

Joint Message from
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on the occasion of World Teachers' Day

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Recasting teaching as a collaborative profession

Teachers are the backbone of quality education: they drive learning and inclusion in schools, and in doing so, strengthen the very social fabric of our societies. Yet, the profession is currently facing an unprecedented crisis – one requiring political mobilization at the highest level, as recently emphasized at the World Summit on Teachers, organized by UNESCO and the Government of Chile.

The *Global Report on Teachers* warns that an additional 44 million teachers are needed worldwide if we are to achieve universal primary and secondary education by 2030. In just seven years, the number of teachers leaving the profession has doubled – further exacerbating the widespread shortage.

This crisis is compounded by teachers' working conditions. Teachers all too often experience professional isolation, with few opportunities for continued development, peer learning and the cooperation needed to ensure effective teaching practices. Reversing current trends in teacher attrition and recruitment demands not only increased investment, but also policies that foster collaborative working environments throughout teachers' careers.

This year's World Teachers' Day, held under the theme 'Recasting teaching as a collaborative profession', reminds us of the fundamentally collective and relational nature of education. It calls for teacher collaboration – in the classroom, in the digital sphere and in decision-making spaces – in order to strengthen motivation and resilience within this essential profession, and enhance the quality of education for millions of students. This mindset shift involves three key components.

Firstly, rooting the profession in collaboration starts from the earliest days of a teacher's career. Shaping a professional identity grounded in cooperation, rather than isolation, requires peer learning, co-teaching and mentoring to be placed at the heart of their initial and continued training. This is why UNESCO has supported the training of over 1.4 million teachers worldwide since 2018, providing them with opportunities to strengthen their skills alongside experts and peers.

Secondly, while no technology can ever replace the humanity of teachers, collaborative digital tools are bringing opportunities for educators to work together across distances and disciplines like never before. Teachers must understand how to leverage technology to effectively enhance connection, dialogue and cooperation, with peers and students alike.

Thirdly, we must also strengthen collaboration in educational decision-making, by recognizing the critical role of teachers when it comes to policy design and school leadership. Through social dialogue, teachers can meaningfully contribute to shaping

reforms that reflect classroom realities. Meanwhile, their involvement in decision-making – from the policy to the school level – can improve school climate, trust and well-being for both staff and students.

On this World Teachers' Day, UNESCO, ILO, UNICEF and Education International call on governments, partners and the international community to make a collective commitment to ensuring that collaboration is recognized as a norm within the teaching profession – because it is only through effective cooperation at all levels that we can build truly inclusive, equitable and resilient education systems worldwide.