WISE and The Wellbeing Project

Inaugural Teacher Wellbeing Research Report Launch

Findings from a Scoping Literature Review and Case Studies in Cambodia, Kenya, and Qatar

Research team

Kathryn Whetten
Duke University

Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell
Duke University

Cyrilla Amanya
ACE Africa

Vanroth Vann
Development for Cambodian Children

Ahmed Baghdady
WISE

Maryam Al-Khalaf
WISE

Malik Muhammad Sohail
Duke University

Hy Huynh
Duke University

Literature on teacher wellbeing is growing, but lacks studies in Kenya, Cambodia, and Qatar

1. SCOPING REVIEW

A. Years 2016-2020

B. Search keys and sources:
- "School, teacher or educator, wellbeing or psychological wellbeing, intervention or service or trial or program"
- "School, teacher or educator, burnout or occupational stress, intervention or service or trial or program"
- Databases: Psycinfo, Scopus, and Education Full Text

C. Yielded 102 relevant articles

2. ORIGINAL CASE STUDY

- Sites: Bungoma, Kenya; Battambang, Cambodia; Doha, Qatar

- 90 teachers, 16 principals, 11 policy makers

- In-depth interviews, brief surveys; questions about current time and also past time of greatest well-being

Few studies on teacher wellbeing occur in low and middle income countries

Out of the 102 studies

- 50% Wellbeing & burnout
- 25% Wellbeing only
- 25% Burnout only
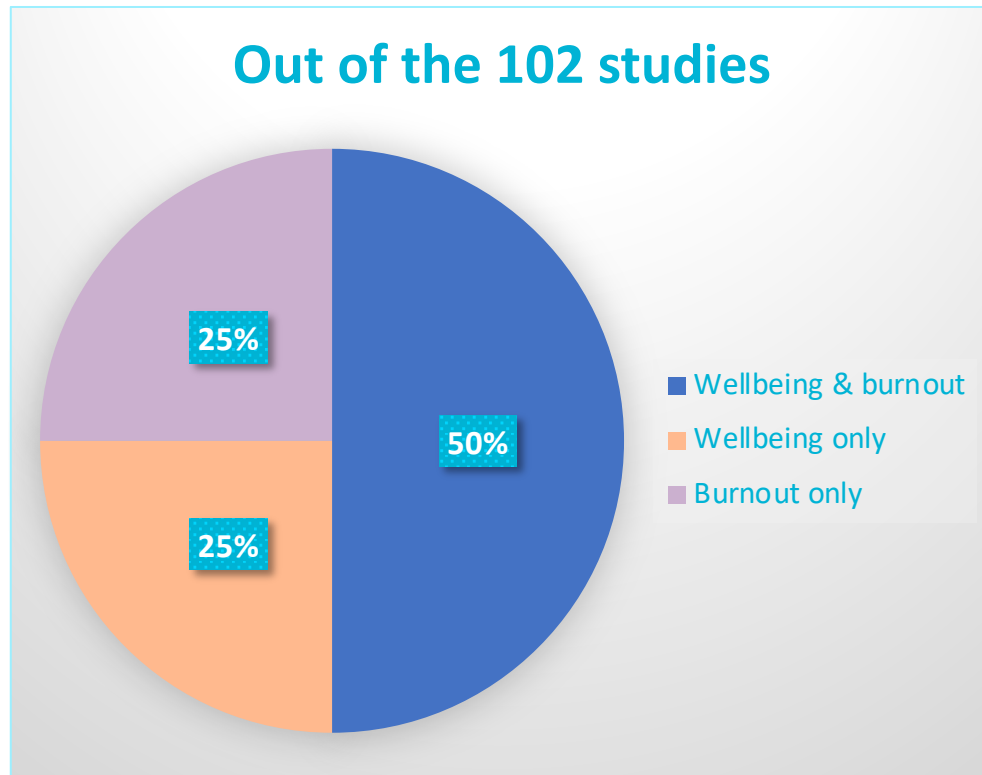
COUNTRIES OF STUDIES	
Continents	**Frequency**
Asia	14
Europe	41
Africa	10
North America	29
South America	01
Australia	06
Antarctica	0
Not available	01

Studies in low-income countries: Ghana, 1 Uganda, 1

In lower middle-income countries: Nigeria, 3

Scoping review: Main findings

Wellbeing:

Positive organizational climate

Calling orientation

Emotion management

Mindfulness practices

Teacher-student teamwork

Burnout:

Negative workplace climate

Job dissatisfaction

Lack of opportunities

Negative social interactions

Things to Do

- Interventions for positive emotions (motivation, compassion, happiness)
- Mindfulness practices
- Social-emotional learning
- Social and emotional support
- Management support and professional autonomy
- Job crafting and work engagement
- Prayer / meditation
- Affiliative and self-enhancing humor

Things to Avoid

- Marginalization of teachers
- Workplace bullying
- Conflict with the students and/or their families
- Excessive bureaucratization
- Job insecurity
- Emotional demands relating to students
- Poor working conditions
- Excessive emotional display rules
- Lack of learning opportunities
- Excessive workload

Of the numerous intervention studies for teacher wellbeing, most are on teacher practices (e.g. mindfulness) and not policies

Intervention studies:

- 55 studies out of 102 tested interventions

- Individual level and interpersonal level, not policy level

- Popularly tested interventions: mindfulness; yoga; Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE)

Implications of findings:

- More studies needed at the organizational and policy level

- More studies needed outside of the US, Canada, Europe, and Australia

- More work needed on where burnout and wellbeing diverge: does removing administrative burden just remove burnout or does it also improve wellbeing?

"Recipes" for teacher wellbeing from case studies in Kenya, Cambodia, and Qatar

Wellbeing occurs when...

TEACHERS ARE VALUED AND RESPECTED LEADERS

- Praise from principals
- Praise from parents
- Parents ask teachers about best ways to educate children
- Students show respect and appreciation for teachers
- Students work hard and pay attention
- Community members respect teachers
- Non-governmental organizations support teachers

TEACHERS ARE DEEPLY ENGAGED IN THEIR WORK

- Professional development
- Classroom autonomy, included in decision making
- Involved in substantive school decisions
- Opportunities for new learning challenges
- Given school-wide and district-wide responsibilities

Wellbeing occurs when...

TEACHERS GET MEANING AND PURPOSE FROM THEIR WORK

1 Teachers help other teachers

2 Students succeed and grow

3 Teachers feel close to their students

TEACHERS FEEL SUCCESSFUL

- Recognition by principals
- Good feedback from inspectors
- Career progression opportunities
- Students do well in their lessons
- Students succeed/win awards

Wellbeing occurs when...

TEACHERS' PERSONAL NEEDS ARE MET

- Financial security
- Job stability
- Good leave policies
- Health insurance
- Principals allow teachers exceptions and flexibility
- Principals express care for teachers' wellbeing

TEACHERS MANAGE THEIR EMOTIONS AND WELLBEING

- Work/life balance
- Physical activity
- Informal counseling between teachers
- When frustrated, remind themselves of the student's home context

Wellbeing occurs when...

TEACHERS EXPERIENCE A POSITIVE, SUPPORTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Principals support teachers when there is a problem with parents
- Teaching resources are available; needed facilities exist
- Everyone in the school is united toward a common goal
- Teachers eat together
- Teachers socialize together
- The amount of work is not overloading
- There is not too much administrative work
- Up-to-date learning materials are present
- Student behavior is acceptable
- Students feel warmly toward each other
- Attractive school environment
- Fun schoolwide events are held

Burnout occurs when…

Strongest factor by far:

- Administrative burden

Other factors:

- Poor student discipline
- High workload burden with lack of work-life balance
- Job insecurity or low pay
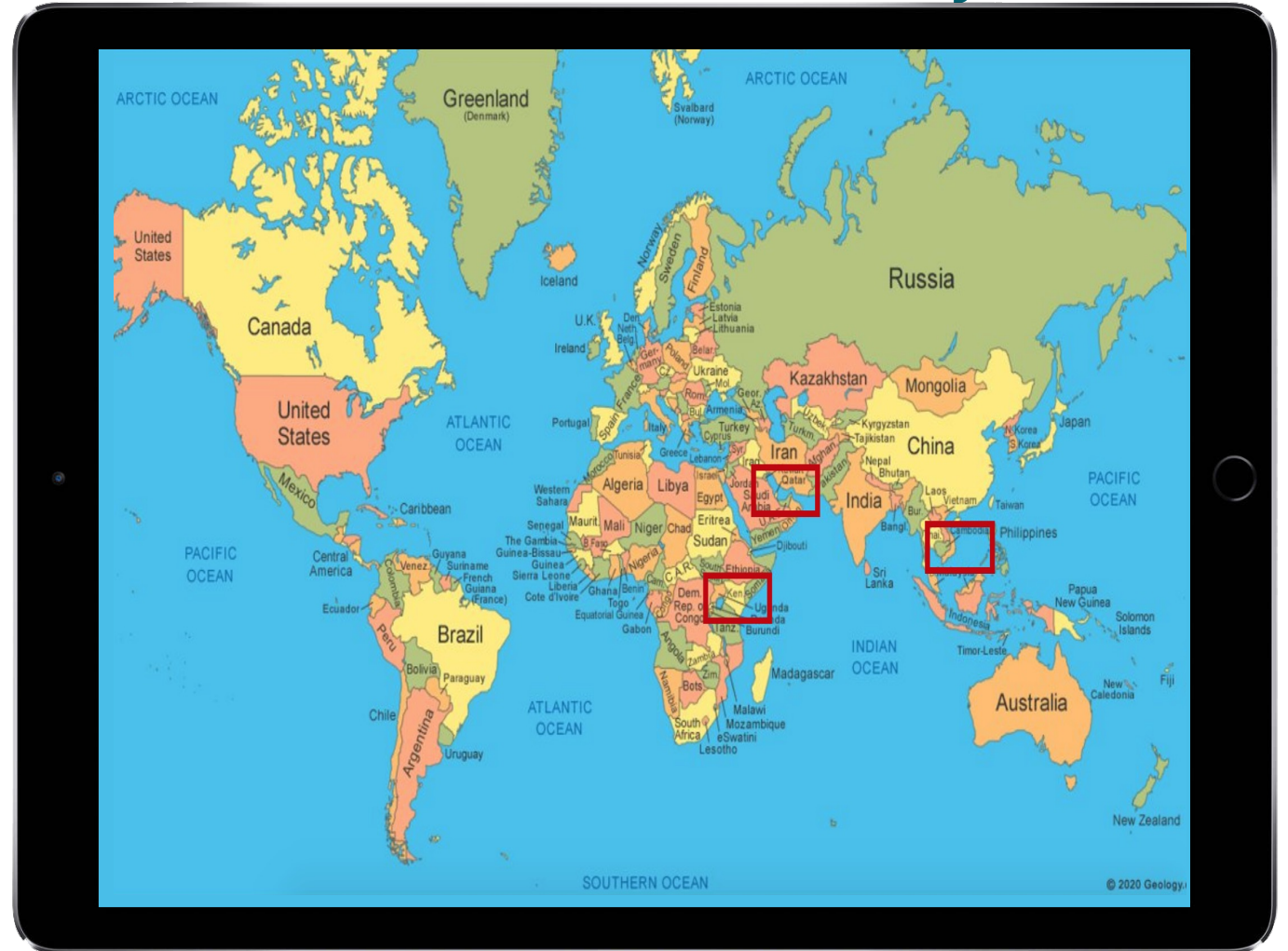
There were few regional differences in the case study

QATAR

- Expatriate teachers

Kenya

- Social gatherings

Cambodia

- Physical health ("It affects my throat or causes a sore throat because I have to make my voice louder while teaching." "I am concerned about chalk dust.")

Case study: Innovative suggestions

Studies to date have neglected promoting wellbeing by caring for teachers' personal needs:

- Kenya: merry-go-round program
- Cambodia: school fund for unexpected expenses
- Transportation and flexible hours
- Guidance counselors for teachers (not just children)

Greater engagement as educators may prevent teacher burnout

- Schoolwide roles
- Districtwide roles
- Leadership roles

Intervening with any one actor may affect them all positively
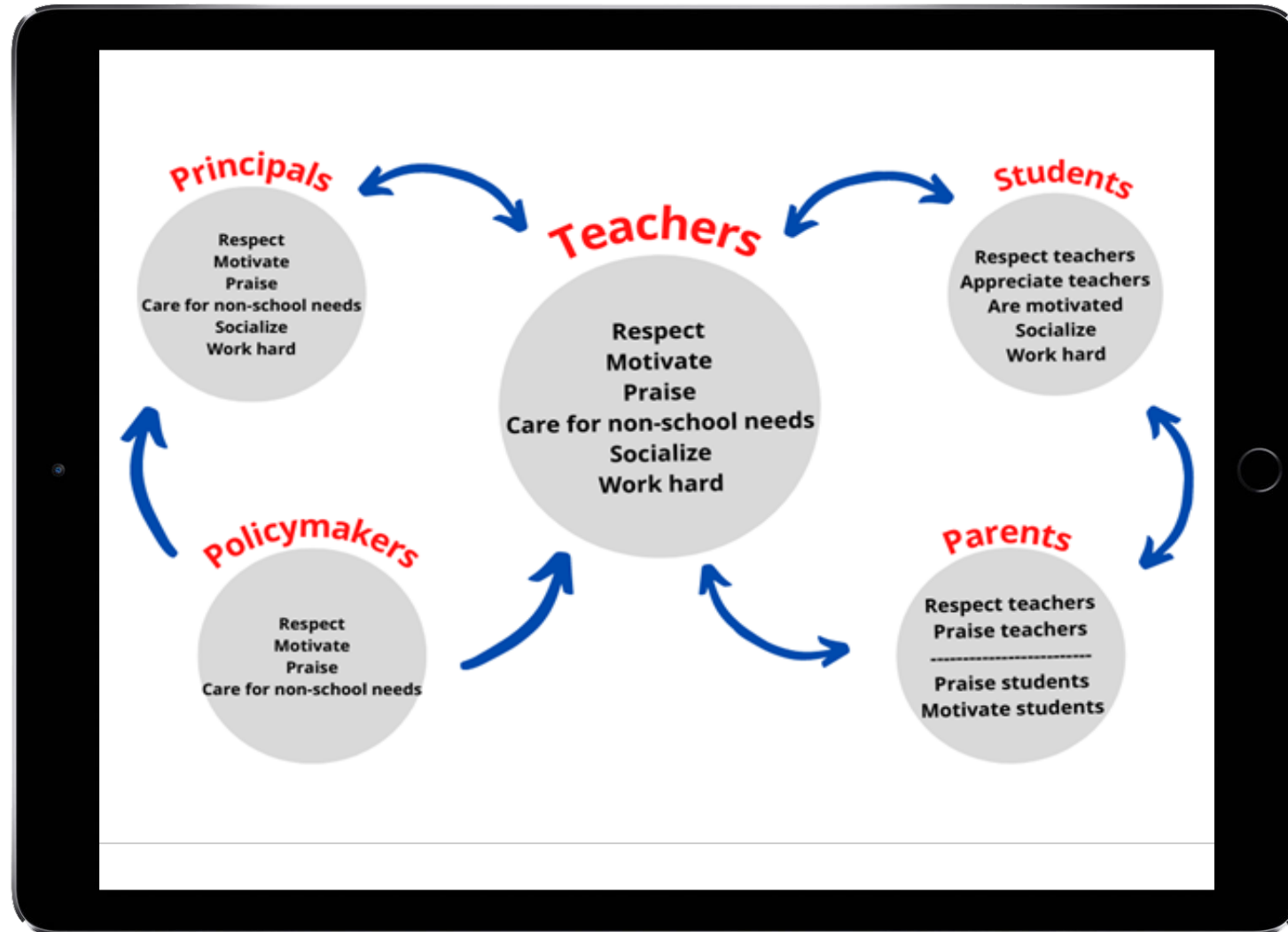
PARALLEL PROCESS:
The process between any two sets of people affects their process with other people

▪ "The kids who came from the rural area were poor so they focused on study... That why my teaching was going well.
The results of the studying were good because they tried hard both at school and home." -
Cambodia

Recommendations for principals

- **Principals can:**
  - Recognize teachers for good work publicly
  - Provide teaching resources
  - Give teachers responsibilities
  - Give teachers decision-making power in the classroom
  - Respect teachers
  - Include teachers in substantive discussions
  - Express care for the wellbeing of teachers
  - Allow teachers exceptions and flexibility
  - Help teachers when they have a personal need

Recommendations for teachers

Teachers can:

- Socialize with each other

- Listen and informally counsel one another

- Strive to be united on common goals for the school

- Look to each other for consultations on teaching

- Learn behavior management strategies for students

- Tailor their work as much as possible to what they personally enjoy and find meaning in (job crafting)

Bringing the scoping review and case study findings together

UNIQUELY IN CASE STUDY:

- Teachers engage in a wide range of personal practices
- Financial support for teachers
- Teachers spending social time together
- Principals expressing care (e.g., tiredness) about teachers and being flexible
- Schools recognizing teachers' personal material needs
- Parents' attitudes toward teachers matter

UNIQUELY IN LIT REVIEW:

- Calling orientation, job crafting, promoting compassion at work
- Emotion management training, positive emotions at work
- Mindfulness interventions, resilience interventions

SIMILARITIES:

- Praise and recognition
- Meaning / student success
- Positive attitude
- Professional development
- Workload
- Support from teachers
- Job autonomy
- Enjoyable work environment
- Prayer

Bringing the scoping review and case study findings together

UNIQUELY IN CASE STUDY:

- Teachers engage in a wide range of personal practices
- Financial support for teachers
- Teachers spending social time together
- Principals expressing care (e.g., tiredness) about teachers and being flexible
- Schools recognizing teachers' personal material needs
- Parents' attitudes toward teachers matter

UNIQUELY IN LIT REVIEW:

- Calling orientation, job crafting, promoting compassion at work
- Emotion management training, positive emotions at work
- Mindfulness interventions, resilience interventions

SIMILARITIES:

- Praise and recognition
- Meaning / student success
- Positive attitude
- Professional development
- Workload
- Support from teachers
- Job autonomy
- Enjoyable work environment
- Prayer

Appendix

Recommendations for policymakers

Policymakers can:

- Provide professional development opportunities for teachers

- Create teacher and principal recognition programs

- Create meaningful teacher feedback from inspectors from outside of the school

- Provide the resources for teachers to have their personal needs met

- Provide financial stability for teachers

- Provide the resources for teachers to work in a positive environment

- Minimize the amount of administrative and bureaucratic work that teachers must do

Recommendations for parents

Parents can:

- **Communicate with your child's teachers**; approach them as an expert in educating your child and ask for advice.

- **Recognize and praise your child's teachers**, when deserved

- **Prepare your child as much as possible to be well-behaved at school**

- **Teach your children to be respectful of teachers**

- **When you have a concern, talk to your child's teacher first**. Assume that the teacher had good intentions. Work toward problem-solving, not blaming.

Recommendations for everyone

Everyone can:

- **Show respect for teachers**. When you meet a teacher, express interest and thank them for their important work. Encourage children to consider careers in teaching.

- **Let your past teachers know they matter**. Write a letter to a teacher who made a difference in your life. That will give them tangible evidence of the impact they have made and will motivate them to continue their good work.

- **Support incentives for teachers**. Advocate for a variety of financial incentives for teachers, such as discounts for gym memberships, restaurants, travel, and local transportation. Such incentives show respect for teachers and may motivate them in small ways to stay in the profession, while also encouraging self-care.