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Kamila Hernik  
Karolina Malinowska  
Rafał Piwowarski  
Jadwiga Przewłocka  
Magdalena Smak  
Andrzej Wichrowski

Survey report

# Polish teachers and principals – an international perspective. Key findings of TALIS 2013



### **Authors of the report**

Kamila Hernik

Karolina Malinowska

Rafał Piwowski

Jadwiga Przewłocka

Magdalena Smak

Andrzej Wichrowski

### **Reviewers**

Magdalena Krawczyk-Radwan

Stanisław Sławiński

### **Editorial Revision**

Monika Bokiniec

### **Polish TALIS 2013**

Rafał Piwowski (national project manager)

Kamila Hernik (project coordinator, from March 2012)

Magdalena Krawczyk-Radwan (project coordinator, until March 2012)

Andrzej Wichrowski (data analysis specialist, from June 2013)

Mikołaj Hnatiuk (data sampling and analysis specialist, until June 2013)

Joanna Felczak

Aleksandra Mioduszevska

Dominika Walczak

### **Board of Participating Countries TALIS 2013:**

Representatives of Poland – Lidia Olak (MEN), Magdalena Krawczyk-Radwan (IBE, until 2012), Kamila Hernik (from 2014)

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ul. Gorczewska 8

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# Introduction

We would like to present an interim report from the second round of the Teaching and Learning International Survey TALIS 2013 dedicated to the working conditions of teachers, their beliefs about teaching, and their teaching and learning environment at schools.

TALIS aims to provide information about teachers and teaching, including data for international comparisons of educational systems. It focuses on such issues as professional development opportunities, teaching beliefs and practices, teacher performance appraisal and feedback from principals and colleagues as well as other issues relevant to leadership and school climate. An analysis of these measures creates grounds for the comparison of countries facing similar challenges, facilitates tapping into various experiences and formulating conclusions on the impact of the policy towards teachers on the learning environment at schools.

This report is an interim analysis of data gathered during the survey and, therefore, has a purely descriptive character. While reading the report, please keep in mind that TALIS methodology is driven by declarations of teachers and school principals that form a picture of the broadly interpreted working conditions of teachers seen from their perspective. It should also be stressed that being an international survey, TALIS creates grounds for cross-country comparisons and features standardised questions, some of which fail to accurately reflect the Polish reality.

Data presented in this report mainly concern lower secondary school teachers and principals. It is clearly stated whenever analysed data are relevant to primary and upper secondary schools. This is due to the fact that lower secondary school teachers and principals are the basic unit of the TALIS analysis design. School surveys other ISCED levels<sup>1</sup> were optional and a much wider reference for lower secondary school data is available. Detailed analyses of respondent statements from all ISCED levels as well as recommendations for the educational policy are published in the comprehensive report from the survey (IBE, 2015).

We hope that findings from TALIS will help identify strengths of teachers and principals and pinpoint areas which are still in need of development.

## Why are we surveying teachers?

Teaching and learning are driven by numerous factors, including student potential and motivation, approach to and assistance in learning provided by their families, the school organisation and the quality of teaching. Undoubtedly, it is a major challenge for the legislator to influence all these factors, however, political strategies towards teachers seem to be the element of the system which may be changed.

Today, there are more than 6 million teachers working in Europe (approx. 650,000 in Poland<sup>2</sup>) and, among other pedagogical factors, they are the ones who play a special role in development of knowledge, skills and social competencies of children and youth.

Surveying teachers, we should not forget about school principals who mediate between teach-

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<sup>1</sup> ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education) is a classification of academic levels adopted by UNESCO. Every reference to ISCED in this report refers to the 1997 version of the classification where ISCED 1 is a primary school, ISCED 2 is a lower secondary school and ISCED 3 is a upper secondary education.

<sup>2</sup> This group covers both teachers of general and vocational subjects in schools for children, youth and adults as well as in art and special schools, educational establishments, boarding schools, etc.

ers, students, their parents or guardians, the educational system and the wider community in which a school exists. Very often, principals are forced to meet conflicting expectations of participants of educational processes. Therefore, it is essential to identify how principals perceive their responsibilities related to school leadership: are they school administrators accountable for quality-oriented arrangement of schooling processes who perceive themselves as a “protective shield” of their organisations or rather tend to force through all guidelines and orders coming top-down (Hammerschmidt, 2014). TALIS report would not be complete without information about school principals: who they are, what goals they set for themselves, what are the barriers to their efficiency and many other issues.

## TALIS 2013 overview

The first cycle of TALIS was conducted in 2008. It surveyed 90,000 teachers from lower secondary schools from 24 countries. The number of countries and regions covered by the second cycle went up to 34. In addition to lower secondary schools, in selected countries, the survey also focused on teachers and principals of primary (6 countries) and upper secondary schools (10 countries). Eight countries opted for TALIS-PISA link, a survey of teachers from schools where PISA project was implemented in 2012.

**Table 1. Countries and regions surveyed in TALIS 2008 and TALIS 2013, including options**

	TALIS 2008	TALIS 2013			
		lower secondary schools	primary schools	upper secondary schools	TALIS-PISA link
<b>OECD member states</b>					
Alberta (Canada)		X			
Australia	X	X		X	X
Austria	X				
Chile		X			
Czech Republic		X			
Denmark	X	X	X	X	
England (UK)		X			
Estonia	X	X			
Finland		X	X	X	X
Flanders (Belgium)	X	X	X		
France		X			
Hungary	X				
Ireland	X				
Iceland	X	X		X	
Israel		X			
Italy	X	X		X	
Japan		X			
Korea	X	X			
Mexico	X	X	X	X	X
Netherlands	X	X			

Norway	X	X	X	X	
<b>Poland</b>	X	X	X	X	
Portugal	X	X			X
Slovakia	X	X			
Slovenia	X				
Spain	X	X			X
Sweden		X			
Turkey	X				
United States (US)		X			
<b>OECD partner countries</b>					
Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates)		X		X	
Brazil	X	X			
Bulgaria	X	X			
Croatia		X			
Cyprus		X			
Latvia		X			X
Lithuania	X				
Malaysia	X	X			
Malta	X				
Romania		X			X
Serbia		X			
Singapore		X		X	X

In 2013, the survey covered over 172,000 teachers, including nearly 14,600 from primary schools, almost 105,500 from lower secondary and more than 25,000 from upper secondary schools. This number also includes 27,000 teachers working in schools participating in the PISA survey. Altogether, the survey was conducted in more than 10,300 schools across all levels, mainly in Europe, but also in the Americas, Asia and Australia. The survey in Poland covered 10,298 teachers and 513 principals from 526 schools.

Similarly to the previous cycle, TALIS 2013 in Poland was coordinated by the Educational Research Institute. The project was implemented and coordinated at the international level by the Data Processing and Research Center (DPC) of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), while the ultimate responsibility for TALIS was delegated to the OECD Secretariat and the TALIS Board of Participating Countries.

## TALIS 2013 methodology

**Survey participants.** TALIS 2013 defines a teacher as a person whose professional activity involved student instruction in at least one class/unit of the surveyed school in the school year 2012/2013. This definition did not include support staff (e.g. librarians, guidance counsellors).

The survey covered teachers of general and vocational subjects taught to children and youth from primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools.

**Sampling.** The sampling frame was designed by Statistics Canada. Surveyed schools in Poland were sampled by the stratified random sampling method from data pools derived from the Educational Information System. Strata were identified with respect to the school size (number of students), its status, (public, private) and type of the school's locality (city, countryside). While sampling secondary schools, an additional stratum was formed by the school type (general upper-secondary, specialised upper-secondary, technical upper-secondary school, basic vocational school). 200 schools were sampled and two replacement schools with a similar profile were selected for each of them. Replacement schools were used when a sampled school refused to participate in the survey. From 20 to 30 teachers from each school were selected, considering their age, gender and subject field. Principals who are also teachers filled in only the questionnaire for principals.

**Survey rollout.** The questionnaire was prepared by a group of experts appointed by the OECD. The survey in Poland was conducted from March to May 2013. The lower secondary school survey was carried out by the Educational Research Institute, while primary and upper secondary schools were surveyed by Millward Brown SMG/KRC Poland Media SA selected by tender.

Respondents could choose if they want to fill in a paper or an online questionnaire form. In both cases school and teacher data were anonymized. To dispel doubts of teachers and principals related to the survey, both the IBE and MB SMG/KRC launched special hotlines where inquirers could obtain answers to all TALIS-related questions. Detailed information was also available at the specially launched survey website – [www.eduentuziasci.pl/talis](http://www.eduentuziasci.pl/talis)

To meet the Consortium standards, a school was included in the survey only if the questionnaire was filled in by at least 50% of sampled teachers. If less than 50% of sampled schools responded to the survey, such records were excluded from international database (this issue was relevant exclusively to the US data).

**Table 2. Participation level for schools, teachers and principals in Poland (including the replacement list)**

Participation level	Primary schools	Lower secondary schools	Upper secondary schools
Schools	87%	99%	84%
Teachers	98%	97%	96%
Principals	87%	96%	82%

**Weighting.** Stratified double sampling combined with insufficient sample participation level required application of analytical weights to formulate findings about the surveyed population. School weights were defined with respect to their size. Teacher weights derived from school weights were adjusted by the refusal ratio to participate in the survey, exclusions (e.g. when a teacher participated in the field trial or was the principal) and in relation to teaching in several schools from a given ISCED level.

**Comparison of results and inference.** Given the current status of the analysis, we are able to formulate separate conclusions about primary, lower secondary and upper secondary school teachers. Due to the fact that few teachers teach at several schools from the same level, comparisons of schools from different ISCED levels in Poland are burdened with minor error.

## Introduction

All mentions of the international average refer to simple arithmetic mean results for participating countries and regions, exclusive of the US (results for the US were excluded from international comparisons as a result of insufficient participation rate).

\* \* \*

And finally, we would like to thank all our respondents and school principals who have agreed to participate in the survey. We are convinced that without your engagement, such efficient rollout of the survey in Poland would not be possible – we would not be able to achieve such high response rate to the questionnaire, and thus obtain records about Polish teachers, principals and schools which are included in the international TALIS report.

## Summary

### Polish teachers are well educated and demonstrate theoretical preparedness for their work

- Almost all teachers have higher education background and teach subject fields consistent with their educational profile.
- In contrast to many other countries, there is no shortage of teachers in Polish schools.
- The biggest professional development needs of Polish teachers include skills and knowledge essential for teaching special learning needs students. Compared to other TALIS countries, twice as many teachers in Poland (58% and 26%, respectively) are working with such students. This may reflect higher awareness of this issue or a broad definition of special needs in Poland.

### All teachers in Poland are subject to formal appraisal which is performed less frequently than in other countries

- Polish teacher performance is appraised by principals, while the evaluation process in other countries included other contributors, such as peer teachers, members of the school managing team, designated mentors or external evaluators and institutions.
- The appraisal in Poland focuses on performance areas related to teaching efficiency: student test scores (91%), classroom management (87%), competencies related to teaching a specific subject field (86%).
- Feedback reinforces a sense of self-confidence in the professional role, job satisfaction and motivation to work. Despite this fact, almost 50% of Polish teachers are convinced that the appraisal is mainly conducted to meet administrative requirements.
- Teachers believe that their performance appraisal fails to trigger actual formal consequences (e.g. bonuses, salary increase, dismissal).

### Polish teachers are satisfied with their work and have a high level of self-efficacy

- Polish teachers rate their efficacy in maintaining classroom discipline the highest among all participating countries and declare that they allocate least time to this task during classes (8%, TALIS average: 13%).
- Their biggest challenges include: work overload, no sense of job security, unsatisfactory income and low prestige of their profession.

### Professional development needs of Polish teachers have decreased in comparison to 2008

- At the same time, the proportion of teachers participating in various forms of professional development has gone up (from 90 to 94%).
- Polish teachers declare the need for more intensive professional development in the area of classroom management (13%) and using new technologies in their workplace (13%).
- Teachers in Poland appreciate benefits of participation in development activities, but evaluate their impact on their learning style rather cautiously: depending on area, “moderate” impact responses were indicated by 44% to 58% respondents.

### The overwhelming majority of teachers are convinced that own inquiry and reasoning are more important in the learning process than acquisition of specific knowledge

- At the same time, they use student activation techniques (work in small groups, longer projects) less often than teachers from other countries.
- They take less interest in the well-being of students and are less interested in what students have to say than teachers from other countries.
- Polish teachers rate classroom discipline higher than their foreign peers.

### Similarly to other countries, inadequate budget and school resources are a problem in the daily work of Polish school principals

- The fact that principals perceive teacher compensation scheme based on career advancement as a roadblock is a distinctive feature of Poland.
- The work of a school principal in Poland requires not only managerial competencies and knowledge of educational law, but also of labour law, public procurement and construction regulations. Principals declare a moderate or a high level of training needs (from 60% to 70%) in all these areas.
- Four in five school principals in Poland declared the need for knowledge and skills related to raising additional funds for their school. A high level of needs in this area was reported by as many as one-third of respondents.

# Chapter 1. The profile of surveyed teachers, principals and schools

## Teachers

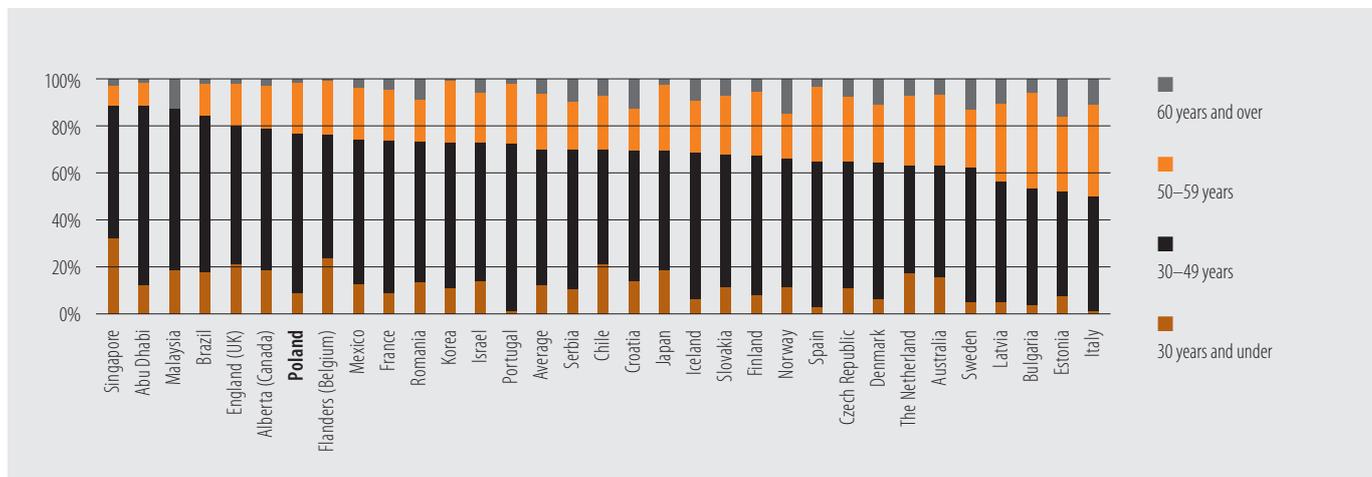
### Teachers – gender and age

Gender disproportions among teachers are common worldwide (Drudy, 2008; OECD, 2005; 2009) – 68% of teachers are females. This percentage is even higher in Poland and totals 75%. Overrepresentation of females (more than 90%) is particularly visible in pre-schools and at lower levels of education. The percentage of males increases in secondary schools (the percentage of male teachers in Polish upper secondary schools accounts for 32% versus 43% in TALIS countries). Gender disproportions also results from the specific educational profile of teachers and their social status. Japan is an example of these processes – females account for merely 39% of total lower secondary school teachers and as many as 93% of pre-school teachers (SBJ, 2010).

Despite the fact that most teachers are female, managerial roles are often delegated to males. The higher the education level in Poland, the lower the number of females holding executive positions. The percentage of female primary school principals totals 72%, whereas the figure for lower secondary stands at 67% and at 53% for upper secondary schools. School principals are usually aged 56–65 years – their percentage share versus 2008 went up from 29 to 49%.

A statistical lower secondary school teacher in participating countries is 43 years old, and is one year older than in Poland. Singapore (on average, 36 years), Malaysia and Abu Dhabi (39 years each) are home to the youngest teacher population. On average in TALIS countries, barely 12% of secondary school teachers are 30 years old and under, while 30% of teachers are over 50 years old. Teacher ageing constitutes a major problem for education systems in some countries, particularly in Italy (the average age is 49 years, whereas 50% of teachers are over 50 years old) and Estonia (48 years). A comparison with records for 2008 indicates that this problem is rapidly becoming graver in Italy, Portugal and Bulgaria. Although teacher ageing is not currently an issue in Poland, the low percentage of young adepts remains visible. The systemic measures should be undertaken to attract young people to become teachers.

**Graph 1. Percentage of teachers in TALIS countries by age**



Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

### Teacher training

Polish teachers and principals have better formal education than their peers from many other countries – 99% of them are university graduates. University background seems to be common in participating countries. The only exception is Flanders (Belgium) where 85% of teachers receive formal professional education in a more practical way.

Meanwhile, due to the shortage of qualified staff, teachers in many countries are forced to teach subjects they were not formally prepared for. Such situation is particularly visible in the Netherlands (one-fifth of general subject teachers did not obtain formal competencies in those fields), Malaysia and Denmark. What is the situation in Poland? The Polish teacher education system provides them with both theoretical and practical background for all subjects covered by the core curriculum (88% of teachers declared such preparedness, unlike Italy where only 35% respondents confirmed such competencies, Iceland and Canada – 42% of similar declarations)<sup>3</sup>. It is advisable to consider whether or not some elements of the education system are not excessively limited (e.g. the Polish teacher certification system for graduates of non-teaching faculties covers only 90 hours of classes in psychology, 90 hours of pedagogy and 90 hours of subject didactics) or inadequate (insufficient number of practical classes, for instance, measures of reaction in challenging classroom situations). Currently, it is not possible to expand the scope of those courses at the university level. In such circumstances, we should consider which of those skills and competencies may be acquired during the teaching practice at school and in the course of continuing professional education.

Most teachers from TALIS countries (93%) are satisfied with the course and quality of their vocational preparations for work. Insufficient preparedness was reported only by teachers from Finland, Japan and Mexico (25% of indications). Finland and Japan top international ranking lists of skills which might suggest that they benefit from the best qualified staff. Such high percentage of teachers dissatisfied with their professional preparedness is perhaps an effect of higher awareness of needs demonstrated by young people and the need for continuous development of their own competencies.

### Employment status and years of service

The majority of Polish teachers hold permanent work contracts, 81% of them are employed full-time. Females (almost 83%) work full-time more often than males (75%). Young teachers with shorter experience are usually employed for a fixed period of time, while older ones promoted to the appointed teacher grade obtain a work contract for an unspecified period of time. 83% of teachers in surveyed countries benefit from permanent employment status, and 82% of them work full-time.

Part-time work is not a choice but a necessity in Poland, Croatia, Mexico, Portugal and Serbia – such type of contract concluded by a teacher reflects lack of opportunities for full-time work. On the other hand, teachers from Singapore, Australia, England, Denmark, France, the Netherlands and Norway usually opt for part-time employment themselves. The tendency to downsize the number of teachers with permanent work contracts is visible in Korea and Mexico (a drop by 10% in 2013 versus results for 2008).

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<sup>3</sup> We have presented the percentage of responses of lower secondary school teachers to assure their comparability with all TALIS participating countries.

## Chapter 1. The profile of surveyed teachers, principals and schools

The average number of teacher's years of service in surveyed countries totals 16 plus 4 years of experience outside the education sector. On average, Polish lower and upper secondary school teachers have 17 years of service and 19 years in primary schools. Twenty-three percent of Polish teachers also gained experience outside the education system lasting on average less than two years of work, whereas teachers from English-speaking countries (approx. 70%) demonstrate more experience unrelated to the education sector (US 8 years, Alberta, Canada 7 years, Australia 6 years, UK 5 years).

Polish primary, lower and upper secondary school principals have on average two years of work experience outside education (TALIS average for lower secondary schools: three years). Lower secondary school principals have a 25-year-long teaching career (four years more than in other TALIS countries), two years of experience in managerial positions at schools (four years less than TALIS average) and 11 years of seniority as principals (two years more than in TALIS countries).

Teachers' work style is determined by age and the specific profile of students (education level, special learning needs, language and status differences among students). Optimum distribution of teachers would imply using their diversified predispositions and knowledge according to the needs of a specific school. Research (Jackson, 2009; Bonesronning, Falch and Strom, 2005) proves that we are witnessing a trend which may bring about a major inequality in providing future educational opportunities. Teachers with less practical experience usually teach at schools dominated by children with low social and economic status (disadvantaged schools) mainly located in the countryside, small towns and unprivileged neighborhoods of large cities. Analyses of TALIS records<sup>4</sup> confirm this negative correlation for education systems. It is another stimulus for development of strategies incentivising best teachers to undertake employment in challenging environments not only with attractive salaries, but also by reducing their teaching load and offering better working conditions. Attempts at motivating best qualified teachers to work in the most challenging communities are most frequently undertaken in Flanders (Belgium), Denmark, Singapore and Brazil.

### Schools

Most Polish teachers work in public schools (the percentage of public schools across all levels of general education of children and youth exceeds 94%). All schools in Romania, Serbia and Malaysia are public schools. There are also countries where these proportions are reversed. Only 22% of schools in the Netherlands are run by the state and in Flanders (Belgium) this figure accounts for 27%. The rate for Chile is 40% and 51% for England and Australia. There are also stark differences in funding of non-public education. Similarly to the Netherlands and Belgium, Polish non-public education is subsidised by the state to the same extent as the public system, while English non-public schools are funded exclusively through the tuition fees paid by parents. Polish non-public schools may also charge the tuition fee.

#### School size

In terms of the average size, Polish schools are among the world's smallest. On average, primary schools have 202 students (19 students per school unit), lower secondary schools have 271 students (546 is the average figure for TALIS countries). Sizes of lower secondary school classes and schools are diversified. An average Polish class in a lower secondary school has 21 students versus 24 in other participating countries and 30 students in Latin American countries. England,

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4 A more detailed overview of analyses is available in the international report (OECD, 2014, Chapter 2, Section 33).

the Netherlands, Portugal, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, Abu Dhabi (UAE) are home to largest schools at this level of education (an average school has more than a thousand students). Polish upper secondary schools are also among the smallest – the average number of students is 387 versus 1,257 in Singapore and more than 1,091 in Finland. The average number of teachers working in a Polish school is 32 and is lower than in other countries (TALIS average is 45). Student-teacher ratio in Poland totals 8:1 compared to 12:1 in TALIS participating countries. The school size may also depend on the specific profile of education system. In many countries, including England and the US, schools are bigger because lower secondary school students are covered by nine or ten grade schooling model. A similar situation applies to Poland in case of school complexes.

### Specific teaching profile in various countries

Teachers work in schools with social structure diversified in terms of ethnicity, language or social background. Teaching children speaking different languages who share no common cultural code is extremely rare in Poland, but two-thirds of teachers in our country work in schools with more than 10% students from disadvantaged families (TALIS average: 51%). This problem is particularly relevant to teachers from Chile, Mexico, Brazil, Malaysia, Israel, France and Portugal (more than 30% of children from underprivileged families).

Learning needs are yet another dimension differentiating students. Compared to other TALIS countries (58% and 26%, respectively), twice as many teachers in Poland are working in schools where the percentage of students with diagnosed special learning needs exceeds 10%. A similar situation is observable in Norway, England, the Benelux countries and Iceland. High percentage of special learning needs students may testify to a higher awareness of this issue but also wide availability of such certificates, broadly drawn institutional definition of special needs or benefits tied to such student status, for instance, additional exam time.

### School resources and equipment

TALIS also analysed issues related to school resources and equipment. Polish lower secondary school principals assess school equipment higher than their peers from other countries, yet the differences in equipment of various types of schools remain visible in our country.

**Table 3. Percentage of teachers working in schools with reported shortages**

Percentage of teachers working in schools whose principals experience shortages or inadequacy of...	... instructional materials	... library materials	... computers for instruction	... internet access	... software
Poland (primary schools)	9%	26%	33%	20%	34%
Poland (lower secondary schools)	12%	21%	29%	23%	41%
Poland (technical upper secondary schools)	64%	23%	37%	10%	31%
Poland (basic vocational schools)	68%	17%	50%	6%	24%
Poland (general upper secondary schools)	25%	22%	49%	16%	43%
Average for participating countries	26%	29%	38%	30%	38%

Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

## Chapter 1. The profile of surveyed teachers, principals and schools

Respondents from Polish lower secondary schools indicated a shortage of computer software (41% of indications, the range of the problem is similar to those in other surveyed countries) and secondly, to lack (or inadequacy) of IT equipment (29%). One-fifth of Polish teachers work in schools whose principals are convinced that their institutions have insufficient internet access (average for TALIS countries is higher – 30%). Shortage of computers is declared by almost half of general and technical upper secondary and 37% of vocational school principals. Romanian and Mexican schools are least fitted with new technologies.

We should keep in mind that it is essential to make investments in material resources even though they are insufficient to improve student performance (Hanushek, 2006). Principals see the shortage of adequate staff and administrative support as a much bigger problem. School principals from most countries are struggling with understaffing. They have no sufficient number of qualified teachers, especially those able to work with students demonstrating special learning needs. Such deficits have been mainly reported by Polish technical upper secondary and basic vocational school principals.

## Chapter 2. Teacher practices, beliefs and attitudes

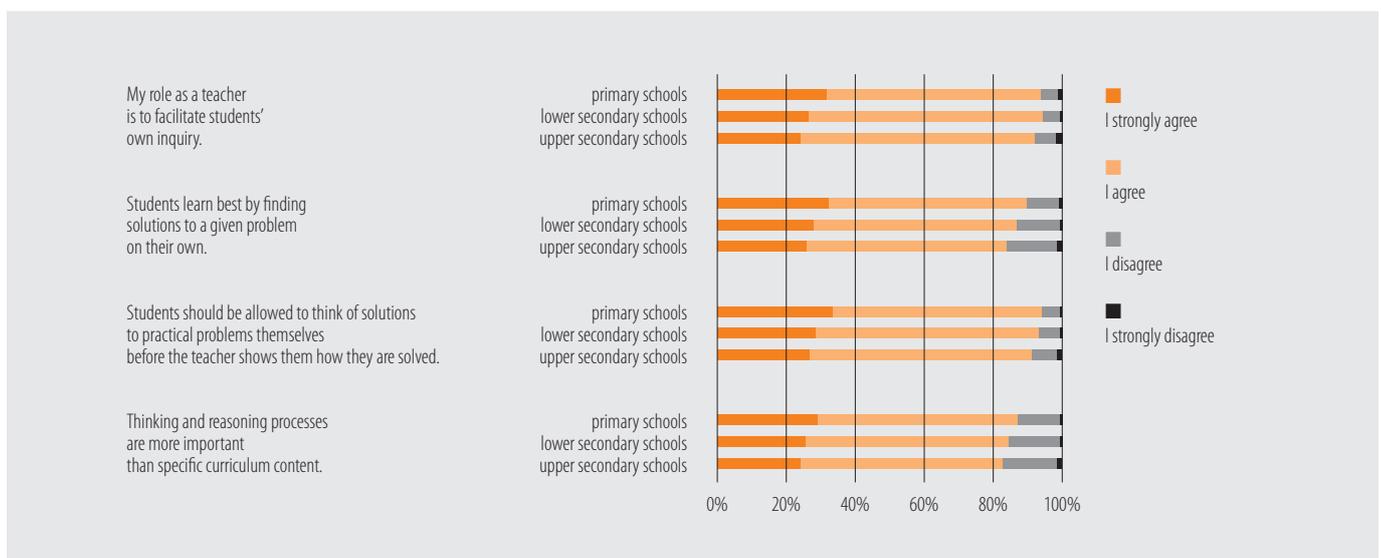
Teaching practices employed by teachers are influenced by a number of factors, such as their education or professional experience. Other important factors include beliefs concerning the nature of teaching which may determine selection of some methods and rejection of others. Therefore, the beginning of this chapter presents beliefs about the teaching process and the role of the teacher and later explores classroom teaching methods declared by teachers. It also describes classroom discipline and teacher-student relations as an important context for the teaching practice. The chapter is supplemented with information about collaboration between teachers which may also heavily impact their beliefs about teaching and the teaching practice itself.

### Teacher beliefs about teaching and learning

To get access into the kinds of beliefs teachers hold about the teaching process, the authors of the TALIS employed the constructivist approach to teaching which understands this process as creating conditions for construction of knowledge rather than its transfer. This approach recognises students as active participants of the teaching process and the role of the teacher is to facilitate their inquiries and support them in learning. Key significance in this approach is attached to students' reasoning and drawing conclusions.

Such beliefs are embraced by almost all teachers in Poland. Approximately 90% agree with the relevant statements, including approximately 30% who responded "I strongly agree". Interestingly, teachers slightly more often declare that such approach is needed in general (students should be given the opportunity to solve problems themselves, while the role of the teacher is to facilitate their inquiries) than actually recognise it as the most efficient way of teaching. It turns out that constructivist beliefs are the strongest among primary school teachers, lower among lower secondary school teachers and the lowest among teachers from upper secondary schools. This means that slightly more focus is put on acquired knowledge than the reasoning process itself at higher levels of education and teachers present ready solutions rather than help children arrive at them through their own inquiries.

**Graph 2. Percentage of Polish teachers who agreed and disagreed with statements reflecting the constructivist approach to teaching**



Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

Similar beliefs are also expressed by the overwhelming majority of teachers from other TALIS participating countries, but there are certain notable differences. Polish lower secondary school teachers fully support presented beliefs less often than their foreign peers (“I agree” responses outnumber “I strongly agree”), especially in terms of the perceived role of the teacher as a facilitator of students’ own inquiry (26% of Polish teachers strongly agree with this statement versus the average for surveyed countries at 39%). At the same time, Polish teachers tend to agree more often than their colleagues from other countries (responses: “strongly agree” or “agree”) about the highest efficiency of learning by self-inquiry (87% versus 83%). Even more interestingly, in some countries (including Sweden and Norway) this belief is shared only by approximately 50% of teachers. However, an analysis of international records indicates that country-related factors have relatively small impact on teacher beliefs and factors related to a specific school have virtually no influence at all.

### Teaching practice

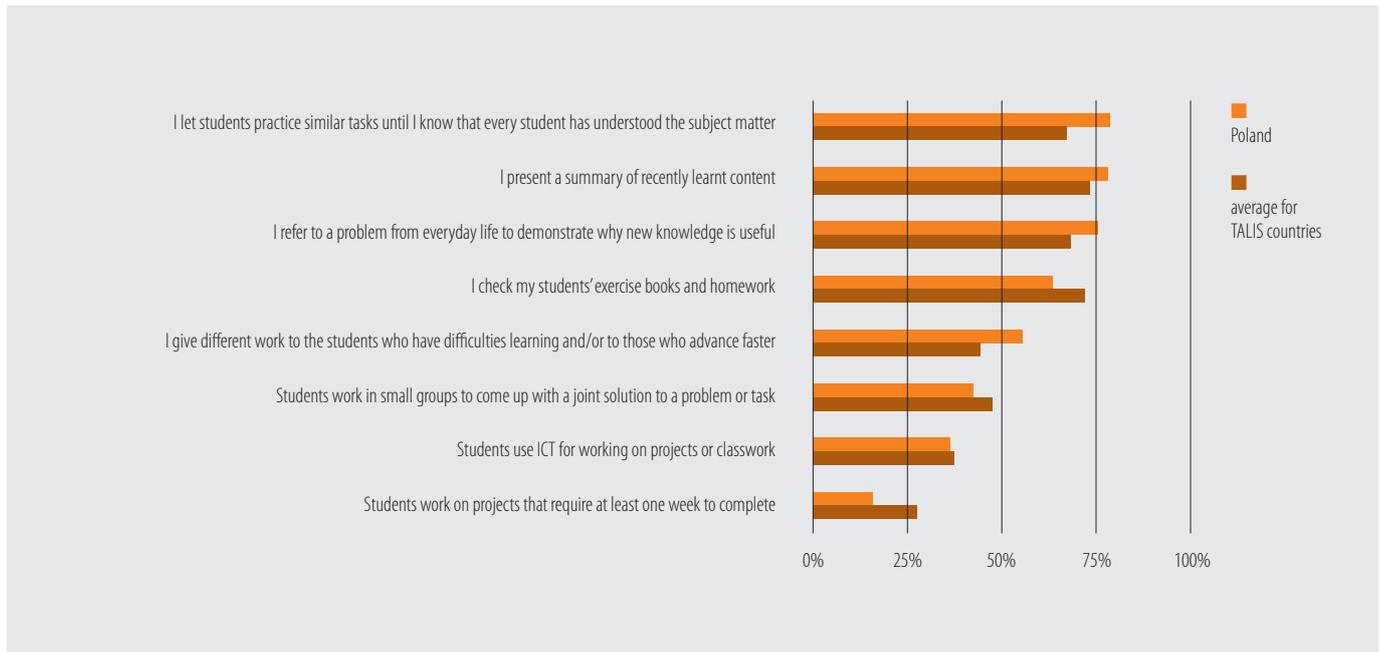
TALIS not only contributes to identification of teachers’ beliefs about their role in the teaching process, but also offers an insight into their didactic practice. It should be stressed, however, that presented results (similarly to other records presented in this report) are based exclusively on teacher declarations.

Graph 3. depicts practices used during lessons, covering both passive and active teaching methods. As we can see, the overwhelming majority of Polish teachers present a summary of recently learned content in the classroom, let students practice similar tasks to understand the subject matter and refer to a problem from everyday life. Application of engaging teaching methods is particularly interesting in the light of previously presented beliefs about the active role of a student and the significance of the reasoning process. As indicated by TALIS findings, techniques students find most engaging (and enabling them to acquire skills essential to meet requirements of the modern world) are employed on a relatively narrow scale. Work in small groups or activities using new technologies are frequently applied by only approximately 40% of Polish lower secondary school teachers, whereas barely 16% of teachers often introduce longer projects<sup>5</sup>. A comparison of Polish lower secondary school teachers’ responses with declarations of teachers from other countries presented in the graph demonstrates that group work is less commonly used in our country. At the same time, more often than elsewhere, Polish students are able to focus on activities “until they succeed”, knowledge is referred to real-life situations and activities vary depending on student’s learning progress.

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5 Considering the declarative nature of data, it is fair to suspect that some responses may have been overestimated.

Graph 3. Percentage of ISCED 2 teachers using the following teaching practices – aggregated responses “frequently” and “in all or nearly all lessons”



Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

A comparison of primary, lower and upper secondary schools in Poland indicates that presentation of a short summary of recently learnt content is common across all education levels, but major differences include checking student’s exercise books and homework (completed by three-quarters of primary and 50% of upper secondary school teachers) or giving different work to students, depending on their academic achievements (approximately two-thirds of primary and 50% of upper secondary school teachers). Teachers from higher levels of education (especially lower secondary schools) enable their students to use ICT more often, whereas work in small groups is more common in primary and upper secondary than lower secondary schools.

### School and classroom climate

Additional information about the didactic practice and the teaching process in the classroom is provided by data on the course of classroom work and student behaviour. Teacher responses indicate that 13% of classroom time in TALIS participating countries is dedicated to tasks related to keeping classroom order and discipline. Poland fares well in this respect – such tasks consume only 8% of lesson time (the lowest value among all surveyed countries). A similar amount of time is allocated to administrative tasks, whereas 82% of class time is spent on actual teaching and learning. It should be stressed once more that these findings are based on teacher declarations and may be burdened with an error.

**Table 4. Average class time dedicated to specific tasks – declarations of ISCED 2 teachers**

In-class activities	Poland	Average for TALIS countries
Administrative tasks	8%	8%
Keeping order in the classroom (maintaining discipline)	8%	13%
Actual teaching and learning	82%	79%

Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

Analyses of international data indicate that country-specific factors or drivers related to a specific school context have minor impact on the class time structure. The most important factors are teachers' individual features. As indicated by the analysis of Polish lower secondary school teachers, in this case, it is experience that plays a very significant role. It turns out that classroom management consumes 12% of class time during lessons taught by teachers with less than 5 years of work experience, whereas teachers with more than 30 years of experience spend half as much time to keep students disciplined.

The positive image of classroom atmosphere is also reflected by other teacher responses. 75% of Polish lower secondary school teachers are convinced that students take care to create a pleasant learning atmosphere (compared to the average 71% for all surveyed countries). When asked to assess the classroom climate, Polish teachers complain about interrupting and noisy students less often than their colleagues from other countries. 23% of Polish teachers declare a major loss of class time due to disruptive students (versus 30% across all TALIS countries). 17% (versus 26%) declare that there is much disruptive noise in the classroom, but only 16% (compared to the average of 29% in surveyed countries) agree with the statement: "When the lesson begins, I have to wait quite a long time for students to quiet down."

Analysing the situation in Poland, we should also point out to differences between individual levels education. It turns out that lower secondary school teachers rate classroom discipline as slightly worse than their colleagues from primary and upper secondary schools.

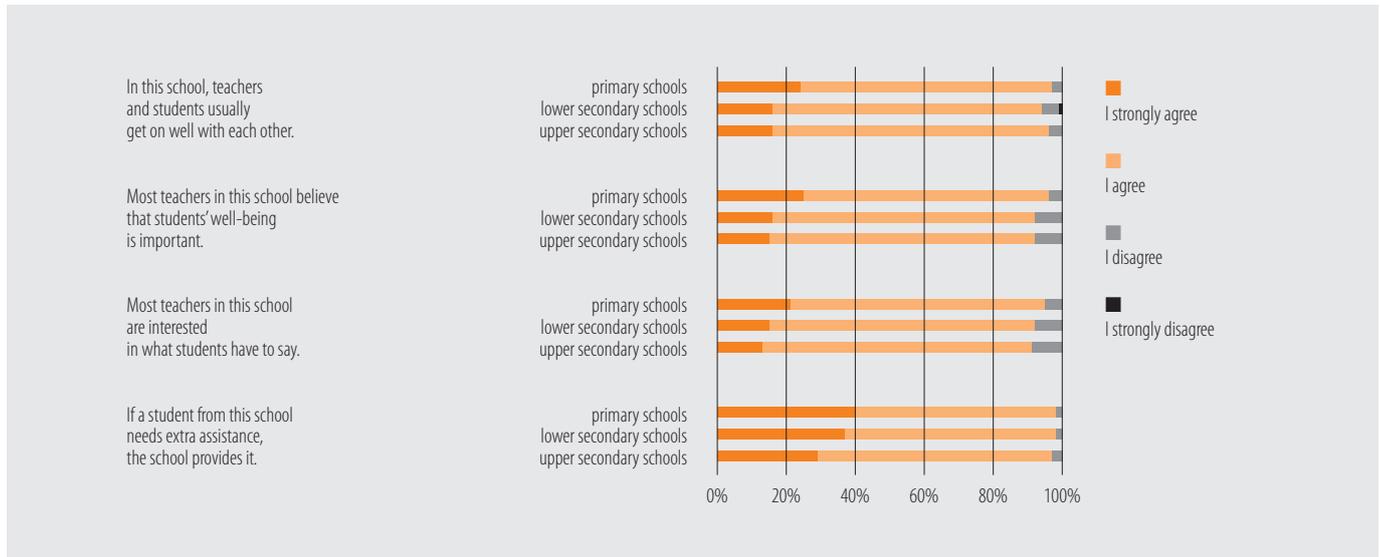
Records gathered in TALIS highlight several problems which, as principals believe, create roadblocks to teaching at school. One is related to lateness and unexplained absences of students which are just as frequent in Poland as in other countries. Lateness and absenteeism are also experienced by teachers from other countries (mostly from Chile and Israel; TALIS average: 11%, Poland: 3%). According to Polish school principals, cheating presents a great challenge. Forty percent of teachers work in schools whose principals are convinced that students tend to cheat at least once a week versus the average for surveyed countries at 13%.

The problem of verbal abuse, psychological abuse and dangerous physical violence is less widespread in Poland than in other surveyed countries, according to principal responses. The percentage of teachers from schools where the principal believes that students are bullied or verbally harassed at least once a week is 8% versus 16% on average across other countries. We should, however, remain cautious while interpreting these results since declarations of principals may tell us more about their awareness of the issue than its actual range.

The course of classroom teaching is also influenced by the school climate, particularly teacher-student relations. A number of studies confirm that school climate may have a significant impact on students' academic achievements, their mental and physical well-being and the range of violence and school aggression (e.g., Debarbieux et al.; 2012, Thapa et al., 2012).

TALIS findings indicate that almost all Polish teachers positively assess social relations at school. More than 90% of them are convinced that teachers from their school are concerned about the well-being of students, interested in what they have to say and get on well with them. Nevertheless, it turns out that teachers from the lowest level of education have the most positive opinions about the social climate. Differences become most evident when we compare categories of respondents strongly agreeing with survey statements depicted in Graph 4.

Graph 4. Percentage of teachers who agreed and disagreed with statements about teacher-student relations



Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

Analysis of data also reveals that teacher-student relations are rated higher in small schools. It should be stressed that lower assessment of relations was declared by young teachers with few years of experience. This may point out to differences in expectations and approach, depending on the number of years of their teaching experience.

International comparisons indicate certain distinct features of the Polish school climate. Teachers believe that compared to schools from other countries, Polish lower secondary schools more often provide extra assistance to students who need it (37% of teachers strongly agree with this statement versus 32% for all surveyed countries), yet teachers take less interest and care less about students.

These differences are particularly noticeable in terms of concern about students' well-being. 16% of Polish lower secondary school teachers strongly agree with the statement "Most teachers in this school believe that student's well-being is important," whereas the average for the total survey was 39%. The openness to students' opinions is also lower. Despite the fact that 92% of teachers agreed with the statement "Most teachers in this school are interested in what students have to say," only 15% opted for response "I strongly agree" (average for TALIS countries: 25%). Related problems are clearly reflected in the PISA 2012 survey results: Poland ranked last in the ranking list based on responses of 15-year olds from OECD countries in terms of how well teachers get on with their students. Teacher opinions confirm that they are aware of the problem, but a comparison of specific figures reveals a major discrepancy between students and teachers in terms of perceiving the school's social climate and proves that teachers tend to underestimate the importance of this issue. It should also be noted that the negative perception of Polish schools among students additionally relates to such elements, as providing students with extra assistance – a dimension assessed higher by Polish teachers than in other surveyed countries.

### Teacher collaboration

Another issue which provides a meaningful context for the teaching practice is the level of collaboration between teachers. This may take various forms designed to facilitate information flow between teachers, create grounds for making important joint decisions and enable exchange of knowledge and experience or joint enhancement of competencies.

The most common form of collaboration between Polish teachers are discussions about the learning progress of specific students. All teachers get involved in them at least once in a while and more than 50% report having such discussions every week. Discussions may be held during team conferences. It should be emphasized that there are many types of teams at Polish schools, including subject teams, form teacher teams, task force teams identifying individual forms of assistance for students with special learning needs, and many other. Findings of the survey indicate that teachers participate in several to more than a dozen of such meetings annually (38% of respondents declare 5–10 meetings a year, 30% once or three times a month).

Cooperation in Polish schools is also meant to provide mutual support in the teaching practice. More than 40% of lower secondary school teachers exchange teaching materials with colleagues at least once a week, and such practices are most typical for teachers of maths, Polish and other languages and less common for science teachers. Peer observations of lessons and exchange of related feedback are much less frequent: only every tenth teacher does it at least once a month or more frequently, whereas almost 60% of teachers altogether engage in lesson observations less than once a year or have never had an opportunity to observe lessons taught by other teachers. Observing lessons is more popular among teachers with shorter work experience. In their case such practices may significantly contribute to acquisition of teaching competencies. It should also be stressed that almost all teachers engage in collaborative professional learning at least from time to time. Such activities, however, are rarely implemented – approximately once or twice per semester in case of almost 50% of teachers

## Chapter 3. The professional development of teachers

There are numerous definitions of teacher professional development in the subject literature – TALIS adopted a broad definition which covers activities developing individual skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics of a teacher (OECD, 2013).

### Forms and content of professional development

At present, more and more focus is put on forms of teacher professional development. The number of surveys whose findings reflect a positive connection between teacher participation in professional development and student performance is increasing. Professional development to which a significant number of hours have been allocated (over the past 6–12 months) has positive impact on students' performance (Yoon et al., 2007).

In TALIS, teachers indicated forms of development they took part in and their participation level. The data analysis contributed to identification of nine types of professional development activities teachers participated in during the past 12 months.

Teacher participation levels in particular types of development activities varied in different countries. Most teachers declared participation in courses/workshops and conferences. Polish teachers mainly took part in development courses (81%, TALIS average: 71%), education conferences or seminars (from 52% to 44%), cooperation networks (from 41% to 37%), mentoring and/or peer observation and coaching (from 45% to 30%), and 38% in individual or collaborative research (TALIS average: 31%). A visibly higher percentage of appointed and chartered teachers opted for courses and workshops (dedicated to subject fields or methodology), whereas a higher percentage of contract teachers opted for mentoring and qualification programmes – the latter type had a higher participation rate of teachers with up to 5 years of service. Teachers with more than 30 years of experience most often participated in research.

According to teachers' declarations, their participation lasted on average: 7 days in courses (versus TALIS average of 8 days), 6 days in in-service training courses in business premises and institutions (7 days), 4 days in observation visits to business premises (3 days). Total participation indicators (participation in at least one form of professional development activity) are not very diversified and range from 88 to 90% for all educational levels (in all countries). The following indicators are typical for Polish teachers: 95% of primary school, 94% lower secondary and 93% upper secondary school teachers participated in professional development activities.

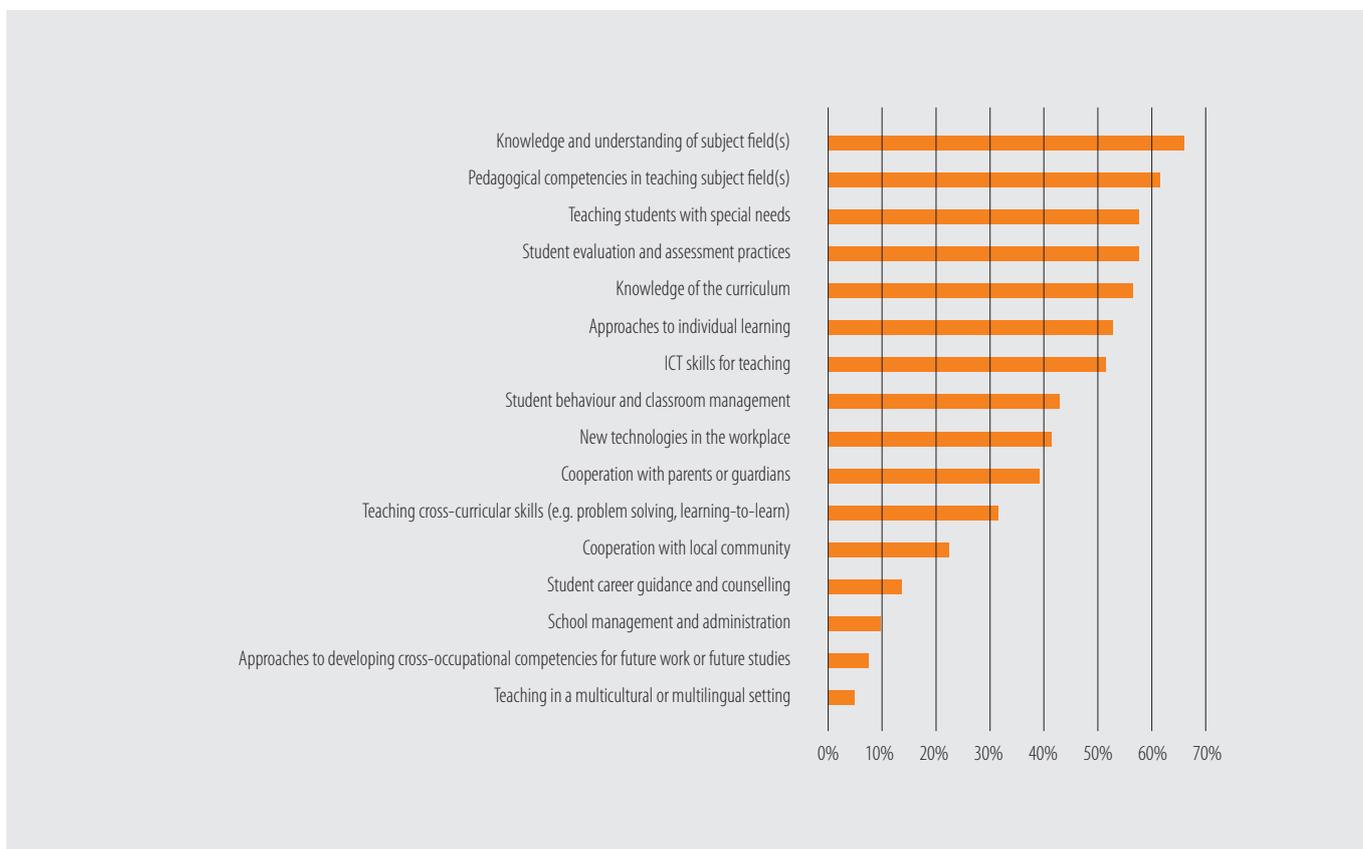
Professional development activities pursued by teachers are diversified not only in terms of their format, but also content and topics of teacher interest. Most popular among all sixteen areas were: knowledge and understanding of subject fields (TALIS: 64%<sup>6</sup> of teachers) and pedagogical competences in teaching subject fields (TALIS: 60% of teachers). Results for Polish teachers were 62% and 57%, respectively, while development of these competencies and knowledge was most usually pursued by teachers under 30 years of age. Topics selected by teachers vary slightly depending on their seniority: teachers with up to 5 years of service attended activities related to knowledge of the curriculum (which in Poland means the school core curriculum), while their colleagues with the longest seniority (30 years and over) opted for teaching students with special learning needs.

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<sup>6</sup> Percentage values indicate the proportion of teachers engaged in developing competencies in a given area and thus diverge slightly from values presented in the international TALIS report (which presents percentage figures for teachers attending all types of professional development activities).

The following areas were very popular among all surveyed teachers (including Polish ones): knowledge of the curriculum, student evaluation and assessment practices and ICT skills for teaching (teacher participation level ranged from 48 to 54%). Polish teachers took special interest in training courses dedicated to teaching students with special learning needs and approaches to individual learning (participation level: 54 and 49%, average for TALIS countries: 28 and 36%). It is possible that participation in professional development activities dedicated to a specific subject matter is not only influenced by teachers’ areas of interest and needs but also needs of the school and the thematic range available for teachers. Another driver was the policy of the Ministry of Education implemented by introduction of, for instance, regulations governing assistance for students with special learning needs, what increased interest in related training courses. By the same token, the curriculum reform stimulated interest in goals and content of the new core curriculum. We cannot rule out that encounters with other teachers may represent a value and an incentive to attend professional development activities.

**Graph 5. Areas of professional development pursued by Polish teachers – during 12 months prior to the survey (percentage of total surveyed teachers – multiple answer questions)**



Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

Teachers highly evaluated individual areas which in their opinion had a large or a moderate impact on the teaching practice. Such view was declared by 75% to 90% of all respondents. Polish teachers assessed their practicality in a similar way. If we considered only “a large impact” responses, the percentage of all Polish teachers who supported this statement would be much lower. Development activities related to teachers’ knowledge and understanding of main subject fields would rank higher, which may be an after-effect of recent curriculum changes. At the same time, the practicality of these activities was more appreciated by younger teachers with shorter seniority. Polish teachers gave the lowest score to professional development activities related to teaching cross-curricular skills.

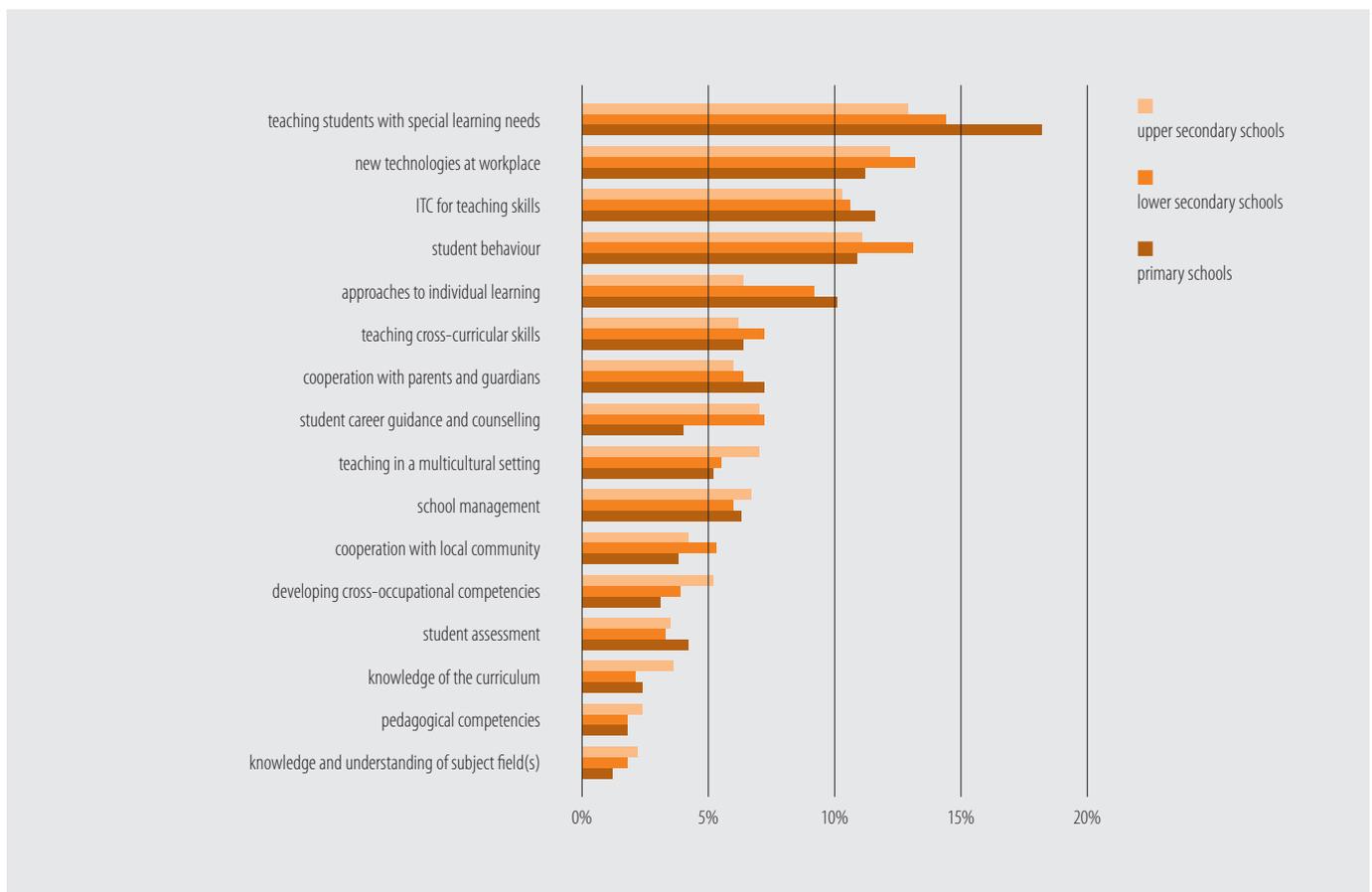
### Chapter 3. The professional development of teachers

TALIS attempted to partially identify the effectiveness of teachers' professional development driven by a number of factors. One of them is widely understood teacher cooperation positively relating to a sense of excellent preparedness for teaching (Parsad et al., 2001). Collaborative learning activities and collaborative research (during development activities) have special meaning in teacher cooperation. In most countries, teachers who were engaged in teacher cooperation network as well as individual and collaborative research tended to respond much more frequently that they were engaged in collaborative learning activities. This predictor turned out to be less pronounced in case of Polish teachers (odds ratio = 1.2 or odds higher than 20%). Nearly one-fourth of teachers stated that no activities they participated in involved collaborative activities or collaborative research.

### Teacher development needs

Not all available types and content of professional development satisfy the declared teachers' needs. Average figures for all TALIS participating countries range from several to slightly more than 20% of teachers who declare a high level of needs, but there are countries where responses added up to several dozen percent. Figures for Poland are generally lower than the TALIS average, but most often indicated areas of unsatisfied demand have remained the same.

**Graph 6. Development needs – the percentage of Polish teachers reporting a high level of needs**



Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

It should be noted that the demand for development in the area of teaching students with special learning needs is reported by the highest percentage of teachers both in total teacher population and among all Polish teachers (from all levels of education). At the same time, only 32% of all teachers attended professional development activities dedicated to this issue (almost 58% of lower secondary school teachers in Poland). In addition, this area received one of the lowest scores in terms of its impact on the teaching practice from teachers in 34 countries participating in the survey (only 27% of teachers indicated high influence). The figure for Polish lower secondary school teachers was higher – 36%.

It becomes evident that in some areas, the level of Polish teachers' development needs is very low (knowledge of the curriculum, knowledge and understanding of their main subject fields, instructional practices – 13%, 14%, 17% of declarations indicating a high and moderate level of needs). However, almost 50% of teachers attended development activities dedicated to these areas. It may result from school needs, modified core curriculum or specific offer of development opportunities. It should be also stressed that young Polish teachers tend to report the highest level of development needs which decrease over time and seniority. The only exception is the area of "ICT skills for teaching". The highest level of needs was reported by the oldest teachers what may indicate generational differences and a better grasp of ICT demonstrated by the younger generation.

To analyse teacher professional development needs, two synthetic indicators were designed to identify the impact of those needs on teacher participation in various types of development activities. The first one, focused on needs related to teaching for diversity, contained six areas (developing approaches to individual learning, teaching students with special needs, teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting, teaching cross-curricular skills, student carrier and guidance counselling and development of cross-occupational competencies for future work or future studies); the second covered pedagogical needs and consisted of 5 areas (knowledge and understanding of the main subject fields, pedagogical competencies in teaching specific fields, knowledge of the curriculum, student evaluation and assessment practices and student behaviour and classroom management). Major correlations (usually positive) between two aggregated indicators and teacher activities/participation in some types of professional development were observed in a number of countries. The higher the level of needs for instructional practice or needs for differentiated instruction, the higher is the likelihood of participation in individual forms of development. The strongest correlations for Polish teachers included: 1) participation in courses, workshops driven by pedagogical needs and teaching for diversity, 2) attendance at courses, seminars organised by companies and institutions determined by pedagogical needs, 3) participation in professional development networks – driven by needs in the area of differentiated teaching and 4) participation in mentoring and/or peer observation and coaching, also dependent on differentiated teaching needs. This analysis explains to a certain extent how major teacher development needs translate into their participation in specific forms of professional development.

It should be added that compared to 2008 results, in 2013 teacher needs for professional development have clearly been reduced. The high level of needs related to knowledge and understanding of the main subject fields declared by Polish teachers went down from 17% to less than 2%, dropped from 22% to under 11% in case of ICT skills for teaching, and from 29% in 2008 to 14% in 2013 in the area of teaching students with special learning needs. It may result from the fact that following a decline in the number of students, schools took on fewer new, young teachers who usually have a higher level of professional development needs (what was reflected in the structure of total teacher population). A factor encouraging professional development was the career progression and salary supplement scheme, yet its opportunities

are becoming exhausted, since 50% of teachers are chartered teachers. Moreover, teachers could have also already satisfied most of their professional development needs.

### Barriers and support for professional development

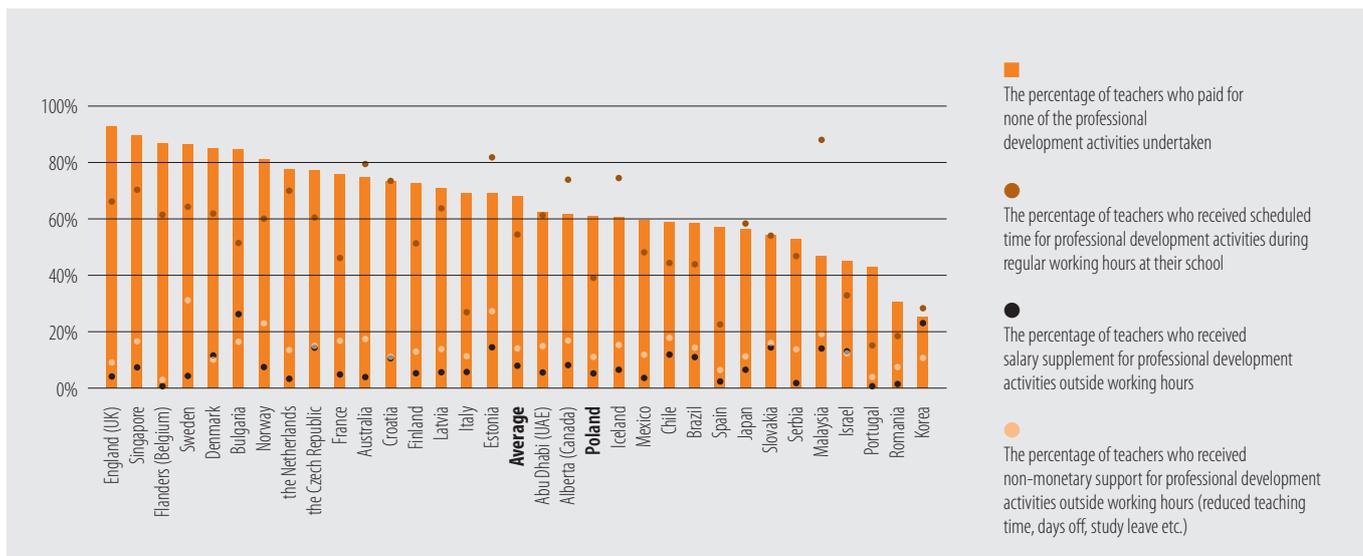
51% of teachers from all surveyed countries are convinced that the biggest barrier to their professional development is the inability to reconcile professional development with their work schedule. Ranking second (indicated by 48% of teachers) was a lack of incentives for participating in development activities, and coming third (indicated by 44% of respondent) was the high cost of such activities. Meanwhile, the biggest barrier for Polish teachers is mainly the high costs of professional development (60% of primary, 53% of lower secondary and 54% of upper secondary teachers), no relevant professional development offered (42%, 47% and 49% of teachers, respectively), lack of time due to family responsibilities (43%, 44%, 45%) and no incentives for participating in such activities (39%, 39% and 45% of teachers). This barrier has been most often reported by elder teachers promoted to a higher professional grade (appointed and chartered) who have generally participated in a host of development activities (and do not need to be incentivised).

It should be stressed that compared to 2008 findings, the percentage of teachers (TALIS- ISCED 2) reporting development barriers in 2013 has decreased.

Across all levels of education, 60–61% of Polish teachers pay for none of their professional development activities, 27–29% partly cover the cost and 11–12% of teachers must cover all of the cost. Percentage rates for all levels of education (TALIS average) are slightly lower in terms of teachers who pay all the cost (5–9%). Compared to 2008, average figures for all TALIS participating countries are almost unchanged, whereas Poland saw an increase in the percentage of teachers who pay for none of their professional development activities (a rise from 44 to 60%) and a minor increase in the percentage of respondents who cover all of the cost of professional development (from 11% to 12%). Differences begin to surface when we compare the percentage of teachers who do not pay for professional development activities depending on their seniority and professional promotion grade. 52% of contract teachers and 66% of chartered teachers did not pay for development activities. Less than half (46%) of teachers with less than 5 years of experience covered no development-related costs, while the percentage for teachers with seniority of 30 years and over was 82%.

The financial contribution of teachers to development costs varied, depending on the type of development activity. Qualification programmes were certainly the most expensive (e.g. certification courses – slightly over 40% of respondents did not pay for them), whereas the lowest level of personal contribution was required in case of courses and workshops (65% of teachers were exempt from charges) – these data are relevant for all ISCED 2 teachers from participating countries.

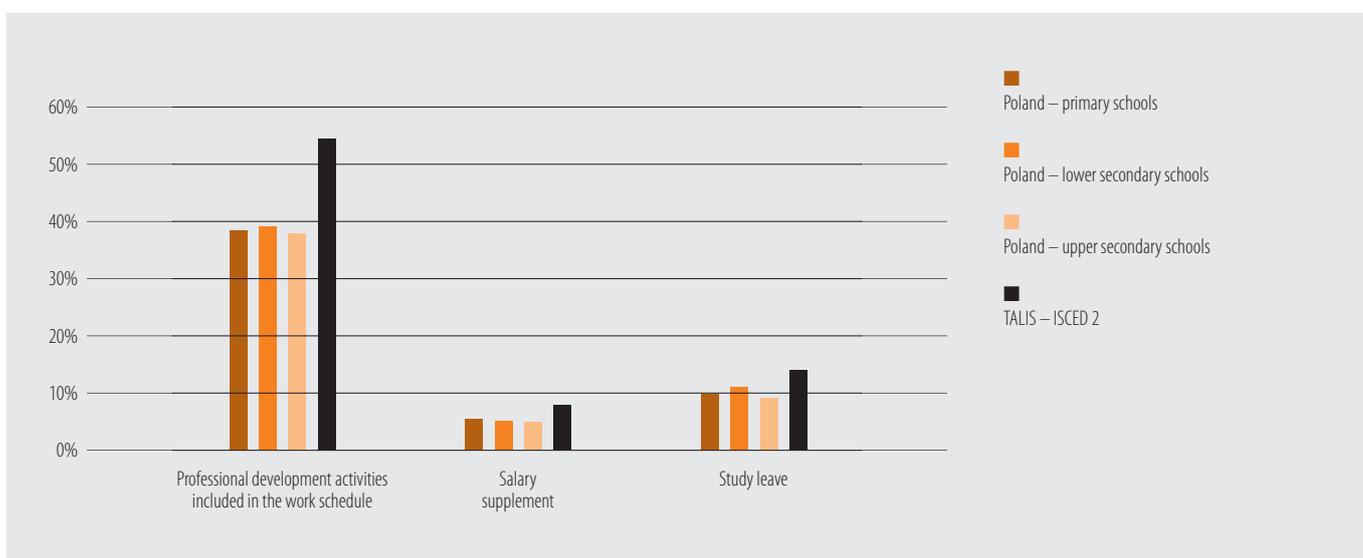
Graph 7. Support received by teachers for professional development activities (ISCED 2)



Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

In addition to ultimate exemption from charges, teachers may obtain various forms of support for their professional development. TALIS 2013 findings indicate that in most cases support involved adapting the teacher’s work schedule to development activities (54%). Only less than 8% (TALIS average with major differences between individual countries) of teachers could benefit from a salary supplement and, on average, 14% had their number of teaching hours reduced and could obtain a training leave.

Graph 8. Support for professional development activities (percentage of teachers reporting such support)



Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

In case of Poland, the percentage of teachers obtaining all three types of support was lower but almost uniform for all types of schools. It is true that salary supplements are not tied to professional development in Poland, but some Polish teachers (5–6%, as depicted in Graph 8) reported to have obtained such support. It is also possible that these are business trips funded by the employer, usually provided for teachers from private schools.

## Chapter 4. Teacher appraisal and feedback

Regular appraisal of teacher performance is an essential element of professional development. As indicated by numerous studies (Hattie, 2009; Gates Foundation, 2010), a well-scheduled process of providing teachers with feedback on their performance which triggers specific activities to develop essential competencies, encourages reflection on work methods and is tied to the teacher motivating scheme may have a positive influence on student academic achievements and thus influence the quality of education. In its report *Key Data on Teachers and School Leaders in Europe 2013* (The European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013), Eurydice concludes that the overwhelming majority of European education systems implement the evaluation of school as a whole and individual teacher evaluation is only one part of a more complex system. A new model of pedagogical supervision was implemented in Poland in 2009. One of its elements is external and internal evaluation of school performance implying indirect evaluation of teacher's efforts. The internal and external evaluation scheme was designed as a measure supporting development of schools, education system and as an essential component of teacher development, especially in terms of critical reflection on their own activities (Mazurkiewicz, 2012). An external evaluation of a given school is conducted by a team of inspectors, while reports from evaluation of all schools are posted on the Internet and made widely accessible.

Evaluation of school performance is not tantamount to formal appraisal of teacher performance whose terms and conditions are defined according to the Teacher's Charter (Art. 6a). Pursuant to this act, appraisal of teacher performance may be conducted at any time, but no earlier than a year after the previous appraisal or appraisal of professional credits, on the motion of the school principal or the teacher in question, the body exercising pedagogical supervision, governing authority, school council or parents' councils. The appraisal is conducted by the school principal demonstrating instructional qualifications or a teacher holding another managerial position at the school, if the principal does not exercise pedagogical superintendence. The appraisal covers only teachers' statutory obligations. Detailed teacher appraisal indicators include: professional competencies, dedication to work, content compliance and efficiency (Michalak, 2014). In addition, if a teacher applies for a higher grade of professional promotion, the school principal determines the evaluation of the teacher's professional credits for the period of internship, including the degree of execution of teacher's professional development plan (Teacher's Charter, Art. 9c).

TALIS addressed appraisal of teacher performance and feedback in the questionnaire form filled in by teachers and principals from primary, lower and upper secondary schools<sup>7</sup>. The broadly drawn definition of feedback adopted by the survey defines it as all and any communication received by a teacher about his/her performance evaluated in various situations (observing classroom and teaching students, discussing teachers' curriculum or the results of their students). Formal teacher appraisal is defined in the survey as a situation when a teacher's work performance is reviewed by the school principal, an external inspector or by the teacher's colleagues and is interpreted as formalised procedure. The main goal of TALIS was to conduct international comparisons and, therefore, the definition of formal teacher appraisal in the TALIS questionnaire is uniform in all countries although it is not compliant with provisions of the Polish education law. For this reason, respondents could have interpreted teacher's performance appraisal according to the Teacher's Charter (Art. 6a) or evaluation of professional credits performed within the professional promotion procedure (Teacher's Charter, Art. 9c) or selected procedures implemented as part of school evaluation or, additionally, as an internal school procedure which is not governed by provisions of the education law. The appraisal is thus perceived as a picture of

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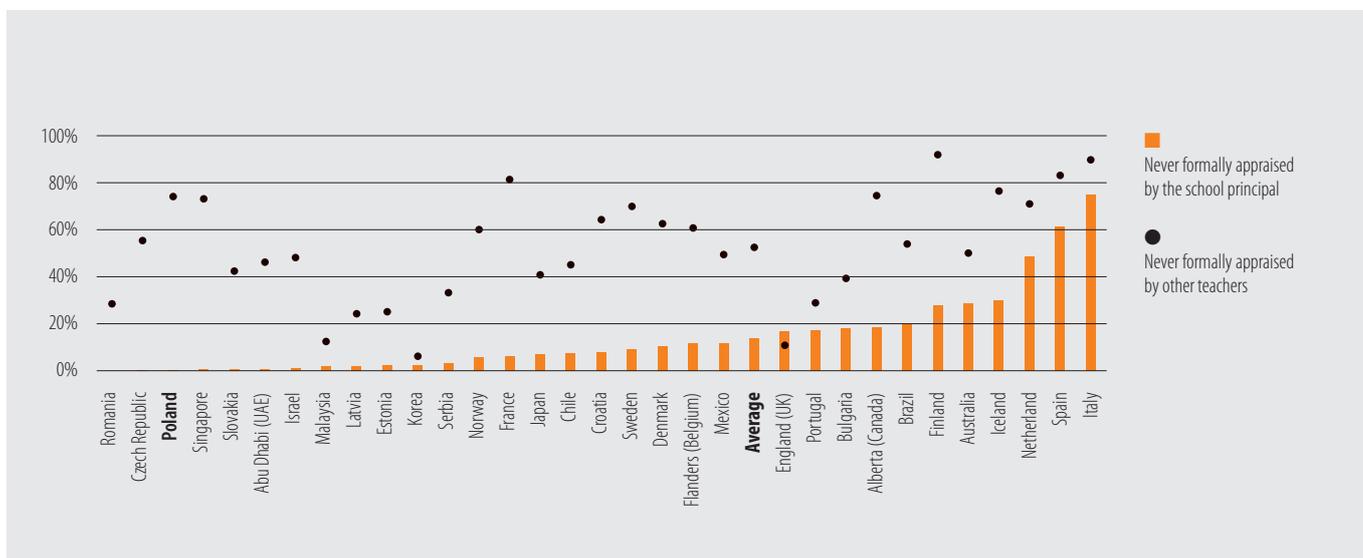
<sup>7</sup> Results for teacher appraisal and feedback for primary and upper secondary schools are similar to responses of lower secondary school teachers and, therefore, this chapter presents results for lower secondary schools only.

a teacher’s performance seen by school principals and teachers rather than the picture of the current legal status This results from the fact that it embraces formal procedures and less formal performance feedback provided to teachers.

Findings of the survey indicate that Polish principals engage in both formal performance reviews of teachers and provision of less formal feedback, as reported by 93% of teachers (TALIS average: 54%). Teachers also declare that other teachers contribute to provision of feedback on their performance (TALIS average: 42%). Teacher performance in Poland and other countries is often appraised by other individuals than principals, including members of the school management team, designated mentors or external evaluators and institutions. Only a minor percentage of Polish teachers (2%) declared that they were never appraised at the school they teach (TALIS average: 12%). For comparison, the percentage for Finland where there is no regulated framework for teacher evaluation (it is a matter of internal arrangements within a given school) reached 37%. Principals of Finnish schools may conduct annual discussions dedicated to professional development or teacher’s performance appraisal but are not obliged to do so. During such activities, the appraisal is not focused on performance to-date but rather on the future (The European Commission/EACA/Eurydice, 2013).

Polish school principals claim that there are virtually no teachers who would not be given a formal appraisal by the principal (0.4%), what marks a stark difference versus average TALIS results (Graph 9). Principals report that to-date three-quarters of Polish teachers were evaluated without the input of their peers, i.e. other teachers (within the formal framework). It does not mean, however, that they failed to provide feedback to their colleagues during formal interviews.

**Graph 9. Percentage of teachers whose principals reported that teachers were never appraised by the principal or other teachers**

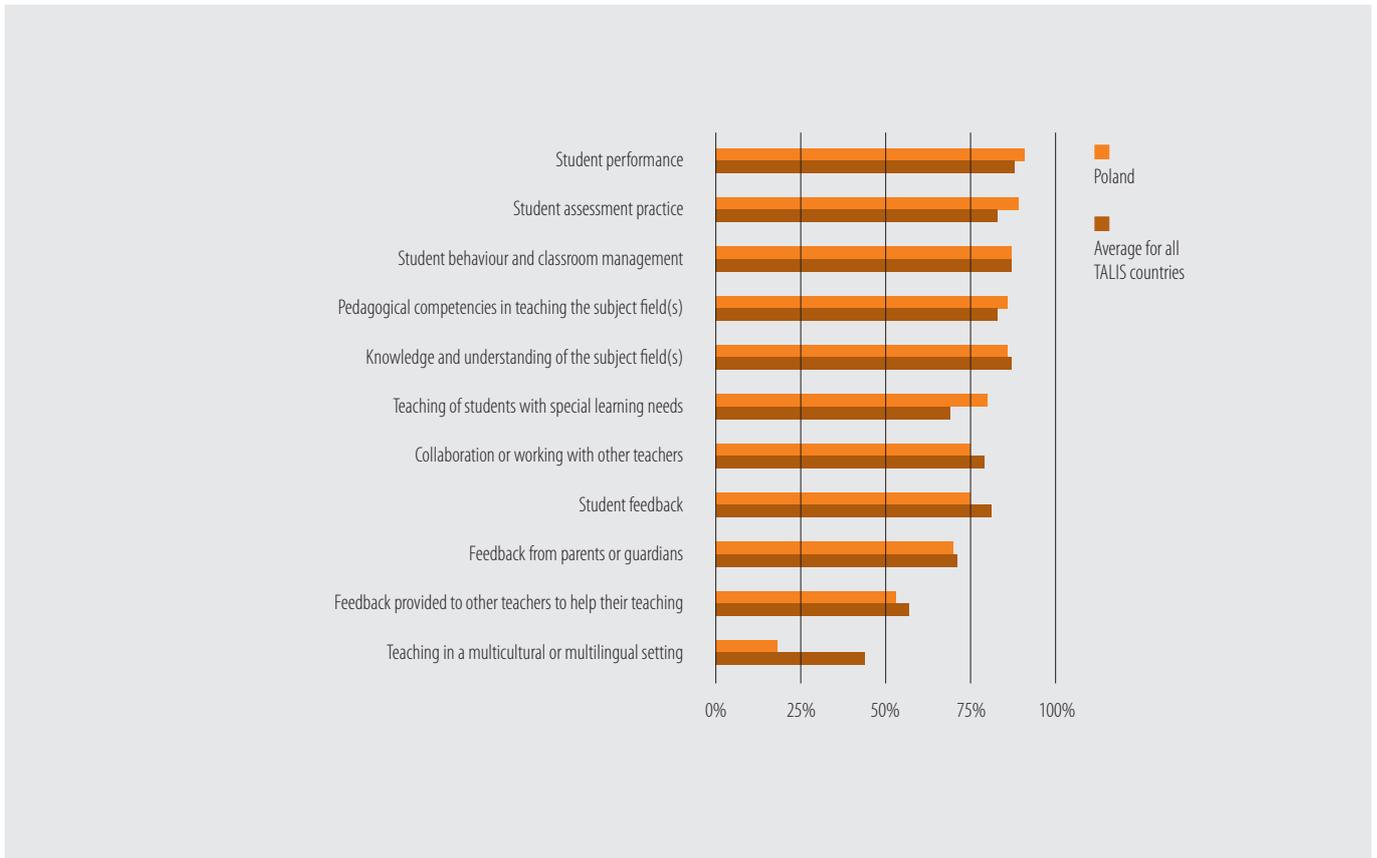


Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

## Appraised areas

Teachers are convinced that key areas of their performance subject to appraisal include: student performance, student assessment practice and managing student classroom behaviour (Graph 10). A high percentage of teachers also pointed out to competencies related to teaching a specific subject field as a recurring feedback theme.

**Graph 10. Percentage of teachers who reported that the feedback they received emphasised the following issues with a moderate or high importance**



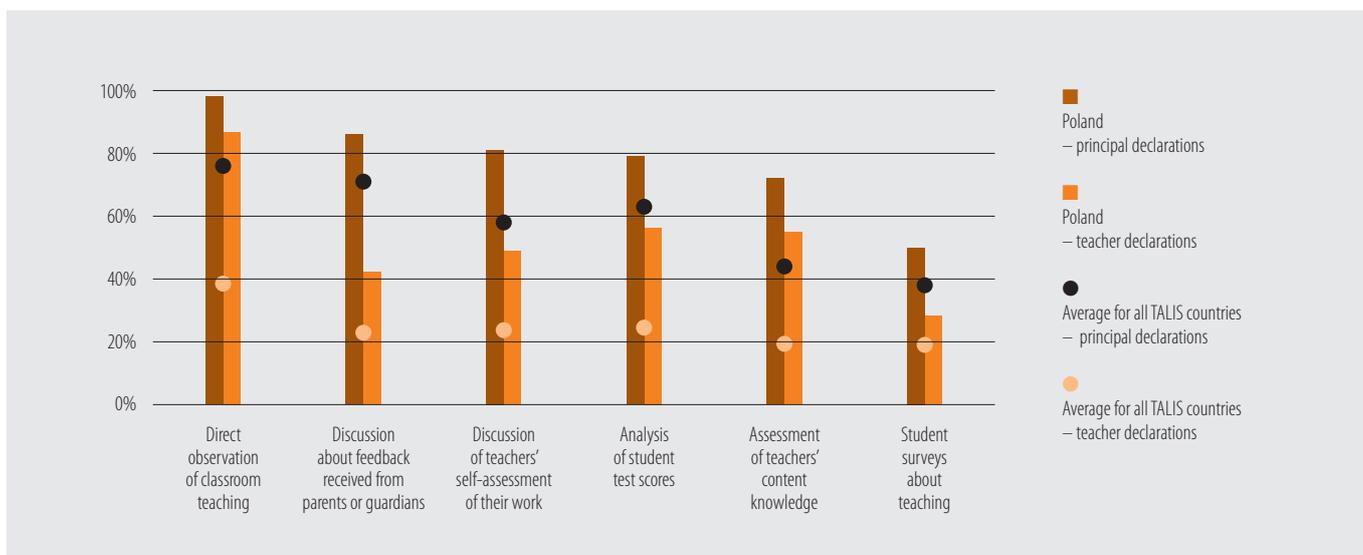
Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

## Teacher appraisal methods

The range of teacher appraisal methods embraced by TALIS is very wide (Graph 11). Polish teachers and school principals mainly indicated direct classroom observations, whereas principals more frequently than teachers indicate employment of various appraisal techniques (e.g. discussing feedback from parents). These differences may result from the fact that declarations made by principals referred to methods employed by them in a given school and not in relation to a specific percentage of teachers<sup>8</sup>. A principal who employed several appraisal methods to evaluate some teachers reported that he/she is using a given method, whereas declarations of teachers reflected their current personal experiences with various appraisal methods.

<sup>8</sup> Responses of principals were computed pro rata to the number of teachers at the principal's school to compute the percentage of teachers. It does not mean that the principal reports such percentage of teachers appraised using a given method. This way, the number of teachers represented by the principal who selected a given response was identified.

**Graph 11. Formal teacher appraisal performed by the school principal using various methods – declarations of teachers and principals concerning employment of the following methods at their school**



Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

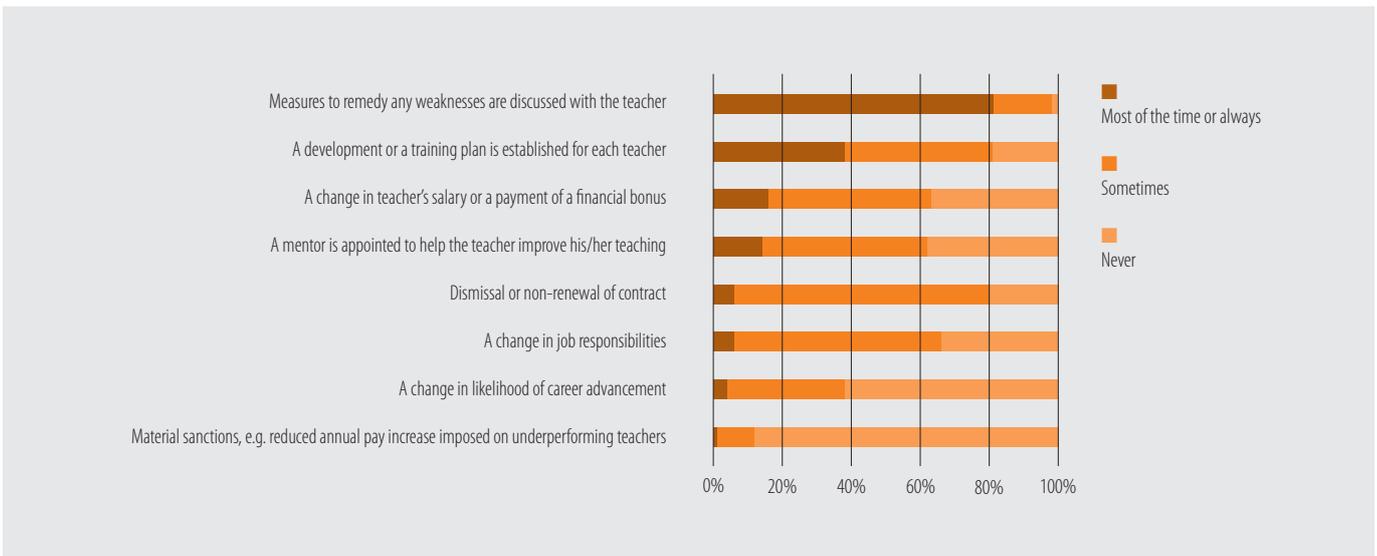
### Frequency of teacher appraisal

Formal teacher appraisal in Poland is conducted relatively less frequently than in other countries. When we divide the percentage of principal responses by the number of teachers they represent, it becomes evident that more than 50% of teachers receive such reviews once every two years or even less frequently. For comparison, performance of 70% of teachers from Malaysia and 62% from Romania is appraised by principals twice a year or even more often and in the majority of European countries formal appraisals are given once a year (82% in France, 60% in Germany, 64% in Norway, 59% in Sweden, 53% in England, 50% in Finland).

### Outcomes of teacher appraisal

If we want teacher appraisal to improve their working style and bring about actual outcomes and results, the activities undertaken as its consequence become important. It turns out that formal teacher appraisal in Poland (especially a review revealing their underperformed areas) is usually followed up by a discussion of remedy measures with the teacher or possibly identification of the professional development plan (Graph 12). Financial sanctions, changes in salary or consequences related to termination of the teacher's contract are extremely rare both in Poland and other countries. It may possibly result from the fact that formal appraisal procedures rarely lead to negative findings and thus disciplinary measures are seldom undertaken at schools.

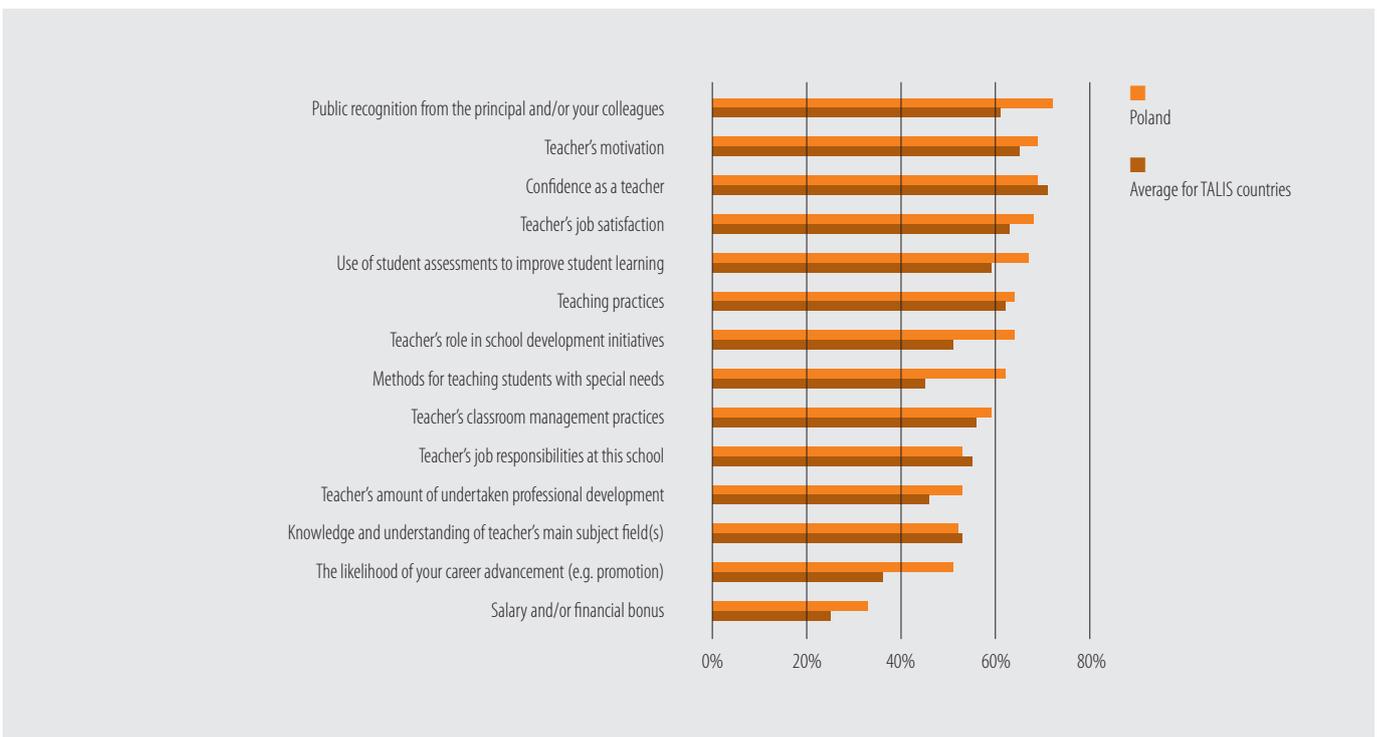
**Graph 12. Follow up on teacher appraisal in Poland (percentage of teachers working in schools whose principals declared the following frequencies of activities)**



Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

Asked about positive outcomes related to feedback received about their own performance, teachers usually indicated those which they found personally relevant: confidence in their professional role, motivation to work and job satisfaction (Graph 13). Another positive outcome reported by teachers was recognition from principals and colleagues. Received feedback also has positive impact on the way they teach in the classroom. Financial motivation is not a common incentive in schools – only one-third of Polish teachers and one-quarter of teachers from all surveyed countries reported a pay increase.

**Graph 13. Positive outcomes of providing teachers with feedback about their work (teacher responses – “moderate change” and “major change”)**

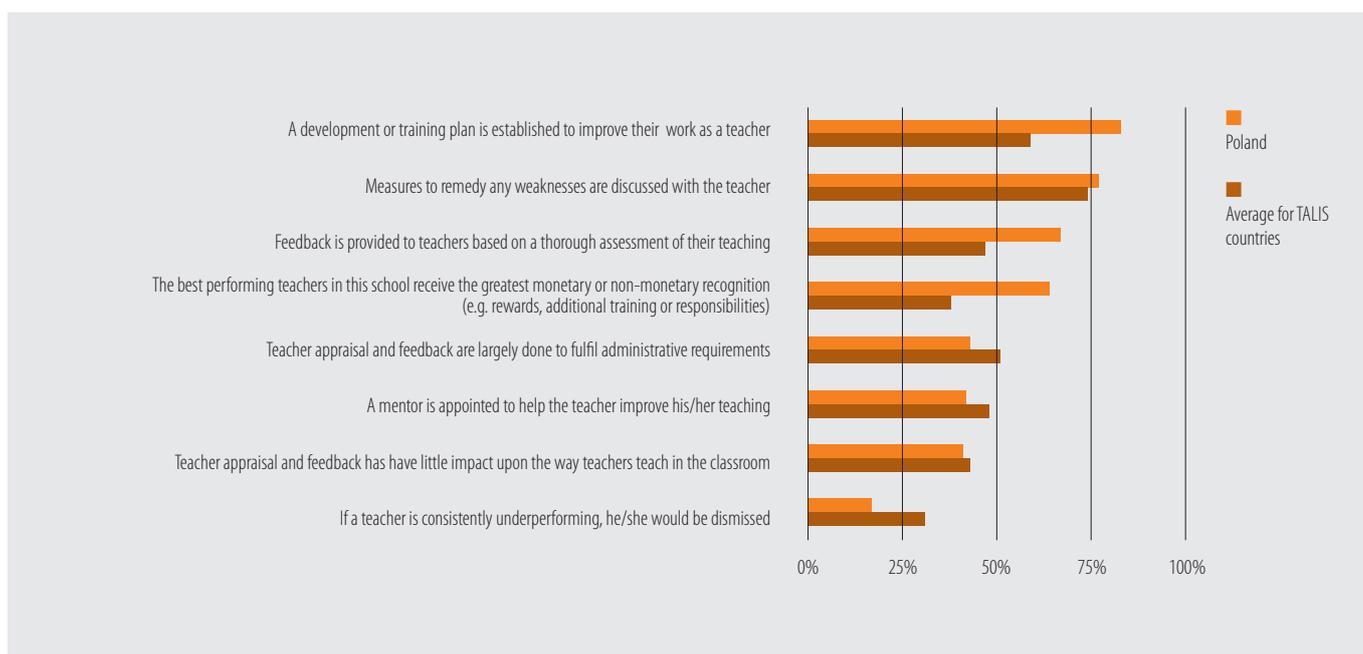


Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

### Teacher beliefs about appraisal of their work

Teachers were asked about their general beliefs and experiences related to the teacher appraisal process (Graph 14). Polish respondents declare much more often than others that best-performing teachers from their schools receive the greatest recognition (e.g. rewards, additional training courses or broader scope of responsibility). Nevertheless, one-third of Polish teachers disagree with this statement. Polish teachers tend to declare more frequently than others that provided feedback is based on a thorough assessment of their teaching. They are less convinced than their foreign peers that a consistently underperforming teacher faces a dismissal. Compared with findings from TALIS 2008, the percentage of Polish lower secondary school teachers convinced that dismissal is a realistic consequence faced by underperforming teachers decreased from 34 to 17%. More than 43% of teachers in Poland believe that teacher appraisal and feedback are mainly done to meet administrative requirements (TALIS average: 51%). Given a high percentage of individuals with such perception of performance appraisal system, it is advisable to consider how to effectively model the culture of mutual learning and aspiring for excellence through critical reflection on one's own work. Performance appraisal should not be associated with administrative requirements or sole teacher supervision but rather with opportunities for acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies by self-analyses of one's work and related discussion with other experienced people.

**Graph 14. Beliefs of lower secondary school teachers about the appraisal of their work – percentage of teachers who agreed with the following statements**



Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

## Chapter 5. Teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction and professional problems

This part of the report presents responses of Polish lower secondary school teachers related to their level of self-efficacy, problems of the teaching profession and job satisfaction. It also features basic international comparisons and references to results for primary and upper secondary school teachers as well as key correlations between these areas and the predictors of self-efficacy and job satisfaction.

### Teacher self-efficacy

The concept of self-efficacy suggested by Bandura (1977) was coined as a result of interest taken in cognitive, learning and behavioural change processes. The concept of self-efficacy was meant to explain and anticipate the efficiency of changes in human behaviours and, therefore, encompasses all activities taken up by an individual. Self-efficacy is an inner conviction concerning the extent to which one can successfully execute the behaviour required to produce a given outcome and to what extent his/her activities demonstrate efficacy. Therefore, self-efficacy impacts the individuals' perception of themselves and the world, their feelings, how they motivate themselves to act and finally, how they behave. Individuals with a high level of self-efficacy will perceive themselves as doers, coping with and seizing control of the circumstances. They will see challenges as tasks to be performed. Individuals with a low level of self-efficacy who see challenges as threats, will have a tendency to focus on setbacks rather than tasks and will be withdrawn, helpless and demonstrating low aspirations (Bandura, 1994).

TALIS employed twelve statements to design four scales measuring teacher self-efficacy including: efficacy in classroom management, efficacy in instruction, efficacy in student engagement and general teacher self-efficacy scale. Additionally, the Polish questionnaire featured a statement about collaboration with students' parents. As shown in Graph 15, Polish lower secondary school teachers gave the highest score to their efficacy in classroom management (statements 1–4). Answers to these questions were definitely positive, especially to the question concerning communicating expected student behaviour. More negative responses were given to questions concerning reactions to noisy or disruptive student behaviour. Polish teachers seem to be faring well in this respect – aggregated percentage of two top responses (“Quite a bit” and “A lot”) ranged from 87 to 95% in Poland versus the international average from 85 to 91%.

Four statements concerned teaching (statements 5–8 on the graph). Polish lower secondary school teachers assess their coping with areas related to intellectual development of materials and knowledge transfer as very good. Only every eighth teacher indicated that he/she has not managed to employ various assessment techniques or provide alternative explanations of the material taught “to a certain extent” or “not at all”. Slightly less positive indications were given to a statement relating to teacher-student interactions (“I manage to craft good questions for my students”). Responses of Polish lower secondary school teachers indicate that they cope least effectively with alternative instructional strategies. The questionnaire failed to define the meaning of “alternative instructional strategies” and its interpretation remained open to respondents. A comparison of these data with results described in the section “Teacher practices, beliefs and attitudes” confirming that project or small group methods are rarely used at Polish schools suggests that respondents who do not feel comfortable in a given area and fail to undertake specific activities have interpreted the term “alternative” as related activities.

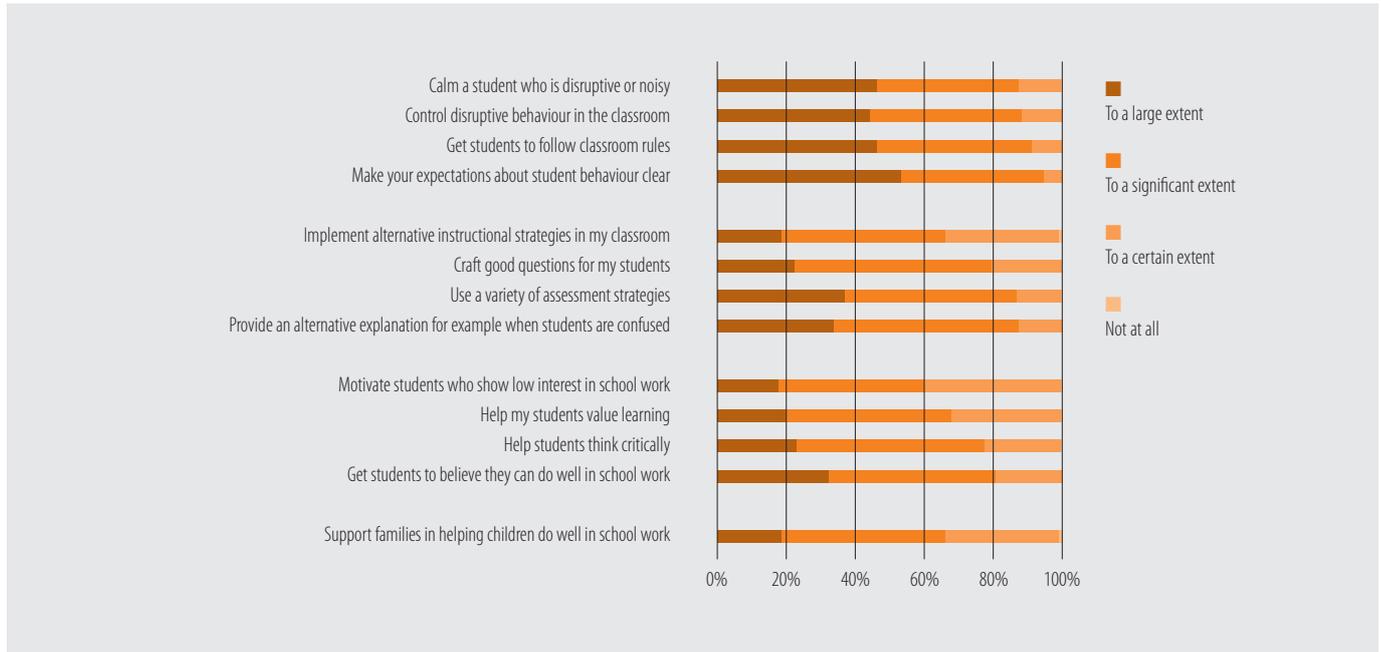
At the same time, abstaining from such methods, they are unlikely to practice and develop a high level of self-efficacy. Later, the chapter presents sources of self-efficacy. Responses to questions about providing alternative explanations when students are confused indicate that Polish teachers assess themselves above average, yet their self-evaluation is lower than the average for the three other questions. The question about alternative instructional strategies points out to a difference of 11 percentage points, although Polish results do not diverge from those for Finland or Norway.

The third area of self-efficacy measured in TALIS is related to efficacy in student engagement (statements 9–12 on the graph). Positive responses also dominate – approximately 80% of Polish teachers reported that they are highly or largely successful in getting their students to believe they can do well in school work or helping students think critically. Questions investigating how successfully teachers help their students value learning had a smaller number of positive indications. As many as 40% of teachers responded that they manage to motivate students who show little interest in school work only to a limited extent or failed to do so at all. A comparison of these findings with responses to questions about alternative instructional strategies enables us to conclude that lower secondary school teachers cope better with knowledge transfer in terms of its intellectual content (encyclopedic knowledge) and worse with student engagement (inspiring students to experience things). Answers to these four questions provided by Polish lower secondary school teachers were less positive than the international average, where two top answers (“to a significant extent” and “to a large extent”) had 70% of indications on question about motivating, approximately 80% on questions about valuing learning and critical thinking and 85% for the question about getting students to believe they can do well in school work.

The set of 12 statements related to self-efficacy employed in all countries participating in the survey was supplemented with a question about cooperation with parents. Two-thirds of Polish lower secondary school teachers reported that they manage to support families in helping their children do well in school work to a significant or a large extent (teachers previously trained in this area and those who assess that their school enables parents or guardians to take active part in decision making at the school level cope definitely better in this respect).

Results presented below refer to lower secondary school teachers, whereas responses of primary and upper secondary school teachers are similar, even though that primary school teachers assess their self-efficacy slightly higher and upper secondary school teachers lower.

Graph 15. Percentage of answers to the question "In your teaching, to what extent can you do the following?"



Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

According to Bandura (1994), self-efficacy is rooted in three factors: experience, modelling and social persuasion. It should not come as a surprise that teachers who have a number of students demonstrating disruptive behaviours in their class have a lower level of self-efficacy. Teachers whose students do well at school are more confident about their self-efficacy. A higher level of self-efficacy is also demonstrated by respondents positively assessing the school climate in the context of teacher-student relations as well as those more frequently engaging in collaboration with other teachers. Likewise, prospects for making a contribution to decision making at the school level or participation in an induction programme for new teachers are also correlated with a higher level of self-efficacy. Teachers who report that the appraisal of their work serves only administrative requirements have a lower sense of self-efficacy. A high level of self-efficacy is connected to a belief that work appraisal is based on a thorough assessment of their teaching. Teachers with a high level of self-efficacy report that a mentor is appointed for teachers from their schools who experience professional difficulties and a development or a training plan is established for them. It is fair to conclude that a higher level of self-efficacy is more common in an environment fostering a climate of collaboration focused on enhancement of the quality of education.

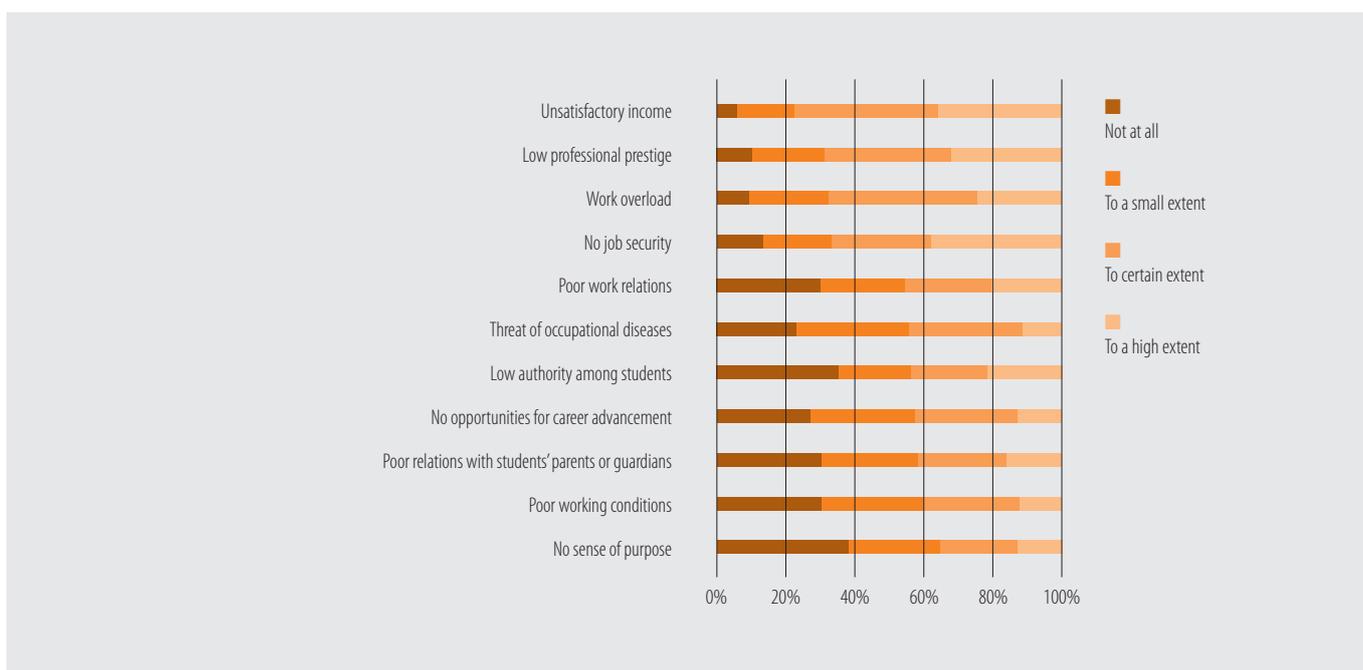
### Problems in the teaching practice

The Polish version of the questionnaire asked teachers to assess to what extent each of the 11 listed areas constitutes a problem in their teaching practice. Among them, least problematic is no sense of purpose (every fourth lower secondary school teacher indicated it as a major problem or a problem to a certain extent). Other six areas: poor working conditions, poor relations with parents or guardians and no prospects for career advancement, low authority among students, risk of occupational diseases and poor work relations were reported as problems by less than 45% of lower secondary school teachers. According to TALIS, key problems affecting Polish lower secondary school teachers results include unsatisfactory income, low prestige of the profession, work overload and no job security. The latter factor had the biggest number of responses: "to a high extent." Detailed results are depicted in Graph 16. Responses of primary and upper secondary school teachers are very similar, although their work overload is slightly

less often declared by teachers from primary and upper secondary schools, while poor relations with parents or guardians are less often declared by upper secondary school teachers.

Problems reported by teachers have low correlation with their level of self-efficacy and the strongest correlations were demonstrated with: low authority among students and no sense of purpose (both low authority and no sense of purpose are related to a low level of their self-efficacy). Correlations are stronger in case of job satisfaction. Lack of purpose is most closely correlated with this indicator<sup>9</sup>. Similarly strong relations are reflected by no opportunity for career advancement and no professional prestige. Work overload, unsatisfactory salary and poor working conditions also have negative correlations with job satisfaction<sup>10</sup>.

**Graph 16. Percentage of responses to the question “To what extent do you find the following factors a problem in the teaching profession” in the lower secondary school teacher population (Poland)**



Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

## Job satisfaction

TALIS used ten statements to measure job satisfaction. Two general questions investigated job satisfaction and prestige. Overall, Polish teachers are satisfied with their work. 93% of lower secondary school teachers agree or strongly agree with the statement “Generally, I am satisfied with my work” versus TALIS average at 91% and the lowest score for England totalling 82%. The question about prestige revealed very different answers – only 18% of teachers reported that the teaching profession is valued by the society. The TALIS average was 31%. Figures for Slovakia, Sweden and France were lower than 5% and 84% for Malaysia.

Polish lower secondary school teachers are generally satisfied with their job. Interestingly, the results indicate that they draw more satisfaction from working at a particular school than from their job as such.

As many as 90% agree or strongly agree with the statement that they enjoy working in their

<sup>9</sup>  $r = -0.30$ .

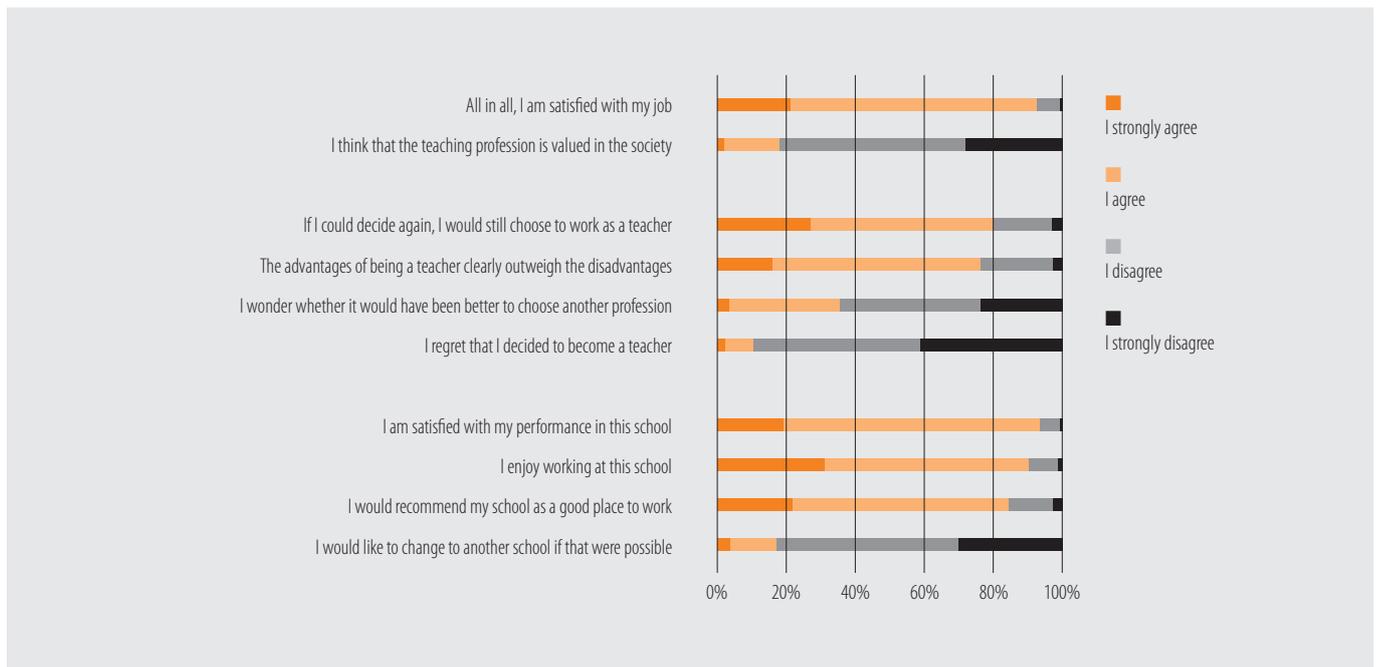
<sup>10</sup> All these correlation coefficients fit into the range from  $-0.30$  to  $-0.20$ .

school, 85% would recommend their schools as a good place to work and only 17% agree or strongly agree with the statement that they would like to change to another school if that were possible. Teachers are also satisfied with their school performance – such response was indicated by 93% of surveyed lower secondary school teachers. Differences with the international average are only visible for the question about the potential change of the school in which they work – in this case, the international average was 21%.

Lower indications were given to questions about the teaching profession. Only every tenth respondent regrets becoming a teacher, and every third lower secondary school teacher wonders if it would be better to choose another profession. Every fifth teacher would rather not or definitely not choose again to be a teacher. In this case, results for Poland are similar to the international average.

A similar pattern was demonstrated by responses of primary and upper secondary school teachers, but primary school teachers much less frequently agreed with the statement “If I could decide again, I would still choose to work as a teacher.” On the other hand, compared to primary and upper secondary school teachers, a smaller percentage of lower secondary school teachers agreed that the teaching profession is valued by the society.

**Graph 17. Percentage of responses to the question “We would like to know how you generally feel about your job. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?” in population of Polish lower secondary school teachers (Poland)**



Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

A slightly lower level of job satisfaction is reported by males. Lower results were also obtained for respondents with more than 5 years of professional experience. Teaching students with special learning needs and high academic achievers contributes to a higher job satisfaction. Teaching students with behavioural problems leads to a lower level of job satisfaction. Both getting on well with students and collaboration with other teachers contribute to a higher level of job satisfaction, but the correlation with good student-teacher relations is stronger. Participation in induction programmes and mentoring also relates to a higher level of job satisfaction, which also positively correlates with self-efficacy<sup>11</sup>.

11 r = 0.27.

## Chapter 6. School leadership: principals' roles and objectives

School leadership is currently becoming a priority in education (Pont et al., 2008). Education systems are facing a number of challenges, including progressive school decentralisation and autonomy processes, growing pressure on school accountability, a more pronounced impact of comparative educational studies on decision making in education (Hernik, Wasilewska, Kasprzak, 2012). These factors force educational leaders to take up specific activities to respond to these challenges and expands their role in educational processes. School leaders also face raising expectations from participants of the school life and have a wider area of responsibility.

TALIS attempted to capture the role of the principal in creating an environment that fosters learning and teaching. It focused on practices and attitudes of principals to various issues, such as: the scope of responsibilities of the principal and other stakeholders of the education process, time spent by principals on various tasks related to their responsibility, educational preparation for their role, professional development and job satisfaction. The survey also attempted to identify what types of leadership dominate in schools and how they correlate with other factors<sup>12</sup>.

### Principals' objectives and scope of responsibility

The average Polish principal is a 50 year old female (although the higher educational level, the lower the percentage of females) with 11 years of work service as the school principal and little experience in other fields (2 years). Another distinctive feature of the Polish school principal profile is the fact that five in six principals also teach various subjects. A roughly similar percentage of respondents have reported that the position of the school principal should be open exclusively to teachers (86%), because it helps the principal better manage the school. A principal engaged in teaching gets on better with students, has more positive relations with teachers and exercises more effective pedagogical supervision (75%, 70% and 70%, respectively, of aggregated responses "I strongly agree" and "I agree"). Barely one-third of Polish principals believe that if a principal is not teaching students, he/she has time to duly fulfil his/her duties.

Various studies and analyses indicate that principals' responsibilities have become increasingly complex. They must meet expectations of teachers, students and parents, the education system and the environment in which they operate. TALIS enabled us to identify how principals distribute their working time. Similarly to respondents from other countries, principals of Polish schools dedicate most of their time to typically administrative and leadership tasks<sup>13</sup> (41% of time), whereas one-quarter of their working time is taken up by tasks related to implementation of the curriculum and teaching-related tasks<sup>14</sup>. The remaining time is spent on interactions with students (15%), parents or guardians (11%), the local community, business and industry (7%).

Data from TALIS offer an insight into the scope of these administrative tasks and curriculum-related activities. They also facilitate identification of principals' areas of responsibility, tasks consuming most of their time and those which require much less time investments or are not perceived as priority areas.

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12 Types of leadership activities are discussed in the main TALIS 2013 report.

13 Including human resource management/ personal issues, regulations, reporting, school budget, preparing timetables and class composition, strategic planning, leadership and management-related activities, responding to requests from district, regional, or national education officials.

14 Including developing curriculum, teaching, class observations, student evaluation, mentoring teachers, teacher professional development.

In the era of a stronger emphasis on principals' accountability and the evidence-based decision making, school leaders focus on ensuring that teachers feel responsible for their students' learning outcomes. 92% of Polish school principals have declared that they used student performance and student evaluation results (including national/international assessments) to develop the school's educational goals and programmes and have worked on a professional development plan for the school. It should be stressed, however, that principals of Finnish schools whose students are renowned worldwide for high performance in the PISA survey attach much less weight to such performance than school leaders from other countries (74%). It is extremely important for principals to provide parents or guardians with information on the school and student performance. On average, principals of Polish schools attach slightly more weight to this task than principals from other countries – 81% of them indicated that they often or very often engage in such activities versus TALIS average at 66%. Motivating teachers to improve their teaching skills and collaborating with them to solve classroom discipline problems are also one of the most often performed tasks by principals (72% and 71% of responses, respectively).

Relatively less frequent activities (less than 50% of indications) of Polish principals include tasks related to solving problems concerning the lesson timetable (14% responded that they never or very rarely do it). In this context, we should note that the collaboration of principals with their counterparts from other schools depends on ISCED level. Lower secondary school principals are least keen to engage in such cooperation (61%), while primary school principals are the most willing to cooperate (80%).

Because of its complexity, the principal's work is increasingly recognised as responsibility that should be broadly shared by other subjects of the education process, including teachers, parents, self-government and national authorities, school boards and other entities (Schleicher, 2012). TALIS attempted to identify to what extent principals make important decisions on their own and how the responsibilities for other areas are shared by other entities. This is, in fact, a question about the principal's autonomy in decision-making and the degree of centralisation of the education system in a given country.

In Poland, data revealed several areas of almost exclusive principal's responsibility, which include<sup>15</sup>: appointing and hiring teachers (99%), suspending and dismissing teachers (98%), approving students for admission to the school (93%). Areas which, according to principal declarations, are subject to shared responsibility with other entities include<sup>16</sup>: establishing student assessment and disciplinary policies and procedures (68% and 65%, respectively), choosing which learning materials are used (59%), determining which courses the school offers and their content (49%), deciding on budget allocations within the school (51%). Generally, the two latter areas are covered by competencies of the self-government/government administration, whereas teachers contribute to decision making on the former areas, in the Polish context by expressing their views.

In most countries participating in TALIS, establishing teachers' starting salaries, including setting pay scales is usually regulated on the central level. Nevertheless, there are some exceptions to this rule (Korea: the principal has the ultimate impact on the salaries of school employees). It should be stressed that despite the fact that the self-government/government administration has major impact on decision making in these areas in Poland (79% and 64%), principals have a

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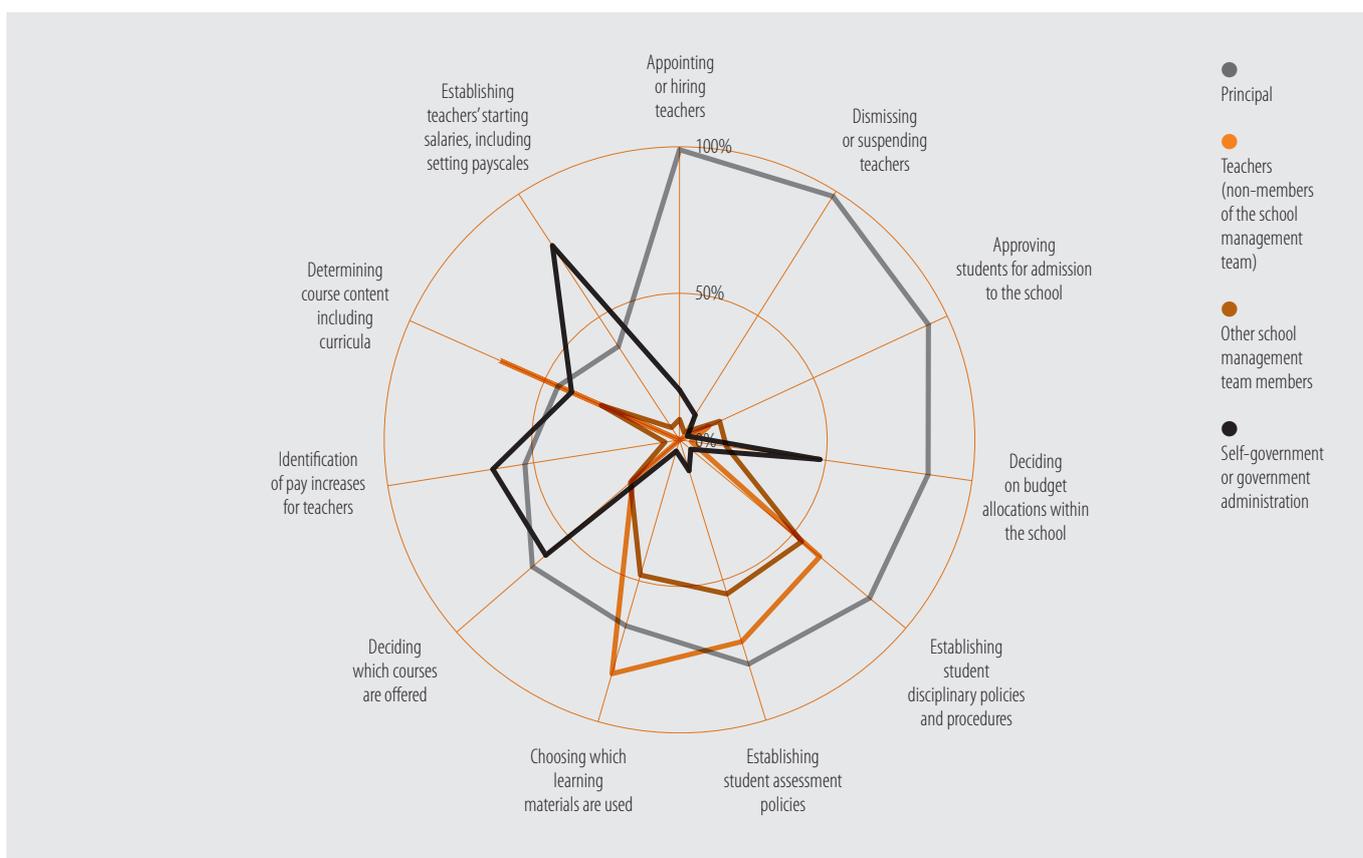
<sup>15</sup> Percentage of responses in which principals reported that they have significant responsibility for individual areas are presented in parentheses.

<sup>16</sup> Percentage of responses in which principals reported that other entities are also significantly responsible for individual areas: other members of the school management team, teachers (non-members of the school management team), school governing board, self-government or government administration.

sense of major responsibility for those issues (38% and 53% principal responses, respectively). In addition, 50% of respondents declare that they have the autonomy to make major decisions. Detailed results are depicted in Graph 18<sup>17</sup>.

Only 27% of teachers from France (home to one of the world's most centralised education systems worldwide), Malaysia and Spain declare impact on the employment of teachers. Principals from Poland (decentralised system) have a sense of influence on a relatively large number of areas, although other studies (Więśław, 2011) prove that the actual autonomy of the Polish principal is rather low and highly diversified – it depends on the principal's individual traits and local customs.

**Graph 18. Percentage of principals who declared that the following entities are often or very often involved in individual activities in their school during the past 12 months prior to the survey (Poland)**



Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

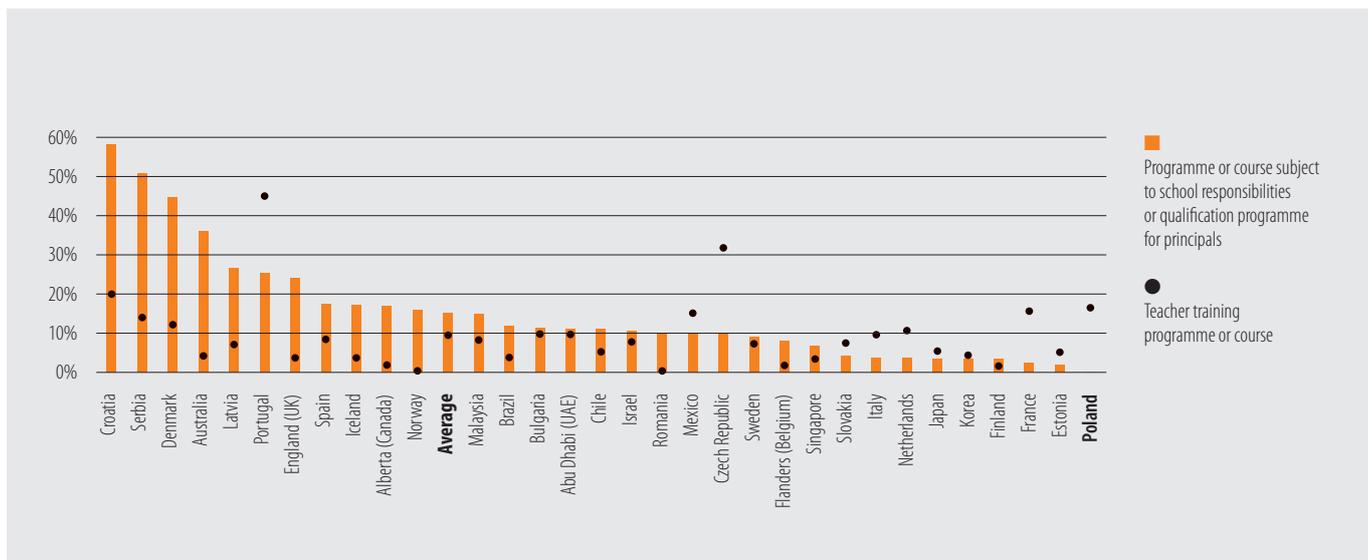
### Educational preparation of principals

Similarly to Polish teachers, Polish principals are the best educated groups in the TALIS. Almost all of them have university background (TALIS average: 92%). Courses and training seminars principals participate in should equip them with knowledge and skills useful in their position. TALIS data indicate that this is not obvious in all countries. Graph 19 depicts the percentage of lower secondary school principals who reported that courses such as school administration or principal training programme and teacher training/education programmes, were not

17 School management teams are operating in barely two-thirds of Polish lower secondary and primary schools and in four out of five upper secondary schools. According to principal declarations, members of such teams include: vice-principals (76%), teachers (82%), parents or guardians (47%).

included in their formal education<sup>18</sup>. In some countries like Croatia or Serbia, it exceeds 50%, although this problem is relevant for only 15% of principals from all surveyed countries. All Polish respondents declared to have completed a course in school administration or principal training programme or course<sup>19</sup>. In reality, however, such preparation for the position of the principal often turns out to be insufficient. Many emphasise the need for modification of the career advancement scheme at schools to establish positions of formal leaders accountable for individual areas, which would create grounds for natural induction of teachers to managerial roles (IBE, 2014).

Graph 19. Percentage of lower secondary school principals who report the following elements were not included in their formal education



Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

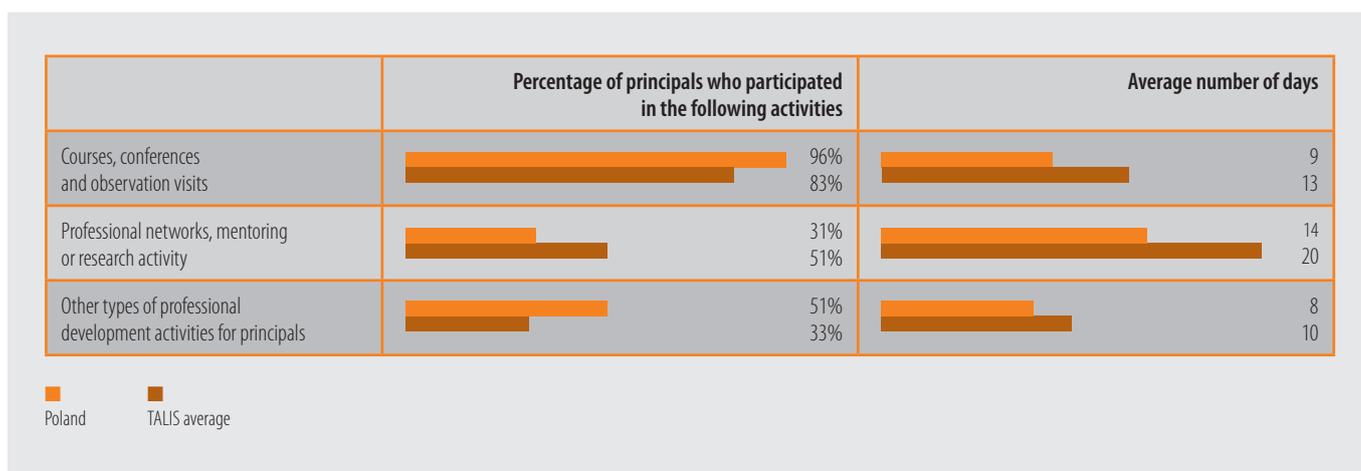
### Professional development of principals – needs and barriers

In Poland, there are no formal requirements for training and professional development for school principals already holding this position. Nevertheless, due to the fact that the overwhelming majority of Polish principals are teachers, they are obliged to continuously enhance their qualifications and pursue ongoing development. TALIS provides a rather broad definition of such activities – almost all Polish principals (96%) declare participation in courses, conferences or observation visits (TALIS average: 83%), but the number of training days they declare is much lower than the international average (from 14 to 20 days). More specific questions reduce this percentage even further – only one-third of Polish principals declare participation in mentoring or survey collaboration networks (TALIS average: 51%) with the average duration of 9 days (TALIS average: 13 days). Participation in other activities related to professional development for principals is reported by 50% of respondents from Poland (and lasts 8 days altogether) and one-third of international respondents (TALIS average: 10 days).

18 Graph 19 does not present responses to questions about educational leadership as an element of formal education because, in our opinion, this term remains unclear. Polish principals usually responded they did not participate in such course (57% versus average 22%).

19 A person who graduated from university or completed a post-graduate course in management or a qualification programme in education management may be appointed a school principal in Poland.

**Graph 20. Participation rates and average number of days of professional development reported to be undertaken by lower secondary school principals in the 12 months prior to the survey**



Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

Participation in professional development activities depends on a wide range of factors, including availability of courses relevant from the standpoint of principals' daily efforts, availability of sufficient time and other resources enabling the principal to pursue such development offer, employer' support or, finally, conditions of participation which may possibly hinder participation of some individuals. Conclusions of TALIS are particularly important in the Polish context, because they indicate major problems related to principals' professional development. Poland is one of the countries where the highest percentage of principals reported no relevant offer (37%, TALIS average: 22%) and the cost of participation in such activities (43%, TALIS average: 30%) as barriers to their development. Another barrier is formed by development activities conflicting with work schedule (30%).

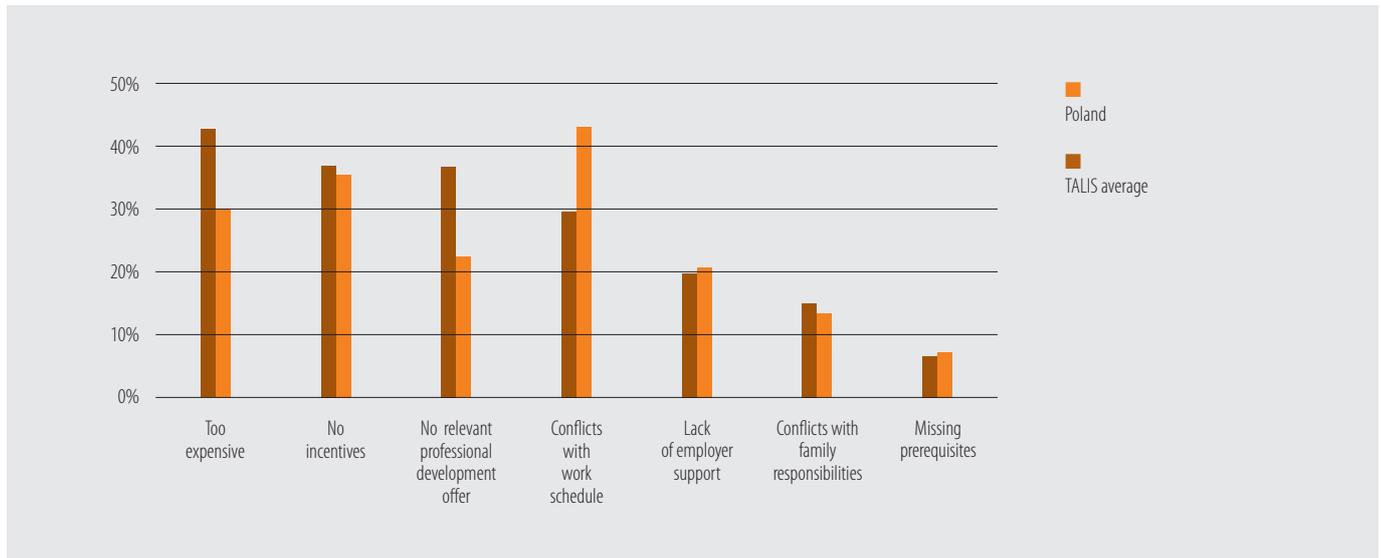
Polish principals were also asked to define to what extent they need professional development in various areas. The data led to important conclusions illustrating problems encountered by individuals managing schools and areas of competencies to be developed to solve those issues. Four in five principals need knowledge and skills to raise additional funds for their schools (moreover, one-third have pointed out to a high level of needs in this area). Data prove that school principals should not only demonstrate good knowledge of education law, but also public procurement, labour and construction regulations. These "non-educational" legal bases of school functioning belong to an area for development for 70% of principals – one-fourth of them declare a high level of needs in this respect (61% declared such needs in the area of the education law). Other development areas for principals cover managerial competencies, strategic planning and internal school evaluation (62%, 62% and 59% indications, respectively, of a high and a moderate level of needs).

Responses to the question about professional development needs have also shed light on areas which Polish principals regard as their strengths and declare no major need for acquisition of related knowledge and skills. These are mainly teaching methods and collaboration with parents and local community (74%, 66% and 70%, respectively, of aggregated answers "no need" or "a low level of needs"). These are areas which do not require specialist knowledge and skills and perhaps Polish school principals already demonstrate such competencies (for instance, teaching methods – the overwhelming majority of respondents work as both principals and teachers). In this context, we should also note the area "using ICT in management" – most

## Chapter 6. School leadership: principals' role and objectives

principals cope well with it (the highest number of “no need” indications – 28%), but over 50% struggle with acquisition of such skills (59%).

**Graph 21. Barriers to participation in professional development – principal responses (%)**



Source: OECD data, TALIS 2013

### Barriers to principals' effectiveness

Polish principals are struggling with similar problems as school leaders from other countries – insufficient budget and school resources (90% in Poland, TALIS average: 80%), regulations and the government policy (89% and 69%, respectively) or major work overload (74% and 72%). A barrier distinctive for Poland is the teachers' grade-based wage system (73% of indications versus TALIS average 48%), which additionally supports the claim that this system needs to be changed (IBE, 2014). In addition, upper secondary school principals report that teacher absenteeism is another major setback (63% versus 33% for lower secondary schools and 35% for primary schools).

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## **Educational Research Institute**

ul. Górczewska 8, 01-180 Warsaw, Poland | tel. +48 22 241 71 00 | [ibe@ibe.edu.pl](mailto:ibe@ibe.edu.pl) | [www.ibe.edu.pl](http://www.ibe.edu.pl)

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