



SCHOOL LEADERSHIP NETWORK

SUMMARY REPORT

Meeting #1 | 5th June, 2024



1st Global Meeting



+100

School Leaders



Topic:

Addressing Teacher Shortages and The Role of School Leaders

14
Countries

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Introduction

On 5th June 2024 , with representatives of UNESCO's Teacher Task Force (TTF), The School Leadership Network (SLN) convened its first global meeting.



Agustín Porres
Regional director,
Varkey foundation



This network is about you; we are here to listen, inspire, and share. We want to support you better this year with your teams, and for this year, the topic will be teacher shortages were for school principals you have a key role.



Our work is guided by the belief that School Leaders are critical in impacting teacher and student outcomes. Principals must be viewed as leaders initiating change rather than being absorbed into administrative orders. They can no longer be viewed as passive functionaries but as active contributors to shaping education policies.

In its fourth year now, the School Leadership Network (SLN) comprises over 600 School Principals and 165 educational experts from 57 countries. This year, we are collaborating with the team at UNESCO's Teacher Task Force to delve deeper into the issue of addressing the global challenge of teacher shortages.

New data collected for the Global Report on Teachers indicates that 44 million additional teachers are needed to achieve universal primary and secondary education by 2030. Shortages are widespread, with sub-Saharan Africa needing 15 million more teachers, while higher-income countries face retention challenges, resulting in teachers massively leaving the profession. This summary report highlights key takeaways from discussions involving school leaders and the role they play in addressing some of these key issues.

Role of School Leaders in Addressing Teacher Shortages

We were thrilled to have Carlos Vargas, Head of Secretariat, UNESCO Teacher Task Force, join us as our Guest Speaker!

“

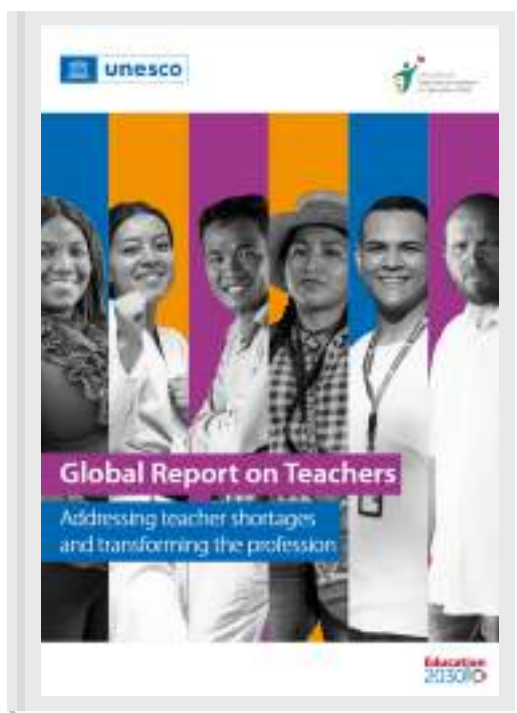
School leadership can improve the quality of the teaching profession when it is distributed because we give them opportunities to make decisions, because there is trust and agency role, recognizing teacher knowledge and working together fosters innovation.

”



Carlos Vargas

Head of Secretariat,
UNESCO Teacher Task Force



Understanding that the teacher shortage is a fundamental problem at a global level and that from the Teacher Task Force it is positioned as one of the priority issues in the educational agenda, we decided from the School Leadership Network to focus the topics to work on this year around this problem.

We believe that the school principal is a key agent in addressing the shortage of teachers and that the principal has a lot to contribute to the discussion with data on what is happening in the schools. In this sense, and to strengthen the role of the principal in this problem, we identify the following challenges and best practices in this consultancy's first meeting.

[Click here to listen to the full presentation.](#)

Teacher Salaries and Incentives

Role of School Leaders



Teachers in rural areas, who have very different working conditions, need to be compensated well to be able to sustain their families and make a career out of this profession.

School Leader, Sierra Leone

Faced with better salaries in other professions, **the relatively low salaries in teaching can dissuade high-quality candidates.** Moreover, throughout a teaching career, the combination of low salaries with limited prospects for improved compensation can result in higher attrition, as other more attractive opportunities become apparent.



School principals can play a crucial role in improving the overall compensation and job satisfaction of teachers, even within the constraints of limited budgets. **Their leadership and advocacy are essential in creating a supportive and rewarding work environment for educators.**

[Click here to read more](#)



KEY TAKEAWAYS AND PROMISING PRACTICES

Teacher Salaries and Incentives: Role of School Leaders

Insufficient Salaries, Additional Jobs



Common second jobs include tutoring, retail positions, and freelance work. While these additional jobs provide much-needed income, they also add to the teachers' already demanding workloads, leading to longer hours and less personal time.

Promising Practices: School Leaders where possible can advocate for better salary and incentive policies. Where school leaders have little autonomy or financial capacity, school leaders have resorted to being creative in designing other types of incentives like offering flexible working schedules for their teaching staff, mentorship programs, and even engaging communities to support schools on short-staffed days.

Status of the Teaching Profession

In many cases, teacher working conditions have worsened as classrooms have become more crowded. In countries across all income levels, unattractive salaries, hard working conditions, and heavy workloads are also discouraging many candidates from joining the profession

Promising Practices: School leaders can elevate the prestige of the teaching profession by advocating for higher salaries, enhancing formal professional development, fostering a supportive and collaborative work environment, promoting teacher recognition, engaging the community, facilitating career advancement, ensuring adequate resources and sufficient incentives, and creating strategic plans for long-term improvement in teacher status and satisfaction.



Teacher Professional Development

Role of School Leaders



We have to be school principals who must be aware that we work with human groups and support them as they form professional communities in which each colleague can share what they know or carry out any initiative they may have.

School Leader, Spain



Pre-service and early career teachers are not the only ones who need support and development; teachers at all career stages should have access to quality support. There is a need to shift professional development into a continuum of lifelong learning and professionalization that links initial training, induction and mentoring programs, and ongoing professional development throughout a teacher's career.

School leaders play a crucial role in teachers' continuous professional development (CPD) by fostering a culture of lifelong learning, offering mentorship opportunities, encouraging collaborative practices, and securing funding and resources to support ongoing educational growth and skill enhancement.

[Click here to read more](#)

School Leadership Network
Teacher shortages

Guiding topics

- Teacher Salary and Incentives
- Proper Working Conditions
- Supporting Beginner Teachers
- Enhancing Teacher Management with Tools
- Teacher Mentoring
- Supporting Teacher Professionalism

Challenges

How does this challenge appear in our communities, how do we experience it, is it a problem in your school?

- Attrition and Quality of teachers**
- Pay is less - no incentive**
- Family Demands, Mothers when teaching in a profession**
- Proper working conditions**

Success and Story
Breakout room 1

Good practices

What things do you think you are doing that positively impact this challenge? What is happening in your community that you see as a helpful trend for another school?

- Think about CSR - how we can support them**
- Working on making funds internally to pay teachers**
- We cannot make money but we can make time - justify ourselves**
- Using Tools for mentoring teachers**

School Leadership Network

KEY TAKEAWAYS AND PROMISING PRACTICES

Teacher Professional Development : Role of School Leaders

School Leaders as Instructional Leaders

School Leaders recognize the importance of supporting teachers in regularly analyzing their teaching methods, fostering continuous pedagogical improvement and professional growth as effective education leaders.

Promising Practices: School Leaders shared examples of redesigning team meetings, creating special professional development days, and partnering with institutions, NGOs, and volunteer experts to provide additional resources.



Fostering Peer-to-Peer Learning

School leaders see potential in harnessing the collective wisdom of teaching teams to support the continuous professional development of teachers.

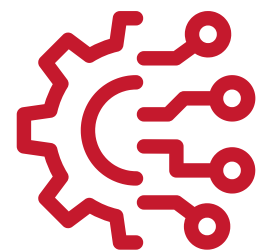


Promising Practices: School Principals shared examples of fostering “team-teaching” practices, lesson-planning challenges, virtual communities of practice, and establishing peer mentorship programs. This has enabled them to create low-cost collaborative spaces where teachers feel supported and can work together to achieve their goals. These intimate communities for professional development can also build mutual trust and respect, improving the collective motivation of teachers.

Leveraging Technology to Promote Online Learning

School Leaders are keen to unlock the potential of leveraging technology to provide low-cost methods of continuous learning and growth.

Promising Practices: School Principals shared examples of utilizing video conferencing tools for virtual training sessions to help teachers connect with experts and trainers, as well as where possible create digital libraries of resources, shared easily over Whatsapp and other low-cost platforms. Embracing the use of artificial intelligence was also proposed as a beneficial strategy for education leaders.



Teacher Motivation

Role of School Leaders



Teacher motivation is not a one-time thing. You have to nurture it continuously through a variety of strategies. It needs everyone's involvement to ensure teachers are motivated and stay that way..

School Leader, Indonesia

Teachers have a great impact on students' learning outcomes. **However, teachers must be recruited, trained, and retained to transform educational environments.** Teachers need better working conditions, motivation, appreciation, career progression, and professional development. And School leaders play a key role in addressing many of these challenges.



How can School Leaders support teachers? What impact do School Principals have on policies around attracting and retaining teachers? What are context-specific challenges?

[Click here to read more](#)



KEY TAKEAWAYS AND PROMISING PRACTICES

TEACHER SHORTAGES: Role of School Leaders in Addressing Teacher Shortages

Teacher Well-Being



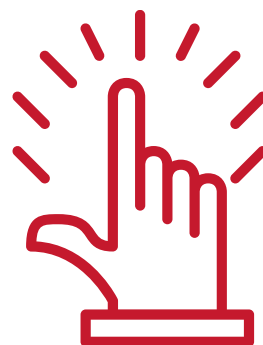
School Leaders recognize that focusing on teacher wellbeing enhances job satisfaction, reduces burnout, improves retention, and ensures a positive, effective learning environment for students.

Best Practices: School Leaders shared examples of establishing flexible working hours, engaging community members to share the load, as well as where possible engaging mental health support. School Leaders also highlighted the need for policymakers to be more involved given the impact of systemic factors that lead to a lack of motivation and make the teaching profession incredibly stressful. The recommendations involved better pay, specific support to teacher in rural areas and even targeted support to school leaders to support teachers in conditions where classroom sizes are large.

Teacher Autonomy and Voice

While teachers need a voice in larger decision-making processes and encouragement to innovate, they also require a certain level of autonomy and academic freedom in their own classrooms.

Promising Practices: School Principals advocate for teacher professional development initiatives that help teachers hone their craft with relevant, modern resources. They believe that school bodies play a huge role in ensuring the financial stability of teachers, which helps teachers feel secure in their roles. They also suggested targeted support to female teachers who battle gender stereotypes to see success in this role. Additionally, easing the burden of administrative tasks on the teachers' part can improve working conditions by furthering their autonomy.



In Conclusion

Challenges

The distribution of students is excessive and disproportionate, which exhausts teachers.

The training offered is scarce, there is a shortage of qualified teachers.

In the absence of leadership skills training, principals and teachers do not see themselves as agents of change.

Teachers' burnout and mental health is affected and more and more teachers are not very passionate about their work.

Families are not involved in the process and do not empathize with teachers.

Promising Practices

School projects that enable teamwork among teachers and reduce the workload.

Scheduled autonomous workspaces for students so that teachers have time to work during school hours.

Training and empowering leadership skills.

Incentivizing planning and training time.

Shared leadership: giving teachers voice, space for dialogue and making them part of the decision making process.

Spaces for reflection, Creating a culture of open and honest communication in school

Where possible, experimenting with flexible working hours.

School Leaders can build. sense of community with parents by generating spaces where they can get involved, strengthen their relationships, and support teachers.

Where do we go from here?

Next Steps

We are eager to dive deeper into some of these questions and have outlined a few areas of exploration for the network!



01 Further Questions to Explore

How can school leaders better support teachers through community work? What incentives are key in the teaching career and what role can school leaders play there? How can school leaders support teachers continuous professional development in a way that is caring, relevant and effective?



02 Next Global Meeting

Our next global meeting is scheduled for **27th August 2024!** Please keep an eye out for details on registration!



03 Register to be part of the Network!

Not part of the Network as yet? [Click here](#) to register and get the latest updates!

Acknowledgements

We sincerely appreciate your ongoing support in our endeavors to nurture a global network dedicated to school leadership. Thank you for being a part of our journey!

Carlos Vargas, Head of Secretariat, Teacher Task Force
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Emilia Soto Echeverri, UNESCO

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[Register to be a part of the Network](#)

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