

# COORDINATED ACTION TO TRANSFORM EDUCATION

# WHAT'S IN IT FOR TEACHER REPRESENTATIVES?



Teacher in Shahrinav District, Tajikistan.  
GPE / Carine Durand

Education transformation comes about when stakeholders in a system change how they interact with one another, purposefully aligning their actions to arrive at dramatically improved outcomes. Toward this goal, the **Global Partnership for Education (GPE)** supports partner countries in getting the most out of policy dialogue and coordination. This brief is part of a companion series to the [Principles toward Effective Local Education Groups](#), although the contents can apply to any mechanism or platform where stakeholders gather to coordinate their actions around national education policy.

The COVID-19 crisis made clear that dialogue, coordination and partnerships will be central to resolving old and new challenges facing the teaching profession. When teacher unions debate working conditions and remuneration, it is often through collective bargaining or social dialogue—defined by the International Labour Organization as “all types of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers, on issues of common interest.” The involvement of teacher representative bodies in broader policy dialogue takes place through multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms, including local education groups (or the equivalent). Here, they can bring the attention of decision makers and other partners to issues and practices for ensuring coherence in the implementation of education policy, including investments needed in teacher preparation, professional development, raising teaching standards and improving teacher well-being.

## WHAT DO YOU AS TEACHER REPRESENTATIVES GAIN THROUGH COORDINATED ACTION?

### Improved capacities for teacher organization and representation in sector policy dialogue

Multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms offer an important forum for evolving the normative frameworks, institutional structures and processes for harmonious discussions and relationships within the education community. Through your efforts to organize the plurality of teacher organizations and their representation in sector dialogue mechanisms, you are better recognized as a key constituency of education stakeholders.

Your participation creates opportunities to

- Raise awareness around the legislative and supporting frameworks needed for teachers

to participate more effectively and regularly in dialogue;

- Access relevant information and knowledge, and heighten your awareness around training possibilities, so that teacher organizations can reinforce their policy dialogue skills and leadership capacities; and
- Suggest viable communications mechanisms for supporting real-time feedback between teacher organizations and authorities in decision making, policy dialogue and monitoring processes, including through online and offline teacher networks and communities of practice.

### **Enhanced recognition and trust in the professionalism and resilience of teachers**

COVID-19 reminded the world of teachers' capacity for adaptation and innovation in the face of unforeseen crises. Your engagement in multi-stakeholder policy dialogue offers a valuable opportunity to highlight the resilience and professionalism of educators. You can showcase the teaching and learning innovations introduced in your specific context (beyond education technologies) to transform learning spaces and ensure learning continuity, as well as initiative in adapting school leadership and management practices.

### **Policy coherence and awareness of specific investments needed to upskill the teaching profession**

Your participation in policy dialogue enables you to highlight persistent gaps between policy commitments and school-level realities in advancing the right to quality education and in achieving SDG 4 targets (including challenges to teacher recruitment, deployment, professionalization and career progression in low-resource areas, remote contexts and areas affected by crisis, conflict and forced displacement).

Through regular engagement in sector coordination and policy dialogue, you can

- Put forward compelling arguments for the investments needed in pre-service training, teacher upskilling, continuous support and agency/autonomy so that teachers can respond to emerging education trends—including the rapid

growth of education technologies and the need to ensure socially and digitally inclusive learning spaces;

- Help to shape competency frameworks covering the skills, behaviors and attributes now needed by teachers, school leaders and different actors in the education workforce to align classroom practice with national learning and development goals (that is, related to climate action, the green economy, digital citizenship and insertion into local labor markets);
- Increase understanding of how early consultation and coordination with teacher organizations can contribute to increasing the relevance of, and teacher buy-in to, teacher training while reducing overlap in partners' training programs and inefficient targeting of resources;
- Inform reflections around the merits of scaling low-cost, context-sensitive and practical training solutions for the teaching profession through partnerships with nongovernmental actors, foundations and the education technology sector; and
- Provide feedback on education reforms through continuous feedback loops.

### **Heightened focus on the working conditions and well-being of teachers**

Teacher well-being is largely founded on a manageable workload, upskilling opportunities, decent pay and working conditions, and supportive school leadership and administration. Shifts have occurred

*“Teacher engagement in the development and implementation of educational reform is crucial, and school reform will not work unless it is supported from the bottom up. This requires those responsible for change to both communicate their aims well and involve the stakeholders who are affected. But it also requires teachers to contribute as the architects of change, not just its implementers.”*

[Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](#)

in the working conditions, responsibilities and roles of teachers and education staff in post pandemic classrooms.

Your participation in sector policy dialogue allows you to

- Lobby for increased investments to protect the education workforce at the school and community levels, including fair and adequate remuneration and incentives, adequate and enabling working conditions, and support for mental health and occupational safety;

*“Through their own organizations and in cooperation with other trade unions, children’s and women’s rights networks, community organizations and NGOs, teachers and educators can collaborate with each other, and with other organizations to work on curriculum development, to strengthen the school management system, and to advocate for policy reform that addresses the factors contributing to the exclusion of child laborers from school.”*

[International Labour Organization](#)

- Improve relationships with all partners through mutual understanding of teacher actions and motivations, as well as increasing your own understanding of how partners view dialogue with the teaching profession; and
- Work in cooperation with national education coalitions and civil society actors to amplify messaging on issues affecting teachers at all levels.



Marble Quarry Primary School, Nairobi, Kenya.  
GPE/Luis Tato

## GHANA

**Strong relationships between the teaching community and other education actors are at the heart of system transformation efforts.** Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL)—a Ghanaian nonprofit teacher organization providing high-quality technical advice, management, research and implementation support services to the teaching profession—works with the National Council for Tertiary Education, colleges of education and universities to design and implement fit-for-purpose teacher training and develop national teacher standards. The organization also undertakes regular school-based mentoring and support to teacher trainees and is helping to move toward a more practice-focused teacher training system with strong oversight.

Key to success are T-TEL’s relationships with the government, teacher education institutions, teacher unions and other key education actors; an enabling policy environment that provides a much-needed institutional anchor for systemic change; and the ability to leverage structures and in-country expertise to increase contextual relevance and sustainability. Evaluations of service delivery show improvements in gender-sensitive instruction, more new teachers demonstrating interactive student-focused instructional methods, and improved knowledge and application of school curricula and assessments. The degree of engagement underlines the importance of genuine co-creation with and ownership by local actors and partners, and the need to collect a variety of data to demonstrate impact.

# NEPAL

**Multi-stakeholder dialogue supports coherence between information and communication technologies (ICTs) in education policy and teacher education.** Nepal's School Sector Development Plan 2016–2023 emphasized the importance of ICTs in education, and the government's intention to equip teachers with modern pedagogical and technological skills to prepare learners for digital societies. But the current culture of teacher professional development remains traditional, with little dedicated funding to integrate digital pedagogies into teacher preparation or continuous development. As a result, schools cannot implement ICT-based educational directives. Moreover, the gap in digital skills funding and training has been filled by nonprofits and international organizations to varying quality standards.

To achieve coherence around national ICT priorities, the government must coordinate across training partners and ensure a high degree of complementarity with the needs of teachers and their representatives at the local level. To this end, there has been a push since 2020 to promote a learning culture across the teacher professional development system through extensive consultations with key stakeholders. Discussions have culminated in agreement on a distance/hybrid model for teacher continuous professional development and a pilot mentoring program. Discussions at the local level between education officers, school leaders and teachers within ward- and municipal-level education committees provide further opportunities to support the upgrading of schools' ICT infrastructure and teacher upskilling if the funding follows.

## WHY DO TEACHER REPRESENTATIVES MATTER IN TRANSFORMING EDUCATION?

- ▶ Your inputs to discussions on curriculum, learning pedagogies and content, assessments and school administration are key to ensuring policy coherence between education directives and daily classroom practice.
- ▶ Your insights about challenges to service delivery are essential, particularly in low-resource contexts and in context where connectivity poses barriers to hybrid or remote learning.
- ▶ You provide updates to your constituency on upcoming education bills, reforms and programs as they affect classroom practice.
- ▶ You are a key player in workforce diagnostic exercises and in mobilizing a variety of partners to develop professional training programs, resources and services supporting teacher upskilling.
- ▶ You support comprehensive teacher policies addressing issues of critical importance to the

professionalization of teachers (such as recruitment, contractual conditions and career paths).

- ▶ You have a stake in peer training and communities of practice that reinforce the teaching community.
- ▶ Your connection and communication with parents and local communities ensure an understanding of what's needed to maintain student engagement.

### ADDITIONAL READINGS:

- ▶ [Social and policy dialogue, a key to union renewal?](#) Education International. February 14, 2023.
- ▶ [Supporting teachers for quality teaching: A hallmark of GPE.](#) GPE. October 5, 2022.
- ▶ [Teachers and Teaching: GPE Value for Money Guidance Note.](#) GPE. June 2022.
- ▶ [Teachers and Beyond: A Mapping of Prominent Education Workforce Tools and Frameworks.](#) GPE. May 2022.
- ▶ [Improving Teacher Support and Participation in Local Education Groups.](#) UNESCO. 2018.

Also see the "Teacher representatives" page on GPE's "[Partners Portal](#)" to better understand GPE's and teachers' roles and responsibilities in the partnership.

### OTHER BRIEFS IN THE SAME SERIES:

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