



Teachers are the Key to Education Recovery

By Educator Barnes – October 5, 2021

The boots on the ground in education are our teachers, and it's war. Teachers are trying to ensure students learn while also ensuring they are safe from the coronavirus in addition to helping students navigate the emotional impact the coronavirus has left on many of us. Annually, October 5 is World Teachers' Day. This year's theme is "Teachers at the heart of education recovery." Since teachers are at the heart, they need the appropriate supports to be successful.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 released a [fact sheet](#) for the 2021 World Teachers' Day. One area of focus was teacher vaccination. Teachers come into close contact with children every day. Some children cannot be vaccinated yet. The reality is, according to the report, "Globally, 72% of countries (146 of 204) have included teachers in one of several priority groups to be vaccinated." Teacher access to vaccines is crucial to them staying healthy especially if they teach children from the age group that cannot be vaccinated.

Staying healthy is only half the battle. Being healthy but being burned out is also a reality because teachers need reinforcements. The teacher shortage was an issue before the pandemic, but pandemic helped shine a greater light on the issues causing teachers to flee the workforce leaving the teachers who stay in the classroom with more weight on their shoulders. Globally, the biggest shortage is in sub-Saharan Africa "where in 2019 there was a gap of 4.1 million teachers to achieve universal primary and secondary education: almost 1 million in primary and 3.3 in secondary education." However, the pandemic has been the last straw for some educators who have cited low pay, a heavier workload, and negative school culture as reasons for leaving. Administrators need to address these issues to keep teachers in the classroom.

Another issue plaguing teachers is learning on the ground especially when it comes to virtual learning. The joint UNESCO/UNICEF/WorldBank/OECD survey states only, "40% of countries, globally, trained three quarters or more of teachers on distance learning methods." Teachers want to be successful. They want their students to be able to learn, but when teachers do not have the skills to maximize the use of digital learning tools, the burden could be too much and send them out the door.

The first step is to acknowledge the issues, and the second step to consistently address the issue. Well trained teachers who are healthy are the key to the education recovery from this pandemic.