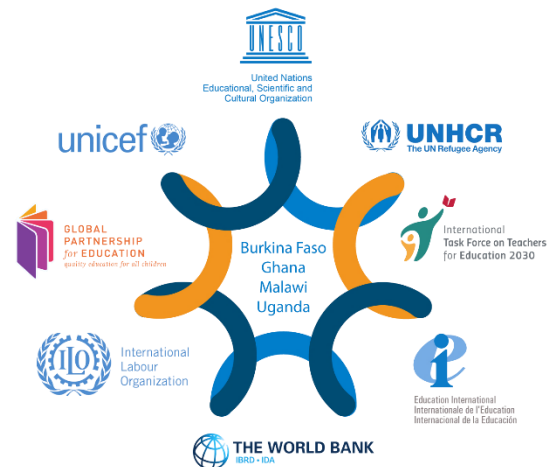# Norwegian Teacher Initiative: Strengthening Multi-Partner Cooperation to Support Teacher Policy and Improve Learning

Guidance note on developing a crisis-sensitive teacher policy

One of the aims of the Norwegian Teacher Initiative is to support education authorities of the four participating countries to elaborate strategies that will strengthen national teacher policies and the teaching and learning components of their national education sector plans[1]. The current COVID-19 crisis demonstrates, now more than ever, the need for thoughtful crisis-sensitive planning in education. With this in mind, building on its partnership approach, the initiative intends to complement teacher policy development with the key provisions needed to ensure that a teacher policy will also be a crisis-sensitive policy.

Crisis-sensitive planning in education

Through prevention and mitigation, crisis-sensitive planning contributes to bridging the humanitarian and development nexus, calling on all humanitarian and development actors to join forces to build the resilience of education systems. Lessons from past emergencies show that preparedness and contingency planning is crucial to the continuity of learning and teaching. Education sector plans, and related policies, should therefore be developed through a crisis-sensitive lens. They should take into account internal risks leading to school closures (e.g. due to conflict or a pandemic such as COVID-19), school occupation (by armed forces or as shelter during a disaster induced by natural hazard) or internal population displacement (due to unrest, internal conflict or natural hazards) while factoring in potential impact of external crises on the national education system, including refugee influx. Crisis-sensitive planning should also take into account the return and reintegration of refugees from exile which directly impacts the capacity of schools to accommodate more students. In most cases, population displacements lead to additional challenges such as overcrowding in schools but it can also result in opportunities such as the provision of additional resources for local schools to help them cope with the increase in student numbers.

---

[1] For more information on the Norwegian Teacher Initiative: https://en.unesco.org/themes/teachers/nti

In 2015, the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) of UNESCO developed a planning resource kit for education sector planners to integrate safety, resilience, and social cohesion in education sector planning. For IIEP, "*crisis-sensitive educational planning involves identifying and analysing existing risks of conflict and natural hazards and understanding the two-way interaction between these risks and education to develop strategies that respond appropriately. Crisis-sensitive planning aims to contribute to minimizing the negative impacts of risk on education service delivery and to maximize the positive impacts of education policies and programming on preventing conflict and disaster or mitigating their effects. It also requires identifying and overcoming patterns of inequity and exclusion in education, including for forcibly displaced populations, as well as harmful cultural practices.*"

A crisis-sensitive teacher policy

Developing a national crisis-sensitive teacher policy, as an integrated component of the national education sector plan, requires the inclusion of key provisions to policy dimensions that will ensure, in a crisis context, suitable employment and working conditions for teachers, appropriate teacher training and preparation, information sharing and consultation mechanisms, and teacher support for continued teaching and learning. While the leadership for crisis-sensitive planning rests with the Ministries of Education, private employers and teachers and their representatives can also bring meaningful contributions to the development and implementation of a crisis-sensitive teacher policy.

This Guidance Note intends to highlight key provisions that a crisis-sensitive teacher policy should include. It builds on the Teacher Policy Development Guide, a tool aimed to assist national policy- and decision-makers to devise evidence-based national teacher policies. The table below lists the key provisions that should be carefully considered for inclusion in the national teacher policy to make it crisis-sensitive. References are made to the applicable teacher policy dimension(s) (TPD) proposed by the Teacher Policy Development Guide.

Key policy areas	Provisions for crisis-sensitive teacher policy	☐
A. The crisis-sensitive teacher policy includes provisions to ensure suitable employment and working conditions: *TPD: Teacher employment and working conditions*	1. Teachers are provided with safe and healthy workplaces, which establish and maintain safe work practices. **Precisions and examples:** • Teachers have access to personal protective equipment (PPE) to minimize risk of spreading infections/transmitting viruses, such as facemasks and gloves, and sanitizing agents, such as hydro-alcoholic gels and soaps, to prevent infection and transmission of viruses. • Teachers are able to undertake social distancing and regular cleaning and disinfection of workstations, equipment and the larger work environment. • Teachers receive training/preparation on preventative measures, such as social distancing and hygiene and sanitary measures, and on the use of PPE. • Teachers receive training/preparation on promoting and disseminating information to keep children safe and healthy, for example information on hand-washing, nutrition and standards-based WASH facilities. • Teachers and school staff are provided adequate security at the workplace and in travelling to and from schools.	☐
	2. Teachers receive appropriate equipment to support distance and home-based learning. **Precisions and examples:** • Teachers have access to reliable internet and telephone connections and some form of digital communication channels (e.g. email, short message service (SMS), voice messages, messaging applications). • Teachers have access to free and open digital tools to support large-scale remote learning, including through video conferencing applications, online learning platforms, online content, technology-enabled learning, educational TV and radio programmes, and other messaging applications and print material for use at home)[2]. • Teachers are compensated for the cost of connectivity (prepaid SIM cards etc.) and other educational needed resources (access to ICT equipment, scanners, printing worksheets, etc.).	☐

---

[2] A list of materials for distance learning can be found on the INEE Website.

Key policy areas	Provisions for crisis-sensitive teacher policy	☐
	3. Provisions are made to secure the employment of all teaching personnel during and after response measures such as school closures. **Precisions and examples:** • In case of school closures, teachers receive timely and regular payment of salary and maintain access to health benefits to ensure economic security and worker retention.	☐
	4. There is equitable allocation of education financing to enable teachers to provide continued forms of learning for all children and youth, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized.	☐
B. The crisis-sensitive teacher policy includes provisions to ensure appropriate teacher training and preparation: *TPD: Teacher education (initial and continuing)*	5. Teachers receive training/preparation that contributes to removing barriers that keep vulnerable children out of school, e.g. by participating in activities for communities to heal and to rebuild confidence after an emergency or critical event. **Precisions and examples:** • Teachers receive training/preparation for supporting continuation of learning during emergency/crisis situations. • Teachers receive training/preparation to recognize signs of mental distress amongst students and to identify support avenues. • Teachers have access to psychosocial support during the emergency/crisis and in the recovery phase. • Teachers receive training/preparation on health and well-being strategies to prevent and address poor outcomes for children, such as School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) and provision of psychosocial support (PSS) during and after emergency/crisis situations.	☐
	6. Teachers receive training/preparation for deploying a mix of instructional approaches for operating inclusive practices and ensuring accessibility of instruction for all children, regardless of the medium of delivery. **Precisions and examples:** • Teachers receive support for parental engagement in home-based learning, for addressing children's socio-emotional development (e.g. fostering children's resilience, coping mechanisms, and dealing with social isolation) during a emergency/crisis and in the recovery phase.	☐
	7. Teachers receive training/preparation for deploying a mix of approaches for children with disabilities (e.g. closed captions,	☐

Key policy areas	Provisions for crisis-sensitive teacher policy	☐
	live sign language interpretation, large print, visual or audio adaptations of material).	
	8. Teachers receive training/preparation for assessing students and for measuring learning outcomes within crisis/emergency situations, including conducting examinations remotely. **Precisions and examples:** • Teachers receive training/preparation for implementing a condensed curriculum and/or remedial instruction, and are consulted on these.	☐
	9. Teachers receive training/preparation to use a variety of approaches to recover lost learning, including through accelerated education which allow for multiple pathways back into formal education, and support design and roll-out of system-wide solutions to address missed examinations.	☐
	10. Teachers receive training/preparation to give evidence of effective instructional approaches for remote learning, especially for the most vulnerable groups such as children with disabilities (e.g. to government officials, national education clusters or education in emergencies working groups, local education groups, education sector technical and financial partners).	☐
C. The crisis-sensitive teacher policy includes provisions to ensure information sharing and consultation mechanisms: *TPD: Teacher accountability*	11. Teachers and their representatives are regularly consulted and involved in developing response strategies, policies and procedures during emergencies/crisis. **Precisions and examples:** • Response strategies, policies and procedures may include, for example, school closures, distance learning, school re-openings, and return-to-school measures.	☐
	12. Teachers can support government officials, national education clusters, education in emergencies working groups, local education groups, and education sector technical and financial partners by using real-time approaches to sharing information to ensure continuity of learning.	☐
	13. Teachers and their representatives are consulted about and involved in communication campaigns and social mobilization efforts to ensure that children who are most vulnerable and at risk of dropping out are mobilized to enrol or re-enrol in schools.	☐
	14. Teachers are consulted and involved in education reforms aimed at attracting children who were previously out of school.	☐
	15. The teacher policy is developed with references to relevant	☐

Key policy areas	Provisions for crisis-sensitive teacher policy	☐
	Conventions, legal documents and other international commitments that the country has made. **Suggested conventions and recommendations:** - the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) - the 1951 Refugee Convention - the Sustainable Development Agenda - the Global Compact on Refugees and its call for refugee inclusion into national education systems - the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons - the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) & UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997)	
D. The crisis-sensitive teacher policy includes provisions to ensure teacher support for continued teaching and learning: *TPD: School governance*	16. Teachers receive real-time, up-to-date information about their students within emergency/crisis situations. **Precisions and examples:** - Students also include newly enrolled children due to displacement (internally displaced and refugees).	☐
	17. Teachers are provided with resources to enable them to address inequities in access to digital connectivity and other low-tech options so that they may continue to teach the poorest and most vulnerable students using the most context appropriate technology.	☐
	18. Teachers can request additional funds and instructional resources to provide effective instruction or to recover lost learning for the most marginalized and vulnerable children.	☐

Useful resources

- Framework for Reopening Schools (UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the World Bank): https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373348.locale=en

- Global Education Cluster COVID 19 Resource Page: https://www.educationcluster.net/COVID19

- IIEP Crisis-sensitive planning resource kit: http://education4resilience.iiep.unesco.org/en/planning

- ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) and UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997)

- INEE COVID-19 distance learning collection: https://inee.org/covid-19/resources/distance-learning

- International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030: Teacher Policy Development Guide

- Safe Back to School Guide: https://educationcluster.app.box.com/s/wlm9mik2ct82rqzbuhsuds9k4ubrjkke?fbclid=IwAR2cQ7xa5g0dEH1iC0bJeifwv3foH7KioRJcBgoBwXkrFhUvoBwv4eECDgk

- UNESCO Issue Notes covering cover key topics related to the COVID-19 education response: https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/issuenotes

- UNESCO - 10 Recommendations for planning distance learning solutions: https://en.unesco.org/news/covid-19-10-recommendations-plan-distance-learning-solutions

- UNESCO - Distance learning solutions to mitigate COVID-19 school closures: https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/solutions

- UNHRC - Connected education: resources, considerations and guidance: https://www.unhcr.org/getinvolved/teachingtools/5e787bea4/5e81cf1d7MHPSS

- UNICEF Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Information Centre: https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19

- UNICEF's work in emergencies and programmes in schools: https://www.unicef.org/wash/