



مسقط 2024
Muscat 2024



إيسيسكو
ICESCO

ICESCO Education Ministers Conference

ICESCO EMC 3

Beyond Transforming
Education Summit:
from Commitments to Actions

3.3

Developing Teaching Quality

Muscat,
Sultanate of Oman

2-3
October

2024



إيسيسكو
ICESCO

ICESCO Education Ministers Conference

ICESCO EMC 3

Beyond Transforming Education Summit:
from Commitments → to Actions

3.3

Developing Teaching Quality

Muscat,
Sultanate of Oman

2-3
October

2024



The urgency for developing teacher quality through a systemic approach

This policy paper, a collaborative effort between Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) and International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), aims to provide strategic foresight based on set of policy guidelines for improving education systems globally with special focus on key areas impacting teacher quality and educational outcomes.

In the education landscape, there are significant challenges that all educational systems are grappling with, such as concerns about student and teacher well-being and acute teacher shortages. An additional 44 million teachers will be needed globally by 2030; of these, 31 million will be needed within secondary education and 13 million within primary education. Challenges in education are further compounded by living in a time of crisis and emergencies. World events and trends, from conflict and war leading to mass movements of refugees, to the climate emergency, the role of digital technology in society and the rise of artificial intelligence, also impact education today and the future of education. These ongoing and contemporary challenges can hinder educational systems from making progress towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education.

Teachers have long been acknowledged as key to the success of educational systems. The educational journey experienced by learners, and relevant outcomes, is mediated by teachers through relevant pedagogical, instructional and assessment approaches, classroom management strategies that create the desired learning environments, and engaging experiences for learners that are contextually appropriate for localized needs. The art and science of quality teaching calls for well-qualified teachers that encompass not only qualifications, certifications and credentials, but also educational background, experience, personal attributes or characteristics, capabilities, and ongoing professional development.

The primary aim of this paper is to emphasize the urgent need for a unified, systemic approach that enhances teacher quality, by leveraging the historical insights and contemporary initiatives of ICESCO member states to address the pressing challenges we face. In addition, the paper identifies and explores the factors that influence teacher quality through four thematic areas. Within each thematic area there are a range of potential reforms and interventions available to education leaders, some of which are highlighted in this paper. The most appropriate interventions are contextually dependent on the unique circumstances of each educational system. What might work in one educational system may not be the appropriate solution in another.

The four thematic areas are:

- 1. Professional expectations and accountability:** Establishing clear expectations and accountability measures for teachers, supported by policies and professional standards, is crucial for fostering an environment conducive to effective teaching. System-wide clarity will drive change to ensure consistent expectations. Such changes can include curriculum and assessment reform, teacher guidance, classroom resources, initial teacher education programme content and design, teacher development, school leadership expectations, and teacher monitoring and evaluation.
- 2. Teacher development and strategic planning:** A strategic approach to teacher development is necessary to ensure that educators possess the requisite skills and experience to meet expectations. This approach should be data driven, where policy and reform decisions are based on evidence from within the system while being informed by international insights. This area includes considering creating pathways for professional growth, the function and quality of initial teacher education, aligning teacher development with the evolving needs of the education system, and the management and intentional design of teacher development and the workforce.
- 3. Elevating the teaching profession:** Enhancing the status and recognition of the teaching profession is vital for attracting and retaining quality teachers. This involves promoting the value of teaching and ensuring that teachers are supported in their roles. It is also dependent on the other thematic areas. For example, clarity on expectations can support stakeholder recognition of the role of teachers, which helps in elevating the status of the profession.
- 4. Teacher well-being and support systems:** Addressing the well-being of teachers is essential for sustaining their effectiveness and engagement. Support systems must be in place to help teachers manage their responsibilities and maintain a healthy work–life balance. Similar to elevating the teaching profession, well-being is also dependent on the other thematic areas. For example, if teachers are not continuously supported through professional development they may become isolated, which affects their well-being.

In conclusion, by considering all four thematic areas together, and the interactions between them, education leaders can take a systemic approach to improving teacher quality, teaching quality and ultimately quality education. The paper advocates for a unified action plan among ICESCO member states, leveraging their unique strengths and values to enable an effective, systemic approach, and designing and implementing the most contextually appropriate reforms to enhance teacher quality. It emphasizes the importance of evidence-informed strategic planning, the development of future-oriented teacher standards, and the establishment of cross-country collaborations to tackle shared challenges. By adopting a holistic and systemic approach to teacher quality, education leaders can implement targeted reforms that are responsive to specific needs.



ICESCO Education Ministers Conference





Contents

Introduction	9
The need to strengthen teacher quality	10
Teacher quality to achieve teaching quality	12
The four thematic areas for enhancing teacher quality	15
Overview	15
Thematic area 1: Professional expectations and accountability	17
Possible future developments	26
Thematic area 2: Teacher development and strategic planning	27
Possible future developments	40
Thematic area 3: Elevating the teaching profession	41
Possible future developments	45
Thematic area 4: Teacher well-being and support systems	46
Possible future developments	50
Summary: The urgent need for a systemic approach to developing quality teachers	51



Introduction

“Education is essential for building a sustainable and equitable world that benefits all societies to make a positive impact on the world.”

ICESCO

Many civilizations and eras throughout history have made significant contributions to education, each leaving a lasting impact on the development and dissemination of knowledge. Notable examples include Ancient Greece, Ancient India, Ancient China, Renaissance Europe and Ancient Rome, among others.

The Golden Age of Islam, spanning from the 8th to the 14th centuries, was a period of remarkable intellectual and cultural flourishing driven by a profound emphasis on education. This era witnessed significant advancements in various fields, including science, mathematics, medicine, philosophy and the arts.

The key and common elements of teaching during these historical periods of educational flourishing included an interdisciplinary approach, critical thinking, mentorship, the establishment of learning centres, the translation and preservation of knowledge, inclusive education, practical application of knowledge, and cultural exchange. These elements not only advanced the intellectual landscape of their respective times but also laid the groundwork for modern educational practices.

Following the flourishing periods of integrative and expansive education, a significant shift occurred as our education systems gradually transitioned towards a more compartmentalized and industrial approach. Education began to mirror the structure and demands of the industrial society, emphasizing segmented subjects, standardized testing, and one-size-fits-all teaching approaches and practices. This transformation marked a departure from the holistic educational methodologies that promoted holistic development, the effects of which are still evident today within our educational systems.

Given the rich educational heritage of these historical periods, there is a pressing need to learn from history and bring about a paradigm shift in contemporary education. In an era where education is often trapped within the confines of a human capitalist framework, there is a pressing need to steer education systems towards a more humanistic approach. This involves embracing the interdisciplinary, inclusive and holistic educational principles that foster critical thinking, creativity and cultural exchange, ultimately nurturing well-rounded individuals who can contribute meaningfully to society.

The importance of education has been increasingly recognized today and has been globally accepted as a key goal for countries through the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030, where Goal 4 is focused on quality education¹ and joint declarations by world governments on education from the Transforming Education Summit² and the Tashkent Declaration on early childhood care and education³.

1 United Nations. (n.d.). **Goal 4 / Department of Economic and Social Affairs**. https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4#targets_and_indicators

2 Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Transforming Education Summit and the UNESCO Transforming Education Summit Secretariat. (2023). **Report on the 2022 Transforming Education Summit**. United Nations. https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/report_on_the_2022_transforming_education_summit.pdf

3 United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2022). **Tashkent Declaration and Commitments to Action for Transforming Early Childhood Care and Education**. <https://www.unesco.org/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2022/11/tashkent-declaration-ecce-2022.pdf>

However, meeting these aspirations, especially Sustainable Development Goal 4, is at risk of failure. UNESCO has explicitly commented, “If we do not achieve this goal, the other global goals will not be achieved either.”⁴ This threatens the promise of education to support national and regional flourishing by equipping learners with the knowledge, skills and competencies for a changing future. The most resilient countries will be the ones with adaptable, educated citizens that also improve equity within society by enabling citizens and their communities to thrive locally, regionally and as global citizens.

The need to strengthen teacher quality

Progress towards Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals has been slow since 2015⁵. At the heart of this slow progress are issues surrounding teacher quality, for example, teacher development, the teacher work environment and well-being support. There is a significant shortage of trained teachers, particularly in low-income regions, with many lacking necessary qualifications and professional development opportunities. Teacher shortages are also a future problem for countries which have an ageing teacher workforce and struggle to attract young people into the profession. Poor working conditions and low pay further demotivate teachers, negatively impacting well-being and contributing to high attrition rates. Additionally, outdated and inconsistent teacher education programmes fail to prepare educators for modern classroom challenges. These factors result in poor student learning outcomes and exacerbate educational inequities, particularly in marginalized communities⁶. This is not new information for us; therefore, addressing these issues as an urgent crisis is crucial for advancing towards universal quality education.

While improving teacher quality is a significant challenge due to internal issues within education systems, such as inadequate teacher development, poor working conditions and outdated development programmes, these existing issues are further complicated by various crises and emergencies. Sudden events such as conflicts, terrorism, earthquakes or flooding, and ongoing crises, such as the climate emergency, female safety, urban–rural divides or socioeconomic divides, all put strain on the education system. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted how difficult it was to maintain education during a crisis. It is important to acknowledge, however, that all countries will have a crisis or emergency at some point, making it crucial to invest in teacher quality. This investment ensures that educators are well prepared to handle such events. Strengthening teacher quality is not only about addressing current deficiencies but also about building resilience in the educational system to withstand and respond appropriately to future crises and emergencies. Therefore, investing in teacher quality is essential for both managing ongoing educational challenges and preparing for inevitable emergencies and crises.

Target 4.c of the Sustainable Development Goals⁷ explicitly focuses on this need: “By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States.”

This target underpins the majority, if not all, of the other targets under Goal 4, from providing quality primary and secondary education (Target 4.1) to increasing the number of youths and adults who

4 UNESCO. (2019). **The world is off track in achieving the global education goal, SDG 4.** <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000368935>

5 UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2024). **The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024.** United Nations. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4053200?v=pdf>

6 International Institute for Educational Planning. (2023). **Teacher education and learning outcomes.** UNESCO. <https://learningportal.iiep.unesco.org/en/issue-briefs/improve-learning/teacher-education-and-learning-outcomes>

7 United Nations. (n.d.). **Goal 4.** https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4#targets_and_indicators



have relevant skills (Target 4.4). If education is a driver of change, then teachers are the agents for that change. They will allow aspirations around education to be met and will be key in developing adaptable, educated communities that can thrive and contribute meaningfully to society, as they guide and interact with children, young people and adult learners across the academic year.

The role of contemporary teachers has been realized based on the rich traditions of education established during key eras, including the Golden Age of Islam. Today, teachers have a vital role in enabling learners to develop as both local and global citizens. They are seen as instrumental in fostering critical thinking, promoting collaboration, and teaching students to skilfully analyse the vast amount of content they encounter in the information age. Beyond cultivating an understanding of traditional subject matter, a teacher's role is significant in nurturing values such as justice, fairness and entrepreneurship. This holistic approach empowers learners to be adaptable and to contribute meaningfully to society after their formal education.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) mission and values align seamlessly with this holistic approach to education. The IB strives to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who are motivated to succeed. Its educational programmes emphasize the development of the whole person—intellectually, personally, emotionally and socially. By fostering critical thinking, encouraging intercultural understanding, and promoting respect, the IB prepares students to thrive in a rapidly changing world. The IB's learner profile attributes—such as being inquirers, thinkers, communicators and principled—equip students with the competencies needed to navigate and contribute positively to global society. Through its rigorous and forward-thinking curriculum, the IB supports the development of adaptable, lifelong learners who are prepared to face the complexities of the future and drive positive change in their communities and beyond.

Quality teachers can play a significant role in supporting the broader, long-term aspirations of a holistic education, and can also be a key part of the solutions to crises and emergencies. In the short term, teachers provide education provision in the most challenging of circumstances through resilience, adaptability and exercising professional judgement. These are only possible if teachers have the skills, competencies and understanding of child learning that they need, and the professional development opportunities that allow them to achieve this level of expertise. Education and teachers are also a point of stability in times of chaos, providing reassurance to communities, parents and learners. Teachers can, despite all the challenges, provide an education and open up life chances. In the long term, teachers are educating the future generations who will be tasked with addressing many of the challenges we face today, such as climate change, migration and the survival of the species. This is where decision-making about the purpose of education is required, including considering a different way to conceptualize education that can be focused on critical thinking, interdisciplinary learning, conceptual understanding, inquiry, collaboration and practical application of knowledge.

This return to historical precedents follows the recognition that the industrial age focus on knowledge and recall is limiting how we are preparing learners for a changing world where the nature of truth is contested. Teachers are more than providers of knowledge—they are role models demonstrating the values, ethics and behaviours we want our learners to have. Teachers are at the forefront of child protection, ensuring safeguarding. Furthermore, teachers have a vital role in promoting inclusive education, ensuring that education is open to everyone, regardless of gender, specific additional needs, disability, economic status or social status. This is especially relevant to closing the gender gap in education and considering evidence that highlights how skilled female teachers have a positive impact on girls' enrolment in education and on their learning⁸.

8 UNESCO. (2004). **Gender and education for all - the leap to equality**. UNESCO. <https://www.unesco.org/gem-report/en/gender-education-all>

Teachers are the beating heart of modern education systems, enabling expectations to be met, and it is time that Islamic nations develop a unified approach to enhance teacher quality.

Teacher quality to achieve teaching quality

Primary phase		Percentage learners completing this	
Country	2000	2023	
Algeria	83.14	96.11	
Bangladesh	59.58	88.02	
Gambia	20.54	58.78	
Suriname	62.41	87.17	
Tunisia	81.52	97.21	

Lower secondary		Percentage learners completing this	
Country	2000	2023	
Algeria	35.93	71.66	
Bangladesh	38.46	70.86	
Gambia	33.82	55.67	
Suriname	30.16	57.96	
Tunisia	56.10	91.56	

Upper secondary		Percentage learners completing this	
Country	2000	2023	
Algeria	15.4	47.81	
Gambia	17.96	32.21	
Pakistan	12.98	25.48	
Senegal	5.94	11.34	
Uzbekistan	72.14	98.61	

Table 1: Percentage of learners completing phases of education (selected from SDG data)

To fully address the challenges, it is important to distinguish between teacher quality and teaching quality, while also emphasizing the ultimate goals of learning, development and human flourishing. Teacher quality refers to the attributes, qualifications and capabilities of the teachers themselves, including educational background, certification and credentials, experience, personal characteristics, and professional development. Teaching quality, on the other hand, refers to the practices chosen and used by teachers and includes, but is not limited to, instructional strategies, classroom management approaches, assessment practices, student engagement and adaptability in instruction. However, true educational success is measured by the extent to which these qualities foster holistic development and flourishing in students. Quality education is not just about effective teaching; it is about nurturing



students' intellectual, emotional, social and ethical growth. This requires teachers to not only be skilled but to also be equipped with the pedagogical freedom to use their professional judgement in deciding what practices are the most appropriate for their learners' comprehensive development.

Historically, education systems have evolved organically over time, reacting to system needs and accumulating structures, policies, practices and purposes. These can conflict with each other versus being deliberately designed to a commonly agreed purpose. For many systems, the initial focus was on increasing access to education through increasing enrolment.⁹ This has continued into the 21st century where Sustainable Development Goal 4, Target 4.1¹⁰ states, "By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes". However, as we strive to meet these goals, it is crucial to balance the focus on enrolment with a commitment to enhancing the quality of education. This means prioritizing not just academic achievement, but also deeper goals of human flourishing and holistic child development, ensuring education becomes a transformative force in the lives of all learners.

Globally, the pace of student enrolment has significantly outpaced the rate of new teacher recruitment, creating substantial challenges for education systems. The drive to improve enrolment and the completion rate of primary and secondary education, in pursuit of Target 4.1, is a success story. Many countries have significantly increased the percentage of children completing primary and lower secondary education (table 1)¹¹. This has been accomplished through supporting families to keep learners in education, advocating the importance of education, and increasing capacity in the system to enrol more students. This ensures more children have access to an education—gaining the knowledge and developing the competencies to support them in their adult lives. However, in many countries, the success of student enrolment and increasing completion of primary and secondary phases of education has outpaced teacher recruitment, which has led to unqualified teachers being recruited into systems and class sizes increasing.

The data does not indicate if the quality of education or the quality of teachers is appropriate, being maintained or improving as enrolment of students increases. High enrolment may ensure students are in school, but are they getting a high-quality education from high-quality teachers? This is especially true if class sizes have increased beyond an optimal number of students which can mean individual students receiving less one-to-one time and support from their teacher. Improving the quality of education, and therefore teacher quality, must become the central and urgent mission for education systems.

The focus on enrolment strains educational resources, diminishes the quality of education and worsens equity, particularly in underserved areas. To address these challenges, it is critical to enhance teacher recruitment and development efforts, update education programmes, and improve working conditions for teachers. Aligning teacher supply *and quality* with the growing student population is essential for maintaining educational quality and achieving global educational goals.

This is recognized in the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action¹²:

9 Pritchett, L. (2015). *Creating education systems coherent for learning outcomes: Making the transition from schooling to learning*. RISE. https://riseprogramme.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/RISE_WP-005_Pritchett.pdf

10 United Nations. (n.d.). **Goal 4**. https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4#targets_and_indicators

11 United Nations (2023). **SDG Indicators Database**. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database>

12 UNESCO. (2016). *Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245656>

“We will ensure that teachers and educators are empowered, adequately recruited, well trained, professionally qualified, motivated and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems.”

This commitment is not only focused on enhancing teacher quality but also improving teaching quality, ensuring that students receive the best possible education. Enhancing teacher quality involves providing educators with the necessary training, resources and support to excel in their roles. Comprehensive teacher training programmes equip teachers with updated knowledge and pedagogical skills, enabling them to address diverse learning needs effectively. Continuous professional development ensures that teachers stay abreast of the latest educational trends, technologies and research, fostering a culture of lifelong learning among educators.

Moreover, improved teaching quality contributes to reducing educational inequities. Effective teachers can adapt their instruction to meet the needs of all students, including those from marginalized or disadvantaged backgrounds. This ensures that every student has access to high-quality education, regardless of their socio-economic status, ethnicity or geographic location. By fostering an inclusive and equitable learning environment, we can help bridge the achievement gap and promote social mobility.

Investing in both teacher and teaching quality ultimately strengthens the entire education system. It creates a positive feedback loop where well-trained and motivated teachers contribute to higher student achievement, which in turn attracts more qualified individuals to the teaching profession. This sustainable approach ensures that the benefits of quality education extend beyond the classroom, preparing students to be informed, engaged and productive members of society.

Improving teacher quality and teaching quality requires a strategic approach across a range of policy areas, rather than a reactive approach to deal with current crises. It also requires a concerted shift away from simply improving access to education to ensuring a quality education provided by high-quality teachers. The next section of this paper identifies four thematic areas that deserve our immediate and urgent attention.



The four thematic areas for enhancing teacher quality

Overview

To enhance and improve teacher quality, we propose focusing on four key thematic areas.

1. Professional expectations and accountability

What are the expectations of teachers as defined by the system? How is the system governed? These expectations can come through **policy** positions, professional **standards, modernized monitoring and evaluation processes** and the provision of **guidance** and **resources** to support teachers in their role.

2. Teacher development and strategic planning

How are teachers and the wider education workforce managed and developed? There is a need to **collect, analyse and utilize data** to enable evidence-informed, **data-led planning and management** of the workforce. This involves strategic recruitment, retention strategies, **career pathways, initial teacher education** and **in-service teacher development** alongside the effectiveness of **school leadership** with an emphasis on inclusivity and equitable education practices.

3. Elevating the teaching profession

How are teachers recognized by the system, including parents, learners and the general public? Elevating the status of the teaching profession involves improving **employment conditions**, which also includes **pay** and **career progression**. A recognition and reward system for teachers' professional growth and contributions, alongside positive **community engagement** and **media representation** of schools and teachers is also a significant factor. Promoting inclusivity and equity in teaching further enhances the profession's societal perceptions and attracts more qualified individuals to the field. Elevated professional status will drive teacher motivation and engagement.

4. Teacher well-being and support systems

How do **teachers feel** about their role and their **work-life balance**? Addressing teacher well-being comprehensively involves ongoing **monitoring** to support an evidence-informed approach to improvement and creating a **supportive work environment** that prioritizes physical, mental and emotional health.

These four thematic areas interact with each other; when addressed together through a systemic approach, they can positively enhance teacher quality.

Here is an example. If expectations are appropriate, are supported by accountability mechanisms and workforce planning, and management is effective, the professional status of teachers is supported and their well-being will have improved: because teachers are operating in a well-managed system with clarity about their role. All four thematic areas affect improving teacher quality and ensuring it is as high as possible, which further raises the professional status of the profession and teacher well-being. This creates a positive feedback loop where high-quality teachers make the profession appealing to more people who are more likely to be high performing from early in their career. Those working in teaching feel there is recognition, progression, support and value in the role, which improves teacher well-being and reduces the attrition rate.



The four areas can be unified and linked by focusing on teacher competencies and skills, aligning them to those we wish to foster in students. We aim to nourish intellectual, emotional, social and ethical growth, which enables students to flourish, thrive, and have a meaningful life: not only for themselves but for the communities they will belong to and interact with.

Teacher competencies and skills, and the expectations of them, need to be articulated (thematic area 1), then accounted for in strategically planning and developing the teacher workforce (thematic area 2). Through developing teacher competencies and skills, the profession can become elevated by teachers becoming masters of what society is valuing (thematic area 3). By having a range of competencies and skills which include resilience, problem-solving and collaboration, teachers are more able to self-regulate their own well-being and know when to access support (thematic area 4).

Fundamentally, if we expect teachers to develop skills and competencies in our students, then teachers need those same skills and competencies, and to a common standard: both to teach to the highest standards possible, and to be role models to their students.



Thematic area 1: Professional expectations and accountability

How are the expectations you have for teachers' behaviours and practices communicated and reinforced within your system?

The expectations set for teachers within an education system are critical in shaping their behaviours and practices, as well as how they are perceived by stakeholders and society. Formalizing these expectations in education policy is one way in which a shared understanding of what quality teaching looks like in your system can be defined. Communicating these expectations can influence not only classroom practice, but also the attractiveness of teaching as a career, teacher well-being, and the way in which families and wider society conceptualize quality learning and teaching.

The way in which the system sets, communicates and manages these expectations can therefore play a vital role in improving teacher quality. Setting aspirational expectations for what quality learning and teaching looks like can have a positive effect on students academically, emotionally and socially, as expectations on teachers can be set to support the intellectual, emotional, social and ethical growth of students. This can include expectations related to problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, inquiry, reflection, principles, risk taking, communication and more, as appropriate to the cultural and contextual needs of a country.

As the world changes and faces a range of opportunities, challenges and emergencies—such as artificial intelligence, increasingly complex digital ecosystems and cybersecurity, to climate change and mass migration of refugees—there is a need to urgently review and maintain standards to ensure they remain relevant, supporting teachers now and in the future.

Standards influence the education system—the form and function of initial teacher education, the type of professional development teachers are provided with, how school leaders conceptualize school improvement, and how the system is monitored and evaluated. There is therefore an urgency to establish future-oriented standards to ensure that both current and incoming teachers meet expectations, and also that they have the competencies and skills to handle unexpected crises and emergencies.

Whether implicitly or explicitly stated, all systems have some form of expectations of teachers—what influences whether these expectations contribute to driving improvements in quality?

The extent to which aspirational expectations are documented

In some systems, expectations for teachers can be referenced or implied within a wide range of documents, including the following.

- Policy documents, including education visions and broader policies, frameworks and standards related to areas like curriculum, assessments, teacher training and educational accountability
- Frameworks and tools used for monitoring, evaluation and inspection of schools
- Teacher training materials, teacher guidance documents or handbooks and teaching resources

Within the IB, the expectations for teachers' practices and behaviours are stated and supported across a range of documents provided to schools and teachers. These include the IB learner profile, Programme standards and practices, curriculum frameworks and course guides. IB programme coordinators, leads and/or directors use these documents in understanding, and meeting, the expectations of becoming and being an authorized IB World School.

Model inquiry and continually inquire into their teaching practices and learning processes of students as a source of professional development	Support thinking and metacognition (thinking about thinking) with prompts and tools	Implement hands-on learning, recognizing that a child's hands, eyes and ears are infinite sources of discovery	Scaffold connected opportunities for the development of skills	Create flexible and engaging learning spaces that promote independence and collaboration	Provide time for learners to wonder, explore, build and revise theories, engage in research and reflect on learning
Value students as capable inquirers	Are open-minded about the process of inquiry, using conceptual understandings to anchor sustained investigations	Inquiry teachers		Extend learning with open-ended questions or problems	Use prior knowledge as launching point for new learning
Engage curiosity through meaningful learning engagements to launch and re-launch conceptual investigations	Use real world contexts and primary experiences as significant activators of learning			Personalise learning by employing a range of strategies and flexible groupings	Understand the importance of collaborative learning and value the contributions of both individuals and groups
Reserve whole-class experiences for meaningful instructional, collaborative and reflective moments	Support students to make deliberate connections within and between subjects	Consider materials, fieldtrips, learning engagements as stimuli for inquiry	Generate routines, questions, strategies and systems that can be transferred across a range of contexts	Monitor and document learning providing meaningful feedback throughout	Measure the products of learning against established success criteria

Fig.1 An example of IB expectations from the Primary Years Programme (PYP) approaches to learning¹³

In other countries, however, the expectations have been more formally documented within documents concerning teacher standards, which are often developed through a process of review and consideration of international best practice.

For example, the recently completed Maldives National Professional Standards for Teachers are considered to represent “a significant step towards ensuring that we have a highly skilled and competent teaching workforce”. The standards, based around three domains (professional knowledge and understanding, professional practice, and professional engagement and attributes) set out a comprehensive framework which describes what is expected of teachers as they progress through different stages of their career. The intention is that these standards will be applied broadly throughout the system to inform teacher training, licensing and evaluation, forming “a basis for the recruitment, remuneration, career development, promotion, and rewards and recognition of teachers”.¹⁴

13 International Baccalaureate. (2023, June 6). **Learning and teaching**. <https://www.ibo.org/programmes/primary-years-programme/curriculum/learning-and-teaching/>

14 National Institute of Education [Maldives]. (2023). **Maldives National Professional Standards for Teachers**. Ministry of Education. <https://gazette.gov.mv/gazette/6888>



The extent to which expectations are context relevant and future looking

Are your teacher standards aspirational and supporting improvement? What is accounted for in the standards?

Teacher standards are public statements that signal the aspirations of the system in relation to what education is for, how it is provided and what the expected student outcomes are. These are increasingly being linked to competencies and skills students require for their futures. However, teacher standards can be developed for an assortment of purposes by a range of different stakeholders and take a variety of forms.

For example, teacher standards can be developed to focus on informing the design and development of teacher professional development. In contrast they can be developed to shift expectations about learning and teaching. Teacher standards have also been created to support the design of pre-service teacher training courses, teacher qualification or licensing, or to inform teacher appraisal processes within schools or within inspection frameworks and tools. In some contexts, multiple forms of teacher standards exist and a process of harmonization of these tools and frameworks is a foundational step in the development of national standards. Without harmonization there will be an element of confusion within the system, alongside a lack of consistency and progression, leading to uncertainty over what the core expectations of teachers are.

Where teacher standards have been developed for a particular purpose within the education system, there is also a risk that these may represent documentation of current practices or be limited in focus based on their purpose. The most aspirational standards, which have the potential to drive change in the system, are informed by a country's future vision of education and what that vision may mean for teachers.

For example, where a national vision for education highlights the importance of community, there is an implicit expectation that teachers will support community coherence and engagement by demonstrating skills and competencies related to that endeavour. This is why teacher standards often include statements related to values, ethics, justice and fairness which go beyond classroom teaching practices.

For example, Egypt's Vision 2030—The National Agenda for Sustainable Development¹⁵ sets out the intention for education to “instill sustainable development values and principles among students” and sets out an ambitious development agenda driven in part by technology, innovation and digital transformation. Alongside the development of this vision, the Ministry of Education and Technical Education has worked since 2020 on the development of a Comprehensive Professional Development framework¹⁶ for teachers with support from the Teach for Tomorrow project. The final framework contains Egypt's first professional standards for teachers which include expectations related to the use of ICT, digital skills and the application of sustainability principles.

The expectations for teachers, therefore, can be highly influenced by local context, culture and aspirations for education aligned to the national purpose of education and the future needs societies are expected to have. We are, however, facing global challenges that place demands on the education

15 Ministry of Planning and Economic Development [Egypt]. (2023). **The national agenda for sustainable development: Egypt's updated vision 2030**. https://mped.gov.eg/Files/Egypt_Vision_2030_EnglishDigitalUse.pdf

16 Education Development Centre. (2024). **USAID teach for tomorrow**. <https://www.edc.org/usaid-teach-tomorrow>

requirements of all nations. The potential impact on our societies of conflict, climate change and a rapidly evolving tech-driven global skills and employment landscape has resulted in significant shifts in many nations in terms of their expectations of teachers.

For example, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of teachers' resilience, adaptability, creativity, innovation and growth mindset, as they were rapidly required to adapt to new ways of working using remote teaching. Integration of digital technology and an increased focus on student well-being and mental health also quickly emerged as priorities for the teaching workforce. Post-pandemic, these attributes, behaviours and skill sets continue to influence discussions around teachers and learning models¹⁷. The role that education plays in enabling societies to negotiate global challenges means that despite the contextual influence of the expectations made of teachers, there are still useful lessons to learn from international examples of teacher standards. For example, there have been recent projects to create broader frameworks applicable globally or regionally:

1. The Global Framework of Professional Teaching Standards¹⁸

2. African Framework of Standards and Competencies for the Teaching Profession¹⁹

3. Pacific Regional Standards for Teachers²⁰

However, there is evidence to suggest that limited awareness of these frameworks amongst policymakers may be limiting the impact of these potential tools to inform a national-level development of standards.²¹

While standards should be aspirational and can position teachers to address global, national, regional and local challenges, and consider international best practice, they are first and foremost shaped by the immediate needs of the system and the current state of teaching practice. Over-ambitious standards that teachers will struggle to meet with the support available will not lead to teacher improvement or a higher-quality education for their students. Counter-intuitively, high standards may negatively impact teacher well-being, drive teachers out of the profession, and create a concern that policymakers and system leaders do not understand the reality of teaching.

The extent to which expectations are developed through consultation and represent a shared understanding of best practice

How are standards developed? How do all stakeholders develop a shared understanding?

17 Lee, J. & Kwon, K.H. (2023). Promoting sustainable learning in the post-pandemic era: Focused on the role of motivation, growth mindset, self-regulated learning, well-being, and smart device utilization. *Sustainability*, **15** (17). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151713247>

18 Education International & UNESCO. (2019, updated 2024). *EI/UNESCO global framework of professional teaching standards*. <https://www.ei-ie.org/en/item/25734:global-framework-of-professional-teaching-standards>

19 Nwokeocha, S. (2019). *African framework of standards and competences for the teaching profession: The knowledge, skills and conduct expected of teachers and school leaders*. African Union. DOI:10.13140/RG.2.2.27462.14406

20 Pacific Community (SPC). (2023). *Pacific regional standards for teachers*.

21 International Institute for Capacity-Building in Africa. (2023). *Where do West African countries stand on professional standards and competencies for teachers and school leaders?*. UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000388115>



Developing appropriate standards that are suitable for the needs of the system and are achievable is driven by *how* the standards are developed. In some jurisdictions, teacher standards have been developed by individual organizations or agencies for a particular purpose, for example to inform the design of pre-service teacher training courses. This risks creating standards that lack connection to the lived reality of teachers or represent an international ideal rather than a realistic national expectation. In contrast, teacher standards in other contexts have been developed through an extensive process of stakeholder engagement and consultation, potentially grounding the standards and improving the engagement of stakeholders in meeting them.

In 2017, the Teaching Services Commission in Sierra Leone developed the first national Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders²² through a highly consultative process involving a wide range of education stakeholders. As such, the standards are considered “the product of a highly inclusive process in which the voices of a wide range of participants were heard and documented” (p. 5). This consultative approach, which was also informed by best practice evidence from local, national and international contexts, was a key principle of the design approach, as the resulting standards are intended to influence practice across the education system: “The key purpose of the Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders in Sierra Leone is to serve as a common point of reference to all stakeholders in the education sector ...The standards provide a common language and the nationally accepted requirements of a teacher ... Therefore, all the authorities whose work revolve around or connect with the teachers and school leaders must recognize the standards as the most important point of reference.”

There are a range of stakeholders who sit outside the education policy sphere whose beliefs and expectations can strongly influence how teachers and quality teaching is perceived in practice. These stakeholders range from education researchers and academics to members of a school’s community, such as parents and community leaders. Effective communication, engagement and discussion with these stakeholders during the documentation of a nation’s expectations for teachers can significantly strengthen the process and increase the potential for system-wide impact. Involving academia, for example, strengthens evidence-based approaches to setting expectations that align with current best practice.

The IB reviews and develops its programmes in partnership with its community through listening, collaboration, consensus building and co-creation.

Each of the IB programmes and curriculums undergoes regular reviews to help ensure that the best possible education is being delivered for IB students. It is a process involving educators from many different cultures and backgrounds, ensuring that practising teachers play a crucial role in the development of each programme. It also means that the IB vision is constantly sharpened by research, both IB-led and that of other respected academic bodies²³.

For example, the IB is collaborating with IB World Schools to evolve and innovate the Diploma Programme (DP) and Career-related Programme (CP) to focus on a broader set of skills. This collaboration will also influence how, when and what the IB assesses in these programmes. The review includes multi-year pilots where the IB works in direct partnership with schools, educators and the wider IB community.²⁴

22 Sierra Leone Teaching Service Commission. (2017). **Professional standards for teachers and school leaders in Sierra Leone.**

23 International Baccalaureate Organization. (2019, updated 2020). **What is an IB education?**
https://resources.ibo.org/ib/works/edu_11162-58229?

24 International Baccalaureate Organization. (2023). **The 16+ review.**
<https://www.ibo.org/programmes/collaborative-review-of-the-dp-and-cp/>

Increasing clarity across society (in particular for parents) on the role of teachers can significantly enhance teacher-community and school-community relationships and enable families to play a role in holding schools to account regarding the quality of education delivered.

How teacher standards, and other documents that explicitly or implicitly provide teacher standards, are developed should align to the ethos, values and practices the system wishes to embed within its education system.

During development, a priority is to ensure standards are appropriate and represent an achievable improvement towards a long-term aspiration of what a good teacher looks like. This means there may be several rounds of incremental improvement to teacher standards over years, or decades, rather than a single push for better quality teachers via one new set of standards. Bringing stakeholders on that journey will support a common understanding of the expectations of teachers and how that expectation may change over time.

The extent to which expectations are reinforced through other components of the education system—curriculum, assessment, materials

What expectations are placed on teachers by documentation outside of teacher standards?

Teacher standards do not exist in isolation, driven by stakeholders alone. They are part of a complex set of directions, guidance, requirements and recommendations that systems create and which together make up the expectations of education. Sometimes these aspects of the system can direct teachers, despite teacher standards (where these exist) also having explicit expectations that require different approaches and/or decision-making.

In particular, the curriculum, assessments, teacher guidance and resources teachers use to scaffold learning can all influence—and in some cases direct—teachers, meaning they contribute to, or are proxies for, standards within the system.

If the curriculum emphasizes knowledge, but teachers are expected, via standards, to develop students' competencies, the dissonance can create tension. If assessments, formative and/or summative, reinforce a knowledge outcome and those assessment outcomes are used as part of student progression through education, school monitoring, or teacher performance appraisals, then it is only natural that teaching focuses on meeting those outcomes rather than developing competencies. This can result in teachers “teaching to the test”, being more didactic, minimizing cross-disciplinary learning and/or reducing the focus on competency development, instead focusing on enabling their learners to perform well in assessments²⁵.

This can be more acute if parents emphasize the value of assessment outcomes, further pressuring schools and teachers.

These influences on teachers become more urgent if there is a shift in the expectations of teachers. Without addressing all the components that contribute to expectation-setting, it is less likely that teachers will adapt to and meet the new expectations, as the wider system still emphasizes the previous focus. Shifts in the gains that are thought to be important for students from their education are currently being seen in international frameworks. For example, changes in the PISA Science Framework for 2025 mean a new focus on competencies and identity, alongside knowledge²⁶. This change in expectations will filter into national education systems and affect the expectations of teachers.



For example, there is pressure in many education systems to address the climate emergency through better teaching of climate science, the effects of the emergency itself, and the competencies needed for learners to live in a changing world, mitigating if not directly resolving the crisis. Curriculum reform is often highlighted as important with a focus on adding new content, revising single subjects such as science, or embedding a topic-based approach to teaching. This is based on the assumption that associated assessments will also be revised to align with the new curriculum expectations.

However, over time, this leads to an overloaded curriculum which is trying to do too much in the time available. This places high expectations on teachers, which forces them to make choices, even if those choices go against the expectations and standards they are meant to meet. There is a finite amount of teaching time available in the school year under current models of education, and adding more content to the curriculum in response to the changing demands of education and teachers is not sustainable.

Where there is an overloaded curriculum, teachers can feel overwhelmed. They may have concerns about there being too much to get through, but there being no forgiveness in the system if something is missed or covered superficially due to time constraints. This can result in practices focused on delivering as much content as possible in the time available to the minimum level of depth²⁷.

Adding more content to the curriculum will also dilute the time teachers can give to foundational skills and developing competencies, skills, attitudes, values and ethics, which are increasingly being prioritized by countries as part of preparing the students of today to live in a more uncertain world.

Is there alignment between expectations of teachers with the expectations set by curriculum, assessment and teacher materials?

To support long-term change in the focus of education, reconceptualizing of curriculum and assessment should be considered while also reinforcing the expected role of teachers. This can include shifting the direction of the national curriculum to a broader framework with minimum content expectations. This will give more space within the curriculum for teachers to meet expectations, especially related to required pedagogical approaches such as inquiry-based learning and competency development. It will also enable local governments, districts (or equivalent), groups of schools and/or individual schools to create their own localized curriculum that meets the requirements of a national framework, while being appropriate to local needs. This approach would reinforce expectations of teachers being expert practitioners who apply professional judgements.

The four IB programmes provide a solid, consistent framework and the flexibility to tailor students' education according to their culture and context. Many of the expectations of the IB are set around approaches to learning and approaches to teaching, such as teaching through context, developing conceptual understanding and inquiry-based learning²⁸.

For example, the curriculum framework for Middle Years Programme (MYP) provided by the IB is designed to offer flexibility in meeting national requirements and student learning needs, while ensuring that IB expectations are also met²⁹.

27 Majoni, C. (2017). Curriculum overload and its impact on teacher effectiveness in primary schools. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.290597>

28 Polman, J.L., & Scornavacco, K. (2022). *Meanings and practices of inquiry-based teaching and learning in the International Baccalaureate*. International Baccalaureate Organization.

29 International Baccalaureate Organization. (2023). *MYP Curriculum*. <https://www.ibo.org/programmes/middle-years-programme/curriculum/>

This can also include considering alternative models of assessment to standard summative assessments at the end of an academic year. Assessment models such as peer (teacher to teacher) observations and feedback, formative assessment practices to inform teacher assessment, project-based learning, and digital assessments, can be used where they support the ethos, education approaches and requirements of the curriculum. The best model to use for assessing competencies may be radically different to the historic models of assessment created for assessing the retention and understanding of knowledge.

Alongside curriculum and assessment requirements and guidance, teachers use a range of materials to inform their teaching practice (guidance) or to scaffold learning in the classroom (resources). These materials set expectations about what learning should focus on, which can drive teacher behaviour and affect their practice. Aligning the design and content of materials to what is expected of teachers is therefore important.

For example, if there is an expectation that teachers use assessment for learning approaches, materials need to support that. If materials do not, then teachers, especially unqualified or inexperienced teachers, may follow the materials and not use assessment for learning: counter to the expectations of the wider system.

Resources that teachers use in the classroom to support learning and teaching—for example, worksheets and textbooks—can be impactful, and save teachers significant amounts of time, allowing them to focus on planning lessons and the pedagogical practices they wish to use around the resources.

However, if the resources provided to or produced by teachers are of poor quality or support ineffective practices or are designed to be used as a didactic resource rather than a learning scaffold, they can restrict teachers and lead to poor quality learning and teaching. It is therefore important that the resources teachers use in the classroom are innovative, well designed and support effective practice³⁰. In effect, the resources teachers use become a form of professional development as well as a learning aid in classrooms.

Over time, teachers who are confident in their practice will become selective in the use of resources, making professional judgements about the best resources to use for the most impact in a classroom situation. Behind both guidance and resources is the need for all materials to be relevant to teachers and learners and their lived reality. This includes girls being able to see examples of girls and women in resources, in balanced, appropriate and aspirational ways. Contextualizing material to ensure it connects to teachers and learners promotes engagement with learning. High-quality teachers will be able to use general materials, such as premade worksheets, and adapt them for their students.

The curriculums, assessments and materials teachers use are often more critical for directing practice than explicit standards, as system accountability measures are often weighted towards them. For example, assessment outcomes being a measure of educational success and/or systems monitoring curriculum coverage.

The extent to which they are reinforced through educational accountability

How are education—and teachers—monitored and evaluated?

All systems have mechanisms in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of education. These include but are not limited to feedback from teachers through workforce



consultation and engagement, partnering with academia and/or international agencies to conduct research and a deep dive into the effectiveness of education to drive evidence-informed change, using assessment outcomes as a proxy for the quality of education³¹, and thorough inspection of schools against a framework. There are also school-level mechanisms for school leaders who act as pedagogical leaders to monitor and support teacher improvement.

Improving digital infrastructure is changing how we monitor and evaluate education, including teachers. Real-time evaluation of teaching is more viable now than it has ever been, and this brings risks as well as benefits. While real-time evaluation can provide feedback to teachers and prompt reflection on practice and timely and targeted support, it can also place teachers within a surveillance culture which undermines their professional judgements and negatively impacts well-being.

All mechanisms will have different drivers. Assessment, for example, will focus on students' measurable educational outcomes and can be weighted towards the depth and breadth of the curriculum and what the curriculum is prioritizing—the risk being that if an aspect of education is not in the assessment it may therefore lack monitoring and become a lower priority. Additionally, inspections of schools will use frameworks and involve the observation of teachers, to determine how effective learning and teaching is within individual schools and/or across the system.

How does accountability in the education system influence teachers?

The different mechanisms each have different influences on the choices teachers make³². As a result, the mechanisms employed in a system signals expectations for teachers; when those expectations align to the wider system they can empower and support teachers.

However, if there is misalignment, then monitoring and evaluation can distort learning and teaching. For example, when monitoring and evaluation are heavily focused on curriculum coverage and/or assessment results there is pressure within the system, and therefore on teachers, to get through the curriculum in a prescribed way. This reduces their autonomy as they cannot apply their professional judgements, and leads to higher workloads and a reduction in well-being.

If the monitoring and evaluation are focused on teacher development—for example, how teachers are planning and adapting their lessons to account for learning needs (via ongoing assessment for learning), how school leaders are supporting effective learning and teaching, or teacher well-being and equity—this creates a very different culture that may be more supportive to enabling quality teaching³³.

Systems therefore need to consider carefully how they monitor and evaluate education and the impact this can have on teachers and drive behaviours that align to expectations. When considering this monitoring and evaluation to provide accountability, prescriptive frameworks should be resisted and instead be created through collaboration with teachers to enable innovation and to incentivize teachers to improve.

31 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2023). **Education GPS**. <https://gpseducation.oecd.org/revieweducationpolicies/#!node=41704&filter=all>

32 Manes-Bonnisseau, C. . (2018). **The impact of inspection: conclusions of SICI's reflections in 2018**. The Standing International Conference of Inspectorates. <https://www.sici-inspectorates.eu/getattachment/bcb9cce3-bd59-4ca7-b4ee-0e74d4136d13/Impact-of-Inspection-Chantal-Manes.pdf;.jpg;.aspx>

33 Douse, M. (2024). The Evolution of School Inspection. NORRAG. <https://www.norrag.org/the-evolution-of-school-inspection/>

Possible future developments

Depending on the current work in the system and country-specific factors some, or all, of the following options for developing in this thematic area may be applicable.

1. Create future-oriented standards for teachers

There is significant potential to improve the quality of teaching through the consultative development of future-oriented teacher standards informed by existing best practice, the future vision for education within the country, and a broad range of evidence about future societal needs in terms of skills, attitudes and values that can be developed through education. Where standards already exist, the rapid pace of change in the world around us means that there is a growing need to ensure standards remain future looking, to enable teachers to continue to provide teaching that will prepare learners to thrive in an uncertain future landscape.

2. Shift monitoring and evaluation towards teacher development

Inspections, or equivalent, of schools should focus on being developmental which will move the system from judging teachers against the framework, which should be closely aligned to expectations and standards, and towards supporting teachers in meeting expectations and becoming part of the continuous development process. Inspections would move away grading and/or stating schools are passing or failing expectations towards being reframed as school and teaching improvement visits.

3. Set standards on producing guidance and resources

For those creating guidance and resources, there should be written standards of what should be included or excluded during authoring, editing and final production. These standards could be used by centralized teams managing production of guidance and resources, schools and teachers directly, or by independent publishers. Having standards will improve the quality of guidance and resources and support the system expectations being effectively implemented.

4. Create a teacher-led innovation hub

A teacher innovation hub can be set up which acts as a platform for sharing practices, guidance and resources thus creating a community of practice. The hub can also coordinate with the higher education sector and support teachers in engaging in action research. A professional journal could be part of how innovation hub supports the sharing of pedagogical practice and action research outcomes are shared by the community. The innovation hub should be led and managed by teachers to maintain its relevance, authenticity and value.

5. Reconceptualize curriculum and assessments

In order to pivot education towards being part of the solution for the challenges countries face, curriculum and assessments need to be reconceptualized. There is the need to have national conversations about what should be taught with the time and resources available, how content should be taught, and if the model of education currently being used is the best one for the expectations countries have, especially if the curriculum and assessments are supporting competency development, preparing students for a changing world including the climate emergency and being members of a global digital community. Decisions on curriculum and assessment should then directly inform expectations and standards for teachers.



Thematic area 2: Teacher development and strategic planning

Are the right number of people entering the education profession with the appropriate skills and experience?

Do you have appropriate structures in place to enable people to progress through the system, ensuring that you have people with the right skills in school-based roles and beyond?

Different nations face different challenges in attracting, developing and retaining the education professionals they need to ensure the delivery of quality learning and teaching. In relation to teachers, the challenge for some nations is sheer numbers—some countries face acute teacher shortages across the board whereas others face particular shortfalls in technical subjects like science and mathematics. In some cases, this is linked to issues with recruiting teachers; in others there are challenges in retaining teachers within the system.

Overall, it is expected that by 2030 an additional 44 million teachers will be needed globally—of these, 31 million will be needed in secondary education and 13 million in primary education³⁴.

To address shortages in the system, and to meet the international target for universal enrolment in education of primary and secondary students, there is a trend of increased numbers of uncertified or underqualified people being recruited into the profession in some countries. The percentage of primary teachers with a teaching qualification in sub-Saharan Africa has decreased from 75% in 2010 to 69% in 2023.

The International Teacher Taskforce Global Report on Teachers 2024 highlights that “when teachers are under-qualified, it is more likely their work will be prescribed and monitored as it will be assumed they lack the professional capacity to make good pedagogical judgments based on training and experience.” This in turn devalues the profession and may further deter people from considering teaching as a valid career choice, further exacerbating shortages and requiring more uncertified or unqualified people to be recruited. Despite this situation, if the system works to support these teachers effectively, turning under-qualified teachers into highly skilled, recognized professionals, then not only does the barrier to entry to the profession remain low, which is vital in many countries experiencing teacher shortages, but the profession is seen as attractive, valuable and a long-term career option.

Once teachers are in the system, attrition can become an ongoing problem. Of the 44 million additional teachers needed globally, 58% (over 25 million) are required to replace teachers leaving the profession. When a teacher leaves the system they take their experience, development and skills with them; meanwhile the new teacher that replaces them requires investment to reach that equivalent skills level.

Keeping teachers in the profession is therefore key, especially where some countries value service length for promotion. If there are high levels of attrition, it will reduce the pool of future school leaders and mid-tier support roles in the system. Considering career pathways—and development opportunities for entry into those pathways for teachers that go beyond the classroom, or enable teachers who demonstrate the skills and competencies to excel as leaders, regardless of service length—may encourage more teachers to stay in the system and reduce the risk of a limited pool of candidates for key leadership roles.

34 International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 & UNESCO. (2024). **Global report on teachers: Addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession**. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000388832>

Contributing to attrition rates and to how people perceive teaching is workforce demographics. In some countries, the teaching workforce is younger than the global average, while in others, it is older. Both present challenges. An ageing teaching workforce means a teacher population crisis is in the future, while a younger teacher workforce may require more support and they may lack the guidance of more experienced educators. For example, in TALIS 2018 it was reported that the average age of Türkiye's teacher workforce was the youngest of the OECD countries, and the country had the second largest group of teachers under 30 years old³⁵. This has different implications for workforce planning, support and development than countries with an older teacher workforce. Additionally, there will be demographic differences within a country's workforce, such as rural–urban divides, gender balance in general and by phase of education, and differences depending on local factors.

All of these challenges, and more, are context specific—for example in Gambia and Nigeria, the teacher workforce is expanding at a faster rate than the projected targets for 2030, whereas in Benin, Chad, Guinea, Mali and Niger, primary teacher numbers need to increase by more than 10% annually to meet the 2030 targets³⁶.

In other contexts, geography poses additional issues beyond numbers alone. For example, in some contexts there are challenges with teacher deployment which contributes to stark disparities in the quality of education between urban and rural schools.

Addressing these types of challenges requires strategic planning informed by data and evidence within each country.

There is significant variation in the nature of challenges faced in different contexts—are there common factors that have enabled some nations to make progress in addressing the challenges their particular context presents?

Placing data at the heart of strategic planning for the teacher workforce

How many teachers are needed next academic year?

How many teachers are expected to enter the system next year?

The effectiveness of workforce management in any sector is related to the quality of the data available to enable those managing the workforce to make timely and appropriate decisions.

Within the education sector, understanding the numbers and demographic details of the historic and current workforce will support decision-making on meeting aspirations for the future workforce.

Data can include, but is not limited, to the following.

- Teacher demographic information (age, gender, length of service, race, country of origin, qualifications)
 - Teacher attrition/retention
-

³⁵ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2019). **TALIS 2018 results (volume I): Teachers and school leaders as lifelong learners**. <https://doi.org/10.1787/1d0bc92a-en>

³⁶ International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 & UNESCO. (2024). **Global report on teachers: Addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession**. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000388832>



- The numbers entering the teaching workforce (in individual, and across all, routes)
- Qualitative information on teacher practice, e.g. observations, feedback, performance outcomes, student assessment outcomes

Percentage of male teachers (2022)		
Country	Primary education	Secondary education
Azerbaijan	6	23
Malaysia	29	32
Oman	30	31
Uzbekistan	8	33

Table 3: Percentage of male teachers by education level, by country as of 2022

Percentage of female teachers (2022)		
Country	Primary education	Secondary education
Bangladesh	64	27
Burkina Faso	49	18
Chad	20	9
Côte d'Ivoire	36	16
Morocco	62	39

Table 2: Percentage of female teachers by education level, by country as of 2022

A case study of the role of data is considering the number of female teachers in the system, given that female teachers support enrolment and outcomes of girls in education. Ensuring there are enough female teachers in the system, especially at secondary level, remains difficult for many countries³⁷(Table 2³⁸). This is compounded in some countries because girls are not progressing to secondary education. Not enough women entering teacher training means fewer female teachers, which then reduces the number of girls wanting to stay in education. Breaking this vicious cycle requires investment and strategic planning informed by data.

Similarly, data shows where female teachers dominate the profession and reinforces a perception that education is a profession for women, which affects how boys connect to education and to their teachers (Table 3).

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

38 UNESCO Institute for Statistics. **UIS statistics**. Retrieved July 2024, from <https://data.uis.unesco.org/>

How is data on the teacher workforce captured and analysed?

The data that can be collected can be vast and will likely require resources through a dedicated unit, staffed by data scientists who are specialized in educational statistical analysis. They will require a dedicated information system to support data capture and analysis.

A well-functioning information system is at the heart of effective planning and management. Without data and proper analysis and communication of this data, planning and management decisions may be misguided. The challenge is not only to collect relevant data, but also to analyse it and make sure that it is used for decision-making³⁹.

Ministries of education (or equivalent) need to have mechanisms for capturing, analysing and reporting on the data they deem important to collect. Attempting to carry out workforce planning without a clear understanding of the teacher workforce as it currently is, or what future projections indicate (provided through modelling and simulations), will undermine efforts to address issues and improve the quality of the workforce.

With analysed data informing workforce planning, the system then becomes about making a range of interventions that will support raising teacher quality.

These include developing flexible interventions to address context and time-specific challenges which can move on timescales shorter than the standard reform timescales for policy and practice. For example, where data identifies a particular issue, a targeted response is possible, such as running a recruitment campaign for teacher training focused on science specialists entering the workforce where the data shows there is a shortage of science specialists. The recruitment campaign would then adapt each year as the needs of system change

There are additional areas of the education system where data can provide an evidence base for larger-scale reform.

Enhancing the capacity and flexibility of initial teacher training

What routes are there for people to become a teacher?

In many countries, teacher qualifications are used as a proxy for quality. As a result, many countries seek to raise the number of teachers with appropriate qualifications to raise the quality of teachers. For example, between 2000 and 2023 Bangladesh went from 36.84% of lower secondary teachers having the minimum level of qualifications to 66.97% in 2022⁴⁰. However, comparing data across countries is difficult, as the minimum qualification levels vary across countries; therefore, large changes in the data could be accounted for by a change in the expectations set through policies and key documentation, such as changes to teacher standards.



Understanding how many teachers are currently qualified and what the capacity of the system is requires data insight. It also puts the onus on initial teacher education, where individuals study and complete a programme to gain a qualification that enables them to enter the teaching workforce. If significantly more teachers are needed in the system, then the capacity of initial teacher education will need to be expanded. If the current initial teacher education system does not have the capacity, change will be needed to meet the need. This kind of change needs to be done while ensuring initial teacher education provides teachers of the expected quality.

There are two common pathways for initial teacher education, where systems may support both or emphasize one.

- **Vocational**, where the trainee teachers develop within a school setting for the majority, or all, of their time
- **University-based with school placements**, which can include a Bachelor of Education, Masters of Education or teacher certification (for example, a Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching).

Additionally, student teachers can prepare for entering initial teacher education by doing placements in schools or working in a school in a non-teaching role. For prospective teachers who have a gap in their subject knowledge, which may be critical for secondary teachers, subject knowledge enhancement courses can be completed.

One way to rapidly improve teacher quality is to have all teachers go through an initial teacher education pathway before they enter the workforce full-time as a qualified teacher, assuming the teachers going through the pathway meet the expected standards at the end. However, as previous discussed, there are acute teacher shortages in many countries and requiring a qualification before entering the workforce will restrict addressing shortages by creating a bottleneck. As a result, introducing more capacity and/or flexibility into initial teacher education may support raising the quality of teachers while providing agility in responding to teacher shortages, both general and in specific subjects or school phases.

Options for introducing more capacity and/or flexibility can include:

- approving more providers of initial teacher education to increase the capacity, assuming the organizations and/or institutions seeking approval meet the criteria expected of being a provider
- enabling part-time options where it can take longer to gain a qualification but may increase the numbers entering the profession, especially those with significant home commitments
- agreeing a common standard for teachers with other countries and enabling easy migration of teachers across those countries so that would-be teachers can gain a qualification in one country and easily work in another. This opens systems up to easily recruiting teachers outside of the home population at the expected standard
- establishing fast track routes into teaching where, through a series of assessments and intensive micro-courses through a university-led vocational pathway, student teachers can become qualified to the expected standard in a shorter period of time
- enabling unqualified teachers to become teachers but on reduced pay and with a requirement to become qualified through a vocational pathway over a set period of time, for example three years.

Ensuring initial teacher education has the capacity and flexibility to meet teacher supply requirements requires planning and management. Effective planning and management will also ensure the right number of people go through initial teacher education.

Ensuring teacher development supports teachers in meeting expectations

Alongside building the capacity and flexibility of initial teacher education, we need to consider how student teachers are developed during their studies, to ensure that those entering the teacher workforce can be effective, and high quality, from the beginning of their career.

How does initial teacher education support quality teachers as well as address the number of teachers required?

All initial teacher education pathways need to align to the expectations of teachers and teaching. It is vital that the standards expected from student teachers, and what they learn on their chosen pathway, are aligned to the national expectations. Misalignment between initial teacher education and the system expectations of a teacher will limit how prepared teachers are to work within the system⁴¹. This means national teacher standards should be informing programmes which are designed and developed by specialists in teacher education.

Alongside alignment to national expectations, there is also a need to reform initial teacher education in response to changes in other parts of the system to maintain coherence. Initial teacher education programmes need to be purposefully designed and adaptable to the changing needs of the system. The following two scenarios demonstrate possible instances where changes in initial teacher education are required.

Scenario 1: The curriculum is updated but initial teacher education is not immediately updated.

Any teacher entering the system from initial teacher education will not be familiar with the new curriculum expectations. This means additional resources are needed to train them on the new curriculum expectations, despite being recently awarded a teaching qualification. There is the heightened risk of newly qualified teachers using pedagogies they were trained on during initial teacher education which are now undesirable in the new curriculum.

Scenario 2: Initial teacher education aligns to best international practice, which is not embedded in the wider system.

Any teacher entering the system will be attempting to use pedagogies which are not in line with system expectations. If school leaders, other teachers, parents or other system actors resist the approaches the teacher is attempting to use, tension will be created. This may result in the new teacher adapting to the system and replacing the pedagogies they were trained in for the predominant pedagogies, even if the predominant pedagogies are not effective. Alternatively, it may result in the new teacher not being able to resolve the tension resulting in them leaving the system and contributing to the teacher attrition rate.

What support do in-service teachers require, and receive, in order to improve?

These scenarios also affect practising, in-service teachers who will have their own development needs based on their strengths and areas for improvement within their knowledge, understanding and



competencies and in responding to system change. Additionally, a minimum level of qualification does not confirm that the qualifications are appropriate or support being an effective teacher. Qualifications can be indicative of a standard but not a guarantee. This means in-service teachers may require significant support to be classed as quality teachers even if they hold a qualification.

This situation can be heightened as, to address shortages of teachers, countries have been recruiting people below the minimum qualification requirement⁴². As a result, in some countries, there are significant populations of unqualified teachers (Table 4)⁴³.

Percentage of teachers with minimum required qualifications (2022)		
Country	Primary education	Secondary education
Bangladesh	74	64
Lebanon	35	[No data]
Malaysia	88	83
Senegal	72	73

Table 4: Percentage of teachers with the minimum required qualifications

For teachers, regardless of status as qualified or unqualified, there can be a lack of opportunity to develop due to teaching commitments or a lack of professional development provision.

This means multiple options for teacher development are needed to address the different needs of teachers in the system.

Unqualified teachers, for example, may require additional coaching, mentoring and out-of-school development opportunities compared to qualified teachers.

Each teacher development option will require planning, design and development by a dedicated team of teacher education professionals who understand the wider system and can ensure all options collectively meet the needs of teachers in reaching the expected standard.

When designing the options, there are various models available. Some of the models available to countries in developing their teachers are detailed in Table 5. Each model has benefits and limitations depending on the purpose of the development.

The IB has a dedicated team, who are specialists in teacher professional development design, development and implementation, to provide professional development opportunities to the IB community.⁴⁴ This includes the IB Exchange, an online platform for educators to engage and learn from one another.⁴⁵

42 Stromquist, N. (2018). **The global status of teachers and the teaching profession.**

Education International. <https://www.ei-ie.org/en/item/25722:the-global-status-of-teachers-and-the-teaching-profession>

43 United Nations. **SDG indicators database.** Retrieved July 2024, from <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database>

44 International Baccalaureate Organization. (n.d.). **Professional Development.** <https://www.ibo.org/professional-development/>

45 International Baccalaureate Organization. (2024, March 11). **Discover IB Exchange.** <https://www.ibo.org/professional-development/discover-ib-exchange/>

Digital technology is starting to change the models available, producing variants which add benefits and/or remove limitations. For example, micro-credentials can be a form of self-study which provide more structure and remove the limitations of teacher-directed self-study.

The IB micro-credentials are a digital first approach to develop and recognize teachers' capabilities honouring both experience and professional learning. This recognition is grounded in observable capabilities supported by evidence and is a transition from time-based to evidence-based professional learning.⁴⁶

Digital teacher development can also increase access to professional development, especially in rural communities⁴⁷ and during periods of crises and emergencies, such as during the COVID-19 global pandemic when many countries restricted in-person activity and teacher development was provided remotely. Additionally, digital teacher development does not mean the use of high-speed internet with continuous connectivity; it can also relate to the use of sporadic connectivity via mobile devices⁴⁸. Digital teacher development can therefore support improving the resilience of systems enabling teachers, including those historically difficult to reach, to be developed despite barriers to in-person engagement in events.

In Jordan, UNICEF have supported the Ministry of Education in providing a programme, Learning bridges in Jordan, to recover and accelerate learning following the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This programme includes digital teacher development and online materials to reach all teachers effectively.⁴⁹ In Lebanon there is a mobile-enabled teacher development programme focused on developing the English language skills of refugee teachers who are educating Syrian children. This programme uses a range of technologies, accessible on many devices, including Zoom, WhatsApp and Padlet.⁵⁰

Implementation of teacher development programmes, involving the various models, is dependent on mentors, coaches and leaders who are highly skilled in adult learning. Such an approach will support teacher engagement in the programmes leading to more capable, confident and collaborative teachers who will then share and create new practices, within their settings. Student outcomes will be affected as confident teachers who are knowledgeable and skilled will build stronger relationships with their students, and engender high levels of trust within the broader school community, including parents.

46 International Baccalaureate Organization. (2023, September 20). *Micro-credentials*. <https://www.ibo.org/professional-development/micro-credentials/>

47 Brughna, M., Cao, L., D'Angelo, S., Hennessy, S., McIntyre, N., Koomar, S., Kreimeia, A., McIntyre, N., & Zubairi, A. (2002). Technology use for teacher professional development in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review. *Computers and Education Open*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeo.2022.100080>

48 Power, T., & Sankale, J. (2007, 18–20 April). *In the palm of your hand: supporting rural teacher professional development and practice through the use of mobile phones and other handheld digital devices* [Conference presentation]. Meraka Innovate Conference, Meraka Institute, Pretoria, South Africa.

49 United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). (n.d.). *Learning Bridges*. <https://www.unicef.org/jordan/education/learning-bridges>

50 UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. (2022). *From radio to artificial intelligence: Review of innovative technology in literacy and education for refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons*. UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000382627>



The IB has an IB Educator Network (IBEN) which comprises approximately 45,000 members and is ever growing. The implementation of IB professional development and school services depends on a diverse and active community of educators, who are passionate about the IB's mission to ensure high quality international education. IBEN enables the IB to have the capability and capacity to support our community, increase the reach of the IB and maintain the quality of the IB⁵¹.

Model	Benefits	Limitations
<p>Cascade</p> <p>A small group is developed (e.g. master trainers) to provide instruction/ support to another group (e.g. lead teachers) who subsequently support another group (e.g. teachers within a school).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective for disseminating information to large groups quickly. • Content is centrally determined. • Provided by specialists/trained teachers. • Can be centrally managed making it logically easier to provide and relatively cheaper than other models. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transmission loss between the layers of the cascade. • Can be rigid and not account for participant needs or adapt to contexts. • Set schedule of provision which teachers and schools have to plan around. • Limited impact on pedagogical change as it is not often sustained.
<p>Community of Practice</p> <p>Where an institution (school, college, higher education institute, community centre) acts as a hub, a community of practice, which supports schools and teachers within the locality on an on-going basis according to local needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective for sustained professional development focused on pedagogical change over time. • Content is managed by the hub and can be adapted for local needs. • Led by hub leaders who would be highly skilled providing an additional career pathway for teachers and ensuring high quality professional development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each hub has a limited reach to be effective, so for large-scale use, a significant number of hubs are needed. • Maintaining consistency between hubs can be challenging. • Hub leaders require ongoing training and support. • Requires dedicated resource in the hub to manage can be relatively expensive than other models.
<p>School</p> <p>Individual schools identify their own needs and independently support teachers within their school in developing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional learning can be tailored to school needs. • School ownership can improve engagement in the professional learner. • Can be easily sustained or followed up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires effective school leadership teams to lead and manage. • Harder to direct for any centrally required professional learning. • Requires resource within schools to manage reducing resource for other activities.
<p>Peer</p> <p>Teachers work together within peer groups (in person or remote) to develop and change practices. This can involve peer observation of classroom learning and teaching.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers may consider it safer to discuss pedagogies, especially new pedagogy, with peers and try new approaches. • Supports discussions between peers (within or across schools) on effective practice supporting reflection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harder to direct for any centrally required professional learning. • Can result in closed loops of pedagogical practice. • Requires teachers to spend time with peers, including during teaching time for observations. • Requires the support of school leadership.
<p>Self-study</p> <p>Teachers independently self-study to develop their practices. This could be through individual reading, reflection and attending events (in person or remote).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers can align their development to their needs and/or interests, improving engagement. • Teachers can flex the time spent on professional learning depending on other demands of their time, e.g. lesson planning, assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harder to direct for any centrally required professional learning. • The quality is dependent on what the teacher locates, which risks teachers learning about poor practice (unless they are provided a platform with checked/ approved materials on). • Application of new pedagogies may be unobserved or monitored.

Table 5: Overview of common models for teacher professional development

51 International Baccalaureate Organization. (2023, July 4). *The IB educator network*. <https://www.ibo.org/jobs-and-careers/ib-educator-network/>

When considering improving teacher quality, rather than the quick dissemination of information such as a curriculum change, there is growing evidence that what improves teacher practice is ongoing, sustainable engagement and support, where concepts and principles are reinforced over time rather than short-term exposure through limited one-off events⁵². For systems looking to improve teacher quality, the focus therefore needs to be on school-based support such as mentoring, peer support, and creating communities of practices (in-person, virtual or hybrid) such as local hubs or teacher learning groups.

In Oman, the Ministry of Education has supported the establishment of professional learning communities in basic and post-basic schools. These communities are designed to support collaboration within and across schools and develop teachers sustainably over time to improve teacher quality⁵³.

Similar to initial teacher education, in-service teacher development needs to be planned and managed to ensure the most appropriate approach to professional development is used, that it meets the needs of the teachers, aligns to expectations, and can reach the required numbers of teachers.

Recognizing the impact of effective school leaders on teachers

The most effective teacher development can be linked to school-based support through mentoring and coaching, with schools acting as hubs communities of practices. School leadership plays a critical role in providing and managing these teacher development opportunities.

In 2008 the OECD report *Improving School Leadership* identified the roles school leaders have in supporting, evaluating and developing teacher quality. It stated: “Effective school leadership is essential to improve the efficiency and equity of schooling.”⁵⁴. Since 2008, additional reports and research have added to the case that school leadership is second only to classroom teachers in terms of its impact on students⁵⁵ and that school leaders, when acting as pedagogical leaders, have a vital role in developing the teachers in their schools⁵⁶.

How do school leaders support improving teacher quality?

How are school leaders developed as pedagogical leaders?

Additionally, in recognition of the role of school leaders *The Global Education Monitoring Report 2024/2025* is themed around leadership and has placed leadership at the heart of a framework of education quality⁵⁷.

52 Darling-Hammond, L., Hyster, M. E. & Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective Teacher Professional Development*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/122.311>

53 Al-Shammakhi, K. & Al-Yahmadi, H. (2021). Professional learning communities in basic and post-basic schools in Muscat, Oman: The need for time and supported leadership. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 9(4).

54 Moorman, H., Nusche, D. & Pont, B. (2008). *Improving school leadership, volume 1: Policies and practice*. OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264044715-en>

55 Day, C., Harris, A., Hopkins, D., Leithwood, K. & Sammons, P. (2006). *Seven strong claims about successful school leadership*. National College for School Leadership [UK].

56 International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 & UNESCO. (2024). *Global report on teachers: Addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000388832>

57 Global Education Monitoring Report Team. (2023). *Concept note for the 2024/5 global education monitoring report*. UNESCO. <https://doi.org/10.54676/SUOE3951>



For school leadership to realize its function within the system, it is increasingly important that governments recognize the role of school leadership beyond administrative management of a school, considering them to be pedagogical leaders who realize the vision of education set within policy. In some systems, school leaders are impeded from becoming pedagogical leaders due to over-centralization of the education system and a lack of autonomy, and accountability, over learning and teaching⁵⁸. This is especially pronounced where systems are heavily focused on compliance models driven by progression through curriculum content or based on summative assessment outcomes.

If teacher quality is to be improved, and be sustained, school leaders need to be supporting teacher development: creating a culture of lifelong learning within the school community, providing time and space for collaboration, discussion and development, instigating formal professional development opportunities, and directing pedagogical practice aligned with national standards⁵⁹. This means investing in school leaders, recognizing their role, and supporting and developing them so that they can support teachers in their schools and improve teacher quality.

Additionally, consideration of where school leaders come from, how they are recruited and under what criteria, is also an important area for reform. In some systems, school leaders are appointed based on length of service and their ability to manage a school administratively. If teacher quality is going to improve, supported by school leaders who are also pedagogical leaders, the criteria for school leaders and the recruitment process may need to be reviewed and revised in line with the evolving expectations of the system.

Improving teacher quality also means improving school leader quality.

The IB has Programme standards and practices which set out explicit standards relating to school pedagogical leadership⁶⁰. To support school leaders such as IB coordinators in meeting those expectations and being effective in the role, the IB provides a range of leadership-focused professional development workshops. Themes of the workshops⁶¹ include ***Leading an IB education, Leading and managing teams and Leading mission, vision and strategy***. School leaders also benefit from a cycle of IB Global Conferences, and a dedicated Heads World Conference, where they can come together as a community, share practices and discuss learning and teaching⁶².

Strengthening and connecting career progression pathways for teachers

Understanding how teachers progress into school leadership, and what wider career options are available for teachers, then becomes an essential area of work for strategic workforce planning and development.

58 Mincu, M. (2022). Why is school leadership key to transforming education? Structural and cultural assumptions for quality education in diverse contexts. *Prospects*, 52 (3–4), 231–242. DOI: 10.1007/s11125-022-09625-6

59 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2019). *TALIS 2018 results (volume I): Teachers and school leaders as lifelong learners*. <https://doi.org/10.1787/1d0bc92a-en>

60 International Baccalaureate Organization. (2018, updated 2022). *Programme standards and practices*. https://resources.ibo.org/ib/psp/Standards-and-Practices/works/edu_11162-51685?

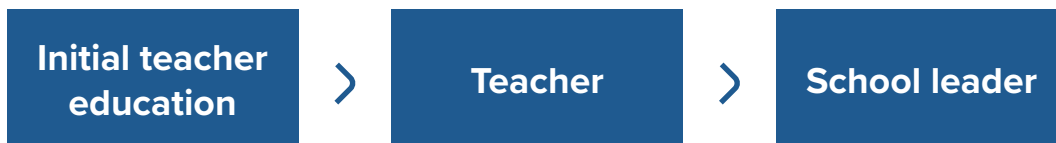
61 International Baccalaureate Organization. (n.d.). *Find professional development workshops*. <https://www.ibo.org/professional-development/find-events-and-workshops/>

62 International Baccalaureate Organization. (n.d.). *Educator conferences*. <https://www.ibo.org/professional-development/conferences/>

What career pathways are available to teachers?

Clear pathways for teacher progression within the education sector can increase career satisfaction for teachers and increase the status of teaching as a career, thus having an impact on teacher retention. Additionally, having career focused development routes will support teacher improvement and specialization leading to higher quality teachers and greater impact.

The simplest career pathway for a teacher is as follows.



However, this pathway can be limiting. Some teachers have no desire to progress into school leadership but prefer to become specialists in teaching alone: what pathway is available for them?

Education policy in Gambia includes a strong focus on establishing meaningful career pathways, linking performance and training with progression towards expert status and/or school leadership. For example, the Gambian Education Sector Strategic Plan 2016–2030 includes the development of professional standards for teachers and school leaders which includes clear career pathways under “Quality and Relevance”. These draft standards, and the associated career pathway, were developed in 2020⁶³.

There is also more depth within what being a teacher is than the pathway indicates. For example, early-career teacher, pastoral leader, subject leader and pedagogical support roles are required at the school level, along with professional development designers and developers, assessment managers, curriculum specialists, education policy advisors and other middle-tier roles, all of which could benefit from having a teacher in post.

The workforce at the middle tier typically comprises the professionals responsible for planning, management and pedagogical support functions. Although middle-tier professionals are traditionally located in decentralized offices, they include school professionals who offer leadership and support beyond their own schools⁶⁴.

Having clear pathways through to school leadership roles and middle-tier roles (e.g. school supervisors, district education officers, school improvement officers) also helps to secure a strong pipeline of staff with appropriate skills and expertise to fill these roles.

This requires conceptualizing a series of pathways culminating in a more complex web of options depending on skills, knowledge, understanding, and additional in-service qualifications and/or courses teachers can complete in pursuit of a specific pathway. This could be included in a planned catalogue of teacher development opportunities, for example.

63 Hungi, N., Kah, E. D., Nwokeocha, S. & Wodon, Q. (2023). *Republic of The Gambia: Situation analysis of the national framework of professional standards and competencies for teachers and school leaders*. UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000387275>

64 Education Development Trust & International Institute for Educational Planning. (2023). *Leading teaching and learning together: The role of the middle tier. What is the middle tier and why is it important for improved learning?*. UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385538>



Importantly, systems establishing more explicitly the career pathways available to teachers as part of workforce planning will support retaining high quality teachers within the wider education system, if not in the classroom: that is, assuming that roles within career pathways are appointed based on skills, experience and suitability for the role, regardless of length of service. A meritocratic system of career progression will make teaching a more attractive career.

Within the IB, educators can take on a number of roles as part of the IBEN⁶⁵. These roles present additional pathways and career choices available to teachers, with many having parallels in national education systems. Some of the roles available to IBEN members include:

- consultants who provide support and mentoring to candidate schools
- content developers who are subject experts designing and developing professional development programmes in collaboration with the IB Professional Learning departments
- examination site inspectors who check on the implementation of examination protocols by IB World Schools
- online professional development (PD) mentors who provide one-to-one mentoring for IB teachers enrolled in a dedicated support programme. These mentors have been specifically trained in online mentoring
- the school visit team lead, who leads the team during programme verification and evaluation visits.

There are over 60 roles available to educators, providing multiple career opportunities and pathways to teachers and school leaders.

65 International Baccalaureate Organization. (2023, June 6). *IBEN roles*.
<https://www.ibo.org/jobs-and-careers/ib-educator-network/iben-roles/>

Possible future developments

Depending on the current work taking place in the system and country-specific factors, some or all of the following options for developing this thematic area may be applicable.

1. Set up an education workforce planning and management unit

An education workforce planning unit would be responsible for the collection and analysis of data, and broader information such as qualitative feedback, relating to the teacher workforce. This includes data and information relating to teacher recruitment, initial teacher education pathways, teacher retention, teacher development and more. The unit will also be responsible for coordinating other parts of the system in light of the data gathered, making recommendations and ensuring that decisions made that affect the workforce are evidence-informed and have been appropriately scoped. The unit can therefore act as part of system governance, ensuring silos of activities do not occur which limit the planning and management of the teacher workforce, or that disparate interventions conflict with each other. Finally, the unit can use the understanding gained from data to design teacher career pathways which support the aspirations of the system.

2. Reform initial teacher education to improve capacity and flexibility

Adding additional capacity and flexibility into initial teacher education will support addressing teacher shortage issues while ensuring all teachers entering the system gain a qualification. This can include introducing new routes into teaching and supporting unqualified teachers in gaining a qualification over time. This is in addition to refocusing initial teacher education on developing the competencies and practices teachers need and which are fully aligned to the expectations of teachers: for example, aligning pathways to teacher standards.

3. Evaluate the approach to teacher professional development

Evaluating how teacher professional development is designed, developed and provided will lead to country-specific actions that will support improving teacher professional development in all aspects. For example, if there is an over-reliance on a specific model of professional development, additional models should be explored, designed, developed and provided. If professional development is not having an impact, then understanding why can lead to improved design and/or improved content (assuming those are the areas preventing impact).

4. Establish an Islamic World Teacher Exchange Programme

Through cooperation between ministries, an Islamic World Teacher Exchange Programme can be developed to enable teachers to teach in other countries across the Islamic World. This will provide the visiting teacher with valuable experience and perspective that will improve their own practices, while also providing the host country with teachers who bring different approaches, attitudes and practices to education, supporting the school communities the teachers interact with.

5. Invest in school leadership

To ensure school leadership can take on the role of pedagogical leadership investment in school leaders will be needed. This can include:

- clarity on the role of schools leaders, for example having dedicated expectations and standards that apply to school leaders
- dedicated networks, forums and professional development for school leaders
- clear pathways on how teachers become school leaders linked to understanding, knowledge and skills of teaching and learning.



Thematic area 3: Elevating the teaching profession

Is teaching an attractive profession?

Which of your learners aspire to be teachers?

The status and perception of the teaching profession can have a significant impact on the quality of teaching. Not only does it impact on qualified teacher retention, it influences the academic standard of the students that aspire to be teachers and apply for teacher training⁶⁶. To have a sustainable pipeline for high-quality teachers requires recruiting people into teaching who are more likely to meet expectations. This in turn requires initial teacher education programmes and the profession to be attractive in comparison to opportunities in other sectors, making it a viable career for people to enter.

A number of countries have made significant progress in improving the status of teaching as a career option-what are some common considerations in these reforms?

Addressing teachers' economic status

OECD analysis has shown how the economic status of teachers, including pay, job flexibility, job security and other conditions for employment, can vary across countries. This has highlighted how these terms and conditions affect the attractiveness, and status, of the teaching profession⁶⁷. The terms and conditions teachers are employed under indicate the value that systems place on their role and the expectations of teachers. This matters because how teachers are recognized by the system will impact teacher behaviour and indicate if the system values quality teaching or other factors.

For example, in the context of teacher shortages, countries are hiring contract teachers into their systems. This risks producing a two-tier system where contract staff have less desirable terms compared to other teachers, or other professionals employed by the system⁶⁸. It also creates instability for potentially large numbers of teachers within the workforce, resulting in increased turnover of staff. This then reduces system-wide teacher quality: those who are in the system temporarily are less likely to engage with development and less likely to want to meet the expected standards.

If the workforce is highly unstable with large turnover due to terms and conditions, e.g. contractual arrangements, then providing extensive professional development will not have a sustained impact within the system. Those trained today may not be in the system in the coming months or years, requiring the professional development to be repeated. Not only does this minimize teacher quality within the system but it also creates a high ongoing cost in constantly needing to provide professional development.

66 Park, H. & Byun, S. (2015). Why some countries attract more high-ability young students to teaching: Cross-national comparisons of students' expectation of becoming a teacher. *Comparative Education Review*, 59 (3), 523–549. <https://doi.org/10.1086/681930>

67 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2005). Teachers matter: Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers. OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/19901496>

68 International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 & UNESCO. (2024). Global report on teachers: Addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession. UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000388832>

Is teacher pay comparable to professions of a comparable skill level?

Pay for temporary contract and permanent teachers in particular can be an ongoing concern. In some countries teacher salaries are low in comparison to professions requiring similar qualifications or skills sets. This drives a perception that teaching is of lower status than comparable career pathways and contributes to low recruitment rates and high attrition rates⁶⁹. If teacher pay is low, there is the additional risk that teachers will seek to supplement their pay through other employment, if permissible, including providing private tuition. This may create a conflict of interests or reduce the time teachers spend on their core role.

If systems are to consider improving teacher quality, understanding how teachers perceive their terms and conditions, and identifying if existing terms and conditions are driving behaviours (whether beneficial or adverse), will be key.

If systems consider addressing teacher economic status by reforming teacher terms and conditions, in particular pay, then there are a range of options available. The best options will depend on the context of the country. Some systems tie improved conditions to meeting standards or specific expectations, such as participating in professional development and/or taking on additional levels of responsibility: for example, becoming subject leaders or taking on a pastoral role. Other systems prioritize blanket improvements for teachers that recognize existing teachers, while also improving the attractiveness of the profession. There are also other incentives which are rewards for teachers not linked to promotion or career progression, such as student outcomes, although such incentives may drive practices opposed to the expectations.

In Uzbekistan, the government introduced a variety of “monetary incentive schemes” to recognize high-performing teachers. The one-off bonus payments can be awarded for student performance in national or international subject Olympiads, school performance in the national rankings, high results in performance appraisals, or involvement in research⁷⁰.

Raising the social status of teachers

Alongside the economic status of teachers is their social status. This is largely determined by the value countries place on teaching and how stakeholders, such as the government, school communities, parents and the media, set the status of teachers through their remarks and actions regarding the profession.

How teachers are talked about and engaged with by leaders in the system, by the media, by their local community, and by parents, will form and set perceptions of teachers. This can vary dramatically across countries but also within countries. While there are countries who hold teaching as a profession in high regard, equally there are countries where teaching is seen as a poor career path with little status⁷¹.

69 International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 & UNESCO. (2024). Global report on teachers: Addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession. UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000388832>

70 Odilov, A. (2023). Teacher career structure reforms in Uzbekistan: The current challenges and lessons learned from top-performing education systems. *Science and Innovation International Scientific Journal*, 2 (6) 30–47. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8021478>

71 Varkey Foundation. (n.d.). *Global Teacher Status Index 2018*. <https://www.varkeyfoundation.org/what-we-do/research/global-teacher-status-index-2018/>



What value does teaching have in society? How are teachers viewed?

How society as a whole views teachers affects not only teachers but all stakeholders in the system, by creating feedback loops. For example, if a school or a teacher has a poor reputation this will drive parental views and risks becoming entrenched, regardless of the changes a school brings in to improve individual teachers or its broader education provision.

If all sources, including the media, discuss teachers in negative ways then those views can become entrenched, including within the profession itself, reducing the professional status of teachers, leading to demotivation and reduced well-being. Discussing teachers positively in general, will promote the profession and show recognition and support. This is why since 1994, International World Teachers' Day has been celebrated annually on 5th October, marking the anniversary of the adoption of the 1966 ILO/UNESCO recommendation concerning the status of teachers.

Positive societal recognition and valuing teachers will make the profession more attractive and support people entering it. They are then more likely to meet the expectations of the profession, enabling them to be classified as quality teachers earlier in their career.

Improving the social status of teachers can only be done through reforms which directly address the negative perspectives about teachers and teaching. Some options include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Improving the status of initial teacher education indicates that teaching is also a high-status profession. This will support more people in considering teaching as a career and they will also be more likely to meet expectations. This can be fostered through quality tutoring, recognition that teacher education programmes have value to society, and through increasing entry requirements for the initial teacher education programme. Taken together, these will give the impression that the profession has a clear set of standards, raising confidence in society that teachers are highly knowledgeable and skilled.

Kazakhstan's efforts to improve the status of teachers—including increasing their salaries—has led to a higher number of applications overall for the profession, and a higher proportion of the highest-achieving learners aspiring to be teachers and applying for teacher training. This has enabled entry requirements for teaching courses to be raised, such that competition for places has driven up the academic standards of students training to be teachers⁷².

- Increasing awareness of teacher standards and the career pathways teachers can take. This will give confidence to society, in particular to parents, about their expectations regarding teachers and how teachers can continue to develop into specialized roles based on merit.
- Demonstrate trust and value in teachers' professional judgements. Consider how teachers are thought of as professionals by the system, and whether they have the space to apply their professional judgements. If teachers are directed rather than trusted by those who are not in the classroom, it can disempower them and reinforce a situation where teachers have little to no autonomy. This in turn devalues their role in society. Why develop their ability to teach if they do not have the freedom and trust to teach as they professionally think is appropriate? Engaging with

72 Nurymbetov, Y. (2022). Recruiting the high-achieving graduates to the teaching profession. The case of Kazakhstan. *Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny*, 3, 53–73. <https://doi.org/10.31338/2657-6007.kp.2022-2.10>

and supporting teachers as highly-valued professionals who undertake a vital public service will elevate the social status of the profession. This can mean involving them more in system planning, decision-making and guiding how the education system operates, and being open and transparent about the involvement of teachers.

- Through communications directly addressing any bias or cross-cutting issues that are directly relevant to teachers. An advocacy campaign to do so can be impactful while also acting as a teacher recruitment campaign.
- As discussed in the “Teacher development and strategic planning” section of this paper, strengthening career pathways for teachers will attract ambitious and highly able people into teaching, positively impacting retention and driving self-interest in self-development, in pursuit of a chosen pathway. This creates a workforce that is more able and which, once recognized, will improve the social status of teachers.

A major consideration is how the professional status of teachers is intertwined with the cultural and societal norms of where they are teaching. To improve teacher quality in a system may require challenging these norms: but this may itself be challenging, given that issues and perspectives around teachers can be entrenched.

If the economic status and social status of teachers can be elevated and account for the unique context of each context, then improved teacher quality will follow as increasing numbers of people enter teaching.



Possible future developments

Depending on the current work in the system and country-specific factors, some or all of the following options for developing this thematic area may be applicable.

1. Improve advocacy on the role and value of teachers

Improving advocacy for teachers and promoting their value, through more news stories involving successful teachers, participation in international, regional and locally recognized events, activities related to the status of teachers, and case studies of effective teachers.

This can be supported by a communications plan advocating teachers; the plan is maintained and altered as necessary to remain relevant to trends and events in education and wider society.

2. Involve teachers in system planning and decision-making

To improve the recognition of teachers and their value—thus elevating their professional status—consider involving teachers in system level planning and decision-making across all aspects of education. For example, teachers could sit on examination boards and be given a role in assessment governance; teachers can also be the editors and reviewers of textbooks and be involved in curriculum design.

Teachers will likely need support to participate in such roles. Release teachers from their teaching to participate in meetings, altering meetings and projects to accommodate teacher involvement and providing capacity development programmes to teachers in these and other roles.

3. Independently review teacher pay and conditions

To ensure impartiality, an independent panel can be created to review teacher pay and conditions and identify country-specific recommendations about how these can be altered to better recognize the value of teachers and to elevate the professional status of teachers. The panel can consider under what conditions teachers are awarded salary increases and bonuses (or their equivalent).

4. Align teacher pay to comparable professions

As a minimum, public sector teachers' pay should be aligned to comparable professions of a similar qualifications and skills level, as well as to teachers in the private sector. Where teacher migration numbers are high, teacher pay can be compared to other countries or to other local areas. This will help to discourage teachers moving to a neighbouring country to teach, or situations where there are low local teacher numbers in specific locations or where teacher recruitment is difficult. It will also address perceptions that teaching is a low-status profession. Once equity is achieved, then the alignment of public sector teacher pay with other sectors should be monitored to ensure it does not regress in the future.

Thematic area 4: Teacher well-being and support systems

To what extent does teacher well-being influence the quality of teaching and learning in your context?

Teacher well-being has a significant impact on the quality of learning and teaching. The IB's own recent research on teacher well-being⁷³ highlights how low teacher well-being can negatively impact teacher effectiveness and thus, in systems where teacher well-being is a concern, reduce teacher quality. Teachers who suffer from low well-being are less likely to be quality teachers and this can negatively affect student outcomes⁷⁴.

“The widespread issue of low teacher well-being and mental health globally is having detrimental effects on schools. This not only exacerbates the shortages of teachers, but it also negatively impacts teachers’ effectiveness in their roles as educators, and on the students they teach”

Well-being for schoolteachers (Report No. 2), International Baccalaureate Organization.

Teacher well-being is of particular importance when teachers are dealing with local, regional, national or global crises and emergencies. For example, anxiety in students linked to the climate emergency is something teachers are increasingly being guided in supporting⁷⁵, while teachers themselves may be managing their own climate anxiety silently. Additionally, teachers who are dealing with education in emergency contexts, such as working in countries in conflict, are having to deal not only with their teaching responsibilities, but also potentially supporting students through loss, and while also having to manage their own losses: so much so that this may even require dedicated support⁷⁶. For example, many teachers witnessed and experienced first-hand during the COVID-19 global pandemic the strain of moving to new digital-first practices while supporting students through an unprecedented crisis.

What influences teacher well-being?

The “environment” a teacher works in directly affects their physical, mental and emotional well-being and is often reduced to that of the physical school building: which belies the complexity of the full environment they face. The environment a teacher works in can be broadly broken down into the following types.

- **The physical environment:** the school facilities (secure outdoor learning environments, lunch facilities, toilet facilities, etc.), the classroom (desks, wall displays, upkeep), the resources a teacher has available (computers, books, pens), light, noise and others.
- **The social environment:** Teaching is a social act involving a range of people with sometimes strong emotions in play. This can create charged environments for teachers to work within while managing their own emotions. Teachers will support colleagues, including school leaders, parents

73 Taylor, L., Zhou, W., Boyle, L., Funk, S. & De Neve, J-E. (2024). *Well-being for Schoolteachers (Report No. 2)*. International Baccalaureate Organization. <https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/new-structure/research/pdfs/wellbeing-for-schoolteachers-final-report.pdf>

74 Glazzard, J. & Rose, A. (2019). The impact of teacher well-being and mental health on pupil progress in primary schools. *Journal of Public Mental Health*, 19(4), 349–375. DOI: 10.1108/JPMH-02-2019-0023

75 Office for Climate Education. (2024, April 19). *Teachers, how can you address your students’ eco-anxiety?*. <https://www.oce.global/en/news/teachers-how-can-you-address-your-students-eco-anxiety>

76 Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies. (2021, October 14). *Teacher wellbeing in crisis contexts - sharing good practice, lessons learned and opportunities for change* [Webinar]. <https://inee.org/resources/teacher-wellbeing-crisis-contexts-sharing-good-practice-lessons-learned-and-opportunities>



and carers and learners, all of whom have lives outside of school. This will affect how they engage in discussions and, in the case of learners, how teachers engage with learning.

- **The cultural environment:** The culture of a school, led by school leadership, can dramatically affect how teachers behave and teach. If there is a culture of openness, trying new pedagogies and development, the school will feel very different compared to one that is directed, with no room for change and where assessment outcomes determine success. There is no right or wrong culture. The best culture is the one that works for the school, and those in it, to ensure success as expected within the expectations of the system.
- **The political environment:** Teachers can often feel at the whim of the political environment, at local, regional or national levels. If there is instability because of political change or because of high levels of reform (leading to reform fatigue), this can lead to disengagement and adversely affect learning and teaching. The political environment also has a role in how teachers are perceived in society. If teachers as a workforce are framed negatively by system leaders, this will create an adverse teaching environment. Political bias may also directly affect the direction the system is oriented towards: for example, specific pedagogies or approaches to education that may conflict with previous expectations about teachers and teaching, or with what research considers to be effective practice.

Increasingly, there is also the digital environment to consider. This includes the use of digital resources in the classroom, and how comfortable teachers feel about their use. It also includes the role of social media, where parents, students and wider society can openly discuss education and teachers. This is sometimes done with bias, due to lack of understanding about teaching and where opinions are being stated as facts. All of this can have a negative impact on teachers' well-being. Additionally, the role of teachers in a digital world and what this means for the profession can introduce anxiety and uncertainty: for example, questions around the impact of artificial intelligence on the future of teaching. Digital education promises much, but can also feel threatening and represent such a seismic change, that it requires a systemic approach to support teachers through such changes.

Well-being, or lack of it, is therefore an outcome of many factors. There is data linking well-being to teacher clarity on their roles, teacher workload, pay and conditions of service, provision of professional development and how teachers are monitored. Elements of teacher well-being, with related data sources, are considered as part of the IB's Teacher Well-being Framework (fig. 2).



Fig. 2 The IB Teacher Well-being Framework

The number and nature of the elements influencing teacher well-being are complex and highly individual. What will be acceptable to one teacher will negatively impact the well-being of another teacher. As a result, qualitative data, such as teacher voice, needs to supplement, or be more valued than, quantitative data.

How can teacher well-being be understood?

Monitoring teacher well-being: Data collection and analysis

Despite the importance of teacher well-being, it has not always been a consideration in data collection or education programme design, such as initial teacher education programmes. Traditionally, teacher well-being is also not included in the indicators of education systems' performances. However, this is now changing within countries and through international studies such as the International Barometer of the Health and Well-being of Education Personnel, which in their 2023 report included two ICESCO member states (Morocco and Cameroon)⁷⁷.

As teacher well-being becomes an increasingly recognized factor in enabling high quality learning and teaching, additional frameworks and approaches for monitoring it are emerging to provide an evidence base for supporting change. All countries should consider how they want to monitor teacher well-being: what elements to monitor, how regularly to monitor and what data sources are appropriate.

Right to Play's ***Teacher Psychosocial Health and Well-being in Schools: Self-Completion Questionnaire*** measured how COVID-19 affected teachers' lives and well-being. It was designed to enable Right to Play to generate insights into the additional support systems and resources teachers needed as they continued to teach during COVID-19.⁷⁸

Save the Children's TPD Approach, Teacher Well-being and Motivation Tool, adapted from the Teacher Motivation Diagnostic Tool, features a one-to-one interview intended to generate data on the critical factors affecting teacher well-being and motivation.⁷⁹

Supporting teacher well-being

All education systems will have teachers who report low well-being or issues with their well-being. While monitoring and analysis can help countries to understand the scale and specific areas of concern, these activities alone will not support teachers. The data gathered from monitoring teacher well-being must be used to inform interventions and actions to support teachers.

What well-being support is there for teachers?

77 Billaudeau, N., Hawa, F., Lopo, A.-A., Richard, M. & Vercambre-Jacquot, M.-N. (2023). ***International Barometer of Education Staff International Report***. Education and Solidarity Network and Fondation d'entreprise pour la santé publique. https://www.educationsolidarite.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/IBEST23-International_Report_2023_EN.pdf

78 Right to Play. (2020). ***Teacher psychosocial health and wellbeing in schools: Self-completion questionnaire***. https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https3%A2%F2%Finee.org2%Fsites2%Fdefault2%Ffiles2%Fresources2%FRi ght2520%to2520%Play25%2520%E2520%2593%2580%2Teacher2520%Psychosocial2520%Health2520%and2520%Wellb eing2520%Questionnaire_0.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK

79 Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies. (2021). Teacher wellbeing in emergency settings: Findings from a resource mapping and gap analysis. <https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/INEE%20Teacher%20Wellbeing%20in%20 Emergency%20v2.0%20LowRes.pdf>



To support teacher well-being a system should have established accessible services tailored to the needs identified through data analysis. The exact nature of these services will depend on what the data on teacher well-being suggests regarding governance, the context of the country and the need to account for social and cultural norms.

How do teachers report well-being concerns?

How effectively are well-being concerns responded to?

It is crucial to have clear and effective mechanisms for teachers to report well-being concerns and to ensure that these concerns are addressed promptly. Services that are provided should be recognized as safe spaces where teachers can constructively share their experiences and feelings. School leaders should work to change the culture within their schools to actively listen to teachers and make necessary changes. National support services, such as an online forums or phone lines, should be available for teachers. It may be beneficial for teachers to have access to a national service anonymously, to counter concerns that a teacher reporting a concern or well-being issue will face repercussions for using the service.

Changes to policies and conditions can also significantly support teacher well-being. If data indicate that teacher workload or conditions are negatively impacting their well-being, these areas should be addressed. Implementing a national policy on teacher well-being and how it is supported—for example through a well-being charter—is an indicator that teacher well-being is being seriously considered and supported, especially if linked to any national policies related to the general well-being of a national population. Such policies can then be supported by direct changes to the environment a teacher is working in. This could involve changing pay and conditions, improving the status of the profession, or investing in the physical environment teachers work in.

In addition to system-level actions, building teacher resilience will support their ability to self-regulate their own well-being. Resilience should therefore be considered a key competency within teacher standards and be a developmental focus when designing and providing teacher development opportunities, especially for teachers who are likely to be working in conditions of crises or emergencies.

Considering teacher well-being during broader educational reform design

As well-being is complex and multifaceted, there is significant potential for other changes within the education system to have an unintended negative impact on well-being, even if the changes are being brought in to improve educational outcomes of students.

The risk of dismissing teacher well-being when introducing reforms can create negative feedback loops that render the reform ineffective and further reduce teacher well-being. For example, if a system pushes for large-scale change, this could negatively affect teacher well-being, which in turn diminishes teachers support and effective implementation of the reform. To mitigate this, it is important to ensure teachers' engagement during the design phase of the reform, provide additional support and time, and clearly communicate clearly the purpose of the reform. It is therefore imperative that teacher well-being is considered when designing reforms and interventions. In some instances, this may mean changing the reform; in others it may mean adding additional resources, such as more teacher development and a longer implementation time, to build teacher confidence with the reform.

Possible future developments

Depending on the current work in the system and country-specific factors some, or all, of the following options for developing this thematic area may be applicable.

1. Monitoring teacher well-being

Having clarity about how teacher well-being will be monitored, e.g. what data will be captured, how the data will be captured and how often should well-being be monitored, will support implementing initiatives to support teacher well-being. Building up an evidence base of how teachers feel in their role will support effective decision-making around existing and new education reforms and lead to the creation of new reforms. Additionally, by monitoring teacher well-being, the impact of a reform on well-being can be identified to determine if a reform, especially those where well-being is not the prime purpose, e.g. curriculum reform, has a beneficial or adverse effect on teacher well-being.

2. Establish services to support teacher well-being

A range of services explicitly set up to support teacher well-being should be created and/or invested in where there is no existing public or private support in place. This can include confidential well-being support forums and phone lines, safe ways for teachers to raise concerns and providing professional development on work-life balance. In federal systems where education is devolved to a regional/state level, coordinating across the system to ensure lessons learned, and identifying strengths and areas for improvement regarding how services to support teacher well-being impact other parts of the system, can lead to support service improvements.

3. Invest in the environment teachers work in

Investing in the environment a teacher works in is one of the most impactful ways to support teacher well-being. Depending on the exact needs in a system this can include, and may initially focus on the physical environment, which is important to both teachers and learners. This is especially so in early childhood education, primary education, and in specific subjects that have physical environment requirements such as science laboratory facilities, art spaces, drama studios, and space and equipment for music and physical education. Additionally, investing in the digital environment and how teachers work digitally builds up readiness for increased use of digital technologies in education.

4. Account for teacher well-being during education reform design

When designing new education reforms, ensure that an impact assessment on teacher well-being is conducted, ideally multiple times during the design process, through direct engagement with teachers. This will ensure that negative impacts of the reform on teacher well-being are removed, limited or mitigated. It will protect teacher well-being while improving how the reform is implemented.



Summary: The urgent need for a systemic approach to developing quality teachers

Despite the actions taken to improve education since the declaration of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, there is an increasingly urgent need for countries to address teacher quality through a systemic approach.

All countries are facing crises and emergencies that our students are living with now and into their adult lives, alongside the certainty there will be crises and emergencies that have yet to arise. All countries face challenges: from conflicts and war, to the climate emergency, to the impact of artificial intelligence and to the possible advent of the technological singularity. For students to flourish and thrive, they will require a range of competencies and skills including, but not limited to, critical thinking, resilience, problem-solving, communication and collaboration.

Teachers play a vital role in supporting and preparing students to navigate the changing world. This can be short term, by providing the immediate knowledge, understanding and competencies students need alongside pastoral and emotional support. It can also be long term, by teaching a future-focused curriculum that accounts for the uncertainties we all have and feel.

We require high-quality teachers to provide this education and teach in ways that support developing competencies. We also need high-quality teachers who can adapt to how education will continue to change in response to local, national, regional and global needs.

Additionally, we are at risk of not meeting Sustainable Development Goal Target 4: Quality Education, considered a key benchmark for us, collectively as a global community, in creating a more sustainable world. Within the challenge of meeting Goal 4 is addressing the acute teacher shortage: with 44 million teachers needed across the world by 2030. When focusing on recruiting those teachers and considering the teachers who are currently in the system and will stay in the system, we also need to make sure they are supported and developed to be the best teachers possible to raise the level of teacher quality. Otherwise, despite having more teachers, and giving more students access to education, aspirations of education and the impact it can have will not be met. This will further impact students' intellectual, emotional, social and ethical growth.

We need to move from increasing access to education to increasing access to high-quality education supported by high-quality teachers.

This paper has highlighted how there are four thematic areas, each with possible future developments. The applicability of each is dependent on the needs of individual countries. Each country is on its own journey and will have differing strengths and areas for improvement, with the best interventions and reforms being specific to them and their context.

To ensure the specific interventions and reforms countries implement will be effective, all four thematic areas need to be considered together, through a systemic approach as each area affects every other area. As a result, the best policies and interventions—that are designed for the context, based on domestic and international research, and on evidence informed through local data collection and analysis—will nevertheless stall or fail if other aspects of the system are not taken into account, creating a system drag effect.

For example, the professional learning community approach in Oman is aligned to best practice in teacher development but is struggling to make an impact due to teacher overload: primarily influenced by teaching and curriculum expectations that do not support engagement in such an approach to teacher development.

Alongside the options for future developments in each thematic area, there are three recommendations to support countries in taking a systemic approach to enhancing teacher quality.

1. Have an evidence-informed understanding of your education system to support strategic planning.

This recommendation is in line with ICESCO strategic orientation 8 **Meeting the educational needs and priorities of Member States** where the need to account for local conditions in each member state is highlighted. To ensure the most appropriate interventions and reforms are considered there is a need to have an evidence-informed planning of the education system. This can be supported and enhanced by having dedicated resources on education data collection and analysis that are able to use the evidence gathered to create strategic plans where the multiple elements of the system, and their interactions, are considered. This will include deciding which of the possible future developments outlined in this paper are appropriate for the system and highly likely to be impactful.

To meet this recommendation key actions can include, but are not limited to the following.

- Create capacity within the appropriate Ministry to design and implement an education system review. This can include setting up dedicated units, recruiting specialists such as education data scientists, and providing capacity development programmes.
- Design a framework for reviewing the education system, focusing on teacher quality.
- Review the system, through data collection and analysis supported by qualitative feedback from stakeholders in the system.
- Create an evidence-informed strategic plan in response to the findings of the review.
- Conduct an education review on a regular cycle, for example every three years, against the same framework, or with only minor edits, to monitor the impact of interventions and reforms and keep future actions up-to-date and relevant.

2. Develop, or revise, teacher standards to be future-oriented supported by common standards from ICESCO.

Standards for teachers underpin the system and are required for clarity on what defines a quality teacher. Developing or revising teacher standards to be future-oriented is required on an ongoing basis to maintain relevance. To support the mobility of teachers, concepts, approaches and resources between member states, standards can be supported by adapting a common set of teacher standards from ICESCO. Common ICESCO standards can also support additional standards related to school leaders, initial teacher education and educational materials.

To meet this recommendation key actions can include, but are not limited to the following.

- ICESCO to coordinate and engage with member states, and other stakeholders, on the requirements of standards. This could involve the creation of a multinational ICESCO standards group to lead this step. Insights from recommendation 1 may inform this.
- To develop standards through a consultative and collaborative process.



- Member states to accept the standards from the process and use these within their own education systems, following adaptation to meet the specific needs of each member state. Member states can be supported by ICESCO as desired.

3. Establish cross-country working groups for shared issues and solutions.

Further to countries understanding their education system fully, it can be expected that there are ICESCO member states who will share areas for improvement and therefore solutions. They will be able to form cross-country working groups to collaborate, plan effectively and share findings across their contexts, thereby maximizing the impact of interventions and/or reforms. This aligns to ICESCO strategic orientation 7 ***Engaging in a forward-looking and proactive approach in planning based on scientific foundations.***

To meet this recommendation, key actions can include but are not limited to the following.

- Further to the analysis of education systems, ICESCO can support identification of areas for improvement common to multiple member states through a comparative analysis of each system's findings.
- Member states with common areas for improvement can hold an event to discuss and designate a lead member state, or ask for ICESCO to support coordination on actions.
- Member states can meet regularly and discuss the area for improvement and progress on designing, implementing and monitoring solutions, sharing their findings and data.

The IB, through partnering and collaborating with ICESCO and individual member states, can utilize its expertise and experience to support member states in meeting the recommendations and in addressing the thematic areas raised in this paper.



     
JOIN US ! انضموا إلينا REJOIGNEZ-NOUS