

# **OECD SCHOOLING, TEACHERS AND TEACHING PROJECT (2021-22)**



## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

## Short description

The *Schooling, teachers and teaching* project seeks to ensure the coherence and continued relevance of OECD policy work on teachers and teaching. To this end, it takes stock of the state of the art, identifies gaps in our knowledge base and anticipates challenges for the future of teaching arising from social, economic and technological change (Strand I).

In addition, the project continues in-depth analysis on two top priorities of teacher policy today: teachers' professional learning (Strand II) and resourcing effective teaching (Strand III). Incorporating the three strands under an umbrella project enables forward-looking and exploratory work to benefit from strong feedback loops with analysis of the policy landscape that shapes teaching as we know it today.

The key overarching policy questions are:

- How can education systems **move beyond the state of the art in teacher policy** and address the challenges facing the profession in the decades to come? (Strand I)
- How can education systems strengthen the entire cycle of **teachers' professional learning**, from initial teacher education and induction in schools to continuous learning throughout their career? (Strand II)
- How can education systems design **cost-effective teacher policy reforms** and how can they support their teacher workforce in **using available resources, such as time, ICT and data, effectively**? (Strand III)

## Project rationale

Teachers are the most important resource in today's education systems. The OECD's expanding evidence base has highlighted the importance of high quality teachers and teaching in education systems. Yet, many countries face persistent challenges in making teaching an attractive and intellectually fulfilling career, as well as identifying effective teaching practices and helping teachers develop the knowledge and skills needed to support their students' success in a rapidly changing world.

Despite the existing body of OECD and other international work, difficult policy, practice and research questions remain. How can we empower teachers to gain the knowledge and skills they need to help their students thrive in tomorrow's world? How can we help integrate new evidence and spread effective practices in the teaching profession? How can schools and teachers develop cultures of peer learning and collaboration? How can we ensure that the resources spent on teachers and teaching are directed to where they have the biggest impact in promoting quality and equity? How can policy support rather than stifle teachers' professional agency and leadership to shape their work? What does the future of teaching look like, including the impact of AI and continuing digitalisation, and how might countries start to plan for it now? A strategic priority for the OECD Directorate for Education and Skills is to ensure that its work on teachers and teaching evolves and continues to address countries' needs in the decades to come.

The COVID-19 crisis has rendered the *Schooling, teachers and teaching* project all the more relevant and important. It has brought global attention to the irreplaceable role of teachers in the learning, development and well-being of their students, beyond the transmission of knowledge and skills. It has revealed to the wider public the many aspects of teachers and teaching that cannot easily be replaced by online teaching platforms, in

particular supporting students' engagement in learning and the coordination of resources, such as parental support, socio-emotional services, digital tools and learning materials.

At the same time, the crisis has exposed the challenges involved in preparing, supporting and equipping all teachers to adapt to change, be it of a medical, social, economic or technological nature. Perhaps above all, the crisis has highlighted the importance of school systems integrating future thinking into their regular teacher policy making. The *Schooling, teachers and teaching* project accompanies countries in this process, taking stock of what we know on effective teacher policies, scanning the horizon for future challenges, and developing new analysis on the (material, digital, time and other) resources that can best support teachers' learning and performance in changing environments.

The project helps countries better understand the present and future of teaching and develop cost-effective approaches to support effective teachers and teaching.

- **Strand I** (jointly conducted with the OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation) seeks to strengthen the quality and coherence of OECD work on teachers and teaching by reviewing the present knowledge base and developing a road map for action in close collaboration with countries. This work will generate innovative thinking and ideas for policy making, practice and research communities and help countries build their own vision and roadmap for teachers for the future.
- **Strand II** will support the development of policy frameworks to strengthen initial teacher preparation (ITP) and continuing professional learning (CPL) through policy diagnosis, peer learning, data collection and analysis. Within the framework of the OECD Teachers' Professional Learning (TPL) Study, this strand will foster peer learning by highlighting common strengths and challenges that countries face as they move towards a culture of teachers' continuous professional growth, with a particular focus on communicating findings for use at both the system and school/practitioner level.
- **Strand III** will provide value for money to countries by mobilising knowledge already created as part of the School Resources Review. It will bring an evidence-based understanding of resource trade-offs to national debates and facilitate discussions that may otherwise be difficult to raise. By drawing on a holistic vision of teaching within this wider resource context, this strand will support the effective use of resources to achieve the maximum impact for equity and quality in teaching and learning.

### Further information

For more information, please contact the project leader, Ms. Deborah Nusche ([deborah.nusche@oecd.org](mailto:deborah.nusche@oecd.org)).

## Methodology and deliverables

### Strand I – The Future of Teachers and Teaching:

This strand will be jointly conducted with the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI). It aims to facilitate peer exchange and innovative thinking through a series of international symposia. The methodology for this strand will involve three steps.

#### ***Taking stock: Synthesis of the current state of the art***

The review of the state of the art will summarise current and past knowledge and work on teachers and teaching. It will identify common themes as well as emerging trends, situating the OECD's findings within work undertaken in other organisations and contexts. This stock-taking exercise will aim to synthesise knowledge on the state of teaching policy and practice across the OECD and the challenges countries face in moving beyond it. To situate the work in a post COVID-19 context, it will place particular emphasis on relevant themes, including distance teaching and digital skills and well-being for teachers.

#### ***Looking to the future: Working directly with countries***

The state of the art review will be analysed with countries as part of a series of *symposia* to engage collectively in future thinking and horizon scanning for challenges ahead. It will support policy makers in adapting knowledge about effective teacher policy in the post COVID-19 context and identify where new analysis and peer learning are needed to respond to unprecedented challenges. The symposia will be inclusive and allow for remote participation and engagement. In addition, tailor-made, country-specific deliverables funded by Voluntary Contributions (VCs) can be agreed upon, such as national workshops, short country visits or regional seminars to engage with a broad set of stakeholders, including policy makers, practitioners, researchers and businesses, to identify knowledge gaps and generate innovative thinking in policy making, practice and research communities. The funding required will depend upon the scope of the work.

#### ***Developing a roadmap for action: The next decade of OECD work on teachers***

The synthesis and symposia will feed into the development of a *roadmap* that can guide and prioritise the OECD's future work on teachers and teaching. The roadmap will highlight important directions for the longer-term work of the Directorate. It will also provide concrete suggestions for short-term objectives and policy challenges shared across OECD countries, guiding and prioritising the OECD's work on teachers and teaching across Level 1 bodies to meet countries' present and future needs. In the (post-) crisis context, it will help serve countries' immediate (post-) emergency needs as well as longer-term strategic goals.

## **Strand II – Teachers’ Professional Learning (TPL) Study:**

The methodology for this strand involves both comparative and country-specific work. Participation in the Study’s annual meetings and peer learning opportunities is free and open to all OECD and partner countries. Joining with a Country Background Report or a Country Diagnosis requires a Voluntary Contribution.

### ***Country self-evaluation and inclusion in the comparative analysis***

Countries may participate in the Study with the preparation of a *Country Background Report* (CBR). CBRs offer an opportunity for countries to take stock of their own approaches to teachers’ professional learning, following a conceptual framework and guidelines developed by the OECD Secretariat. In a second step, the common framework for this work will facilitate comparative analysis and maximise opportunities for countries to learn from each other. Information provided in the CBRs will feed into Study’s final synthesis report. All countries participating in a country diagnosis (see below) will complete a CBR, but countries can also participate in the project with the preparation of a CBR only, without a diagnostic review.

### ***OECD country diagnosis***

To complete a *Country Diagnosis*, the OECD Secretariat will work with national co-ordinators of participating countries to conduct diagnostic visits with a team of experts. The diagnostic visits will result in an analysis of strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis). At the end of the visit, the OECD team will present findings to stakeholders in the country. To encourage peer learning, national co-ordinators from other countries will be encouraged to participate in the review visit as “observers”. The main findings of country visits will be summarised in short national diagnostic reports, presenting case studies and SWOT analyses resulting from review visits.

### ***Annual project meetings***

Annual meetings of country representatives will be organised to review the Study’s progress and facilitate peer exchange.

### ***Analysis and synthesis***

The project will synthesise its findings on challenges, promising policies and innovative practices in continuing professional learning systems in a *final report* if at least five countries participate in the Study. The final comparative report will pull out key lessons for policy makers to improve systems for teachers’ continuing professional learning.

### **Strand III – Resourcing Schools for Effective Teaching:**

Strand III proposes tailor-made, country-specific products on cost-effective teacher policy reforms and the use of resources (e.g. funding, infrastructure, time, ICT) for effective teaching. This strand’s work may include analytical work focussed on country-specific priorities, tailored country reviews, workshops and peer-learning seminars. In the post COVID-19 context, analytical work and country diagnoses on the effective use of ICT and the organisation of student learning time will be particularly relevant. This strand is based on Voluntary Contributions and the required funding will be determined by the nature and scope of the work.

#### ***Analysis on the effective use of ICT resources in school education***

This work focuses on unaddressed policy issues from a resourcing perspective. What are the trade-offs when investing in different types of ICT or other resources? How can ICT help education deliver greater value for money? What tools can governments rely on when deciding upon different types of technology, especially when technology is changing so fast? What are successful models of public-private partnerships? How are ICT-based programmes evaluated? What can we learn from countries that have integrated technology effectively in school education? Under what conditions can online teaching be effective? What are the lessons learned from different approaches to online learning developed in the context of COVID-19?

#### ***Analysis on the effective organisation of student learning time***

This work looks at policies to organise student learning time in order to support educational recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. Just as students suffer from “learning losses” over the regular summer holidays, they will likely experience substantive losses due to the COVID-19 disruption of their schooling. Students’ partial or full return to school after the COVID-19 related school closures will require school systems to experiment with different approaches to organising learning time, catering to both the academic and socio-emotional needs of students. The analysis can build upon evidence from research and policy making, including (but not limited to) extended day options, summer schooling and links between in-school and out-of-school learning, and consider these from both a cost-effectiveness and an equity perspective.

#### ***A conference on value for money in post COVID-19 education***

The project proposes organising a VC-based international conference on value for money in post COVID-19 education, bringing together high-level representatives from ministries of education and ministries of finance across OECD countries. While investment in education remains a crucial element in the economic and social recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, ensuring value for money is also imperative. In this context, education ministries must be able to make a good case for educational investments, demonstrate their efficient use of resources and search for ways to deliver greater value for money. Preparing for the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis will likely involve refocussing educational priorities, prioritising equity funding to support the students most affected by learning losses and building on successful innovations emerging from the crisis. Thus, fostering dialogue and strengthening collaboration between ministries of finance and ministries of education is more important than ever.