

## Analysis of Education Personnel in Honduras

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### General Recommendations

1. Fulfill short-term salary commitment while a long-term salary strategy is worked out;
2. Revise the *Ley Retributiva* in order to revoke the tax exception that teachers enjoy;
3. Eliminate the requirement of *gremio* (union / guild) membership in order to be a teacher;
4. Strengthen the operation of the *Sistema de Información de Recursos Humanos* and encourage decentralization of the education system.

### ***30 years of strikes—The government's response has been consistent***

1. The Honduran Government, through the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finances and the President, makes a call for reason and good sense. In this call it is argued that there are not funds to pay what the teachers are owed by law.
2. Next, the government makes a proposal and the teacher's unions reject it.
3. Finally, the government and the unions decide on a salary increase that isn't as high as promised by the previous government, but helps to calm protests and make teachers return to the classroom.
4. *The government once again does not fulfill the new agreement.*
5. This process leaves broken promises that are the seeds for future conflict.

The *Estatuto del Docente* and PASCE promise salaries and financial compensation that are unsustainable for the government in the short-term. Under this reality late salary payments become a **chronic** problem. Given the impossibility of fulfilling the mandate of the *Estatuto del Docente*, unions accept negotiated salaries and partial salary increases that always leave the door open for a strikes because, *the government has not fulfilled the mandate set forth in the Estatuto del Docente*. This gives the unions huge bargaining power over the government. There is also a conflict of interest at the level of union leadership where a permanent solution to the salary problem would take away from their political clout, ability to call for a strike and possibility of a national political career.

### History

1. Honduras has had teacher's unions since 1895.
2. The *Ley de Colegiación Obligatoria*, and Art. 66 of the *Ley Orgánica de Educación* from 1966 stipulate that only those who are part of a teacher's union legally recognized by the state can work as a teacher.
3. Between 1950 and 1960 teacher's unions started to have political leanings. In order to face the government with a united front, non-partisan groups such as the *Colegio Profesional Superación Magisterial Hondureño (COLPROSUMAH)* were created. With time, *COLPROSUMAH* also became politicized, creating incentive for the creation of alternative teacher's unions. This process largely explains the huge diversity and number of teacher's unions today. The organization that coordinates teacher's unions has changed throughout the years, as unions decide to create a new institution to replace another that had lost power or political credibility. Some unions have clearly defined their political leanings, while others have tried to maintain a politically neutral stance. Currently the organization that represents all the teacher's unions is the *Federación de Organizaciones Magisteriales de Honduras (FOMH)*.
4. After years of lobbying by *COLPROSUMAH*, Congress approved the *Ley del Escalafón del Magisterio* in 1968, establishing a legal benchmark that regulated the hiring of teachers, using objective and professional criteria instead of political ones.

5. The 1968 law is the framework within which more detailed regulations for teachers should be developed. This is why the *Estatuto del Docente* was needed. This statute was requested by the teachers when the *Ley de Escalafón del magisterio* was approved. The statute was developed and discussed for almost 15 years in a process which generated many strikes, especially during the 80s. For successive administrations it was clear that the creation of an *estatuto del docente* would mean salary negotiations, and therefore a long and drawn-out fight which could possibly decrease the government's political clout. For political leaders the statute was a double-edged sword. On the one hand it endangered fiscal stability, but on the other hand it was important to consider the political support of teachers and their families, who made up a large part of the leaders' constituency.
6. In 1997, Carlos Flores Facussé, president of Congress, had presidential ambitions and found himself in a good position to negotiate the statute, even though he did not have the full support of the President of Honduras..

### ***Estatuto del Docente***

1. The statute defines the hourly wage as equal to or greater than 0.71132 times the current minimum wage (Art 46).
2. Multiplying the hourly wage by 156 hours of class per month gives the base teacher's salary (Art. 47).
3. This formula is also used to calculate other compensation such as seniority pay, bonuses based on educational level, bonuses for teaching in certain areas of the country and other bonuses.
4. The statute also requires teachers to adhere to professional ethics guidelines.
5. In addition, the statute states that teachers must teach 200 days each year.
6. Finally, the statute stipulates that teachers must provide a quality education for students.

The automatic link between the base salary and other bonuses has created, and continues to create, severe fiscal problems because of the generous nature of these bonuses. Experts inside and outside the government have called the current salary system unsustainable.

The hourly wage has increased substantially since 1997. Evidently, the problem is that teacher salary increases are not adjusted automatically when the minimum wage is adjusted (as indicated in Art 49), instead, in salary negotiations, the last minimum wage negotiated by the government and the unions is used.

Extra bonuses are another obstacle to the design of incentives that would improve teacher quality, because these bonuses are linked to teacher credentials, seniority, and the areas in which they teach, variables that are not directly linked to quality teaching and improvements in the learning environment.

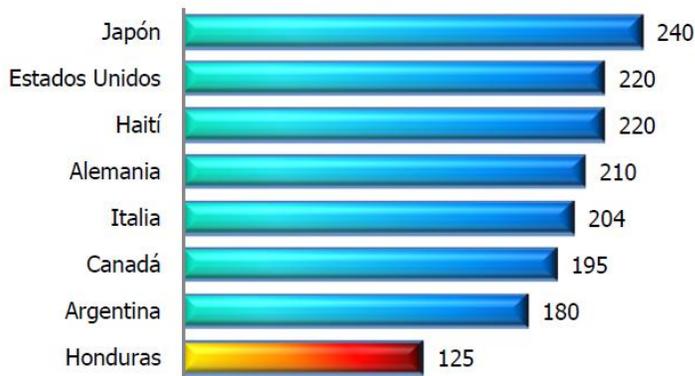
It has been more than 10 years since the passing of the *Estatuto del Docente* and a manual for teacher evaluation still has not been approved as specified in the statute.

President Maduro began a salary reform process. First, he was able to separate the teacher's base salary from the assignment of bonuses and the process finished with the 2003 passing of the *Ley de Ordenamiento del Sistema Retributivo del Gobierno Central*. The teacher's unions opposed this law and began to protest.

The strikes in protest of the *Ley Retributiva* resulted in President Zelaya reforming the law by way of *Decreto 74-2006* which stated that teachers were exempt from its application. In 2007, President Zelaya offered the unions a very generous salary agreement with the intention of reaching a truce with the education sector and of increasing the quality of public education. The agreement was called the *Programa de Ajuste Social y Calidad Educativa* (PASCE).

*Fig. 1 Days of class per year*

**Fig. 1 Días de clase por año**



***Programa de Ajuste Social y Calidad Educativa (PASCE)***

Before the signing of the 2007 salary agreement Honduran teachers received a salary 48% higher than the Latin American average while the quality of Honduran education was much below average.

The agreement: *Propuesta Salarial y Programa de Ajuste Social y Calidad Educativa (PASCE)*,

- a. Contains generous salary increases and consequently increases to bonuses,
- b. Contains a L. 12,500 bonus every four years for all eligible teachers.
- a. Includes an agreement by the unions to an audit by parents and civil society to verify the identity of teachers on the payroll, their attendance records and lesson plan preparation.

This salary package greatly exceeded the fiscal capacity of the government unless it was willing to violate its fiscal plan or the agreements it had with the International Monetary Fund. Nonetheless, President Zelaya approved the agreement, giving teachers the opportunity to recuperate funds not received in the past in exchange for measurement of their performance.

The monthly salary for an elementary school teacher with a bachelor's degree and five years of experience rose from L12, 792 in 2006 to L20, 311 in 2009.

With the salary increase provided for in the *PASCE*—without counting the projected demand for new teachers and infrastructure—the teacher's salary budget would have to increase 100%, constituting 4.3% of the GDP by 2017.

According to a recent analysis, the inclusion of educational quality measures in *PASCE* was only a cosmetic measure to reduce the level of concern among civil society and donors by trying to prove that the real purpose of *PASCE* was to increase educational quality with salary increases only being an incentive.

Table 8. Sample salary of an elementary school teacher with a bachelor's degree and 5 years of experience

Tabla 8. Ejemplo de Salario de un Maestro de Primaria con Licenciatura y 5 años de servicio

Renglón	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 en adelante
Aumento anual por hora	-	8.01	8.01	8.0	Aplicar Art. 49 Estatuto Docente
Valor por Hora de Clase (VHC)	33.44	41.45	49.46	<b>57.46</b>	57.46+
Sueldo Base	5,216.64	6,466.2	7,715.76	8,936.76	9,000+
Calificación Académica	3,073.12	3,260.58	3,459.47	3,670.49	3,670+
Beneficio por Antigüedad en Servicio	668.04	708.79	752.02	797.89	797+
Total mensual	8,957.8	10,435.57	11,927.25	13,405.14	13,405+
Salario anual (14 pagos)	125,409.2	146,097.98	166,981.5	187,671.96	187,671+
Otros colaterales (promedio)	2,500	2,792	2,850	2,902	2,902+
PASCE	0	12,499.74	12,499.74	12,499.74	12,499.74
<b>Total anual</b>	<b>127,909.2</b>	<b>161,389.72</b>	<b>182,331.24</b>	<b>203,073.7</b>	<b>203,073+</b>
Valor real por hora clase (1,560 horas al año)	82	103.4	116.9	<b>130.2</b>	130.2+
Salario mensual real promedio(SMR) (156 horas de clase) 10 meses	12,792	16,130	18,236	<b>20,311</b>	20, 311+
Salario Mínimo Promedio (SMP)	2,685	2,943	3,400	<b>5,500</b>	
SMR/ SMP	4.76	5.48	5.36	<b>3.69</b>	

Fuente: Elaborado por los autores

*PASCAE* does not include *PROHECO* employees nor teachers hired after August 2006. It is important to stress that the bonuses detailed in *PASCE* did not stop teacher strikes, but did have a negative effect on the number of strike days.

### ***SLARHD* as an instrument for reform**

*Sistema de Administración de los Recursos Humanos Docentes (SLARHD)* will correct many of the problems found in the TSC audit such as:

- 206 teachers received bonuses for working in certain areas even though these DID NOT work in the indicated areas, resulting in 21 billion Lempiras in undeserved pay.
- 1,576 teachers received extra payment for working in border zones, even though they DID NOT work in border areas, resulting in almost 90 billion Lempiras in undeserved pay.
- 8,259 teachers received higher salaries than established by the *Estatuto del Docente* according to their educational level (example: teachers who only have a high school diploma receive the salary of someone with a bachelor's degree), creating more than 777 billion Lempiras in undeserved pay.
- 538 teachers received pay for shifts longer than allowed in the *Estatuto del Docente*, resulting in the overpayment of almost 13 billion Lempiras.

In total, the audit revealed that in the course of only five years, between 2003 and 2008, the state lost more than 900 billion Lempiras (more than \$47 million dollars) in undeserved pay. If these payments have continued to the present day, the state will have wasted almost 1, 1235 million Lempiras (\$65 million dollars).

From an operational standpoint, the current online *SLARHD* system is not very informative. The system should allow for a cross-check of position and personnel, differentiation in types of positions (full-time, part-time etc.) and the average number of hours worked per month. This would allow for privacy in terms of salary earned, but at the same time would provide better information to the public and to parents regarding the day-to-day work of school teachers.

### **Teacher union benefits**

1. Loans—59%
2. Life insurance—22%
3. Funeral expenses--8%

### Reasons to join

1. Salary protection—30%
2. Academic representation—21%
3. Educational policy representation—18%

### Monthly payment amounts and total funds managed by teacher's unions

Monthly payments by members—approximately 3% of their salary (L329.00)

60% for the loan fund and life insurance

40% for the unions—administration, lobbying and advertising.

The total amount of member payments in 2007 was more than L. 241 million (US \$12 million), of which COLPROSUMAH received 40% (US \$5.2 million) (Appendix 1).

**Satisfaction with teacher's unions:** 75% are satisfied or very satisfied

**Satisfaction with the number of strike days:** 93% said that there should be fewer or much fewer strike days

### Reasons for strikes—1997 to 2008

The majority of teacher strikes in the last 10 years have originated from the failure of the government to fulfill salary payments stipulated in the *Estatuto del Docente*, especially payments of bonuses or the base teacher's salary. Strikes have also been called because of differences in interpretations of political appointment procedures, administrative issues, and the application of the *Estatuto del Docente* in terms of salaries of administrators and other issues.

### Days of class per year vs. Value of class hours and inflation—(see appendix 2)

The value of an hour of class has been adjusted to keep pace with inflation in the last 10 years. There is not a relationship between the number of days of class and the value of an hour of class.

### Conclusions

- 1) Quality improvement: Specific quality indicators must be defined and clear consequences established when these indicators are not reached.
- 2) The *Ley Retributiva* must be revised in order to revoke the exception that teachers currently enjoy.
- 3) The requirement of union membership in order to be a teacher must be eliminated.
- 4) *SLARHD* must be strengthened.
- 5) The conflict of interest in negotiations with teacher's unions must be eliminated
- 6) There should be competition with the teacher's unions for non-salary benefits such as health and life insurance, financing options, the creation of cooperatives etc.
- 7) Increased involvement of parent organizations in the management of schools should be encouraged.
- 8) Educational progress must be measured and the results published.
- 9) A system of comparison between individual schools, municipalities, departments and the whole country should be established.
- 10) The unions should be encouraged to focus more on educational issues.
- 11) Human resource management should be decentralized.

Apendix 1

Table 3. Membership dues paid to teacher's unions (in '000 L)

Tabla 3. Monto de las cuotas pagadas a los organizaciones magisteriales (en '000 L)

<b>Organización Magisterial</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
COLPROSUMAH	60,953	81,272	97,592
PRICHMA	5,182	5,835	21,753
SINRPODOCH	6,164	8,161	15,844
COPELAGOSH	6,916	10,299	16,012
COPEMH	55,001	63,594	66,082
COPRUMH	16,954	18,288	24,298
<b>Total</b>	<b>151,172</b>	<b>187,452</b>	<b>241,583</b>
<b>Total Millones \$US</b>	<b>8.04</b>	<b>9.97</b>	<b>12.85</b>

Apendix 2

Fig. 2 Value of one hour of class vs. the number of days of class per year

Fig. 2 Índice del valor de la hora de clase vs. inflación y número de días de clase por año

