World Teachers' Day 2020 Fact Sheet

## Teachers: Leading in crisis, reimagining the future

Teachers are the cornerstone on which we build inclusive, equitable, quality education. The COVID-19 pandemic has substantially compromised teachers' capacity to maintain education quality due to school closures, the transition to remote teaching and the challenges of returning to school. Yet the COVID-19 crisis has also shed new light on the way in which teachers lead in classrooms, schools and communities.

To ensure quality teaching and learning continue, so that countries do not lose pace in efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, leadership will play an increasing role. To foster a healthy and equitable learning environment for all, including students further marginalised by the pandemic, countries need to provide quality training to ensure teachers acquire relevant skills to strengthen their leadership roles.

The global teacher workforce has expanded rapidly since 2000, yet many more teachers are needed

- The total number of teachers worldwide increased by 50% between 2000 and 2019, from 62 million to 94 million teachers (Figure 1).

- To reach universal primary and secondary education in 2030, 69 million more teachers are needed: 24 million for primary and 44 million for secondary education.

- Teacher shortages are most acute in sub-Saharan Africa, where 70% of countries face shortages at primary level and 90% of countries at secondary level (UIS, 2016).

Figure 1.   Number of teachers worldwide by education level, 2000-2019

Legend: Preprimary, Primary, Lower Secondary, Upper Secondary, Tertiary
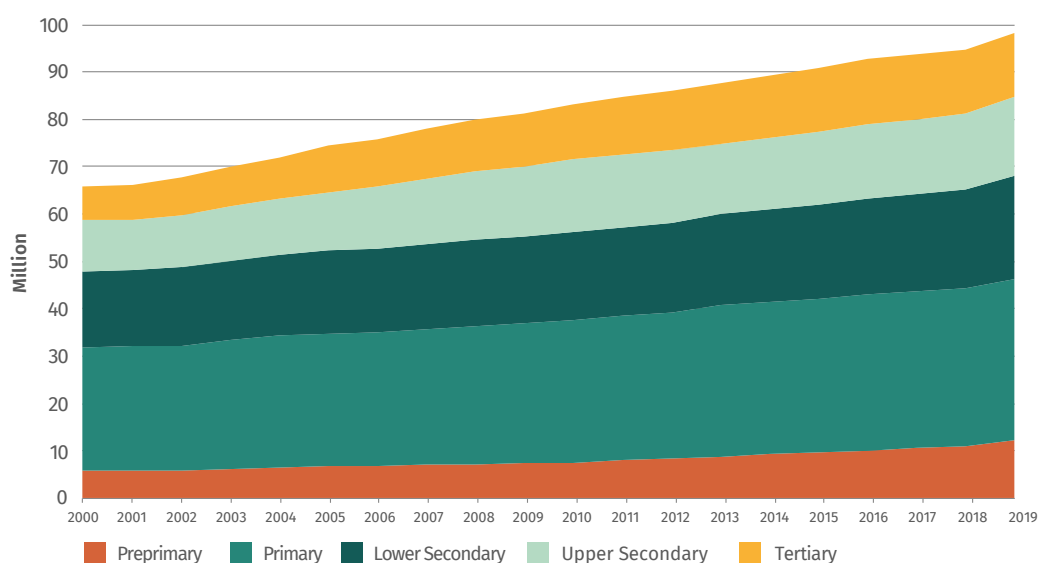
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) database, 2020.

Training is key to support effective leadership, but many teachers lack minimum qualifications

To deliver quality education, **trained teachers** with core skills in pedagogy, instructional leadership, inclusive education and classroom management are essential (Table 1 and Figure 2).

Table 1.   Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications, by education level, 2019 or most recent year available

Region	Qualified teachers		Pupil/ trained teacher ratio	
	Primary	**Secondary**	**Primary**	**Secondary**
World	**81**	**78**	**28**	**21**
Sub-Saharan Africa	65	51	58	43
Northern Africa and Western Asia	85	84	23	18
Central Asia	98	97	21	11
Southern Asia	74	77	40	29
Eastern Asia	…	…	…	…
South-eastern Asia	97	95	19	20
Latin America and the Caribbean	83	84	25	20
Oceania	…	…	…	…
Europe and Northern America	…	…	…	…
Low income	75	58	51	38
Lower middle income	75	76	39	28
Upper middle income	84	84	27	…
High income	…	…	…	…

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) database, 2020.

Note: Data are for SDG indicator 4.c.1. Refinement of the indicator name approved by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) on 13 March and 2 April 2020. Final approval pending the 52nd session of the Statistical Commission in March 2021.

❯ Globally, 81% of primary and 78% of secondary teachers had the minimum required qualifications, according to the most recent available data with substantial variations between regions. Central Asia had the highest proportion of teachers with the minimum qualifications, at 98% of primary and 97% of secondary teachers.

❯ The region with the lowest proportions of teachers with minimum qualifications is sub-Saharan Africa where just 65% of primary and 51% secondary teachers were trained. Within sub-Saharan Africa, 100% of primary teachers had the minimum required qualifications in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti and Mauritius. In contrast, only 37% had minimum qualifications in Equatorial Guinea, 27% in Sao Tome and Principe, and 15% in Madagascar.

❯ The region with the second-lowest proportion of teachers with the minimum qualifications is Southern Asia where 72% of primary and 77% of secondary teachers were trained. Within the region, 78% of primary teachers were trained in Pakistan, 73% in India and 50% Bangladesh, compared with 89% in the Maldives.

Figure 2. **Proportion of primary teachers with the minimum required qualifications, 2019 or most recent year available**
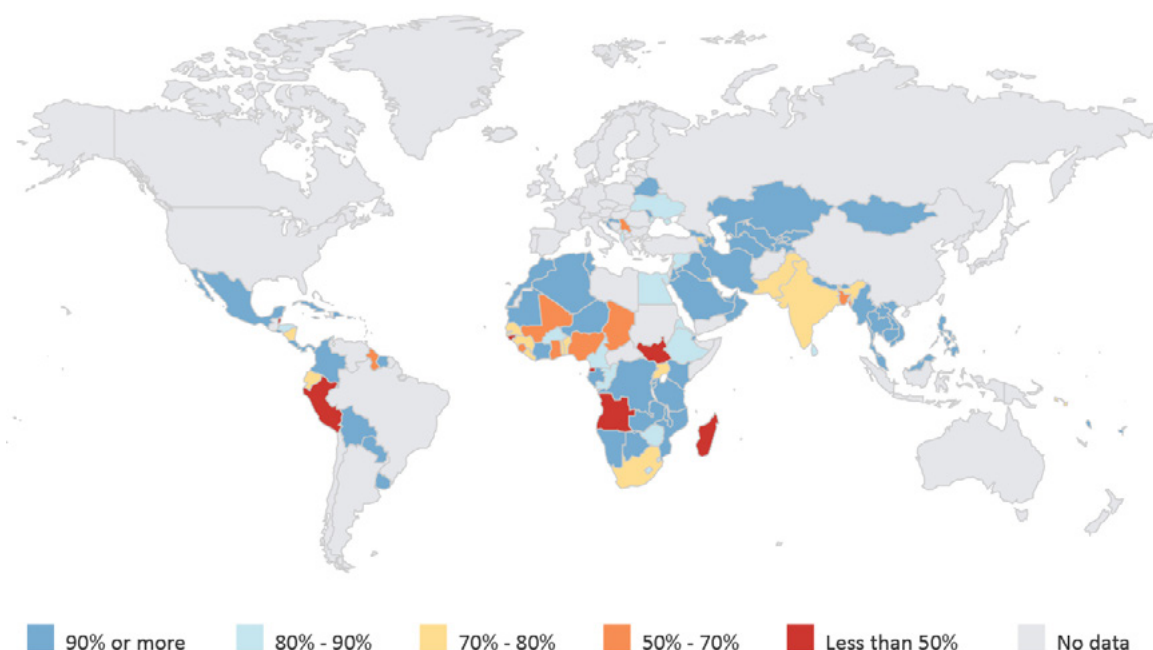
90% or more   80% - 90%   70% - 80%   50% - 70%   Less than 50%   No data

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) database, 2020.

Note: Data are for SDG indicator 4.c.1. Refinement of the indicator name approved by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) on 13 March and 2 April 2020. Final approval pending the 52nd session of the Statistical Commission in March 2021.

A smaller proportion of teachers in Western Africa have the minimum qualifications than in other regions of sub-Saharan Africa. One reason is that since 2000 these countries have partially responded to increasing enrolment and demand for primary education by recruiting non-civil servant teachers or contract teachers. Contract teachers generally have fewer academic qualifications and less pedagogical training, and do not benefit from additional in-service training. In Niger, 71% of pre-primary to secondary teachers were on contract in 2017 (**Niger, 2020**).

Many teachers are overburdened by large class sizes, especially in countries where lack of training already undermines education quality

High pupil to trained teacher ratios, which result in large class sizes, diminish teachers' capacity by reducing the amount of time spent on teaching and learning activities (**OECD, 2019**) (Table 1).

❯ Indicating an overstretched workforce, there was 1 trained primary teacher per 58 pupils in sub-Saharan Africa and per 40 pupils in Southern Asia.

⭨ There were overcrowded classrooms in many countries. The ratio of pupils to trained primary teachers was 240:1 in Madagascar and 114:1 in Sao Tome and Principe. In Southern Asia, the primary pupil to trained teacher ratio in Bangladesh was 60:1.

⭨ Pupil to trained teacher ratios were generally lower in secondary education in all regions, but remain high in sub-Saharan Africa (43:1) contrasting with Central Asia (10:1).

Box 1.   Moving towards regional African standards of teacher training

To improve the quality of education in Africa, the African Union aims to increasingly professionalize teaching. Developing standards for teacher qualifications, the African Framework of Standards and Competencies for the Teaching Profession emphasizes that teachers need to have the following competencies at the end of their training:

⭨ professional knowledge and understanding,
⭨ professional skills and practices,
⭨ professional values, attributes and commitment,
⭨ professional partnerships, and
⭨ professional leadership.

The standards also propose a minimum entry requirement to the teaching profession, including:

⭨ Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree obtained either after successful completion of an integrated five-year programme with academic and professional education; or after three years of academic and two years of professional education; or

⭨ Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) obtained after a Bachelor's (four-year duration), Master's or Doctorate degree in an academic field.

Source: African Union Commission, 2019.

How can we compare teacher training internationally?

Countries have different paths to become a trained primary teacher. These paths can be compared by looking at i) the level at which teachers are trained, ii) the duration of years in academic study and iii) the duration of teacher training. Data from seven selected countries shed light on the varying quality of teacher training (Figure 3):

⭨ The number of years of combined education and teacher training required to become a primary teacher varies from 12 years in Niger to 18 years in Brazil, with teacher training programmes of 2 years in Niger and 4 years in Brazil.

⭨ Few sub-Saharan African countries meet the teacher training standards set out by the African Union for entry into primary education (Box 1). For example, in Burundi, Cameroon, Niger and Tanzania, upper secondary vocational teacher training programmes begin after the completion of lower secondary education.

⭨ In Tanzania, due to teacher shortages, diploma trainees study in college for one year and spend the second year in schools as part of teaching practice, presenting a challenge for the effectiveness of the supervision (Centre for International Education, 2020).

⭨ In Cambodia, primary teachers have 14 years education; 12 years in primary and secondary education followed by 2 years of teacher training in a post-secondary non-tertiary programme.

⭨ In Brazil, despite standards in the National Education Plan (2014-24) requiring completion of 18 years of general and teacher education to teach at the primary level, teacher training continues to be offered by upper secondary vocational programmes because of challenges to provide adequate places at tertiary level (INEP, 2018).

Figure 3. Mapping primary teacher general and professional education, 2019

Country	Title	Years of education (stages by year)
Niger	Assistant teacher	Primary education (ISCED 1): 1–6; Lower secondary (ISCED 2): 7–10; Teacher training (ISCED 3): 11–12
Niger	Teacher	Primary education (ISCED 1): 1–6; Lower secondary (ISCED 2): 7–10; Upper secondary (ISCED 3): 11–13; Teacher training (ISCED 4): 14
Burundi	Primary teacher diploma (D7)	Basic education (ISCED 1-2): 1–9; Teacher training (ISCED 3): 10–13
Cameroon (Francophone sub system)	Certificat d'aptitude pédagogique d'instituteur pour l'enseignement maternel et primaire* (CAPIEMP)	Primary education (ISCED 1): 1–6; Lower secondary (ISCED 2): 7–10; Teacher training (ISCED 3): 11–13
Cameroon (Francophone sub system)	Certificat d'aptitude pédagogique d'instituteur pour l'enseignement maternel et primaire* (CAPIEMP)	Primary education (ISCED 1): 1–6; Lower secondary (ISCED 2): 7–10; Upper secondary (ISCED 3): 11–12; Teacher training (ISCED 3): 13–14
Cameroon (Francophone sub system)	Certificat d'aptitude pédagogique d'instituteur pour l'enseignement maternel et primaire* (CAPIEMP)	Primary education (ISCED 1): 1–6; Lower secondary (ISCED 2): 7–10; Upper secondary (ISCED 3): 11–13; Teacher training (ISCED 3): 14
Cambodia	Primary school teacher diploma	Primary education (ISCED 1): 1–6; Lower secondary (ISCED 2): 7–9; Upper secondary (ISCED 3): 10–12; Teacher training (ISCED 4): 13–14
Tanzania	Teacher Training (Certificate)	Primary education (ISCED 1): 1–7; Lower secondary (ISCED 2): 8–11; Teacher training (ISCED 3): 12–13
Tanzania	Teacher Training (Diploma)	Primary education (ISCED 1): 1–7; Lower secondary (ISCED 2): 8–11; Upper secondary (ISCED 3): 12–13; Teacher training (ISCED 4): 14–15
Ecuador	Bachelor degree	Basic education (ISCED 1-2): 1–9; Lower secondary (ISCED 2): 10–12; Teacher training (ISCED 6): 13–16
Brazil	Bachelor degree applied to education	Primary education (ISCED 1): 1–7; Lower secondary (ISCED 2): 8–11; Upper secondary (ISCED 3): 12–14; Teacher training (ISCED 5): 15–18

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) database, 2020; and UIS, 2011. ISCED classification.

*Note: * Informal translation: Pre-primary and primary teacher certificate.*

COVID-19 and its aftermath require teachers to reinforce remote teaching and ICT skills

Not only has the COVID pandemic exacerbated educational disparities, it has also set back teachers' morale, motivation and livelihoods. Many teachers remain unprepared and underequipped to lead or deliver distance education – especially those with no initial teacher education and few opportunities for in-service training.

↘ In member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 56% of teachers reported that they had used ICT in teacher training and 43% felt prepared to use ICT in teaching.

↘ In OECD countries, an average of 60% of teachers reported using ICT for teaching in recent continuing professional development activities (Figure 4).

↘ In Austria, Czechia, Denmark, Israel, Malta and Portugal, fewer than 50% of teachers reported using ICT in training during the previous two years. By contrast, in Colombia, Kazakhstan, United Arab Emirates and Viet Nam, more than 80% of teachers reported using ICT (OECD, 2019).

Figure 4.   Percentage of teachers for whom use of ICT for teaching has been part of recent professional development activities, 2018
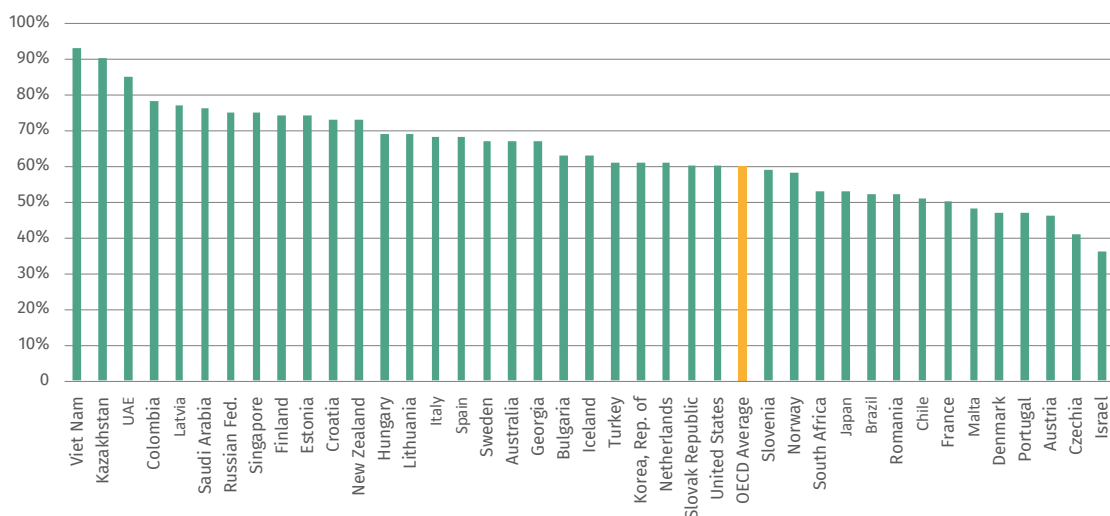
Source: OECD, 2019. TALIS 2018 Results Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners.

↘ In a recent UNESCO/UNICEF/ World Bank survey of countries' responses to COVID-19, 62% of countries reported giving practical guidelines for ICT-based teaching. However, this ranged from 71% in high-income countries to just 44% in lower middle-income and low-income countries. (UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank survey, 2020)

↘ Additional training on distance education for teachers was less common. It was offered by half of all countries, and was more frequent in lower middle- and low-income countries (56%) than in high-income countries (43%). This may be explained by greater needs in lower-income countries (UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank survey, 2020).

↘ Fewer than one-third of all countries are offering psycho-social support to teachers in the UNESCO/ UNICEF/ World Bank survey of countries' responses to COVID-19 transition to remote learning.
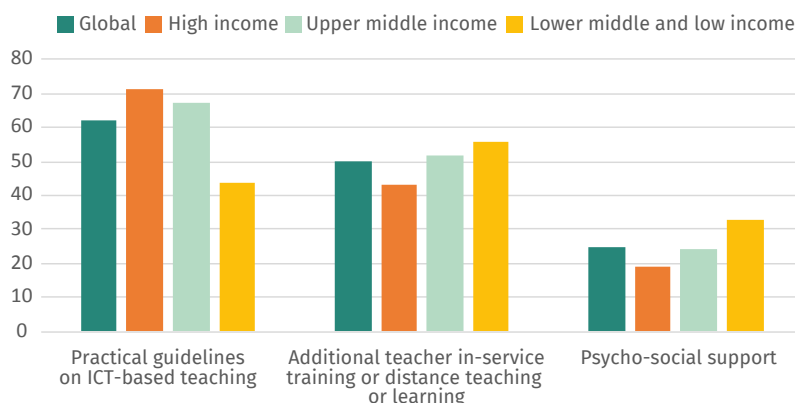

Figure 5.   Proportion of countries supporting teachers in ICT, distance education and psycho-social support, by income level, 2020

Source: UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank survey, 2020

To mitigate education disparities due to COVID-19, teachers need training on leadership

Never has teacher leadership been so important in the delivery of quality education. Teachers and school leaders need to demonstrate distributed leadership roles to mitigate gaps in teaching caused by the pandemic (Box 2).

↘ Yet, principals in selected high- and middle-income countries within the OECD spend less than about one-quarter of their time on curriculum and teaching-related tasks and meetings. It is highest in Shanghai, China at 27% and lowest in the Netherlands at 11%.

↘ In high- and middle-income countries, few teachers are assigned a mentor in school and this includes novice teachers, who have the greatest need. The share of novice teachers assigned a mentor ranged from 43% in the United Arab Emirates to 5% in Slovenia. It is under 10% in Argentina, Chile, Finland, Italy and Lithuania.

Box 2.   Building teacher resilience: Reinforcing distributed leadership across schools

Teacher leadership thrives in a school culture characterized by trust, collective responsibility for learning, recognition, autonomy to solve problems and support for teachers' professional development. School leaders have a vital role in creating these conditions. Through a combination of training and professional learning communities (PLCs), the Belgian non-governmental organization VVOB – *education for development* helps to build the capacity of school leaders to create and nurture distributed leadership across the school ecosystem.

↘ In **Rwanda**, 843 school leaders completed a post-graduate diploma course in effective school leadership – a course that includes four modules over 400 hours. Evaluations show that school leaders who benefit from support, schedule time for PLCs and participate themselves, lending credibility and encouraging participation.

↘ In **South Africa**, a national framework for the induction of novice teachers was developed that encourages school leaders to set up PLCs. Testing with 100 school leaders showed that participation in PLCs stimulates teachers to take more ownership of their professional development. An online PLC course for 269 district officials, 50 school leaders and 300 teachers will also be launched.

↘ In **Ecuador**, 287 school leaders in technical and vocational education and training – 146 men and 141 women – participate in PLCs to exchange best practices, analyze school data and organise pedagogical support for teachers. Each PLC is supported by a qualified advisor for two years (over 110 hours), before continuing independently. Evidence shows the majority of PLCs function well, but that mandated turnover of principals can pose challenges.

Source: VVOB – education for development, 2020.

Teachers need to be supported to foster inclusive education

Education systems need to put into place legal and policy frameworks to support inclusive teaching practices. During the return to school, practicing inclusive teaching skills will be vital to mitigate potential disruption, exclusion and dropout. According to the Profiles Enhancing Education Review (PEER) website by the GEM Report:

↘ Out of 168 countries, 61% claim to provide teacher training on inclusion. Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, followed by Europe and Northern America, are more likely to offer such training than other regions, especially sub-Saharan Africa and Central and Southern Asia.

↘ About 40% of countries – mostly in Latin America and the Caribbean – enshrine teacher training on inclusion in laws and policies (GEM Report, 2020).

↘ Less than 3 % of countries have adopted an "inclusive education law" that promotes teacher training while 10% have an education law that ensures inclusion for all but does not explicitly mention teacher training on inclusive education.

Schools need to be equipped to provide a safe environment for pupils and teachers, and to enable continuity of teaching

As children begin to return to school, proper sanitation and personal protective equipment are vital to ensure safety and well-being (Table 2). To ensure the continuity of remote teaching and learning, schools need devices and Internet connections.

↘ Globally, 66% of primary schools had basic handwashing facilities, ranging from 37% in sub-Saharan Africa and 51% in Southern Asia to 97% in Europe.

↘ Over two-thirds of primary schools globally (73%) had access to electricity, which is critical to support ICT; this ranges from 31% in sub-Saharan Africa to 55% in Southern Asia and 100% in Central Asia.

↘ Access to school computers is not universal in most middle and low income regions, varying from 96% in Central Asia to 20% in Southern Asia.

↘ Internet access is common in Eastern Asia with 95% of primary schools being connected. In sub-Saharan Africa, regional data are not available, but 35% of primary schools were connected in Rwanda, 16% in Cabo Verde and 13% in Senegal. Internet access is extremely sparse in Burkina Faso, Madagascar and Sierra Leone where fewer than 1% of schools are connected.

↘ In South-eastern Asia, similarly, fewer than 1% of primary schools in Myanmar were connected.

Table 2. Proportion of primary schools with access to basic facilities, 2019 or most recent year available

Regions	Basic handwashing facilities (%)	Access to basic drinking water (%)	Access to electricity (%)	Access to computers for pedagogical purposes (%)	Access to Internet for pedagogical purposes (%)
World	**66**	**78**	**73**	**48**	**40**
Sub-Saharan Africa	37	44	31	…	…
Northern Africa and Western Asia	93	87	88	85	80
Central Asia	93	95	100	96	70
Southern Asia	51	84	55	20	11
Eastern Asia	96	97	97	95	95
South-eastern Asia	73	67	85	53	66
Latin America and the Caribbean	…	…	89	61	43
Oceania	95	87	92	75	62
Europe and Nothern America	97	97	100	…	…
Low income	43	49	32	…	…
Lower middle income	53	78	55	27	16
Upper midle income	81	79	94	67	62
High income	95	96	98	…	…

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) database, 2020.