



Activating the recommendations on teacher well-being

“Just as teachers support us all, we must support teachers.”

Antonio Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General

The High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession was convened by the United Nations Secretary General in response to the global teacher shortage. The Panel brought together academics, ministers, former presidents, and teachers and students and their unions. Tasked with providing policy advice for governments to ensure that every child's right to a professionally-trained, qualified, and well-supported teacher is fulfilled, the Panel identified [59 recommendations](#).

The recommendations cover a broad range of topics, including: pay, conditions and job security; professional practice; gender, equity and diversity; social dialogue and collective bargaining; technology and the future of work in education; and education financing.

These broad and progressive recommendations are a unique opportunity to effect real change for millions of teachers and students around the world.

What does the Panel say about teacher well-being?

[Teacher well-being](#) can include components such as job satisfaction, financial stability, emotional and physical health, and autonomy. Enhancing teacher well-being involves attention to working conditions, workload, emotional exhaustion, and feelings of safety, including addressing violence, discrimination, and harassment. It is also inter-related with teachers' professional identities, and beliefs, including self-efficacy and motivation (OECD, 2021).

The Panel recognises that “teachers need to work in a climate of security, support, well-being and decent working conditions” (UNESCO/ILO Page 2). It calls for comprehensive national teacher policies to address teacher well-being (Recommendation 4) and for multi-stakeholder national commissions to be established. The commissions should address workload and well-being as part of tackling the teacher shortage.

Recommendation 38 → **Mental health and holistic well-being**

There is one stand-alone recommendation focused directly on well-being:

38. *Working conditions should promote teachers' mental health and holistic well-being. Educational jurisdictions, in collaboration with teachers and their organizations, should develop systemic teacher well-being policies that are reflected in teachers' conditions of service.*



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There are also many other recommendations that focus on ensuring the enabling conditions that support teacher well-being. These include:

Recommendation 37 → **Quality working conditions**

Teachers' professional well-being is directly affected by their working conditions. The Panel outlines multiple components necessary for quality working conditions, including manageable class-sizes, workload, and work-life balance.

37. Working conditions should also provide for stable contractual forms; a safe and healthy workplace; manageable teacher-to-student ratios; support structures for managing problematic student behaviour; balanced workloads; safe, affordable and adequate housing; relevant, quality and accessible training and professional development opportunities; equitable access to technology and other resources; adequate social protection and pensions; and working-time arrangements (including duties beyond classroom teaching such as lesson preparation, marking and out-of-class student and parent engagements) that allow for adequate rest and work-life balance.

Recommendation 18 → **Ensuring freedom from intimidation**

Personal safety and professional autonomy are both key to teacher well-being. The Panel calls for governments to protect teachers from attack and interference.

18. Violence, harassment and intimidation or threats from whatever source undermine the status and dignity of teachers and their educational functions. Adequate resources must be provided to ensure security and freedom from intimidation or outside interference for teachers and schools. Governments should develop policies that deter future threats by holding perpetrators accountable.

Recommendation 15 → **Teacher status and dignity**

Teacher well-being is affected by their sense of professional agency. The Panel highlights the importance of trusting teachers, providing them autonomy and ensuring they can be involved in policy decision-making related to their work.

15. Teacher status and dignity are also directly related to teachers' ability to influence policies regarding their work, including curricula and pedagogical practices. Policies should ensure teacher agency and autonomy based on knowledge, competence



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and responsibility within education goals, and should foster a climate of trust and respect between school authorities, communities, learners and teachers. Governments should also ensure that teachers and their organizations can engage in social dialogue, including collective bargaining, and policy dialogue on all matters affecting the profession.

Recommendations 26 and 27 → Professional development and practice - mentoring and collaboration

Teacher well-being is also linked to self-efficacy. The Panel makes twenty recommendations on training and professional development (recommendations 20-31). All of them aim to contribute to strengthening teachers' capacities. We will highlight two. The first is on the need to support new teachers. This is especially important for the well-being of newly qualified teachers, and can support efforts to retain teachers in the profession.

26. New teachers should be provided with adequate induction and mentorship under experienced and suitably qualified teachers, with reduced workloads and adequate resources in initial years designed to allow for development of their skills. Mentorship should be provided for several years, and mentors should be trained, supported and compensated.

The second is on the importance of promoting collaboration.

27. Policies should promote teaching as a collaborative profession, with adequate space, time and resources for collaborative planning, communities of practice, and reflective and reflexive practice by and among teachers, within and beyond their education institution. Such efforts can be supported by education authorities. Teachers should be encouraged to use interdisciplinary teams to teach core curricula content through thematic units.

Recommendation 10 → Ensuring well-being for all teachers

The panel recognises the need for targeted policies to attract and retain teachers from marginalized groups and to support the well-being of teachers from diverse backgrounds.

10. Governments should develop policies and measures to promote equity, diversity and inclusion in the teaching workforce, in particular for vulnerable and marginalized groups, beginning with workforce planning. Targeted policies should attract



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marginalized groups into the profession and ensure they are supported to remain in teaching. Such policies should include provisions to promote women and marginalized groups into leadership positions; protect teachers from all forms of violence and harassment, including gender-based violence; and ensure social protection. Policies should also guarantee freely available pathways to high quality training for teaching, adequate compensation and working conditions, and an inclusive environment for teachers in all their diversity, including those with disabilities, and should address the need for child and family care for teachers.

Recommendation 12 → **Teacher well-being in emergency contexts**

The recommendations specify the importance of protecting the well-being of teachers working in emergency contexts. In addition to decent salaries and the fulfilment of their basic labour rights, they require targeted support related to the challenging conditions they work in.

- 12. Governments should develop clear policies to support all teachers who are working in crisis-affected regions, refugee camps and local areas prone to violence such as gang activity. Such policies should aim to provide adequate support and access to professional development; promote the well-being of teachers by addressing their physical, emotional and psychosocial needs; and raise the status of all teachers working in contexts of crisis and displacement. Education funding needs to be managed to ensure continuity in case of disruptions due to crisis. There should be consideration for hazard pay. Teachers working in crisis-settings must receive timely, adequate and regular salaries.*



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Teacher well-being is essential for student well-being. Education International is committed to working with member organisations to make sure that teachers' well-being is prioritised and the UN High-level Panel's recommendations become effective for teachers everywhere.

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