

# Coach

Helping Countries Accelerate Learning

## Program Overview Document

SEPTEMBER 2021

### Summary

*Coach* is the World Bank's global initiative focused on helping countries improve in-service teacher professional development (TPD) programs and systems to accelerate learning. *Coach* recognizes teachers' central role in improving student learning. The initiative addresses the critical need to adequately prepare, develop, and support teachers to succeed. The program has the goal to help countries design, implement, and evaluate high-quality TPD programs and systems that align with best practice and evidence. This goal will be achieved through a three-pronged approach consisting of the development of technical resources, operational support, and a robust stakeholder engagement strategy. The *Coach* vision is that all classroom teachers have regular access to high-quality and effective professional development opportunities that effectively support them to improve their teaching practices in the classroom and increase student learning.

### 1. Background and Context

**The world is experiencing a global learning crisis. Despite increases in enrollment in recent decades, too many children remain out of school, and many in school are learning too little** (UIS 2017; World Bank 2018). More than 250 million primary- and secondary-school-aged children and youth are out of school, and a large fraction of these have had no formal schooling (UIS 2019). However, even for children who are in school, a large proportion are not acquiring fundamental skills. The current Global Learning Poverty rate is 53 percent; that is, 53 of every 100 10-year-olds in low- and middle-income countries cannot read and understand an age-appropriate text.

**In an educational system, the quality of classroom teaching that students receive is the most important in-school driver of learning. Ultimately, addressing the global learning crisis requires improving teaching quality worldwide** (Popova, Evans, and Arancibia 2016). Estimates from various countries show that switching from a low-performing to a high-performing teacher can increase a student's learning outcomes by the equivalent of more than two years of schooling (Bau and Das 2017; Buhl-Wiggers and others 2017; Evans and Yuan 2017). Rigorous evaluations also show that interventions delivered by teachers, for example using structured pedagogy, are among the most effective in improving learning (Béteille and

Evans 2019). The value of teachers goes far beyond these effects on measured cognitive learning. Research shows that teachers also are essential to the socioemotional well-being and outcomes of students, often well beyond their schooling years (World Bank 2020).

**In this context, it is essential that countries have appropriate policies, systems, and programs to support teachers in teaching effectively.** Countries must ensure both *pre-service training* and *in-service teacher professional development (TPD) programs* that provide high-quality preparation and learning opportunities. These TPD programs and strategies must be embedded within a broader teacher policy system that adequately recruits, selects, prepares, develops, supports, and motivates teachers throughout their careers.

**Ensuring high-quality in-service TPD programs and systems is of the utmost importance in strengthening teaching quality and improving student learning and outcomes worldwide.** This is particularly important in the context of the current global learning crisis, the additional disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the global goals set forth in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.

## 2. Problem Statement

**Despite its importance, many education systems today do not provide teachers with high-quality TPD opportunities to improve and strengthen their teaching practice.** A minority of teachers do not have access to any kind of in-service TPD. Most teachers have access to TPD that is not of high quality and that does not adequately help them improve their teaching practice.

**Recent research has highlighted a set of key design and implementation characteristics that the most effective TPD programs have in common.** However, [an analysis of 139 TPD programs](#) in low- and middle-income countries found that much of the professional development that teachers receive does not align with these characteristics.

Instead, TPD programs implemented at scale typically demonstrate weaknesses in four key areas:

1. **Same support and training for all teachers, with no personalization tailored to each teacher's needs and contexts.** Many programs adopt a one-size-fits-all approach in which all teachers receive the same training opportunities, regardless of where they are in their current developmental journey as an educator. These programs do not provide personalized feedback to teachers to strengthen or improve the areas in which they are struggling.
2. **Theoretical content disconnected from classroom reality.** Many TPD programs focus on providing theoretical content and knowledge that is difficult for teachers to transfer to their classroom practice. Additionally, the training and support that these programs and systems offer do not enable teachers to practice the skills that they need to master. Many

TPD programs provide theoretical training and do not provide time and support for teachers to practice new skills.

3. **Training in a broad set of skills, with inadequate time to master each one.** TPD programs often focus on general training in a broad set of skills, without prioritizing material. This format does not allow teachers enough time to learn, practice, and master each skill.
4. **One-off programs that do not provide enough support.** Many programs offer teachers only one-off training experiences, often in the form of one initial training at the start of the school year. These programs do not provide opportunities during the school year for reinforcement, follow-up and support to address issues that come up as teachers use the new skills in the classroom.

Consequently, teachers seldom are motivated to take TPD programs or to apply the learning from these programs in their classrooms.

The issues above span both the *design* and *implementation* of TPD programs. For example, related to the fourth point—that one-off programs do not provide enough support—regarding *design*, some programs provide only initial training to teachers and do not plan any ongoing support during the school year. Regarding *implementation*, a program may seek to provide ongoing support and follow-up to teachers via a coaching scheme during the school year. However, if coaches are overburdened with other work, or not properly supported to carry out their role and responsibilities, teachers still will end up without reinforcement, follow-up, and support.

## 4. Our Vision of Effective In-Service TPD Programs and Systems

In response, the World Bank has developed *Coach*, a global initiative to accelerate student learning by improving in-service TPD. *Coach* focuses on supporting countries at every stage in the design, implementation, and evaluation of high-quality and effective TPD programs and systems. This focus aligns with what we know works from research and the experience of the most successful programs in the field.

*Coach* helps countries move away from the traditional inputs-based approach to one that focuses on enhancing the quality of student-teacher interactions. *Coach* recognizes the central role of the classroom teacher and the importance of supporting him/her via high-quality and effective TPD opportunities and learning experiences. *Coach* leverages insights from the fields of behavioral change, adult learning, and the science of learning.

*Coach* supports countries to align every element of their TPD systems and programs with four evidence-based principles of effective TPD (Table 1).

**Table 1. Coach Principles for Effective In-Service TPD**

From Ineffective Professional Development	→	...to Effective Professional Development
From one size fits all	→	Tailored
From highly theoretical	→	Practical
From general	→	Focused
From no follow up	→	Ongoing

- **Tailored.** Research from the field of adult learning shows that adults are better able to master new skills that are relevant to their needs and contexts. *Coach* moves toward a model where professional development opportunities align with teachers’ needs, eventually using data to identify, prioritize, and tailor learning opportunities for each teacher.
- **Practical.** Insights from an analysis of the most effective programs show that they provide training in practical skills that are easily transferable to the classroom to change instruction. Moreover, research from the science of learning shows that deliberate and repeated practice is essential to master new skills. This finding is backed up by the empirical evidence from the most effective programs which provide learning opportunities that enable teachers to practice, reflect, and receive feedback on their use of the new skills. *Coach* moves toward a model centered on practical skills focused on what teachers need to do in the classroom, and that gives teachers multiple opportunities to practice these new skills and gain mastery.
- **Focused.** Adult learning research shows that teachers need adequate time to master new content and knowledge. Instead of general training in a wide range of techniques, *Coach* builds toward a model focused on mastery of a targeted set of teaching skills at a time, providing sufficient time to consolidate new learning.
- **Ongoing.** Research from the science of learning indicates that mastery of new skills requires repeated and deliberate practice. This finding is backed up by evidence from the field regarding the most effective TPD programs that teachers with ongoing support to learn, practice, improve, and master the use of new teaching skills. *Coach* builds toward a model focused on providing continuous support through repeated cycles of observation and feedback and regular, ongoing opportunities for follow-up training throughout the school year.

**The focus of *Coach* is on helping countries build effective TPD systems and programs that realize these four key principles by leveraging available structures and modalities to deliver appropriate support to teachers.** Although the program name references coaching (an approach shown to often embody the four principles described above), *Coach* focuses on supporting not only personalized coaching but also various modalities of TPD. Potential structures and modalities include but are not limited to group training, 1-1 individualized support (coaching), school- and cluster-based training, professional learning communities, and teacher self-study.

**A guiding principle for the *Coach* program is the importance of ensuring that TPD programs and systems are need based, that is, they respond to the specific needs of the country context, teacher population, and local resources.** The way that these principles are operationalized on the ground will be dependent on each country context, teacher policies, relevant TPD structures, and teachers' capacities and needs. The aim is to meet countries where they are and to provide the relevant tools and resources to support countries' efforts to adopt and integrate these evidence-based principles within their TPD programs.

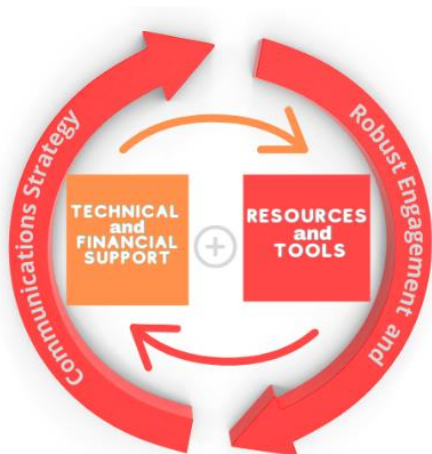
**A second guiding principle for the *Coach* program is to ensure that resources and support span both the design and implementation phases of TPD programs.** *Coach* resources seek to respond to the issues in current TPD offerings by providing guidance not only on how to design high-quality TPD programs and systems but also how to implement them successfully and with fidelity in the field. This guidance requires using the experience in the field to provide feedback to the program and to strengthen the technical tools and resources developed from it.

**A final guiding principle for the *Coach* program is integrating TPD programs within effective teacher policy and systems that support teaching and learning.** Consequently, *Coach* is integrated in, and aligned with, a broader package of support to teachers. The *Coach* Program is part of the [Global Platform for Successful Teachers](#), which outlines five principles that guide the World Bank's approach to support countries to improve teacher-related policies and programs. The platform drives change (1) by supporting governments with technical advice and financial support and (2) by providing policymakers, researchers, school leaders, and teachers with the tools and resources to help implement the five principles. Strengthening in-service TPD systems is 1 of 5 principles identified by the Global Platform for Successful Teachers to help countries enhance their teacher policies. *Coach* also is integrated within the support offered by the World Bank to [Accelerator Countries](#), which have committed to an investment plan to reduce Learning Poverty through an integrated approach anchored in a vision of instructional coherence across curricula, pedagogy, and assessment. Finally, *Coach* is aligned with World Bank efforts to leverage technology effectively to improve teaching and learning processes. Technology can be leveraged by delivering teacher professional development at scale, supporting teachers to facilitate learning in the classroom, and monitoring the implementation fidelity and effectiveness of TPD programs.

## 4. Coach Program and Strategic Approach

To accomplish its vision and goals, *Coach* leverages a three-pronged approach (Figure 1):

**Figure 1. Coach Program and Strategic Approach**



- a) **Development of technical tools and resources** to design, implement, and evaluate high-quality and effective TPD programs and systems
- b) **Direct operational support to the field** as technical assistance (TA) to a subset of countries revamping their TPD programs and systems
- c) **Engagement strategy focused** on positioning the importance of high-quality and effective TPD within the international and national teacher policy landscape

### 4.1 Development of technical tools and resources

The development of technical tools and resources provides country policymakers, program leaders and staff, school and system leaders, and other relevant educational actors with relevant guidance on how to design, implement, and evaluate high-quality and effective TPD programs and systems.

The focus is on synthesizing and distilling key learnings from the empirical evidence and the most effective programs in the field to provide guidance that is evidence based, highly actionable, and easy to adapt to different settings. With stronger knowledge on what works, and how, stakeholders will be better able to support the integration of evidence-based practices and reduce the gaps between theory and practice. The evidence on what works well in TPD is often centered in high-income countries. A key element of this strand of work is translating this evidence into guidance on policies and practices that are applicable to low- and middle-income country settings that may struggle to implement quality TPD interventions.

The *Coach* tools and resources have been designed to provide guidance across all stages of the design, implementation, evaluation, and improvement of effective TPD programs and systems. The intended audience of these resources are international and country policymakers, program leaders and staff, system and school leaders, and others in the policy or programmatic level of a TPD system or program.

The tools and resources are supplemented with an [overview video](#), which introduces the *Coach* program and initiative, and this **Overview Document**, which provides an orientation to the program.

**Table 2. Coach Tools and Resources**

Coach Tools and Resources
<p><b>Resource navigator</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Resource Guide for Teacher Professional Development Reforms (Forthcoming).</b> Provides a list of key resources both from within and outside the <i>Coach</i> program. The resources are supplemented with their cost and contact information and provide guidance on enhancing a country’s support throughout the life cycle of a TPD reform—diagnosis, design, implementation, and evaluation.</li></ul>
<p><b>Existing Teacher Professional Development programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Coach Repository of In-Service Teacher Professional Development Programs.</b> Provides access to a database of in-service K-12 TPD programs that have been implemented around the world. The repository is accompanied by a set of Spotlights Sheets, which provide more detailed information on a subset of the programs. (<a href="#">Repository</a> and <a href="#">Spotlight Sheets: APM Peru, NEI+ Nigeria, Read India, Tusome Kenya, UBC Chile</a>)</li><li>• <b>World Bank Teacher Professional Development Repository.</b> Provides access to a detailed database of World Bank education projects or projects with education components. These projects focus primarily on in-service TPD interventions for all levels of education. The repository also includes TPD projects that target pre-service, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and higher education. (<a href="#">Repository</a>)</li></ul>
<p><b>Guidance on different types of teacher support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Individualized (1-1) Support<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>Structuring Effective 1-1 Support (Revised Post Consultation).</b> Provides guidance on the profile of the pedagogical leader who provides 1-1 support to the teacher, the typical ratio of teachers to pedagogical leader, the frequency of support to teachers, the typical length of observation and feedback session(s), and the remote support teachers require across different individualized (1-1) support models, such as coaching. (<a href="#">Technical Guidance Note</a>, <a href="#">Summary Slides</a>, and <a href="#">blog</a>)</li><li>○ <b>Implementing Effective 1-1 Support (Available for Consultation through November 15, 2021).</b> Provides guidance on how pedagogical leaders can provide high-quality individualized (1-1) support to teachers. The note includes a high-level overview of the 1-1 coaching cycle, followed by a more detailed discussion of each stage of the coaching cycle. (<a href="#">Technical Guidance Note</a>)</li></ul></li></ul>

- Group Support
  - **Structuring Effective Group Training (Available for Consultation through November 15, 2021).** Provides guidance on the five characteristics of effective group training: Content focus, Frequency of training, Profile of the facilitator, Group size, and Materials to be provided. ([Technical Guidance Note](#) and [Summary Slides](#))
  
- School- and Cluster-Based Support
  - **Structuring and Supporting School- and Cluster-Based Continuous Professional Development (Available for Consultation through November 15, 2021).** Provides guidance on the five decision points for structuring and supporting effective school- and cluster-based teacher support: Grouping of teachers, Frequency of meeting, Profile of the facilitator, Training and support for facilitators, and Content for teachers. ([Technical Guidance Note](#) and [Summary Slides](#))

#### **Guidance on motivating changes in teaching practices**

- **Motivating Changes in Teaching Practices (Forthcoming).** Provides information on motivational barriers for behavioral change in the TPD journey along with strategies and motivational enablers to overcome those barriers for improving teaching practices.

#### **Guidance on establishing a monitoring and evaluation system**

- **Monitoring and Evaluation for In-Service Teacher Professional Development Programs (Forthcoming).** Provides guidance on designing a results framework and choosing indicators, and outlines a step-by-step process to design, implement, use, and sustain a TPD M&E system.

#### **Guidance on improving Teacher’s Guides**

- **Teacher’s Guide Diagnostic Tool Manual (Revised Post Consultation).** Provides guidance on how to assess the quality of teacher’s guides in grades 1-4. Additionally, the manual provides recommendations for the improvement of teacher’s guides. ([Manual](#), [Summary Slides](#), [Scoresheet](#), and [blog](#))

#### **Sample Teacher Professional Development materials**

- **Foundational Teaching Skills Guide (Revised Post Consultation).** Outlines a set of 11 Foundational Teaching Skills (FTS). For each skill, the guide provides a clear description of what it entails, step-by-step guidance on how to implement it effectively in the classroom, and a detailed example. ([FTS Guide](#))
- **Foundational Teaching Skills Teacher Training Package (Available for Consultation through November 15, 2021).** A package meant to be used by master trainers delivering group support to teachers focused on improving their skills across all, or a subset, of the 11 FTS. The package consists of a training manual, participant workbook, training video scripts, training assessment, and a Coach FTS



Contextualization Note. The Contextualization Note provides guidance on how to adapt, combine, and sequence training modules to suit the needs of different contexts. ([Trainer Manual](#), [Participant Workbook](#), [Training Video Scripts](#), [Training Assessment](#), and [Coach FTS Contextualization Note–Forthcoming](#))

- **Foundational Teaching Skills Coach Training Package (Forthcoming).** A package meant to be used by master trainers delivering group support to coaches focused on supporting teachers in improving their skills across all, or a subset, of the 11 FTS. The package consists of a training manual, participant workbook, video scripts, and training assessment.
- **Coach Companion (Forthcoming).** An example of a manual for coaches and school leaders to use in the classroom to support the application of the FTS. The manual is meant to be used by the coach or school leader as s/he conducts regular classroom visits; identifies skills for which teachers need support; and conducts follow-up feedback conversations after each observation that provide targeted feedback, modeling, and practice for the teacher.

## 4.2 Operational Support

A second element of the *Coach* approach is to provide hands-on operational support to country teams and governments with the objective of increasing capacity to build effective TPD programs and systems.

The provision of operational support as technical assistance (TA) helps a subset of countries to leverage the *Coach* tools and resources to improve their current TPD programs and systems. In addition, the work implementing the *Coach* tools and resources in the field will shape and inform additional technical products, ensuring a feedback loop between evidence and practice. This component also ensures that the *Coach* tools and resources will respond to the challenges and context of implementing TPD programs in the field.

Table 3 summarizes the direct operational support that the *Coach* team is providing to countries.

**Table 3. Current Active Coach Support to Countries, September 2021**

Country	Coach intervention
<b>Angola</b>	The Girls Empowerment and Learning project includes a component focused on improving teaching quality by supporting teachers, including the provision of structured learning materials, teacher training, and coaching. Building on insights from the past implementation of <i>Teach</i> in Angola, the <i>Coach</i> team will support project implementation, drawing from the global tools and resources.
<b>Democratic Republic of the Congo</b>	<i>Coach</i> principles are being used to inform the development of new pedagogical leadership modules as part of in-service training for school leaders in nine provinces. The revised pedagogical leadership modules include training in how to establish a coaching relationship with teachers,

	how to use an observation instrument to identify teacher needs, and how to provide ongoing support and feedback to teachers on foundational teaching skills.
<b>Mozambique</b>	The <i>Coach</i> team has been working with the government of Mozambique on the <i>Aprender+</i> program, <sup>a</sup> which has the overall goal of improving early grade reading outcomes—particularly as schools reopen following a year of school closures. <i>Coach</i> is providing technical assistance to the Teacher Training Unit in Mozambique on the TPD component of the <i>Aprender+</i> program. This assistance involves providing technical inputs to strengthen the effectiveness of in-country TPD services by supporting the design and implementation of an ongoing coaching system and establishing feedback mechanisms for teachers (using classroom observations). Capacity building and knowledge transfer also is being promoted in this TA through activities such as the development of teacher and coach training materials.
<b>Pakistan</b>	Pakistan is spearheading TPD reforms by expanding access to quality TPD using technology-based solutions. Building on country teacher diagnostic assessments ( <i>Teach</i> ) and in-country TPD practices, including those using technology, the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFEPT) plans to reform foundational teaching practices by leveraging low-tech solutions that support ongoing, tailored, and focused TPD. The government also is testing practical approaches to deliver evidence-based TPD by supporting cluster-based TPD practices and enhancing 1-1 support for teachers. Technical guidance from <i>Coach</i> on these topics will inform the policy dialogue and engagement efforts with policy leaders and practitioners.
<p><i>Note:</i></p> <p>a. The <i>Aprender+</i> program is funded by Finland and will be piloted in the province of Niassa in 2022. Over the coming years, the learnings from this pilot will inform national scale-up of the approach via the recently approved project, Improving Learning and Empowering Girls in Mozambique (P172657).</p>	

### 4.3 Stakeholder Engagement

Finally, *Coach* is complemented by a stakeholder engagement strategy focused on:

- a. **Ensuring that *Coach* tools and resources build on expertise and knowledge from other programs in the field.** To strengthen the technical rigor, coherence, and information captured in each of its tools and resources, *Coach* leverages strategies including public consultation periods for initial-stage products and the advice of an international Technical Advisory Board.
- b. **Positioning the issue of high-quality in-service TPD as a key driver to address global learning poverty.** A second goal of the stakeholder engagement strategy is to position the importance of high-quality in-service TPD within the international educational education community and with country policymakers, development partners, and other actors. *Coach* achieves this goal through the development and dissemination of tools and resources around these topics. In addition, *Coach* utilizes communication

materials including virtual events to present the program's products<sup>1</sup> (see [here](#) and [here](#)), blogposts (see [here](#) and [here](#)), the World Bank Teachers Team Podcast ([Apple](#) or [Spotify](#)), and a Teachers Team Newsletter (see [here](#)), in addition to a [website](#).

- c. **Disseminating resources and supporting their take-up in the field.** A final goal of the stakeholder engagement strategy is to support the take-up and use of the *Coach* tools and resources in the field. A key component of this work is monitoring and collecting user feedback, especially country-level feedback, on the application of the *Coach* tools and resources. During the first year of dissemination, the *Coach* team will monitor the products for quality/user-friendliness, country-level utility, and user demand. These data will (1) support continuous improvement and updating of the products; (2) identify knowledge and implementation gaps, which can inform future selection of topics for additional *Coach* tools and resources; and (3) inform improvements to the stakeholder engagement strategy.

## 5. Coach Going Forward

Reforming TPD policies and practices is a long-term effort that requires incremental change at the classroom, school, and system levels. The *Coach* Program is committed to generate and disseminate practical guidance and to provide hands-on support that will aid stakeholders' efforts to better support teachers, thus improving student-teacher interactions and enhancing student learning.

To accomplish this long-term vision, the *Coach* program will unfold in three key stages:

- **Stage 1: Initial development of tools and resources [2020-21].** The *Coach* team focuses on developing a set of initial tools and resources. Next, the team officially launches the *Coach* program to the public. Finally, the team obtains feedback on the tools and resources via a series of public consultations and engagement with stakeholders, including the Technical Advisory Board (TAB).
- **Stage 2: Piloting in the field and consolidation of tools and resources [2021-23].** The *Coach* team will focus on implementing the tools and resources in the field, learning from field implementation, and adjusting the tools and resources as appropriate to strengthen them. The team also may develop other tools and resources based on field experience to support scale-up and take-up in the future, including the digitalization of *Coach* materials.
- **Stage 3: Scale-up [2023-24]:** In this final stage, the *Coach* team will focus on systematizing the learning from the field experiences by consolidating final versions of the *Coach* tools and resources. The team will support take-up and scale-up through the digitalization of materials. Finally, the team will develop an online platform for teachers, coaches, program and system leaders, and policymakers that provides access to *Coach* tools and resources.

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<sup>1</sup> These events, as well as previous ones, are uploaded to the Teachers' Team YouTube Channel.

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