

Teacher Task Force Regional Virtual Meetings
World Teachers' Day, 5 October 2020
Teachers: Leading in crisis, reimagining the future

Concept Note

Background

Organized by UNESCO, the international community celebrates World Teachers' Day (WTD) every year on 5 October since 1994 to commemorate the signing of the [1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers](#). Complementing this landmark achievement, WTD also commemorates the adoption, in 1997, of the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel. With teachers often cited as the single most important input to ensure education quality, WTD provides an annual occasion to take stock of teachers by measuring progress related to Target 4.c. of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as shine a light on the challenges teachers face in their role to deliver quality education.

This year, WTD will be celebrated under the theme "*Teachers: Leading in crisis, reimagining the future*", which acknowledges the context of unprecedented disruption of education due to challenges imposed by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on already constrained education systems.

Teacher Leadership

Around the world, teachers have been working individually and collectively to ensure the continuity of education through new learning opportunities for students. The COVID-19 crisis created a unique situation for teachers to demonstrate leadership, creativity and innovation, but it also underlined the importance that Ministries, educational authorities and schools develop strategies to reinforce leadership capacity across education systems in a distributed manner.

Teacher leadership can be understood as constituting a triangular continuum of micro-, meso-, and macro- levels in which teachers, head teachers and other education personnel act at these different levels, demonstrating multiple facets of distributed leadership including:

- **Micro level** leadership, which highlights the [experiences of teachers](#) and how they have *led in the classroom* in response to school closures adapting teaching to students' needs; in the use of/ transition to remote/distance teaching; and in responses during the return to school including ensuring effective classroom management, their students' health and safety; and proactively addressing their own personal and professional needs;
- **Meso level** leadership encompasses *school-wide responses*, in collaboration with colleagues, often representing additional responsibilities including administration and management tasks, and acting as pedagogical experts. As pedagogical experts, headteachers and others are positioned to lead on articulation and implementation of teaching and learning which will be critical for the continuation of learning. Senior and experienced teachers mentor juniors and peers, participate in local communities of practice, and encourage students and colleagues to learn and do things differently; and
- **Macro level** leadership involves *partnerships with parents and community* to ensure continued learning opportunities; it may often include examples where teachers developed creative and organic solutions to mitigate educational challenges confronting communities when classrooms and school-level arenas are compromised. It considers the

interconnection between school-based teaching and greater community/societal goals and aspirations.

Moving forward, stronger leadership by various actors in the classroom, across schools and in the community will be essential to mitigate the worst effects of the COVID-19 related education disruption, and the anticipated learning losses.

Objectives

Following from the Regional Meetings initiated in May/June of 2020 on distance teaching and the return to school, the TTF, with member organisations and partners is organizing a new series of discussions to coincide with the WTD celebration. These will build on the initial dialogue while also exploring the topic of teacher leadership and its key role in developing effective solutions to address challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic and building back resilient education systems.

In particular, the regional meetings will provide a forum to:

- Share examples of leadership that emerged, were implemented or are planned during different phases of the pandemic including the transition to remote teaching and the return to school;
- Identify the different systemic or policy level enabling factors that were conducive to foster effective leadership amongst school leaders and teachers at the classroom-, school- and community-levels;
- Identify challenges that need to be addressed to ensure leadership can be enhanced and teachers can take the lead on different dimensions of teaching and learning;
- Discuss different tools available to support teacher leadership, including the new TTF Toolkit for Reopening Schools, and TTF Knowledge Platform.

The presentations to be delivered by country representatives should attempt to address the following questions:

- What government interventions were implemented or are planned to strengthen leadership capacity of school leaders and teachers to ensure the continuity of learning in the use of distance education and the return to school (if applicable) at the classroom-, school-, and community-levels?
- Given the lack of time to prepare for school closures in most countries, what examples of leadership decisions and actions emerged to ensure the continuity of learning at the micro- (classroom), meso- (school) and macro- (community) levels?
- What forms of social dialogue were conducted or are planned within a strong teacher leadership orientation to ensure the voices of teachers are included in planning?
- What enabling factors and challenges currently exist to foster a leadership mindset?

Modality

The regional meetings, coordinated by the TTF Secretariat in cooperation with UNESCO Regional Offices and other regional partners, will be held between 6-9 October via Microsoft Teams or Zoom platforms. The duration of each meeting will be approximately 1 hour and a half. Information on how to connect to the platform will be communicated to all registered participants prior to the meeting. The agenda for the meeting and relevant documentation will be circulated in advance to give participants enough time to familiarize themselves with the information.

Participation

The regional meetings are aiming to consolidate networks in the region, thus, participation from TTF members and non-members is expected. The UNESCO field offices and other partners will help to identify crucial actors, policies and strategies on teachers and leadership to be presented. TTF focal points, Ministries of Education, and other relevant education actors working with teachers are invited to attend the meetings.

Tentative agenda

ITEM	TIME
Welcome and introduction (TTF & partner)	5 min
Keynote presentation (School leader)	7 min
Countries perspective -3 country experiences (tbc)	21 min (7 min each)
NGO/IGO intervention	7 min
Discussion including questions and answers	30 min
Closing remarks (TTF)	5 min