

Teacher Task Force

Regional Virtual Meeting for Asia-Pacific

COVID-19 education crisis - Supporting teachers in distance learning and on school reopening

26May 2020, 15:00 (Bangkok time/GMT+7 Hrs.)

Concept Note

Background and Introduction

The COVID-19 crisis has disrupted education in an unprecedented way, with, at its height, some 191 countries closing their schools, affecting 1.5 billion students and over 63 million primary and secondary teachers. Governments have had to act rapidly to meet the challenge to continue providing quality education in this new environment, where face-to-face pedagogy is no longer possible and where teachers lack skills related to ICT, distance education and education in emergencies.

Acknowledging these challenges, the Teacher Task Force (TTF) launched a [Call to Action on Teachers](#) that emphasises the following six key messages for governments and education stakeholders:

- preserve employment and wages;
- prioritise teachers' and learners' health, safety and well-being;
- include teachers in developing COVID-19 education responses;
- provide adequate professional support and training;
- put equity at the heart of education responses; and
- include teachers in aid responses

Moreover, the TTF released a new Knowledge Platform to provide its members and the wider community with a central repository of quality resources on teachers and teaching for policy-makers, decisions-makers and teacher educators as well as a space to actively engage and promote teacher networks.

Objectives of the regional meeting

Throughout the school closures, governments have adopted various measures to ensure learning continuity. In some cases, this has meant working with infrastructure constraints, such as a lack of connectivity or devices to ensure on-line learning. Teachers themselves have also been impacted by the crisis professionally and personally. As countries plan to reopen schools, the role of teachers, their knowledge of their learners' needs, and expertise and experience in teaching practice are critical to developing school reopening plans. Moving forward, designing context-sensitive resilience strategies will need to include the voices of teachers, teacher educators and their representatives.

The Asia-Pacific region includes countries which represent a wide range of socio-economic realities and capacities including countries leading in the use of digital technologies in teaching and learning, where others have infrastructure challenges. Additionally, different countries in the region also grapple with inequalities regarding access to online and other forms of education. Notwithstanding these variations between and within countries, the virtual meeting seeks to provide a platform to engage in dialogue on the

main challenges and potential and planned interventions related to teachers and teaching, including the proposed reopening of schools.

In particular, the objectives of the meeting are:

- to understand the challenges faced by countries in addressing issues related to teachers and teaching while designing education responses to COVID-19;
- to share promising practices to support teachers, including training and psycho-social support;
- to highlight challenges and opportunities in the reopening of schools.

Some of the main questions to be covered will include:

- How are governments ensuring adequate training and support for in-service teachers to deliver effective distance/online instruction? How prepared are education systems in deploying online platforms and supporting teachers in using digital technology?
- How are governments supporting teachers working in areas with poor or no internet connectivity?
- What are the challenges and opportunities for the reopening of schools and how to best include teachers in responses? How should governments support teachers to meet their professional and personal needs?
- What measures are in place or planned that consider vulnerable populations (e.g. girls, disabled learners, cultural and linguistic minorities, displaced persons) to ensure equity in teaching and learning and mitigate dropout?

Modality

The regional meeting, coordinated by the TTF Secretariat in cooperation with the UNESCO Bangkok, Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education and the UNESCO New Delhi Cluster Office, will be held on 26 May via Zoom. The meeting will last approximately 1 hour and a half. Information on how to connect to the platform will be communicated to all registered participants prior to the meeting. The agenda and relevant documentation will also be circulated in advance.

Participation

The meeting is open to TTF member countries and organisations as well as non-members. TTF focal points, representatives of Ministries of Education, and other relevant education stakeholders working on teachers issues in the region are invited to join the meeting.

You can register here: [Registration](#)

You can join the meeting using the following link and password:

<https://zoom.us/j/94610962114>

Password: 964616

Tentative agenda

ITEM	TIME
Welcome and introduction	5 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair: Libing Wang, PhD, Chief, Section for Educational Innovation and Skills Development (EISD), UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education
Presentation of the TTF work	10 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Borhene Chakroun, Head a.i., Teacher Task Force Secretariat, Director, Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO
Countries perspective -4country experiences	20 mins (5 mins each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cambodia: Dr. Samsideth Dy, Cambodia's Representative to the ITTF and Deputy Director-General for Education, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport China: Mr. Ren Yougun, D.G. for Teachers, Ministry of Education, People's Republic of China India: Prof. Padma Sarangapani, Chairperson, Centre for Education, Innovation and Action Research, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. Maldives: Dr. Abdulla Rasheed, Minister of State for Education and Head of National Institute of Education
NGO/IGO intervention	5 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Tara Béteille, Senior Economist, Head, Teacher Thematic Group, World Bank
Q&A and discussion	45 mins
Closing remarks	5 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Ethel Agnes P Valenzuela, Director, SEAMEO Secretariat