



UNITED NATIONS
TRANSFORMING
EDUCATION
SUMMIT 2022

Transforming Education Summit

Action Track 3 Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession

Discussion Paper May 13th, 2022

I. Context, challenges and opportunities

The achievement of SDG 4 and the transformation of education rely heavily on teachers and education personnel¹, yet global progress on education is severely constrained by three major challenges: teacher shortages; the qualifications and emerging professional development needs of teaching personnel, and their status and working conditions.

In 2015, it was estimated that 69 million teachers were needed globally to meet SDG 4². Without enough teachers, classrooms are overcrowded, teachers are overworked, and the quality of teaching is inadequate to enable all learners, especially the most vulnerable, to achieve the expected learning outcomes. While this number has decreased as we approach the target year, sub-Saharan Africa remains with the greatest need estimated at an additional 15 million.³

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers in many countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (1 in 3) and Southern Asia (1 in 4), lacked the minimum required qualifications and training.⁴ Changes brought forth by the pandemic, including widespread digitalization and increasing inequality, have further underscored the need to transform teaching and to better train and support education personnel to respond to a variety of situations and challenges, including climate change, displacement and conflict, and to adapt learning to different formats and needs.

Digitalization is a promising technology for expanding education access and enriching provision for more learners. Yet lack of access to such technologies and requisite infrastructure, and a dearth of skills for their use by learners and teachers remains an important obstacle for unlocking their potential.

¹ Education personnel includes teachers but also administrators, trainers, education support personnel, and other workers who may be involved in formal or informal education.

² Based on data by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, to achieve universal basic education by 2030, the world education systems will require additional 24.4 and 44.4 million teachers respectively in primary and secondary. Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia account for over 76% of the need for new teachers in developing countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 70% of countries for primary against 90% for secondary face serious teachers' shortages leading to the continent being home to the most overcrowded classes; hence the most overburdened teachers.

³ International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030. 2021. Closing the gap: Ensuring there are enough qualified and supported teachers in sub-Saharan Africa. Paris: UNESCO. <https://teachertaskforce.org/knowledge-hub/closing-gap-ensuring-there-are-enough-qualified-and-supported-teachers-sub-saharan>

⁴ UNESCO, 2021. [World Teachers' Day 2021 fact sheet](#)



UNITED NATIONS
TRANSFORMING
EDUCATION
SUMMIT 2022

Another key obstacle in developing quality teachers is working conditions and remuneration, which deter youth from entering the profession and in-service teachers from remaining in the profession. The agency, autonomy, motivation, leadership, and decision-making power of teachers needs to be amplified. The active participation of teaching personnel and their representative organizations in the development of short, medium-term, and long-run strategies to support educational transformation is crucial to ensure that their expert perspective and professional needs are considered, alongside those of learners and society at large.

Making the teaching career attractive can also include opportunities to collaborate and improve their practice. This should be linked with enhancing the career paths of teachers, including through mentoring and induction, professional development and ongoing instructional support, promoting a culture of teacher agency, research and innovation in teaching (UNESCO, 2021). Teachers, as reflexive practitioners, innovators, and knowledge producers, need to be involved in the transformation of education.

Accelerating progress toward SDG 4 and transforming education is only possible when teaching personnel are professionalized, trained, motivated, and supported — in all settings, including crises and refugee contexts, and at all levels of education from early childhood to TVET, adult and higher education. This requires funding and, above all, appropriate policies that recognize teaching as a collaborative endeavor performed by professionals who can contribute to the production of knowledge that will support future transformations in education. (UNESCO, ILO, UNICEF and Education International, 2021)⁵.

The Summit's Thematic Action Track (AT) 3 on Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession focuses on responses to the following issues to transform education: i) teacher shortages; ii) teaching personnel qualifications and emerging professional development needs, iii) status and working conditions; and iv) teacher leadership and innovation.

II. What does the transformation look like?

An empowered education workforce: professionalized, trained, motivated, and supported

As stated in the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the Implementation of SDG 4, the transformation of education requires that teachers and educators are empowered, adequately recruited, well-trained, professionally qualified, motivated, and supported within well-resourced, efficient, and effectively governed systems.

In line with the Report of the International Commission on the Futures of Education (UNESCO, 2021), the transformation of education requires supporting teacher collaboration, reflective practice and research supporting teacher autonomy and participation in public debate and decision-making in education. Such a workforce also needs decent work, including respect for fundamental principles and rights at work, equity and equality in access to quality education and education technology, and adequate working

⁵ UNESCO, ILO, UNICEF and Education International: [Joint message on the occasion of World Teachers' Day. Teachers at the heart of education recovery](#), 5 October 2021



conditions and safety and health at work, including mental well-being for all education personnel, as well as protection against violence and harassment and communicable diseases.⁶

Description of the changes we want

The specific changes aimed for with respect to teachers, teaching and the teaching profession (AT3), are described in the next paragraphs

a) An adequate number of qualified teachers

Education systems need to recruit adequate numbers of teachers with the minimum required qualifications to meet learners' needs.

In the **short-term**, to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, countries need added flexibility that enable expanding the pool of temporary candidates, including calling back retired teachers and capitalizing on the use of volunteers with various qualifications while providing training and support related to teachers' most pressing learning needs. The use of volunteers should be regulated, limited in time, and subject to respect for fundamental principles and rights at work, including opportunities for training and certification.

In the **medium-term**, strengthened licensing and accreditation schemes, including the recognition of prior and experiential learning, can provide new pathways for teacher qualification. Likewise, in-service training can help teachers meet the minimum required qualifications. Since teacher attrition is highest in the first few years of teaching, induction programmes can be strengthened. Such measures can incentivize high-achieving graduates and those already teaching (but lacking qualifications) to look to teaching as an attractive career option. Career guidance interventions in secondary and tertiary institutions can help steer promising students into teaching careers, including those from rural and remote regions.

In the **longer-term**, countries need to invest heavily in improving teachers' salaries and working conditions and provide teachers with opportunities to grow and develop, such as taking on flexible career paths, which include mentoring for their peers, leadership or policy support positions. Education systems should reward innovation, teacher agency and autonomy. Such reforms require longer-term investments and a restructuring of teacher career paths to align with teacher education programming.

b) All teachers have quality initial training and continuous professional development throughout their careers

In the **short term**, to support recovery from COVID-19 education disruptions, teacher continuous professional development needs to integrate pedagogies and capacity building to embrace hybrid modes, to address learning loss, and prevent school dropout. Educational processes should comprise identifying, developing, experimenting, assessing, evidencing and scaling-up the most effective teaching that combines in-person and distance online/offline provisions to ensure that all learners, regardless of age,

⁶ ILO, Conclusions of the Technical meeting on the future of work in the education sector in the context of lifelong learning for all, skills and the Decent Work Agenda, 17–21 May 2021



sex and location, can learn through blended pedagogies. It is important, however, that technology enables, but does not drive, teacher professional development.⁷

In the **medium term**, teacher development needs to innovate and transition from course-based training to a continuum of collaboration and exchange among teachers, schools, and education systems. The promotion of communities of practice and peer-learning spaces where teachers may be able to exchange and share the result of their innovations and experimentations, but also their professional needs, can also advance the sense of purpose and of belonging to a professional community.

In the **longer term**, it is necessary to broaden the agency and autonomy that teachers have to interpret and manage the curriculum, to adapt and prioritize content and pedagogy, and to transform educational provision, both pedagogically and in terms of the organization of learning and schooling, in order to address the individual profile and potential of each learner.

c) Improved status and working conditions of teaching personnel

To ensure quality education, and to make the teaching profession more attractive for younger generations, systems need to ensure decent working conditions and an enhanced status of the profession, including through wages comparable with professions requiring similar levels of qualifications, so that teachers can assume an active role in the transformation of education processes. Teacher motivation also needs to be more consistently taken into consideration in discussions in relation to the teaching profession.

In the **short term**, working conditions for the teaching profession need to be improved to ensure quality teaching and learning, especially in terms of workloads and work intensity, balance of teaching and non-teaching working time, appropriate accountability mechanisms, as well as a supportive environments and infrastructure. Access to professional development opportunities and salary scales established through social dialogue can be linked to progressing teacher careers.

In the **medium term**, global changes and the transformation of education need to be reflected in the status of teachers. Therefore, teachers shall be perceived as actors of change and must be part of the decision-making process concerning education to protect their educational autonomy and ensure enabling working conditions.

In the **longer term**, a culture of collaboration between teaching professionals, their representative organizations, governing bodies and other social actors needs to be established to ensure extensive support for teachers. This collaboration should include social dialogue and teacher participation in decision-making processes affecting education and the teaching career. Efforts should be made to reflect

⁷ World Bank, 2020. How to Enhance Teacher Professional Development Through Technology: Takeaways from Innovations Across the Globe (<https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/how-enhance-teacher-professional-development-through-technology-takeaways-innovations>)



the importance of teachers and the complexity and expertise of teaching professionals in media and government communication to promote trust in teachers.

d) **Teaching personnel's leadership and innovation are recognized and supported**

Teachers' capacity for innovation is one of the keys to building resilient education systems. Since teachers are best placed to assess the conditions of their own classrooms and communities, governments need to promote their leadership to generate meaningful transformations. Experimentation and adaptation must take place within clear policy frameworks. Governments, teacher training institutions and other actors must balance structure and flexibility to foster both bottom-up (grassroots) and top-down (system-wide) innovations.

In the **short term**, effective teacher innovations can be deployed and scaled up to support continued learning and recovery efforts at school or district level, by supporting implementation of the RAPID Learning Recovery Framework (UNICEF, UNESCO, WB, 2022).

In the **medium term**, teaching personnel, and especially school leaders, can be encouraged to work with schools to design and implement interventions to reach every child, assess learning levels, prioritize teaching the fundamentals, increase catch-up learning, as well as develop children's well-being so that they are ready to learn.

In the **longer term**, there is the need to reshape the teaching profession to accommodate a career pathway for teacher leaders, beginning with opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles as part of their professional development. Teacher leaders provided with specialized training could be responsible for leading school "learning teams", as envisioned by the Education Commission's (2019) initiative to transform the education workforce. This would require governments to invest in new policies and plans to enable an organizational restructuring to integrate teacher leaders in a transformed school model.

III. Mapping of key investments, interventions and game changers

Key action areas and actors

Action areas include:

- Incentives and support for comprehensive national policies for teachers and teaching personnel.
- Development of standards and competency frameworks and integrating ICT into teacher education and practice.
- Design of certification mechanisms and continuous upgrading programme of in-service teaching personnel.
- Leverage the wider education workforce in team-based approaches to support teaching and learning
- Supporting teacher leadership and innovation
- Promoting robust social dialogue in education
- Prioritizing integrated national reform strategies, investments and policy reforms.



Key actors include:

- National governments and ministries of education
- Teachers and their representative organizations, as well as other education personnel
- Employers of teaching personnel (public, private, communities/CSO)
- Teacher education and development bodies and professional regulation bodies
- Universities and Researchers
- Development partners and donors
- Civil society actors, faith-based organizations and other social partners in education
- Student organizations

Successful policy interventions and good practices across different regions

Promising strategies for accelerating progress include:

Strategy 1: Incentives and support for comprehensive national policies for teacher and teaching personnel. Drawing on the UNESCO/TTF's [Teacher Policy Development Guide](#), this can include support for the development or implementation of teacher policies aimed at elevating the quantity, quality, status and working conditions of teachers, as well as costing of teacher policies that are comprehensive credible, crisis-sensitive and embedded in Education Sector plans. This can also include standards and certification mechanisms for teaching skills and professionalisation modalities

Strategy 2: Development of standards and competency frameworks and integrating ICT into teacher education and practice. This can include an integrated strategy to develop the digital skills to teach effectively with ICT, providing devices and the connectivity needed to produce and leverage available digital resources, share knowledge with peers, enrich and transform teaching practices. Digitalization strategies in a number of countries have shown that such investments can expand access to education but need to be accompanied by measures to ensure equitable and inclusive access to and capacity to use education technologies both for educators and learners, appropriate training for educators, decent work in relation to the use of technology, including in respect to work-life balance, and protection of privacy and data.

Strategy 3: Design of certification mechanisms and continuous upgrading programmes of in-service teaching personnel. This can include the recognition, accreditation, and certification of prior and experiential learning among volunteer teachers, community, teachers, and other education personnel, including teaching aides. An important element in improving the social and professional status of teachers is the official recognition of their qualifications, which also includes education staff in a broader sense, i.e., community teachers, volunteer teachers, etc.

Strategy 4: Leverage the wider education workforce in team-based approaches to support teaching and learning: Emerging evidence suggests that supporting teachers and learners with a team of education professionals and other roles can be an effective way to improve learning and promote a broad range of



education outcomes. (D'Amour et al., 2009). While few education systems employ formal team structures, many already include elements of team approaches, such as teachers working together in professional learning communities or school principals working with district officials and teachers to engage caregivers in their child's learning.

Strategy 5: Supporting teacher leadership and innovations: This can include incentive programmes for teacher innovations and collaborative work. Fostering the agency and autonomy of teachers by co-creating educational resources and implementing continuous reforms of the curriculum and evaluation frameworks. Capacity building in social dialogue and system transformation needs to accompany this process.

Strategy 6. Promoting robust social dialogue in education. Social dialogue, including collective bargaining, can ensure decent work and fair working conditions for teaching and education personnel. Bringing knowledge and experience from social partners in the development of policy can prevent conflicts, including strikes, in the education sector. Training partners on social dialogue, in particular interest-based bargaining techniques, can be one way to improve labour relations in education and forge collaboration on strengthening education systems.⁸

Strategy 7. Prioritizing integrated national reform strategies. Combining some of the elements listed above and including consultations, investments and policy reforms should be prioritized. An integrated teaching career management system is needed to motivate high-performing teachers while helping personnel who need further training. There is a need to assess performance based on variations in learning outcome acquisition by students, thus better rewarding teaching staff who make a difference in disadvantaged communities.

IV. Synergies and alignment across Action Tracks and their sub-themes

Teaching personnel and particularly teachers and school leaders are at the front lines of ensuring that education is inclusive. They are important agents of change through their work (what they teach), but also by who they are (role models). In educational settings, teaching personnel can demonstrate positive attitudes towards learners of differing abilities, those who speak a minority language at home, or those who arrive from a different region or country (including internally displaced and refugee populations). They can strengthen scientific and critical thinking skills, promote tolerance, encourage dialogue, improve gender equity, advance important cultural and social values, and create a more sustainable and peaceful world.⁹ (OECD, 2015; UNESCO, 2020)¹⁰.

⁸ ILO, Handbook on social dialogue in education, (forthcoming, 2022).

⁹ UNESCO, 2013. [Teachers – Education Sector technical Notes](#)

¹⁰ UNESCO, 2020. [Global education monitoring report, 2020: Inclusion and education: all means all](#)



Promoting gender equality, including women and staff from minority backgrounds or with disabilities, and gender-sensitivity in the teaching workforce can be an important strategy to engage both boys and girls meaningfully in learning.¹¹

Developing the digital capability and skills of teachers is key to preparing students for the needs of changing societies and economies. This will require improving the quality of initial and continuing teacher training and development and enhancing supports for lifelong learning. Such training should cover use of technology, pedagogy and content knowledge, and ethics, safety and well-being in relation to digital technologies. Training and professional development need to be affordable and accessible to all teachers, and should take into account gender and rural/urban dynamics.¹² Teachers, in particular TVET teachers and trainers, will also be the key to developing lifelong-learning strategies and ensuring that education responds to the needs of the labour market. This will require social dialogue around skills needs, skills needs assessment strategies and sectoral development policies to be coordinated with education systems.

Important intersections of this Action Track can be found with regards to the digital transformation (Action Track 4) and the financing of education (Action Track 5).

V. Accountability and follow-up mechanisms (should not exceed 400 words)

Recommendations to inform voluntary national commitments - to inform the national consultations and the summit

Accelerating efforts to improve the status of teachers and their working conditions to make the teaching profession more attractive. A national indicator for this could be an index of qualified and supported teachers and national social dialogue mechanisms in place.

Accelerating the pace of teacher professional development by means of initial teacher education and continuous in-service training. This could include the updating, development and implementation of professional teaching standards and competency frameworks to guide teacher education curricula, mentorship programmes, qualification and accreditation processes, and teacher formative assessment.

¹¹ Jyotsna Jha, Shubhashansa Bakshi & Ernesto Martins Faria, 2012: "[Understanding and challenging boys' disadvantage in secondary education in developing countries](#)". Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2012, Youth and skills: Putting education to work

¹² ILO, Digitalization in teaching and education in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania, 2021.



Innovating in teacher policy, education, and certification processes to increase the supply of qualified teachers. Innovations in the training and certification of teachers could include processes of recognition and validation of prior and experiential learning, and innovations to embrace the digital turn by means of blended pedagogies for the delivery of hybrid education.

Key initiatives/coalitions/networks/platforms that can support, with the SDG4-Education 2030 High-Level Steering Committee, the post-Summit follow up and monitoring – main actions and accountability

Global, regional and national coalitions of teachers and their representatives, education authorities, civil society organizations and academics can be leveraged and promoted as part of the follow up to the Transforming Education Summit. At the heart of this is the notion that teacher voices and experience should be placed at the centre of education decision-making, including in relation to responses to current and future disruptions and the transformation of education systems.

- At the global level, international coalitions such as the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, also known as the Teacher Task Force (TTF) and representative bodies will continue to ensure that teacher perspectives are part and parcel of global education movements. They also lead the way for advocating for the teacher profession and elevating the status of teachers. Working with member states and regional bodies, they can also provide cross-national platforms for information sharing, monitoring and evaluation.
- Greater international regular monitoring of respect of teacher rights, as set out in the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of Teachers, could be carried out through appropriate bodies by the international system, such as the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel (CEART).
- Regional bodies are a key player to ensure that promising practices, policy innovation and national initiatives are shared across countries, to champion change and strengthen teacher policies. They can also support monitoring and follow up of national commitments to education more broadly, and teacher development in particular.
- At the national level, (as well as sub-national level, for countries with devolved education system governance), teacher representative bodies, civil society and community organisations can ensure that grass-root teacher innovations are fostered and brought to the level of national authorities, so that the reality of teacher experiences is taken into consideration in policy making and forms a virtuous cycle within decision-making processes. They can also support this dialogue through advocacy and training.