



WORLD TEACHERS' DAY 2021

Teachers at the Heart of Education Recovery

Webinar to celebrate WTD 2021 in the Arab Region

WED 6 October 2021, 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm Beirut time (GMT +3)

Concept Note and Agenda

Introduction

Every year since 1994, on the 5th of October, UNESCO, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and other partners celebrate the **World Teachers' Day (WTD)** in commemoration of the Adoption of the 1966 *ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers*. The 1966 *Recommendation* sets out the rights and responsibilities of teachers, as well as standards for their initial training, continuing professional development, recruitment, employment, and teaching and learning conditions. Over the years, additional *Recommendations* have been added, such as the one concerning the *Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel* (1997) and the *ILO Policy Guidelines on the Promotion of Decent Work for Early Childhood Personnel* (2014).

Given the critical role teachers play in facilitating quality learning for all, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG 4 – Education)* and the *Education 2030 Framework for Action* dedicated specific targets on teachers (SDG target 4.c).

This year's international celebration is focusing on the teachers contributions in recovery processes following especially the Covid-19 crisis and its long lasting effects on education and learning in countries the world over. Despite rapid and complex adjustments to the new sanitary situation, after more than a year and a half since the crisis onset education systems are still struggling to overcome learning disturbances and losses. Teachers are called upon to take a central place in recovery processes (i.e. back to learning; back to school), however they need appropriate support from their schools, local communities, national Governments, as well as other stakeholders, the broader public and the international community.

A number of international reports emphasize the fact that the negative impact of Covid-19 on education has been stronger in the Arab countries (especially in conflict-affected and developing contexts) than in other parts of the world, with greater losses in children's education, greater risks of drop out and more challenging conditions for teachers, parents and the community at large.

However, as in the context of other crisis, more often than not teachers demonstrated that crises can be turned into opportunities. Teachers were prompted to show initiative, engage in productive peer support and seek out effective partnerships with their local communities, including parents, in finding appropriate solutions to keep education and learning going. In some cases, teachers were supported by their school management; by their peers; by NGOs/Associations; and/or by teacher training and professional development agencies. Many teachers engaged also in self-learning activities to enhance their ICT skills and their capacities to engage learners in online and hybrid learning activities.

However, in order to support teachers in a sustainable way and ensure that their initiatives and partnerships take root as education systems slowly recover from the crisis, much greater investment will be needed in teachers. This includes in particular in professional development, working conditions, status and salary. This is why the Teacher Task Force launched earlier this year its *Call for Greater Investment in Teachers and Teaching*.

By reckoning teachers at the heart of education recovery, the **WTD 2021** celebration emphasizes both the innovative roles teachers can play in getting back to (a new) normal, and the support they need to fulfil the challenging expectations of their learners, as well of parents and the community at large.

Background Information and Rationale

Capitalizing on the WTD 2020 celebration in the Arab Region (8 October 2020) organized by the *International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030* (TTF) and *UNESCO Office in Beirut*, that focused on teacher leadership, this year's WTD celebration will tackle more specifically what changed (and what needs to change) with regard to teacher continuous professional development (TPD). Along with other measures, such as those related to salaries, working conditions and social protection, quality continuous professional development (TPD) is of utmost importance in preparing and supporting teachers to be at the heart of education recovery.

The emerging heroines and heroes in this time of crises were the teachers. They reminded the whole world of their value and the versatility with which they could tackle and adapt to the new situation. They learned fast to deal with online teaching, connecting with parents, physically availing communities and children with learning sheets and activities, as well as quickly producing educational videos and other materials. Despite their serious efforts, teachers have met nevertheless with very significant

challenges and have not always managed to mitigate the difficulties of the situation, particularly in the most vulnerable and deprived communities.

With the exception of a few countries in the Arab Region connectivity has been a serious problem for online teaching during the pandemic with a coverage reported to be roughly half the households in the entire population.

In many countries, Ministries of education, in cooperation with partners and stakeholders, such as IT firms and the Media (TV and Radio stations) established support systems for teachers to successfully transition from in-person schooling to online/remote and hybrid teaching and learning. International organizations, such as UNESCO and its partners of the Global Education Coalition have also greatly contributed to developing and sharing teacher professional development resources, among which are:

Supporting teachers in back-to-school efforts – A toolkit for School Leaders, Second edition (UNESCO and ILO, TTF)
<https://teachertaskforce.org/knowledge-hub/supporting-teachers-back-school-efforts-toolkit-school-leaders>

Ready to Come Back - A Teacher Preparedness Training Package, UNICEF MENARO, 2020
<https://www.unicef.org/mena/reports/ready-come-back>

Supporting teachers and education personnel during times of crisis, Issue Note 2.2., UNESCO
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373338>

However, all the existing policy guidance and resources need to make their ways to the teachers by means of appropriate support mechanisms. It is clear that the new challenges teachers need to respond to require several major shifts in the way they get support to acquire new competencies, such as competencies to:

- Integrate ICTs and other traditional technologies in their teaching activities and shift from in-person to remote/online and hybrid learning modalities;
- Adjust curricula and assessment strategies to the new realities of remote/online and hybrid learning;
- Cater for their learners' wellbeing, as well as for their own (and their families) wellbeing;
- Engage in new forms of teacher professional development, taking advantage of the potential of ICTs, as well as of traditional technologies in enhancing teacher networking and communities of practice;
- Work with their peers in jointly planning meaningful learning activities for students and in learning from one another in the context of flexible and mutually-beneficial communities of practice;
- Demonstrate initiatives and leadership in finding appropriate/customized solutions for their specific contexts and learners as a combination of traditional and innovative approaches.

In order to identify both teacher needs and effective ways in supporting their efforts to continuously develop their professional competencies, UNESCO Office in Beirut last August launched a Regional Study that focuses on *(Post)Pandemic Teacher Professional Development in the Arab region*. While the

comprehensive findings of the Study will be shared during a webinar planned on 10 November 2021, snapshots of its initial findings will be shared during the WTD 2021 webinar on 6 October 2021.

Objectives and Expected Outcomes

The WTD 2021 webinar for the Arab Region aims at shedding light on both (a) the teacher needs in facing the new challenges the Covid-19 crisis brought to the fore; as well as (b) the effective ways they can be supported through forward-looking and innovative continuous professional development strategies.

More specifically, the webinar deliberations will constitute an opportunity to:

- Give voice to teachers and those engaged in teacher professional development to share their personal and institutional needs/challenges and experiences in bringing about quality changes with regard to supporting teachers deliver quality services during difficult times;
- Learn from one another about innovative strategies in ensuring teacher professional development; and about how teachers can be engaged in (school-based) self-learning and in (school-based) peer-support activities;
- Identify key areas that require enhanced education policy support and resources at different levels (i.e. school; school networks; local communities; teacher professional development agencies; ministries of education; regional and international organizations).

The following are expected outcomes based on which subsequent activities will be identified:

- Examples shared of challenges teachers encountered in the context of the Covid-19 crisis that require new approaches with regard to continuous teacher professional development;
- Inventory of effective ways in overcoming such new challenges and needs through innovative teacher continuous professional development strategies;
- Recommendations to different stakeholders on filling the gaps with regard to TPD and aligning it with the SDG4 targets and the overall (and beyond Covid-19 crisis) need that teachers are fully equipped with the competencies to ensure quality learning for all, including the most vulnerable.

Webinar topics

The webinar guest speakers and participants are invited to focus their intervention around several questions, as follows:

- How did the Covid-19 crisis impact teachers in the Arab Region?
- What (new) needs and challenges in terms of teacher professional development have occurred/been identified?
- What are some examples of successful/effective/innovative responses in terms of teacher professional development?
- What lessons and policy recommendations can be drawn to date?

Organizational Matters and Methodology

Co-conveners:

- UNESCO Office in Beirut, Regional Bureau of Education for the Arab States
- UNESCO ED/PLL/TED and TTF
- ABEGS (Arab Bureau of Education in the Gulf States)

Date and time:

WED, 6 October 2021, 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm (Beirut time, GMT +3)

Participants:

- Teachers
- Teacher trainers/Representatives of TPD institutions/agencies
- Policy makers
- Education NGO representatives
- Representatives of Regional and International Organizations

Working languages:

- Arabic and English (with simultaneous translation) – possibly also French
- Simultaneous interpretation provided by UNESCO Office in Beirut

Methodology:

- Short presentations by invited guests (5-7 minutes each, based on power points, oral presentation and/or video support). The presentations will follow a guidance note (i.e. discussion points) that will be shared with the presenters in advance.
- Q&A session open to all the participants
- Summary of discussions, conclusions and recommendations

Accessing the webinar:

Please find below the link to register to, and access the Zoom webinar on Wed 6 Oct. 2021, from 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm:

https://unesco-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_pwgyHe30SmeSUN3zk1m4Tg

(Panelists and Moderators will receive a personalized link).

Agenda

| Timing | Activities/Sessions | Moderator |
|-------------------|--|---|
| 12:00 pm-12:05 pm | Introduction to the webinar and house rules by Ms. Dakmara Georgescu (UNESCO Office in Beirut) | Ms. Leila Loupis, TTF |
| 12:05-12:20 pm | Opening session Speeches by: Mr. Abdelrahman Almedaires, PhD , Director General of the Regional Center for Quality and Excellence in Education (RCQE) and Co-Chair of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (TTF) Mr. Abdulrahman Alasmi, PhD , Director General of the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS) Ms. Costanza Farina , Director of UNESCO Office in Beirut, Regional Bureau of Education for the Arab States | Ms. Maram Alghani, TTF |
| 12:20-12:30 pm | Snapshot of UNESCO Beirut Study on (Post)Pandemic Teacher Professional Development by Ms. Malak Zaalouk , AUC, Egypt | Ms. Dakmara Georgescu, UNESCO Beirut |
| 12:30-13:00 pm | Listening to the Voices of Teachers and Teacher Trainers: What teacher professional development is needed for teachers to be at the heart of education recovery? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lebanon/CERD ○ Gulf countries ○ North-African countries (t.b.d.) | Ms. Dakmara Georgescu and Mr. Elie Imad, UNESCO Beirut |
| 13 :00-13 :20 pm | Discussions – Q&A | Mr. Abdelsalam Al Joufi, ABEGS |
| 13 :20-13 :30 pm | Summary of Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations by Mr. Abdelsalam Al Joufi, ABEGS | Ms. Dakmara Georgescu, UNESCO Beirut |