



The Global Status of Teachers 2024

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The Global Status of Teachers 2024

Ben Arnold
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David Edwards' Introduction to the Global Status of Teachers Survey 2024

When I wrote the introduction to Education International's 2021 Global Status of Teachers Survey, it was difficult to predict how the opinions and observations of EI member organisations during the pandemic would be perceived a generation from now. This 2024 edition of EI's Global Status of Teachers Survey is therefore a vital report since it is the first, post-pandemic survey of the health of education systems in general and of the teaching profession in particular.

Just as the 2021 report vividly described the pandemic storm and its immediate impacts, our latest iteration provides an equally vivid picture of the shape and direction education is now taking globally.

I am very grateful to the researchers responsible for this report. Ben Arnold and Mark Rahmi of Deakin University have not only made sure that we have a reliable and unique picture of education globally, they have done a great job of ensuring that the report is both reliable and valid. Their rigorous methodology led to a set of survey questions which drill down deeply into the core facts - not only about the global state of education, but about how education is developing regionally.

In thanking Ben and Mark for their work, I'd also like to thank Linda Darling-Hammond and the Learning Policy Institute for recommending them to EI as well as for her support for this Project. I'm equally grateful for her excellent Foreword and her continuing commitment to enhancing the quality, role and status of teachers across the world.

What really strikes me about the report is that while there is a growing academic and research consensus internationally that schools and their teachers underpin the social stability, wellbeing and economic health of society... that message has yet to be fully understood by many individual

countries and societies. Collectively, we must make sure that this vital message, one shared fully by the UN and the OECD, is understood particularly given the pressing need for education to respond to the threats posed by climate change and the degradation of bio-diversity.

Irrespective of advances in digitalisation and artificial intelligence, all the evidence shows that without qualified teachers there can be no successful education system. Yet, there are very few global reports which describe the current condition of the teaching profession from within. This makes the messages from this report even more troubling and powerful.

This report demonstrates that teacher shortages are both a global crisis and a reversible challenge. Low pay/compensation, excessive working time and intensity and poor career progression are just some of the factors which are leading to teacher attrition. The message is that these factors are compounded by poor school leadership, lack of special needs support, too many administrative activities, excessive class sizes, too little attention paid to teacher well-being, work related violence, and inadequate professional learning. And while they know these causes, many governments still repeatedly fail to create effective strategies to retain teachers. Sadly, the smallest number of formal agreements between teacher unions and governments are on these issues.

Yet, the report's evidence shows that where there is social dialogue and partnership between teachers, their organisations and governments there is real progress in halting teacher attrition. And in countries where teacher status is high, so too are high levels of student achievement- and unsurprisingly they are the countries which have successfully tackled teacher attrition.



I'm also deeply concerned about our report's highlighting of the areas of discrimination teachers face. It is entirely unacceptable that in 2024 around 40% of teachers say they face political discrimination. Alongside the other areas of discrimination, such as ethnicity and gender, the picture that emerges is that many education systems are fundamentally harmed by discrimination against teachers.

Despite these challenges, I welcome the evidence that almost all countries have now publicly committed to realizing the right to education for all young people- even though many still must take necessary steps to achieve it. One of those steps is funding. The vast majority of unions report that education is not funded sufficiently, nor distributed equitably. Our Go Fund Education campaign is precisely targeted at remedying this unacceptable situation.

What is absolutely clear to me from this report is that the world's teachers believe that education is too important a public service for society to be left in the hands

of market forces and the private sector. They believe, and this is backed up the evidence of this report and evidence from inter-governmental organisations, that underinvestment comes at a high cost to society.

EI and its member organisations are determined to use every platform and campaigning strategy available to it, to enhance the status of the teaching profession across the world. The landmark recommendations of the United Nations' High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession are in complete synergy with this aim and are now buttressed with the evidence from our report to reach our goal.

David Edwards
General Secretary,
Education International



Foreword: Professor Linda Darling-Hammond

This 2024 Global Status of Teachers report sends a very important message at a critical time. It is the fourth in a series of such reports published by Education International since 2015 reflecting teachers' reports on the conditions of their work and the status of the profession. At this moment -- on the heels of a global pandemic accompanied by massive political changes, climate and conflict disasters, and rapid economic restructuring -- both schools and the teaching profession are experiencing intense challenges and a felt need for systemic transformation.

At the core of these reports is a focus on teachers' working conditions and their health and well-being. More broadly they attend to the status of the teaching profession, and at the societal level they are framed by a concern for educational equity and the public good. The sweep of these results is broad, representing 204 of EI's 343 unions representing early years to upper secondary and TVET educators, located in 121 different countries. Data were collected in five languages (Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish) from association leaders in all of these countries and through interviews with teachers in each of EI's five global regions: Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, North America + the Caribbean.

This survey illuminates the underlying reasons for growing teacher shortages, rising attrition, and stresses in schools that have occasioned growing attention to teaching and teachers from a wide range of international bodies. For example, the United Nations established a High-Level Panel that issued a major report on the teaching profession this year. Attention has also come from UNESCO and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), recognizing how critical schools and teachers are to the economic and social well-being

of societies and to the optimism and efficacy of young people in relation to their future. These and other organizations are working together to create a framework for responding to the needs for change: EI has worked with UNESCO to create an International Framework of Professional Teaching Standards and with the OECD to create Ten Principles for Effective and Equitable Educational Recovery.

Addressing Widespread Shortages

It's clear that substantial initiatives that transform teaching as a profession will be needed to resolve shortages and to support teachers' capacity to meet the pressing needs they face. The Deakin University research team describes the shortage situation as both a global challenge and a crisis. Member organisations in all EI's Regions report significant teacher shortages, with special education and multiple subject areas in secondary education -- including information technology, mathematics, and the sciences -- as the most severely affected.

Notably, the most severe shortages in subject specific areas- special education, information technology, mathematics and the sciences- also match the highest levels of need for professional learning identified by teachers in the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Surveys. Special education as a field is especially important now in the wake of the effects of the pandemic on children's and young people's mental health and learning lags. The technical fields are, meanwhile, needing to grow to meet the demands of a world that will be utterly and irrevocably changed by technology and the rapid expansion of Artificial Intelligence capabilities which will transform everything about the economy and the society -- and will necessarily affect education.

Creating a High-Status, High-Retention Profession

The causes of teacher shortages are very clear: Inadequate pay/compensation is globally identified as the most common cause. The next five causes- poor career progression, poor management practices, excessive working time, low professional status, and poor occupational health and safety -- are all related. The low status of the profession – which produces and is produced by teachers' low status – is also the root of all these factors.

The importance of attrition as a key cause of shortages cannot be overstated. While many policymakers think about teacher recruitment when they encounter shortages, the problem stems largely from a failure to retain teachers already hired. In jurisdictions where school enrolment is stable or declining, about 9 out of 10 positions each year are a result of teachers who left the year before – most of them for reasons other than retirement. Filling vacancies by hiring teachers who are not prepared creates a vicious cycle, as these teachers are 2 to 3 times more likely to leave after the first year than are fully prepared teachers.

And attrition is quite costly both to school districts and to students. In the US for example, research conducted by the Learning Policy Institute indicates that additional teacher replacement costs tend to average more than 1/3 the cost of a new teacher's salary, and high rates of attrition also reduce student achievement. Often teachers are recruited and treated in ways that undermine retention – e.g. by recruiting teachers who are underprepared, failing to offer novices strong mentoring, giving them the most difficult teaching loads, and letting them sink or swim with the supports they need. These longstanding traditions are ultimately costly and counterproductive. High retention strategies that change these conditions will be needed to turn shortages and student learning around.

Many of these high-retention strategies can be seen in countries in the Asia Pacific region, some of which appear to ascribe to a higher status and more supportive approach to teaching. This study finds that in these countries, many of which are very high-achieving,

teachers experience higher levels of respect, greater acknowledgement of their expertise, greater attention to their input, and better levels of access to professional learning. In an international study I led, entitled *Empowered Educators*, we found teachers perceived as nation-builders in countries like Singapore and provinces like Shanghai, with strong investments in compensation, professional learning, and working conditions paying off in high rates of retention for teachers and high levels of learning for students.

These were nations in which teachers also had more time for collaborative planning and learning and an increasingly manageable class sizes. This survey emphasizes that this is not the case globally: In many parts of the world, excessive levels of teaching and non-teaching activities, class sizes combined with inadequate time for all the work of teaching, and a lack of attention to the emotional needs of teachers all feed into teachers' excessive workload intensity, sense of burnout, and, too often, a sense of discouragement about remaining in the profession.

Creating Conditions for System Success

While teachers are concerned about their own working conditions – which ultimately influence their capacity to teach and students' opportunities to learn -- they are equally concerned about the condition of the system as a whole. This survey makes clear the extent to which teachers and their unions are committed to system equity on behalf of all children -- including those who have been marginalized as a function of disability, immigration status, or economic status – and worry about the extent to which genuine access is available.

Teachers hold strong concerns about the adequacy and fair distribution of resources generally and the inadequacy of resources in many societies for students who have additional needs. They see the dangers in a growing privatization movement around the world, which will favor some at the expense of others.

They are also rightfully concerned about whether students are being taught the knowledge and skills needed in the rapidly changing world they are



entering – including those needed to address enormous, existential issues such as societal inequality and climate change – and want to be more involved in developing and determining the governance, curriculum and assessment systems that govern their work and students’ learning. The forward looking innovations introduced by teachers during the pandemic should be building blocks for future-oriented education systems. Yet many systems have sought to return to the old “normal” that cannot solve the challenges we face and have failed to capitalize on the creativity of their teachers to engage in needed transformations. And few agreements between governments and teachers’ unions go beyond pay and compensation issues to address these fundamental issues of equity, management practices, curriculum and assessment, or school evaluation.

Given the enormity of the needs that face our systems today it will be critical to forge the social partnerships between government and unions that not only address the work-related issues identified in this report – which are vital for recruiting and retaining a stable and effective teacher workforce – but also build the foundations for new systems of education. These systems need to be grounded in equity; focused on meaningful learning for students that arms them with the deep understanding and critical thinking they need to succeed and solve problems collaboratively; and supportive of deep knowledge and skills among educators forged by lifelong learning in communities of practice.

Teachers understand what is needed. Children and societies will be well-served if educators have the opportunity, as members of strong professions and professional associations, to use what they know both to teach and to lead the design of the transformed systems.

Linda Darling-Hammond
Stanford, California.





Executive Summary: Global Status of Teachers 2024

The Global Status of Teachers report provides a global and regional analysis of the status and conditions of the teaching profession by representing the views of teacher unions worldwide. This report, commissioned by Education International (EI), builds on previous reports from 2015, 2018, and 2021 with the aim of highlighting the key issues facing teachers in 2024. The report primarily draws on survey data from 204 senior union representatives across 121 countries. Given the widespread recognition of teachers' essential role in society, the report outlines key priorities for action and offers recommendations to ensure that the teaching profession remains attractive, sustainable, and sufficiently supported to meet the needs of both current students and future generations.

Key Findings

1. Teacher shortages: a significant global challenge

Teacher shortages are identified as a significant global challenge, particularly in secondary education, special education, and subject-specific areas such as IT, mathematics, and science. Unions report that the primary causes of shortages are low salaries, excessive working hours, low professional status, and poor career progression opportunities. Regional variations in the severity of shortages were noted, with North America and the Caribbean, and Africa particularly affected. Attrition, rather than recruitment, is driving shortages, especially when underprepared teachers are hired and subsequently leave the profession early.

Recommendation 1

- **Review teacher salaries and compensation:** Governments must offer competitive and

attractive salaries to draw individuals to the profession and retain current teachers.

- **Develop strategies to attract and retain teachers:** Beyond salary adjustments, teaching should be promoted as a high-status profession, with policies addressing teachers' concerns and ensuring their job satisfaction.
- **Address critical shortages:** Targeted recruitment efforts are needed for subject-specific areas facing shortages, particularly in special education and STEM fields.

2. Teachers' rights and social dialogue: legal, political and practical obstacles

Teachers face numerous legal and practical obstacles, including restricted freedom of expression and limitations on organising. Unions report that mechanisms for social dialogue are inadequate, limiting teachers' influence on professional matters, particularly in relation to equity and professional development. Teachers' voices are often excluded from decisions affecting their work, especially at the district, state, and national levels.

Recommendation 2

- **Provide legal protections:** Governments should protect teachers' rights, including freedom of expression and collective bargaining.
- **Improve social dialogue:** Establish robust and inclusive mechanisms for teachers to engage in social dialogue with governments, ensuring they have a voice in decisions at all levels.
- **Empower teachers:** Increase teacher participation in policy-making, particularly in areas affecting their professional status,

purpose, working conditions and professional development.

3. The status of teaching: low professional status in many contexts

Despite being recognised for their critical societal role, teachers are undervalued compared to other professions. Media portrayals of teachers are often negative, and employment conditions and professional learning opportunities are inconsistent, leading to a decline in the profession's status. Regional variations show that some countries, particularly in Asia Pacific, place higher value on teaching as a profession, while other regions have more negative perceptions of the profession.

Recommendation 3

- **Promote teacher status:** Foster public, political and media discourse that recognises teachers as professionals and ensure systems and policies are designed to position teaching as a high-status profession.
- **Enhance professional learning:** Develop systems that recognise teaching as complex intellectual work and provide opportunities for teachers to engage in high-quality, relevant professional learning.

4. Challenging working conditions and teacher well-being issues

Teachers globally report excessive workloads, large class sizes, inadequate respect, and mental health challenges. These concerns are often overlooked by governments, leading to issues related to teachers' negative experiences of their work in many contexts. Discrimination, though less frequently reported, remains a significant issue in certain regions, particularly regarding political and social discrimination against teachers. Consultations between unions and governments on issues such as inequality, disability equity, and gender equality are limited, with substantial regional differences in government responsiveness.

Recommendation 4

- **Address workload:** Reduce unnecessary burdens on teachers by addressing the causes of excessive workload and redesigning teaching roles to focus on teaching activities.
- **Promote healthy school systems:** Develop school systems and environments that promote teacher well-being and mental health, enabling teachers to do their professional work.
- **Address discrimination:** Ensure teachers work in safe and respectful environments, free from discrimination.

5. Resourcing the right to education for all

Significant gaps exist in the fulfillment of the right to education, particularly regarding resource distribution and policy engagement. Public funding for education is often insufficient, and there is growing concern over the regulation and accountability of non-state actors in education.

Recommendation 5

- **Ensure fair resource distribution:** Governments should prioritise equitable distribution of educational resources to ensure all students have access to quality education.
- **Improve funding and oversight:** Secure adequate public funding for public education and strengthen oversight of non-state actors to maintain equitable and high-quality education.
- **Enhance consultations:** Increase engagement between governments and unions on critical issues such as inequality and disability equity.

Given the enormous challenges facing educational systems today, it is crucial to establish a strong, high-status teaching profession. This profession must be supported by well-structured systems and relationships with governments and employers that focus on addressing the key challenges teachers face, as well as attracting and retaining a stable and highly skilled workforce. Beyond these immediate concerns, a strengthened



high-status teaching profession lays the foundation for transformed education systems. Such systems must be grounded in equity and designed to provide students with meaningful learning experiences that foster deep understanding and critical thinking skills, preparing them to navigate complex futures characterized by rapid technological advancements, economic shifts, and global challenges such as climate change and societal inequality.





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Chapter 1: Introduction

The recent social, political, and economic upheavals have emphasised the critical role that teaching professionals play in the functioning and development of societies worldwide. During the Covid-19 pandemic, teachers ensured the continuity of education despite unprecedented challenges. They provided not only academic support but also emotional and psychological support for students and other members of the community during a time of considerable uncertainty and anxiety. The COVID-19 pandemic gave parents and the general public greater insight into the essential role that teachers play in society as part of the social fabric of our lives. There appeared to be greater recognition that teachers are not only responsible for promoting student learning and growth but also play an essential role in fostering healthy, resilient communities, promoting inclusivity, and connecting students, families, services, and the wider community, leading to more appreciation for the teaching profession (Heffernan et al., 2021; OECD, 2020). Furthermore, global strategies and agendas aimed at creating better societies—characterised by technological advancement, sustainability, equity, and peace—have emphasised the critical importance of teachers by positioning them as key agents in achieving this vision (OECD-Education International, 2021; OECD, 2024; UNESCO, 2023; UN, 2024a).

Despite this widespread recognition of teachers in the post-pandemic context, there are concerns that teaching is increasingly challenging and difficult to sustain as a career, as evidenced by the severe workforce shortages in many countries (UN, 2024b). Many of the challenges now facing teachers are intimately connected to issues related to the status and conditions of the profession (OECD, 2024; UNESCO, 2022; UN, 2024b). While there has been significant growth in the global teacher

workforce and an exponential increase in the number of schools employing teachers (UNESCO, 2022), teachers in many contexts struggle for recognition and respect and do not share the professional status and conditions of more established professions, such as doctors and lawyers (Ingersoll & Perda, 2008; Dolton et al., 2018). These more established professions are traditionally associated with specialised and substantive knowledge, a commitment to the public good, self-regulation over entry into the profession, autonomy over how work is planned, organised, enacted and evaluated, decent working conditions and high levels of societal respect and recognition (Abbott, 2014; Mezza, 2022; Muzio, Aulakh & Kirkpatrick, 2020). On these bases, teachers in some countries have achieved professional status. However, in most countries, teaching does not enjoy the same autonomy, working conditions, or societal respect, leading to a lower professional status and recognition (Ingersoll & Perda, 2008; Dolton et al., 2018).

1.1 Contemporary issues associated with the conditions and status of the teaching profession

The challenges facing the teaching profession vary significantly across countries due to differences in educational infrastructure, government policies, cultural attitudes, teacher pay, and working conditions, especially in regions affected by conflict. This section highlights several critical issues related to the conditions and status of teachers globally. Although not exhaustive, this discussion aims to highlight pressing challenges facing the profession. Addressing these

issues is essential for improving the professional standing of teachers and ensuring the sustainability of educational systems globally.

Workforce sustainability

Teacher workforce shortages are a global challenge, significantly impacting the quality and stability of education systems (UN, 2024; UNESCO, 2023). These shortages are compounded by difficulties in attracting new teachers and retaining existing professionals (Heffernan et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2019; UNESCO, 2024). Critical factors contributing to these shortages include teachers' working conditions, professional autonomy, salary and remuneration, status, recognition and respect, and the mental health of teachers (Heffernan et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2019; Rahimi & Arnold, 2024).

Retaining teachers is crucial for the sustainability and effectiveness of school systems. High turnover negatively affects the remaining teachers, increases workloads, and disrupts continuity in teaching (Ladd & Sorensen, 2017; Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Teacher attrition also leads to out-of-field teaching, where teachers teach subjects outside their expertise (Hobbs et al., 2022). Attrition also necessitates substantial investment in attracting and preparing new teachers, diverting resources that could be used for other educational improvements.

Moreover, teacher turnover disrupts student achievement by breaking the continuity of learning and impacting the development of student-teacher relationships, which are critical for effective learning (Gibbons et al., 2021). It also negatively affects school culture, increasing instability and diminishing community cohesion (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Kelchtermans, 2017). Schools experiencing high staff turnover rates often struggle to build a stable and supportive educational environment, which is essential for fostering student success (Kelchtermans, 2017).

Teacher rights, autonomy and voice

Teacher rights, professional autonomy, and professional voice are fundamental elements of education systems that value, respect and empower teachers. In some countries, recognition of basic rights, respect for teacher unions and collaborative approaches to policymaking ensure teachers have significant roles in educational reforms and exert control over their work. Conversely, in other locations, the erosion of teachers' rights and professional autonomy is a growing concern. Hostility towards unions (ITUC, 2023) and policies that restrict teacher professional autonomy undermine teachers' ability to participate in decision-making processes and have led to a top-down approach to education reform (Day, 2017). In recent reforms, the policy voice has dominated decisions about teachers' work (Day, 2017).

In many countries, new models of governance have transformed teaching and learning by emphasising the standardisation of teaching and learning, a focus on teacher performance, constrained forms of autonomy, the use of corporate management models and test-based accountability policies (Blackmore et al., 2023; Sachs, 2016; Sahlberg, 2016). There is considerable evidence that these developments have placed greater control over the teaching profession with policymakers and systems administrators (Day, 2017; Sachs, 2016; Sahlberg, 2012). Consequently, teachers in many contexts face prescriptive guidelines, rigid frameworks that limit their professional judgement, and a bureaucratic and constrained work environment (Day, 2017).

The status of teachers

Public perceptions of the teaching profession vary between contexts: teachers are highly regarded in China and Malaysia but have lower status in Brasil and Israel (Dolton et al., 2018). However, international studies indicate



that, on average, the public does not hold teaching in the same regard as more established professions (Dolton et al., 2018; Ingersoll & Perda, 2008). A recent international survey found that on average members of the general public ranked teaching in the middle of occupations, comparable to social workers and librarians (Dolton et al., 2018). Although many factors contribute to how teachers are viewed by the public, political and media representations of teachers, levels of pay and remuneration, perceptions of competency and expertise and the historical struggles for professional recognition play a critical role.

In some countries, there is evidence that political and media representations of teachers often express hostility towards teachers (Kim, Owusu & Asbury, 2024 and portray teaching in a negative light (Barnes, 2022; Mockler, 2022; Mockler & Redpath, 2023). These reports may perpetuate a perception that schools are underperforming, and students are not fulfilling their potential due to the low quality of teachers (Barnes, 2022; Frenkiewich & Onosko, 2020). Negative online representations of teachers via social media sites are also emerging as an important issue, with teachers reporting experiencing criticism, abuse and negative portrayals of their work via social media (Cowen Forssell et al., 2024).

Pay and employment conditions are other critical issues that contribute to the status of the teaching profession. In many countries, teachers receive lower salaries than other similarly qualified workers (OECD, 2022; UNESCO, 2023). For example, half of all countries pay primary teachers less than other professions requiring similar qualifications (UNESCO, 2023 p. 14), and the average teacher salary in OECD countries is lower than other tertiary-educated workers. The average salary for primary teachers is often more pronounced than (OECD, 2022). This disparity affects teachers' living standards and career choices and contributes to broader perceptions of teaching as a lower-status profession (Räsänen, et al., 2020; Kraft & Lyon, 2024).

Teacher practice and professional learning are other critical elements that contribute to the professional status of teachers. Various approaches to professional knowledge, practice and teaching in different countries lead to differing views on the profession and its position in society (Sachs 2016). In response to concerns about teacher quality, one prominent approach has focused on developing the technical and occupational aspects of teaching, emphasising standardised practices, accountability systems, and ongoing professional development aimed at improving student outcomes, often on standardised tests (Mockler, 2024; Sachs, 2016). The focus on measurable competencies and performances can narrow the scope of practice, limiting teacher professional agency, expertise, and judgement (Mockler, 2024; Sachs, 2016). As a result, these approaches have contributed to a diminished status and perception of the teaching profession in some countries (Mockler, 2024; Sachs, 2016; Sahlberg, 2016).

The professional status of teachers is also shaped by social and historical factors, especially gendered notions of work and persistent gender discrimination (Blackmore, 2005; Drudy, 2008). In most countries, the majority of teachers in the workforce are women, especially at the early childhood and primary levels (UIS, 2023). Over the past two decades, their proportion has increased globally, playing a critical role in expanding education and enhancing access (Kelleher, 2011). Established views of teaching and caregiving have sometimes diminished their professional status and recognition compared to male-dominated professions in some countries (Drudy, 2008; Kelleher, 2011). This perception and stereotype have affected wage structures and career progression, demonstrating social and historical issues associated with respect for and the status of women in education systems and broader society (Drudy, 2008). Historically, in many countries, women were targeted by policymakers for recruitment into the teaching profession because of perceptions that they had limited career options and would be satisfied with lower levels of

pay (Ingersoll et al., 2021). This partially explains why teaching salaries in many countries remain lower than those in male-dominated fields, reflecting broader gender pay disparities (Kelleher, 2011).

Aside from these issues, hierarchical roles within the education system, the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of teachers, and teacher migration status, also shape broader views of the profession and professional status. Principals are generally viewed as having higher status than teachers due to their responsibility for schools, while secondary school teachers are seen as having a higher status than primary school teachers because they often teach more specialised subjects (Dolton et al., 2018). Important differences are also apparent in some contexts according to teachers' ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Phillip & Brown, 2020). In some countries, teachers with particular cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds have historically been excluded from the teaching workforce, and policies and processes, such as entry requirements, licensing, and school cultures, continue to marginalise these groups (Phillip & Brown, 2020). In addition, migrant teachers in some countries face significant employment challenges, including limited access to permanent positions, poorer employment conditions, and a need to engage in unpaid work to secure jobs (Bense, 2016).

Working conditions and health and wellbeing

In their daily work, teachers contend with various pressures associated with their interactions with students, parents, and the demands of the school environment. While many teachers enjoy their work and have supportive working conditions, a significant number report working in challenging environments (Rahimi, Arnold, Horwood & Riley, 2022; Doan, Steiner & Pandey, 2024; Heffernan et al., 2022; Rahimi & Arnold, 2024) and the teaching profession is reported as one of the most stressful (Gallup, 2022). In many contexts,

teaching work is characterised by complex roles that involve heavy workloads and considerable emotional demands (Arnold, Rahimi & Riley, 2023; Doan, Steiner & Pandey, 2024; OECD, 2022). These challenges are often exacerbated by teachers' limited participation in decisions affecting their work and restricted control and autonomy. Major sources of stress for teachers include excessive administrative tasks, extensive marking, responsibility for student achievement, managing student behaviour, addressing parent concerns, and keeping up with changing requirements (Arnold, Rahimi & Riley, 2023; Doan, Steiner & Pandey, 2024; Heffernan et al., 2022; OECD, 2022). In some contexts, teachers must contend with these issues alongside high rates of work-related violence, including physical violence, threats of violence, bullying and abuse (McMahon et al., 2014; Wilson et al., 2011). Compounding these issues, many teachers work in conditions that are far from ideal, such as inadequate facilities and limited access to essential teaching resources (UNESCO, 2023).

While teaching is a demanding profession, it also offers many professionals fulfilment, satisfaction and meaning (Horwood et al., 2021; Rahimi, Arnold, Horwood & Riley, 2022; Riley et al., 2020). Many teachers derive a strong sense of purpose from their role in supporting student growth and development and contributing to the future of society. Empirical studies indicate that teachers who perceive their teaching practice to align with their beliefs and values experience higher well-being, job satisfaction, and reduced distress and burnout (Slemp, Field & Cho, 2020). Furthermore, the relationships teachers build with students (Spilt, Koomen & Thijs, 2011), colleagues (Bermejo-Toro, Prieto-Ursúa & Hernández, 2016), and the broader community provide a strong sense of connection and support, which further enhances their job fulfilment. This demonstrates that teaching is very rewarding when there is alignment between personal and professional values, professional practice and the systems and conditions within which teachers work.



Education for All

Within the broader context of Education for All, the Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education and education as a fundamental right, governments can create local and system conditions that enable teachers to work effectively. These conditions include high-quality education for all children and young people, adequate funding for education, proper resourcing and infrastructure and supportive systems and policies that empower teachers to do their work. However, despite widespread recognition of the importance of education, public funding for education is currently facing significant challenges globally due to the failure of governments to meet the minimum agreed benchmarks, reduced international aid and the learning gaps created by the Covid-19 pandemic (May Bend et al., 2023). In many countries, inadequate public funding and a lack of government commitment to education have been exacerbated by the privatisation and commercialisation of schooling (Hogan & Thompson, 2020). These issues raise important concerns about the equity, accessibility, and quality of education for all children, potentially exacerbating existing inequalities, increasing segregation and undermining the right to education.

In inequitable school systems, wealthier students attend well-resourced schools, while less advantaged students face underfunded and inadequately supported schools (Dovemark et al., 2018). Segregation within the school system creates significant challenges for teachers working in schools for disadvantaged students. For example, they may struggle with staff shortages (Riley et al., 2020), below-average student achievement (Strand, 2014), and additional student health and needs (Chapman & Harris, 2004). The failure to address these disparities impedes teachers' ability to deliver quality education and exacerbates existing educational inequalities, undermining the right to education for all children.

1.2 Transforming the teaching profession: addressing current challenges

Concerns about the challenges facing teachers have prompted widespread reflection on the contemporary nature of teaching, the professional status of the teaching profession, and the evolving needs of teachers as they prepare students to navigate complex and uncertain futures (OECD, 2024). These concerns underscore the importance of understanding and addressing current and future demands on teachers to ensure they are well-equipped to support their students.

At the global level, there is a growing recognition that the conditions that affect teachers' lives are fundamental to achieving high-quality education for children and young people (OECD, 2024; UN, 2024). There is a growing momentum behind efforts to elevate the status of the teaching profession as evidenced by the proliferation of global initiatives. One of the latest initiatives is the report of the UN's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession which focuses on enhancing the recruitment, preparation, experiences and retention of teachers by advocating for improved working conditions and better support systems (UN, 2024). A further initiative exploring the development of teachers' professional standards is the UNESCO/ Education International Global Framework of Professional Teaching Standards (EI & UNESCO, 2019) which sets out principles related to teaching knowledge, understanding and relations and has provided a basis for further development of work on teacher policy in the United Nations.

However, international surveys on teachers' professional lives are rare. Education International's Global Status of Teacher's Survey is one example and is the only one carried out by teacher unions. Another is the OECD's International Teaching and Learning Survey (OECD, 2014; OECD, 2020). Its data is used to make recommendations on the development of teacher policy and studies on how teacher professionalism can be defined. One such study is the OECD's on-

going project, 'New Professionalism and the Future of Teaching' (OECD, 2024).

These various projects reflect heightened interest in transforming teaching to equip educators for the complexities of contemporary teaching. These projects aim to collaborate with teachers, policymakers, and other key stakeholders to create a common vision for the future of teaching, define what it means to be a professional and identify the pathways to professionalisation.

For example, recommendations of the UN High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession (UN, 2024) are predicated on the notion that teachers need enabling conditions to effectively perform their work. This includes establishing systems and environments that are responsive to teachers' needs and perspectives. This includes rights, mechanisms for social dialogue, fair pay, safe and inclusive working environments, and respect and

status. The OECD's approach differs in that it aims to establish a set of key universal features of the teaching profession and develop strategies that assist policymakers in aligning their professional learning systems, processes, and opportunities with these priorities. The former outlines the systemic and societal preconditions for a healthy, sustainable teaching profession capable of meeting the needs of students now and in the future while the latter focuses on transforming the profession from within through the development of systems to transform teachers' attitudes, behaviours, and learning processes.

Within the various global initiatives, there is evidence of different perspectives on how to respond to the challenges teachers face and elevate the status of the teaching profession nationally and globally. To clearly understand the implications of policy efforts to reform the profession, it is useful to define some key terms related to the status and conditions of

Table 1.2.1: Key terms related to the status and conditions of the profession (adapted from Muzio, Aulakh & Kirkpatrick, 2020; Evans, 2008, 2014).

Term	Definition
<i>Profession</i>	An occupation that has undergone several stages of development and successfully effected tactics and strategies that convinced others (especially the state and public) to accord it the status of a 'profession' with resultant material and social benefits.
<i>Professionalised</i>	An occupational group that possesses the status of an established profession.
<i>Professionalism: Institutional focus</i>	A type of labour market where professionals, rather than employers or clients, predominantly determined how their work is defined, performed, and evaluated. It emphasises professional autonomy and control, ensuring that practitioners as a collective set and maintain the standards of their work.
<i>Professionalism: Professional practice and ethics</i>	A commitment to standards of practice that shape professional interactions and practices. It emphasises a dedication to the public good and the continual growth of educational professionals, ensuring that they collectively uphold and advance the integrity and quality of their profession.
<i>Professionalisation: Institutional focus</i>	The journey undertaken by an occupation towards becoming increasingly "professionalised" by establishing a labour market where they have control over their work.
<i>Professionalisation: Professional practice and ethics</i>	The journey undertaken by an occupation towards becoming increasingly "professionalised" by establishing and upholding the standards and expectations that define professional work, including the ideals of service and commitment to the public good.



professions (see Table 1.2.1). These terms explain some important perspectives that persist in debates on professionals and professionalism today.

It is important to note that there is no consensus on the meaning of professionalism, and professionalism can and has been represented in many different ways, including as:

- Socially-constructed and evolving
- Social coordination
- Applying knowledge to cases
- Occupational control
- Knowledge as social capital
- Standards, ethics, and quality service
- Relationships with clients or the public
- A source of identity
- A basis of social and professional status and power

(Evans, 2015)

Furthermore, research into teacher professionalism and professionalisation are dominated by theories and empirical evidence from teachers working in Western contexts, reflecting specific social, economic, historical and cultural perspectives on teaching (Tikly et al., 2022). Yet, globally, the teaching profession and its history are incredibly diverse, with various ways in which teacher professionalism is understood and practised across different regions. As such, there is a growing recognition of the need for varied interpretations and plural conceptions of teacher professionalism (Evetts, 2013; Sachs, 2016; Tikly et al., 2022).

Given this diversity, efforts to elevate the teaching profession must consider the varied interpretations and conceptions of teaching across different contexts, recognising that teachers whose views and experiences are often absent from global discussions offer valuable insights into teacher professionalism (Tikly et al., 2022). At the same time, it is important to address the common challenges teachers face globally. This report draws on the two definitions of professionalism outlined above (Table 1.2.2) to identify key areas of reform necessary to address contemporary challenges and support

the teaching profession in becoming more empowered, esteemed, and sustainable. This focus emphasises that policies, strategies, and initiatives aimed at elevating the status of the teaching profession will only be sustained and impactful if they address the key challenges facing the profession, promote professional autonomy and control and ensure the profession is recognised as one that is trusted, valued, and respected (Sachs, 2016).

Empowering teachers: rights, voice and professional autonomy

To address the challenges facing teachers and transform the profession, it is important to create the conditions for an empowered teaching profession that has considerable autonomy and can influence how its work is defined, organised, performed, and evaluated (Sachs, 2016). Fundamentally, this involves establishing and upholding enabling rights and decent work conditions for teachers in line with international standards, including protecting freedom of association, collective bargaining, freedom of expression, freedom of thought and academic freedom (United Nations, 2024). These rights ensure that teachers undertake their work in an environment that protects their personal and professional freedoms, fosters their professional growth and allows them to effectively advocate for the needs of their students and the teaching profession.

In addition to basic human rights, efforts to improve the conditions and status of the profession should foster trust, respect, and reciprocity among teachers, their unions, policymakers and other key stakeholders. A crucial mechanism to achieve this is coordinated and institutionalised social dialogue between governments, teacher unions and relevant employers. This can help to prevent policies from being imposed on teachers 'from above' (Evetts, 2011; Sachs, 2016, UN, 2024). Instead, teachers are actively involved in policy development, allowing their insights and expertise to shape the direction of

the profession (Sachs, 2016). Teachers and their organisations, in consultation with stakeholders, should determine and monitor the standards of practice that shape professional expectations and practices. This will begin to address the imposition of external systems of accountability and foster more professional and collegial forms of accountability within the teaching profession (Thompson, 2021).

The expertise, needs, and experiences of teachers should also contribute to the design of teacher preparation, induction, and professional learning policies and systems to ensure they align with the needs and experiences of the profession (Sachs, 2016). This collegial and collaborative approach could help to institutionalise teacher voice and collegial authority and expertise, empowering teachers as a professional group to collectively determine, uphold and advance the integrity and quality of their profession.

Enhancing the status of teachers

To address the key issues related to status of the teaching profession, new reforms must promote a well-respected, high-status profession that is recognised and rewarded for its contribution to society. Rewards for teaching work come in various forms, including remuneration (salary, bonuses), career opportunities (promotion prospects, career pathways, and job security), socio-emotional benefits (respect, recognition, support), and intrinsic rewards such as motivation for public service and altruism.

Ensuring equitable compensation is fundamental to recognising and rewarding the profound contributions teachers make to society. Establishing fair wages, benefits, and rewarding career pathways will support teachers to receive compensation at levels comparable to other similarly qualified professionals. Gender pay equity should be ensured, in addition to fair and comparable salaries across levels of education.

Politicians, civil servants, the media

and other key stakeholders can help to foster greater trust in the profession by publicly acknowledging the significant contributions teachers make to society. They can also convey a view of teaching as complex, intellectual work that requires adaptive expertise, discretionary judgement, research literacy and a commitment to professional practice and ethics. By valuing the contributions and expertise of teachers, educational authorities, the media and the public can enhance the profession's social standing and create a more supportive professional environment for current and aspiring professionals.

High-status professions are acknowledged for their expertise and authority in relation to their core responsibilities and purpose. Reforms focused on elevating the status of teachers, should ensure that teachers and their unions are able to exert influence over policies affecting their professional practice and ethics, including how their professional work is defined, organised, performed, and evaluated. Teacher expertise and discretionary judgement should be acknowledged and promoted, including recognition that there are diverse pathways to student success and teachers should not be constrained by pedagogies and assessments that meet only narrow criteria for success.

High-status professions also engage in ongoing professional learning. Professional learning for teachers should be widely available, ensuring that the expertise, needs, and experiences of teachers contribute to the design of teacher preparation, induction, and professional learning policies and systems. Professional learning systems should promote teacher expertise, judgement, and collaboration whilst demonstrating trust in the profession (Sachs, 2016; Mockler, 2024). Furthermore, professional learning systems and policies should promote teaching as a collaborative profession, providing adequate space, time, and resources for collaborative planning and learning and communities of practice. Professional learning experiences should be informed by the elements of



high-quality, meaningful professional learning, including reflective practice, collaborative inquiry, research-informed practice, and the integration of diverse knowledge and pedagogies (Cramer, Brown & Aldridge, 2023; Darling-Hammond, Hylar & Gardener, 2017; Mockler, 2024; Sachs, 2016).

To address gender inequalities and stereotypes in the teaching profession, authorities and other key stakeholders must advocate for career progression opportunities and professional recognition for women (Drury, 2013; Kelleher, 2011). Policymakers should recognise the necessity of combating discrimination and marginalisation based on ethnic, cultural, or linguistic backgrounds (Phillip & Brown, 2020). Entry requirements, licensing processes, and school cultures should be reformed to become more inclusive, culturally safe, and supportive of diversity.

Designing professional roles and work environments that enable teachers to support students

To address the key issues related to teachers' working conditions and overall health and wellbeing, reform efforts must acknowledge and attempt to address the contemporary challenges of teaching that are evident in many countries. By adopting a holistic approach to teacher wellbeing, which encompasses the quality of life in relation to their health, work environment, school culture, and interpersonal relationships, educational authorities can create a supportive environment that allows teachers to fulfil their roles and respond to the needs of their students (Rahimi & Arnold, 2024).

Although there is growing policy interest in promoting teacher health and wellbeing, current methods to understand and mitigate the challenges teachers face at work vary significantly. Furthermore, current policies and strategies tend to focus on individual-directed interventions to promote professional learning and development in teachers, develop their

positive evaluations of work, or reduce mental health problems (LaMontagne et al., 2014). These approaches often neglect the more challenging and time-consuming work of addressing the root causes of stress related to policies, processes, and working conditions in schools (Rahimi & Arnold, 2024; LaMontagne et al., 2014).

Efforts to transform the teaching profession should ensure that they attend to the systemic and school-level issues that contribute to teacher stress and ensure they do not exacerbate these issues (Rahimi & Arnold, 2024). This involves developing policies that address the broader systemic factors that impact on teachers' working conditions in schools. Reforms must demonstrate an understanding of and respond to the stresses and strains that teachers experience in different contexts, to inform more effective and holistic policies (Rahimi & Arnold, 2024).

Supportive governance structures are crucial in creating an environment where teachers are valued and empowered as a profession (Sachs, 2016). Developing policies and processes that promote professional and collegial autonomy, fair evaluation systems, trust in teachers, respect for their professional judgement and expertise, teacher collaboration and learning, reasonable workloads and support for the emotionally demanding nature of teaching work are critical elements (Rahimi & Arnold, 2024). Additionally, ensuring access to mental health support systems can help to address mental health problems among teachers.

Promoting the Right to Education

Adequate public funding is crucial for realising the Right to Education, providing the resources needed to maintain, improve, and expand educational opportunities. Addressing financial constraints and disparities in public funding is essential for equitable access to quality education. UNESCO recommends that

governments allocate at least 6% of their GDP or 20% of their national budget to education (UN, 2024). This commitment supports the creation of high-quality learning environments and helps reduce educational inequalities.

Effective policies must prioritise the equitable distribution of resources, focusing on under-resourced schools to ensure that all students, regardless of socio-economic background, have access to quality education. Comprehensive support for teachers is also vital, involving investments in infrastructure, teaching materials, and professional learning tailored to the needs of teachers and their students.

Governments are responsible for developing equitable school systems that provide supportive conditions for students and teachers. In addition to listening to the needs of teachers, students and parents, this includes maintaining infrastructure, ensuring high-quality teacher preparation and professional learning, and offering curricula that meet diverse needs.

Adequate provision and funding can enhance educational opportunities, leading to more equitable teaching environments and better distribution of teacher expertise.

Additionally, regulating private education is important to prevent increased segregation and exacerbation of inequality, and reduce the challenges facing teachers in inequitable school systems. Effective regulation can ensure a more level playing field, where resources are distributed more equitably and teachers receive the support they need to provide quality education. Furthermore, advocacy for global solidarity is essential to address funding gaps and assist countries with limited resources in achieving their education goals and delivering on education as a universal human right.

Figure 1.3.1: Framework for the Global Status of Teachers report 2024

GLOBAL STATUS OF TEACHERS

CRITICAL ISSUES



TEACHER SHORTAGE



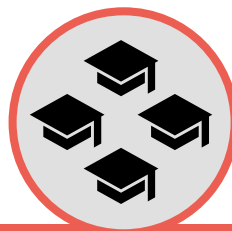
TEACHER RIGHTS & SOCIAL DIALOGUE



THE STATUS OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION



TEACHER WORK, HEALTH AND WELLBEING



EDUCATION FOR EQUITY AND THE PUBLIC GOOD



1.3 About the Global Status of Teachers 2024 Report

The 2024 Global Status of Teachers report examines teacher union perspectives on the status and conditions of teachers regarding the key challenges facing the profession. By examining these challenges, the report offers insights into the factors that shape teacher professional status and teachers' working lives in different contexts. These insights provide direction on key priorities for teachers globally and regionally, and offer insights into the strengths, limitations, implications and relevance of contemporary reform efforts.

Since 2015, Education International's commissioned Global Status of Teachers Survey reports have focused on the conditions and status of the teaching profession globally. These reports have consistently assessed the critical issues facing teaching professionals working at all levels of education up to the end of schooling, including their union status, career opportunities, conditions of work, professionalism, educational provision and educational rights. The primary findings of the first report, the 2015 Global

Status of Teachers and the Teaching Profession Report, indicated that teacher status is closely linked to the quality of education. The report highlighted that salary and working conditions are crucial determinants of this status. Additionally, it emphasised that continuing professional development (CPD) is essential for enhancing the status of teachers (Symeonidis, 2015).

The 2018 and 2021 reports both emphasised common challenges facing the profession globally, including negative media portrayals of teachers, decreasing job security and casualisation, the low attractiveness of the profession, low salaries, poor working conditions, the low quality of professional learning and issues related to teacher rights and mechanisms for social dialogue (Stromquist, 2018; Thompson, 2021).

We draw on the conceptual framework used in previous reports, the key strategic priorities of EI and the contemporary challenges facing teachers to develop the framework for the 2024 survey (see Figure 1.3.1).





Chapter 2: Methodology

This report primarily draws upon the insights, experiences and perceptions of leaders from education unions and professional organisations associated with Education International (EI).

2.1 Survey instrument

A comprehensive multilingual survey instrument comprising five sections was designed and developed through a multistage process. The initial survey design process involved consideration of previous versions of the Global Status of Teachers study, a review of relevant literature and policy documents related to the current status of teaching professionals, and consultations with EI experts. Following the development of the draft survey instrument, tests were conducted to assess the readability of the questions and items, evaluate the appropriateness of survey measures and scales, and analyse the flow and coherence of the instrument. This informed the development of the final English version of the survey which was then translated into four other languages and approved by EI staff who checked the translations. Finally, the survey was made available to participants via the secure online survey platform 'Qualtrics' in five different languages: English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic.

The survey's main sections include one demographic section and five key sections: teacher shortages; teachers' rights and social dialogue; the status of the teaching profession; teachers' work, health, and sustainability; and education for equity and the public good.

2.2 Participants data collection, preparation and analysis

The survey invitations were disseminated via email to a senior leader in a national or sub-national teacher union representing school teachers, vocational and educational training teachers, and educators in early childhood settings. Senior leaders were selected as they were viewed to be well-informed unions who were in a unique position to have a broad view of the education system and an understanding of teachers' work and the systems and processes within which teaching work is situated. The leaders' responses were provided through different methods, including direct submissions from senior leaders or submissions from senior leaders in consultation with a committee or other senior colleagues. All respondents were verified via the outline platform and completed their submissions between April and June 2023.

From a population of 343 EI member organisations, 204 unions (approximately 60% of the population), located in 121 different countries, responded to the survey (see Table 2.2.1 for more details). Records that were not sufficiently completed or were duplicated were removed during the data cleaning process. Only one record per member organisation was retained for analysis.

Table 2.2.1 demonstrates the engagement with the survey from senior leaders in organisations across various educational levels, reflecting a strong response. Figure 2.2.1 (below) highlights the representation of education organisations that participated in the study, categorised by the level of education in which the teachers they serve work. It is important

Table 2.2.1: Participants demographics

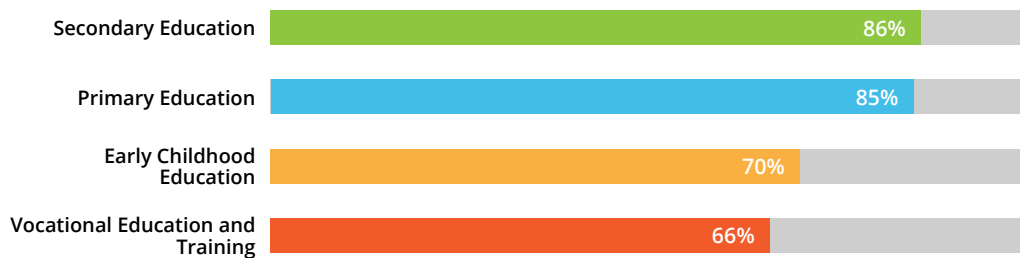
	<i>Records</i>	<i>Targeted sub-population</i>	<i>Surveys (%)</i>
Africa	77	111	69.4%
Asia and the Pacific	33	59	55.9%
Europe	55	110	50.0%
Latin America	19	32	59.4%
North America and the Caribbean	20	31	64.5%
TOTAL	204	343	59.5%

to note that most organisations cover multiple levels of education, such as Early Childhood Educators, Primary Teachers and Secondary Teachers within the same organisation. In total, 86% of participating union organisations represent secondary teachers, 85% represent primary teachers, 70% represent early childhood educators, and 66% represent educators in the VET sector.

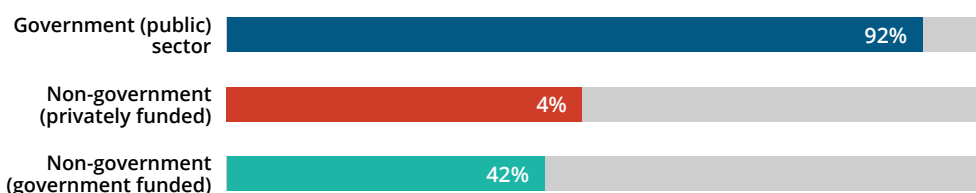
Most participating organisations (92%) represented teachers in the government (public) sector. However, almost half

(47%) of the participating organisations represented teachers in the private sector and 42% represented other teachers in other non-government settings. Figure 2.2.2 details the involvement of organisations across various school sectors.

A total of 204 union organisations contributed to the study, with membership sizes categorised as follows: Less than 5,000 members (25%, 51 organisations), 5,000-15,000 members (26%, 54 organisations), 15,000-100,000 members

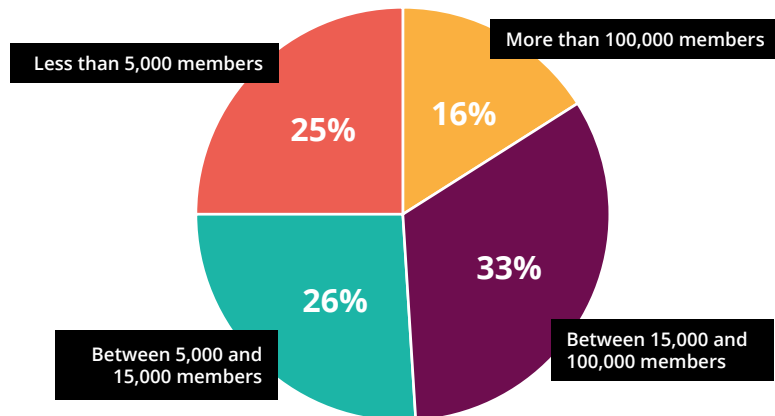
Figure 2.2.1: Proportion (%) of participating union organisations that represent teachers at each level of the education system*


*Participants could select multiple choices to indicate their organisations coverage.

Figure 2.2.2: Proportion (%) of participating organisations over school sector represented*


*Participants could select multiple choices to indicate their organisations representativeness.

Figure 2.2.3: Proportion (%) of participating organisations over number of members



(33%, 67 organisations), and more than 100,000 members (16%, 32 organisations). Figure 2.2.3 gives a distribution of the number of members represented by participating organisations.

A variety of question types were employed in the survey, including matrices of Likert-scaled items, yes/no, multi-answer selection options, and a limited number of open-ended questions. For the key quantitative questions, a 5-point Likert scale was used. "I don't know" was also provided as an option in the survey, and any respondents selecting this option were omitted from the analyses. To enhance the readability of the report, the raw scores from the Likert questions were subsequently rescaled to range from 0 to 100. Average scores across various measured scales were calculated to facilitate a detailed assessment and comparison of teachers' work and life, as well as prevailing conditions across the regions. R, Python, and Microsoft Excel were used for data cleaning, processing, analysis, and the creation of diverse figures, maps, and diagrams which indicated global results and facilitated the illustration of regional differences in the data.

Additional focus group discussions and interviews with a small number of volunteer teachers were conducted in Europe, Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America. In the initial survey, union leaders indicated whether they would be willing

to support the research team in recruiting teachers for the focus group discussions. Within each global region, the research team collaborated with the union to share an invitation email with teachers, inviting them to participate. Teachers who responded were required to sign an informed consent form and schedule a time to meet with the researchers. The interviews and discussions took place via Zoom, with the aim of gathering individual teachers' opinions on the teaching profession and the conditions of their work in different countries. The Zoom recordings were transcribed, and insights from the teachers are presented as appropriate in each section of the report.

2.3 Reporting the results

Responses to the survey were categorised both globally and by region to highlight geographical variations and trends more distinctly. Calculating the mean of responses for each region allows for a nuanced understanding of regional trends while maintaining the anonymity of participating organisations and countries.

The figures for the reported mean scores at a global level were visualised using horizontal box plots to highlight variation in the responses. Interquartile Ranges (IQR) were utilised to illustrate the spread and central tendency of responses to each item. Box plots varying in width indicate

differing levels of response agreement: wider plots show greater variability, while narrower plots signify more uniform responses. For example, items displaying low levels of variation are described as having 'high consensus,' indicating a broad agreement among participants on those specific issues. The total number of valid responses for each item (N) are displayed on the right-hand side of each boxplot. The medians were displayed within each box plot to represent the midpoint of responses for each item, providing a central measure around which the majority of responses were distributed. To facilitate a clear understanding and to visually represent these regional differences, we employed a variety of visualisations such as maps, detailed charts and tables.

The variability and response density to each item within each region is illustrated in the charts in the Appendix.

Chapter 3: Teacher shortages

Teacher workforce shortages are a pressing global challenge, with many countries struggling to attract and retain qualified professionals (UN, 2024; UNESCO, 2022). This crisis not only undermines the quality and stability of education but also places an increased burden on the remaining teachers. The status and conditions of the teaching profession and teachers' working conditions are interrelated and substantially impact teachers' health and wellbeing, career intentions and teacher turnover. In this section, we analyse unions' perspectives on the extent of the teacher shortage, the key issues contributing to shortages, and the efficacy of policies to address this problem.

3.1. Teacher shortages

Unions' views on teacher shortages: a global overview

To understand the union perspective on teacher shortages, we asked unions to what extent teacher shortages were a major issue in their countries. Figure 3.1.1 provides an overview of how unions perceive teacher shortages as a major global issue according to the level of education. Across all participating countries, teacher shortages were reported as an important issue that requires attention.

- Globally, shortages in **special education teachers (71)** were reported as the most significant issue.
- Shortages in **secondary (64)**, **early childhood (61)** and **primary teachers (59)** were reported as a moderately serious concern globally.

As indicated in Figure 3.1.2, the narrower interquartile range (IQR) for teachers in special education indicates a higher degree of consensus that there are shortages in this area compared to other areas.

Figure 3.1.1: Unions' views on the severity of shortages across the major educational levels
To what extent are teacher shortages a major issue in your country?

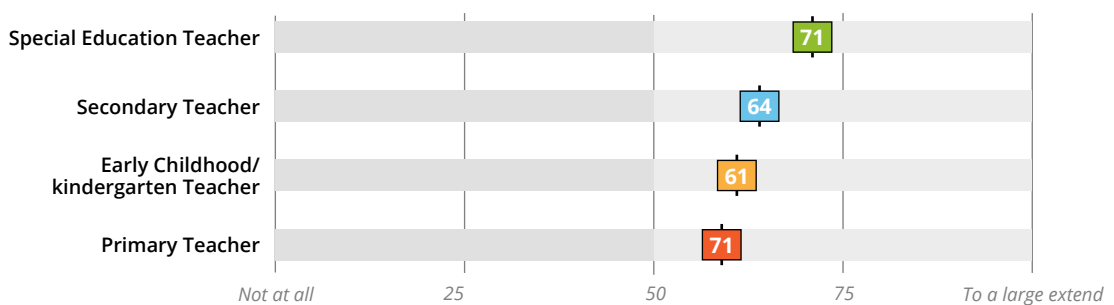
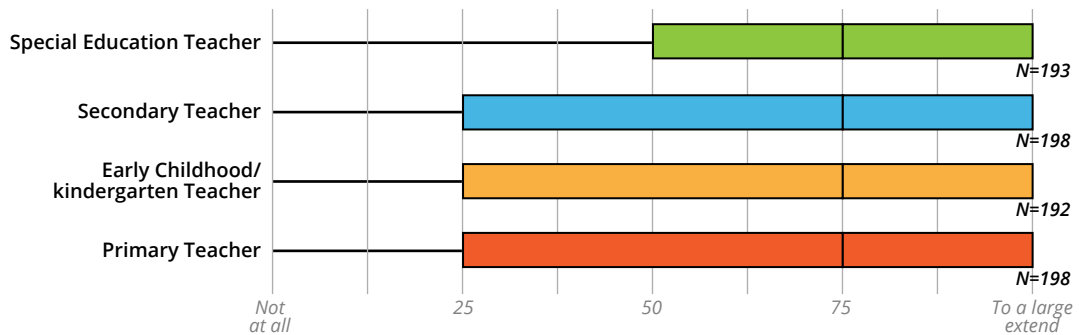


Figure 3.1.2: Variability of unions' responses, reporting of teachers' views on severity of shortages across educational levels

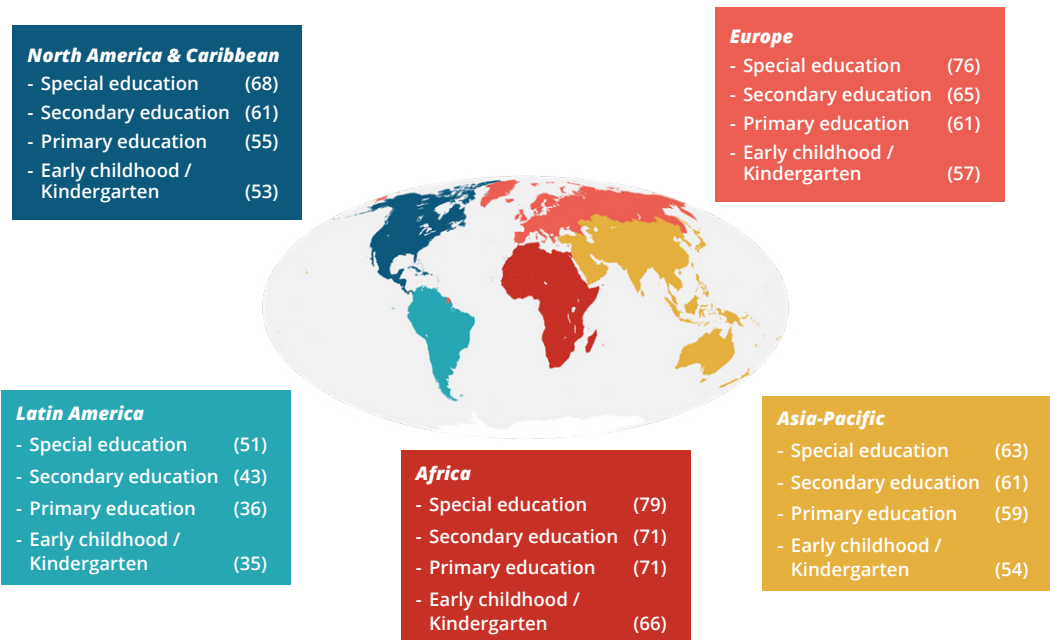


Unions' views on teacher shortages: a regional overview

Analysis of unions' views of teacher shortages by region demonstrates substantial variation, with African representatives reporting that shortages are a significant issue, particularly in special education (79),

and Latin American unions reporting that shortages are a more limited issue, especially in early childhood/ kindergarten (35). Unions in Europe, North America and the Caribbean, and Asia-Pacific all reported that shortages were a significant issue, with the most acute concerns often expressed about special education teachers. For Asia-Pacific, a shortage of secondary teachers was more concerning.

Figure 3.1.3: Unions views on the severity of teacher shortages across the major educational levels by region**



* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'

** Regions shapes are based on the classifications of global geographic regions and do not aim to depict the EI classification used in the report in detail.



3.2 Teacher shortages in key subject areas

Within the teaching profession, sufficiency in the number of qualified teaching professionals varies not only by the level of education but also by subject. In many countries, there are difficulties in attracting and retaining educators in specific disciplines and specialisms, such as special education, mathematics, science, and languages. According to UNESCO (2023), this is a global issue. Even in well-resourced education systems across regions like Europe and North America, there is a significant challenge in retaining qualified educators in key subject areas, which negatively affects educational quality and equity.

Unions' views on teacher shortages in key subject areas: a global overview

Figure 3.2.1 provides a global overview of unions' views on the extent that teacher shortages in key subject areas are a major issue. The results demonstrate that unions perceive teacher shortages in Special Education, Information Technology, Mathematics, and Sciences to be greater than shortages in subjects such as Geography and History.

Higher global shortages

Globally, unions highlighted that subject-specific shortages are a more significant concern in the following key areas:

- Special education (69)
- Information technology (67)
- Mathematics (66)
- Sciences (65).

More moderate global shortages

Unions reported that shortages in these areas are noticeable but less significant, indicating that this is a moderate issue globally:

- Languages (55)
- Arts (50)
- Literacy/Reading/Language (47).

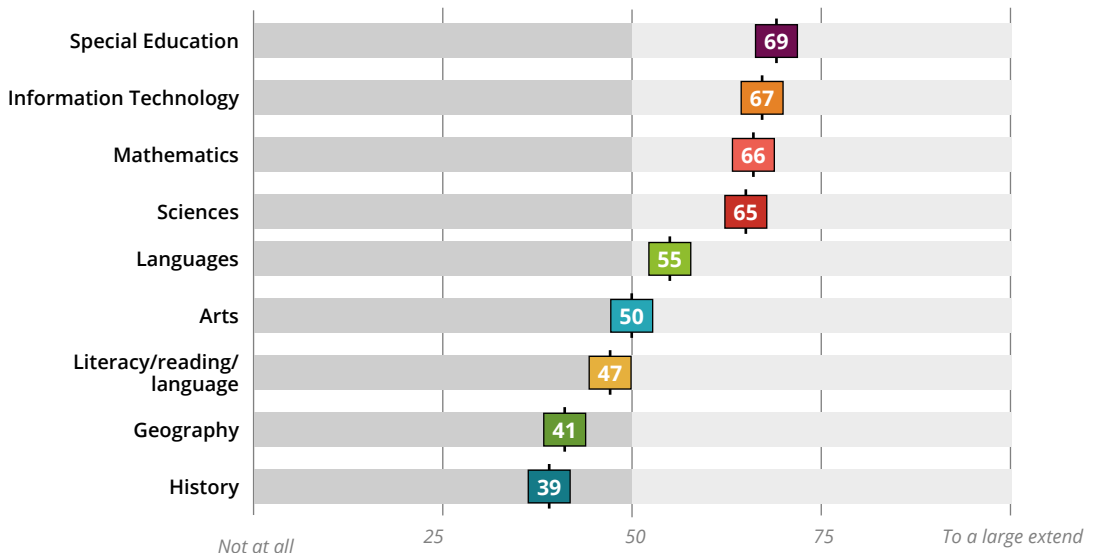
Limited global shortage

Overall, unions reported that the issue of shortages was least severe in two subject areas:

- Geography (41)
- History (39).

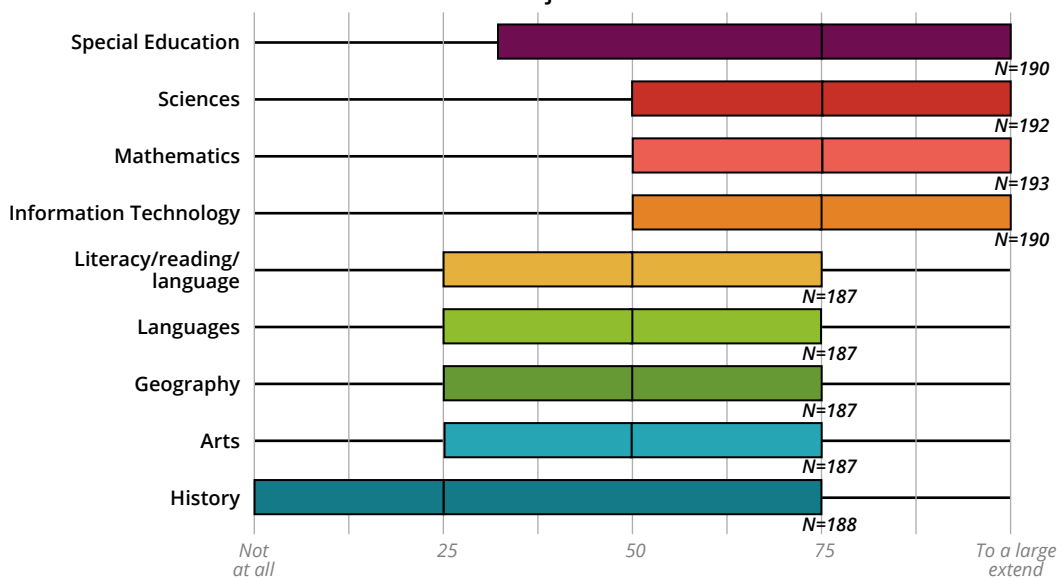
As indicated in Figure 3.2.2 (next page), there is greater variability regarding unions' views on the extent of teacher shortages in Special Education and History.

Figure 3.2.1: A global overview of unions' perspectives on the severity of teacher shortages in key subject areas. *



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'

Figure 3.2.2: The variability of responses regarding teacher shortages across different educational subjects.



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'

Unions' views on teacher shortages in key subject areas: a regional overview

A regional analysis of teacher shortages demonstrates significant issues in special education across all major regions. Additionally, teacher shortages in STEM fields, particularly in Mathematics and Sciences, are a significant issue across the regions. Conversely, shortages in geography and history are consistently less severe. Table 3.2.1 (next page) presents unions' perspectives on the extent of shortages in key specialisms and subjects by region.

Africa

- Unions perceive significant shortages in special education (73), information technology (72), and mathematics (67).

Asia-Pacific

- Unions perceive severe shortages in special education (69).

Europe

- Unions perceive severe shortages in mathematics (77), sciences (74), information technology (69) and special education (65).

Latin America

- Unions perceive moderate to severe shortages in special education (63).

North America and the Caribbean

- Unions perceive severe shortages in special education (75), sciences (72) and mathematics (65).

Overall, in comparison to other regions, teacher shortages were reported more severe in North America and the Caribbean. Figure Series 3.2.1 in the Appendix illustrates the variations within each region, as reported by unions.

3.3 Major causes of teacher shortages

The conditions and status of teachers play a critical role in contributing to shortages and attrition within the teaching profession. For example, teachers' working conditions, compensation, professional status, and career development opportunities among other factors contribute to teachers' career plans and turnover. In this section, we consider unions' views on the causes of teacher shortages and their perspectives on the effectiveness of government policies to address these issues.



Table 3.2.1: Regional perspectives of unions on the significance of teacher shortages in key subject areas. *

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Special education	73	69	65	63	75
Information Technology	72	62	69	57	60
Sciences	64	59	74	50	72
Mathematics	67	55	77	57	65
Languages	56	48	57	51	60
Literacy/reading/language	49	44	41	50	61
Arts	59	43	39	38	64
Geography	42	41	39	36	54
History	42	40	32	36	53

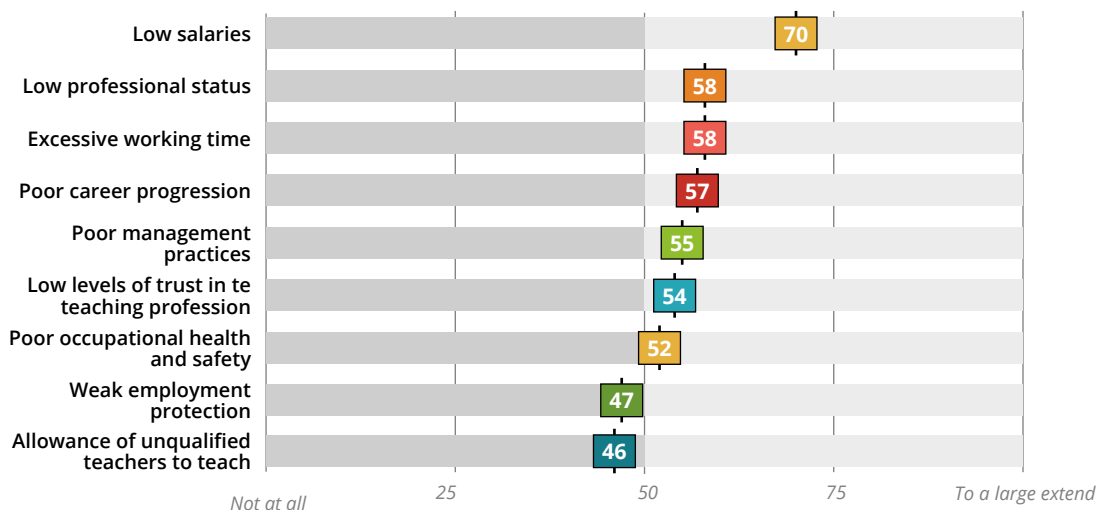
* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'¹

Unions' views on the causes of teacher shortages: a global overview

Unions were asked to identify the extent to which different aspects of teachers' work contributed to shortages. Figure 3.3.1 provides an

overview of the results. At the global level, low salaries were viewed as the most significant issue impacting teacher shortages. Excessive working hours and low professional status were somewhat significant contributors to shortages, globally.

Figure 3.3.1: A global overview of unions' perspectives on the factors that impact teacher shortages*



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'¹

Globally, unions report that the following issue significantly impacts on teacher shortages:

- Low salaries (70)

Globally, unions report that the following issues have a moderate impact on teacher shortages:

- Excessive working hours (58)
- Low Professional Status (58)
- Poor career progression (57)
- Poor management practices (55)
- Low levels of trust in the profession (54)
- Poor occupational health and safety (52)
- Weak employment protection (47)
- Allowance of unqualified teachers to teach (46).

Figure 3.3.2 provides an overview of the variability in union responses to teacher shortages.

Insights from the Profession

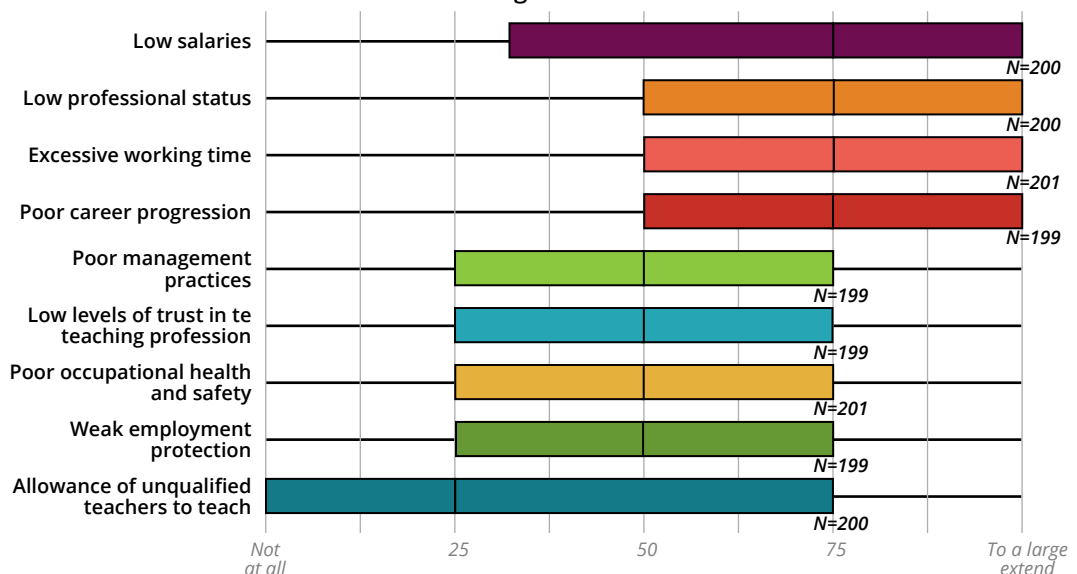
The truth is, it's a very demanding profession. We don't have the support we need, there aren't enough job positions to address all the social issues, and we don't have adequate working conditions, nor do our students have the living conditions to engage with knowledge properly. So, that's where we are. It's a beautiful profession, but we see fewer and fewer people choosing it. With recent governments, we lose rights, and the teaching profession becomes less appealing.

Secondary school teacher, Europe

I was offered a very good job in a bank. I cleared the exam and the interview, but I didn't give up my teaching job. Twice, I have been offered a promotion as a postgraduate teacher, but I declined because I'm very happy working with small children... I don't take even a single leave day. We have 20 days leave, and I don't even complete the 20 in a year because I don't want to miss even a single day.

Primary school teacher, Asia-Pacific

Figure 3.3.2: The variability of unions' responses regarding the factors that impact teacher shortages



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'

Unions' views on the causes of teacher shortages: a regional overview

Across the regions, unions reported that low salaries were the most significant issue contributing to teacher shortages. Low professional status, excessive working time and poor career progression were also reported as important issues across the regions (see Figures 3.3.3 and 3.3.4).

Africa

- Major issue: Low salaries (70)
- Other important issues: Low professional status (58), Poor management practices (57) and Poor occupational health and safety (56).

Insight: Limited government budgetary provision. IMF/WB [International Money Foundation/World Bank] imposed a ceiling on teacher recruitment. General poor conditions of service which serves as a disincentive to qualified teachers.

Union representative, Africa

Asia-Pacific

- Major issue: Low salaries (70)
- Other important issues: Excessive working time (60) and Poor management practices (59).

Insight: The employment of teachers is affected by Neo-liberal policies of the government and ideological standards.

Union representative, Asia-Pacific

Europe

- Major issue: Low salaries (69)
- Other important issues: Poor career progression (63), Excessive working time (63) and Low professional status (61).

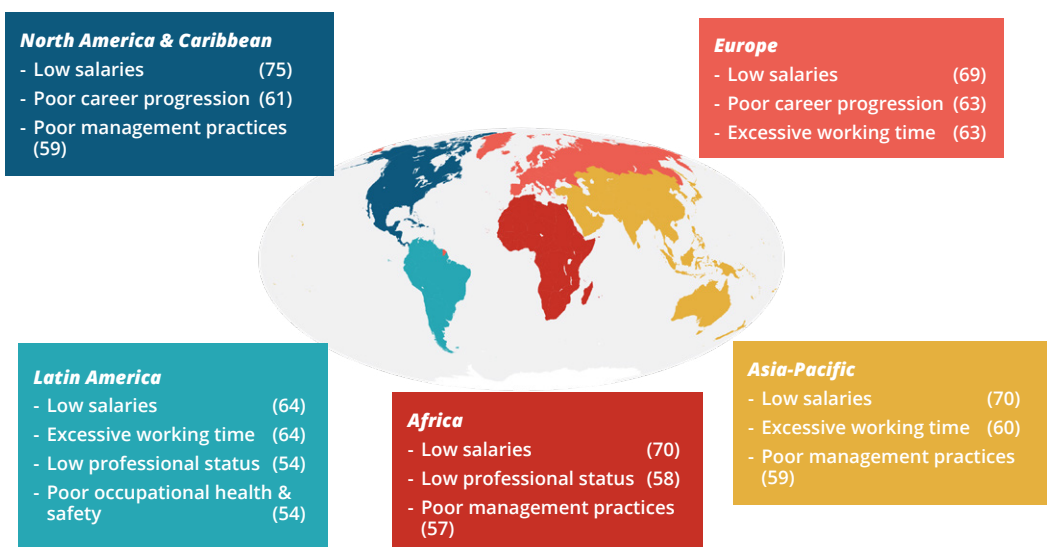
Insight: The lack of affordable housing, Cost of living crisis...

Union representative, Europe

Too much workload for administration and tasks outside the classroom; Challenging parental relationships.

Union representative, Europe

Figure 3.3.3: A regional map of unions' views on the major causes of teacher shortages



* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'

Latin America

- Major issues: Low salaries (64) and Excessive working time (64).

Insight: Devaluation of the career, precarious working conditions, and high level of work-related stress (Translated to English).

Union representative, Latin America

North America and the Caribbean

- Major issue: Low salaries (75)
- Important issue: Poor career progression (61).

Insight: Lack of access to educational institutions, the finances to advance training, access to Continuous Professional Development to maintain their license.

Union representative, North America and the Caribbean

Figure Series 3.3.1 in the Appendix illustrates the regional variations as reported by unions.

Table 3.3.1: Regional perspectives of unions on authorities' understanding of teacher shortages, efforts to address issues and policy responses *

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Low salaries	70	70	69	64	75
Excessive working time	53	60	63	64	53
Poor management practices	57	59	52	45	56
Poor career progression	54	56	63	51	61
Low professional status	58	55	61	54	59
Poor occupational health and safety	56	54	42	54	55
Low levels of trust in the teaching profession	55	50	56	50	57
Poor employment protection	55	47	33	47	53
Unqualified teachers being allowed to teach	51	43	42	38	51

* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for 'Strongly disagree' to 100 for 'Strongly agree.'



3.4 Education authorities' roles in addressing teacher shortages

In response to teacher shortages, many governments have developed a range of strategies to attract new teachers and reduce attrition within the profession. These measures range from enhancing teacher compensation and improving working conditions to reforming teacher preparation and establishing marketing campaigns to elevate the image of the profession (Rahimi & Arnold, 2024). In addition, some governments have implemented targeted recruitment drives and offered special incentives for teaching in high-demand areas, subjects or regions. To assess unions' perspectives on the effectiveness of education authorities' approaches and strategies for addressing teacher shortages in their country, we asked them to what extent they agree or disagree with key statements about government actions.

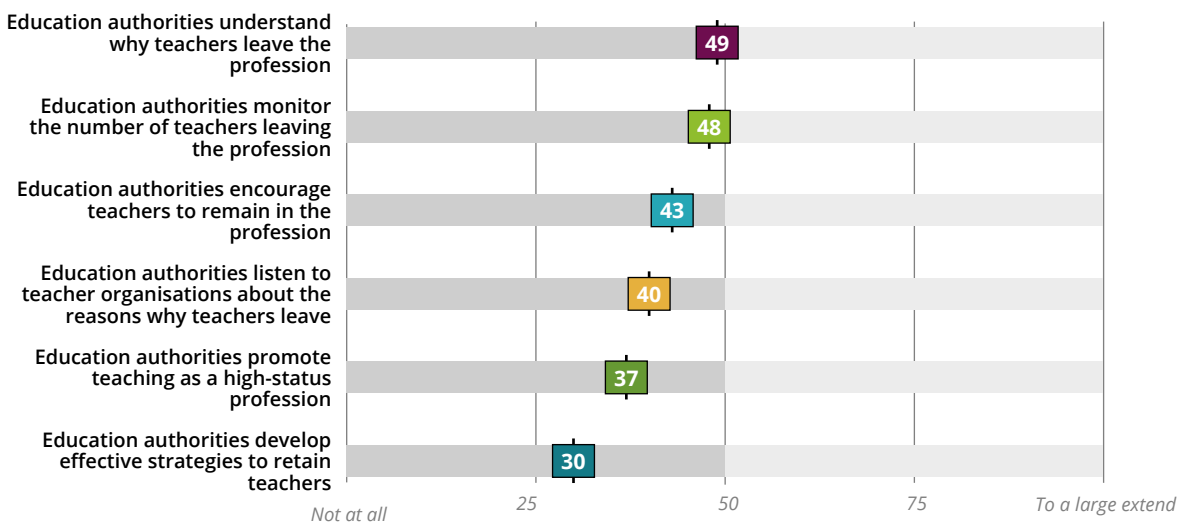
Unions' views on authorities' understanding of teacher shortages, efforts to address issues and policy responses: a global overview

Overall, **unions were neutral** on whether authorities understand why teachers leave and they question the efficacy of strategies implemented to address teacher shortages, identifying several government actions as somewhat ineffective (see Figure 3.4.1)

Overall, **unions were neutral** on whether education authorities understand why teachers leave the profession (49), monitor the number of teachers leaving (48), encourage teachers to stay in the profession (43), and listen to teacher organizations about the reasons teachers leave (40).

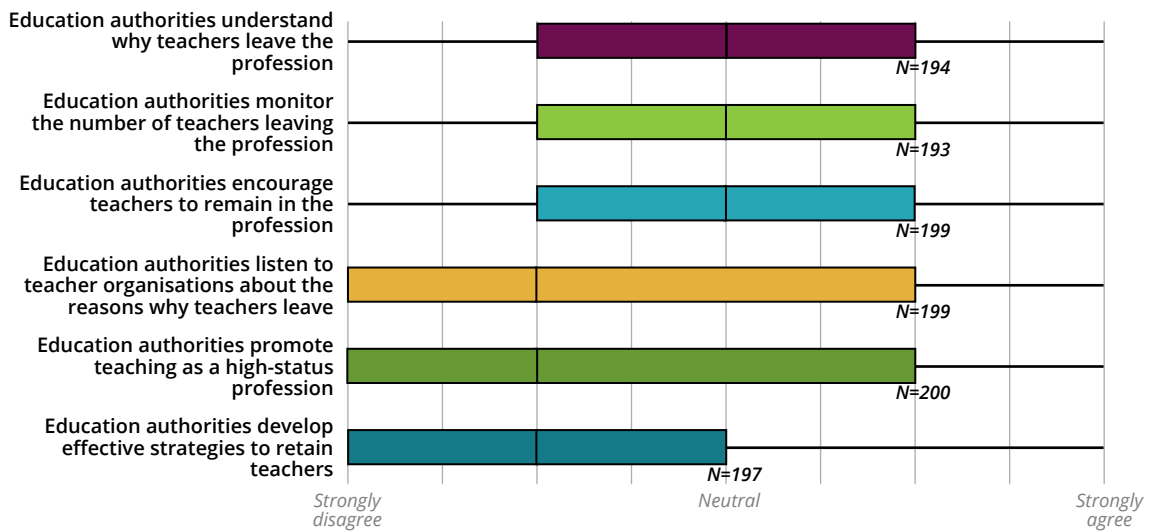
Globally, **unions disagreed** that education authorities promote teaching as a high-status profession (37) and develop effective strategies to retain teachers (30).

Figure 3.4.1: Unions' global perspectives on education authorities understanding of teacher shortages, efforts to address issues and policy responses*



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Strongly disagree' to 100 for 'Strongly agree'

Figure 3.4.2: Variability of unions' perspectives on educational authorities' efforts to address teacher shortages*



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Strongly disagree' to 100 for 'Strongly agree.'

A regional overview of unions' perspectives on authorities' understanding of teacher shortages, efforts to address these issues, and policy responses

Across the regions, unions' views on education authorities' attempts to understand and address teacher shortages varied. Except for unions in Latin America, which reported relatively lower scores on authorities' understanding of teacher shortages, unions from all regions were neutral on whether authorities understand why teachers leave and monitor the number of teachers leaving the profession. Unions in each region indicated that teacher retention strategies were generally ineffective, particularly in Latin America and North America & the Caribbean (see Table 3.4.1 next page).

Africa

- Overall, African unions **indicated that government retention strategies were ineffective (32)** and that authorities did not **promote teaching as a high-status profession (36)**.

Asia-Pacific

- Overall, unions in Asia-Pacific **did not view retention strategies as effective (37)**.
- Unions were neutral about authorities' efforts in other areas related to addressing teacher shortages.

Europe

- Unions in Europe did not consider retention strategies effective (29), and authorities did not consult teacher organisations about the reasons for teacher attrition (38).
- Unions in Europe were neutral about authorities' efforts in other areas related to addressing teacher shortages.

Latin America

- Unions were generally negative about educational authorities' actions and understanding regarding teacher shortages. They indicated that **authorities did not encourage teachers to remain in the profession (26)**, **did not promote teaching as a high-status profession (24)** and **had not developed effective retention strategies (26)**.



North America and the Caribbean

- Unions indicated that **authorities did not develop effective retention strategies (21) and did not promote teaching as a high-status profession (37)**.
- Unions were neutral about authorities' efforts in other areas related to addressing teacher shortages.

Table 3.4.1: Regional perspectives of unions on authorities' understanding of teacher shortages, efforts to address issues and policy responses *

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Education authorities understand why teachers leave the profession	70	70	69	64	75
Education authorities monitor the number of teachers leaving the profession	53	60	63	64	53
Education authorities encourage teachers to remain in the profession	57	59	52	45	56
Education authorities listen to teacher organisations about the reasons why teachers leave	54	56	63	51	61
Education authorities promote teaching as a high-status profession	58	55	61	54	59
Education authorities develop effective strategies to retain teachers	56	54	42	54	55

* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for 'Strongly disagree' to 100 for 'Strongly agree.'

3.5 Summary

Globally, teacher shortages at key levels of education were reported as a significant issue, particularly concerning special education teachers. More than half of all unions reported that teacher shortages in early childhood, primary, secondary, and special education were a significant concern. However, there was considerable variation between unions in different countries, with some reporting teacher shortages as a critical issue and others viewing the problem as less severe.

In addition to the level of education, subject-specific shortages in special education, IT, math, and science were highlighted as concerns globally. Over half of the unions identified these subject areas as facing significant shortages. Yet, again, the extent of the problem varied widely across different countries, with some unions indicating a severe shortage of teachers in these areas and others perceiving the issue as manageable.

Globally, unions reported that low teacher salaries were the most significant issue contributing to teacher shortages. In many locations, unions reported this as a major cause of teacher shortages, while in others it was viewed as a more moderate issue. Other issues identified as significant on a global scale included excessive working hours, low professional status, and limited opportunities for career progression. While most unions viewed these as moderately important issues, some considered them critical factors contributing to teacher shortages.

Overall, unions indicated that education authorities did not promote teaching as a high-status profession and had failed to develop effective strategies to retain teachers. Globally, unions were neutral on whether education authorities listened to teachers about the causes of the shortages or effectively understood, monitored and addressed the causes of shortages.



Chapter 4: Teacher rights and social dialogue

For teachers to have their dignity acknowledged and their professional judgement respected, they must have agency and self-determination over their work in schools, a voice in social dialogue and experience basic rights. The recent recommendations from the UN High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession emphasises the critical importance of enabling rights and decent work for teachers, in line with international standards, including freedom of association and collective bargaining, freedom of expression, freedom of thought and academic freedom (United Nations, 2024). The recommendations also highlight the critical importance of coordinated and institutionalised mechanisms for social dialogue between governments, teacher unions and relevant employers' organisations as the principal means for developing policies on education, teaching and the teaching profession.

This chapter focuses on the social, legal, and political frameworks surrounding the teaching profession. The analysis examines unions' views on whether teachers have basic rights and the extent to which they can exercise these rights in their contexts. The chapter also considers the degree to which unions can engage with governments on key issues affecting the profession through coordinated and institutionalised mechanisms for social dialogue. Additionally, the analysis focuses on union representation and the collective agency teachers possess to drive positive change for the profession. The chapter also explores the interactions between teacher organisations and educational authorities, examining their impact on the teaching profession and the level of teacher participation in school management decisions at various levels.

4.1 Challenges to internationally recognised collective labour rights

Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) guarantees all workers the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of their interests, highlighting legal foundations for collective labour rights. Recent analyses have highlighted an alarming increase in violations of workers' rights globally, with many countries intensifying restrictions on union activities and suppressing strikes (ITUC, 2023). In many countries, government teachers classified as public servants have different, and sometimes more restricted, rights compared to teachers in the private and non-government sectors, particularly concerning union representation and collective bargaining. Public sector employees may face more limitations on striking and collective bargaining due to legal restrictions to ensure the continuous provision of public services. The following section provides an overview of the challenges to teachers in exercising their rights, distinguishing between practical and legal obstacles.

Legal obstacles to teachers' rights globally

To understand unions' views on whether teachers were able to exercise their basic rights, we asked if there were any legal obstacles preventing teachers from expressing their rights. Legal obstacles to teachers' rights are aspects of the legal framework in each country that prevent teachers from fully enjoying their rights.

Globally, substantial restrictions within legal frameworks prevent or limit teacher rights (see Figure 4.1.1). Notably, 32% of teacher unions indicated legal barriers to freedom of expression, while 29% identified legal obstacles to the right of assembly and demonstration. Additionally, 18% reported impediments to the right to establish and join organisations, and 25% noted legal challenges to the right to collective bargaining.

Practical obstacles to teachers' rights globally

In addition to legal obstacles, teachers' rights can be restricted even where appropriate legal frameworks are in place. Practical obstacles may include interference from authorities, exclusions, sanctions, and other interferences that prevent teachers from fully exercising their rights. To understand the practical obstacles teachers face in exercising their rights,

unions were asked about the situation in their countries. Globally, many teachers encounter practical obstacles impeding their access to key rights (see Figure 4.1.2).

- 44% of teacher unions reported practical barriers that hinder teachers' right to freedom of expression.
- 46% of unions reported practical barriers that affected the right of assembly and demonstration.
- 30% reported that teachers experienced practical challenges in exercising their right to establish and join organisations.
- 41% of unions reported that teachers faced practical barriers to their right to collective bargaining.
- 57% indicated practical obstacles that hindered teachers right to strike.

Figure 4.1.1: The proportion of unions reporting legal obstacles to teachers' rights globally.

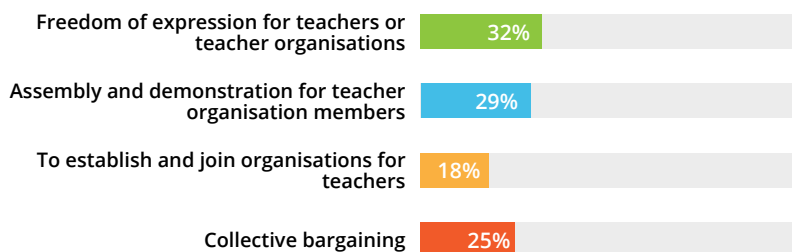


Figure 4.1.2: The proportion of unions reporting practical obstacles to teachers' rights globally.





Breaches of internationally recognised collective labour rights by governments and employers: a regional overview

Insight: In [our country] public sector unions... do not have the right to strike.

Union representative, Asia-Pacific

Insight: In the context of the trade union organisation of teachers, there are significant anti-trade union laws that establish challenging barriers to teachers exercising their right to lawful industrial action. These barriers have increased in recent years...

Union representative, Europe

This section provides an overview of unions views on legal obstacles to teachers' rights by region (see Table 4.1.1).

Africa

Legal obstacles to teachers' rights are high in Africa, with significant restrictions reported in relation to the rights of assembly and demonstration (43%), the rights to freedom of expression (41%), and collective bargaining (29%).

Asia-Pacific

Teachers in many Asia-Pacific countries face substantial legal barriers, especially in relation to the rights

of assembly and demonstration (45%), the rights to establish and join organisations (39%) and freedom of expression (38%).

Europe

Europe shows a relatively lower frequency of legal obstacles to teachers' rights. However, challenges persist in some locations across all rights, notably in the right to freedom of expression (17%) and the right to collective bargaining (15%).

Latin America

Teachers in Latin America encounter considerable legal challenges, notably in the rights to freedom of expression (37%) and collective bargaining (37%).

North America and the Caribbean

Unions report that teachers in this region experience relatively low legal obstacles across some rights, with particularly low figures in the rights to establish and join organisations (0%) and assembly and demonstration (6%). However, challenges remain, especially in relation to the right to freedom of expression (24%) and the right to collective bargaining (11%).

Table 4.1.1: The proportion of unions reporting legal obstacles to teachers rights by region (%)*

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
There are legal obstacles to the right to freedom of expression	41	38	17	37	24
There are legal obstacles to the right of assembly and demonstration	43	45	9	26	6
There are legal obstacles to the right to establish and join organisations	24	39	4	16	0
There are legal obstacles to the right to collective bargaining	29	36	15	37	11

*Proportion of 'Yes' responses

Practical obstacles to teachers' rights by region

This section examines how practical obstacles to teachers' rights, such as interference from authorities, exclusions, and sanctions, vary across different regions. The analysis highlights major regional variations in teachers' ability to exercise their fundamental rights (see Table 4.1.2).

Africa

Teachers in Africa face considerable practical obstacles to their rights, with significant impediments reported in exercising the right to strike (69%), freedom of expression (60%) and assembly and demonstration (57%). Challenges to collective bargaining (46%) and establishing and joining organisations (40%) are also prevalent.

Asia-Pacific

Unions reported that teachers in Asia encounter substantial practical barriers, especially in the right to strike (62%) and the right to collective bargaining (58%). The rights of assembly and demonstration (55%), and the right to establish and join organisations (48%) were also widely viewed as being obstructed.

Europe

Unions in Europe reported lower levels of practical obstacles than other regions. However, notable practical challenges were reported in relation to the right to strike (43%), the rights of assembly and demonstration (30), the right to freedom of expression (26%) and collective bargaining (26%).

Latin America

Unions in this region reported considerable practical challenges, particularly in collective bargaining (58%) and the right to strike (58%). Obstacles in the rights of assembly and demonstration (39%), the rights to freedom of expression (37%) and establish and join organisations (37%) were also deemed noticeable.

North America and the Caribbean

In this region, significant challenges are observed in the right to freedom of expression (44%) and the right to strike (44%). There are also barriers to assembly and demonstration (39%). A smaller proportion of unions reported obstacles to collective bargaining (17%) and the right to establish and join organisations (11%).

Table 4.1.2: The proportion of unions reporting practical obstacles to teachers rights by region (%)*

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
There are practical obstacles to the right to freedom of expression for teacher organisation members (interference from authorities, exclusions, sanctions)	60	41	26	37	44
There are practical obstacles to the right of assembly and demonstration for teacher organisation members (interference from authorities, exclusions, sanctions)	57	55	30	39	39
There are practical obstacles to the right to establish and join organisations for teachers (interference from authorities, exclusions, sanctions)	40	48	11	37	11
There are practical obstacles to the right to collective bargaining (interference from authorities, exclusions, sanctions)	46	58	26	58	17
There are practical obstacles to the right to strike (interference from authorities, exclusions, sanctions)	69	62	43	58	44

*Proportion of 'Yes' responses



4.2 Key mechanisms for social dialogue

This section explores unions' views on mechanisms of social dialogue, particularly how these processes impact collective bargaining, consultation practices, and the broader professional voice and democracy among teachers. The analysis focuses on the presence and effectiveness of existing social dialogue frameworks from the perspective of union representatives

Formal agreements and formal consultations between government representatives, employers and teachers are **two key mechanisms for social dialogue**. These processes aim to foster mutual understanding and collaboration on key policies affecting the profession.

Formal agreements are legally binding documents or artefacts that specify the terms of employment, wages, benefits, working conditions and other workplace policies agreed upon by the unions of teachers and their employers. For example, collective bargaining agreements, joint decisions, or negotiated policy frameworks.

Formal consultations involve discussions and negotiations where representatives of employers and teachers consult each other to share information, discuss problems, and find mutually acceptable solutions. They do not bind the parties to any specific agreement or action.

Unions' perspectives on key mechanisms for social dialogue: a global overview

Insight: [We have] good social dialogue and consultation structures, many opportunities for influencing policy development and strong industrial relations structures/procedures - which are not undermined by the state.

Union Representative, Europe

To understand whether basic mechanisms were in place to facilitate social dialogue, unions were asked about the situation in their countries.

The findings indicate that although there are instances of formal, legally binding agreements covering all of the key areas of teachers' work, and in some cases these agreements are widespread, the mechanisms for social dialogue in many countries for key aspects of teachers' work are either non-binding ('formal consultations') or non-existent. Many unions reported a lack of social dialogue mechanisms, highlighting major issues in ensuring teachers' views and perspectives are heard (see Figure 4.2.1).

Key insights:

Stronger mechanisms for social dialogue

Unions reported **stronger mechanisms for social dialogue** in **teacher pay & compensation, employment protection** and **working time**.

- In these areas, half or more of all unions reported having formal agreements with governments.
- Approximately, a **quarter** (24-28%) reported non-binding, **formal consultations** in these areas.
- A significant proportion of unions indicated **no mechanisms for social dialogue** regarding **teacher pay and compensation (15%), employment protection (21%)** and **working time (26%)**.

Weaker mechanisms for social dialogue

In key areas related to **teaching and learning, teacher professional learning, teacher health and wellbeing, school management** and **equity** unions reported **weaker mechanisms for social dialogue**.

- Overall, only a **minority of unions** reported having **formal agreements** in the following areas:
 - Teacher certification (42%)
 - Career pathways (41%)
 - Teacher evaluation (36%)
 - Professional development (36%)
 - Occupational health and safety (33%)
 - Management of personal data on teachers (28%)

- Student assessment (28%)
 - The evaluation of schools (28%)
 - The school curriculum (28%)
 - Equity issues (27%)
 - Management practices (22%).
- The proportion of unions reporting that **formal consultations** occurred in these different areas **ranged between 30-45%**.
 - The overall proportion of unions reporting **no mechanisms for social dialogue varied between 25-44%** across these key areas.

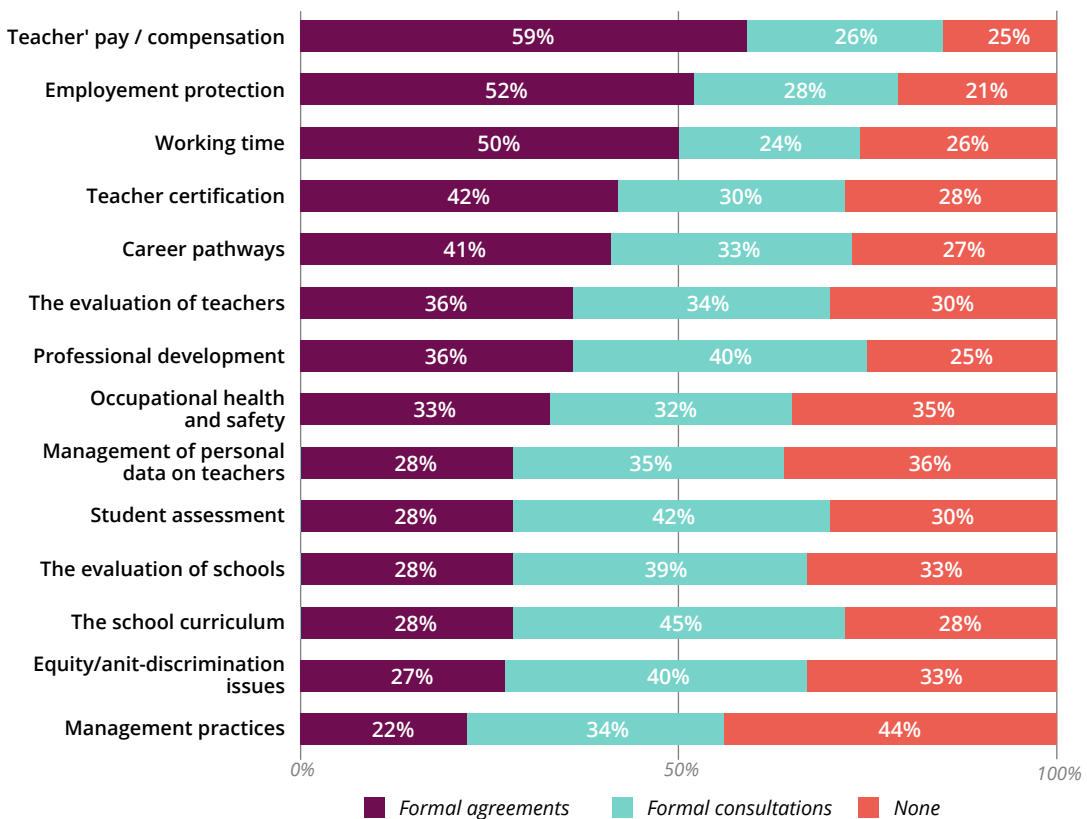
Mechanisms for social dialogue: a regional overview

Significant regional differences exist in the mechanisms for social dialogue. Overall, less than half of unions in each region report formal agreements in most key areas of teachers' work. However, in some regions, there are relatively stronger mechanisms for social dialogue in certain areas (see Tables 4.2.1 a and b).

Relatively stronger mechanisms for social dialogue

Despite limitations, a larger proportion of unions in Europe and North America and the Caribbean reported having formal agreements in place across various areas of teachers' work. Fewer unions in these regions reported a lack of mechanisms in the different areas of teachers' work.

Figure 4.2.1: A global overview of unions' perspectives on the presence of mechanisms for social dialogue



* The option 'I don't know' was excluded from the analysis; Total number of responses to each item varied between 183 and 196.



Relatively weaker mechanisms for social dialogue

Africa

Overall, compared to Europe, Latin America, and North America and the Caribbean, a relatively smaller proportion of unions in this region reported formal agreements for teachers, while a relatively higher proportion indicated that no mechanisms exist.

Asia-Pacific

Compared to other regions a relatively higher proportion of unions reported formal agreements across particular areas of teachers' work, such as the school curriculum and the evaluation

of schools. However, in many other important areas, unions reported the absence of formal mechanisms.

Latin America

While a considerable proportion of unions indicated that formal agreements were in place in two key areas (e.g., teachers' pay and employment protection), in many other areas the proportion of unions indicating the presence of agreements was low.

Table 4.2.1a: The proportion of unions reporting mechanisms for social dialogue in each region

		Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Teachers' pay/compensation	Formal agreements	50%	42%	70%	79%	72%
	Formal consultations	28%	32%	24%	16%	17%
	None	22%	26%	6%	5%	11%
Employment protection	Formal agreements	45%	39%	60%	63%	61%
	Formal consultations	25%	32%	34%	21%	22%
	None	30%	29%	6%	16%	17%
Career pathways	Formal agreements	42%	32%	43%	42%	44%
	Formal consultations	32%	19%	41%	32%	33%
	None	26%	48%	16%	26%	22%
Professional development	Formal agreements	37%	30%	37%	32%	44%
	Formal consultations	32%	40%	52%	42%	33%
	None	32%	30%	12%	26%	22%
The school curriculum	Formal agreements	25%	33%	30%	21%	28%
	Formal consultations	40%	37%	53%	53%	44%
	None	35%	30%	17%	26%	28%
Student assessment	Formal agreements	27%	30%	27%	32%	28%
	Formal consultations	36%	37%	54%	42%	44%
	None	37%	33%	19%	26%	28%
The evaluation of teachers	Formal agreements	24%	48%	46%	21%	53%
	Formal consultations	38%	26%	37%	37%	24%
	None	39%	26%	17%	42%	24%

Table 4.2.1b: The proportion of unions reporting mechanisms for social dialogue in each region

		Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
The evaluation of schools	Formal agreements	19%	42%	35%	16%	31%
	Formal consultations	41%	26%	41%	42%	44%
	None	41%	32%	24%	42%	25%
Teacher certification	Formal agreements	37%	45%	49%	26%	56%
	Formal consultations	31%	23%	35%	37%	17%
	None	32%	32%	16%	37%	28%
Working time	Formal agreements	38%	52%	63%	42%	67%
	Formal consultations	22%	23%	28%	32%	11%
	None	40%	26%	9%	26%	22%
Occupational health and safety	Formal agreements	21%	39%	43%	32%	50%
	Formal consultations	29%	26%	43%	26%	28%
	None	51%	36%	15%	42%	22%
Management practices	Formal agreements	16%	30%	25%	13%	31%
	Formal consultations	35%	27%	37%	38%	38%
	None	49%	43%	39%	50%	31%
Management of personal data on teachers	Formal agreements	18%	33%	38%	24%	41%
	Formal consultations	41%	27%	32%	41%	29%
	None	41%	40%	30%	35%	29%
Equity/anti-discrimination issues	Formal agreements	18%	33%	31%	29%	35%
	Formal consultations	44%	27%	45%	29%	41%
	None	38%	40%	24%	41%	24%

4.3 Climate for social dialogue

The climate for social dialogue refers to the nature of the relationship between teachers and authorities/governments and the degree of collaboration or conflict that characterises their interactions. This climate is crucial as it influences negotiations on teaching work, conditions and status, and shapes the dynamics between the teaching profession, policymakers, and employers.

The analysis of survey data identified three distinct climates. Despite significant variation within and between countries, these categories offer broad insights into the relationships between governments and teacher unions across different contexts.

a) Robust and dynamic relations

This classification highlights a fundamentally respectful relationship between governments and teacher unions characterised by healthy negotiation, despite facing conflict. Overall, this may reflect a healthy, resilient climate for social dialogue.

Insight: In principle, a respectful relationship. Recurring conflicts usually lead back to the negotiating table after a phase of escalation.

Union representative, Europe

b) Obstructive and dismissive

This classification describes a climate where constitutional and legal frameworks legitimise the involvement of teacher unions in educational



discussions and policymaking, but authorities actively obstruct unions in practice, preventing meaningful engagement.

Insight: The relationship is not good even though it's in the constitution and enshrined in the laws of the country. Still, the Under Secretary in the ministry refused to give us the letter of recognition which blocks us from attending the meetings of the education cluster as well as the NGO's forum and other official educational events.

Union representative, Africa

c) Hostile and adversarial

This classification describes a situation where the government adopts a hostile stance to the union and interactions are marked by significant conflict and resistance. Formal consultations may occur, but they often do not impact education policies and are undermined by a weak legal framework for teachers' rights. Overall, in this context, social dialogue is fraught with challenges.

Insight: The government is essentially hostile to trade unionism and has a long record of framing obstructive and oppressive legislation. In formal terms, teachers lack national negotiating rights over pay and conditions. However, an evident crisis of schooling as well as a wave of strike action by teachers has forced the government into negotiations over pay and workload... there are formal consultations on some topics, but these very rarely impact on government's preferred policy.

Union representative, Europe

Insights from the profession

Whenever we demand a time to meet with the leaders—the political leaders or the policymakers—they cannot deny us; they will give us time to meet. The relationship, you know, isn't always positive, but it's not negative either. I can say we have decent relations with them. They meet us, whether they fulfill our demands or not, they meet us very humbly and listen to what we want. We're fighting for that, and the government is just listening to us. They assure us every time, saying, 'Yes, we will do it, we will form a committee, and they will observe the results.

Primary school teacher, Asia-Pacific

Yesterday, we were watching Parliament, and for the first time in around 8 years, we heard the representative of one of the previously ruling parties agreeing publicly with our trade union. That was the first time, but to agree with us, they had to move to being in the opposition.

*Secondary school teacher, Europe
Our union has tried its best to pressure the government to listen to teachers, but the government continues to ignore us. Last year, we went on strike and didn't teach for almost two months, but still, the government did not consider our requests.*

Primary school Teacher, Africa

We still have a government that chooses teacher unionism as its enemy... A national government that chooses unionism in general as its enemy, and teachers in particular. So, not only are there no responses, but if there are, they are extremely cynical, and they constantly seek to construct the image of teachers as demons within the school—of the teacher who doesn't want to work, and thus protects the teacher who can't manage.

Secondary school teacher, Latin America

4.4 Teacher influence over decision-making in school systems

In this section, teacher influence in decision-making refers to the ability of teachers to have a say in decisions about their work at different levels of the school system. The extent to which teachers and their unions can influence key decision-makers within the school system reflects the power dynamics between teachers and their employers. In contexts where the views of the teaching profession are respected, the power dynamics tend to be more balanced, enabling teachers to influence decisions affecting their work. However, where input from the profession is limited or disregarded, this may reflect a more disconnected, fractured or antagonistic relationship, whereby teachers' views are not welcomed or deemed necessary. The level of teacher influence over decisions about their work offers insights into their professional autonomy and empowerment within the education system.

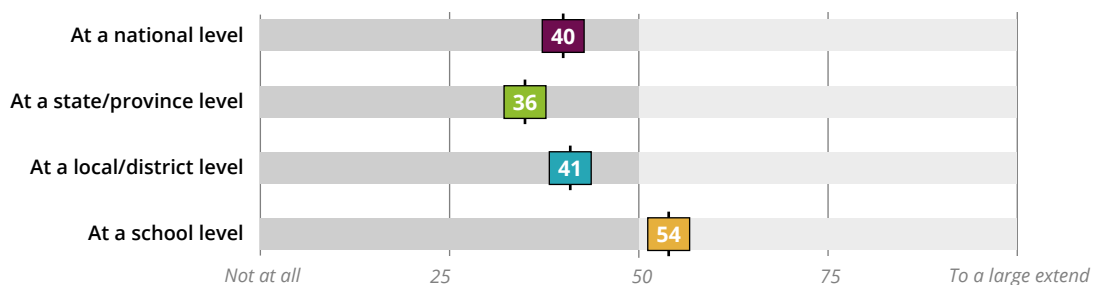
Unions' perspectives on teacher influence in decision-making: a global overview

To evaluate teachers' influence over key decision-makers, unions were asked whether teachers in their country can affect decisions about their work, from within their schools to the national policy-making level. Globally, the findings indicate that teachers have some influence over decision-making, with the most influence over decisions in their schools and influence diminishing at higher levels of the education system (see Figure 4.4.1).

Key insights:

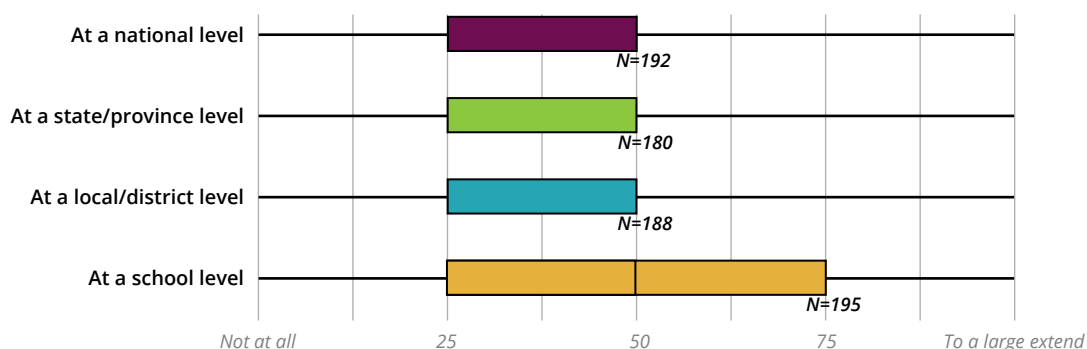
- At the **school level**, unions report that teachers have **some influence (54)** over decisions that affect them and their work.
- Beyond the school level, at the **district, state, or national levels**, unions report that teachers and their unions have some but relatively **less influence** over decisions affecting their work.

Figure 4.4.1: A global overview of unions' views on teacher influence in decision-making at various educational levels*



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'

Figure 4.4.2: Variability of unions' views on the extent of teacher influence in decision-making at various levels





As indicated in Figure 4.4.2, there is high consensus among unions on teachers' influence on decision-making at the district, state, or national levels.

becomes very hard for teachers to do the work of their choice.

*Primary school teacher,
Asia-Pacific*

Insights from the Profession

We depend not only on our headmaster but also on public services. That's the problem for us, because we don't have the space to make decisions at the school level; we have to follow what's written in the law.

Primary school teacher, Europe

I would say that the reaction to our ideas is different at different levels of the system. At the system level, we've got a real problem with communication. I hope that it's about to change, but I haven't really noticed much improvement yet. It's like we're in the early phase of the new ruling parties. It's much, much better at the school level. Obviously, it depends on the headmaster, but the headmaster is also constrained by the system, so while some things can be done, there are always certain limits.

Secondary school teacher, Europe

It totally depends on the nature of the head teacher. Sometimes the head teacher is very, you know, flexible and open to changing policies, allowing the teachers to do what they think is best for the school. But sometimes, when the primary schools are connected with the senior secondary schools and fall under the district level officer, it

Unions' perspectives on teacher influence in decision-making: a regional overview

There was substantial regional variation in unions' perceptions of teacher influence on decision-making in the education system (see Table 4.4.1).

Influence in the school

- At the **school level**, unions across **all regions** perceived teachers had some influence. However, there were important variations between the regions. Unions in North America and the Caribbean (61) and Europe (60) reported that teachers had relatively more influence over decisions in their schools than unions in Africa (51), Asia-Pacific (48), and Latin America (46).

Influence beyond the school

- Across the regions, it was perceived that teachers had limited influence over **decision-making beyond the school level**. Although still limited, unions in North America and the Caribbean reported a slightly higher degree of teacher influence at the local, state/sub-national, and national levels, followed by Europe and Africa. In contrast, teachers in Asia-Pacific and Latin America were reported to have slightly lower levels of influence beyond the school level.

Figure Series 4.4.1 in Appendix illustrates the variations within each region.

Table 4.4.1: Unions' views on teacher influence in decision-making at various educational levels in different regions*,**

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
At the school level	51	48	60	46	61
At a local/district level	43	36	39	37	46
At a state/province level	38	36	34	32	43
At a national level	46	58	26	58	17

* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'

**High scores bolded

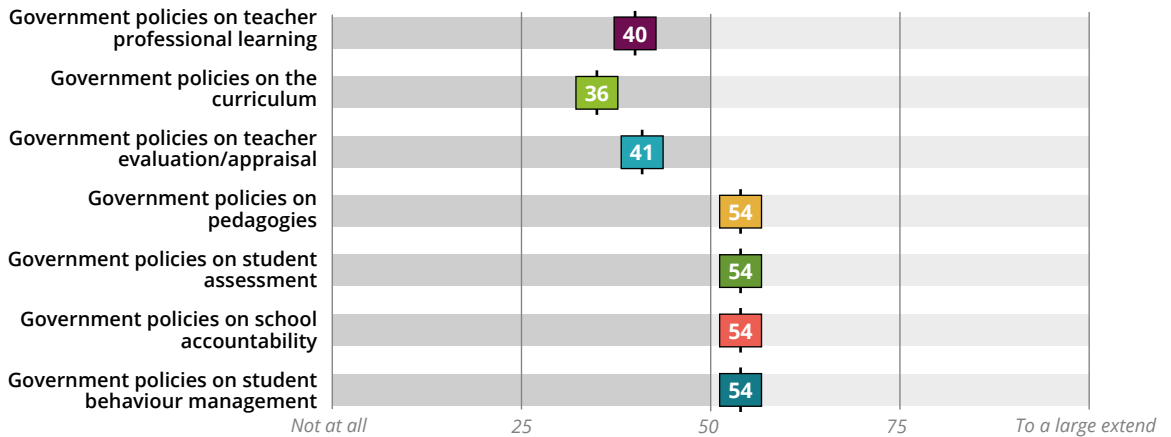
4.5 Unions' perspectives on teacher voice in education policymaking: a global overview

High-status professions are often characterised by the significant authority and influence that professionals exert over their work. Individuals in these roles are recognised and trusted for their specialised knowledge and exert considerable influence over how their work is structured, organised, and practised. However, the degree of authority and influence teaching professionals have over their work can vary considerably.

Overall, the results demonstrate that while teacher unions are involved to some extent in collaborating with governments to shape the rules affecting teachers' work, these consultations are limited. Figure 4.5.1 provides a global overview of consultations between teacher unions and governments.

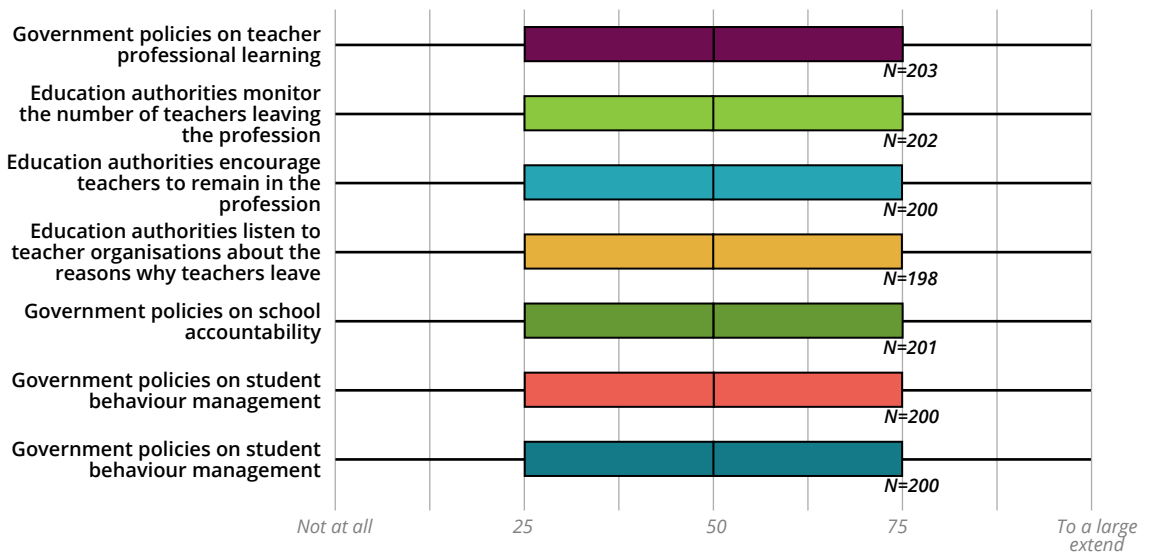
Overall, governments consult with teacher organisations to some extent on the key policies affecting teachers, indicating that unions are recognised but have a limited role in shaping educational reforms. Unions' responses for all areas of consultation had moderate variabilities (see Figure 4.5.2), reflecting a moderate consensus on the issues globally.

Figure 4.5.1: A global overview of the extent of government consultation with unions about the key policies affecting teachers*



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'

Figure 4.5.2: Variability of unions' responses on government consultation with unions about the key policies affecting teachers





Unions' perspectives on teacher voice in education policymaking: a regional overview

Overall, unions reported engaging with governments to some extent regarding the key policies affecting teachers' work. However, collaboration varied significantly across regions, with unions based in Europe reporting stronger, though still limited, partnerships with governments on key teacher policies. Table 4.5.1 provides insights into how teacher unions influence educational policies across the major regions.

Key insights:

Africa

- Government consults with teacher organisations **to some extent** in almost all key areas.
- **Lower levels of consultation** regarding policies related to **teacher evaluation** and **student behaviour**.

Asia-Pacific

- Government consults with teacher organisations **to some extent** in all areas.

- **Relatively lower levels of consultation** in most key areas compared to other regions.

Europe

- Government consults with teacher organisations **to some extent** in all areas.
- Relatively **greater level of consultation** in some key areas, such as **policies on professional learning and teacher evaluation/appraisal**, compared to other regions.

Latin America

- Government consults with teacher organisations **to some extent** in most areas.
- **Relatively lower level** of consultation in most key areas compared to other regions.

North America and the Caribbean

- Government consults with teacher organisations **to some extent** in most areas.

Figure Series 4.5.1 in Appendix illustrates the variations within each region.

Table 4.5.1: The extent of government consultations with teacher unions about the key policies affecting teachers in different regions*

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Government policies on the curriculum	51	43	51	41	55
Government policies on teacher professional learning	48	45	59	42	47
Government policies on teacher evaluation/appraisal	44	44	56	41	51
Government policies on school accountability	46	44	46	39	44
Government policies on student assessment	47	42	47	46	43
Government policies on pedagogies	47	40	47	41	51
Government policies on student behaviour management	40	40	46	45	35

* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'

4.6 Trust in teachers

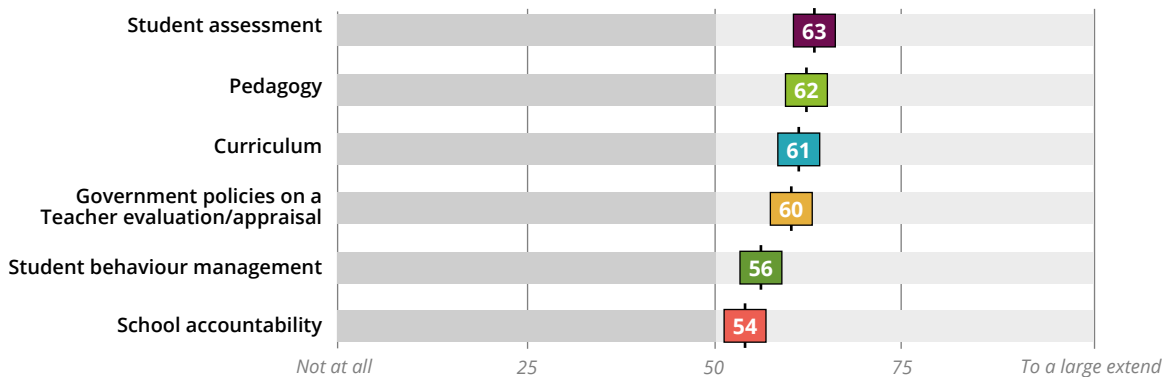
When education systems and policies are designed to empower teachers and grant them trust and esteem, teachers often experience greater autonomy in shaping key aspects of their work, such as how they teach and how the quality of their work is evaluated. In contrast, systems and policies dominated by the voices of policymakers and administrators, which focus on centralised control and rigid standards, may restrict teachers' professional autonomy (Sachs, 2016). In such environments, specific curricula and assessment methods are often prescribed, leaving little room for professional judgement or innovation, and external mechanisms of accountability are used to assess teachers. Unions were asked to assess the level of government trust in teachers across key areas of their work.

Unions' views on trust in teachers by governments: a global overview

Globally, unions reported that teachers are somewhat trusted to manage key aspects of their work. Overall, this suggests that trust in the teaching profession remains limited, with most governments not fully entrusting teachers with their professional responsibilities.

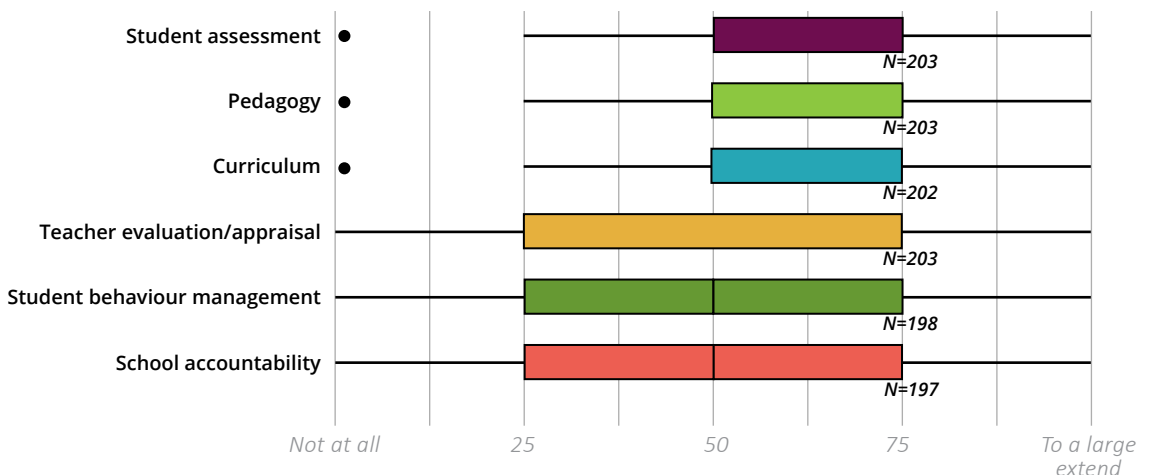
Globally, teachers were trusted to some extent in key areas related to their work. Unions reported there to be relatively more trust in teachers in the areas of **student assessment** (63, high consensus), **pedagogy** (62, high consensus), **curriculum management** (61, high consensus) and **student behaviour management** (60).

Figure 4.6.1: A global overview of government trust in teachers to take responsibility for key aspects of their work*



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'

Figure 4.6.2: Variability of unions' views on the extent that the government trusts teachers to take responsibility for key aspects of their work





Teachers were perceived to be **relatively less trusted** in areas related to teacher appraisal and school accountability.

Unions' views on trust in teachers by governments: a regional overview

According to unions, government trust in teachers varied by region. 4.6.1 illustrates regional variations in the extent of government trust in teachers.

Key insights:

Africa

Governments in this region trust teachers to some extent in all areas of their work, with slightly greater trust in certain key areas:

- Student assessment (65)
- Pedagogy (63)
- Curriculum (62)

Asia-Pacific

Governments in Asia -Pacific trust teachers to some extent, with relatively greater trust observed in the following key areas:

- Student behaviour management (65)
- Student assessment (61)
- Curriculum (61)
- Teacher evaluation/appraisal (60).

Europe

Governments in Europe trust teachers to some extent in all areas of their work, with slightly greater trust in certain key areas:

- Student behaviour management (67).
- Pedagogy (63)
- Curriculum (62)
- Student assessment (60)

Latin America

Governments in Latin America trust teachers to some extent in all areas of their work, with relatively greater trust in key areas such as student behaviour management (58%) and student assessment (57%). However, trust in teacher evaluation/appraisal is relatively lower. Compared to other regions, trust in teachers is lower in Latin America, particularly in the area of teacher evaluation and appraisal.

North America and the Caribbean

Governments in North America and the Caribbean were reported to trust teachers in relation to student assessment (71) and to trust the profession to some extent in all other areas of their work. Government trust in teachers in the key areas of their work is higher in this region.

Table 4.6.1: Levels of teacher autonomy and agency in regions*

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Student assessment	65	61	60	57	71
Pedagogy	63	57	63	55	67
Curriculum	62	61	62	53	67
Teacher evaluation/appraisal	57	60	54	43	58
Student behaviour management	55	65	67	58	57
School accountability	55	52	55	54	56

* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'

4.7 Teacher influence in schools

In their day-to-day work in schools, teachers, as professionals, should have a voice in and influence over local policies and practices. This ensures that decisions affecting their professional practice are informed by their expertise and experience. By collaborating with teachers, leaders can demonstrate respect for teacher authority and expertise, positioning teachers as leaders in the school. To examine teacher agency in schools, unions were asked about the extent to which teachers could influence policies in their schools and influence school leaders' decisions.

Unions' views on teacher influence in schools: a global overview

Globally, unions report that teachers have some influence over school policies and practices, though this influence is often limited. Figure 4.7.1 highlights the extent of teachers' impact on these decisions within schools.

- Globally, teachers can only influence policies and practices in their schools **to some extent**.
- **Teachers were reported to exert slightly more influence** in the areas of student assessment (54), behaviour management (54) and pedagogy (53).
- Teachers were reported to have **slightly less influence** in the areas of curriculum development (46), school accountability (46) and teacher evaluation (44).

Figure 4.7.1: A global overview of unions' views on teachers' influence over policies and practices in schools*

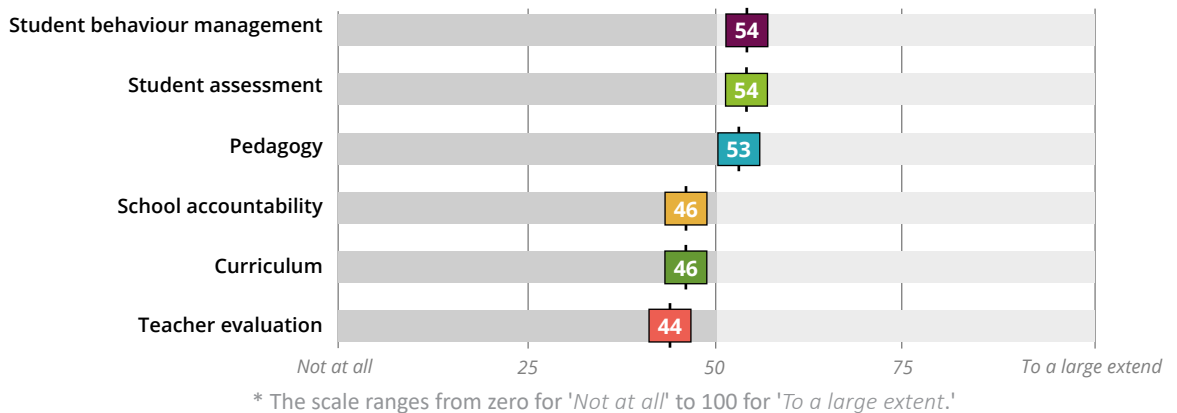
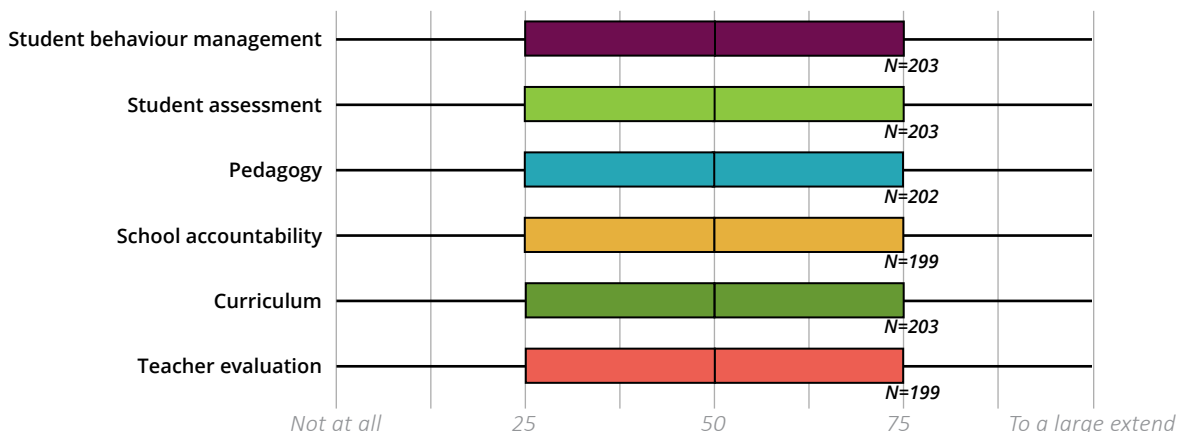


Figure 4.7.2: Variability of unions' responses on teachers' influence over policies and practices in schools





As indicated in Figure 4.7.2, the responses to all of the questions had same moderate variability, reflecting a moderate consensus on the responses globally.

Unions' views on teacher influence in schools: a regional overview

Across the different regions, unions reported that teachers could influence policies and practices in their schools to some extent. Table 4.7.1 provides a comparative overview of regional perspectives on the extent that teachers can influence policies and practices in their schools.

Key Insights

Africa

- Overall, teachers can only influence policies practices in their schools **to some extent**.
- **Teachers were reported to have relatively less influence** over the curriculum (43).

Asia-Pacific

- Overall, teachers can influence policies practices in their schools **to some extent**.
- **Teachers were reported to have relatively less influence** over the curriculum (43), school accountability (43) and teacher evaluation (43).

Europe

- Overall, teachers can influence policies practices in their schools **to some extent**.
- **Relatively greater influence** over pedagogy (59).
- **Relatively less influence** over school accountability (41) and teacher evaluation (41).

Latin America

- Overall, teachers were reported to influence policies practices in their schools **to some extent**.
- **Relatively greater influence** in relation to pedagogy (63) and student behaviour management (57).
- **Relatively lower levels of influence** in the area of teacher evaluation (39).

North America and the Caribbean

- Overall, teachers were reported to influence policies practices in their schools **to some extent**.
- **Relatively greater influence** in the areas of pedagogy (58) and student assessment (58).

Figure Series 4.7.1 in Appendix illustrates the variations within each region.

Table 4.7.1: A regional overview of unions' views on teacher influence over policies and practices in schools*,**

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Student behaviour management	56	53	53	57	50
Student assessment	55	52	52	55	58
Pedagogy	47	49	59	63	58
The curriculum	43	43	49	49	49
School accountability	48	43	41	55	51
Teacher evaluation	46	43	41	39	47

* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'

**High scores bolded

Unions' perspectives on teacher influence over school leaders' decisions: a global overview

Overall, unions reported that, in the best cases, teachers can influence school leaders' decisions 'sometimes', while in the worst cases, their influence is infrequent (see figure 4.7.3). The low scores may reflect that these issues are often dictated by broader educational policies, national regulations, or hierarchical structures, over which individual school leaders have limited control. Alternatively, leaders may not fully engage teachers in decision-making processes.

Key insights:

Globally, unions stated that teachers **sometimes** influenced school leaders' decisions in the following key areas:

- Student behaviour management (48)

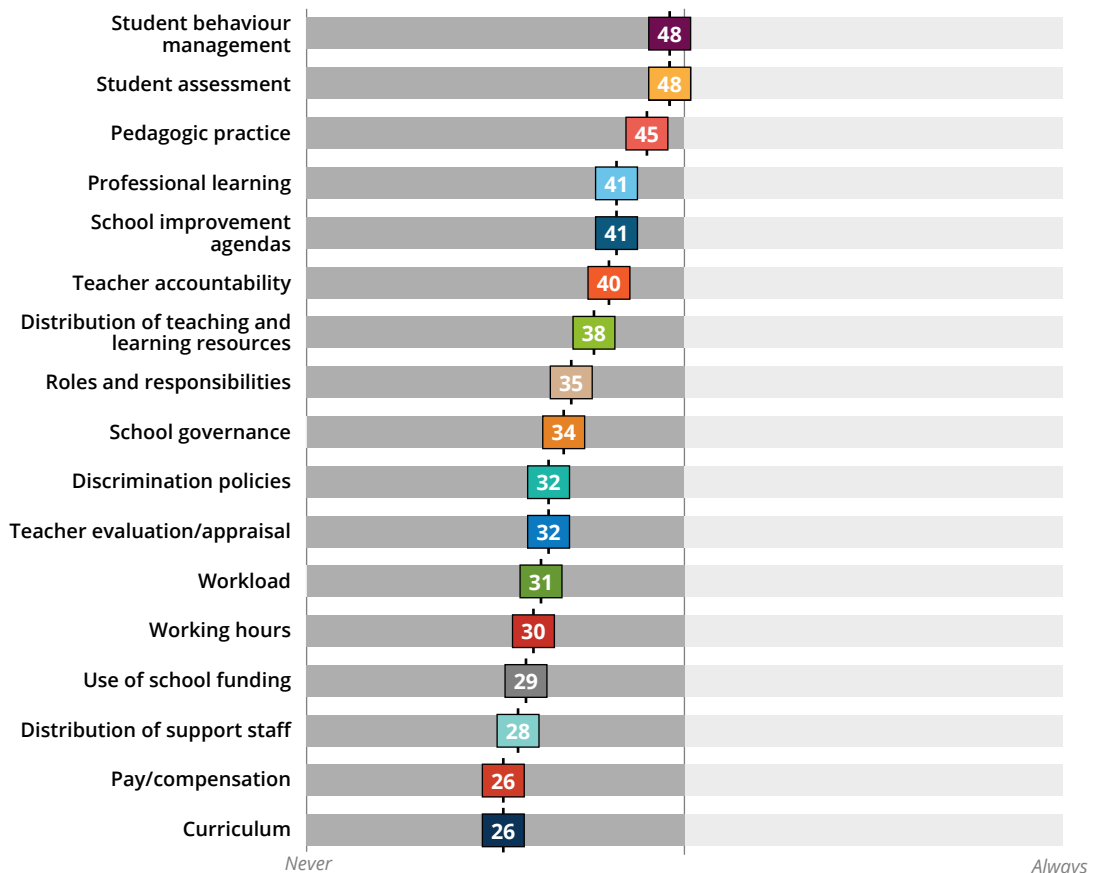
- Student assessment (48)
- Pedagogic practice (45)
- Professional learning (41)
- School improvement agendas (41, high consensus)
- Teacher accountability (40)
- Distribution of teaching and learning resources (38, high consensus).

However, as indicated by Figure 4.7.3, there is moderate variability around unions responses related to the several of the above areas, reflecting diverse opinions across the countries.

Unions reported that teachers could only **occasionally** influence school leaders' decisions in the following areas:

- School governance (34, high consensus)
- Discrimination policies (32)
- Teacher evaluation/appraisal (32)
- Curriculum (26, high consensus)
- Pay/compensation (26, high consensus).

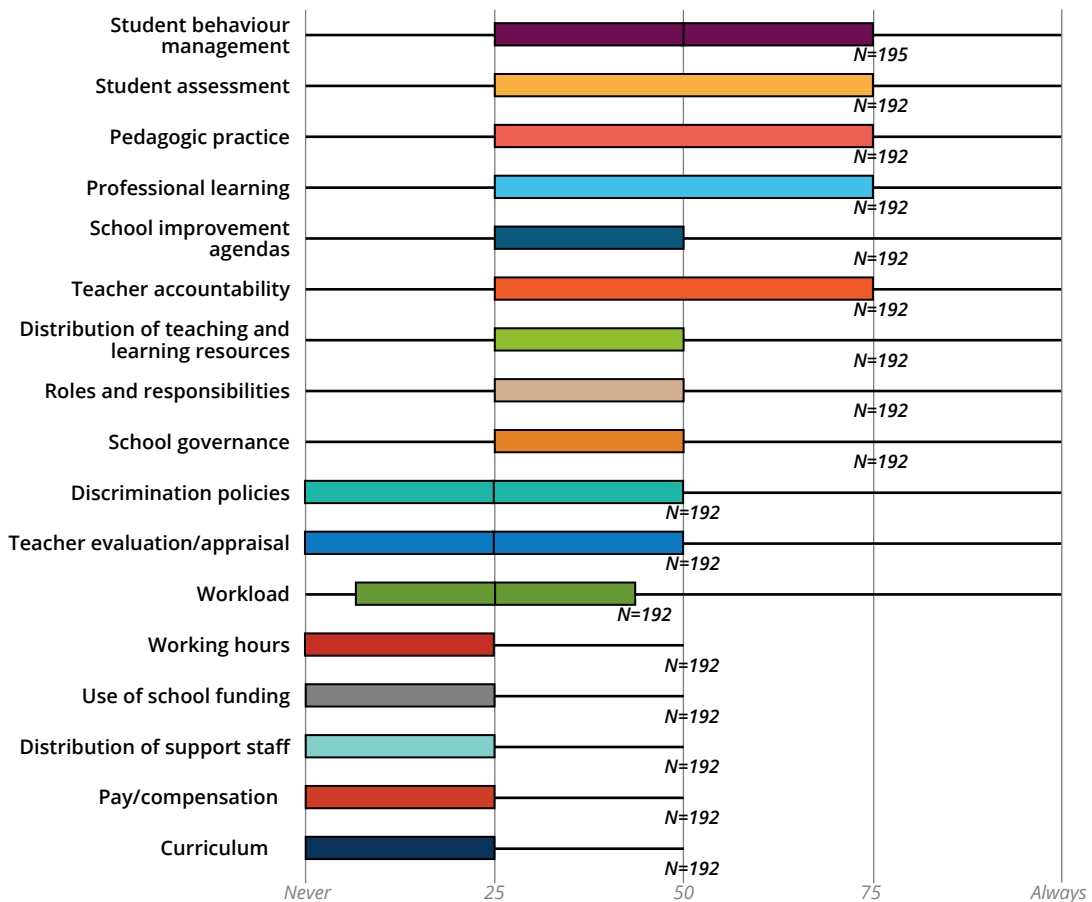
Figure 4.7.3: Unions' views on teacher influence over school leaders' decisions regarding key aspects of teaching*



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Never' to 100 for 'Always.'



Figure 4.7.4: Variability of unions' responses regarding teacher influence over school leaders' decisions regarding key aspects of teaching



Unions' perspectives on teacher influence over school leaders' decisions: a regional overview

Table 4.7.2 provides a regional comparison of unions' perceived influence of teachers on school leaders' decisions about various aspects of work in schools. The analysis reveals varied perceptions of the degree of influence that teachers had over leadership decisions in their school, with notable variations across different areas.

Africa

Unions reported teachers could **sometimes** influence leaders on two aspects of their work:

- Student behaviour management (46)
- Student assessments (49).

Teachers were reported to **only occasionally** influence leaders' decisions on the following aspects of work:

- Curriculum (27)
- Pay (30)
- Distribution of support staff (32)
- The use of school funding (32).

Asia-Pacific

Teachers were reported to **sometimes** influence leaders' decisions in the following key areas:

- Student behaviour management (52)
- Student assessment (48)
- Professional learning (45).

Teachers were perceived to influence decisions on several other key areas

only occasionally:

- Working hours (25)
- Pay (28)
- Workload (30)
- Curriculum (30)
- Distribution of support staff (29)
- The use of school funding (29).

Europe

Teachers were perceived to **sometimes** have influence over decisions in three key areas:

- Pedagogic practices (53)
- Student behaviour management (51)
- Student assessment (48).

In most areas of their work teachers were reported to influence leaders' decisions **only occasionally:**

- Working hours (23)
- Pay/compensation (26)
- Workload (27)
- Curriculum (24)
- School governance (24)

- Distribution of support staff (22)
- Discrimination policies (27)
- Use of school funding (25).

Latin America

Teachers were perceived to **sometimes** influence leaders' decisions in two key areas:

- Student assessment (46)
- School improvement agendas (49).

In the other areas of work teachers were reported to influence leaders' decisions **only occasionally.**

North America and the Caribbean

Teachers were perceived to **sometimes** influence decisions in key two key areas:

- Pedagogic practices (49)
- Student behaviour (46).

In numerous other areas of work teachers were reported to influence leaders' decisions **only occasionally.**

Figure Series 4.7.2 in Appendix illustrates the variations within each region.

Table 4.7.2: Unions' views on teacher influence over school leaders' decisions by region*,**

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Pay/compensation	30	28	18	26	26
Workload	34	30	27	28	31
Roles and responsibilities	39	35	33	26	33
Working hours	41	25	23	21	24
Curriculum	27	30	24	22	24
Teacher evaluation/appraisal	35	34	28	22	33
Pedagogic practice	41	42	53	39	49
Student behaviour management	46	52	51	43	46
Professional learning	39	45	41	38	44
Student assessment	49	48	48	46	42
Teacher accountability	43	38	39	35	40
School improvement agendas	39	42	38	49	44
School governance	39	36	24	39	42
Distribution of support staff	32	29	22	26	26
Discrimination policies	35	38	27	22	30
Use of school funding	32	29	25	24	29
Distribution of teaching and learning resources	38	39	38	29	41

* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for 'Never' to 100 for 'Always'

** High scores bolded



4.6 Summary

The findings in this chapter reveal that teachers globally face substantial legal and practical obstacles that impede their ability to exercise fundamental rights. Challenges, such as interference from authorities, exclusions, and sanctions, are widespread and limit teachers' freedom of expression, assembly, the right to establish and join organisations, collective bargaining, and the right to strike. These barriers highlight the systemic challenges teachers and their representatives face in advocating for their professional interests.

Globally, mechanisms for social dialogue between teachers and governments are limited and inadequate in addressing the key issues affecting teachers. While some formal mechanisms exist, particularly regarding teacher pay, compensation, employment protection, and working time, they are not widespread. Mechanisms are even weaker in areas, such as professional development, teacher evaluation, and equity issues. This demonstrates the need for governments to establish mechanisms for social dialogue with teaching professionals. While unions in some locations reported that their relationships and engagement with governments were robust and conducive to negotiations, many others faced obstructive or hostile actions.

Aside from the basic rights and legal frameworks that provide a foundation for teacher professionalism, it is important that teachers have a voice and can exert influence over decisions impacting their work. While teachers and their unions have some influence over these decisions, particularly at the school level, this influence diminishes significantly beyond the school level—at the district, state, or national levels. This limited influence is reflected in the restricted consultations between teachers' unions and governments on key issues, as well as the partial levels of trust placed in the profession.

Within schools, unions reported that teachers had some voice and agency. They were able to exert a degree of influence over policies and practices in their schools and could sometimes influence school leaders' decisions. Globally, this suggests that teachers are not fully empowered to shape key policies, practices, and decisions affecting their work at the local level.

Overall, existing structures and environments are inadequate and do not grant teachers the same level of authority, autonomy and influence as high-status professions.

Chapter 5: The status of the teaching profession

Public recognition and respect for teachers, including acknowledgment of their role in society and the value of their professional expertise, are crucial for enhancing the status, reputation, and appeal of the teaching profession. Public perceptions, as well as how the media and policymakers portray teachers, reflect the level of respect and status teachers hold in society. In addition, many issues related to the experiences of teaching professionals in their roles impact the prestige and desirability of teaching. Among these, pay, remuneration and job security are key. Professional preparation, development and opportunities for progression also play integral roles in influencing the status of teaching and attracting and maintaining a skilled teaching workforce with a high level of self and professional efficacy.

This chapter analyses unions' views on the status of teachers in society. It examines unions' perspectives on how teaching is perceived by the public and the media. The chapter also examines whether unions perceive the policies and processes related to teaching to serve to elevate or undermine the status of teaching.

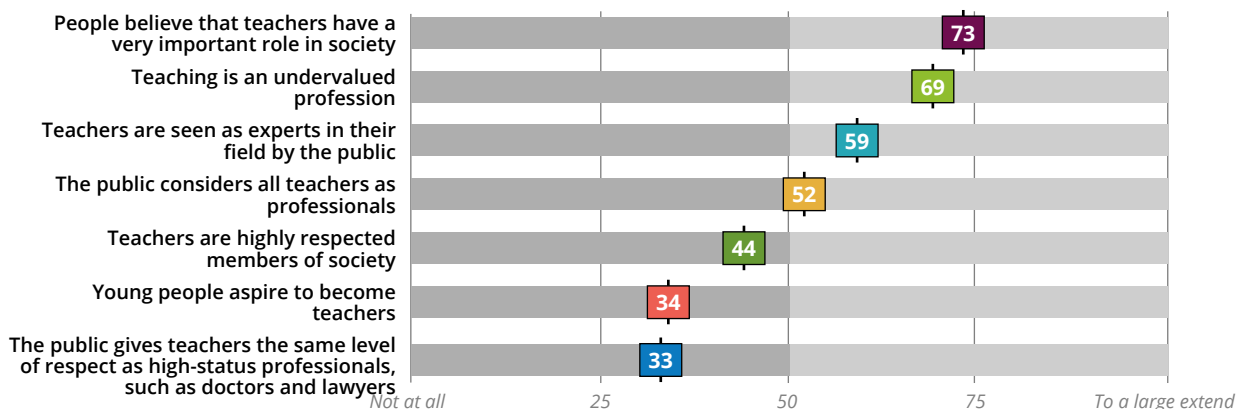
5.1 Status of the teaching profession: public and societal perceptions of teachers

Public perceptions of the value of the teaching profession in each country are important because they reflect the levels of trust and respect afforded to educators. These perceptions impact how teachers are treated, their pay, the profession's appeal and their recognition as experts with authority over their work. To assess public perceptions of the profession, unions were asked how the public viewed teachers.

A global overview of unions' perspectives on public perceptions of teachers

Figure 5.1.1 presents unions' views on public perceptions of the teaching profession. Overall, unions reported that teachers were recognised as having a critical role in society and were somewhat viewed as experts in

Figure 5.1.1: Public perceptions and valuation of the teaching profession*



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Strongly disagree' to 100 for 'Strongly agree.'



their fields. However, several key issues were raised, including that teaching is undervalued, lacks the same respect as other professions, and is unattractive as a career choice for young people.

Key insights:

Teachers have a critical role in society: Overall, unions agreed that the public believe teachers have a critical role in society (75).

Undervalued as a profession: Globally, unions agreed that teaching is an undervalued profession in society (69).

Limited acknowledgement of teacher expertise: Unions were neutral tending towards slight agreement that teachers are viewed as experts by the public (59, high consensus; see Figure 5.1.2).

Mixed views of professional recognition: Unions were neutral on whether teachers were viewed as professionals by the public (52).

Mixed views tending towards negative views on whether teachers are highly respected: Overall, unions were neutral on whether teachers are highly respected members of society (44).

Teachers are not given the same level of respect as other high-status professions: Overall, unions

moderately disagreed with the statement that teachers were given the same level of respect as doctors or lawyers (34, high consensus).

Teaching is not attractive to young people: Overall, respondents moderately disagreed with the statement that teaching was an attractive profession to young people (33, high consensus).

Insights from the Profession

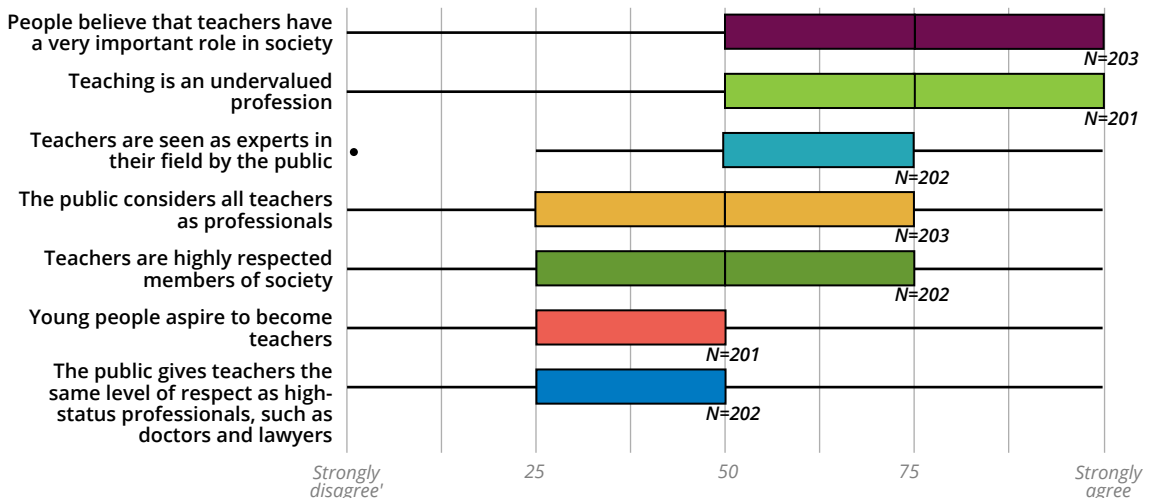
The prestige, regard, and value that teachers hold in early childhood, primary, and secondary education have diminished. This has also been somewhat validated by public officials who, while campaigning, claim that education is very important, but later, in their actions and public policies, do not reflect that same value they verbally support.

Secondary school teacher, Latin America

I think that our profession in our country is underrated, I would say, and it's at quite a high level of being underrated. But at the same time, I see the process of slow change. But, for now, I would say that our profession isn't really seen as very attractive for young people, so we don't have many young teachers.

Secondary school teacher, Europe

Figure 5.1.2: Variability of unions' responses on valuation of the teaching profession by the public across the countries practices in schools



Teaching is quite different here actually... Teachers are considered 'gurus' since ancient times. So, the respect we receive from the students, parents, and the community is quite different... When I was working in a rural area, every single person in the village, whether they were students at my school or not, bowed their heads and greeted me when they saw me.

*Primary school teacher,
Asia-Pacific*

A regional overview of unions perspectives on public and societal perceptions of teachers

There were considerable regional variations in unions' responses to questions about how the public viewed the teaching profession. Table 5.1.1 shows that while teachers are universally acknowledged for their importance, they are perceived as undervalued, especially in Europe, with variations in respect, professionalism, and young peoples' aspirations to enter the profession across all regions.

Key Insights:

Africa

- **Importance and Value:** African unions reported that teachers are recognised for their importance in

society (74) and moderately agreed that teaching is an undervalued profession in society (63).

- **Respect, Status, and Attractiveness:** Overall, respondents somewhat disagreed that teachers were respected members of society (38). They disagreed that young people aspired to become teachers (27) and indicated that teachers were not given the same level of respect as high-status professions (26).

Asia-Pacific

- **Professional status and importance:** Teachers were reported to be viewed by the public as having a critical role in society (76). They were also somewhat seen as experts in their field (64) and highly respected members of society (60). However, there were mixed views on whether teachers were considered professionals (54).
- **Attractiveness:** Although views about whether young people aspired to become teachers were mixed, responses were on average more positive than Africa, Europe and North America and the Caribbean (42).

Europe

- **Importance and Value:** Unions in Europe reported that teachers are somewhat recognised for

Table 5.1.1: Regional perspectives on public and societal perceptions of teachers*

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
People believe that teachers have a very important role in society	74	76	65	75	79
Teaching is an undervalued profession	63	66	79	72	71
Teachers are seen as experts in their field by the public	59	64	59	53	61
The public considers all teachers as professionals	50	54	50	66	50
Teachers are highly respected members of society	38	60	43	42	49
Young people aspire to become teachers	27	42	30	43	41
The public gives teachers the same level of respect as high-status professionals, such as doctors and lawyers	26	49	31	46	39

* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for 'Strongly disagree' to 100 for 'Strongly agree.'



their importance in society (65). However, this recognition is combined with a perception that teaching is undervalued as a profession (79) and mixed perspectives on whether teachers are viewed as professionals (50).

- **Lack of High-Status:** European unions indicated that teachers are not seen on a par with other high-status professions (31) and the profession is generally not attractive to young people (30).

Latin America

- **Professional status and importance:** It was reported that teachers are viewed as having a critical role in society (75), teaching is seen as an undervalued profession (72), and that teachers are somewhat viewed as professionals by the public (66). However, there were mixed views on whether teachers are seen as experts in their field (53) and the sense that they were not highly respected members of society (42).
- **Attractiveness:** Although views about whether young people aspired to become teachers were mixed, responses were on average more positive than other regions (43).

North America and the Caribbean

- **Importance and professional status:** Respondents indicated that teachers in this region are viewed as having a very important role in society (79). However, despite this recognition, the believed teaching is an undervalued profession (71). There were mixed perceptions whether teachers are viewed as

professionals (50). There were mixed views, tending towards the negative, as to whether teachers receive the same level of respect as other professions (39).

- **Attractiveness:** Mixed views tending to the negative on whether young people aspire to become teachers (41).

Figure Series 5.1.1 in Appendix illustrates the variations within each region.

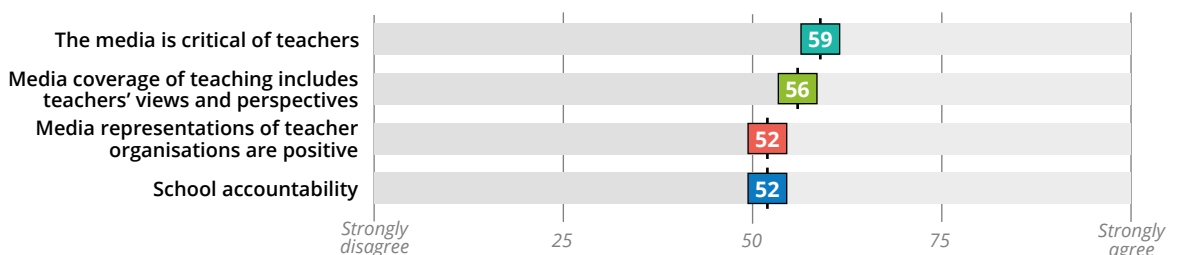
5.2 Status of the teaching profession: media coverage of teachers

Media coverage of the teaching profession is crucial as it shapes public perceptions and attitudes toward the teaching profession. Positive portrayals of teachers and teaching can enhance the profession's prestige, foster a climate of respect and affect how teachers are treated by policymakers and the general public, while negative coverage can have the opposite effects. We consulted unions to gather their views on media portrayals of the teaching profession in their respective countries.

Unions' views on media coverage of the teaching profession: a global overview

Figure 5.2.1 presents a global summary of unions' perspectives on media portrayals of teachers. Overall, unions were neutral on whether the media is critical of teachers, whether teachers' perspectives are presented in the media, and whether there are positive

Figure 5.2.1: Media coverage of the teaching profession*



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Strongly disagree' to 100 for 'Strongly agree.'

portrayals of teacher organisations and the teaching profession.

Key insights:

Critical coverage of teachers:

Globally, unions were neutral, leaning towards slightly agreeing that media coverage is critical of teachers (59, high consensus).

Mixed views on the inclusion of teacher perspectives: Overall, unions were neutral on whether teachers' perspectives are included in coverage (56).

Mixed views on the portrayal of teacher organisations and of teaching as an important profession: Unions were neutral overall on whether media coverage promoted teaching as an important profession (52) and whether media representations of teacher organisations were positive (52).

As indicated in Figure 5.2.2, there is a high consensus that media coverage is somewhat critical of teachers, and moderate consensus on the three other related statements.

This has also influenced how society views teachers.

Secondary school teacher, Latin America

The media interfere so much with schools, and... if a student is unable to answer a single question, they make it a big issue and start blaming the teacher.

Primary school teacher, Asia-Pacific

Unions' views on media coverage of teachers: a regional overview

Unions across regions reported varied media attitudes towards teachers. Unions indicated that criticism in the media was more prevalent in Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America. Unions reported mixed but somewhat positive feedback on the inclusion of teachers' perspectives in Europe and North America and the Caribbean, as well as on the promotion of the teaching profession in Asia-Pacific and North America and the Caribbean. Table 5.2.1 presents a summary of regional responses to questions about media portrayals of teachers.

Key Insights:

Africa

- **Media criticism of teachers:** Unions were neutral, leaning towards slightly agreeing that the media is critical of teachers in Africa (61).

Insights from the Profession

The problem is also that the media are friends of particular political parties in our country. Therefore, what we do with the educational community is clear—but it remains within the educational community... The media, both national and local, use communication to fragment.

Figure 5.2.2: Variability of unions' responses on media coverage of the teaching profession

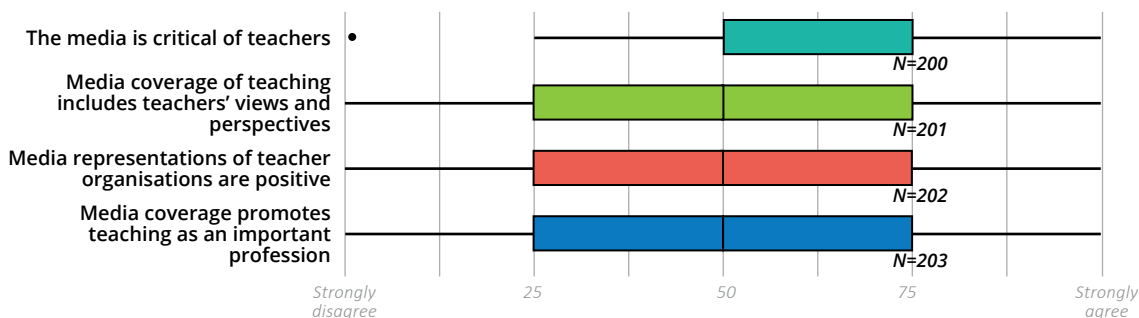



Table 5.2.1: Attitudes on media portrayals of teachers in various regions*

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
The media is critical of teachers	61	60	55	66	53
Media coverage of teaching includes teachers' views and perspectives	54	56	59	49	59
Media representations of teacher organisations are positive	54	55	49	49	55
Media coverage promotes teaching as an important profession	51	60	50	45	57

* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for 'Strongly disagree' to 100 for 'Strongly agree.'

Asia-Pacific

- **Media criticism of teachers & promotion of teaching profession:** Unions were neutral tending towards slight agreement that the media is both critical of teachers (60) and promotes teaching as an important profession (60)

Europe

- **The inclusion of teacher perspectives:** Unions were neutral, leaning towards slightly agreeing that teachers' perspectives were included in media portrayals (59).

Latin American

- **Media criticism of teachers:** Unions moderately agreed that the media is critical of teachers (66). Overall, unions' scores in this region regarding the media being critical of teachers were the highest.

North America and the Caribbean

- **Inclusion of teacher perspectives:** Unions were neutral tending towards slight agreement that teachers' views were included in media coverage (59).

Figure Series 5.2.1 in Appendix illustrates the variations within each region.

5.3 Status of the teaching profession: employment conditions

Employment conditions and policies can considerably influence the status of the teaching profession by affecting internal and external perceptions, as well as recruitment and retention of teachers. Key factors such as compensation, professional development opportunities, job security, and employee benefits play a crucial role in shaping how the profession is perceived and valued within society. We asked unions about their views on how they felt teachers' employment conditions impacted on the status of teachers in their country.

Unions' perspectives on how teachers' employment conditions impact the profession's status: A global overview

This section explores unions' views on how employment conditions impact the teaching profession's status globally, with emphasis on respect, salary, and safety. Overall, unions were neutral on the impact that teachers' employment conditions had on the status of the teaching profession. The overall neutrality reflects the diverse views within unions across different locations, with some perceiving employment conditions to have a negative impact, others remaining neutral, and some seeing a positive

impact. In particular areas, such as teachers' salaries and hiring policies, the impact was viewed as slightly negative, whereas in other areas, such as leave allowances, it tended towards a slightly positive impact (see Figures 5.3.1 and 5.3.2).

Key insights:

Neutral tending towards slightly negative impact on professional status

- Teacher hiring/recruitment policies, the average teacher's salary and dismissal policies were viewed as having a limited but slightly negative, on the status of the teaching profession.

Neither a positive nor negative impact on professional status

- On average, employer contributions to healthcare (47), opportunities for career progression (48), disciplinary policies/processes for teachers (49), pensions/retirement plans (52) and teachers' learning, professional development (54) and employment contracts (56) were viewed as having a very little or no impact on the status of the profession.

Neutral tending towards slightly positive impact on professional status

- Leave Allowance (Vacation days) (61, high consensus) was reported to have a limited but slightly positive impact on the status of the profession.

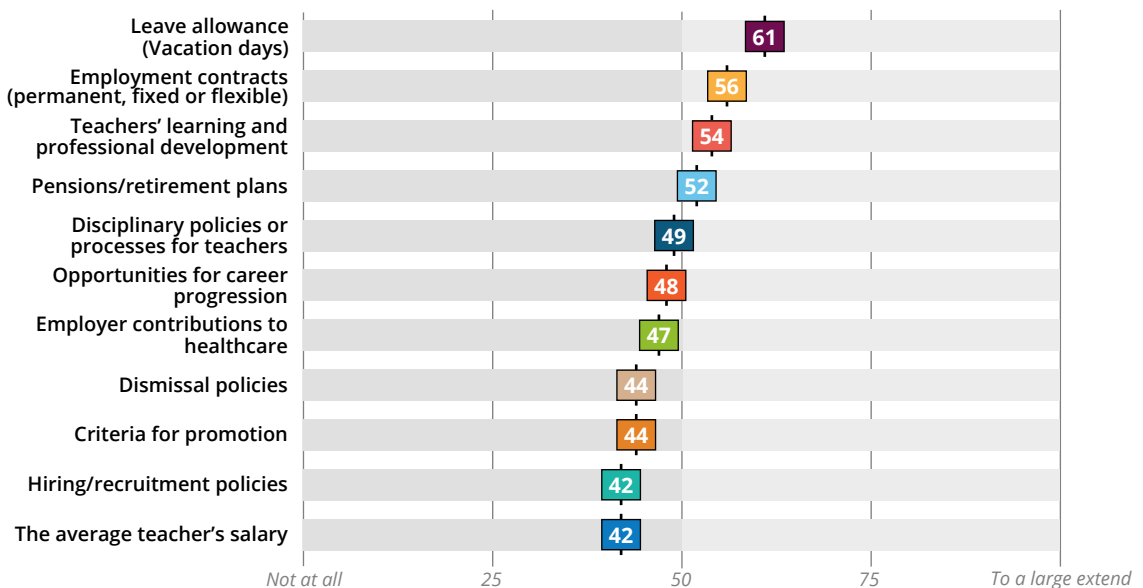
Insights from the profession

A teacher in primary school on the government payroll cannot afford to feed their family for 30 days in a month. The salary covers food costs, but we haven't even talked about other things like charcoal, rent, school fees for my children, and medical bills. If I want to buy a house, I will have to take a loan and pay it back each month. This makes the situation worse because my current salary cannot sustain my family for even two weeks. So, I have to skip some meals in order to move forward.

Primary school teacher, Africa

I think there's a lot [that impacts on the status of the profession]. But salary, I think, is very important, because these days the salary for a teacher who starts work is just a

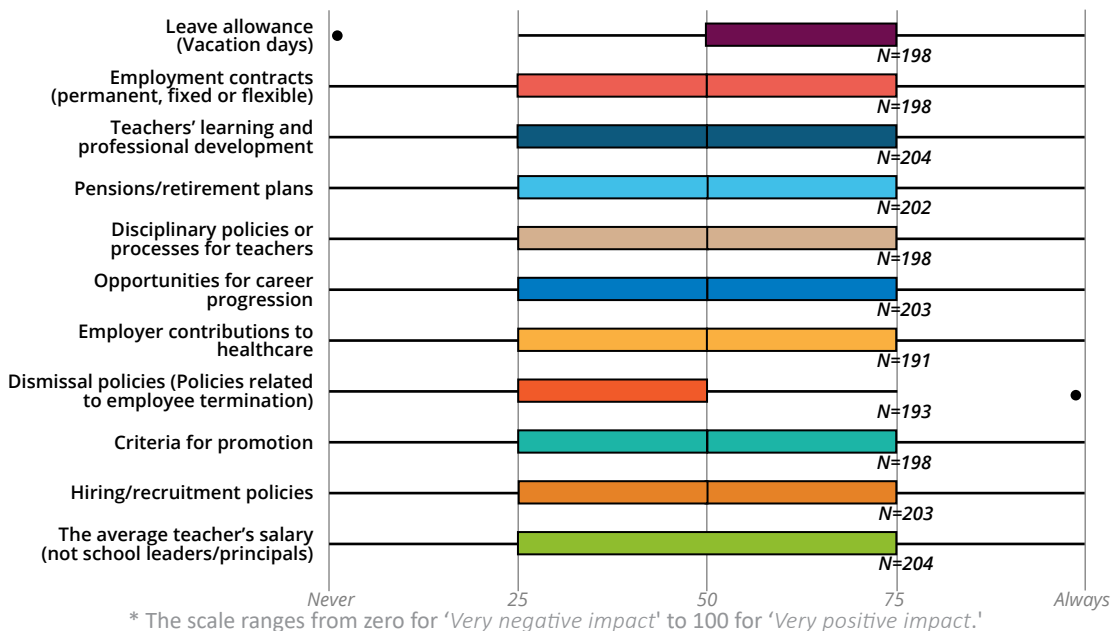
Figure 5.3.1: A Global overview of the impact of employment conditions on the status of the teaching profession*



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Very negative impact' to 100 for 'Very positive impact.'



Figure 5.3.2: Variability of responses on the Impact of employment conditions on the status of the teaching profession*



little bit above the lowest salary in the country. So, it's not, you know, you don't earn that much after university, and you've got a really huge responsibility at work because you are responsible for someone's children.

Secondary school teacher, Europe

Unions' perspectives on the impact of employment conditions on the status of teachers: a regional overview

Overall, most unions in each region reported that teachers' employment conditions had a limited impact on the status of the teaching profession. However, in some regions, particular employment conditions positively impacted the status of the profession, while others had a negative impact (see Table 5.3.1).

Key insights:

Africa

- **A slightly positive impact on professional status:** Employment contracts (permanent, fixed, or flexible) (61).

- **A slightly negative impact on professional status:** Hiring/recruitment policies (39), Dismissal policies (39), Employer contributions to healthcare (41), The average teacher's salary (41).

Asia-Pacific

- **A slightly positive impact on professional status:** Teachers' learning and professional development (60)
- **A slightly negative impact on professional status:** The average teacher's salary (41).

Europe

- **A positive impact on professional status:** Leave allowance (Vacation days) (72).
- **A slightly negative impact on professional status:** Criteria for promotion (41) and Opportunities for career progression (40).

Latin America

- **A positive impact on professional status:** Leave allowance (Vacation days) (68).

Table 5.3.1: Impact of job conditions on the status of the teaching profession, regional perspectives *

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Leave allowance (Vacation days)	52	55	72	68	63
Employer contributions to healthcare	41	53	56	43	38
Employment contracts (permanent, fixed or flexible)	61	52	56	50	49
Pensions/retirement plans	53	55	53	41	55
Teachers' learning and professional development	53	60	50	51	63
Dismissal policies (Policies related to employee termination)	39	45	48	41	55
The average teacher's salary (not school leaders/principals)	41	41	46	45	31
Disciplinary policies or processes for teachers	52	54	46	36	47
Hiring/recruitment policies	39	47	44	37	44
Criteria for promotion	43	54	41	47	36
Opportunities for career progression	52	56	40	51	38

* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for 'Very negative impact' to 100 for 'Very positive impact.'

- **A negative impact on professional status in other areas:**
Disciplinary policies or processes for teachers (36) and hiring/recruitment policies (37).

North America and the Caribbean

- **A positive impact on professional status:**
Leave allowance (Vacation days) (63) and Teachers' learning and professional development (63).
- **A negative impact on professional status:**
The average teacher's salary (31).

Figure Series 5.3.1 in Appendix illustrates the variations within each region.

5.4 Status of the teaching profession: teacher professional preparation and learning

The status of the teaching profession is influenced by teacher preparation and professional learning policies and systems, which shape how new educators are introduced to the field and the ongoing learning and development opportunities practicing teachers receive. High-status professions often have good access to professional learning due to the importance of continuous development in these fields. Employers and professional associations typically invest heavily in professional learning, understanding the importance of learning and development to practitioner expertise.

In this section, we consider unions' perspectives on the level of access teachers in their countries have to professional learning and the impact of professional preparation and learning on the status of the profession.

Unions' perspectives on teachers' access to professional learning: a global overview



To understand unions' perspectives on teachers' access to professional learning, we asked participants about the extent to which qualified teachers had access to professional learning in key areas of their work. Overall, unions reported that teachers had some access to professional learning opportunities. However, there were important variations between different areas (see Figures 5.4.1 and 5.4.2).

Overall, unions report that teachers have relatively greater access to professional learning in certain key areas

- Assessing student learning (63, high consensus)
- Knowledge and understanding of subject area(s) (62, high consensus)
- Pedagogy (61, high consensus)
- The curriculum (60, high consensus).

Overall, teachers were reported to have some access to professional learning in the majority of key areas, including the following:

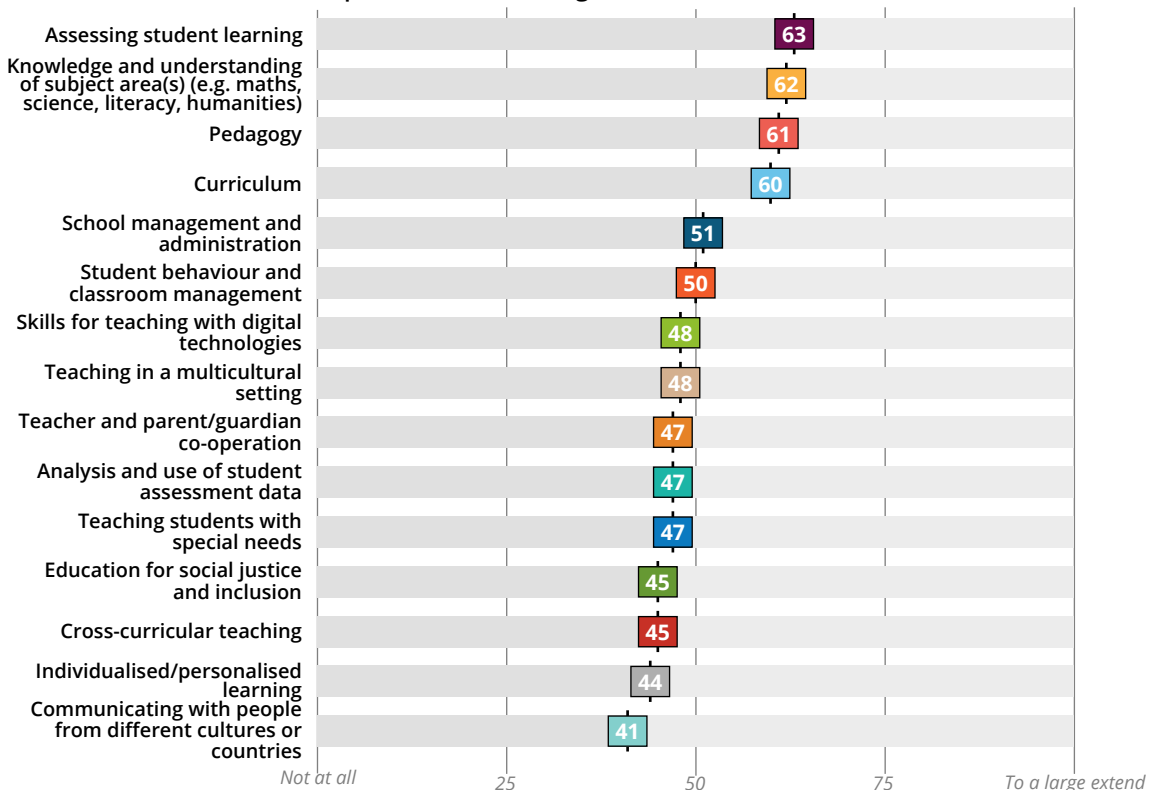
- School management and administration (51)

- Student behaviour and classroom management (50)
- Skills for teaching with digital technologies (49)
- Teaching in a multicultural setting (48)
- Teacher and parent/guardian co-operation (47)
- Analysis and use of student assessment data (47)
- Teaching students with special needs (47)
- Education for social justice and inclusion (45)
- Cross-curricular teaching (45)
- Individualised/personalised learning (44)

Teachers were reported to have relatively more limited access in one area of professional learning:

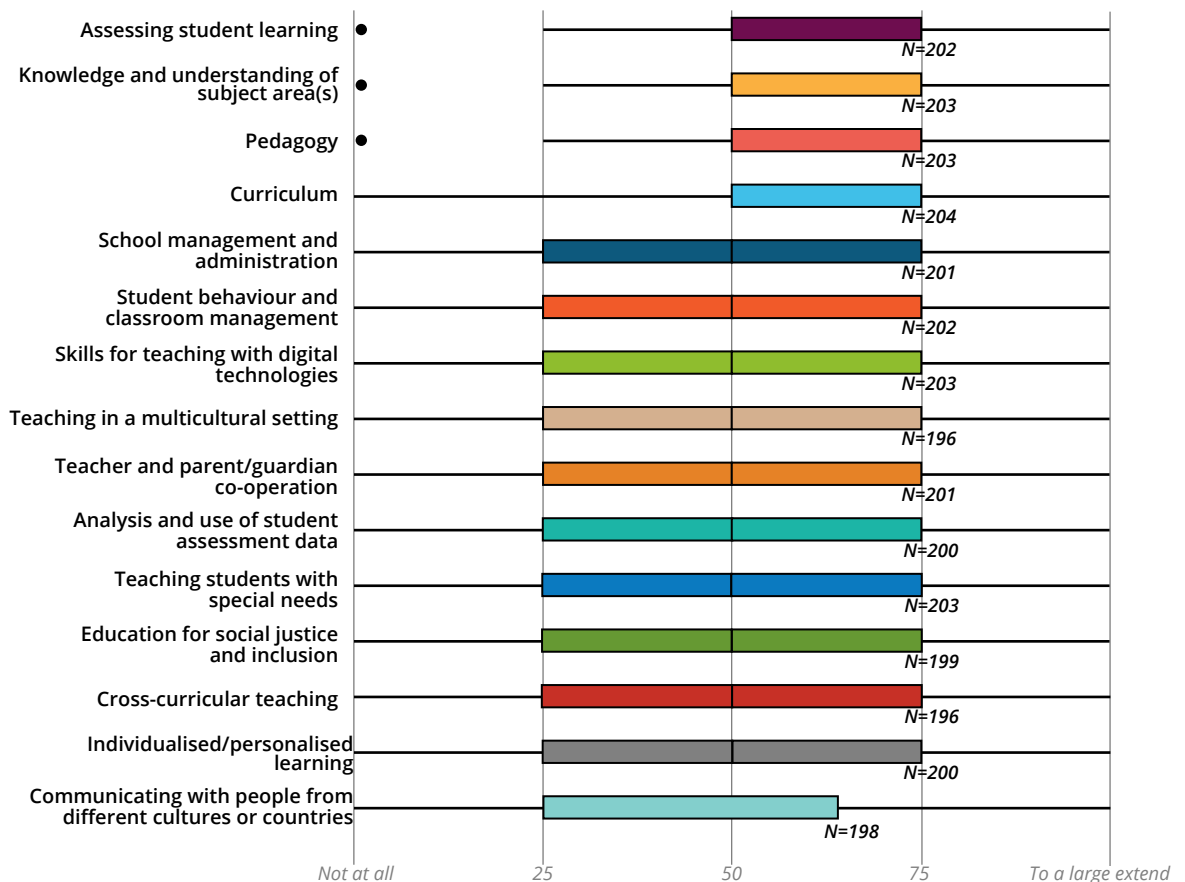
- Communicating with people from different cultures or countries (41).

Figure 5.4.1: A global overview of unions' perspectives on access to professional learning for teachers*



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'

Figure 5.4.2: Variability of unions' responses on access to professional learning for teachers



Insights from the Profession

In this country, 90% of teachers are women, which means that all the responsibilities, all the household responsibilities, mostly fall on us. So, training outside of our working hours means that men hold more hierarchical positions because they can take the courses and train outside of work, while we women are constantly juggling everything because we are the only ones at home.

*Primary school teacher,
Latin America*

In the past, we had time and space within our school day, during the school day, to train. It was guaranteed by the national government and the provincial governments, and we did it. The National Institute of Teacher Training also provided wonderful courses with incredible, very up-to-date bibliographies... But we lost

that with the government... That's what I wanted to highlight. We need paid time to think about teaching, yes, with colleagues from each institution.

*Secondary school teacher,
Latin America*

Unions' perspectives on teachers' access to professional learning: a regional overview

Overall, unions across various regions reported that teachers have relatively greater access to professional learning in specific areas of their work, such as key subject areas and student assessment, access is more limited in other areas. There are also substantial disparities in access to professional learning between regions, particularly in areas such as digital technologies and multicultural education. Table 5.4.1 provides an overview of unions'

perspectives on teachers' access to professional learning according to each region.

Key insights:

Africa

- **Some access to most areas** of professional learning.
- **More limited access to learning** on skills for teaching with digital technologies (31), individualised/personalised learning (35), teaching students with special needs (39) and cross-curricular teaching (39).

Asia-Pacific

- **Some access to all areas** of professional learning.
- **Greater access** to assessing student learning (71), the curriculum (64), student behaviour and

classroom management (62).

Europe

- **Some access to most areas** of professional learning.
- Greater access to knowledge and understanding of subject area(s) (e.g. maths, science, literacy, humanities) (66), pedagogy (64) and learning about skills for teaching with digital technologies (64).
- **More limited access** to learning regarding parent/guardian co-operation (40).

Latin America

- **Some access to almost all areas** of professional learning
- **Greater access** to knowledge and understanding of subject areas (69), pedagogy (65),

Table 5.4.1: Unions' perspectives on teachers' access to professional learning in different regions*,**

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Knowledge and understanding of subject area(s) (e.g. maths, science, literacy, humanities)	55	63	66	67	69
Assessing student learning	58	71	61	66	64
The curriculum	57	64	60	57	64
Student behaviour and classroom management	43	62	51	51	54
Pedagogy	57	61	64	66	65
Analysis and use of student assessment data	44	60	44	50	43
School management and administration	51	59	45	57	47
Skills for teaching with digital technologies	31	58	64	55	49
Teacher and parent/guardian co-operation	45	58	40	51	53
Cross-curricular teaching	39	56	45	51	42
Individualised/personalised learning (matching learning activities to each learner's needs)	35	55	48	49	45
Teaching in a multicultural setting	47	53	46	51	40
Teaching students with special needs	39	48	56	51	46
Education for social justice and inclusion	43	48	46	50	43
Communicating with people from different cultures or countries	42	45	42	36	32

* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'

**High scores bolded

assessing student learning (64) and the curriculum (64).

- **More limited access to communicating with people from different cultures or countries (36).**

North America and the Caribbean

- **Some access to most areas of professional learning.**
- **Greater access to knowledge and understanding of subject areas (69), assessing student learning (66) and pedagogy (66),**
- **More limited access to communicating with people from different cultures or countries (32).**

Figure Series 5.4.1 in Appendix illustrates the variations within each region.

5.5 The impact of professional learning policies on the status of the teaching profession

Policies that promote a comprehensive, engaging and ongoing professional learning experience will enhance the professionalism of teachers, while those that offer limited or inadequate learning opportunities can negatively impact their professionalism and professional status (Sachs, 2016). To understand unions' perspectives on the impact of teacher preparation and professional learning policies and practices, we asked participants what impact these had on the status of teachers in their country.

Unions' views on the impact of professional learning policies on the status of the teaching profession: a global overview

Overall, the perceived impact of teacher preparation and professional learning policies and practices on the professional status of teachers is mixed. The perceived impact of initial teacher education, including practicum and courses, and teacher entry standards is slightly positive (see Figures 5.5.1 and 5.5.2).

Key insights:

Overall, the following areas of professional learning policy were perceived to have a slightly positive impact on the professional status of teachers:

- Initial teacher education practicum (60, high consensus)
- Initial teacher education courses (60)
- Initial teacher education (60)
- Teacher entry standards (59, high consensus).

Unions were neutral on the impact of two other key areas on teacher professional status:

- Ongoing professional learning policies (52)
- Teacher Induction Policies (52).



Unions' views on the impact of professional learning policies on the status of the teaching profession: a regional overview

Across the different regions, the overall impact of professional learning on the status of the teaching profession appears limited but slightly positive. In most regions, standards and teacher education practices are perceived to have a slightly negative impact on teacher status. Notably, Latin America stands out as the exception in one area, where teacher induction and mentoring are viewed as having a slightly positive influence on the profession's status. Table 5.5.1 presents regional differences in how teacher training policies are valued across various aspects of professional development and entry into the teaching profession.

Key insights:

Africa

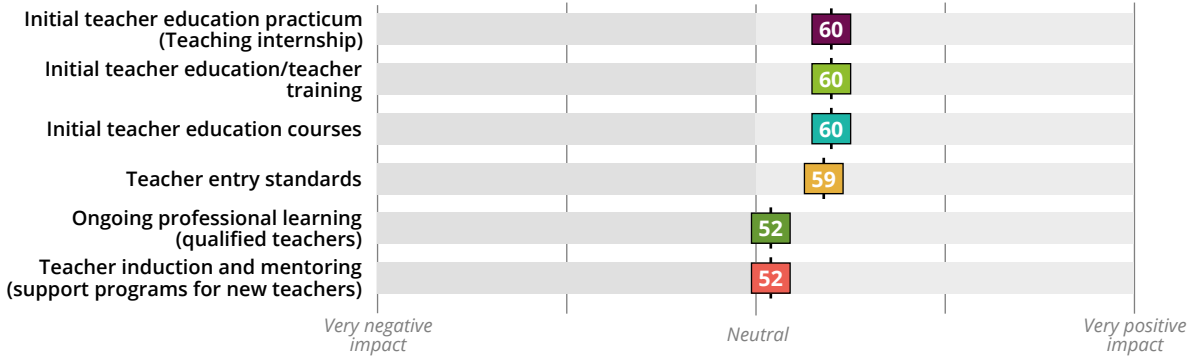
Overall, unions reported that several aspects of preparation and professional learning had a **slightly positive impact on the status of teachers**:

- Initial teacher education courses (64)
- Initial teacher education practicum (Teaching internship) (63)
- Initial teacher education/teacher training (62)
- Teacher entry standards (61).

Asia-Pacific

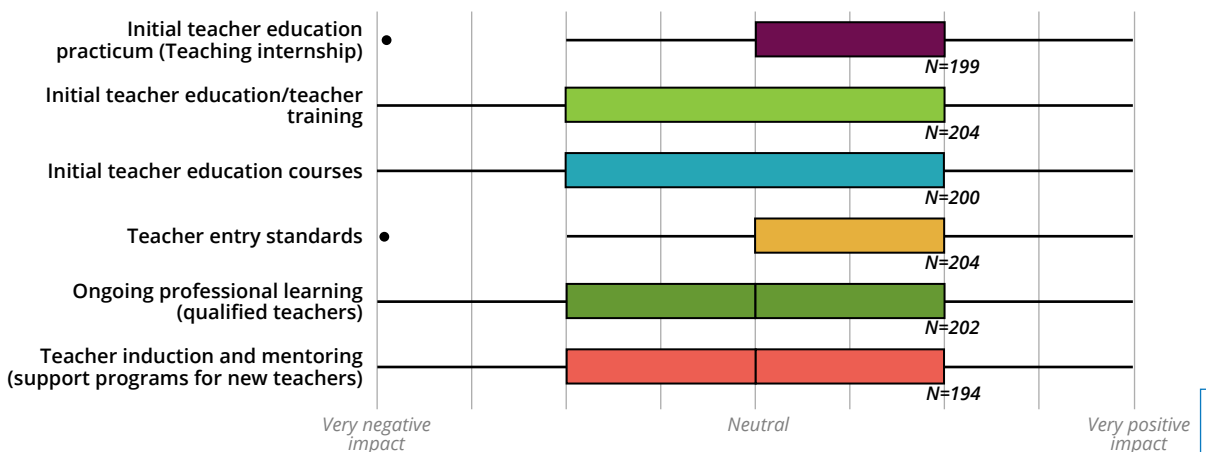
Overall, unions in this region reported that several aspects of preparation and professional learning had a **slightly positive impact on the status of Teachers**:

Figure 5.5.1: A global overview of unions' perspectives on the impact of teacher preparation and learning policies on teacher status *



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Very negative impact' to 100 for 'Very positive impact.'

Figure 5.5.2: Variability of unions' responses on the impact of teacher preparation and learning policies on teacher status



- Teacher entry standards (64)
- Initial teacher education/ teacher training (62)
- Initial teacher education courses (59)
- Initial teacher education practicum (Teaching internship) (59).

Europe

Overall, unions in Europe **were neutral on the impact** of preparation and professional learning on the status of teachers.

Latin America

Overall, unions in this region reported that several preparation and learning policies and practices had a **slightly positive impact on the status of teachers**:

- Initial teacher education practicum (Teaching internship) (61)
- Initial teacher education/ teacher training (61)
- Initial teacher education courses (59).

North America and the Caribbean

Overall, unions in this region reported that one aspect of preparation and professional learning had a **slightly positive impact on the status of teachers**:

- Initial teacher education courses (61)

Figure Series 5.5.1 in Appendix illustrates the variations within each region.

Table 5.5.1: Unions' perspectives on the impact of teacher preparation policies on teacher status broken down by region*

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Initial teacher education practicum (Teaching internship)	63	59	58	61	53
Initial teacher education/teacher training	62	62	56	61	55
Initial teacher education courses	64	59	53	59	61
Teacher entry standards	61	64	55	55	58
Ongoing professional learning (qualified teachers)	53	52	50	55	55
Teacher induction and mentoring (support programs for new teachers)	50	55	53	43	54

* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for 'Very negative impact' to 100 for 'Very positive impact.'



5.6 Summary

Globally, unions report that while teachers are acknowledged for their critical role, the profession remains undervalued and lacks the respect of other high-status professions. Unions indicated that while teachers are somewhat seen as experts, public recognition of their professional status and respect for their work remain limited. Unions also reported that teaching is generally not seen as an attractive career choice for young people. Overall, these results highlight that teaching is generally not regarded as a high-status profession, with ongoing challenges related to its societal status in many countries.

Regarding media portrayals of the teaching profession, unions expressed mixed views. Globally, unions were neutral on whether the media is critical of teachers, includes teachers' perspectives in its representations, promotes teaching as an important profession, or creates positive portrayals of teachers. The overall neutrality masked significant differences between unions in different contexts, with the media being seen as having a positive, neutral, or negative role concerning the teaching profession.

Unions expressed mixed views on how employment conditions influence the status of the teaching profession globally. In some areas, such as teacher hiring policies and salaries, employment conditions were reported to have a slightly negative impact on professional status. In other areas, such as leave allowances, unions reported a slightly positive impact. Other factors, such as healthcare contributions, career progression, and disciplinary policies, were perceived as having little effect on teacher status.

Overall, unions reported that teachers have some access to professional learning opportunities. Although access is still limited, it is relatively greater concerning assessing student learning, pedagogy, and understanding subject areas and limited in areas related digital technologies, multicultural teaching, and social justice education. Unions reported mixed views on the impact of teacher preparation and professional learning on the professional status of teachers. While initial teacher education courses and practicum and teacher entry standards were perceived to have a slightly positive impact, ongoing professional learning and teacher induction policies were viewed as having no discernible impact.

Chapter 6: The Work, health and sustainability of the teaching profession

The working conditions, health, wellbeing, and career intentions of teachers in schools are influenced by the broader conditions and status of the profession. In most countries, many aspects of teachers' roles and responsibilities are determined beyond the school, by education departments or ministries, standards bodies and local authorities. These bodies play an important role in establishing teacher standards, curricula, assessment, teacher evaluation and teaching frameworks that outline what is expected of teachers. In addition to determining what should be taught and how teachers should conduct themselves, these bodies define the roles and responsibilities of teachers, outline their role in decision-making and determine the degree of autonomy they can exercise in their profession. The different standards, guidelines, contracts, curricula, assessment and evaluation systems and policies interact with teachers work in schools in complex ways to impact on their health, wellbeing and career intentions.

This chapter analyses unions' perspectives on the key factors affecting the health and sustainability of the teacher workforce. The chapter examines the main work-related challenges facing teachers, the capacity of education authorities to understand and respond to these issues, and the strategies implemented to support teacher mental health. The chapter also considers unions' views on teacher shortages, the major causes and issues contributing to them and the effectiveness of policy responses.

6.1 The work, health and sustainability of the teaching profession: working conditions in schools

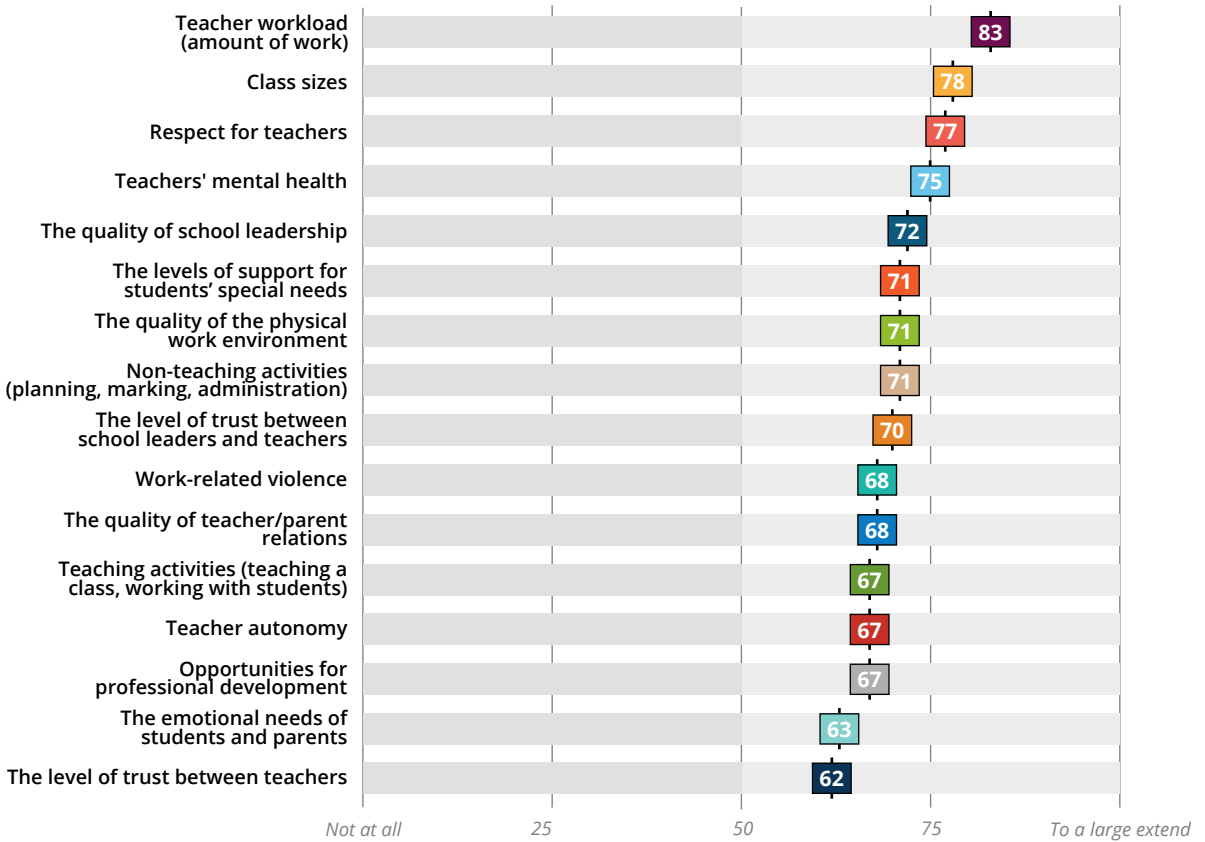
In addition to the broader conditions and status of the teaching profession, teachers' working conditions in schools are critical to their health, wellbeing, and intentions to remain in the profession (Heffernan, 2022; Rahimi & Arnold, 2024). Teachers' working conditions encompass many different aspects of their daily work, including workloads, emotional demands, relationships with students, support from colleagues, and autonomy, which are associated with teachers' attitudes towards their work and their mental and physical health and wellbeing (Riley et al., 2020). To assess teachers' work, health and wellbeing, unions were asked about the extent to which different work-related issues were a concern for teachers in their countries.

Challenges facing teachers in school: a global overview

Figure 6.1.1 presents unions' perspectives on the main work-related challenges that concern teachers in schools, highlighting a range of key aspects related to their day-to-day working conditions that teachers are concerned about. Overall, the global picture from unions indicates that **all of the issues are a concern for teachers at least to a moderate extent**, with teachers' workloads, class sizes, respect for teachers, and teacher mental health emerging as significant concerns.

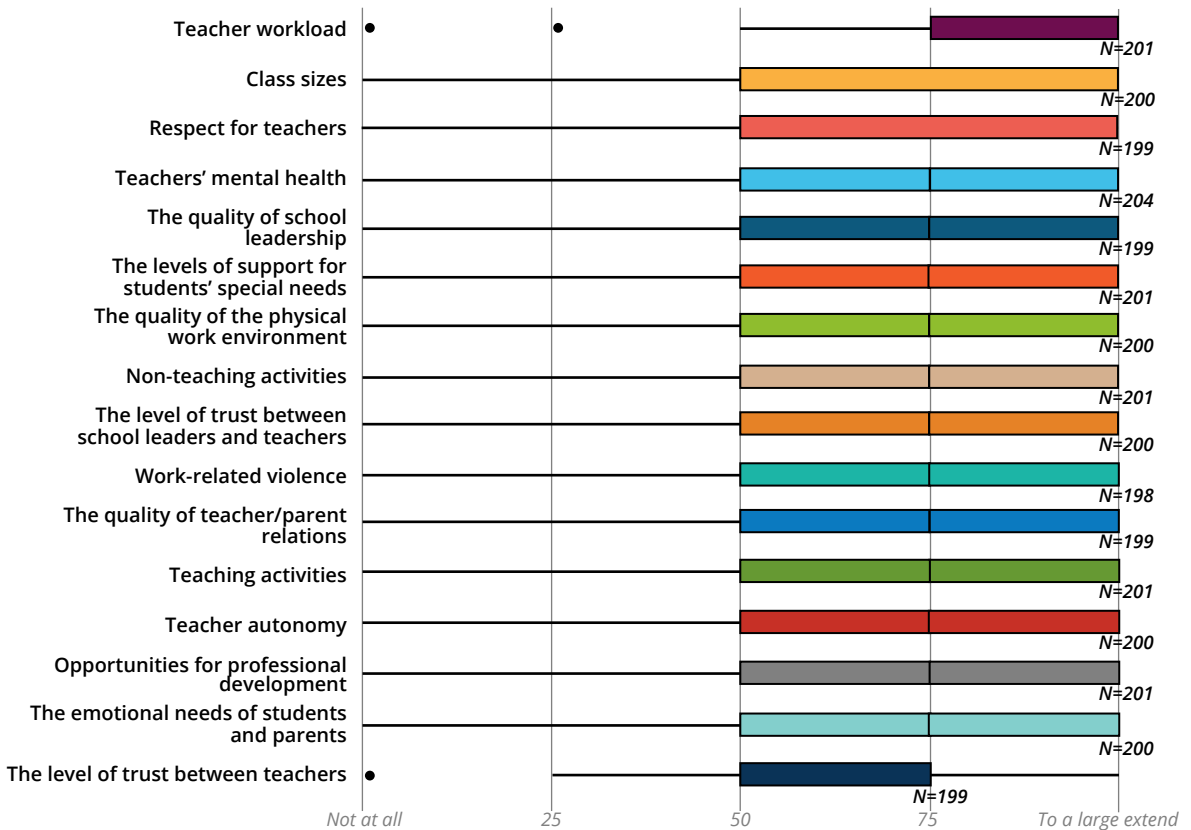


Figure 5.4.1: A global overview of unions' perspectives on access to professional learning for teachers*



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'

Figure 6.1.2: Variability of responses on the main work-related problems for teachers



Key insights:

Teacher workload (83) with a high consensus (see Figure 6.1.2) was reported as the most significant issue related to teachers working conditions indicating that this is significant problem.

Class sizes (78), **respect for teachers** (77) and **teacher mental health** (75) were reported as other important concerns globally.

Insights from the Profession

We have heavy workloads. You find yourself teaching three classes where there are around 80 students in each class, times three. That is too much. You have to mark their books... So many teachers are facing mental health-related problems. We had a staff member who tried to commit suicide twice because of the stress.

Primary school teacher, Africa

Within our current job structure and institutional organisation, we can't respond to student needs. So, we end up offering repetition as the only solution, which I think is something we strongly disagree with. I find it disastrous, and we don't have the support we need. All the policies are designed to train us more and improve the school, as if everything depended solely on the school. But nothing is seen as the government's responsibility. There is no policy saying, 'Let's change the school format. Let's change the job structure because it's not working.'

Secondary school teacher, Latin America

In the rural areas, there are so many primary schools that are running in one or two rooms, and we don't even have cleaners or security guards. We're providing the midday meal to the students, so teachers have the additional responsibility of observing that the food is being cooked properly and checking the menu or ingredients. We have many extra non-teaching duties like election duty and census duty. After the coronavirus, we also have some

medical duties, like checking up on the students daily and providing their daily health data.

Primary school teacher, Asia-Pacific

Society thinks that we work fewer hours, that we only work 18 hours a week and do nothing else, and that we get two or three months of vacation. But the problem is, they don't see the paperwork. They don't see all the emails we have to send to parents. I'm thinking about my situation. When I changed schools—at my previous school, every parent knew me, and every parent knew how I taught and that it worked. But when I changed schools, for three or four months, I had to reassure the parents that my method of working is okay and that their children will learn.

Primary school teacher, Europe

The main challenges facing teachers in schools: A regional overview

Across the different regions, major issues for teachers include high workloads, mental health issues, levels of respect for teachers and the quality of leadership. Although almost all issues were viewed as somewhat important across the regions, each region has unique challenges, such as work-related violence in Latin America and concern about the physical work environment in North America and the Caribbean (see Table 6.1.1 and Figure 6.1.3).

Key insights:

Africa

Work-related issues that unions considered most important to teachers:

- Respect for teachers (77)
- Teacher workload (75)
- Class sizes (75).

Work-related issues that unions considered to be of relatively less importance to teachers:

- The emotional needs of students and parents (57).



Asia-Pacific

Work-related issues that unions considered most important to teachers:

- Teacher workload (83)
- Teachers' mental health (78)
- Class sizes (74)
- The level of trust between school leaders and teachers (74).

Work-related issues that unions considered to be of less importance to teachers included:

- The emotional needs of students and parents (59).

Europe

Work-related issues that unions considered to be most important to teachers:

- Teacher workload (90)
- The levels of support for students' special needs (84)
- Class sizes (83)
- Non-teaching activities (82)
- Teachers' mental health (81)
- Respect for teachers (81)
- The quality of school leadership (81).

Work-related issues that unions considered to be of less importance to teachers:

- The level of trust between teachers (57).

Table 6.1.1: Unions' perspectives on the main challenges facing teachers in schools by region*,**

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Teacher workload (amount of work)	75	83	90	92	87
Teachers' mental health	64	78	81	88	82
Class sizes	75	74	83	75	80
The level of trust between school leaders and teachers	68	74	74	64	68
The quality of school leadership	67	70	81	67	76
Non-teaching activities (planning, marking, administration)	62	69	82	82	67
Respect for teachers	77	69	81	75	84
The quality of teacher/parent relations	67	68	72	68	63
The levels of support for students' special needs (e.g. inclusive education, behaviour)	62	67	84	70	82
The level of trust between teachers	63	64	57	66	64
Teacher autonomy	61	63	73	75	74
The quality of the physical work environment	72	63	70	66	88
Opportunities for professional development	64	63	71	70	70
Work-related violence	67	61	69	82	70
Teaching activities (teaching a class, working with students)	69	60	65	79	67
The emotional needs of students and parents	57	59	69	67	71

* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'

**High scores bolded

Latin America

Work-related issues that unions considered to be most important to teachers:

- Teacher workload (92)
- Teachers' mental health (88)
- Non-teaching activities (82)
- Work-related violence (82).

North America and the Caribbean

Work-related issues that unions considered to be most important to teachers:

- The quality of the physical work environment (88)
- Teacher workload (87)
- Respect for teachers (84)
- Teachers' mental health (82)
- Class size (80).

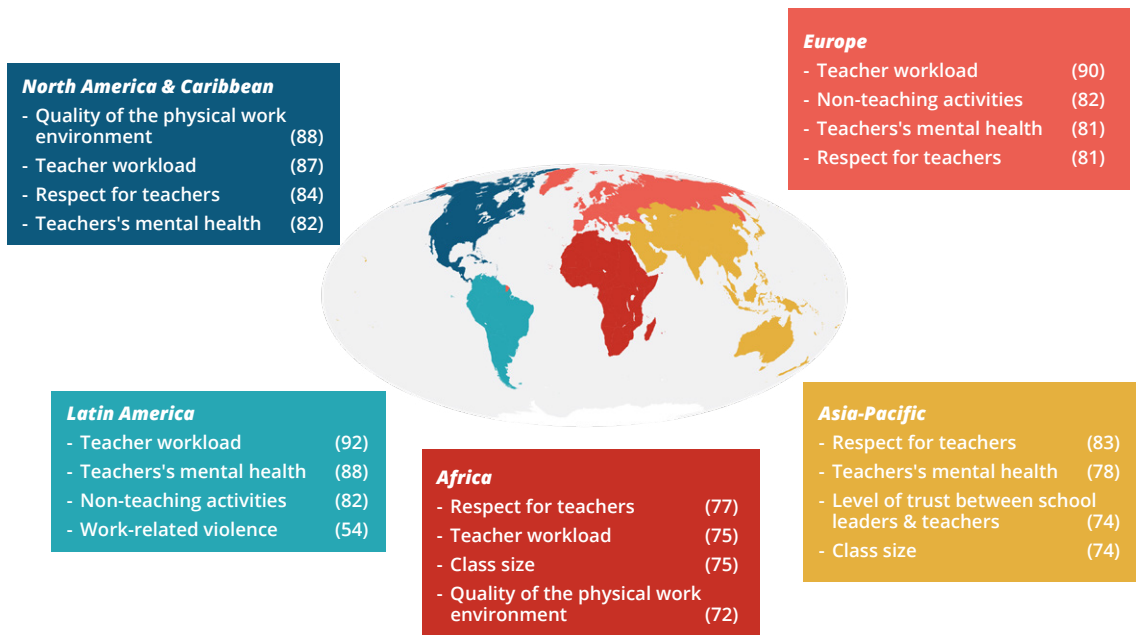
Figure Series 6.1.1 in Appendix illustrates the variations within each region.

6.2 The work, health and sustainability of the teaching profession: education authorities' responses to teachers' concerns about teaching

Due to their responsibility for workforce planning and their role as the major employers of teachers in many countries, national and sub-national governments have an important role to play in the health and sustainability of the teaching workforce. To understand and effectively respond to the major challenges and opportunities that teachers face at work, policymakers must gather information about teachers' experiences at work and work with teachers and their organisations to address the key challenges. This can support the development of systems and policies that are responsive to teachers needs and enable them to do their work.

In this section of the report, we analyse unions' perspectives on whether governments listen to teachers' concerns about their work and whether they have established effective formal agreements to address these issues.

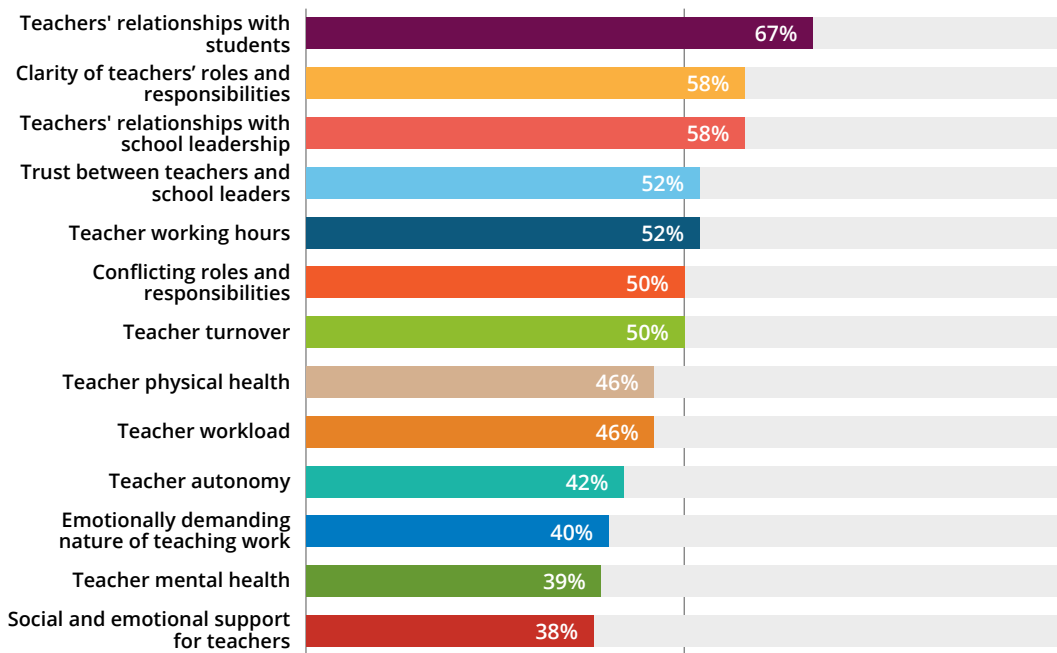
Figure 6.1.3: The 4 main challenges facing teachers in schools in each region



* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'



Figure 6.2.1: Global overview of unions reporting that governments listen to teachers on key aspects of their work (%)*



* Percentage of 'Yes' responses

Unions' views on governments' receptiveness to teachers' concerns about their work: a global overview

Unions were asked whether governments listened to teachers or their organisations about their key work-related concerns. The results demonstrate that approximately 50% of unions worldwide report that governments listen to teachers on key work-related issues (see Figure 6.2.1).

A majority of governments listen to teachers regarding:

- Teachers' relationships with students (67%).
- Teachers' roles and responsibilities (58%)
- Teachers' relationships with school leaders (58%).

Approximately half of all governments listen to teachers regarding:

- Trust between teachers and school leaders (52%)
- Teachers' working hours (52%)
- Conflicting roles and responsibilities (50%)

- Teacher turnover (50%)
- Teacher physical health (46%)
- Teacher workload (46%).

A minority of governments listen to teachers regarding:

- Teacher autonomy (42%)
- Emotionally demanding nature of teaching work (40%)
- Teacher mental health (39%)
- Social and emotional support for teachers (38%).

Unions' views on governments' receptiveness to teachers' concerns about their work: a regional overview

Table 6.2.1 highlights regional variations in governments' receptiveness to teachers about the key issues affecting their work. Across various regions, governments are more receptive to teachers regarding their relationships with students and clarity in roles and responsibilities. Conversely, governments are reported to be less receptive to teachers

Table 6.2.1: Regional overview of unions reporting that governments listen to teachers on key aspects of their work (%)*

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Teachers' relationships with students	70%	77%	53%	67%	83%
Clarity of teachers' roles and responsibilities	55%	68%	54%	63%	58%
Teachers' relationships with school leadership	63%	65%	43%	56%	68%
Trust between teachers and school leaders	57%	56%	40%	53%	59%
Teacher workload	37%	55%	50%	42%	56%
Emotionally demanding nature of teaching work	26%	55%	51%	39%	42%
Conflicting roles and responsibilities	49%	63%	48%	37%	59%
Teacher working hours	42%	68%	56%	32%	74%
Teacher autonomy	32%	54%	48%	32%	56%
Teacher physical health	36%	73%	52%	32%	42%
Teacher turnover	45%	67%	55%	32%	44%
Teacher mental health	27%	57%	50%	28%	37%
Social and emotional support for teachers	25%	56%	48%	22%	42%

* Percentage of 'Yes' responses

concerns about other key issues, including the provision of social and emotional support, the emotionally demanding nature teaching, teacher autonomy and teacher workload.

Key insights:

Africa

A majority of governments listen to teachers regarding:

- Teachers' relationships with students (70%)
- Teachers' relationships with school leadership (63%).

A minority of governments listen to teachers regarding:

- Social and emotional support for teachers (25%)
- Emotionally demanding nature of teaching work (26%)
- Teacher mental health (27%)
- Teacher autonomy (32%).

Asia-Pacific

A majority of governments listen to teachers regarding:

- Teachers' relationships with students (77%)
- Teachers' working hours (68%)
- Clarity of teachers' roles and responsibilities (68%).

Europe

Unions are divided on whether governments listen to teachers regarding most key issues:

- None above 55%.

A minority of governments listen to teachers regarding:

- Trust between teachers and school leaders (40%).

Latin America

A majority of governments listen to teachers regarding:



- Teachers' relationships with students (67%)
- Clarity of teachers' roles and responsibilities (63%).

A minority of governments listen to teachers regarding:

- Social and emotional support for teachers (22%)
- Teacher mental health (28%)
- Teacher autonomy (32%)
- Teacher physical health (32%).

North America and the Caribbean

A majority of governments listen to teachers regarding:

- Teachers' relationships with students (83%)
- Teacher working hours (74%)
- Teachers' relationships with school leadership (68%).

A minority of governments listen to teachers regarding:

- Teacher mental health (37%)
- Social and emotional support for teachers (42%)
- Emotionally demanding nature of teaching work (42%).

Based on these results, regions can be classified into three broad categories regarding government responsiveness to teachers' concerns about their work:

Asia-Pacific

- Relatively higher receptiveness to teachers' concerns about their work. The majority of unions in Asia-Pacific report that governments listen to teachers' concerns about their work.

North America and the Caribbean and Europe

- Moderate receptiveness to teachers' concerns about their work. Unions in these regions are generally split about government responsiveness to teachers' concerns.

Africa and Latin America:

- Lower Receptiveness to teachers' concerns about their work. Although governments are responsive in

some areas, only a minority of unions in these regions report that governments listen to teachers' concerns about their work.

Unions' perceptions of agreements between governments and teachers on working conditions: a global overview

To determine whether effective agreements were in place to address key issues facing teachers in schools, unions were asked about the extent to which they had useful formal agreements with governments. Unions reported that somewhat useful agreements were in place across most aspects of work, with the highest average scores reported for agreements related to workload and working hours. In four key areas, formal agreements were viewed as having more limited usefulness. Agreements regarding mental and physical health and safety were viewed as the least useful (see Figures 6.2.3 and 6.2.4).

Somewhat useful agreements

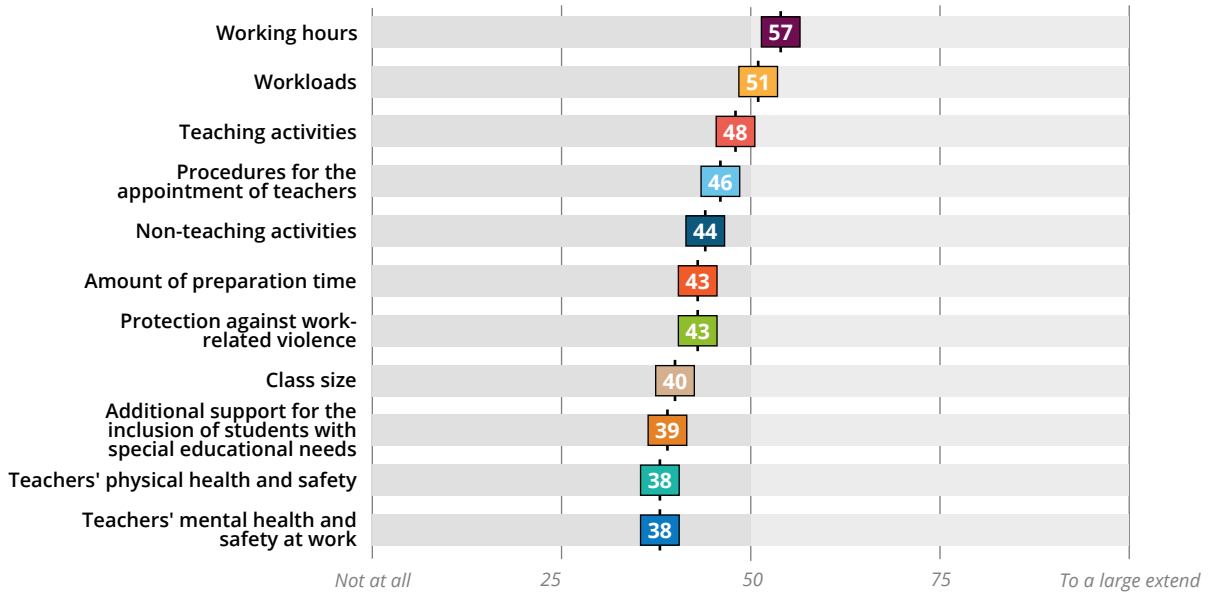
- Working hours (57)
- Workloads (51).
- Teaching activities (48)
- Procedures for the appointment of teachers (46)
- Non-teaching activities (44)
- Amount of preparation time (43)
- Protection against work-related violence (43).

Somewhat useful, tending towards not useful

- Class size (40)
- Additional support for inclusive education (39, high consensus)
- Physical health and safety (38)
- Mental health and safety (38).

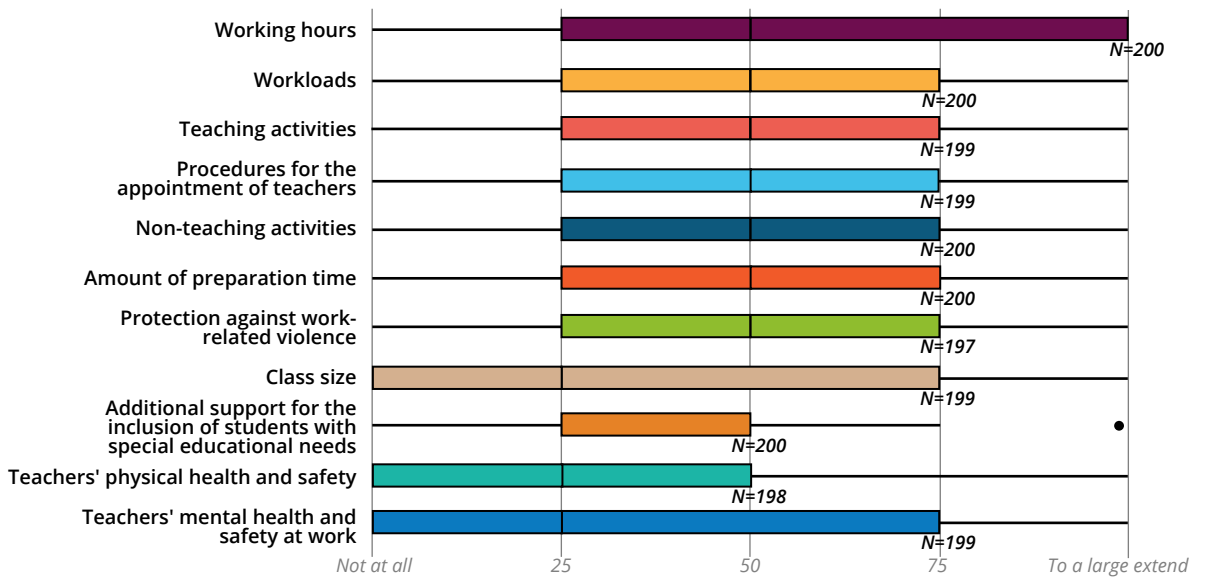
Figure 6.2.4: Variability of responses on the extent to which teachers have useful agreements with governments on key aspects of their work

Figure 6.2.3: A global overview of unions' views on the extent to which teachers have useful agreements with governments on key aspects of their work*



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'

Figure 6.2.4: Variability of responses on the extent to which teachers have useful agreements with governments on key aspects of their work





Unions' perceptions of agreements between governments and teachers on working conditions: a regional overview

Across regions, agreements on working hours are generally seen as somewhat useful, often receiving the highest scores compared to other agreements. In contrast, agreements concerning teachers' mental and physical health and safety, as well as additional support for inclusion, consistently rank among the least useful (see Table 6.2.2).

Key insights:

Africa

Somewhat useful agreements:

- Working hours (53).

Least useful agreements:

- Class size (34)
- Additional support for inclusion (34)

- Teachers' physical health and safety (30)
- Teachers' mental health and safety (25).

Asia-Pacific

Somewhat useful agreements:

- Working hours (54)
- Protection against work-related violence (50).

Least useful agreements:

- Additional support for inclusion (43).

Europe

Somewhat useful agreements:

- Working hours (60).

Least useful agreements:

- Teaching activities (42)
- Non-teaching activities (42)
- Class size (38).

Table 6.2.2: Unions' perceptions of agreements between governments and teachers on working conditions by region *,**

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Working hours	53	54	60	59	66
Workloads (the amount of work)	45	53	53	54	59
Teaching activities (e.g. working with students, teaching classes)	49	52	42	51	54
Protection against work-related violence	40	50	47	43	33
Procedures for the appointment of teachers	41	49	49	55	45
Class size	34	48	38	45	49
Teachers' physical health and safety (e.g. clean and well-maintained facilities, adequate ventilation, lighting, and temperature)	30	46	44	36	42
Teachers' mental health and safety at work (e.g. plans to reduce stressors or provide support)	25	44	45	42	51
Amount of preparation time	41	44	44	39	50
Non-teaching activities (planning, marking, working with parents, administration, meetings, data entry)	44	44	42	41	47
Additional support for the inclusion of students with special educational needs	34	43	43	39	41

* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'

** Higher scores displayed in bold

Latin America

Somewhat useful agreements:

- Working hours (59)
- Procedures for the appointment of teachers (55)
- Workloads (54)
- Teaching activities (51).

Least useful agreements:

- Teachers' mental health and safety (42)
- Non-teaching activities (41)
- Amount of preparation time (39)
- Additional support for inclusion (39)
- Teachers' physical health and safety (36).

North America and the Caribbean

Somewhat to moderately useful agreements:

- Working hours (66)
- Workloads (59)
- Teaching activities (54)
- Teachers' mental health and safety (51).

Least useful agreements:

- Teachers' physical health and safety (42)
- Additional support for inclusion (41)
- Protection against work-related violence (33).

Figure Series 6.2.2 in Appendix illustrates the variations within each region.

6.3 The work, health and sustainability of the teaching profession: health and wellbeing outcomes for teachers

The status and conditions of the teaching profession influence teachers' working conditions, their experiences of their roles and ultimately their mental health and well-being. Poor working conditions, a lack of support, and low professional status can contribute to stress among teachers. Conversely, supportive employers, school systems, and working conditions can lead to greater job satisfaction and better mental health. In this section of the report, we consider unions' views on teachers' experiences of their jobs and their mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Unions' perspectives on teacher health and wellbeing: a global overview

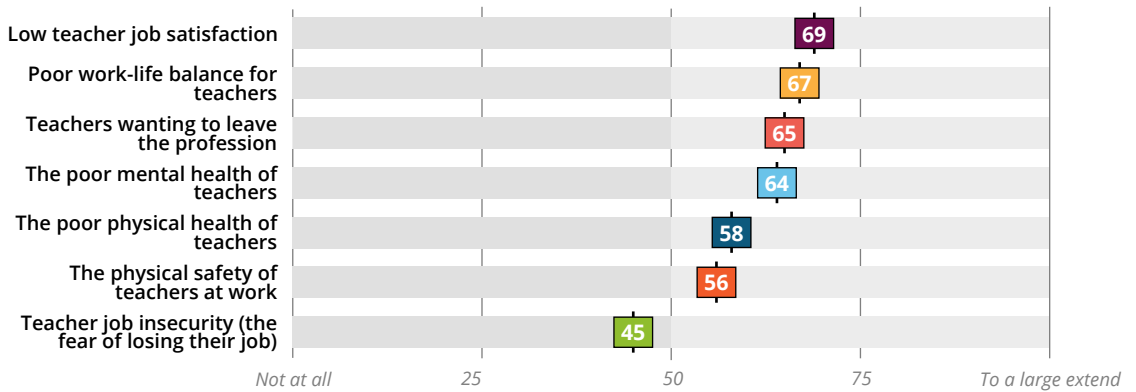
To understand unions' perspectives on teachers' experiences of their roles and teacher health and well-being, unions were asked about key teacher health and wellbeing issues. Overall, all issues related to teachers' experiences at work and their mental and physical health were viewed as somewhat to moderately important globally.

- The most prominent issues were low teacher job satisfaction (69), poor work-life balance (67), teachers wanting to leave the profession (65), and the poor mental health of teachers (64).
- The poor physical health of teachers (58), the physical safety of teachers at work (56) were viewed as somewhat significant at the global level.
- Teacher job insecurity (45) was the lowest concern at the global level but still a somewhat prominent issue.

As indicated by Figure 6.3.2, there was moderate consensus on responses related to each concern.

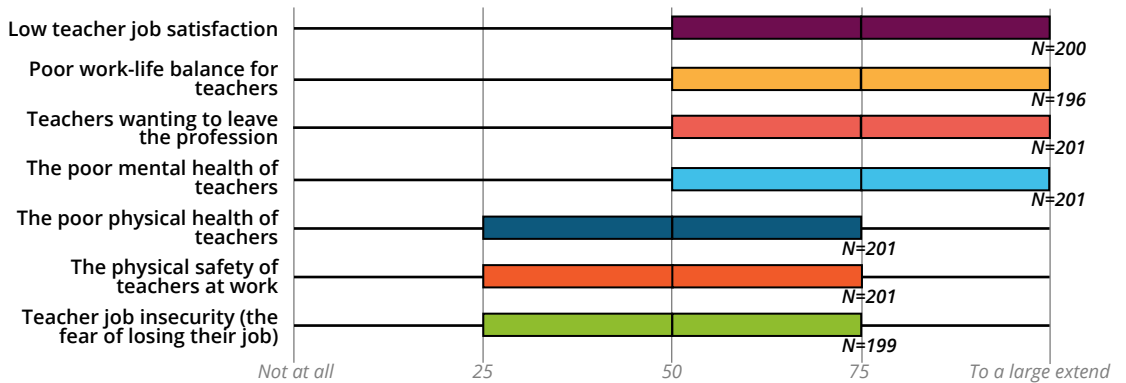


Figure 6.3.1: Global overview of unions' perspectives on the extent of teacher health and wellbeing issues*



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'

Figure 6.3.2: Variability of unions' responses regarding key concerns about teacher health and wellbeing



Insights from the profession

I've got days at work where I'm worried not only about the health of my pupils but also about their personal lives. This is very, very stressful work, and I'm thinking about it all the time. That makes this job incredibly stressful. But then, when you're walking in and you see children or even teenagers shouting in the corridor, 'Oh, hello! You look so nice today. Oh, I missed you!'—you know, you just melt. This is the best part of the job, seeing that something has happened and they are really enjoying being with you. So, yes, it's very stressful, but it gives you really, really good relationships with the kids, with the teenagers, and that counts. You can go back home happy because things went well, and you did something good for someone—especially when you

work with disabled children or with children whose parents aren't that involved in their lives.

Primary school teacher, Europe

At some point, I felt completely exhausted working as a teacher... It's not really a good thing to say about your profession that it makes you completely exhausted. I think the problem is, in some ways, the blurred boundary between your private life and your work. It's not so clear, because we take all the things from our working environment with us into our private life. All the emotions... Education is so deeply connected with our relationships with students. So, if something bad happens to them, we take it with us—into our private lives, with our emotions, with our empathy. In my case, I had a group of students where, for example, there were suicide attempts. There was such a

situation, and it really stays with you for a long time. It's not so easy to just, you know, accept that kind of situation.

Secondary school teacher, Europe

While I'm a Vice-Principal, I also teach classes within the institution. I love my job. I love it. I enjoy it. I like it a lot. Even when my daughter tells me, 'Don't go to work,' I tell her, 'I work not only to have money to live but because I love it,' so that she knows that when you do work you love, it's truly a privilege. So, I love it. But I also often say that I start the school day and I'm overwhelmed... Because it starts—I have the morning planned, as a principal, for example, and then the emergencies start... There is a constant sense of wonder, of surprise, of uncertainty. The uncertainty is very varied and feels like a whirlwind, with very high peaks where everything happens, and then there are very calm moments

Secondary school principal and teacher, Latin America

I've always found that even when I'm sick, with little voice, and tired, the moment I step into the classroom, it feels like those things disappear. It's like something else takes over. You only feel unwell after you leave. Yes, in that moment, it's the worst, but

when you're there in the classroom, you keep going. That's because there are gratifications.

Primary school teacher, Latin America

Unions' perspectives on teacher health and wellbeing: a regional overview

Across the regions, the key issues impacting teacher health and wellbeing include low job satisfaction, poor work-life balance, teachers considering leaving the profession and poor mental health. Particularly severe challenges are evident in North America and the Caribbean, where issues such as poor work-life balance, low job satisfaction, and poor mental health rank among the highest reported concerns. Table 6.3.1 highlights the regional differences in teacher health and wellbeing concerns.

Key insights:

Africa

In this region, the most pressing concerns were:

- Low teacher job satisfaction (70)
- Teachers wanting to leave the profession (67).

Table 6.3.1: Unions' perspectives on the extent of teacher health and wellbeing issues by region**

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Low teacher job satisfaction	70	70	65	67	79
The physical safety of teachers at work	58	55	45	67	70
Poor work-life balance for teachers	60	69	70	66	82
The poor mental health of teachers	61	66	62	66	76
The poor physical health of teachers	59	58	51	62	63
Teachers wanting to leave the profession	67	58	66	55	79
Teacher job insecurity (the fear of losing their job)	44	44	40	55	58

* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for 'Not at all' to 100 for 'To a large extent.'

** Higher scores displayed in bold



Asia-Pacific

In Asia-Pacific, the most pressing concerns related to teacher health and wellbeing were:

- Low teacher job satisfaction (70)
- Poor work-life balance (69)
- Poor mental health of teachers (66).

Europe

In Europe, the most pressing concerns related to teacher health and wellbeing were:

- Poor work-life balance for teachers (70)
- Teachers wanting to leave the profession (66).

Latin America

In Latin America, the most pressing concerns related to teacher health and wellbeing were:

- Low teacher job satisfaction (67)
- The physical safety of teachers at work (67)
- Poor work-life balance for teachers (66)
- The poor mental health of teachers (66).

North America and the Caribbean

In North America and the Caribbean, the most pressing concerns related to teacher health and wellbeing were:

- Poor work-life balance for teachers (82)
- Low teacher job satisfaction (79)
- Teachers wanting to leave the profession (79)
- The poor mental health of teachers (76).

Figure Series 6.3.1 in Appendix illustrates the variations within each region.

6.4 The work, health and sustainability of the teaching profession: government actions to promote teacher health and wellbeing

As the primary employers of teachers in many countries and governments bear responsibility for the health and wellbeing of teachers. Policymakers can promote teacher professionalism and foster supportive school systems and positive work environments that enable teachers to teach. Additionally, policymakers can ensure that teachers who experience serious challenges to their health and wellbeing issues have access to the relevant support services.

There are four key actions that policymakers can commit to support the development of healthy school systems and workplaces (Dollard & Bakker, 2010).

Commitment of leaders: Policymakers and school leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to stress prevention by actively supporting mental health initiatives.

Priority of health and well-being: Policymakers and school leaders prioritise the health and safety of staff above productivity objectives.

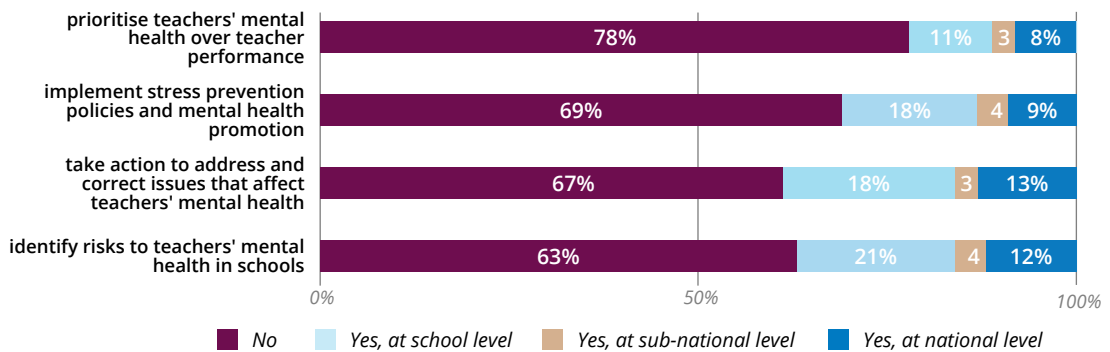
Effective communication: School systems and schools maintain reliable communication channels, ensuring all community voices are heard and valued.

Inclusive participation: Governments, in participation with teachers, school leaders, unions and health representatives, actively participate in enhancing teacher health and safety.

Unions' views on government actions to promote teacher health and wellbeing: a global overview

To assess whether governments and schools are required to promote the mental health and wellbeing of teachers, unions were asked about the

Figure 6.4.1: A global overview of unions' views on government actions to promote teacher health and wellbeing (%)



existence of specific legal mandates compelling authorities to act. Globally, there is a significant lack of government action to support teacher mental health. This widespread inaction not only impacts teachers' immediate health but also affects retention and the attractiveness of the teaching profession (see Figure 6.4.1).

A significant majority of respondents indicated that governments were not taking action to promote teacher mental health.

- **78%** of respondents indicated that education authorities **do not prioritise teacher mental health over performance** in their countries.
- **69%** indicated that education authorities **have not implemented stress prevention and mental health promotion policies**.
- **67%** of respondents noted that education authorities **do not take action to address issues that affect teacher mental health**.
- **63%** of respondents reported that education authorities **do not identify the risks to teacher mental health in schools**.

Unions' views on government actions to promote teacher health and wellbeing: a regional overview

Overall, unions indicated that education authorities across the regions largely fail to prioritise teachers' mental health over performance, are not proactive in

implementing stress prevention and mental health promotion policies and are failing to take adequate action to address the issues impacting on teacher mental health. Although action was limited at all levels, it was more prominent at the school level and very limited at the national and sub-national level across the regions (Table 6.4.1).

Prioritisation of teacher mental health over performance

- Across all regions, the majority of unions reported that education authorities do not prioritise mental health over performance. In Europe and Latin America 84% of unions indicated this was the case.
- Unions in North America and the Caribbean reported limited, but relatively better, prioritisation at the school level.

The implementation of stress prevention and mental health promotion policies

- In Africa, Latin America and North America and the Caribbean most unions reported that education authorities did not implement these policies.
- A moderate majority of unions in Asia-Pacific (58%) and a moderate minority of unions in Europe (44%) reported that such policies are implemented at some level.
- National level policies are very limited across the regions.

Identification of risks to teachers' mental health in schools

- Across the regions, a significant proportion of unions indicated

Table 6.4.1: Unions' views on government actions to promote teacher mental health, by region (%)

		Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Do authorities prioritise teachers' mental health over teacher performance?	No	80%	61%	84%	84%	74%
	Yes, at school level	11%	16%	4%	11%	26%
	Yes, at sub-national level	4%	7%	2%	0%	0%
	Yes, at national level	5%	16%	10%	5%	0%
Do authorities implement stress prevention policies and mental health promotion?	No	83%	42%	56%	84%	74%
	Yes, at school level	9%	42%	22%	5%	16%
	Yes, at sub-national level	1%	3%	8%	0%	11%
	Yes, at national level	7%	13%	14%	11%	0%
Do authorities identify risks to teachers' mental health in schools?	No	73%	50%	49%	84%	61%
	Yes, at school level	13%	28%	29%	5%	33%
	Yes, at sub-national level	1%	3%	8%	0%	6%
	Yes, at national level	12%	19%	14%	11%	0%
Do authorities take action to address and correct issues that affect teachers' mental health?	No	77%	47%	57%	84%	63%
	Yes, at school level	15%	23%	22%	5%	26%
	Yes, at sub-national level	1%	7%	4%	0%	0%
	Yes, at national level	7%	23%	18%	11%	11%

that educational authorities do not identify risks to mental health, with those in Latin America reporting the greatest levels of inaction (84%).

- Unions in Asia-Pacific, Europe, and North America and the Caribbean indicated slightly better risk identification overall. However, national action remains very limited across all regions.

Action to address and correct issues affecting teachers' mental health

- Across all regions, most unions report that education authorities do not take action to address the issues affecting teachers' mental health.
- Unions in Latin America (84%) and Africa (77%) reported the greatest levels of inaction.
- Across the regions national action was greatest in this area, yet still very limited.

6.5 The work, health and sustainability of the teaching profession: discrimination against teachers

Various forms of workplace discrimination exist that undermine the degree of safety and inclusiveness teachers experience in schools. In this section, the analysis focuses on unions' views on discrimination against teachers and whether or not there are policies to prevent the different forms of discrimination.

Unions' views on discrimination against teachers: a global overview

To understand the frequency of discrimination against teachers, unions were asked how often teachers face different forms of discrimination. Figure 6.5.1 presents data on the frequency of different forms of discrimination against teachers, as perceived by unions globally.

Globally, the following forms of discrimination against teachers were reported to occur some of the time tending slightly towards infrequently

- Political views (40, high consensus, Figure 6.5.2)
- Sexual orientation (38)
- Disability (38, high consensus)

Globally the following forms of discrimination against teachers were reported to occur infrequently

- Ethnic discrimination
- Age-based discrimination
- Gender discrimination
- Religious discrimination
- Migrant/immigrant discrimination

Unions' perceptions of discrimination against teachers: a regional overview

Discrimination against teachers varies substantially across regions, with Latin America reporting the highest levels, particularly in terms of sexual orientation, which occurs frequently (Table 6.5.1). Europe shows the lowest frequency of discrimination, with ethnicity slightly more common but still seldom experienced by teachers in this region.

Key Insights:

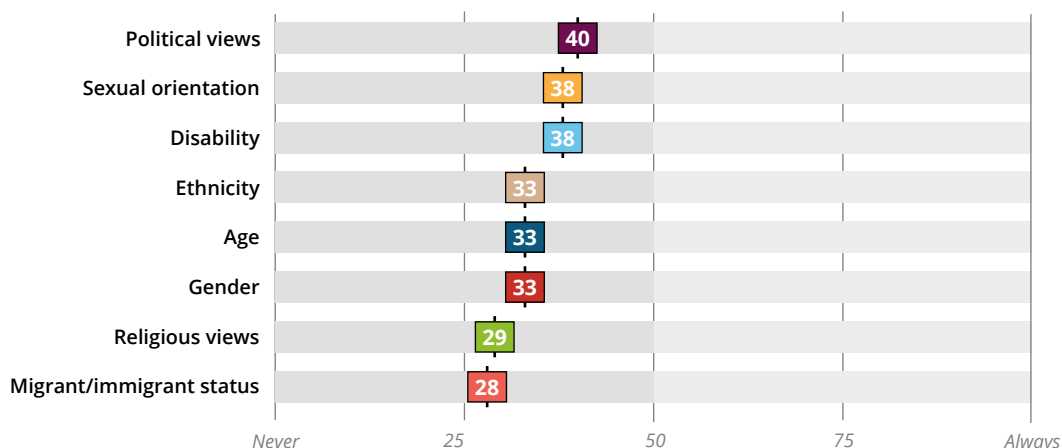
Africa

- The most common form of discrimination was based on disability (41) which occurred some of the time. Discrimination based on political views (39) was also experienced sometimes.

Asia-Pacific

- The most common form of discrimination was based on political views (40) which occurred sometimes.

Figure 6.5.1: Unions' global views on extent of discrimination*



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Never' to 100 for 'Always.'



Figure 6.5.2: Variability of unions' responses on the extent of discrimination against teachers

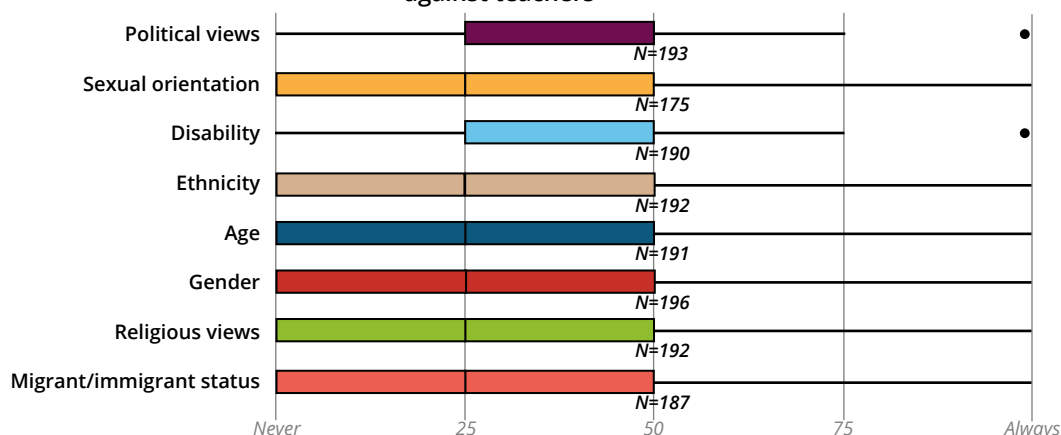


Table 6.5.1: Unions' views on extent of discrimination across regions*

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Political views	39	40	33	59	45
Sexual orientation	37	36	33	67	28
Age	30	33	30	51	36
Disability	41	32	31	54	34
Migrant/immigrant status	22	31	29	40	32
Gender	33	30	27	50	32
Religious views	26	28	30	38	33
Ethnicity	31	28	34	46	32

* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for 'Never' to 100 for 'Always.'

Europe

- All types of discrimination occurred seldomly. Discrimination based on ethnicity (34) was the most common.

Latin America

- The most common form of discrimination was based on sexual orientation (67) which occurred often. This was significantly higher than all other scores in all of the regions.
- Other forms of discrimination, such as that based on political views (59), disability (54), and gender (50) occurred some of the time.

North America and the Caribbean

- The most common form of discrimination was based on political views (45) and occurred sometimes.

Figure Series 6.5.1 in Appendix illustrates the variations within each region.

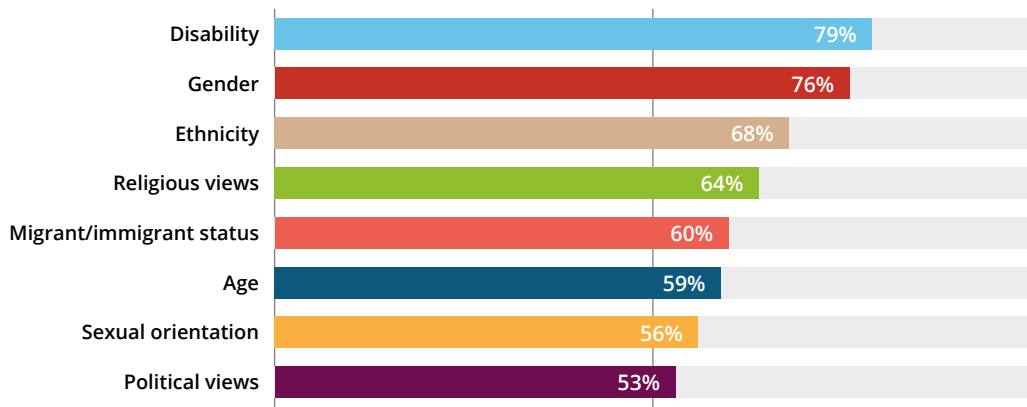
Unions' views on policies to reduce discrimination against teachers: a global overview

To assess whether adequate provisions exist to reduce discrimination, unions were asked if there were policies in place to address each type of discrimination against teachers. Figure 6.5.3 summarises the implementation of policies to reduce discrimination against teachers.

Policies to reduce discrimination based on disability and gender were reported as relatively widespread:

- 79% of respondents reported that policies aimed at reducing

Figure 6.5.3: The proportion of unions reporting that there are policies to reduce discrimination against teachers (%)*



* Percentage of 'Yes' responses

discrimination against teachers with disabilities were in place.

- 76% reported policies to reduce gender discrimination.

Policies to reduce other forms of discrimination were reported to be relatively less widespread

The proportion of unions reporting the presence of policies to reduce various forms of discrimination against teachers is as follows:

- Ethnicity (68%)
- Religion (64%)
- Migrants (60%)
- Age (59%)
- Sexual orientation (56%)
- Political views (53%).

Unions' views on policies to reduce discrimination against teachers: a regional overview

Table 6.5.2 demonstrates the views of teacher unions across various regions on whether government policies aimed at reducing discrimination against teachers are in place.

Africa

In this region, policies to reduce certain forms of discrimination are widespread:

- Disability (85%)
- Gender (82%)
- Ethnicity (71%)
- Religious views (71%).

Table 6.5.2: A regional overview of policies to reduce discrimination against teachers (%)*

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Gender	82%	87%	74%	37%	73%
Disability	85%	83%	77%	56%	81%
Ethnicity	71%	76%	68%	44%	67%
Religious views	71%	80%	63%	17%	60%
Political views	62%	65%	57%	16%	31%
Migrant/immigrant status	63%	74%	65%	22%	50%
Sexual orientation	52%	70%	69%	21%	47%
Age	66%	57%	61%	24%	64%

* Proportion of 'Yes' responses to a Yes/No question



Policies to reduce other forms of discrimination against teachers are relatively less common:

- Sexual orientation (52%).

Asia-Pacific

Policies to reduce some forms of discrimination against teachers are widespread:

- Gender (87%)
- Disability (83%)
- Religious views (80%)
- Migrant/immigrant status (74%)
- Sexual orientation (70%).

Policies to reduce certain forms of discrimination against teachers are relatively less common:

- Age (57%).

Europe

Policies to reduce some forms of discrimination against teachers are widespread:

- Disability (77%)
- Gender (74%)
- Sexual orientation (69%)

Policies to reduce certain forms of discrimination against teachers are relatively less common:

- Age (61%)
- Political views (57%).

Latin America

Overall, policies to reduce discrimination against teachers were not widespread, especially in relation to:

- Religious views (17%)
- Political views (16%).

North America and the Caribbean

Policies to reduce some forms of discrimination against teachers are widespread:

- Disability (81%)
- Gender (73%)
- Ethnicity (67%).

Policies to reduce other forms of discrimination against teachers are relatively less common:

- Sexual orientation (47%)
- Political views (31%).

6.6 Summary

This chapter demonstrates that working conditions are a significant concern for teachers. Globally, the primary work-related concern was teacher workload, followed by class sizes, respect for teachers, and teacher mental health. Despite the significance of these issues, only half of all unions reported that governments listen to teachers about their major work-related concerns, particularly those related to workload and mental health. Furthermore, the agreements between governments and teachers regarding working conditions were considered only somewhat useful. These agreements were strongest in the areas of workload and working hours but weakest in four key areas: class size, support for inclusive education, mental health and safety, and physical health and safety. The findings highlight that teachers worldwide face significant challenges related to their working conditions, yet they struggle to engage effectively with governments to address these concerns.

Overall, unions reported that teachers' evaluations of their work and their mental health were the most significant health and wellbeing issues. However, between different contexts there were significant variations, with low job satisfaction, poor work-life balance, a desire to leave teaching and poor mental health significant concerns in some locations and more moderate concerns in others. Despite these challenges, there is a notable lack of action by governments and school systems to promote teachers' mental health and well-being. A majority of unions report that governments are not prioritising teachers' mental health, failing to identify the risks teachers face, and not developing policies or taking action to reduce stress or promote mental health.

Unions also reported that teachers continue to experience various forms of discrimination at work. Globally, the most common forms of discrimination reported were based on political views, sexual orientation, and disability, occurring periodically. Other forms of

discrimination, including those based on ethnicity, age, gender, religion, and migrant/immigrant status, were reported as less frequent. These findings suggest that discrimination against teachers remains a significant issue that requires action. Unions reported that policies to reduce discrimination were widely implemented in some areas, such as disability and gender, but more limited in other areas, such as discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, migrant status, age, sexual orientation, and political views. These differences highlight the need for significant work across all areas to establish comprehensive anti-discrimination policies and create safe, inclusive work environments for all educators.



Chapter 7: Education for equity and the public Good

Education is a basic human right that can work to address poverty, tackle inequality and promote sustainable development. Despite the importance of education, social, economic and cultural barriers prevent approximately 244 million children and young people worldwide from attending school (UIS, 2022). The Right to Education (RTE) underpins various national and international conventions, agendas, and frameworks and is rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international legal instruments. RTE places significant responsibilities on governments, mandating them to guarantee free, inclusive, quality education for all citizens without discrimination. Sustainable Development Goal 4 emphasises the obligations of states to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, including requiring that all boys and girls complete 12 years of free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education (United Nations, 2024).

Under this legislation, the State is responsible for ensuring the adequate provision of education to enable all citizens to access free, equitable, and quality education. This encompasses the adequate funding of education and the creation and maintenance of learning environments that support educational development and student wellbeing. It also involves developing adequate infrastructure, such as schools and learning facilities, high-quality teacher preparation and professional development, and relevant curricula that meet the needs of all students

This chapter investigates unions' perspectives on the role of education in fostering inclusion, equity, and social justice. The analysis focuses on unions' views of whether all children, especially those from marginalised groups, are actively participating in schooling and have

access to adequate educational resources. It also considers unions' views on their role in advocating for key elements of the Right to Education and their perspectives on the provision of education in their respective countries.

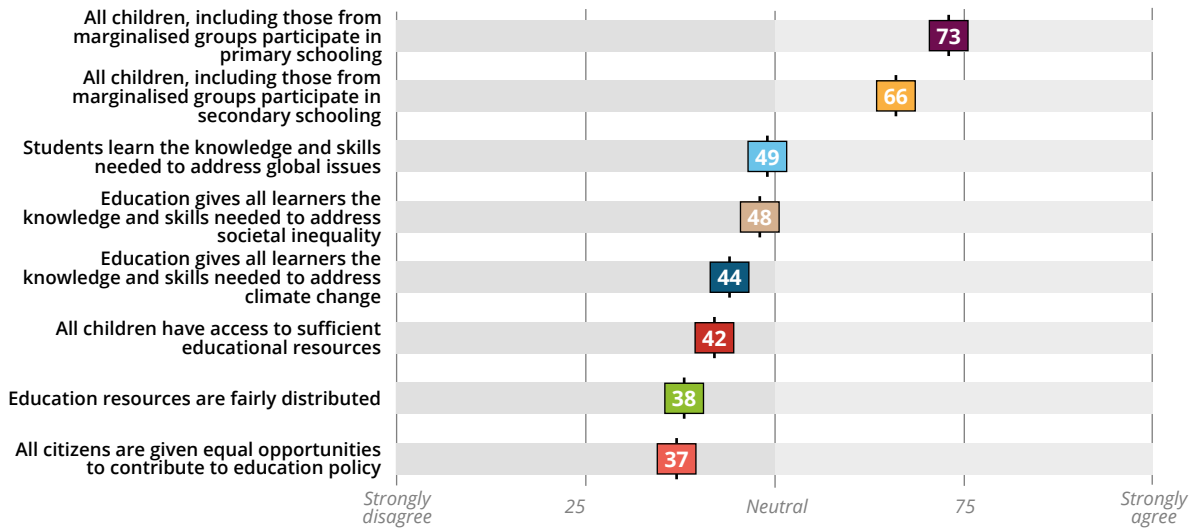
7.1 *The Right to Education*

In countries where education is fundamental right, governments are responsible for ensuring that all children have access to high quality schooling. To fulfil their obligations to their citizens, governments are required to organise school systems so that they promote equity, inclusion and social justice.

Unions' views on the Right to Education: a global overview

To understand unions' perspectives on whether governments were fulfilling their obligations under the Right to Education, they were asked whether schooling in their country provided equal access to all students, including the most marginalised. Overall, unions indicated that primary education is inclusive of all children, including those from marginalised groups. However, unions' responses to all other key elements of the Right to Education indicate that they feel there is significant work to do, especially in relation to equal access to education and the fair distribution of resources. Figure 7.1.1 offers an overview of unions assessments on the extent to which educational systems worldwide are fostering equity, inclusion, and social justice.

Figure 7.1.1: Global overview of unions' views on the fulfilment of key aspects of the Right to Education*



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Strongly disagree' to 100 for 'Strongly agree.'

Globally, there is widespread agreement that all children participate in primary school:

- Overall, unions agreed that all children, including those from marginalised groups, participated in primary school (73).

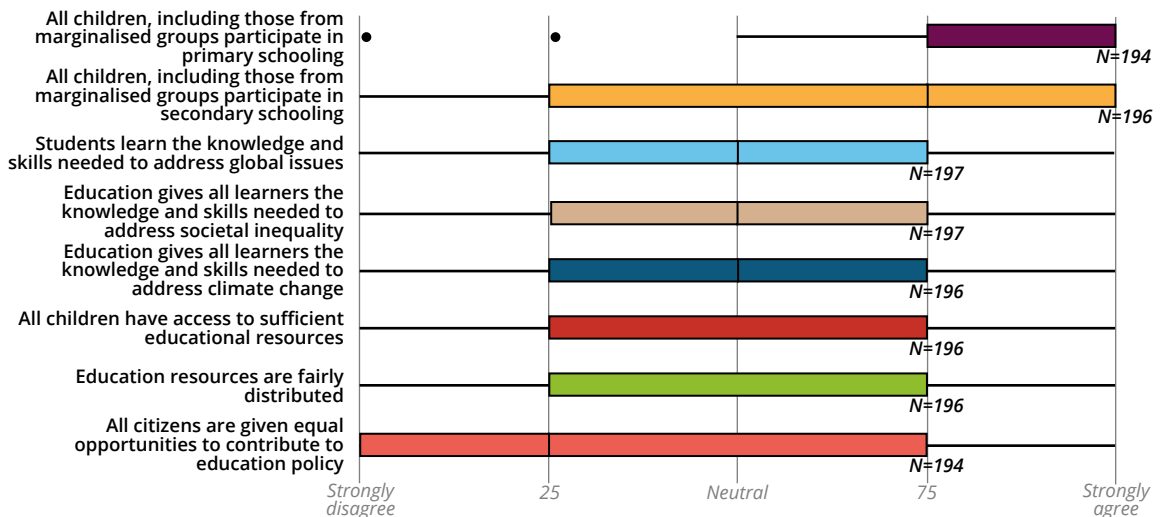
Globally, unions are less confident that all children and young people participate in secondary school:

- Overall, unions were less in agreement that all children, including those from marginalised groups, participate in secondary school (66).

Globally, unions are neutral on whether students learn key skills for better societies and have access to the necessary educational resources:

- Unions are neutral on whether students learn the knowledge and skills needed to help address: global issues (49), societal inequality (48) and climate change (44)
- Unions are neutral on whether all students have access to sufficient educational resources (42).

Figure 7.1.2: The variability of unions' responses on key elements of the Right to Education





Globally, unions reported that education resources are not fairly distributed and citizens do not have equal opportunities to contribute to education policy:

- Education resources are fairly distributed (38)
- All citizens are given equal opportunities to contribute to education policy (37).

Insights from the Profession

It seems like [private schools] are offering free education to the disadvantaged, but they charge development fees and many other fees. Very few students can stay, but they take admission, and within one or two years, parents withdraw their children from there. Government schools, on the other hand, are completely open for every kind of student—even students aged 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 who have never attended school. We bring them in and organise bridge courses for them.

*Primary school teacher,
Asia-Pacific*

We agree that schools that cater to children with disabilities, when the disability allows students to access mainstream schools, are great. At least, I think it's wonderful. The issue is that we don't have the working conditions to truly work with diversity in the classrooms, both in terms of workload and working conditions. At the moment, we don't have enough support staff. For example, a therapeutic companion or a support teacher—we end up overcrowding the classrooms. We might be in a very small classroom with 35 students, all with different challenges. It's difficult to work under these conditions.

*Secondary school teacher,
Latin America*

Unions' views on the right to education: a regional overview

Across the regions, there is a broad agreement on the inclusion of marginalised groups in primary and secondary education. However, in almost all other areas related to the Right to Education, unions' responses indicate that significant issues remain. Unions in Europe exhibit the most favourable perceptions on the fulfilment of the Right to Education, especially in terms of inclusivity, whereas those in Latin America and North America and the Caribbean express substantial concerns, especially regarding the allocation of educational resources and public involvement in educational policymaking.

Africa

Unions agree that all children participate in primary and secondary school:

- All children, including those from marginalised groups, participate in primary education (67).
- All children, including those from marginalised groups, participate in secondary education (63).

Unions have significant concerns regarding educational resources:

- Education resources are fairly distributed (35).
- All students have access to sufficient educational resources (34).

Asia-Pacific

Unions agree that all children participate in primary and secondary school:

- All children, including those from marginalised groups, participate in primary education (69).
- All children, including those from marginalised groups, participate in secondary education (63).

Unions are neutral tending towards negative regarding educational resources and citizens contributions to education policymaking:

- Education resources are fairly distributed (40).
- All citizens are given equal opportunities to contribute to education policy (41).

Europe

Unions strongly agree that all children participate in primary and secondary school:

- All children, including those from marginalised groups, participate in primary education (90).
- All children, including those from marginalised groups, participate in secondary education (78).

Unions are neutral tending towards negative regarding educational resources and citizens contributions to education policymaking:

- All citizens are given equal opportunities to contribute to education policy (39).
- Education resources are fairly distributed (46).

Latin America

Unions are neutral tending towards slightly positive regarding participation in primary school:

- All children, including those from marginalised groups, participate in primary education (63).

Unions do not feel that educational resources are fairly distributed or that all citizens contribute to education policymaking:

- Education resources are fairly distributed (32).
- All citizens are given equal opportunities to contribute to education policy (21).

North America and the Caribbean

Unions agree that all children participate in primary and secondary school

- All children, including those from marginalised groups, participate in primary education (69).
- All children, including those from marginalised groups, participate in secondary education (69).

Unions do not feel that educational resources are fairly distributed or that all citizens contribute to education policymaking:

- Education resources are fairly distributed (28).
- All students have access to sufficient educational resources (29).

Figure Series 7.1.1 in Appendix illustrates the variations within each region.

Table 7.1.1: Unions' views on the fulfilment of the Right to Education by region*

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
All children, including those from marginalised groups participate in primary schooling	67	69	90	63	69
All children, including those from marginalised groups participate in secondary schooling	63	63	78	41	69
Education gives all learners the knowledge and skills needed to address societal inequality	50	51	48	45	38
Education gives all learners the knowledge and skills needed to address climate change	42	48	51	36	36
All children have access to sufficient educational resources	34	46	56	37	29
Students learn the knowledge and skills needed to address global issues	51	44	55	41	35
All citizens are given equal opportunities to contribute to education policy	38	41	39	21	32
Education resources are fairly distributed	35	40	46	32	28

* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for zero for 'Strongly disagree' to 100 for 'Strongly agree.'



7.2 The Right to Education: union consultations with governments on key issues related to the Right to Education

Teacher unions can play an important role in promoting the Right to Education by advocating for equitable resources and policies that support all students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. To understand which aspects of the Right to Education are within the current remit of teacher unions, they were asked whether their organisation had held consultations with the government on the key issues.

Union consultations with governments regarding the Right to Education: a global overview

Globally, a majority of unions reported that they had held consultations with governments in relation to the quality of primary, secondary and early childhood education. However, unions reported that consultations in specific areas like racial equity in education and the role of education in addressing

climate change were more limited (see Figure 7.2.1).

More widespread consultation in relation to the quality of education

- Globally, 72% of unions have consulted with government on the quality of primary and secondary education.
- 65% have consulted on the quality of early childhood education.

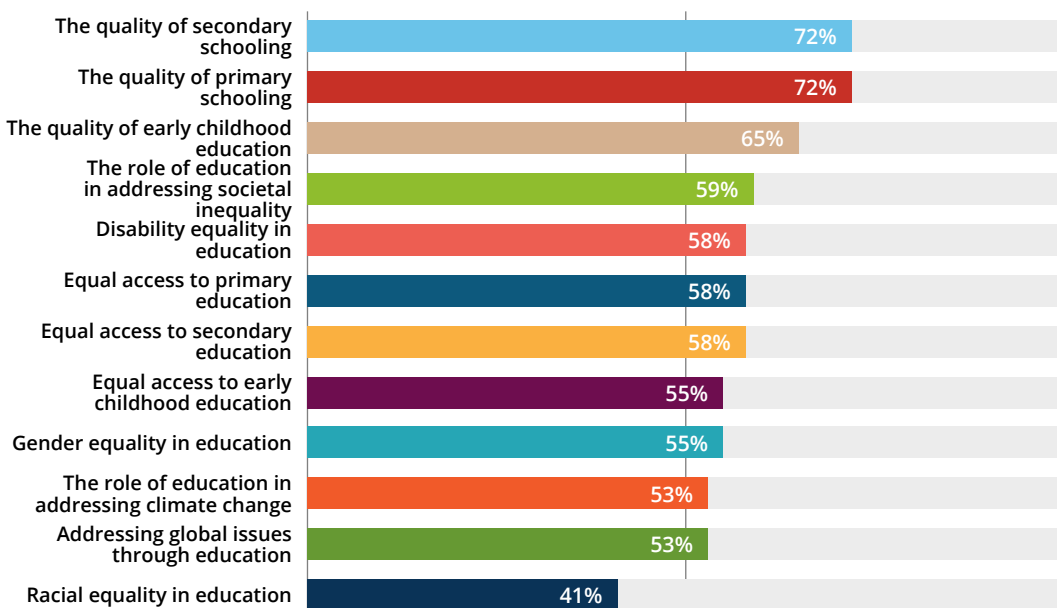
More moderate consultation with government in other key areas

- Almost 60% have consulted with government on the role of education in addressing inequality (59%), equity for those with disability in education (58%) and equal access to primary or secondary education (58%).
- Over half had consulted on equal access to early childhood (55%), gender equality in education (55%), the role of education in addressing climate change (53%) and addressing global issues through education (53%).

Limited consultation with government in one area

- Less than half had consulted on racial equity in education (41%).

Figure 7.2.1: A global overview of union participation in consultations with government on key issues related to the Right to Education (%)*



* Percentage of 'Yes' responses

Union consultations with governments regarding the Right to Education: a regional overview

The level of consultation varies widely across regions, with unions in Latin America reporting the highest levels of engagement with government across all key issues related to the Right to Education, and North America and the Caribbean also reporting substantial engagement. However, unions in all regions report lower levels of consultation on specific issues such as climate change and racial inequalities (see Table 7.2.1).

Key insights:

Africa

More widespread consultations in relation to the quality of education

- A significant majority of respondents reported that there were consultations on the quality of primary schooling (66%) and secondary schooling (68%)

More limited consultations in relation to the role of education and racial equality in education

- Less than half of respondents reported that there were consultations on the role of education in addressing climate change (47%), the role of education in addressing societal inequality (41%) and racial inequalities in education (31%).

Asia-Pacific

More widespread consultations in relation to the quality of education, access and the role of education in addressing societal inequality

- A majority of respondents reported that there were consultations with government on the quality of primary schooling (69%), secondary schooling (68%), the role of education in addressing societal inequality (67%), equal access to primary education (64%) and equal access to secondary education (59%).

Table 7.2.1: A regional overview of union participation in consultations with government on key issues related to the Right to Education (%)*

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Equal access to early childhood education	45%	52%	71%	82%	39%
Equal access to primary education	55%	64%	60%	78%	39%
Equal access to secondary education	53%	59%	58%	84%	44%
Gender equality in education	58%	52%	53%	79%	24%
Racial equality in education	31%	56%	41%	68%	29%
Disability equality in education	49%	54%	67%	83%	53%
The role of education in addressing societal inequality	41%	67%	67%	84%	75%
The role of education in addressing climate change	47%	39%	63%	68%	53%
Addressing global issues through education	51%	50%	53%	72%	40%
The quality of primary schooling	66%	69%	72%	83%	88%
The quality of secondary schooling	68%	68%	69%	84%	88%
The quality of early childhood education	57%	52%	73%	83%	77%

* Percentage of 'Yes' responses



More limited consultations regarding the role of education in addressing climate change

- A minority of respondents reported that there were consultations regarding the role of education in addressing climate change (39%).

Europe

More widespread consultations in relation to the quality of education and access to early childhood

- A significant majority of unions reported that there were consultations with the government on a number of major issues related to RTE, including the quality of early childhood education (73%), the quality of primary schooling (72%), equal access to early childhood education (71%) and the quality of secondary schooling (69%).

More limited consultations in relation to the role of education and racial equality in education

- A minority reported that there were consultations on promoting racial equality in education (31%).

Latin America

Overall, unions in this region, reported widespread consultations across all areas.

North America and the Caribbean

- A vast majority of unions reporting that they engaged in consultations regarding the quality of primary schooling (88%), secondary schooling (88%) and early childhood education (77%) as well as the role of education in addressing societal inequality (75%).
- Lower levels of consultation were reported in other areas, such as gender equality in education (24%) and racial equality in education (29%).

7.3 The Right to Education: public funding of education

Public funding is essential for ensuring the Right to Education, as it provides the resources to maintain, improve and expand educational opportunities for all children. Adequate public funding helps to ensure that all children have access to a high-quality education, reducing inequalities and enabling a fair start for students from diverse backgrounds. To understand unions' perspectives on the public funding of education in their country, we asked whether they felt public expenditure in key areas was sufficient and whether funding for education had changed over recent years.

Unions' views on public funding for education: a global overview

The results demonstrate that unions do not feel that government funding is sufficient across the levels and key areas of education (see Figures 7.3.1 and 7.3.2). The low scores highlight unions' concerns about the inadequacy of government expenditure and the

need for increased investment in the vast majority of countries.

- Globally, teacher unions, with a high degree of consensus, disagree that government funding is sufficient for primary schooling, secondary schooling, teacher compensation and students with additional needs.

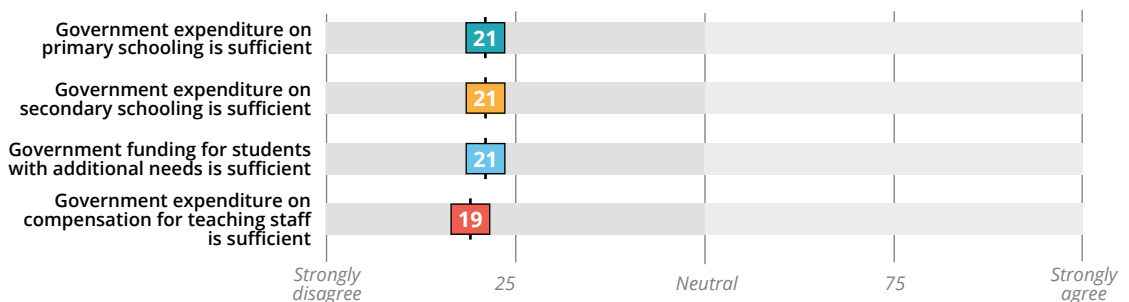
Unions' views on public funding for education: a regional overview

Insight: The state invests less in education. Private schools are for the rich. Poor children study in government schools.

Union representative, Asia-Pacific

Across the major regions, government funding for education is widely viewed as inadequate, with members from all regions indicating that funding for primary and secondary education, students with additional needs, and teacher compensation is inadequate. Views regarding funding for education were most negative in Latin America. These results highlight that unions

Figure 7.3.1: Unions' perspectives on the sufficiency of government funding for education: a global overview*



* The scale ranges from zero for 'Strongly disagree' to 100 for 'Strongly agree.'

Figure 7.3.2: Variability of unions' responses on the sufficiency of government funding for education

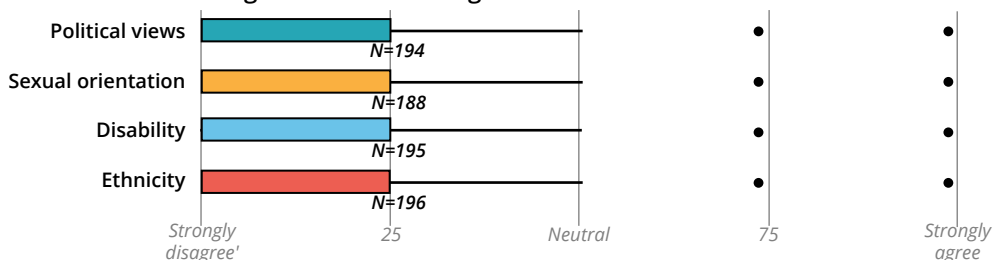



Table 7.3.1: Unions' views on sufficiency of government funding in education across regions*

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Government expenditure on primary schooling is sufficient	17	29	23	13	26
Government expenditure on secondary schooling is sufficient	17	31	22	11	26
Government funding for students with additional needs is sufficient	17	26	22	13	15
Government expenditure on compensation for teaching staff is sufficient	20	29	23	7	15

* Mean scores for the scale ranging from zero for zero for 'Strongly disagree' to 100 for 'Strongly agree.'

across the major regions view enhanced funding for education as a critical need (see Table 7.3.1).

Africa

- Overall, unions in this region indicated that funding for all areas of education was inadequate.

Asia-Pacific

- Overall, unions in this region disagreed that funding for education was adequate. However, the overall scores were higher than all other regions indicating slightly less negative sentiment overall.

Europe

- Overall, unions in this region disagreed that funding was adequate across all key areas.

Latin America

- Overall, unions in this region expressed the most negative sentiment, indicating that funding for education was highly insufficient across all key areas.

North America and the Caribbean

- Overall, unions in this region disagreed that funding was adequate across the key areas, with particularly negative sentiment regarding funding for students with additional needs and teacher compensation.

Figure Series 7.3.1 in Appendix illustrates the variations within each region.

Unions' views on changes in funding for schools: a global overview

Unions vary in their perceptions of whether there have been changes to the level of public funding for different types of schooling. Globally, they expressed mixed views on whether funding had increased, decreased or stayed the same. Figure 7.3.3 provides insights into how the funding landscape for various types of education has shifted over the last five years.

Public funding for public schools

- The largest proportion of unions (39%) reported a decrease in funding for public schools, while substantial proportions reported increases (31%) or no change (30%).

Public funding for primary schools

- Unions expressed mixed views on changes to primary school funding. The largest proportion of respondents indicated that there had been reductions (37%), while 33% reported increases, and 31% reported stability in funding.

Public funding for non-state schools

- Globally, a significant proportion of unions reported that funding for non-state schools has remained the same (45%). However, a substantial proportion (32%) reported an increase in funding for non-state schools.

Indirect support for private schools (e.g., Tax Deductions)

- Almost half of all unions (44%) viewed indirect financial support for private schooling through tax deductions as remaining the same. However, a notable proportion (35%) reported an increase in this type of funding.

Public funding for private tuition

- Public funding for private tuition was reported to be predominantly unchanged (59%), with more reports of decreases (23%) than increases (18%).

Insights from the Profession

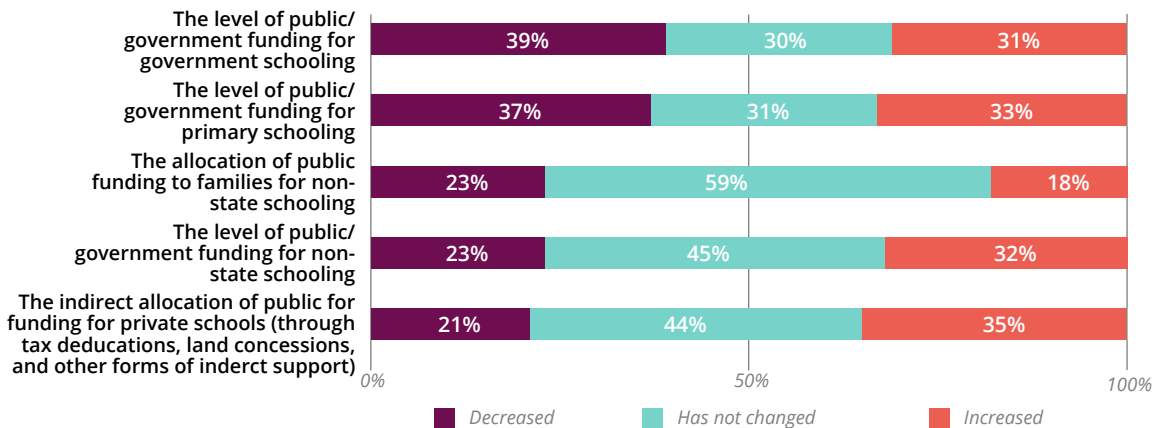
We, as part of the unions, always feel like we have to... constantly fight against privatisation because there is a common belief that private schools are often better than public schools. So, organisations and NGOs come in to interfere within the state-run education system. It's a constant battle.

Secondary school teacher, Latin America

The perception of the public is that government schools are not providing a good education, and that the teachers in government schools are not concerned about teaching their students. So, everyone who has a little money wants to send their children to private schools.

Primary school teacher, Asia-Pacific

Figure 7.3.3: Unions' views on changes to funding for schooling over the last five years (%)



7.4 The Right to Education: the provision of schooling

Insight: There should be sufficient public schools fully funded with taxpayers' money to enable all children to have access to free quality education irrespective of their status/background. Notwithstanding, the involvement of some private schools for citizens who may choose to send their kids. This should be fully privately funded.

Union representative, Africa

Governments are responsible for the provision of schooling. However, growing privatisation and the introduction of public private partnerships have led to more mixed models of provision in many countries. To understand unions' perspectives on the provision of schooling, they were asked who should be responsible for the provision of schooling in their country.

Unions' perspectives on responsibility for school provision: a global overview

Overall, a significant majority of respondents believe that education should be exclusively provided by the public sector or primarily provided by the public sector, with only limited private sector involvement. While

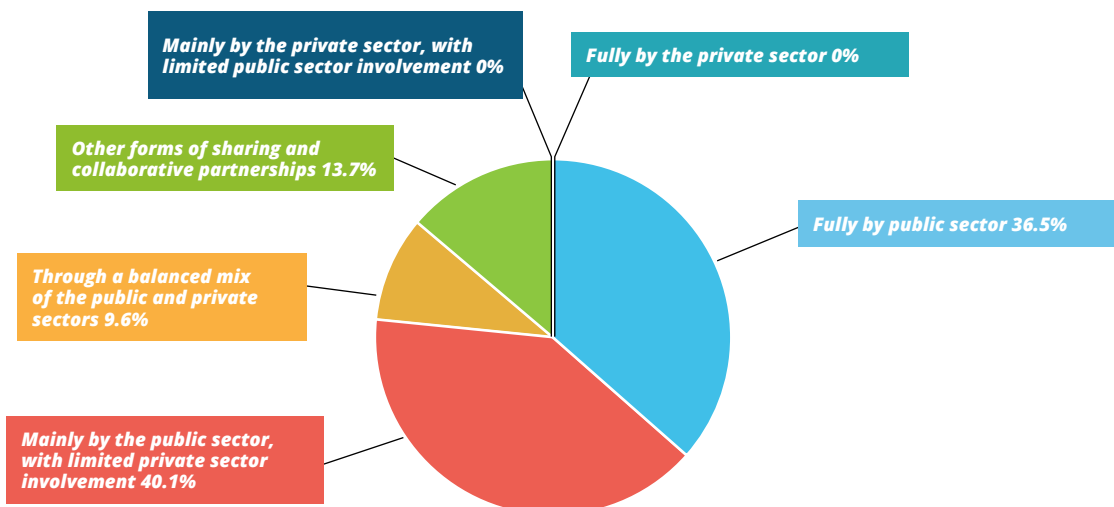
there was no support for an education system that is predominantly or entirely managed by the private sector, a small proportion of unions advocated for a balanced approach between private and public provision and some supported collaborative partnerships between state and non-state actors (see Figure 7.4.1).

- 76.6% of unions believe that education should either be fully provided by the public sector (36.5%) or predominantly managed by the public sector with limited private sector involvement (40.1%).
- 9.6% reported that there should be a balance between private and public provision.
- 13.7% supported exploring other forms of collaborative partnership.
- No respondents favoured provision that was solely or majorly provided by the private sector.

Unions' perspectives on responsibility for school provision: a regional overview

In most regions, unions expressed a preference for an education that was entirely or predominantly the responsibility of the government. However, in Latin America, a significant proportion of unions expressed a preference for other forms of sharing and collaborative partnerships

Figure 7.4.1: Unions' views on responsibility for school provision: a global overview (%)



between state and non-state actors. Table 7.4.1 succinctly outlines union perspectives across various regions on how education should be provided.

Key insights:

Africa

- 75% of respondents expressed a preference for mainly or solely public provision of schooling.
- 17% expressed a preference for other forms of sharing and collaborative partnerships between state and non-state actors.

Asia-Pacific

- 81% of unions indicated that schooling should be solely or mainly provided by the public sector.
- 16% indicated that a balance of public and private sector provision was preferable.

Europe

- 82% of unions indicated that schooling should be solely or primarily public.
- There was limited interest in mixed models (9%) and other forms of collaboration (9%).

Latin America

- Although 53% indicated that education should be solely or primarily public, a substantial proportion of respondents (42%) expressed a preference

for other forms of sharing and collaborative partnerships.

North America and the Caribbean

- 62% of respondents expressed support for majorly public models with limited private involvement while 28% of respondents supported fully public models.
- 11% indicated a preference for a balance of public and private provision.

Unions' views on changes to school provision: a global overview

Unions were asked about changes to the provision of education in their country. Overall, unions reported mixed views on changes in the provision of public schooling and public private partnerships. However, a substantial proportion of respondents indicated that private and alternative forms of provision had expanded in recent years. Figure 7.4.2 provides insights into their perspectives on how various types of schooling have changed over the last five years.

Diverging views on changes to the provision public schooling

Public Schooling

- 32% of unions reported a decrease in the provision of public schooling, 29% witnessed an increase, and 39% reported no change.

Table 7.4.1: Unions' views on the provision of education: a regional overview (%)

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
Fully by public sector	32%	45%	43%	32%	28%
Mainly by the public sector, with limited private sector involvement	43%	36%	39%	21%	61%
Through a balanced mix of the public and private sectors	8%	16%	9%	5%	11%
Other forms of sharing and collaborative partnerships	17%	3%	9%	42%	0%
Mainly by the private sector, with limited public sector involvement	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Fully by the private sector	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%



Diverging views but a significant increase in many other forms of provision

Public-private partnerships for schools

- The majority of respondents reported no change in partnerships between the public and private sector (51%). However, a substantial proportion (37%) reported an increase in this form of provision.

Non-state schools (e.g., religious or philanthropic schools)

- Although 46% of unions note no change in provision, 43% report an increase in the provision of non-state schools.

Low-fee private schooling

- Overall, unions' responses indicate varied changes in provision for this sector, but substantial growth globally, with 43% indicating an increase, 23% reporting a decrease, and 34% observing no change.

Private schooling

- The majority of respondents (63%) report an increase in this type of provision, far exceeding the 11% who observed a decrease.

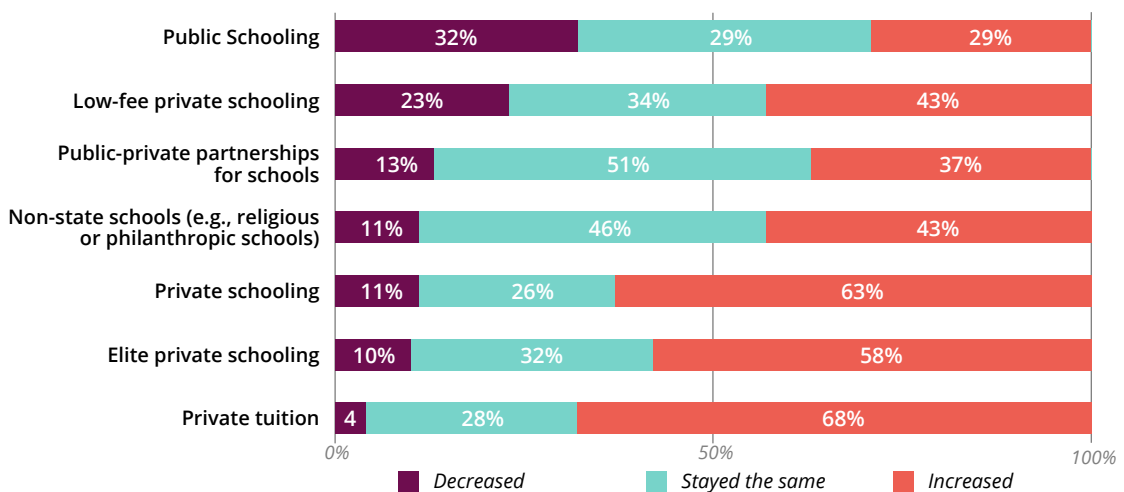
Elite private schooling

- Unions reported a significant expansion in this form of provision, with 58% reporting an increase and just 10% observing a decrease.

Private tuition

- The highest increase in provision was observed in this category, with 68% of unions reporting an increase in provision, indicating that there has been a significant expansion of private tuition, globally.

Figure 7.4.2: Unions' views on changes in the provision of each type of schooling (%)



7.5 The regulation of non-state providers of schooling

In the context of increasing privatisation and commercialisation in education, governments have a crucial role in ensuring the provision of public education as a fundamental right. This responsibility involves safeguarding against the risks that privatisation might pose to the quality and accessibility of education. To fulfill their obligations and ensure that all citizens have access to free, high-quality education, states must enforce the transparency, accountability, and inclusivity of education providers.

Unions' perspectives on the promotion of the right to education

Overall, teacher unions reported that legal frameworks and government oversight concerning the Right to Education are in place, with a significant majority affirming that laws are enforced to uphold the right (Figure 7.5.1). However, there are mixed views regarding the effectiveness of regulation targeted at non-state actors in education and the government's role in ensuring all education institutions help to promote equal access to school.

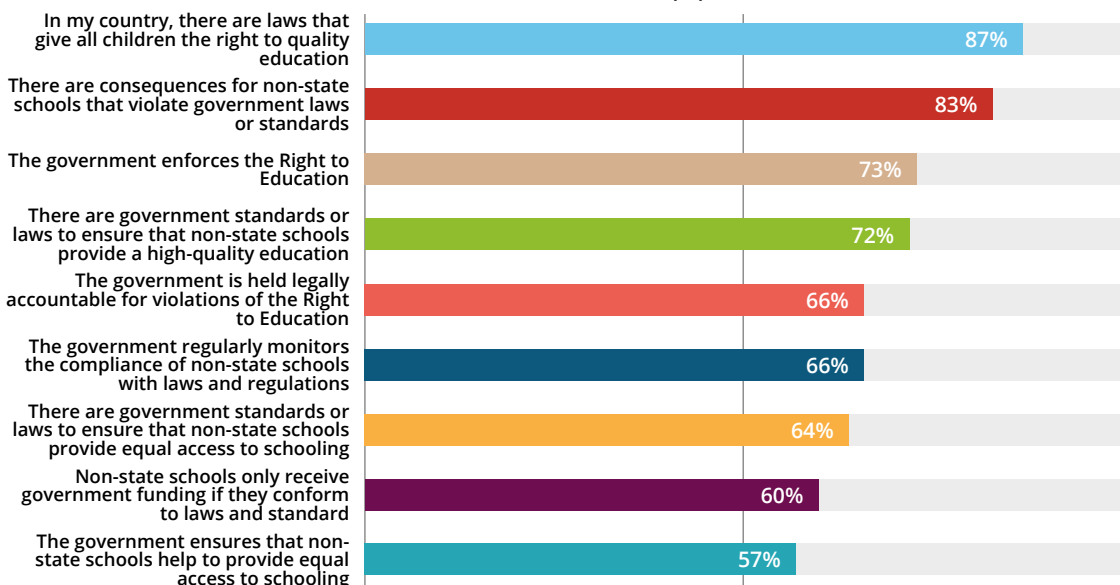
Globally, frameworks and oversight for the Right to Education are widespread, with significant exceptions

- A significant majority of respondents indicated that all children have the Right to Education (87%).
- A majority of unions indicated that the government enforces the Right to Education (73%); however, a significant proportion indicated this right was not enforced (27%).
- Most respondents indicated that the government is legally accountable for violations of the Right to Education (66%), although a substantial proportion of respondents (34%) reported that this was not the case.

Globally, government oversight of non-state actors is widespread, with significant exceptions

- A significant majority of unions (83%) indicated that there are consequences for non-state actors who violate government laws or standards.
- A majority of unions (72%) indicated that laws exist to ensure non-state actors provide a high-quality education.

Figure 7.5.1: A global overview of teacher unions' views on the regulation of non-state schools (%) *



* Percentage of 'Yes' responses



Globally, while many governments regulate non-state schools, the practice is not as widespread

- Most respondents (64%) reported that there are laws or standards ensuring that non-state schools provide equal access to schooling, although a substantial proportion (36%) indicated this is not the case.
- A majority of respondents reported that governments monitor the compliance of non-state schools (66%) while a substantial proportion (34%) indicated this was not the case.
- A slight majority (60%) indicated that non-state schools only receive government funding if they comply with laws and standards.
- Unions were more split on whether the government ensures non-state schools help to provide equal access to schooling, with 57% affirming this was the case.

Unions' perspectives on the promotion of the Right to Education: a regional overview

Across the regions, unions reported that there was strong recognition of the right to quality education. However, it was reported that there was considerable variation in the enforcement of the RTE and accountability for non-state schools. Table 7.5.1 demonstrates that there are considerable regional differences in how governments hold themselves and non-state actors accountable and enforce regulations to ensure equal access.

Africa

- The vast majority of respondents (88%) reported that laws were in place to ensure the right to a quality education and that non-state schools violating these laws faced consequences.
- Unions expressed more mixed views on whether the government was legally accountable for the Right to Education (59%) and on whether governments restrict funding when

non-state actors do not conform to laws and standard (50%).

Asia-Pacific

- The vast majority of respondents (90%) reported that there were laws giving all children the right to a quality education.
- It was very widely reported that laws against non-state schools were enforced (89%).
- Unions expressed mixed views on whether laws ensured that non-state schools provided equal access to schooling (56%), whether governments ensured that non-state schools contributed to providing equal access to schooling (56%), and whether governments restricted funding when non-state actors did not comply with laws and standards (42%).

Europe

- The vast majority of unions reported that the government enforced education rights (90%) and that education is a right (88%).
- Unions expressed mixed views on whether the government ensured that non-state schools helped to provide equal access to schooling (53%) or that there were laws to enforce this (58%).

Latin America

- The majority of unions reported that education is a right (78%). Although the figure was notably lower than in other regions.
- Overall, respondents indicated that the legal and regulatory environment and enforcement of education as a right were weaker than in other regions, with respondents split on most of the key elements.

North America and the Caribbean

- Widespread agreement that education is a right (89%).
- Moderate or mixed responses across most key elements regarding the regulation of the Right to Education and non-state actors in education.

Table 7.5.1: A regional overview of unions' views on the regulation of non-state schools*

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America & Caribbean
In my country, there are laws that give all children the right to quality education	88%	90%	88%	79%	89%
There are consequences for non-state schools that violate government laws or standards	88%	89%	87%	56%	55%
There are government standards or laws to ensure that non-state schools provide a high-quality education	76%	73%	71%	58%	67%
The government enforces the Right to Education	68%	72%	90%	53%	67%
There are government standards or laws to ensure that non-state schools provide equal access to schooling	69%	69%	58%	58%	62%
The government regularly monitors the compliance of non-state schools with laws and regulations	65%	69%	79%	37%	64%
The government is held legally accountable for violations of the Right to Education	59%	66%	80%	67%	60%
The government ensures that non-state schools help to provide equal access to schooling	64%	56%	53%	53%	40%
Non-state schools only receive government funding if they conform to laws and standard	50%	42%	84%	58%	64%

* Percentage of 'Yes' responses



7.6 Summary

This chapter highlights that, globally, teachers work within education systems in which there are significant gaps in the fulfilment of the Right to Education. Most unions indicated that primary education is inclusive of all children, including those from marginalised groups and they also reported that secondary schools were inclusive, despite being more divided in their views. Unions were neutral on whether students learn the key skills required for better societies and whether they had access to the necessary educational resources. They did not consider education resources to be fairly distributed, nor did they feel that all citizens were able to contribute equally to education policy. These results demonstrate that significant challenges remain in achieving more equitable education systems globally.

The chapter also provides insights into unions' consultations with governments regarding the Right to Education. Globally, most unions have engaged in consultations on the quality of primary, secondary, and early childhood education. However, consultations on many other issues have been more limited. While there is widespread consultation on education quality, there is only moderate engagement on issues such as inequality, disability equity, and gender equality. The promotion of racial equality remains the area with the least consultation between unions and governments. In the context of broader societal inequities and systemic inequalities in education systems, there is a clear need for greater engagement with issues of racism and discrimination within schools and educational policies.

In terms of funding for education, the results demonstrate that unions do not believe current levels of funding are sufficient to meet the needs of primary and secondary schooling, teacher compensation, or students with additional needs. Furthermore, unions indicated that in many contexts there had been important changes in public funding for education over the last five years. Approximately 40% of unions reported a decrease in funding for public schools and many reported an increase in direct and indirect funding for non-state schools.

This indicates that there is a growing shift in education funding from public to non-state schools in many countries, which raises concerns about the sufficiency of resources for public education and free access to a high quality education for all.

The majority of unions agree that frameworks and oversight for the Right to Education are in place, although concerns remain regarding the enforcement of RTE and legal accountability for violations of the Right. While government oversight of non-state actors in education is generally reported to be widespread, a significant proportion of unions noted the absence of laws to ensure non-state actors provide a high-quality education. The regulation of non-state schools was also identified as an issue with unions reporting more mixed views on government efforts to monitor compliance, hold private schools to account and ensure non-state schools provide equal access to schooling. This indicates that while there are established frameworks for the Right to Education, there are significant gaps in enforcement and legal accountability, particularly in regulating non-state actors.





Chapter 8: Conclusion and Recommendations

The Global Status of Teachers 2024 report presents a comprehensive overview of unions' views on the key issues facing the profession globally and regionally. The report highlights the need for urgent, coordinated action and systemic change to ensure that the teaching profession remains attractive, sustainable and capable of meeting the needs of future generations. Teacher shortages, declining professional status, and limited influence over policy-making are among the most pressing concerns.

Teacher shortages

Unions report that teacher shortages are a significant global issue, particularly in secondary and special education. Subject-specific shortages, especially in special education, IT, math, and science, were also reported as prevalent. Several factors were viewed as contributing significantly to these shortages, including low teacher salaries, excessive working hours, low professional status, and poor career progression. There were important regional variations in the reported extent of teacher shortages, with unions in some regions, such as North America and the Caribbean as well as Africa, reporting severe shortages in areas like special education.

Recommendation 1: Take action to address the root causes of teacher shortages

a) Review teacher salaries and compensation: Governments should ensure that teacher salaries are attractive, competitive commensurate with the significance of the job. Attractive salaries are crucial for drawing individuals to the profession and for retaining current educators.

b) Develop strategies to attract and retain teachers: Authorities should implement strategies to promote teaching as a high-status profession. This should involve ensuring that teaching is recognised as such. It will require much more than advertising campaigns, including careful consideration of the current and desired position of teachers within society. Engaging directly with teachers to understand their needs and developing policies that address these concerns could promote retention and satisfaction within the profession.

c) Address critical shortages: Given the reported prevalence of subject-specific shortages, particularly in critical fields such as special education and STEM subjects, targeted recruitment initiatives are necessary in some areas.

Teachers' rights and social dialogue

Unions report that teachers face significant legal and practical obstacles that restrict their fundamental rights, including freedom of expression and the right to organize. Additionally, mechanisms for social dialogue between teachers and governments are often inadequate, limiting opportunities for teachers as a professional group to voice their opinions on issues affecting them. Globally, teachers' influence over decisions impacting their work is reported to be limited at the school level and even weaker at higher levels of the education system.

Recommendation 2: Provide legal protections and establish mechanisms for social dialogue to actively engage with teachers' perspectives

a) Provide legal protections:

Governments should ensure legal frameworks protect teachers' rights, including freedom of expression and collective bargaining.

b) Improve social dialogue:

Authorities should work with teachers and their representatives to establish robust and inclusive mechanisms for social dialogue, ensuring teachers have a voice in decisions at all levels of education.

c) Empower teachers: Governments should work to increase teachers' influence in policy-making processes, particularly at district, state, and national levels, to ensure their concerns are adequately addressed.

The professional status of teachers

Despite being recognised for its critical role in society, the teaching profession is undervalued and lacks the same level of respect as other high-status professions. Media portrayals of teachers were reported to be mixed, with some unions perceiving the media to be critical of the profession and others viewing the media in a more positive light. The conditions of employment and professional learning opportunities were also reported to have mixed impacts on the profession's status. The findings highlight significant regional and sub-regional variations in the professional status of teachers, as well as the factors impacting teacher status.

Recommendation 3: Develop systems, policies, and public discourses that promote teaching as a profession

a) Promote teacher status: Foster better public, political and media discourse and ensure that policies are designed to recognise and respect teachers as professionals.

b) Design professional learning to enhance teacher professionalism:

Develop and implement professional learning systems that acknowledge and promote teacher expertise, recognise teaching as complex intellectual work, and provide opportunities for teachers to engage in ongoing, high-quality learning that is relevant to their practice.

Working conditions and teacher well-being

Unions report that teachers' working conditions, including excessive workloads, large class sizes, a lack of respect, and mental health challenges, are major concerns globally. According to unions, these issues are often overlooked by governments, who, in most cases, fail to listen to or acknowledge teachers' concerns, particularly in relation to workload and mental health. While unions indicated that discrimination against teachers is not frequently reported, they identified it as a significant issue that requires urgent action. Unions also noted important regional differences in how attentive and responsive governments were to teachers' concerns, with some governments being more receptive than others.

Recommendation 4: Develop healthy, sustainable school systems and teaching roles

a) Address workload: Employers and authorities should work with teachers and their representative to identify the causes of excessive workloads in and develop strategies to reduce the burden on teachers. This should involve including teachers in the design and organisation of their work, allowing them to better focus on their core teaching activities.

b) Promote healthy school systems: Review how actors at different levels of the education system contribute to the development of healthy school systems and workplaces. Ensure that education and teacher policies are developed to provide teachers with supportive conditions that enable them to perform their work effectively and promote their health and well-being.



- c) Combat discrimination:** Address discrimination and ensure that all teachers work in safe, respectful environments.

The Right to Education

Unions reported significant shortcomings in the fulfilment of the Right to Education, particularly in resource distribution. The levels of public funding for education were reported to be insufficient, and there was widespread concern over the regulation and accountability of non-state actors in education. Unions reported that their consultation with governments on key education issues, such as inequality and disability equity, were limited. According to unions, there were substantial regional variations in the adequacy of public funding and the regulation of non-state education providers. While unions in some regions reported adequate government support for education, others stressed the need for increased governmental engagement and oversight.

Recommendations 5: Promote equity through fair resource allocation and government leadership

- a) Ensure fair resource distribution:** Fair distribution of educational resources is fundamental to ensuring all students have access to quality education.
- b) Enhance consultations:** Increase the frequency and depth of consultations between unions and governments on critical issues like inequality, disability equity, and gender equality.
- c) Improve funding and oversight:** Governments should secure adequate funding for education and strengthen oversight of non-state actors to ensure they provide high-quality, equitable education.





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Appendix





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