

World Teachers' Day

Recasting teaching as a collaborative profession

3 October 2025

Concept note

Background

On 3 October, UNESCO will celebrate World Teachers' Day to commemorate the adoption of the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers and the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel. These instruments set forth the rights and responsibilities of teachers as well as outline international standards for the most important professional, social, ethical and material concerns of teachers.

Last year, the UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession published a set of Recommendations that seek to strengthen the role of teachers in the transformation of education and to advance SDG 4. A core message from the Recommendations - echoing UNESCO's seminal report on the Futures of Education - is the need to promote teaching as a collaborative profession, supported by coherent systems throughout teachers' careers. In parallel, global education frameworks have emphasized the collective and relational nature of teaching, underlining that quality education is shaped by cooperation, shared responsibility and professional solidarity. The 2025 World Teachers' Day celebration therefore focuses on collaboration as a key lever for teacher professional learning and broader educational transformation.

World Teachers' Day is co-convened by UNESCO in collaboration with the ILO, UNICEF and Education International. This year, for the first time, the international celebration will not take place at UNESCO

Headquarters in Paris but will be hosted by the African Union in the framework of the Pan-African Conference on Teacher Education (PACTED) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This choice is particularly timely, aligning with the launch of a new Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) and the African Decade for Education — together marking a renewed continental and global commitment to prioritizing education and the teaching profession as drivers of sustainable development. The morning will feature an opening ceremony with high-level representatives from convening partners, followed by a panel discussion including teacher perspectives on the importance of collaboration in building supportive and sustainable professional environments.

The importance of collaboration

Teachers play vital roles in education systems and drive learning, inclusion and innovation in schools and societies. Yet many teachers carry out their work without collaborative structures to support and strengthen their pedagogy, agency, professionalism and well-being. In many education systems, the teaching profession remains marked by professional isolation, fragmented structures and a lack of opportunities to build collaborative networks and relationships with peers, mentors and school leaders. This has an impact on educational quality and equity and related issues like teacher attrition.

By 2030, the world will require an additional 44 million teachers to achieve universal education targets ([UNESCO & TTF, 2024](#)), a condition exacerbated by the high rates of attrition witnessed globally. Reframing the teaching profession as an inherently collaborative profession — sustained by policies, practices and learning environments that value mutual support, shared expertise and joint responsibility — is an essential step in redressing these issues and transforming education systems. In short, collaboration is key to enhancing both teaching and learning practices as well as the work and lives of teachers, such that they feel excited and empowered to realize their vocation and achieve collective impact.

This approach begins with initial teacher education, where collaborative professionalism can be modelled through peer learning, co-teaching, joint reflection and integrated partnerships with schools. In Ghana, for example, reforms to teaching practicums have institutionalized cooperation between teacher education institutions, mentors and school leaders, ensuring a more coherent and supportive experience for pre-service teachers during their placements ([National Teaching Council, 2017](#)). When such practices are embedded in initial preparation, they lay the foundations for a professional identity rooted in cooperation rather than isolation ([UNESCO, 2021](#)).

Continuous professional development must equally prioritize collective inquiry and shared problem-solving, whether through communities of practice, study circles or other forms of collegial learning. In Chile, the national teacher induction programme includes dedicated time for mentoring, peer observation and joint reflection — offering early-career teachers a structured and collaborative environment to grow ([UNESCO & TTF, 2024](#)). Supported by school leadership and aligned with national frameworks, these and related strategies strengthen both teacher motivation and the quality of teaching and learning. Digital technology can also act as a powerful enabler of teacher collaboration, especially across distances and school contexts. Its full potential remains unevenly realized, however, due to persistent disparities in digital infrastructure, access and skills.

Embedding and enhancing collaboration in schools and early childhood centres is also vital. Learning environments that foster shared leadership, distributed responsibilities and collective planning tend to be more resilient and equitable. In China, for instance, school reforms have increasingly promoted distributed leadership models, empowering teachers to participate in decision-making processes and lead professional learning communities ([UNESCO & TTF, 2024](#)). Collaboration is important not only

within subject teams, but across roles and functions — between teachers, school heads, pedagogical coordinators and support staff — creating professional ecosystems grounded in trust and mutual accountability ([UNESCO, 2024](#)). Differentiating collaboration from compliance is crucial for educators, as effective collaboration is not imposed but cultivated through inclusive dialogue and recognition of teachers' expertise and professionalism.

Collaboration by and with teachers is essential not just in teacher learning and in school-based structures, but in how education policy itself is developed. Public policies play a central role in sustaining professional collaboration and are enhanced greatly by the active involvement of teacher unions and professional associations in shaping and upholding collaborative practices. Strengthening teachers' voices in educational decision-making processes — whether through consultation, co-design or structured social dialogue — is critical to fostering professional agency and legitimacy as well as ensuring policies are grounded in classroom realities and supported by those expected to implement them ([HLPTP, 2024](#); [UNESCO, 2024](#)). One concrete example can be found in Zambia's 2021 *National Framework for Teacher Social Dialogue* ([UNESCO, 2021](#)), which recently institutionalized teacher voice in policy development. Enabling environments where collaboration by and with teachers is valued as a professional norm rather than a managerial tool ([HLPTP, 2024](#)) help appropriately position the expertise of teachers and, ultimately, improve the effectiveness and impact of education policies.

In sum, embedding collaboration throughout teacher education, schools, and policies — with adequate time, space and resources for meaningful participation and collective learning — builds resilient, equitable education systems, while reinforcing a sense of belonging and purpose among teachers ([UNESCO & TTF, 2024](#); [UNESCO, 2021](#)). These priorities resonate strongly with recent international calls to view education as a long-term investment, and to prioritize teachers as foundations for resilient and inclusive systems ([Fortaleza Declaration, 2024](#); [Santiago Consensus, 2025](#)).

World Teachers' Day 2025 therefore celebrates teaching as a collaborative profession — one that draws its strength from strong human connections, shared responsibilities and sustainable professional identities. Organized alongside the Pan-African Conference on Teacher Education, this year's celebration highlights the global relevance of collaboration and the transformative potential of collective effort. Through global dialogue, country experiences and teacher voices, the event will reaffirm the irreplaceable role of teachers and the need to reposition trust, solidarity and professional agency at the heart of education. World Teachers' Day serves as a global moment to celebrate the teaching profession and to urge the international community to take concrete action to recast teaching as a collaborative profession.

Venue and format of the global celebration

World Teachers' Day 2025 will be celebrated on 3 October during the Pan-African Conference on Teacher Education (PACTED) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, at the Headquarters of the African Union Commission. A livestream will also be available. For more information and to register your participation, consult the official [World Teachers' Day webpage](#).

Participants

Participants will include Ministers of Education and officials from African Union Member States, heads and representatives of the co-convening agencies (UNESCO, ILO, UNICEF and Education International), national teacher councils, regulatory bodies, representatives from teacher unions, teacher associations and outstanding teachers recognized for excellence and innovation. Development partners, international organizations, philanthropic foundations, academic and research institutions, civil society organizations, youth groups, technology and private sector partners, and media will also take part.