



# Teaching in Focus #45

Where to find  
experienced teachers?



Teaching & Learning

## Where to find experienced teachers?

- In some countries, more than half of the most experienced teachers work in just 10% of schools.
- Experienced teachers are less likely to work in socio-economically disadvantaged schools.
- Redistributing experienced teachers to the neediest schools can help create a level playing field in education.

The importance of experienced teachers cannot be underestimated. They can help raise the performance of students and improve the overall quality of schooling by supporting less-experienced colleagues. This *Teaching in Focus* (TIF) analyses the distribution of teachers across schools from two different but complementary angles: *equality* and *equity*.

Equality refers to whether all students have the same exposure to experienced teachers. However, providing equal resources to all students irrespective of their personal or socio-economic profile does not necessarily help address concerns related to equity. Disadvantaged students typically require more resources, such as experienced teachers, to achieve similar education outcomes to those of advantaged students. If the proportion of experienced teachers remains heavily skewed towards the most advantaged schools, this can prevent disadvantaged children from having a fair chance at succeeding (OECD, 2022). If policy makers want to ensure a level playing field for all students, it is important to consider whether experienced teachers should be allocated to the neediest schools.

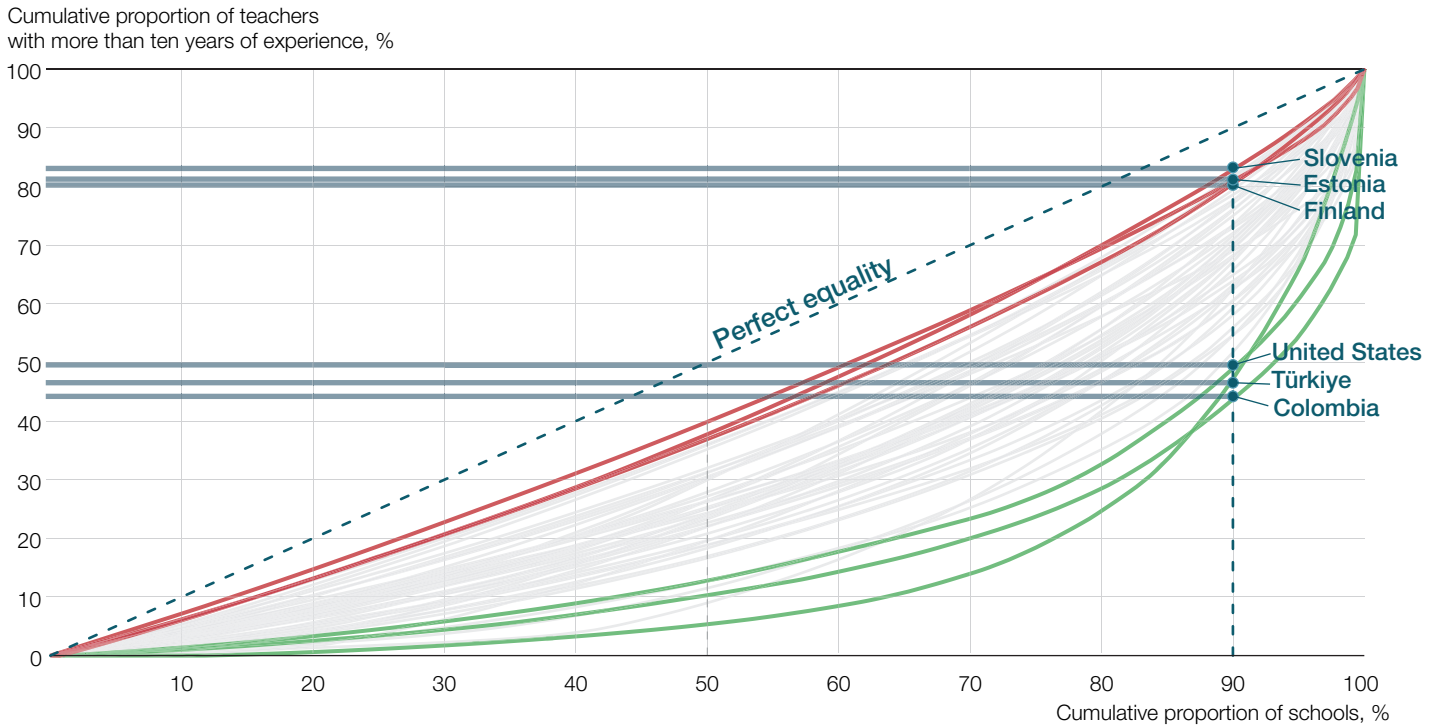
### Are experienced teachers equally distributed across schools?

Figure 1 utilises Lorenz curves (Box 1) to show the level of equality in the distribution of experienced teachers (those with more than ten years of experience) among schools in TALIS countries and subnational entities. The dotted line represents a theoretical education system where experienced teachers are distributed equally among schools (e.g. all schools having the same proportion of experienced teachers). Greater deviation from the dotted line implies higher levels of inequality. Estonia, Finland and Slovenia are highlighted as having relatively low levels of inequality. In contrast, Colombia, the Republic of Türkiye (hereinafter referred to as “Türkiye”) and the United States diverge strongly, reflecting higher levels of inequality.

#### Box 1. The Lorenz curve in this TIF

The Lorenz curve is a graphical representation of inequality used to measure the distribution of a resource, such as income, throughout a population, such as that of a country. In this TIF, Lorenz curves (Figure 1) plot the cumulative percentage of experienced teachers against the cumulative percentage of schools in a country, ordering the latter from those with the smallest to those with the largest share of experienced teachers. Since larger schools have more teachers of all characteristics, the analysis in this report was conducted after normalising the population of teachers at each school within each country or subnational entity.

Figure 1. Distribution of experienced teachers by countries and subnational entities

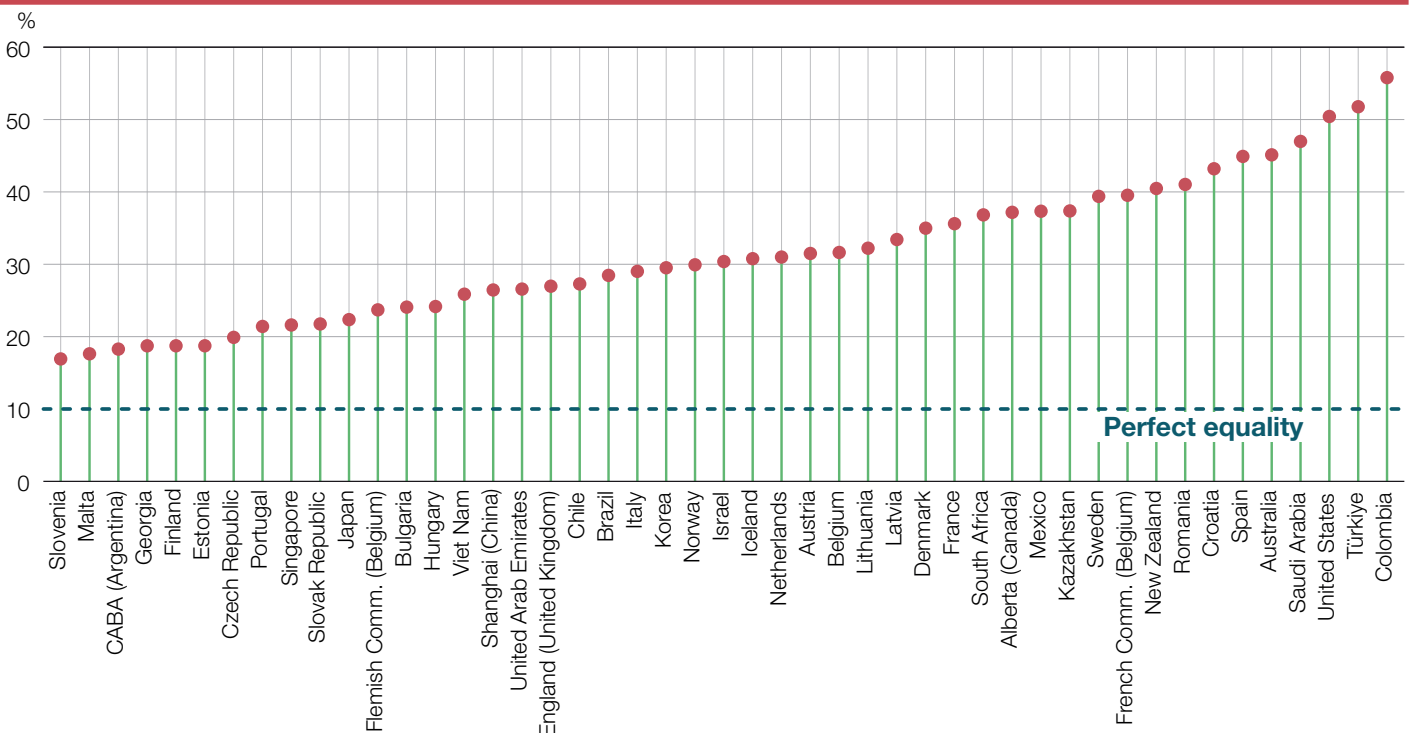


**Note:** The dotted line indicates perfect equality. The three countries with curves closest to the dotted line are shown in red; these are the ones with the most equality. The three countries with curves furthest from the dotted line are shown in green; these are the ones with the most inequality. To account for differences in school size, the number of teachers in each school is normalised.

**Source:** OECD, TALIS 2018 Database; [https://www.oecd.org/education/talis/TIF45\\_data\\_WhereToFindExperiencedTeachers.xlsx](https://www.oecd.org/education/talis/TIF45_data_WhereToFindExperiencedTeachers.xlsx)

Figure 2 shows the share of experienced teachers working in 10% of a country's schools (the 10% of schools refers to those with the highest proportion of experienced teachers). In Colombia, Türkiye and the United States, roughly 50% of experienced teachers work in 10% of schools. In contrast, in education systems such as Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires [hereinafter referred to as CABA (Argentina)], Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Malta and Slovenia, less than 20% of experienced teachers work in those schools.

Figure 2. Share of experienced teachers working in uppermost 10% of schools



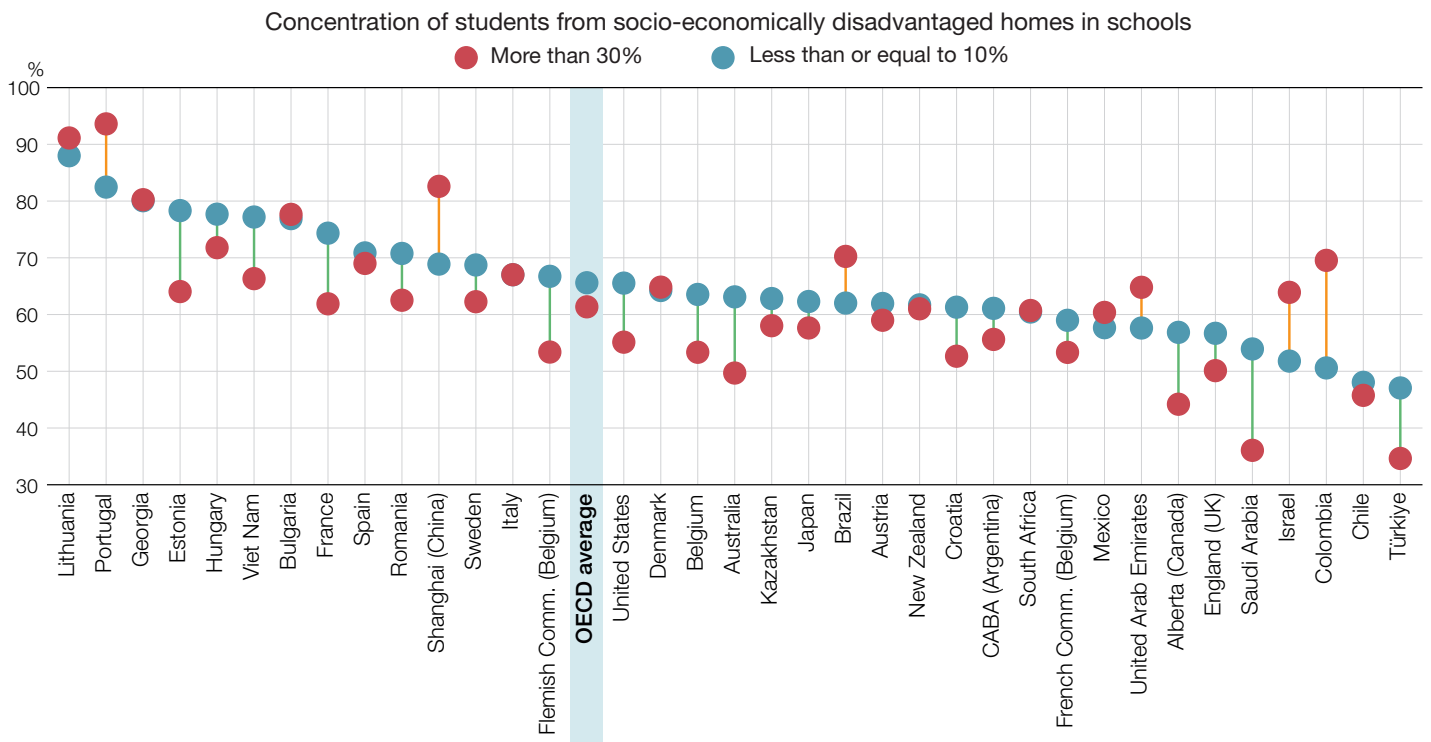
**Note:** The uppermost 10% of schools refers to those schools with the highest proportion of experienced teachers. To account for differences in school size, the number of teachers in each school is normalised. "Experienced teachers" refers to those with more than ten years of experience. The dotted line indicates perfect equality.

**Source:** OECD, TALIS 2018 Database; [https://www.oecd.org/education/talis/TIF45\\_data\\_WhereToFindExperiencedTeachers.xlsx](https://www.oecd.org/education/talis/TIF45_data_WhereToFindExperiencedTeachers.xlsx)

## Do students have equitable access to experienced teachers?

As shown previously, an unequal distribution of teachers could improve or hinder educational equity, depending on what types of schools have more experienced teachers. In most countries and subnational entities participating in TALIS, teachers with more than ten years of experience tend to work in socio-economically advantaged schools (which have 10% or fewer students from socio-economically disadvantaged homes) than in socio-economically disadvantaged schools (where more than 30% of students are from socio-economically disadvantaged homes). In Alberta (Canada), Australia, Estonia, the Flemish Community of Belgium, France, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, the United States and Viet Nam, the share of experienced teachers is more than 10 percentage points larger in socio-economically advantaged schools than in disadvantaged ones (Figure 3). In a few countries and subnational entities, such as Colombia, Israel, Portugal, and Shanghai (China), the share of experienced teachers is larger (by at least 10 percentage points) in socio-economically disadvantaged schools.

Figure 3. Share of experienced teachers by concentration of socio-economic disadvantage in schools



**Note:** A green or orange solid vertical line implies a statistically significant difference. The absence of a line indicates there is no statistical difference. A green line implies that the share of teachers with more than ten years of experience is larger in socio-economically advantaged schools. An orange line implies that the share of teachers with more than ten years of experience is larger in socio-economically disadvantaged schools.

**Source:** OECD (2022), *Mending the Education Divide: Getting Strong Teachers to the Schools That Need Them Most*, TALIS, <https://doi.org/10.1787/92b75874-en>, Table 2.3.

The cases of Colombia and Türkiye highlight the need to analyse the distribution of teachers in terms of equality and equity. These two countries have some of the highest levels of inequality in the distribution of experienced teachers (Figure 1 and Figure 2). However, the share of experienced teachers in Türkiye is larger in socio-economically advantaged schools, while in Colombia the reverse pattern is observed (Figure 3). This indicates that, although the countries' levels of inequality of teacher distribution are similar, those inequalities might influence equity differently.

It is important to note that, while experienced teachers are a valuable resource for education, more years of experience may not always correlate with more effective teaching. Furthermore, these data might not imply a deliberate decision regarding the allocation of resources but may be a result of other factors. In Colombia, for example, public schools tend to serve a more disadvantaged student population compared to private schools. Nevertheless, teachers in public schools also have greater job stability due to the influence of unions.

## The bottom line

In TALIS countries and subnational entities, the share of experienced teachers working in the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of such teachers ranges from around 15-55%. The share of experienced teachers tends to be larger in socio-economically advantaged schools than in disadvantaged schools. This suggests that the distribution of teachers could contribute to educational inequity. Policy makers should consider the potential benefits of addressing imbalances in the distribution of experienced teachers.

## What is TALIS?

Find out more about the Teaching and Learning International Survey: <http://www.oecd.org/education/talis/>

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### Note

The data referred to in this *Teaching in Focus* brief can be found at:  
[https://www.oecd.org/education/talis/TIF45\\_data\\_WhereToFindExperiencedTeachers.xlsx](https://www.oecd.org/education/talis/TIF45_data_WhereToFindExperiencedTeachers.xlsx)

### For more information

OECD (2022), *Mending the Education Divide: Getting Strong Teachers to the Schools That Need Them Most*, TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/92b75874-en>.

Papay, J. and M. Kraft (2015), "Productivity returns to experience in the teacher labor market: Methodological challenges and new evidence on long-term career improvement", *Journal of Public Economics*, Vol. 130, pp. 105-119, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2015.02.008>.

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