specific subject areas) need in order to function effectively in schools.

6. Teacher preparation curricula should be revised in line with the graduate

standards described in Recommendation 5. Producing effective teachers should be the central concern of the curriculum. Graduates need to acquire subject matter knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge (common to all teachers) and pedagogical content knowledge (how to teach their subject). These should be central in teacher education curricula.

7. Particularly for English education programmes, the development of student teachers' proficiency in English (not just their theoretical knowledge of English) should be prioritised. Programmes need to define target exit levels (possibly aligned to some international benchmark such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)) and provide English language courses that allow graduates to reach these. Graduates with low levels of English cannot provide effective English language instruction in schools. Similar arguments apply to other subjects, though English is distinct given that it is both the subject and the medium of instruction.

8. Any review of initial teacher preparation should also re-consider the role of teaching practice. Student teachers will benefit from school experiences (including observation and talking to teachers) throughout their programme (not just in the final year). Ensuring that all stakeholders in the process receive appropriate preparation and support is also important, as are clearly structured tasks for student teachers to complete, transparent assessment criteria and constructive feedback.

9. Teacher educators (including the many who are part-time) will benefit from opportunities to enhance their own competences (theoretically and practically) in relation to course design, pedagogy, assessment (of student teachers) and evaluation (of teacher education courses). Pedagogical development should focus in particular on ways of enabling teacher educators to adopt more interactive methods even with large classes. Teacher educators will also benefit from an awareness of how assessment can utilise performative tasks which allow student teachers to develop and demonstrate the development of practical skills and teacher decision making. Improving teacher educators' ability to use technology in their courses will also ensure that student teachers are exposed to positive models of the kinds of technology-informed pedagogical practices they will be expected to implement as future teachers.

10. It is also recommended that mechanisms for the accreditation and regular external review of teacher preparation programmes be introduced or revised to maintain consistent standards across the country.

11. Teacher educators often feel disempowered by a lack of autonomy, consultation and support. It is recommended that universities conduct their own internal research to better understand such issues and how they might be alleviated. Improving the morale of teacher educators will contribute to better programme quality.

12. B.Ed. programmes and the TSC examination are not closely aligned. Further discussion among the relevant stakeholders of how this might be problematic is recommended (it might not be, given the different functions of each process). In any case, given the shared concern with initial teaching qualifications that B.Ed. programmes and the TSC have, closer dialogue between respective representatives is desirable.

13. While limited insight emerged from this study into teacher induction processes, it is important to emphasise the value of structured support for early career teachers, and it is recommended that appropriate guidelines for the process be developed by LGs in collaboration with head teachers. These guidelines should be formulated in a document which is also made available to all new teachers.

7.3 CPD

14. An effective CPD system will be driven by professional standards which define the competences that teachers require to deliver national education goals. It is recommended that such standards be articulated and/or reviewed for Nepal and used as a reference point for decisions about the kinds of CPD that teachers require.

15. TPD remains the dominant form of CPD in Nepal. Given the move to LG, it is recommended that TPD courses and manuals be adapted by LGs to respond more effectively to the needs of local schools, teachers and students. TPD content remains quite generic and insufficiently driven by insight into student learning in Nepal. LGs should be given the opportunity to revise training courses accordingly. They will first need to be equipped with the expertise for such a task.

16. Closer observation-based study is recommended of how TPD training is delivered (for example, what instructional methods trainers use) and of the further developmental support that trainers require to improve their competences and enhance the quality of their work.

17. Further study is also required of how online mechanisms can be effectively used to provide access to training to a wider range of teachers. In addition to widening access to training, virtual approaches may alleviate some of the challenges noted here regarding the availability of budget, trainers and training premises. The capacity of trainers to support teachers virtually would also need to be enhanced.[57] A guide for ETC trainers on adapting face-to-face training to online contexts is available[58] and can be disseminated more widely to support the greater use of virtual training.

18. Improving the number of training centres in each province would allow resources to be used more efficiently and reduce the funds that are spent on long-distance teacher travel and accommodation.

19. Permanent teachers are currently given priority for TPD training, and a substantial proportion of the teaching workforce are subsequently excluded from opportunities to develop. This has negative effects on the quality of

57. For resources regarding online competences for teacher educators, see the report and webinar at https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-and-events/webinars/webinars-teacher-educator/which-competences-do-teacher-educators-need.
58. GoN (2021). PETC Trainers' Handbook for Adapting Teacher Training from Face to Face to Online. MOEST

education, both because it lowers the morale of non-permanent teachers and because the competences of these teachers are not being developed. It is important for the authorities to identify strategies for addressing this situation; this might include provision which makes it easier for non-permanent teachers to upgrade their status once they meet specific criteria.

20. TPD courses are assessed using several criteria, including a final examination. However, teachers' certificates do not indicate how well they do on the assessment. This limits the value of the assessment and can negatively affect teacher motivation. It is recommended that TPD certificates specify how well teachers perform.

21. As part of the TPD assessment, teachers complete an action research project. It is unclear what the criteria for successful projects are or whether teachers receive any feedback on their work. It is recommended that more explicit guidance be published by CEHRD on this matter. This would also encourage teachers to conduct further action research projects as part of TPS.

22. More effective mechanisms are required to assess both the quality of TPD training courses and the impact they have on teaching and learning. While how many courses are run and how many teachers take part are important indicators, evidence of quality and impact are essential for the improvement of teacher CPD.

23. In order to study the effectiveness of the various forms of CPD (including TPS) that teachers in Nepal engage in, LGs need to develop expertise in monitoring and evaluation. It is recommended that a needs analysis of the evaluation work LGs must do be carried out and a strategy formulated to address these needs.

24. Post-training mechanisms to support teachers when they return to the classroom are lacking, and this limits the extent to which teachers apply in their lessons new ideas from the training. It is important for LGs (in co-operation with head teachers) to formulate a strategy to address this issue. For example, after attending training, teachers could be asked to define some changes they plan to make in their classroom, share these with the head teacher, then meet them periodically to discuss progress against the plan.

25. Class size is seen to be a major barrier to the adoption of new pedagogical practices by teachers. It is recommended that a focus on teaching large classes be included in TPD or customised training to help teachers learn about effective pedagogical strategies they can use in their classrooms. Trainers also need to be made more aware of the difference between demonstrating activities with 25 teachers in a training centre and expecting teachers to replicate this in a classroom with 50 or more students.

26. Limited post-training pedagogical innovation by teachers was also ascribed to a lack of incentives and low levels of accountability. It is recommended that both of these issues be addressed as LGs continue to develop their CPD mechanisms. Teachers will be motivated by incentives that acknowledge and make public their innovative work; formal mechanisms (such as teacher performance evaluations) which make teachers accountable to head teachers and LGs also have a role to play in stimulating change in the classroom.

27. The promotion of non-training CPD through TPS is commendable; it is important that government policy is supported with consistent messages (from LGs and head teachers) to teachers about how TPS differs from TPD training. TPS also needs to be incentivised to motivate teachers to take part.

28. Head teachers are expected to take a leading role in TPS, and it is important to assess the competences head teachers require to implement this role effectively and to provide them with appropriate capacity-building opportunities. Opportunities for head teachers to collaborate through a community of practice where common challenges related to TPS are discussed and solutions considered would also be of value.

29. TPS includes an ambitious range of activities; given the different kinds of technical expertise required to implement these and the currently restricted ability of LGs to support TPS, it is recommended that the MOEST or LGs select a smaller set of activities and make those the focus of TPS for a specified period (for example, two years). Two ideal candidates are mentoring and peer observation, though LGs may vary in their preference. The principle, though, is to streamline the goals for TPS and to allow for a more productive focus on selected CPD activities.

30. For mentoring to be effective, clarity is required around several key issues: who the mentors will be, criteria for mentor selection, their roles and responsibilities, how many teachers they would be responsible for, the goals of mentoring, how the quality of mentoring would be assessed, what incentives would be available for mentors, the competences needed for effective mentoring, and how these could be developed (for example, through training). Mentoring often also calls for significant shifts in teachers' attitudes towards CPD (for example, mentees must be active participants in the process). Guidance on such matters is available in the international literature[59] along with insights from a pilot of a mentoring scheme in Nepal.[60]

31. For TPS to work effectively, the skills and knowledge that underpin each different CPD activity must be identified and developed in the relevant stakeholders. For example, while action research is included in TPD Phase 1 training, only three hours are dedicated to it; this is inadequate if teachers are to engage productively in action research as part of TPS. Similarly, for mentoring to be effective, mentors require specific skills that need to be developed through training. To support teachers in the classroom, LG officials need to be trained in the process of observing lessons and giving teachers feedback.

32. Teachers and head teachers will be better able to participate in TPS activities when they are able to see clear models of what these entail. It is recommended that LGs and/or federal authorities produce a resource illustrating TPS practices and make it available to schools. This would include, for example, case studies (real examples) of mentoring, peer observation, action research, and lesson observation and teacher feedback. Videos of local participants doing and reflecting on these activities, along with relevant associated tools, would enhance such a resource and motivate engagement in TPS.

59. For example, Davis, E. (2014). Making mentoring work. Rowman & Littlefield Education.
60. CEHRD (2022). Pilot of teacher mentoring as an element of teacher professional development. MOEST.

Author biography

Simon Borg has been involved in teaching and teacher education for 35 years. He specialises in the design, implementation, evaluation and study of teacher education and professional development programmes and policies. He has published widely and completed educational consultancy assignments in over 20 countries.
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