Supporting teachers in crisis contexts during COVID-19

“One thing that became clearer to us is that during this period, the work that we are doing is tremendous...It requires all of us to work together...What we are doing is more important now than before...” Teach For All Teachers in Morocco

22nd April 2020
Agenda

1. Welcome and introduction

2. Teacher Survey Results (Dennis Sinyolo, Education International)

3. Practical recommendations for teachers in crisis contexts:
   a. Key considerations and promising practices (Mary Mendenhall, Teachers College, Columbia University)
   b. Adapting programming during COVID-19 (Sarah Hartigan, WarChild UK, and April Coetzee, WarChild Holland)
   c. UNHCR’s approach to teacher support (Charlotte Berquin, UNHCR)
   d. UNRWA’s approach to teacher support (Caroline Pontefract and Frosse Dabit, UNRWA)

4. A Call for Action on Teachers during COVID-19 (Borhene Chakroun and Leila Loupis, UNESCO)

5. Moderated Discussion / Q&A
A snapshot of Covid-19 survey results

Dennis Sinyolo, Senior Coordinator, Education International

Navigating the crisis
Purpose of the survey

With nearly 1.6 billion students out of school, the COVID-19 crisis has become an education crisis

**Purpose of EI survey:** A rapid assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on educators and students’ learning

103 responses were received from education unions around the world, constituting about a quarter of EI’s member organisations (representing nearly 50% of the 32.5 million individual members)
Key teacher-related findings

1. Many teachers are required to provide distance education and e-learning without the necessary tools, preparation and support

2. Teachers and their unions expressed need for greater collaboration and sharing of professional knowledge and tools

3. Teachers, education support personnel and their unions are not consulted when governments make decisions on methodologies and tools/platforms to use

4. In countries where teachers continue to teach virtually/through distance education they report increased workload and concerns about ICT security issues

5. Teachers need psychosocial support to cope with the situation, and training to be able to support traumatized students and colleagues

6. Many contract teachers, supply teachers, teachers in private schools and education support personnel have either not been paid or laid off
Recommendations

1. Safeguard students and educators’ health, safety and well-being, including physical and mental health before, during and after closures – PPE and psychosocial support essential

2. Governments and partners should engage with educators, through their unions, in coming up with relevant, effective and proportionate measures to respond to COVID-19 in education and ensure a full post-crisis recovery

3. Governments should ensure full funding and recovery of education systems and return to schooling when it is safe to do so. ICTs cannot replace teachers; neither can virtual learning replace schooling

4. Governments should ensure the protection of teachers and education support personnel’s employment, terms and working conditions. No teacher or education support staff should be dismissed or denied their salary as a result of COVID-19

We encourage you to use EI’s Guiding principles on COVID-19
Final thought

Educators and their unions are frontline workers and doing the best to support their students during the twin crises of COVID-19 and education. They deserve every government and every partner’s support to help every child, youth and adult enjoy the right to free quality public education during and after the pandemic.
Supporting Teachers in Crisis Contexts

Key Considerations & Promising Practices

1. Teachers are often forgotten as a key stakeholder group in EiE contexts. Include teachers in policy- and practice-related decisions and leverage their leadership roles in the community.

2. Teachers’ jobs in EiE contexts are vulnerable. Extend financial support to teachers during disruption (e.g. compensation, incentives, etc.).
   - Join efforts with partner organizations to advocate for continued pay to donors.

3. Teachers are often overlooked in discussions about PSS/SEL. Provide psychosocial support to teachers during Covid-19 disruption.
   - Supervising organizations can touch base through weekly personal phone calls and outreach.

4. Teacher professional development is often short, sporadic. Provide ongoing PD that addresses the health pandemic and related emerging issues (e.g. SGBV, child protection, remedial instruction) during homeschooling/distance learning and return to school.
   - Plan now for how teachers can support learners who experienced abuse/violence while at home.
   - Plan now about what type of support teachers will need to provide remedial/catch-up education to learners? (pending duration of quarantine)
5. Technological innovations focus primarily on learners → Leverage technology to support learners and teachers
   - Utilize technology to disseminate PSS/SEL and protection messages, tips to support homeschooling/distance learning, and PD strategies/techniques for now and later. Help teachers connect with one another and/or with other helpful resources.

6. Difficult to advocate to donors for teacher support (e.g. recurrent salaries, continuous professional development) → Leverage increased recognition of teachers to strengthen advocacy efforts for improved working conditions, decent pay, continuous professional development, etc. both now and into the future.

7. Critical role of teachers missing in preparedness plans → Capture lessons learned in the response to the coronavirus pandemic and better prepare for the future.
War Child UK’s Teacher Support

• Radio
  • Support call-in to government-led student call ins to teachers
  • Call centre setup to support students who dial in off-air

• Messaging Platforms
  • Student groups facilitated by two teachers
  • Teacher support groups
Teacher Wellbeing

Methodology
• Workshop based - 10 hours over 5 sessions
• Based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
  o Mindfulness on being able to focus on present moment to do what matters –not being caught up in emotions and thoughts
  o Being able to watch our thoughts from a distance
  o Accept difficult feelings so they don’t overwhelm us and we take actions that do relate to our values
  o Helping people to identify their values, what type of teacher they want to be.
  o Being able to move forward to take action based on their value system
Support to teachers
UNHCR COVID RESPONSE
Support during school closures

1) Priority: ensure continuity of teachers' salaries payment
   Ex: Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritania, Somalia

2) Refugee teachers leading the way to ensure continuity of education
   Ex: Chad, Liberia, Uganda

3) Learning circles to share educational content and COVID messages
   Ex: Kenya, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka

4) Support to teacher professional development on instructional design
   Ex: Jordan
Back-to-school support

1) Contextualized teacher training
   - Safe schools: PSS and public health (+ WASH in schools)
   - Prevention of school dropout: Multi-level classes and differentiated teaching, catch-up classes, AEP

2) Sustainable support to connected education
   - Advocacy for investments in digital public infrastructure
   - Reuse of distance learning materials, digital literacy programs

3) Risk-informed teacher policy documents
   - Systematic inclusion of preparedness measures and continued learning opportunities for all crisis-affected children
Resources

- UNHCR Connected Education COVID page
- Resources & tools UNHCR inventory (600+)
- Live blog: Refugees in the COVID-19 crisis
- COVID-19 situation: Global, Regional and Country Updates
UNRWA education programme

- For 70 years UNRWA has worked to ensure that Palestine refugee children have access to quality, inclusive and equitable education
  - UNRWA education programme was **born of conflict** and operated through a number of conflict
  - **High demand for education** from the Palestine refugee community
  - Long standing relationship with **Host Governments** (host country curriculum, study plans and academic calendar)
  - 533,342 Palestine refugee children in 709 schools and 22,000 education staff
  - 8 Vocational Training Centres for 8,270 youth and 2 educational science faculties (teacher training institutes) for 1,890 students
Recognising the central role of teachers to quality education: the UNRWA approach

The Teacher Policy
- Provides the framework for holistic support to teachers:
  - Teacher management
  - Career progression
  - Professional development
  - Professional support structures

Key points to build upon
- Emphasis on equitable inclusive and quality learning
- Learning in situ through self learning
- Clearer roles and relationships within schools and beyond schools
- Encouragement of communities of practice
Continuity of Learning:
- UNRWA Self Learning Programme (TV, ILP, print)
- Guidelines for parents and teachers on use of the SLP
- Wrap Around materials (making use of student textbooks).
- Student follow-up (What’s App, SMS).
- Review accessibility and develop solutions accordingly.
- PTAs activated to support SLM distribution

Psychosocial Support
- PSS through online platforms
- Integrated in Self Learning Programme
- Agency-wide PSS Group

Safety and Security
- Health safety
- Awareness raising on prevention (child friendly messages/ video)
- Purchase of hygiene and sanitation kits
- Disinfection of education premises.

TVET
- TVET in Emergency Response Plan
- Self learning approach

Monitoring and Evaluation
- Review of EiE indicators and evidence based decisions
Teachers are central to COVID-19 EiE response

UNRWA

Teachers: Teacher Policy

TVET
TVET in Emergencies
New self learning modalities

Psychosocial support:
Identification of students, and integration of PSS in SLM

Continuity of learning:
Development of Study Plans, student remote follow-up, student assessment.

Monitoring and Evaluation:
At all levels

Safety and security:
Health messages and behaviours

Continuity of learning: Development of Study Plans, student remote follow-up, student assessment.

UNRWA Teachers: Teacher Policy

Monitoring and Evaluation: At all levels

Safety and security: Health messages and behaviours

Psychosocial support: Identification of students, and integration of PSS in SLM

TVET
TVET in Emergencies
New self learning modalities
Some reflections……..

• Advocate for the importance of education in emergencies.

• Ensuring that the role of all teachers is clear, whatever the modality of education:
  • In design of materials; in engagement with parents; in support to students; and in assessment of learning;
  • Ongoing monitoring and evaluation with engagement of teachers on access, engagement, success, adaptation of students, teachers and parents.

• System approach / building on and adapting what is there.

• Support to teachers and their well-being (peer groups, virtual communities of practice)

• Opportunity to build back better – with the teachers engaged.
Call for Action on Teachers

Supporting teachers in crisis contexts during COVID-19: Webinar

Borhene Chakroun
Head of the Secretariat of the Teacher Task Force
Director, Division of policies and lifelong learning
COVID-19 crisis for teachers and learners

Global monitoring of school closures caused by COVID-19

- 1,579 billion affected learners
- 91% of total enrolled learners
- 191 country-wide closures
- 63 million teachers

Call for Action on Teachers
1. **Preserve employment and wages**

Governments and all education providers should ensure that the entire teaching and education support staff and their salaries and benefits are preserved.

2. **Prioritise teachers’ and learners’ health, safety and well-being**

Teachers need socio-emotional support to face the extra pressure resulting from moving to distance learning and ensuring student learning and well-being.

3. **Include teachers in developing COVID-19 education responses**

Teachers and teacher representative organizations must be involved in designing short-term approaches and long-term solutions to COVID-19.
4. **Provide adequate professional support and training**

Governments and service providers need to move swiftly to ensure teachers receive necessary training for distance and online teaching options.

5. **Equity at the heart of education response**

To avoid exacerbating inequalities, extra support should be provided to teachers working in remote areas, in low-income or minority communities.

6. **Include teachers in aid responses**

The international community should ensure that education systems are not further weakened, by directing international financial aid to support teachers’ professional development, in particular in the world’s poorest countries.
Over **80 partners are on board**: UN agencies, civil society and non-profit organizations, technology companies, development banks and media.
Panelist Discussion

Dennis Sinyolo, Education International
Mary Mendenhall, Teachers College, Columbia University
Sarah Hartigan, WarChild UK
April Coetzee, WarChild Holland
Charlotte Berquin, UNHCR
Caroline Pontefract, UNRWA
Frosse Dabit, UNRWA
Borhene Chakroun, UNESCO
Leila Loupis, UNESCO
Questions?
Hello teachers! I hope you're doing great. This is Rania Kandoussi from Morocco. I'm a fellow member with Teach for Morocco's organisation. Well as my fellows' friends talked about their experiences with distance learning during the current situation. I'm going to share with you a small part of my big beautiful experience with my kids using WhatsApp.

This was today's lesson (tall - short) I tried to make my kids understand the meaning and the difference between the two terms by multiple activities, the most important of which is using spaghetti bars and carrots beads with the help of parents.

Activity content: To arrange the spaghetti bars from longest ones to shortest ones.

The goal of the activity:
To make the difference between the terms "

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