

Call for Proposals: Breakout Sessions

International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030

14th Policy Dialogue Forum

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

Johannesburg, South Africa, 26-28 February 2024

Overview:

One of the central mandates of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 or Teacher Task Force (TTF) is to advocate for improvements in teaching and the teaching profession as a means for ensuring the provision of quality education and equitable outcomes for all. As such the TTF, through its biennial Policy Dialogue Forum (PDF), aims to raise members' and other education stakeholders' knowledge on crucial issues facing the implementation of the teacher target 4.c of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The PDF therefore represents a key laboratory of ideas to help ensure the achievements of SDG 4 on education and the Education 2030 Agenda.

Led by the TTF Secretariat, the 14th PDF will be co-organised with and hosted by the Republic of South Africa's National Department of Basic Education. The theme of this edition is "*Addressing Global Teacher Shortages: Dignifying, diversifying and valorising the profession*".

The challenge of teacher shortages remains a complex and persistent obstacle to achieving global education objectives. Challenges have persisted across several geographies for decades, but they were exacerbated in many contexts during the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath due, in part, to increasing demands for teachers coupled with a lack of recognition, status and support. Data show a remaining global gap of 44 million additional teachers needed to achieve the SDGs, while recent data also show that teacher attrition is rising in several countries around the world.

The PDF will bring together various like-minded international education stakeholders and leaders from around the world to exchange ideas, explore policy options and review recommendations to curb current shortages and plan for building a more robust and sustainable teacher workforce that meets the needs of learners and society. Delegates will include policymakers and other representatives from ministries of education, civil society organizations, international organizations and donors that support teachers, school leaders, teacher educators and those involved in providing education.

Objectives:

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.

Breakout sessions:

The Forum promotes participatory approaches, dialogue and exchange of national and regional experience for better evidence-based teacher policy formulation and implementation. The forum is open to participants during a 3-day in-person format (26-28 February), beginning with an opening ceremony and a ministerial session, which will be followed by three plenary panels based on the subthemes in the table shown below. Related to and following each of the plenaries, participants can choose to attend one of the various simultaneous **Breakout Sessions** that expand on the three subthemes.

Subtheme 1: Addressing common challenges leading to teacher shortages	Subtheme 2: Strengthening policies for the professionalization of the teacher workforce	Subtheme 3: Promoting national and international cooperation to reduce teacher shortages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breakout session 1: Managing teacher shortages, elevating the status, and working conditions of teachers.• Breakout session 2: Diversifying the teacher workforce and building equity through inclusive policies.• Breakout session 3: Finding and supporting teachers in emergency and crisis situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breakout session 1: Recruiting enough qualified teachers and providing teacher education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.• Breakout session 2: Leveraging technologies to support the transformation of teaching and learning.• Breakout session 3: Valorising the teaching profession and teachers' voice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breakout session 1: Sustainably financing the policies that target teacher shortages.• Breakout session 2: Using enhanced data to improve teacher management.• Breakout session 3: Forging a new agenda for the teaching profession.

Lastly, TTF governance meetings will be held during different moments of the forum, including regional, constituency, and Steering Committee (SC) meetings as well as the TTF's Annual Meeting.

Call for Proposals: As part of the main programme of the Policy Dialogue Forum, the [TTF is inviting its members to submit proposals to organize breakout sessions](#) according to the nine subthemes detailed above. Please see below for a more detailed description of each breakout session.

Should you wish to organize a Side Event, you can mention this in the “**comments**” box in the [submission form](#).

Descriptions of Breakout Sessions

Subtheme 1: Addressing common challenges leading to teacher shortages

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

In many educational systems, the issues contributing to teacher shortages can be complex and may result from advancements made in pursuit of other educational objectives. For instance, addressing problems related to the quantity and increasing the numbers of teachers may inadvertently lead to qualitative shortages (e.g., by lowering qualification standards). Similarly, significant improvements in access to primary education will require the establishment of more secondary schools and the hiring of additional teachers at that level.

This breakout session will explore how systems can address, prioritize, and plan for interconnected challenges to maintain the quality, status, and working conditions of teachers. It will analyse successful instances of comprehensive strategies and explore the implications of uncompetitive working conditions on the attractiveness of the teaching profession. This may lead individuals to consider other careers or prompt current teachers to seek opportunities in different jurisdictions, contributing to a systemic "brain drain" through international recruitment efforts.

1.b. Diversifying the teacher workforce and building equity through inclusive policies.

Frequently, educational systems encounter shortages of teachers within specific groups, characterized by gender imbalances or a lack of teachers sharing similar cultural or linguistic backgrounds with their students. Policies aimed at cultivating a more diverse teaching workforce not only enhance inclusive working environments but also have a positive influence on student outcomes, fostering more equitable education systems.

This breakout session will explore and discuss suggestions for promoting equity in teaching workforces, with a particular emphasis on addressing gender disparities.

1.c. Finding and supporting teachers in emergency and crisis situations

Fulfilling teaching positions during emergency and crisis situations poses significant challenges due to stressful working conditions, including displacement, threats to physical safety, or psychological trauma. Simultaneously, migration crises arising from internal turmoil in a country can result in a substantial loss of talented teachers, worsening existing teacher shortages.

This breakout session will aim to thoroughly explore issues related to teaching in crisis situations. It will cover strategies to ensure supportive working conditions, including social and emotional training, to enhance motivation and retention of staff in challenging contexts. The session will encourage insights into systemic challenges faced by teachers in various crisis scenarios, emphasizing the implementation

of measures like contingency plans and effective salary systems. Additionally, it will explore avenues to support talented teachers compelled to leave the country who wish to return.

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

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

Addressing teacher shortages goes beyond recruiting higher numbers; it requires qualified teachers, emphasizing the importance of quality initial teacher education programmes. Additionally, teachers need to be equipped for ongoing challenges throughout their careers, emphasizing the crucial role of access to lifelong learning opportunities. Even with available quality education and professional development, shortages in specific subjects, regions, or teaching populations may persist. Systems can employ targeted recruitment strategies to ensure equitable teacher deployment and foster a diverse teacher workforce.

This breakout session will explore this issue comprehensively, considering aspects such as accessible quality teacher education, professional development programmes, recruiting and training teachers in rural or remote locations, examining variations in recruitment efforts across different education levels, and exploring innovative methods for recruiting and certifying contract or community teachers.

2.b. Leveraging technologies to support the transformation of teaching and learning

A dearth of qualified teachers can arise from various factors, such as systems lacking the training infrastructure to meet demand or teachers residing in locations too remote to access training centres easily.

This breakout session will explore how technological solutions can address these challenges. Utilizing blended or entirely online training sessions, systems can enhance access to high-quality teacher training and reduce shortages in quality. Another aspect to consider is how systems can leverage digital tools and online portals to provide superior professional development and collaborative tools, boosting teachers' motivation, transforming pedagogies and elevating the prestige of the profession.

2.c. Valorising the teaching profession and teachers' voice

In numerous countries globally, teaching is often viewed as a profession of last resort. This perception can influence both potential new recruits and existing teachers contemplating their commitment to the profession.

This breakout session will investigate and discuss creative approaches for systems to transform the perception of the teaching profession into a more positive light. This includes empowering teacher agency within classrooms, encouraging participation in social dialogue, and involving teachers in decision-making processes at various levels. The session will also explore the timing and alignment of policies with other measures aimed at addressing teacher shortages.

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

3.a. Sustainably financing the policies that target teacher shortages

Numerous stakeholders contribute to financing initiatives under the Education 2030 Agenda, yet recent projections indicate a significant gap in meeting SDG teacher targets.

In this breakout session, discussions will focus on determining the necessary steps for all relevant actors, emphasizing the role of national and international cooperation to enhance alignment and coordination. The goal is to achieve tangible progress in alleviating teacher shortages and fulfilling the objectives of Target SDG 4.c. Perspectives from international organizations, the private sector, donor countries, and low- and middle-income countries will be considered.

3.b. Using enhanced data to improve teacher management

Insufficient and poor-quality data can significantly hinder the analysis and understanding of teacher issues undermining effective resolution of teacher shortages.

This breakout session will examine the methods for gathering, analysing, and employing more timely data across all levels of educational networks. Examples and insights may involve training and engaging school leaders, local or regional personnel, national staff, or incorporating new positions and technology to facilitate the data collection process. The session may also include discussions on innovative classification frameworks aimed at generating improved data for a more nuanced understanding of what constitutes a qualified teacher.

3.c. Forging a new agenda for the teaching profession

As the fourth industrial revolution comes into focus, artificial intelligence and advanced technologies are increasingly under the scrutiny of education policy-makers. However, as global workforces evolve, emphasizing the value of collaboration, innovation and creativity, teachers will increasingly need to cope with the reality of AI's implications for education.

This breakout session will examine the implications of the evolving global work landscape on teaching. It will explore how education systems can modify various aspects of future recruitment and training processes to stay relevant in a rapidly changing world.

Breakout sessions format:

All proposals for breakout sessions should comply with the following:

- Have a duration of 90 minutes, including 30 minutes for Q&A/discussion with the audience;
- Use innovative and interactive techniques as much as possible;
- Feature best practices and evidence-based examples; and
- Adhere to notions of inclusivity (in particular gender balance) and include the voices of policymakers, decision-makers, teachers and teacher education practitioners.

Furthermore, session organizers should produce a report or article on the outputs of each event which will be included in the Policy Dialogue Forum's Final Report. More information will be provided upon selection.

Proposals will be reviewed by the TTF Secretariat and an ad hoc committee comprised of TTF members.

Breakout sessions logistics:

Please note that all breakout sessions will be in-person and no travel will be arranged for speakers.

- The TTF Secretariat will:
 - Where possible, provide English and French **interpretation**
 - Include each session in the overall **programme** and **communications** of the Policy Dialogue Forum.
- The breakout session coordinators will be responsible for:
 - Designing the overall **discussion** and **agenda** for each breakout session, in line with the overall concept note and specified sub-themes
 - Identifying, organising and communicating with each of their **moderators** and **speakers**
 - Carrying out any further **communication**/publicity about the session.

Breakout sessions submissions:

Please use the online submission form

1. **Title** of the Session (selected from the above-mentioned options)
2. **Organizing partners** (names of agencies/ CSOs/ coalitions/ Ministries etc.); also, *please indicate if part of a TTF thematic group.*
3. **Names of lead organizers**
4. **Email** address of **lead organizer**
5. **Abstract** for the event (maximum 250 words)
6. **Names, organization, role, country** of **speakers** (please note if confirmed or tbc)
7. **Planned outputs / outcomes** (maximum 150 words)
8. **Notes**/comments (if you would like to propose a side event (i.e., outside of the main programme), please mention it [here](#)).

Breakout sessions timetable:

Please **submit** your proposal **via** [the online form](#)

Deadline for submissions is **12 January 2024**

TTF Secretariat will **announce** accepted proposals by **26 January 2024**

Further information

- The concept note and draft agenda for the event are available **online here**.
- The Forum is an in-person event.



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