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**TEACHING PROFESSION**  
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A Briefing by  
Education International

**2022**

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International Summit on the Teaching Profession

# The Pandemic-Moving Forward: Governments and Teacher Unions Working Together to Leave No-One Behind



Education International  
Internationale de l'Éducation  
Internacional de la Educación  
Bildungsinternationale

A Briefing by  
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International Summit on the Teaching Profession



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# Welcome and Introduction

by **David Edwards,**  
General Secretary of Education International

First, I want to express my sincere thanks to Minister Alegria and the Spanish Government for hosting the International Summit on the Teaching Profession this year. We first started planning this Summit in early summer of 2019 but with the hiatus caused by the pandemic, its planning was suspended. I am therefore very grateful to the Spanish Government for its undimmed commitment to hosting the first in-person Summit since 2019. Colleagues from the Spanish Ministry have been great to work with. They have maintained their optimism and good humour throughout.

I also want to thank the OECD and its Education and Skills Director, Andreas Schleicher, for their steadfast commitment to the Summits over the last decade. It has been unwavering, and it has shown that the OECD understands, as we do, that the involvement of teachers and their unions in the development of educational practice and policy is absolutely essential for achieving high quality education systems. Good labour relations undergird good learning and teaching conditions.

Which is why the theme for this year's Summit is so relevant. It encapsulates the idea that, despite the existential crises facing the world, the power and optimism inherent in education will always provide hope for humanity's future. The idea of moving forward with hope in this Summit's theme, is accompanied by the understanding that proactive collaboration between governments and teacher unions is fundamental to making sure that no student is left behind.

This understanding was described by US Secretary for Education Cardona as intentional collaboration when he addressed the 2021 ISTP. I welcome the Spanish Host's agreement to schedule a pre-Summit seminar which will act as a bridge between last year's US hosted Summit and the Summit in May. The idea that intentional collaboration is vital to achieving teacher professionalism and well-being, whole child education and equity echoed throughout the discussions in last year's Summit. Those ideas provide an essential backdrop to addressing this year's Summit themes and sub-themes.

The world events surrounding this year's Summit are dominated by the Ukraine crisis alongside the continuing climate change and pandemic crises. Yet the Summit enables us to both learn from and respond to these crises. Indeed, the Summit provides us with the opportunity to understand and learn how Ukrainian teachers and their Unions, faced with appalling aggression, are managing to keep education alive both in Ukraine itself and in other countries which are providing education for an unprecedented number of refugees.

Learning how these crises can be tackled is essential if students are to remain optimistic about the future, which is why the questions in this year's plenaries are so important. The plenary themes provide delegations with the opportunity to reassert the vital role of schools in encouraging students to be optimistic that their learning can influence their future. The themes' focus on the role of teachers in securing a sustainable future opens up the opportunity to discuss how teachers can be empowered to enable students to feel they can make a positive contribution in tackling these crises. Whether the crisis is military aggression, climate change, disease or environmental degradation, it is vital for teachers to be able to address them without fear that they will be criticised or disciplined.

The other Summit themes, focussing on the role of digital technologies in education and the need for educational communities to be the driving force for innovation in schools, reinforce the message that it is education which must be at the centre of post pandemic recovery. Indeed, our joint EI/OECD Principles for Effective and Equitable Educational Recovery provide a vital resource for the Summit themes. They highlight the importance of schools as social hubs which support the development of students' social and emotional skills and wellbeing. They urge that a collaborative culture of innovation in partnership with school communities is developed and that teachers and schools need to be at the centre of designing robust digital learning infrastructure.

In EI's Briefing for the US hosted Summit last October, I said I wanted to echo something which has remained a constant since the pandemic started. Education represents humanity's guarantee for a better future. Schools are at the heart of their communities, providing students with a love of learning and their optimism for the future. Teachers and school communities have shown enormous resilience, constantly innovating in order to educate and protect students. And these truths are even more obvious with the crises in the Ukraine and Afghanistan demonstrating to the world the lengths that teachers will go to make sure that children and young receive education. It is for this reason that I welcome the request from the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian delegations for the Summit to express solidarity with Ukraine and consider countries' experiences in integrating refugees in

education systems. I hope that the Ukrainian Minister and our member organisations will be able to address the Summit.

Last year's ISTP made great strides in putting centre stage the importance of education systems providing the optimum conditions for student and teacher well-being and making sure that all students receive equitable access to social and emotional skills as well as academic education. I know that this year's Summit will make equally great advances. The ISTPs provide a unique opportunity to convince governments that teachers and their organisations are necessary equal partners in making sure that education is at the core of humanity's future.



David Edwards  
General Secretary  
Education International

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# Summit Session 1: The pedagogical potential of digital technologies in education: a vital challenge for schools, teachers and students

## Education International's Research.

When it became apparent that Covid was a global existential threat, Education International moved fast to provide support to its member organisations. With UNESCO it commissioned Armand Doucet and his colleagues to report on approaches to distance learning during Covid 19 school closures. (Education International 2020a) Published in March 2020 the report made proposals which were prescient. It argued for the development of multi-lateral, collaborative partnerships across sectors which ensured that teacher voices were a major part of the solution.

The report proposed a blended learning approach to enable students' learning experiences to be as differentiated as possible and for the provision of tools to teachers to achieve this. It argued that there should be a rapid provision of teachers' professional development in digital technology, which, incidentally, was the highest level of teachers' learning need identified by the OECD's TALIS 2018. (OECD 2019) Doucet et al urged that teachers should be enabled to rethink ways of using assessment. The report emphasised that trust was key to a collective approach on all fronts and that teachers should be able to lead in the crisis by using their professional judgements to make the best decisions for their students.

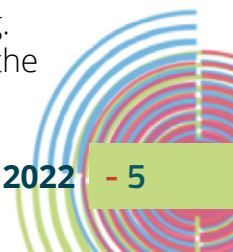
A subsequent survey of education unions carried out by Christina Colclough for EI in September 2020 showed that there

was a relatively low level of consultation of unions by education authorities on the introduction of digital technologies but that unions were moving rapidly to make up this advocacy shortfall. (Education International 2020c) It recommended that unions should give a priority to including digital technology provision in collective bargaining and that education authorities should include unions in the governance of the supply and use of this provision. It also recommended that EI and its member organisations could provide on-line learning modules in technology.

Commissioned by EI before the pandemic, but published in mid-2020, Alison Egan's research review of technology in teaching and learning also anticipated the issues for teachers which would emerge during the pandemic. She argued that educators should be empowered to evaluate what technologies they can use in their school or teaching environment, by allowing them the time and space to share their experiences of technology with each other, and to experiment with new technologies. (Education International 2020b)

## The Pandemic-the Response of Teachers and Schools.

These early research findings were mirrored by the actions taken by many schools and their teachers. Despite inadequate professional development it was teachers who innovated 'just in time' solutions to providing remote learning. Teachers made major adaptations to the



curriculum and its assessment. Many unions during school lockdowns provided quality remote learning and professional development for their members. The effects of lockdown were less severe and lasted for shorter periods in countries where governments worked in genuine partnership with teacher unions to plan remote provision. Those countries where education was provided by a strong and coherent public sector were best prepared to respond to the effects of the pandemic on education and for post pandemic recovery.

The pandemic, however, exposed and exacerbated gaps in support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The effects of lockdown had a marked and negative impact on many students' wellbeing. It became clear to parents, as well as students, that there was no substitute for in-person teaching in schools.

### **The Principles for Effective and Equitable Educational Recovery and Digital Learning.**

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As the accompanying notes for Summit Session 1 rightly imply there are clear lessons to be learnt from the pandemic. School lockdowns highlighted the social and relational value of schools in the education of children and young people. At the same time, they demonstrated the need for education systems to have strong and inclusive digital learning infrastructures.

The EI/OECD Principles for Effective and Equitable Educational Recovery (PEEER) (OECD-Education International 2021) set out the strategic approach which is needed to establish these infrastructures.

The Principles emphasise that the pandemic had highlighted the essential role of schools in the education of children

and young people and their importance in providing the social dimension of learning. They propose two digital strategies.

The first is that countries should develop a multi-modal remote learning infrastructure. This would necessarily involve the teaching profession and relevant stakeholders drawing on their experiences of providing and receiving remote learning during the pandemic and establishing and evaluating such a structure. The Principles also emphasise that a multi-modal approach would need to be adopted because of the diverse realities of student access to different media and it could encompass virtual class tools, on-line learning platforms, TV and radio education, worksheets, social media channels and well as texts and calls to support students' learning.

Alongside this multi-modal approach, the Principles urge education systems to create strong digital learning infrastructures which would need to be developed in collaboration with the teaching profession, designed with teachers and students and focus on enabling teachers to enhance learning and support for their students. The Principles emphasise that teachers need to feel empowered to exert their professionalism in the use of technology as part of their teaching and to be able adapt the curriculum to meet their learners needs and situation. They stress the importance of education systems providing additional targeted student support for students to address reduced learning opportunities.

The Principles also assert that the evaluation and quality assurance of this infrastructure should include transparent technology criteria for providers and have the feedback of teachers, students and school communities at its core. The importance of teachers being supported by on-line safety protocols for students is stressed as is the need for on-line safety



guidance developed with the input of teachers and parents.

Further the Principles propose that, with teachers and their unions, jurisdictions and education authorities should review teachers' working conditions in order to identify the areas that need to be improved for teachers to be their most effective during the pandemic and post pandemic recovery.

EI believes that such reviews should include the impact of the use of digital technology on working conditions. For example, reviews should include the establishment of reasonable expectations for digital and on-line contact, including the right to disconnect from the use of digital technology when its use becomes excessive- a right that has already been included by some jurisdictions in teachers' contracts.

The need for systemic multi-modal strategic approaches to supporting student learning which include inclusive digital infrastructures is evident from the pandemic. A graphic example of their importance in a crisis was highlighted by Slawomir Broniarz, the General Secretary of ZNP- the Polish Teachers Union, in a recent letter to EI and OECD:

*Observing the Ukrainian refugees in Poland, we see how important it is for them to feel that the community in which they have functioned so far, in their schools and classrooms is trying to survive. It is a paradox that without another dramatic experience, the pandemic experience, the education that thousands of Ukrainian teachers organise remotely for their students, would not be possible. (EI/OECD 2022)*

## Digitalisation and the Future of Education.

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The answers to the questions that accompany this Summit plenary question are crucial to the future of education. According to the OECD the exponential growth in digital data will present societies with four future scenarios for schooling: 'Schooling Extended (an extension of current schooling models); Education Outsourced, (privatised education with digital education as the key driver); Schools as Learning Hubs, (outward facing school communities which are the centres of innovation); and Learn-as-you-go, (learning takes places anywhere having been turned over to the power of the machine)'. (OECD 2020)

Theoretically, sections of education could be converted to entirely digital processes. For example, block chain technology could be used to develop new forms of credentialing in education and training. (OECD 2021) Further, new previously unthinkable scenarios and threats face societies in future including: Stateless Digital Citizenship, digitally created 'Deep Fakes', AI Digital Wars, and Non-Human Intelligences being considered citizens. (OECD 2022a)

Envisaging these scenarios are a way of analysing the choices facing humanity. They are also a way of alerting society that it must focus on keeping human agency, democratic accountability and positive pluralism at the centre of its development or else it will face an uncertain future.

In education, ICT can help enhance the quality of education. For this to happen digital innovation must be seen as being at the service of human society and its success measured by how much it is contributing to equity, human well-being, creativity, democratic values and sustainable development.

It is vital that teachers and their school communities and education systems themselves to set the terms for the use of AI in schools and to ensure its development is human centred and reflects human values. The structures governing education systems must have within them representatives of the users of digital technologies, including teachers and support staff unions, parents and those involved in education more widely so that they can define the role of AI in pedagogy and in the functioning of schools.

### **Policy Implications.**

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Will teacher unions with governments consider and develop the proposals on digital education within the OECD/ EI Principles on Effective and Equitable Recovery?

Will governments with teacher unions act to agree partnerships for developing together, within the public sector, digital learning infrastructures, digital provision, professional support and learning for teachers and equitable and sufficient digital provision for students? Will teacher unions and governments pursue proposals to improve teachers' working conditions and professional development including improved working conditions in the digital environment?

Will governments with teacher unions develop agreed protocols about the development and use of digital technology in schools which are defined by the values of equity, human well-being, creativity, democratic values and sustainable development? Will governments and unions initiate research together on the relationship of digital technologies and students' social and emotional wellbeing?

# Summit Session 2.

## School Systems as a Driver for More Inclusive Communities

This agenda notes for this session contain a set of broad questions. Previous Summits have addressed some of these questions, but the pandemic has changed their context.

### Innovation.

Successful innovations in education can only take place when teachers believe them to be practical solutions to practical problems. Any innovation must be owned by teachers and seen as necessary to improve the circumstances in which they work. Just as circumstances change in schools, or in the systems supporting schools, so will the need for schools to adapt to those circumstances.

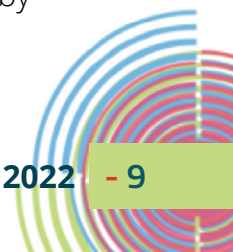
Teachers constantly innovate to adapt to the unique learning, social and emotional needs of their students. Often such innovations would not even be deemed by teachers to be innovations, but part of the natural process of iteration and dialogue that takes place between teachers, support staff and students. However, a useful way of describing the changes that constantly take place in schools' teaching and organisation is that they are 'micro innovations.'

The whole approach of teachers to tackling the physical exclusion of lockdowns was to find ways including all their students in continuing learning on an equitable basis. As the Principles (OECD-EI *ibid*) described it, teachers were involved in constant micro-innovation, adapting

to rapidly changing circumstances, including updating health protection, adapting teaching and learning strategies, responding to the social and emotional needs of their students and attending to their own professional learning needs. Consequently, the Principles urge the adoption of a collaborative culture of innovation with education jurisdictions considering teachers and their unions to be full partners in creating the conditions for recovery and sustaining an innovation culture.

This rapid and unique response by teachers during the lockdowns amplified of how teachers had normally operated in their classrooms. Education International's commissioned research on teacher leadership, for example, found that the vast majority of teachers thought that it was normal to initiate and lead development in relation to their roles. (Education International 2012) In short, the effects of the pandemic highlighted what has always been obvious: that the source of effective innovation is the teaching profession itself. The need for teachers to be able to constantly adapt and innovate during the pandemic was a key reason why EI and the OECD agreed that it was essential that teacher unions in partnership with educational jurisdictions should review teachers' working conditions with the aim of improving them.

In fact, innovations imposed on schools by educational jurisdictions are almost always doomed to fail. They may be adopted by schools at the time but rarely are they



embedded. Imposed innovations may also have unforeseen consequences. The introduction of school performance tables leading to a narrowing of school curricula is one such example. The danger of unforeseen consequences would also be present if schools were evaluated on the quality and number of their innovations. The issue for governments should be, not whether they have policies for innovation, but whether they have policies which create the conditions for innovation. Successful innovation is often a product of trial and error. Being able to learn from mistakes without being penalised for them is an essential part of those conditions. A strong self-confident teaching profession is a precondition for successful innovation.

What is very clear is that few education systems have initiated research on the enormous amount of creative innovation which took place in schools during the pandemic. This year's Summit clearly provides a window of opportunity for teacher unions and governments to explore strategies about how to learn from the creativity demonstrated by teachers, support staff and their school communities during the pandemic. (Internationally Education International has monitored teachers' activities during the pandemic through its member organisations. (Education International 2021b) The OECD's Global Teaching Insights initiative also videoed a small number of teachers describing innovations during the pandemic. OECD (2022b))

This exploration has implications for how education systems' curriculum, assessment and accountability arrangements are configured in their relationship with schools. It also has major implications for teacher policy especially in relation to teacher self-efficacy, well-being and leadership and to the opportunities for learning, professional development and research available to teachers. Questions around how to improve teachers' working

conditions to enable teachers to be confidently at the centre of innovation need to be at the centre of any discussion.

## **Achieving Equity and Inclusion for Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds.**

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There are some themes which have echoed throughout the Summits. Achieving equity and inclusion for students from disadvantaged backgrounds is one of them. At the 2014 ISTP both EI and the OECD pressed for a structural shift of approach towards supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In its 2014 Summit briefing EI proposed a set of actions which it has continued to press for since: the provision of sufficient learning resources to address disadvantage without penalising other communities; ensuring that the teaching profession reflect students' demography; preparing teachers on how to respond to the needs of students from disadvantaged backgrounds; making sure that working conditions and career structures encourage the most experienced teachers to work in disadvantaged schools and encouraging teachers to stay in disadvantaged schools by guaranteeing job security. The 2016 ISTP addressed the issue of how to tackle the impact on education systems of an exponential increase in the number of students who are refugees.

EI, then and now, has consistently argued for the teaching profession to be integrally involved in defining what is needed for additional support for students traumatised by the destruction of their home societies. At the ISTP 2021 EI stressed that the focus on disadvantage remained a relevant as ever, citing the EI/OECD Principles' proposal that governments will need to provide necessary and stable funding, supportive

institutions, and regulatory frame works for an effective and equitable recovery that prioritises students who have suffered most from the crisis. Again, it urged that this approach would have to respond the needs of students who are refugees. (Education International 2021a)

Since the last Summit, the arguments for a strategic approach to support for disadvantaged students have been supplemented by the OECD's latest analysis of TALIS 2018 data which proposes additional support for teachers and additional funding through equitable funding policies for disadvantaged schools. (OECD 2022c) Although there are debatable aspects in the proposals which suggest that schools with greater autonomy should provide incentives for teachers to join their schools, the report provides a welcome boost for those seeking to persuade educational jurisdictions to adopt a strategic approach to supporting disadvantaged schools.

A number of developments have brought the issue of disadvantage into even sharper focus since the 2021 Summit. The exponential increase in the numbers of refugees from across the world has grown even greater with the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. There is a growing realisation that the pandemic and Ukrainian crisis have undermined the mental health and well-being of many students. There is also some evidence that the post pandemic educational recovery packages in many countries are stalling, and that many governments are not prioritising funding for education. (Education International 2021b *ibid*)

Despite the Summits' focus on the issue of tackling educational disadvantage over the years, there is still a need for a coherent approach to be adopted. The same need applies to those students deemed to have disabilities. The educational divide exacerbated by the pandemic,

the increased importance of providing increased social and emotional support for students, and the need for additional support for students who are refugees, are three reasons out of many, why education ministers and union leaders at the Summit need to unite to demand long term additional funding for education from their governments.

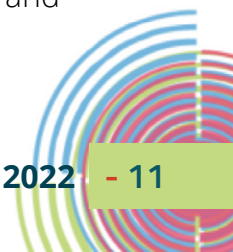
### **Teachers' Continuing Professional Learning and Development (CPLD).**

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The very first ISTP in 2011 focussed on the need for educational jurisdictions to give teachers' equity of entitlement to CPLD. While CPLD is essential for helping teachers to be at the edge of their game it is also highly vulnerable to budget cuts. The pandemic highlighted teachers' own innovations in adapting 'just in time' professional development for digital learning because of the erratic availability of CPLD in some jurisdictions. The EI/OECD Principles (EI/OECD *ibid*) set out a strategy for teachers' CPLD in digital education. They note that many teacher unions had provided virtual professional development for their members during the pandemic and that this had implications for the profession more widely. The Principles urge educational jurisdictions and teacher unions to create a systemic strategy for teacher learning and professional development drawing on the lessons of the pandemic-one of which is that education jurisdictions should have a strategic and secure funding approach to teachers' CPLD.

However, the underlying evidence and need for changes around CPLD have not changed since the first ISTP in 2011. (e.g., Education International 2016; OECD 2016; Education International 2013; OECD 2013)

High quality CPLD can have one of the strongest impacts on teacher practice and



retention but, for this to happen, teachers themselves need to be convinced that the CPLD they take part in is relevant and necessary. CPLD should be an entitlement for teachers within their working conditions rather than a bolt-on imposition. This entitlement should include the ability to share pedagogic practice and learning across schools within the school day and access pedagogic resources whose quality is moderated by the profession.

Positive career development and quality CPLD are a major factor in the retention of teachers. Teacher appraisal/evaluation must be developmental and formative and lead to learning and career opportunities for teachers. Teacher unions are often the most effective in providing high quality learning and professional development for their members. A systemic strategy for teacher policy can only be effective if teacher unions are at the centre of its development. And a core part of teacher policies must be high quality CPLD.

## **Policy Implications.**

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Could strategies be developed by Unions and Educational Jurisdictions which could identify the conditions for fostering innovation in schools which would have the support of teachers' and their communities? Could Unions and Governments collaborate on creating an accessible resource of innovative practice and developing ways of enabling teachers to share it? Could teachers' working conditions be improved in ways which would value and enhance teachers' professional creativity, judgement, and agency?

Is it possible for Unions to collaborate to agree a strategy for supporting schools and their teachers in disadvantaged areas? What specific needs do the children of refugees have and what

support do they need? How can provision for students who need additional social and emotional support be enhanced? Would such provision be seen as part of a continuum of support which includes support for students with disabilities or special educational needs? What steps can Unions take with Ministers to secure stable and sufficient long-term funding for schools to be able to respond to the effects of long-term disadvantage and crises on students?

Will unions and governments consider together evaluating the professional learning and development needs of teachers and agree a strategic approach to CPLD provision? What are the lessons of the pandemic in individual countries for teachers' CPLD? Will part of any agreed CPLD strategy include the opportunity for teacher unions to be supported by CPLD funding to provide professional development for their members?

# Summit Session 3: The Role of Teachers and School Communities in Securing a Sustainable Future

Whereas the previous two sessions addressed relatively specific questions the last session contains both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is that the valuable time offered by this session could be used up with general position statements about education in the future, which may not lead to practical objectives. The opportunity is that decisions could be taken by delegations which could lead to genuinely innovative practical objectives. To achieve something useful out of this session delegations will need to focus on a specific strand within these questions.

## ISTP 2021 and Summit Session 3.

Delegations will also find the Report of the 2021 Summit useful: specifically, the conclusions around developing education for the Whole Child and the links between student and teacher well-being. (NCEE 2021) The consensus in ISTP 2021 was that teacher professionalism and well-being and whole-child education and equity, bound together by intentional collaboration, would provide an essential foundation for educating students for a sustainable future. There are therefore strong arguments for taking forward and building on the conclusions agreed at the US ISTP 2021 in this session. It is essential therefore that all Summit participants attend the pre-Summit seminar which will take place on the 11<sup>th</sup> May as set out in this Summit's programme.

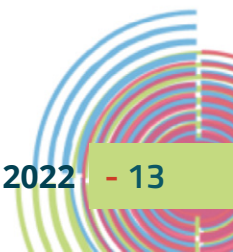
## Ukraine and the Refugee Crisis.

Education International welcomes the decision to invite the Minister of Education for Ukraine and teacher unions to address the Summit. At the time of writing this is scheduled to take place in the last session of the Summit. In addition, the ISTP delegations from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have written to the Summit organisers (stressing) *the need to make use of international fora to speak out against Russian aggression in Ukraine; and renew our commitment to teachers and learners of Ukraine, in our position as educational leaders around the world.*

The delegations have also asked *that there should be, an exchange of views on participating countries' experience in the integration of refugees in the state system.*

Education International agrees that the impact of the refugee crisis should be addressed by the Summit. Summit session 3 between 09:00-11:00 would seem to be the best place for that discussion to take place. Indeed, one of the questions accompanying this session's theme asks; *what is the role of education in preparing today's young people to mitigate and adapt to the effects of existential challenges...?*

The 2016 ISTP in Berlin addressed the effects of the Syrian refugee crisis. Education International's 2016 ISTP Briefing noted then that the current refugee crisis had created new demands on teachers which would have been impossible to



predict only a short time ago. It also noted the leading role EI member organisations in Germany were taking to support their members in teaching the children of refugees including providing professional development for their members.

The refugee crisis experienced in 2016 has now exponentially increased in magnitude with the Ukraine and Afghanistan crises. EI's ISTP 2016 Briefing emphasised that the only way for education systems to respond successfully to the educational and social needs of the children of refugees was for governments to work in partnership with teachers and their unions. This statement is even more relevant for this Summit. Session 3 will provide an excellent opportunity for delegations to share experiences and developing practice in refugee education and to explore the most effective forms of partnership for solving the practical problems thrown up by the crisis.

### **Optimistic Agency and Curriculum Reform.**

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Schools are essential in instilling in students a sense of optimistic agency-that education can enable them to play their part in tackling the existential crises facing humanity. Robin Alexander describes well the need for students to acquire the power of optimistic agency. His studies found that the rapidly changing world, while not always easy to comprehend by younger students, was creating alarm particularly in relation to global warming, environmental sustainability, and geo-political sustainability. He has found that students' pessimism turned to hope when they felt that they had the power to act.

*The children who were most confident that climate change might not overwhelm them were those whose schools had replaced unfocused fear by factual information and practical strategies*

*for energy reduction and sustainability. (Alexander 2022)*

It is in the area of curriculum and evaluation reform that delegations have a real opportunity to propose specific strategies for shaping learning about the new challenges facing humanity. Curriculum reform was not a specific theme at ISTP 2021, but it did emerge in discussions about learning for the Whole Child. Indeed, a small number of countries made commitments to develop climate and ecological education programmes and proposed reforming curricula to include education for sustainable development. (Poland and Sweden)

### **Curriculum Reform and Responding to New Realities.**

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In its ISTP 2021 Briefing, (Education International *ibid*) Education International argued that school curricula should be capable of responding to new realities such as the threat of climate change in order to instil in students the belief, optimism and motivation that they have the power to initiate positive change. It also argued that the successful creation of curricula responsive to the 21st century must be the outcome of partnerships between schools, the teaching profession and its unions and educational jurisdictions. Equity should be a key lens for gathering information which would inform education reform. The EI/OECD Principles themselves propose that teachers should be empowered to adapt the curriculum to their learners' needs and situation. However, in its briefing EI noted that a recent survey of unions in the OECD found that only 27% of unions reported being involved in the initiation of curricula reform. (MacBeath et al 2020)



## Teach for the Planet.

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As part of its Teach for the Planet campaign, Education International has created an Education Unionist's Guide to Climate Change Advocacy. (Education International 2021c) The Guide argues that quality climate science education should be at the core of any curriculum. Accompanying the Guide is EI's Climate Change Education Ambition Report Card. It is an analysis of data submitted by countries to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The data analysed for the Card, described as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), examines countries' climate change education plans. The author describes the state of the plans as poor with under a quarter referring to climate change education and none requiring that climate change should be a compulsory part of the curriculum. Only a few countries view young people as a priority group or agents of change although more see young people as passive beneficiaries or stakeholders. Only one recognises that teachers play a significant in promoting sustainability in the education sector (Education International 2021d) An EI and UNESCO teacher survey found that out of 58000 teachers sampled globally, 80% wanted to continue to learn about Climate Change Education and 90% felt that it was important to teach it. However, 1 in 4 teachers did not feel prepared for this task. This highlights the need for systems to offer teachers quality professional development in this area. There is therefore an open door at the Summit for delegations set out new approaches to curricula which make them much more responsive and enabling to teachers and their students on existential issues such as climate change.

## The Curriculum, Democratic Values and Pluralism.

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While there is real potential for including climate change education in the curriculum, the crisis in Ukraine has also highlighted the need for the curriculum to include education for democracy. The exponential increase in the prevalence of fake news and groundless conspiracy theories fuelled by an all present social media has highlighted the importance of teachers being able to have the space to explore with students what is fact and what is fiction.

Yet an analysis by the OECD of the engagement of populations in OECD countries in political and non-political associations shows little increase in engagement since 1950. (Coppedge et al.2021) Using this as a proxy for political and democratic awareness it is reasonable to assume that many students lack the ability to dispassionately interrogate national and global events.

The need for education in how to analyse world events is heightened by savagery and violence inflicted on Ukrainian society by the Russian Army, which could be creating as much 'unfocussed fear' among students, as Alexander describes it, as the pandemic. There is a strong argument for space to be created in the curriculum to enable teachers, with their students, to explore the concepts behind democratic values and the related values of pluralism, tolerance and respect.

## The Need to Support SDG 4.

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Education International and the OECD agree that national and international evidence are vital for educational improvement. (EI/OECD *ibid*) The United Nations' Sustainable Education

Development Goal (SDG4) has provided the backdrop for analysing countries' progress in achieving this goal. Education International and the OECD completely support the achievement of SDG 4. The OECD itself has devoted resources to analysing countries' education progress data for the UN. For the next two years, however, OECD countries have decided not to pay for this analysis and a key support for analysing SDG4 progress has, therefore, been removed. One action that delegations could take is to urge Ministers to restore funding for this programme.

## **Policy Implications.**

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What steps can education jurisdictions and teacher unions take to work in partnership to meet the challenges created for education by the exponential increase in the numbers of refugees? What are the implications of the refugee crisis for school funding, support for teachers, for meeting the social, emotional and language needs of students, for parent/ school liaison and for the curriculum and its assessment?

Is there an opportunity for teacher unions and governments to agree a joint approach to curriculum reform? Should curriculum reform involve joint initiation, implementation and evaluation by teacher unions and governments?

Would this joint approach include changes to the curriculum which would respond to the need to include learning about the existential challenges facing the world? How might education for the Whole Child influence curriculum reform? Should evaluation be reformed alongside curriculum reform? What are the implications for schools as communities of discussing global existential issues with students? What are the equity implications of curriculum reform? What

are the implications for teachers' working conditions and CPLD of a joint approach to curriculum reform?

How might Unions and Governments together monitor and contribute to international evidence on education reforms and progress towards achieving the Education Sustainable Development Goal?

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