International Task Force on Teachers
for Education 2030
14th Policy Dialogue Forum and governance meeting
26-29 February 2024

Addressing global teacher shortages:
Dignifying, diversifying, and valorising the profession

Concept Note

Table of Contents

Context

As we approach the midpoint of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, it's evident that the world is off-track to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG4, which aims for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunity for all.

The education sector has been profoundly impacted by the learning crisis, a situation exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing conflicts, and the displacement of populations. These challenges have underscored the fragility of our educational systems and highlighted the urgent need for resilience and adaptability. Furthermore, education is increasingly influenced by external factors such as the rapid digitalization of economies and societies, climate change, and societal challenges such as a growing polarization coupled with a diminishing trust in democratic institutions. These evolving dynamics place immense pressure on education systems, demanding transformation, and innovation.

In this complex landscape, the teaching profession finds itself at a crossroads. Teachers are expected to navigate and adapt to these multifaceted challenges, reshaping their roles to meet the ever-evolving demands of education.

Recognizing this critical juncture, the United Nations Secretary-General convened the Transforming Education Summit (TES), aiming to advance a global agenda and new social contract for education. The TES placed teachers at the heart of the conversation, acknowledging their pivotal role in shaping the future of education.

To further delve into these issues and valorise the teaching profession, the Secretary-General established a High-Level Panel to mobilize political ambition, action, solutions, and solidarity to transform education. This panel was tasked with providing a set of evidence-based recommendations to advance the teaching profession and strengthen international cooperation in this field. The Panel made an urgent call to action to transform the teaching profession and address teacher shortages. Some of the recommendations include greater investment on teachers, and to monitor and evaluate the efficacy and efficiency of these expenditures; to develop policies that support teaching and learning; to promote equity, diversity and inclusion, including targeted policies to attract teachers on marginalized areas; to support a training for teachers that includes lifelong learning, innovation, human-centered technologies, sustainability, peace and democracy; and to foster decent work and adequate working conditions for teachers. A critical point raised by the Panel was the need to elevate the status and dignity of the teaching profession in which teachers' knowledge and autonomy are recognized and their role goes beyond transmitting content.

The Recommendations of the High-level panel on the Teaching Profession were presented at the last SDG4 HLSC meeting on 8 November 2023 at UNESCO's HQ, which welcomed the Recommendations of the High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession and encouraged Member States and partners to support and monitor their implementation through existing coordination and monitoring mechanisms, including the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel (CEART), UNESCO's Global Report on Teachers, and the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030.

Background

Created in 2008, the TTF is a unique global independent alliance working solely on teachers and teacher issues. It is dedicated to raising awareness, expanding knowledge, and supporting countries on the questions and themes raised in Target 4.c of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4). The TTF believes that teaching should be a valued profession and that every learner should be taught by qualified, motivated, and empowered teachers within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems to foster learning and achieve inclusive and equitable quality education for all.

To achieve this vision, the TTF mobilizes governments and other stakeholders for the advancement of teachers and quality learning, acting as a catalyst for global, regional and national efforts. It approaches this work under three main headings: producing and disseminating knowledge, advocacy and learning about national and regional policy all the while aligning itself with the international community's pledge to "…ensure that teachers and educators are empowered, adequately recruited, well-trained, professionally qualified, motivated and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems."

Teacher Task Force - 2024 Policy Dialogue Forum

The TTF Policy Dialogue Forum is a biennial flagship event organized to push progress towards achieving the Education 2030 Agenda and, more specifically, the SDG 4.c target which aims to "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."

The Forum creates an essential space for education actors and teacher stakeholders (including policy-makers, teachers, teacher and civil society organizations, researchers, international, multilateral and private sector organizations, and foundations) to come together and examine teacher issues, share good practices and challenges and strengthen collaboration and communication. In doing so it also provides a unique opportunity to build alliances for advocacy and to mobilize resources. Its aim is to produce clear outcomes which lead to concrete change on the path to achieving inclusive education for all.

Global teacher shortages and how to solve them is the theme at the heart of the 14th International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (TTF) Policy Dialogue Forum (PDF) and governance meetings to be held in person from 26-29 February in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The Forum is co-organized by the TTF Secretariat and the Ministry of Basic Education of South Africa and will focus on i) addressing challenges leading to teacher shortages; (ii) strengthening policies for the professionalization of the teacher workforce; and (iii) promoting national and international cooperation to address teacher shortages.

Introduction to the issue of teacher shortages and rationale for the 2024 PDF

This year's theme is timely and important as teacher shortages remain a complex and persistent obstacle to achieving global education objectives. The Forum will bring together international education stakeholders in person to exchange ideas and explore policy options and recommendations for ministries, civil society organizations, international organizations and donors that support teachers, school leaders, teacher educators and policy-makers.

Teachers are the lifeblood of any education system and having enough qualified teachers is at the centre of achieving the aims of the Education 2030 Agenda and SDG 4.c. Even so, while the number of teachers globally has steadily increased at all levels of education in the last couple of decades, the world still faces an ongoing shortage (UNESCO, 2021a; UNESCO and TTF, 2022).

According to new projections, progress has been made in several countries to recruit the required number of teachers to achieve universal primary and secondary education, yet there remains a projected global teacher shortage of 44 million teachers by 2030, down from 69 million in 2016. One third of these are needed in sub-Saharan Africa alone (UNESCO and TTF, 2023).

Resolving teacher shortages has long been a global priority with the efforts of previous global agendas (EFA, MDGs) largely focused on primary education and countries with growing populations or large numbers of out of school children, as most high-income nations had already achieved universal primary education (UPE). However, it is worth noting that teacher shortages remain a global concern in both developed and developing countries.

With the launch of the Education 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in 2015, the focus of global teacher shortages became more complex as targets expanded to include universal secondary education (USE) in addition to UPE (UNESCO, 2016). Highlighting the need for secondary teachers not only added a huge quantitative bump to projections on global teacher shortages, but the specialized nature and advanced requirements for those positions also added complexity to recruitment and training for new teachers (Mulkeen et al., 2017).

More recently, and especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, many high-income nations have also started to report teacher shortages, including Japan, Australia, the United States, France, and the Netherlands among others (UNESCO and TTF, 2022 and 2023). The pandemic brought many issues to the forefront, but it also exacerbated pre-existing challenges faced by teachers such as poor pay in comparison with other professions requiring similar levels of qualifications, high workloads and stressful working conditions (UNESCO and TTF, 2022; See et al., 2020). This culmination of events has left the world facing the truly global challenge of addressing teacher shortages.

So why must systems do everything in their power to alleviate teacher shortages? More than simply hindering the completion of the Education 2030 Agenda, teacher shortages have immediate and practical impacts on students and learning outcomes. Research has shown time and again that quality teaching matters; it is the most important school-level factor for improving student learning (Bruns and Luque, 2014; Chetty et al., 2014). Prolonged teacher shortages may also lead to vicious cycles that make it hard for systems to attract and retain

enough teachers due to the negative effects on those who continue to work in schools. Issues such as increased pupil-teacher ratios, larger class sizes, or more teaching hours per week can hurt teacher morale and drive down retention numbers (TTF, 2019; Mulkeen et al., 2017). In sum, schools and classrooms bereft of teachers are less likely to meet the core aim of SDG 4 that "all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education" (United Nations Statistics Division, 2021, p. 5).

Those realities together make teacher shortages one of the most pressing issues in global education discussions today. In conjunction with the release of the UNESCO/TTF Global Report on Teachers, the TTF will use this Forum to launch conversations and debates about immediate and future steps to address global teacher shortages. To do this, the forum has three major themes:

1. Addressing common challenges leading to teacher shortages;

2. Strengthening policies for the professionalization of the teacher workforce; and

3. Promoting national and international cooperation to reduce teacher shortages.

Theme 1: Addressing common challenges leading to teacher shortages

Part of the difficulty in finding solutions to teacher shortages emerges from the multifactored nature of the challenge. While the push for universal education and increases in student populations have driven much of the demand for teachers — according to new projections, 42 percent of the teacher gap is to fill new positions to expand access to schooling — there is another significant dimension. A substantial 58 percent of the teachers needed correspond to replacements for those leaving the profession (UNESCO and TTF, 2023). Teacher shortages are highly dependent on context and can mean different things to different systems, including:

- A quantitative shortfall due to increasing student numbers from high population growth or a reduction in the number of out-of-school children;

- A quantitative shortfall because of difficulties recruiting and retaining teachers due to the status of the profession, poor working conditions or low pay compared to other professions;

- A qualitative shortfall due to a lack of training and certification for teachers working in the system or a lack of capacity to prepare adequate numbers of qualified teachers; or

- A lack of diversity and equity in the makeup of a system's workforce leading to shortages of teachers based on gender, linguistics, subject-area expertise, or other factors.

Many systems around the world face growing student populations and a subsequent need for more teachers for a variety of reasons. Population growth has long placed stress on teacher recruitment efforts to keep up with demand but advances towards the SDGs have created additional challenges. For example, some countries recently started offering free

basic education for all while others have made upper secondary education compulsory for the first time. In Zambia, the government expanded free education in 2022 from primary students to secondary students (Ukoh, 2023). This expansion led to an enormous recruitment effort to find 55,000 new teachers over a five-year period (UNICEF, 2022).

Other systems face quantitative shortages due largely to the low prestige of the teaching profession, stemming from issues which range from a lack of basic security or sanitation facilities to high administrative burdens or a lack of professionalism or career pathway options. No matter what the context or issues, research has shown that the low prestige of the profession can cause systems to struggle to both attract new candidates as well as retain the ones they already have (TTF, 2021; Evans and Yuan, 2018). Research from South Africa, for instance, found that teachers are emigrating from the country due to low pay and poor working conditions. This has led to teacher shortages, especially in rural settings (TTF, 2021; Mlambo and Adetiba, 2020). Another issue affecting shortages, which emerged during a TTF consultation of members in May 2023, is brain-drain and teacher mobility in the Caribbean, the Arab States and other regions where qualified teachers migrate looking for better working conditions. These challenges worsen in emergencies when the working conditions are more precarious, teachers lack training and support, and face emotionally challenging or even live-threatening situations e.g., when schools are under attack.

A separate, but not less impactful challenge comes from systems that struggle to find enough qualified teachers to meet student needs. An important aspect of meeting the SDG goals is providing every child with a quality education, but systems struggle to meet this objective if students are taught by unqualified or poorly trained teachers. A shortage of quality teachers can occur in systems that focus on quickly addressing quantitative shortages, which may lead to the relaxing of entry requirements or shortening of initial teacher education and pre-service training (Mulkeen et al., 2017). Other systems may not have the infrastructure necessary to properly train enough new teachers to meet demand (Mulkeen et al., 2017). Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, has battled the issue of qualitative shortages, with large drops in the percentage of teachers with the minimum required qualifications in the last two decades at both the primary and secondary levels (TTF, 2021).

A final typical challenge that systems face involves a shortage of specific groups of teachers due to a lack of equity and inclusion in workforces. A common shortage of this type comes in the form of gender disparities, which can skew in either direction depending on context. For instance, stereotypes about the role of women as caregivers, combined with the lack of prestige of the profession, can prevent men from seeking teaching roles, especially in high-income contexts or at lower levels of education (UNESCO, 2022a). On the other hand, a lack of employment opportunities and stereotypes about women's role in the workforce, especially leadership positions, can result in a surplus of men in the teaching ranks such as in sub-Saharan Africa (TTF, 2023). In numerous countries, including those in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, women in leadership positions are widely under-represented compared to the numbers of female teachers (Bergmann and Alban, 2022). Another example is when schools face shortages of qualified teachers that have the same language (including indigenous languages) or ethnic backgrounds as the students they teach. This situation can arise from a lack of equity in recruitment or training measures for teachers, which can prove especially true in isolated or remote contexts (TTF, 2019).

One way for systems to reduce shortages in specific populations and improve equity, is to offer incentives to targeted groups. For example, the Working to Advance Science and Technology Education for African Women Foundation offers undergraduate scholarships to women interested in STEM topics (UNESCO, 2019b) and the Forum for African Women Educationalists aims to promote girls' and women's education in sub-Saharan Africa.

Guiding questions on challenges leading to teacher shortages

- What are the most pressing challenges and lessons learned from systems that have faced large growth in student populations and subsequent teacher shortages? How are these challenges different at varying levels of education (from pre-primary to tertiary) and what have been the successful strategies to address them?

- What conditions have been the main driving factors of teacher shortages spreading across numerous countries in recent years? How have systems adapted to meet these challenges?

- What strategies have systems used to promote equity and reduce shortages among specific teaching populations, especially women, and improve the equitable deployment of staff at all levels?

- How do working conditions for teachers change for teachers during times of crisis and how can education systems better support teachers and maintain retention rates? What are the specific responses needed in the face of different kinds of crises, e.g. violent conflict, forced displacement, disasters, public health emergencies?

Which data, tools, mechanisms, or means of analysis can systems utilize to better understand and project the true nature of teacher shortages relating to quantity, quality and diversity?

Theme 1 Breakout Sessions:

Managing teacher shortages, elevating the status, and working conditions of teachers

For many systems, the challenges leading to teacher shortages can be complex and even stem from progress made towards other educational goals. Examples could include solving issues of teacher quantity and availability that lead directly to qualitative shortages (e.g., by lowering qualification requirements), or greatly improving access to primary education which necessitates more schools and teachers at the secondary level. This breakout session will debate how systems can address, prioritize and plan for these interrelated challenges, ensuring that teacher quality, status and working conditions are not compromised. It will also examine any examples of comprehensive strategies that have found measures of success. It will also discuss the implications for uncompetitive working conditions and how they have impacted on attractiveness of the profession, pushing potential candidates to other professions or for current teachers to other jurisdictions and countries based on international recruitment efforts leading to systemic "brain drain".

Diversifying the teacher workforce and building equity through inclusive policies

Often systems face teacher shortages within certain populations, based on gender disparities, or shortages of teachers that have the same cultural or linguistic backgrounds as their students. Policies that foster a more diversified teacher workforce not only contribute to more inclusive working environments, but also positively impact student outcomes, which leads to more equitable education systems. This breakout session will discuss and debate proposals on how to make teaching workforces more equitable, with a special focus on addressing gender disparity.

Finding and supporting teachers in emergency and crisis situations

Teaching positions in emergency and crisis situations can be extremely difficult to fill due to stressful working conditions such as displacement, threats to physical safety or psychological trauma. At the same time, migration crises stemming from turmoil within a country can lead to massive brain drain in the country of origin, exacerbating pre-existing teacher shortages. This breakout session will explore one of these issues in depth or cover the topic as a whole.

Explored dimensions will include how to ensure enabling and safe working conditions for teachers in emergency situations, and the social and emotional training and support that can help improve motivation and job satisfaction in order to deploy and retain more staff in those contexts. Insights into systemic challenges teachers face in different crisis scenarios (violent conflict, forced displacement, disasters, public health emergencies) are also welcome, with an emphasis on measures to address them, such as contingency plans and building effective teacher salary systems that make it possible to continue paying teachers during conflict. From the perspective of loss of talented teachers, it will also explore possible avenues to support teachers compelled to leave the country who now wish to return.

Theme 2: Strengthening policies for the professionalization of the teacher workforce

While the causes of teacher shortages are multidimensional, the most effective policy options to address them usually form part of larger holistic plans rather than existing as stand-alone solutions. Policies for the professionalization of teaching are an example, since they encompass a variety of interrelated dimensions, including high quality initial teacher education, support to novice teachers, continuous professional development, fostering teacher collaboration, structuring teacher careers in such a way that increasing expertise is rewarded and recognized, and including the voice of teachers in the shaping of the profession and education (UNESCO, 2021). Given their multidimensionality, policies for teacher professionalization can raise the attractiveness of the profession over time to new recruits as well as help retain more teachers already working in the system.

Policies targeting teacher training can help reduce shortages in several ways. Initially, policies that expand access to training opportunities can contribute to lowering qualitative shortages in systems that do not have teachers meeting baseline requirements. One way this can happen is for systems to require additional training for the certification process of contract or community teachers, such as in Uganda (TTF, 2020). Providing opportunities for certification and enhanced qualification could also raise the quality of instruction and motivation of these teachers (TTF, 2020, Bashir et al., 2019). For instance, Congo allows contract teachers to move into permanent status by passing a professional test while Cameroon opens pathways to permanent employment for contract teachers who have taught for five to ten years (TTF, 2020).

Other underqualified teachers, especially those in rural and remote locations, may struggle to get to teacher training centres to improve their qualification level. One potential option for these types of teachers is to incorporate technology to offer more remote or hybrid training options, such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) (TTF, 2019; McAleavy et al., 2018).

Over time, policies targeting training can also enhance the prestige of the profession to better recruit and retain higher numbers of teachers. Research has found that quality professional development and opportunities for collaborative training can raise motivation in teachers and improve retention (Evans and Yuan, 2018; OECD, 2020). School leaders can also play an important role in this process by establishing a culture that promotes mentorship and ongoing training opportunities for teachers within schools (Boeskens et al., 2020; Jensen et al., 2016). Through this type of integrated, ongoing process of professional training and development, teachers can develop into lifelong learners and raise the professionalism and status of the career.

To increase retention rates, systems have a host of policy options that aim to raise the prestige of the profession and improve working conditions for teachers. Because of their nature, policies that target retention typically work as part of comprehensive plans to improve the esteem of the teaching profession instead of as standalone options. Some examples include:

- Providing induction and mentoring programmes as well as school leaders offering and facilitating ongoing school-based continuing professional development, coaching and instructional support;

- Increasing teacher rewards and remuneration based on set criteria and incentives according to enhanced teacher career pathway options;

- Increasing opportunities for teacher agency, autonomy, innovation, and leadership;

- Instilling and reinvigorating a sense of belonging to a profession through the establishment of teacher councils or other professional communities; or

- Developing rigorous teacher standards that further professionalize teaching based on set competencies (TTF, 2019; Mulkeen et al., 2017; Tournier and Chimier, 2019).

Largely, these types of policies target the professionalism, support structure and agency of teachers, which can in turn raise teacher motivation and job satisfaction (Crehan, 2016; Tournier and Chimier, 2019). For example, Finland has developed a highly professionalized and collaborative culture for its teachers, which has given teachers a high degree of agency to make decisions and solve problems. These factors, combined with a required five-year teacher education programme, including at master's level, and a supportive school leadership model, have made teaching a highly popular profession in the country (Lavonen, Forthcoming).

Guiding questions on strengthening policies for the professionalization of the teacher workforce

- How can systems find a proper balance between expediting training programmes for teacher recruits or contract teachers in hard to staff areas without sacrificing quality and ensuring longer-term equitable working conditions for teachers?

- How have systems attempted to raise the prestige of the profession by turning professional development into lifelong learning opportunities? How can communities of practice or networks of exchange developed in collaborative training make the profession more rewarding?

- How can education systems ensure teachers can provide a more supportive, collaborative teaching and learning environment? In what ways can school leaders provide support and instructional leadership for teachers while also maintaining oversight and accountability?

- How do systems integrate and align teacher policies targeting teacher recruitment, training and retention in a holistic manner? How do teacher unions and social dialogue play a role in this process?

Theme 2 Breakout Sessions:

Recruiting enough qualified teachers and providing teacher education and lifelong learning opportunities for all

For addressing teacher shortages recruiting higher numbers of teachers is not enough: recruited teachers need to be qualified, and this requires quality initial teacher education programmes. Teachers should also be equipped to adapt and respond to emerging challenges throughout their career, for which access to lifelong learning opportunities is crucial. Even when quality teacher education and professional development are available, shortages in specific subjects, regions or teaching populations might persist. Targeted recruitment can then be used by systems to ensure equitable teacher deployment and a diverse teacher workforce. This issue will be explored in depth from one of several angles, to include accessible quality teacher education and professional development programs, recruiting and training more teachers locally in rural or remote locations, examining how recruitment efforts differ at different levels of education, or innovative methods of recruiting and certifying contract or community teachers.

Leveraging technologies to support the transformation of teaching and learning

A dearth of qualified teachers can stem from a host of factors including systems that lack the training infrastructure to meet demand or teachers living in locations too remote to easily reach training centres. This breakout session will look at how technological solutions can help solve these types of issues. Through blended or fully online training sessions, systems can expand access to quality teacher training and lower qualitative shortages. Another angle to examine is how systems can use online portals to offer higher quality professional development and means of collaboration, raising the motivation of teachers and the prestige of the profession.

Valorising the teaching profession and teachers' voice

In many countries around the world, teaching is thought of as a profession of last resort. This idea can permeate into both potential new teaching recruits as well as active teachers considering whether they want to continue in the profession. This breakout session will explore and debate innovative ways that systems can change the perception of the teaching profession into something more positive, including through the enhancement of teacher agency in classrooms and participation in social dialogue and decision-making at different levels. The timing and alignment of policies with other measures that address teacher shortages will also be considered.

Theme 3: Promoting national and international cooperation to reduce teacher shortages

Even with numerous options available to address teacher shortages for policy-makers, additional transformative measures are needed to validate teaching as an attractive profession with the pressing world deadline to achieve the SDGs. To achieve these transformations national and international cooperation, and solidarity are needed. This further motivates the global community to develop and support ways of sustainably financing teacher salaries and all associated policies that eliminate shortages. The UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on the teaching profession called on adequate financing and the need to invest more on teachers. Funding for public education should be guaranteed, including long-term strategies to ensure well-trained and supported teachers. The Policy Dialogue Forum is a key opportunity to bring the international community together to implement the recommendations from the High-Level Panel and elevate the status of the teaching profession. On this, the role of the Teacher Task Force Network becomes critical to call for more funding, better data and to advocate for the teaching profession.

As education systems continue to grow, likewise data, analytics and digital technology continue to grow in importance for the purposes of teacher management issues. Education management information systems (EMIS) or a specific Teacher Management Information System (TMIS) can prove invaluable in terms of general organization and efficiency as well as improved fiscal responsibility. Systems also need to keep a finger on the pulse of global and local issues that motivate young people as potential teaching candidates. They also need to strive towards evolving and improving the profession to ensure it a viable and attractive option for those entering the job market.

To fully eliminate global teacher shortages, governments and ministries must first develop realistic, sustainable ways to finance teacher remuneration and professionalization, as well as the infrastructure and support systems needed to produce and retain enough qualified teachers. Additionally, governments should be supported by international cooperation and solidarity to ensure sustainable financing and reduce teacher shortages. This issue is vital as teacher salaries make up the bulk of education budgets in most systems, with low- and middle-income countries typically spending 75 per cent or more of their education funding on teacher remuneration (GPE, 2022). Since financing for universal education by 2030 remains largely out of reach for many systems, countries have instead developed national benchmarks for making progress based off their own contextual realities. However, the 2023 Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR) projects that an annual average financing gap of US$97 billion from 2023 to 2030 for low- and middle-income countries to even hit their own benchmarks. Thus there is much yet to be done to make further progress towards SDG 4 goals.

To sustainably finance enough teachers, increases in education budgets are needed both domestically and from donors. Initiatives such as the UN's TES and the High-Level Panel as a follow up initiative emphasize the need for rapid, collective action and have called on all countries to meet domestic spending targets of 4-6 per cent of GDP and 15-20 per cent of public expenditure on education. They have also called for donor countries and international cooperation to meet their commitments of 0.7 per cent Gross National Income to their Official

Development Assistance (ODA) (UNESCO, 2022b). The GEMR team calculated that by adjusting ODA spending, donor countries could cover up to one third of the average financing gap to reach national benchmarks. However, a rapid increase in domestic spending must still occur to make up for the rest: Among the 178 countries with available data in 2017–22, 61 – 34% did not meet either of the two domestic spending targets (2023 GEMR).

Increasing the number of teachers is not only difficult for systems to finance; it can also become difficult to manage and track teachers. Enhanced data show potential in addressing teacher shortages by allowing planners or school leaders to more efficiently deploy teachers. For example, Senegal has developed an integrated system that automatically estimates teacher recruitment needs based on a combination of vacant posts and data concerning under-represented groups or regions (IIEP-UNESCO Pôle de Dakar, 2017; Mackintosh et al., 2020).   Quality data on teachers can also allow systems to become more cost-efficient by improving accuracy that allows for better tracking of personnel and support teacher management. For instance, Uganda removed more than 5,000 ghost teachers — those listed on payrolls and receiving a salary but not actually teaching — from its system in 2012 (Mulkeen et al., 2017).

Large-scale, global data collection and monitoring of teachers can also play a key role in more direct targeting of policies and funding to reduce shortages. Currently, a significant gap exists in global data collection on teachers and the teaching profession (UNESCO, 2019a). Beyond basic information (such as size of the workforce, gender, qualifications, attrition or salaries), global data collection is sparse and no longer fit for the purpose of aiding and benchmarking progress on the issue of shortages. Significant new initiatives and investment are needed to better understand and unpack the characteristics of the teaching workforce, the quality of teachers, their training, remuneration and other working conditions. Without this, international and regional organizations and other development partners will be held back in their capacity to inform and support policy-making and model information and data for teacher management at regional and national levels.

Looking to the future, systems must continue to work to ensure the teaching career stays relevant and attracts high-quality recruits. This includes forging a new agenda for the teaching profession to dignify teachers and teaching; which includes the cooperation and inclusion of different stakeholders from governments, the international community, experienced and novice teachers and possible candidates and the community as a whole. This new agenda should allow teachers to expand their forms of delivery to include pedagogies of cooperation and. collaborartion, community outreach, greening education, digital tranformation, service learning, action research among other emerging and innovatrive approaches. An innovative approach can also motivate and attract greater numbers of young people into the profession through the revaluing and dignifying of the teaching profession.

Guiding questions on promoting national and international cooperation to reduce teacher shortages

- What resources or support mechanisms do countries facing large demographic changes need most to combat teacher shortages moving forward? What role do international organizations play in supporting these needs?

- How can governments ensure the teaching profession is dignified by enhancing funding, data and advocacy for teachers? What role does the international community play? How can the Teacher Task Force as a consolidated and international network support the elevation and status of the teaching profession?

- What types of data and calculations do countries use when weighing options to reduce teacher shortages such as increases in teacher salaries compared to funding other teacher initiatives? How do current and future demographic trends play into this decision-making process?

- How are education systems using data to better manage teacher shortages based on region, subject matter, etc.? How do school and local/district leaders play a role in this process?

- How can digital technologies be leveraged to transform the profession, its culture and the work of teachers? Could this have an impact on making the profession more attractive?

- How are education leaders looking to the future and changing their approach to attract today's youth to the profession? How do the rapidly changing nature of technology and future workforce demands play into this approach?

- What should be included in a new agenda for the teaching profession? What role do different stakeholders play? How to support the implementation of the High-Level Panel recommendations?

Theme 3 Breakout Sessions:

Sustainably financing the policies that target teacher shortages

While many actors play a role in attempts to fund the initiatives that make up the Education 2030 Agenda, recent projections show these efforts are still well short of meeting SDG targets. This breakout session will debate what needs to happen for all pertinent actors, including the role of national and international cooperation, to better align and coordinate to make tangible progress towards reducing teacher shortages and meeting the objectives of SDG 4.c. This will include perspectives from international organizations, the private sector, donor countries and low- and middle-income countries.

Using enhanced data to improve teacher management

A lack of accurate and timely data can make properly addressing teacher shortages more difficult or next to impossible. This breakout session will explore how to collect, analyse and apply more timely data at all levels of their networks. Examples and lessons learned could include training and utilising school leaders, local or regional staff, national staff, or adding positions and additional technology to help in the process. It could also include discussion of new classification frameworks to develop better data to unpack what is a qualified teacher.

Forging a new agenda for the teaching profession

With the onset of the fourth industrial revolution that focuses on artificial intelligence and other advanced technologies, innovation and creativity are becoming more desired attributes in global workforces. This breakout session will explore how the changing global work environment applies to teaching and how education systems can adapt all aspects of their future recruiting and training pipelines to remain a viable profession in a rapidly changing world. It will further address pathways to making the profession more attractive.

Regional and thematic perspectives

In addition to breakout sessions for each of the three major themes, the Forum will also include sessions on regional and thematic perspectives. These will focus on challenges and policy options for addressing teacher shortages but seen through a regional and thematic lens and considering unique contextual factors. With the varying nature of causes leading to teacher shortages, regional breakout groups offer a chance for more detailed and nuanced discussion and debate involving countries from a single region regarding commonly experienced challenges. Meanwhile TTF thematic breakout groups can focus on shortages related

to one specific issue, independent of region. It is hoped that these breakout groups allow participants to find common ground and develop shared visions when considering possible policy options to address teacher shortages.

Some guiding questions for these sessions could include:

- What challenges have systems faced in reducing gender disparities among teacher workforces in their respective regions? How does this challenge differ at different levels of education (pre-primary versus secondary, for example) as well as in leadership positions?
- What role does the low prestige of the profession play in ongoing teacher shortages in the region? What innovative strategies have systems used to improve the culture and esteem of teaching over time?
- How are countries planning to address future workforce and demographic changes when considering policies that target teacher shortages? How do the realities of the regional situation affect policy decisions and future planning?

Expected outcomes

The 2024 PDF will seek to enrich the global discussion surrounding ongoing teacher shortages by developing insights and policy recommendations that:

- Highlight the global scale and ongoing importance of addressing teacher shortages in various contexts around the world.
- Identify and diagnose some of the major issues and challenges that lead to teacher shortages, to include perspectives from countries from different regions and with different income levels as well as providing a focus on equity and emergency or crisis situations, including conflicts, situations of violence, forced displacement, disasters, public health emergencies and hardship situations such as migration, brain-drain and inequality of opportunities.
- Produce evidence-based recommendations for national governments to better understand strategic policy options for the improved recruitment, training and retention of teachers.
- Broaden discussions and debates about the need to ensure the profession is attractive and how to properly manage budgeting and personnel to reach a point where every teacher is qualified, trained and supported so that learners can enjoy a quality education.
- Provide insights on how the TTF can advance the global cooperation and solidarity in transforming the teaching profession including the implementation of the HLP recommendations; possible means for stronger coordinated financing of education and of teachers to ensure gaps are filled and global efforts to collect teacher data to inform policy-making and benchmark progress.

Annex 1: References

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