

Coronavirus Disease 2020

Covid-19

Covid-19 and Education: How Education Unions are Responding

Survey Report

April 2020



Education International
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Executive Summary

While the full impact of the health emergency caused by the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) will take many years to determine, the immediate impact on students and educators is significant and requires a collective and well-informed response.

In March of this year, as many governments around the world took rapid action to address the impact of the unfolding health crisis on the education sector, Education International⁰¹ (EI) surveyed its member organisations across five regions to learn about the different strategies and approaches of their governments, and the actions their own organisations to support their members and all education workers. While there are multiple, varied, and substantive challenges from one country to the next, certain trends and issues are common.

The Covid-19 health crisis has given rise to several urgent questions for education unions: How can rights be protected and realised during lockdowns? How are governments responding to the challenges of ensuring students' and education workers' safety in countries where schools remained partially open? How can teaching and learning be organised during full or partial school closures? What are the implications for education workers' conditions of employment? How are the usual patterns of social dialogue working in this time of crisis? To what extent can education unions continue to lead the way to better, more equitable education systems for all students?

The rate of school closures has been so rapid and their extent so unprecedented that no education system has had sufficient time to prepare. While most member organisations report that students are being taught online in their country, very few can say governments are providing adequate and sufficient support for teachers during the transition from onsite to digital and distance learning.

Member organisations also highlight the inequalities within education systems that have been made more acute by the health emergency. Vulnerable students, such as those living with disabilities, students from low-income households and students in rural areas all face significant

01 Education International is a Global Union Federation that represents organisations of teachers and other education employees. It is the world's largest, most representative global sectoral federation of unions representing more than 32.5 million trade union members in 384 organisations in 178 countries and territories



challenges with the shift to online and distant learning.

Education unions are working swiftly through social dialogue processes to protect decent working conditions for all education workers, and especially the most vulnerable, including those working in private education institutions, early childhood educators, education support personnel and teaching staff on precarious contracts.

Across all regions, as education transitioned to online platforms, the most typical union response is to provide training and support for members and students, and to share information.

Education International has developed [*Guiding Principles on the Covid-19 Pandemic*](#) and the [*EI Executive Board adopted a Resolution on EI's Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic*](#). A [*digital hub*](#) has also been created on the EI website, containing news, updates and information about the actions taken by EI member organisations in response to the health emergency.

At all times, but especially in the current climate of uncertainty, solidarity – among education workers, with their students and within their communities – remains the binding glue of the education union movement.

This report shows that EI member organisations all over the world remain ready to promote the right to quality education for all, the rights of their members and the health and wellbeing of societies everywhere.

Introduction

Context: Worldwide School Closures

The Covid-19 health emergency has led to school closures in almost every country in the world.⁰² More than 90% of the world's total enrolled learners have been told to stay away from school and other educational premises. As a result, governments, teachers, education unions and communities are taking action to ensure that education can continue while educators and students alike are compelled to remain at home.

This report provides a global overview of education unions' understanding of: a) government responses within education systems to the Covid-19 emergency; b) the impact that school closures have had on educators' employment conditions; and c) education unions' actions to support their members and education workers. In closing the report also outlines the different forms of support that EI member organisations seek from EI during these times of rapid change and uncertainty.

Methodology

The report is based on a global survey⁰³ of EI member organisations between March 20th and April 9th, 2020. The findings presented here are based on 93 valid responses⁰⁴ that were extracted from the data collected by April 9th. Member organisations from 67 countries completed the survey.

All the information discussed in the report is taken from the responses to the EI survey and has not been corroborated with other sources.

The survey findings are presented from a global perspective, which masks regional trends and differences that are significant in some cases. For

02 At the time of writing there are 189 country-wide closures (track school closures on UNESCO's "COVID-19 Educational disruption and Response" webpage: <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>)

03 The survey questions can be found in Annex I. Annex II is a list of all the EI member organisations that responded to the survey. The resources shared in response to questions 11, 14 and 15 can be found on the EI website: www.ei-ie.org.

04 There were nine invalid responses - three responses received were not from EI member organisations and six were duplicate responses.



example, only 44.4% of respondents from the Africa region reported that students were being taught via online means, compared to 85.7% in Europe.

The report contains examples of how education unions and governments were responding to the unfolding Covid-19 health emergency during last two weeks of March and at the start of April 2020. However, the situation is in constantly changing and policy responses may have changed dramatically since respondents completed the survey.

Regional Responses

EI member organisations located in countries all around the world participated in the survey; the response rates from the different regions were as follows⁰⁵.

Figure 1. Response rate by region

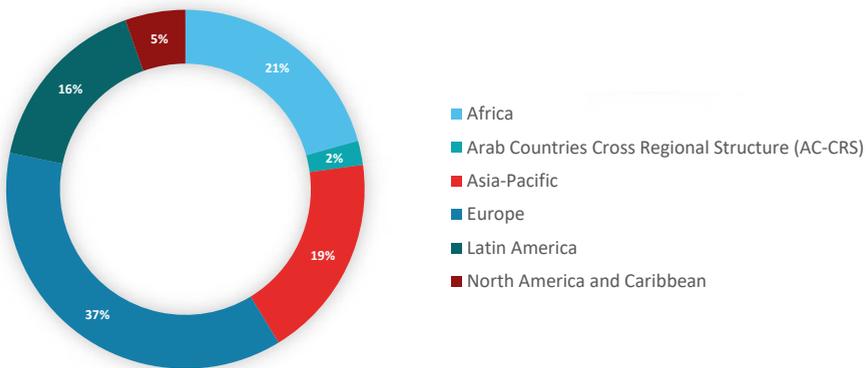


Table 1. Response rate by region

Answer choices	Responses	
Africa	19.4%	18
Arab Countries Cross Regional Structure (ACCRS)	1.1%	1
Asia-Pacific	21.5%	20
Europe	37.6%	35
Latin America	15.1%	14
North America and Caribbean	5.4%	5
Total		93

05 For more information on EI's regional structures see: https://www.ei-ie.org/en/detail_page/4394/regions. EI's Arab Countries Cross Regional Structure (ACCRS) was established by EI's Executive Board in 2011.

Sectoral Responses

As shown in the graph below, the survey was completed by member organisations across all sectors represented by EI member organisations, as well as by member organisations representing education support personnel (ESP).

Figure 2. Sectoral responses (some members represent multiple sectors)

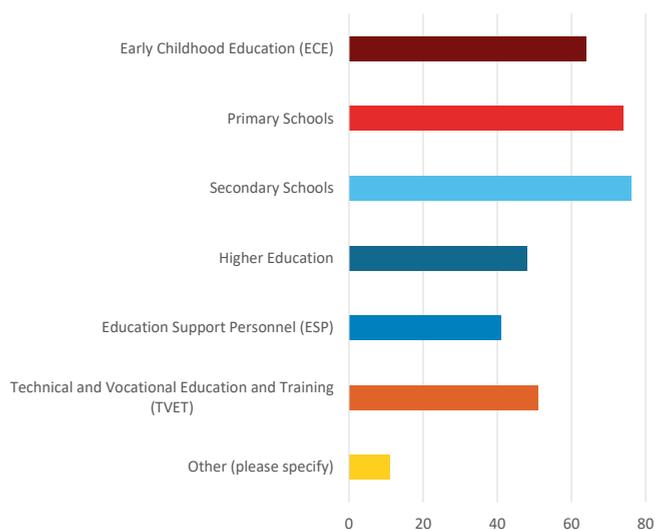


Table 2. Sectoral responses

Answer choices	Responses	
Early Childhood Education (ECE)	68.8%	64
Primary Schools	81.7%	76
Secondary Schools	80.6%	75
Higher Education	52.7%	49
Education Support Personnel (ESP)	44.1%	41
Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)	53.8%	50
Other (please specify)	9.7%	9
Total		93



I. Government Measures to Minimise the Impact of School Closures

EI member organisations were asked what concrete measures their government had taken to minimise the impact of the Covid-19 emergency on the education system. **The graph below shows that more than two thirds (71.0%) of respondents reported that students are being taught by online means, but less than a third (29.0%) of respondents reported that teachers are being supported with access to appropriate resources to teach online.**

Figure 3. Concrete measures taken by governments to minimise the impact of school closures on students' education

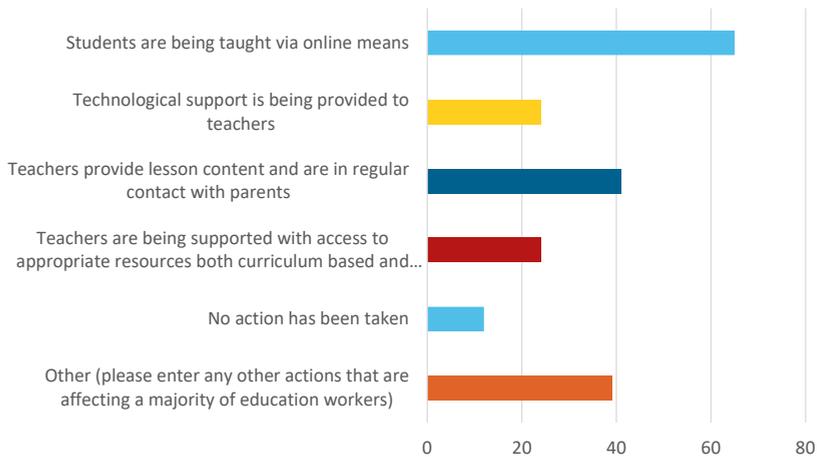


Table 3. Concrete measures taken by governments

Answer choices	Responses	
Students are being taught via online means	71%	66
Technological support is being provided to teachers	29%	27
Teachers provide lesson content and are in regular contact with parents	47.3%	44

Answer choices	Responses	
Teachers are being supported with access to appropriate resources both curriculum based and pedagogical	26.9%	25
No action has been taken	11.8%	11
Other (please enter any other actions that are affecting a majority of education workers)	39.8%	37
Total		93

Transition to Online Education

Seventy-one percent (71.0%) of union respondents reported that students are being taught via online platforms. However, some member organisations indicated that when schools closed there had been no systems in place for online learning and little existing content for distance learning, making the transition to this mode of education a challenge. The suddenness of the transition also raised concerns about data protection and privacy, as highlighted by Lärarförbundet (Sweden).

Television, Radio and WhatsApp

Some member organisations reported that their governments are broadcasting educational programmes on the radio (CTERA⁰⁶, Argentina; NTA⁰⁷, Nepal; FTU⁰⁸, Fiji; and SADTU⁰⁹, South Africa) whilst numerous respondents refer to the introduction of televised educational channels or educational programmes on public television channels. ESFTUG¹⁰ (Georgia) explained that lessons following the national curricular began to be broadcast on public television after it became apparent that there were “*internet challenges*.”

According to CMOS PM¹¹ in the Czech Republic, televised education has been quite successful:

Czech State TV [...] transformed one of its channels into a learning channel for children in primary and low[er] secondary schools. Everyday there is a programme for each specific grade, which consists of: 1) real life online teaching in the TV studio

06 Confederación de Trabajadores de la Educación de la República Argentina

07 Nepal National Teachers' Association

08 Fiji Teachers Union

09 South Africa Democratic Teachers' Union

10 Educators and Scientists Free Trade Union of Georgia

11 Českomoravský Odborový Svaz Pracovníků Školství



(taught by teachers - i.e. professionals); 2) commentary of the teacher; 3) a set of handouts; 4) online support for parents. It can be said that this form of support is aimed mainly at children and parents, but teachers can refer to this resource and they can rely on the quality of the programme. The programme follows the curriculum and the TV tuition is of high quality. In other words, the target audience – children at primary and low[er] secondary schools do not [only] have to rely on self-studying.

However, unions in other countries express some concern about the limited educational programmes on offer and about the effectiveness of televised education.

Nearly half (47.3%) of respondents reported that teachers provide lesson content and are in regular contact with parents. WhatsApp was mentioned as a mode of communication used between teachers and students (or between teachers and parents) in Argentina, Cyprus, Honduras, Jamaica, and Kurdistan.

Access to Resources for Teachers

Only 26.9% of union respondents reported that they are being supported to access appropriate resources for the transition to online and/or distance learning. **The majority of member organisations, therefore, report that government support for teachers during the transition from onsite to online and distance teaching and learning is insufficient.** ČMOS PŠ¹² (Czech Republic), for instance, explained that the Ministry of Education provided some resource materials online, but that there was no relevant pedagogical support or resources provided to support teachers.

As a result of this perceived lack of government support, in some countries, teachers are supporting each other by sharing methods and experiences amongst themselves (as reported by ANDE¹³, Costa Rica and UEN¹⁴, Norway). Unions are also stepping in to fill the gap – section III of the report highlights some of the union initiatives to provide professional support to teachers.

12 Czech and Moravian Trade Union of Workers in Education (ČMOS PŠ)

13 Asociación Nacional de Educadores

14 Union of Education Norway

Equity Concerns

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), currently, *half of the total number of learners who are currently unable to attend school onsite because of the Covid-19 health emergency (approximately 826 million students), do not have access to a household computer. Forty-three per cent (43%, or 706 million students) have no internet at home (source: UNESCO).*

This was reflected in the responses of EI member organisations. Some unions highlighted equity concerns related to online distance learning. According to FECCOO¹⁵ (Spain):

Online learning has revealed the deep social divisions in the country, underlining the essential role played by schools in levelling socio-economic differences between students.

Access to technology and connectivity in rural areas are highlighted as a particular concern in some low-income countries. ANDES¹⁶ (El Salvador) reports that some students have neither internet access nor smart phones. SADTU (South Africa), points out that access to technology for teachers is not equitable either - *“some teachers in some areas are supported by technology.”*

TOPPS¹⁷ (Philippines), explains that students and parents protesting the lack of equitable access to the internet led to a change in government policy:

Initially, education administrators advised [the use [of] online means [for] teaching and giving homework to students. However, complaints against online education were lodged by students and parents because they said the majority of public school students in the elementary, secondary, and tertiary levels have no means of getting online education as they have no access to technology. Hence, the Commission on Higher Education issued a memorandum stopping the giving of online homework to students.

Similarly, CSC Enseignement¹⁸, (Belgium) reports that - because of their equity concerns - they advised that distance teaching should not include any new subjects, and that students should be given the option - but not obliged - to do schoolwork at home.

15 Federación de Enseñanza CC.OO

16 Asociación Nacional de Educadores Salvadoreños

17 Teachers' Organisation of the Philippine Public Sector

18 Confédération des Syndicats Chrétiens de l'Enseignement



Additional equity concerns included: the difficulties faced by students with disabilities, who are normally supported by inclusive education specialists onsite, but cannot have such in situ with distance learning; the inequitable support that students of different socio-economic backgrounds will receive at home (SNTE, Mexico); and the catastrophic impact on students who are usually entitled to school meals, but will be unable to access this service during school closures.

NAPTOSA¹⁹ (South Africa) notes that:

70% of our learners relied on schools for at least one meal and the situation is dire, as many learners are from impoverished communities. The lockdown has hampered food provision by schools.

ESFTUG (Georgia), describes a government initiative in Tbilisi to provide meals to kindergarten students from disadvantaged backgrounds who normally rely on school meals, noting that the union plans to support the initiative if needed.

No Action Taken

11.8% of respondents suggested that *no action* has been taken by their government to adopt concrete measures to minimize the impact of school closures on students' education. This may appear quite shocking at first glance; however, respondents may have included unions in countries where schools have not (yet) been closed, or where schools had recently closed, and governments had not yet made a plan for distance learning. In some cases, governments appear slow to respond. CNTE (Brazil) comments that, whilst responses varied between provinces, most provinces still do not have any distance education structures.

Decentralised Approaches

Some unions noted that government responses are decentralised. For instance, CNTE²⁰ (Brazil) reports varied responses across different provinces. NEA²¹ (United States of America), reports that, whilst higher education institutions are all moving to online instruction, responses

19 National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa

20 Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores em Educação - CNTE/Brasil

21 National Education Association

at K-12 (primary and secondary) level vary *“not only state by state [but] between school districts within states”* (of which there are more than 15,000). Lärarförbundet (Sweden) reports that, although the government issued recommendations, decisions regarding distance learning are made at the municipal level or at the school level (in the case of publicly-funded private school providers). Similarly, the JTA²² (Jamaica), reports that online learning arrangements were decided at school and not at government level.



II. The Impact on Employment Conditions

The graph below shows which education workers' employment conditions are affected by the measures introduced in response to the Covid-19 health emergency, according to respondents.

Almost half of respondents report that the employment conditions of part-time teachers on temporary contracts have been affected, whilst 28% report the same for full-time teachers on temporary contracts. Sixteen percent (16%) report that part-time teachers on permanent contracts have been affected but only eight percent (8%) report the same for full-time teachers on permanent contracts. Thirty-two percent (32%) report that education support personnel's employment conditions have been affected.

Figure 4. Groups of workers whose remuneration and/or employment situation has been affected by school closures

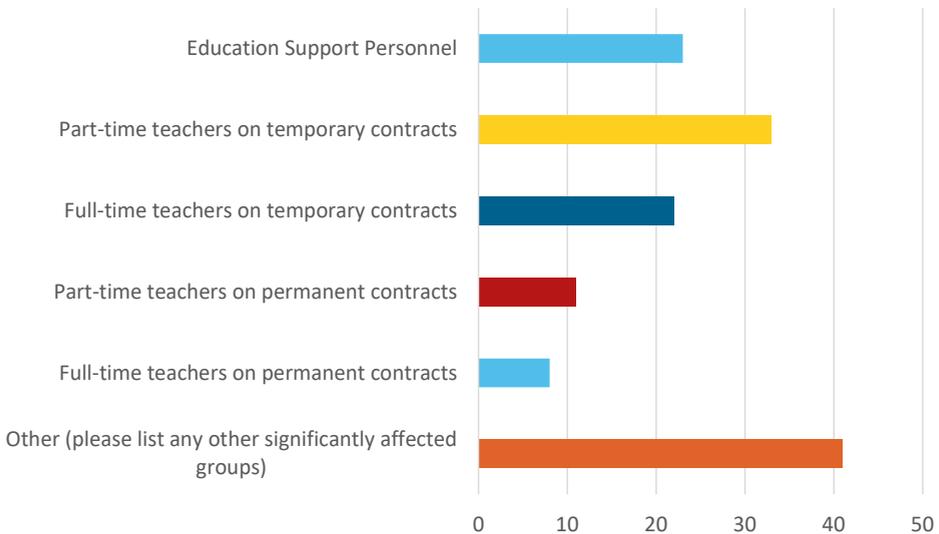


Table 4. Groups of workers whose remuneration and/or employment situation has been affected by school closures

Answer choices	Responses	
Education Support Personnel	32%	24
Part-time teachers on temporary contracts	48%	36
Full-time teachers on temporary contracts	28%	21
Part-time teachers on permanent contracts	16%	12
Full-time teachers on permanent contracts	8%	6
Other (please enter any other actions that are affecting a majority of education workers)	57.3%	43
Total		93

Nearly two thirds of unions report the working conditions of the following groups of education workers as significantly affected by government responses to the Covid-19 health emergency (in numerical order from the most to the least frequently mentioned by respondents):

1. education workers working in private institutions;
2. higher education personnel and researchers;
3. supply/substitution teachers;
4. early childhood education (ECE) workers; and
5. immigrant teachers (mentioned by just one respondent – NTTU²³, Thailand).

The following sections provide an overview of the ways employment conditions of various groups of education workers are affected by school closures related to Covid-19, as reported by respondents.

Teachers on Permanent Contracts (part-time and full-time)

Few member organisations report that full-time teachers on permanent contracts have seen changes to their employment conditions. But multiple respondents express concern that, due to possible funding difficulties, this situation could change. For example, changes to education workers' collective agreement is a concern in some countries.

The working conditions/professional situation of primary and secondary education personnel are likely to be affected by a



ministerial decree amending certain clauses of the collective agreements (CSQ²⁴, Canada)

The type of impact on the employment conditions of teachers on permanent contracts (including public school teachers and civil servants) mentioned are - salary cuts; furloughing²⁵ and delays in salary payments. The table below provides some examples from specific countries.

Table 5. Examples of how teachers on permanent contracts' employment conditions have been affected

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the (already existing) legislative regulations, workers unable to work at their workplace will stay at home and receive 80% of their regular remuneration/salary. (ESTUS,²⁶ Slovenia)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public school teachers earning more than a certain amount will have their salaries cut by 16-25% for at least three months, as will all other civil servants (KTOEOS²⁷ and POED²⁸, (Northern Cyprus))
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a delay in paying teachers' salaries of more than 45 days, as a result of the Kurdistan economy relying on oil and the price of oil falling dramatically as a result of the Covid-19 emergency (KTU²⁹, Iraq, [Kurdistan])

Teachers on Temporary Contracts (part-time and full-time)

Many respondents report that teachers hired on temporary contracts have been especially negatively impacted by the closure of schools. Respondents explain how, with schools closed, those paid by the hour are out of work and those on temporary contracts have not been renewed. It was also pointed out that, as schools were closed, it is difficult for those whose contracts had ended to find new work.

Education Support Personnel

As a category of workers, ESP often have precarious employment conditions including short-term contracts.³⁰ This is a concern for member

24 Centrale des syndicats du Québec
 25 Being put on unpaid leave
 26 Education, Science and Culture Trade Union of Slovenia
 27 Kıbrıs Türk Orta Eğitim Öğretmenler Sendikası
 28 Cyprus Turkish Teachers Trade Union
 29 Kurdistan teachers Union
 30 See: Butler, P. (2019). Understanding the Invisible Workforce: Education Support Personnel's Roles, Needs and the Challenges they Face. Education International.

organisations. AFT³¹ (United States of America), for example, highlight that ESP – as hourly workers – are the education workers most at risk.

Many member organisations report that as a result of school closures, ESP have been temporarily or permanently dismissed. A wide range of ESP roles are reported as being affected, including: auxiliary teachers; inclusive practices staff; cafeteria workers; security staff; bus drivers; cleaning staff; peripatetic music teachers and external advisors.

Table 6. Examples of how ESP employment conditions have been affected

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support staff have not been paid by the School Board, who have no budget. Therefore, each school is trying to help provide food for these workers and they qualify for the \$300 government grant that has not yet been disbursed (ANDES, El Salvador)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESP (and some groups of pedagogical employees financed by the municipalities) are facing salary cuts since the municipalities are losing part of their income due to reduced income taxes (OZPSaV³², Slovakia)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School cafeteria staff are asked to continue to go to school. Instead of making meals they clean the facilities and do training. They get paid on the condition that they go to school (KTU³³, Korea)

Education Workers in Private Institutions

Education workers in private institutions are most frequently mentioned by respondents who included additional information to supplement their response to question 12 in the survey. **Both teachers and ESP in the private sector are specified as having their employment conditions affected, and private sector employees at all levels (from ECE to higher education) were mentioned.** Respondents report that private-sector employees have been dismissed; have lost their income as a result of not being able to work; or have not had their contracts renewed.

Respondents commonly note that education workers in private institutions depend on the schools receiving income from school fees. Respondents also typically describe the precarious employment conditions of education workers in private schools prior to school closures and suggest that this made them vulnerable to being dismissed.

31 American Federation of Teachers

32 Odborový zväz pracovníkov školstva a vedy na Slovensku

33 Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union



Table 7. Examples of How ESP Employment Conditions Have Been Affected

• Many teachers working in private schools have not had their contracts renewed and have become unemployed (FECCOO, Spain)
• Teachers and ESPs are dismissed by profit-making private schools (NTA, Nepal)
• Private school workers have been laid off, but the State is guaranteeing social safety nets (FLC-CGIL ³⁴ , Italy)
• Teachers in private schools and preschools are not paid their salaries because students do not pay their monthly fees (ACUT(G) ³⁵ , Sri Lanka)
• Some universities, mostly in the private sector, are infringing contracts (ESFTUG, Georgia)
• In some private universities, part-time academics will not be paid as their workload has been transferred to full-time academics delivering education through online leaning platforms (POED, Cyprus)

Supply Teachers

Some member organisations point out that supply teachers are unable to work during the school closures, as schools have stopped hiring substitutes for teachers who are sick. For supply teachers, no work means no income, or very low income from benefits based on a casual or part-time contract.

Table 8. Examples of how Supply/Substitute Teachers' Employment Conditions Have Been Affected

• Supply and other staff are no longer employed in the same numbers since most schools are now closed (NEU ³⁶ , United Kingdom)
• [Substitute] teachers...have a number of different employment contexts - making it difficult to determine continuity of income. In all cases the government have made it clear it does not want educators losing out, but the devolved funding model makes it very difficult to determine what that means on a case by case basis (NZEI Te Riu Roa, NZ)
• Supply teachers will be eligible for some government unemployment benefits but at a much lower salary (AEU ³⁷ , Australia)

34 Federazione Lavoratori della Conoscenza CGIL

35 All Ceylon Union of Teachers (Government)

36 National Education Union

37 Australian Education Union

Staff and Researchers in Higher Education

Higher education personnel with employment conditions affected, as noted by respondents, included: education workers in private universities, lecturers, interim faculty, researchers on fixed term contracts, staff paid by the hour, and part-time staff.

Table 9. Examples of How Staff and Researchers' in Higher Education's Employment Conditions Have Been Affected

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching staff will not receive salaries until the pandemic ends (PROIFES³⁸, Brazil)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a no work-no pay policy for part-time teachers paid at an hourly rate (this is common as public universities have very few permanent staff). The financial support given by the government through its Department of Labour and Employment does not support job-order employees from the government sector (TOPPS, Philippines)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researchers on fixed-term contracts experience a loss of earnings from cancellation of face-to-face teaching and disruption to research projects. But with no current plans for research funding, universities are extending the duration of fixed-term contracts (and PhD studentships) during the crisis (UCU³⁹, United Kingdom)

Early Childhood Education Workers

A few unions report that both temporary and permanent early childhood education (ECE) teachers' and ESP employment conditions have been affected, with one linking this to the fact that ECE is privatised (ACUT(G), Sri Lanka).

Table 10. Examples of How ECE Workers Employment Conditions Have Been Affected

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most ECE teachers are being subjected to creative interpretations of the government support, including being forced to take annual leave, whilst the employer takes the government subsidy and changes them to contractual conditions (NZEI Te Riu Roa, New Zealand)
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Immigrant Teachers

One respondent (TOPPS, Thailand) noted that foreign teachers' right to remain in Thailand is under threat as travelling is difficult, and foreigners often must travel outside the country in order to renew their work visas.

38 Sindicato Nacional e Democrático dos Professores

39 University and College Union



III. Education Union Responses

Seventy respondents (just over 75%) answered the last question in the survey, which invited unions to share more information about their responses to the health crisis and to suggest how best Education International can support its member organisations.

Respondents describe actions taken by their unions as the Covid-19 health crisis began to unfold and it became clear that there would be a massive impact on the education sector in their country. These actions range from raising awareness of government measures amongst their members, students and within communities (SET⁴⁰, Chad), to participating in cleaning and sanitation efforts (ISTT⁴¹, Egypt), asking members to donate to the government’s Covid-19 relief fund (NTA⁴², Nepal), suspending a strike mandate (UDEN⁴³, Senegal), making face masks for health workers (UNE-SN⁴⁴, Paraguay) and submitting a list of members volunteering to assist with government efforts (OLTEK⁴⁵, Cyprus).

Across all regions, as education transitioned to online platforms, the most typical union response was to provide training and support for members and students, and to share information.

The tables below give an overview of the different forms of support unions are providing to their membership and beyond, as well as the kinds of information and training they are making available.

Table 11. Union Support

• A union campaign with self-care tips for the education sector and targeting senior citizen members (ANDE, Costa Rica)
• House-to-house visits by union members with health personnel for an educational day of prevention and to educate students on prevention measures (CGTEN-ANDEN ⁴⁶ , Nicaragua)
• Financial support for members (COLPROSUMAH ⁴⁷ , Honduras)

40 Syndicat des Enseignants du Tchad
41 Independent Teachers Syndicate of Egypt
42 Nepal National Teachers’ Association
43 Union Démocratique des Enseignants
44 Unión Nacional de Educadores Sindicato Nacional
45 Association of Teachers of Technical Education Cyprus
46 Confederación General de Trabajadores de la Educación de Nicaragua
47 Colegio Profesional Union Magisterial de Honduras

- A union toll-free phone line for students who are sitting exams, which is especially important for students who do not have internet access in their homes (NTA, Nepal)
- Virtual support groups for members who have tested positive for Covid-19, using infrastructure created during the height of the HIV/AIDS pandemic (SADTU, South Africa)
- Peer learning between teachers who have been sharing methods for online and distance teaching with each other (UEN, Norway)

Table 12. Union Training & Information Sharing

- Supplementing government provision of education (on television and radio) by providing content to students via email, on WhatsApp and on online conference calls; providing food for students (CEA⁴⁸, and CTERA, Argentina)
- Sharing information that explains any changes in labour law and what government measures mean for members' work in practical terms; advising members who have been laid off. (FUURT⁴⁹, Finland)
- Publishing information on government decisions regarding Covid-19 that impact members' work with links to all government recommendations on a union web page and in an opt-in daily newsletter for members and all teachers. A special Covid-19 information hub has been established on the union leaders' online platform and the union has organised webchats (Läraryörbundet, Sweden)
- Working with non-governmental organisations and agencies that offer online training for teachers, students, unions, and other key stakeholders (such as ministries, parents' associations) (NAPTOSA, South Africa)
- Providing professional development to members on student engagement during the crisis (NEA, USA)
- Providing training for members on virtual teaching, developing health-focused recommendations on teleworking, indexing & centralising resources produced by different universities to make them accessible to members (CONADU⁵⁰, Argentina)

Social Dialogue

EI member organisations are also poised to protect their members' jobs and employment rights through social dialogue. In countries where social dialogue is well-established (such as Germany), education unions worked together as soon as the implications of the government

48 Confederación de Educadores Argentino

49 Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers

50 Federación Nacional de Docentes Universitarios



response to the health emergency for the education sector became clear. Together, German education unions successfully advocated for the required support to reach their members (GEW⁵¹, Germany). In Argentina, CONADU, an EI member organisation representing educators in higher education, reported that a new policy on distance learning is under development, because this is not covered in the existing collective agreement. At the same time, as reported by another EI member organisation in the same country (CTERA), an online platform (Seguimos Educando) was created as a result of joint efforts by the Argentinian government and education unions.

In other countries, **EI member organisations report they are engaging in social dialogue and lobbying to minimise the impact of the closures on educators.** For example, in Georgia, ESFTUG said they are working to reverse the infringement of contracts in private universities. In Spain, FeSP-UGT⁵² reported that union pressure have led to the government establishing a redundancy plan to enable ESP to be re-instated after the closures. In France, SNES-FSU,⁵³ demanded that all staff on temporary contracts (whether full-time or part-time) receive their normal salaries. In Canada, CSQ is engaging in discussions with the government regarding their concerns about ESP employment conditions. SNTE⁵⁴, Mexico reported that all educators have been guaranteed full salaries thanks to the unions' intervention, whilst in Australia, the AEU relayed that they successfully negotiated higher unemployment benefits for supply teachers.

In Jamaica, the JTA has been lobbying government for financial support for teachers using their own funds to pay for internet access to teach online; internet connectivity is also an issue.

In Spain, STEs-I⁵⁵ has made use of the social dialogue process to lobby on behalf of students. Large numbers are unable to access online learning due to the digital divide between students: those from low-income households who do not have access to computers and the internet, and those from rural areas, where internet connectivity may be unreliable or unstable.

As governments have taken action to ensure continuation in education during the Covid-19 emergency, EI member organisations have been quick off the mark to act in the interests of their members and of education workers more generally, and for the common good. This report offers only a snap-shot of the wide-ranging approaches and strategies of education unions the world over in the face of a shared threat to human health and wellbeing.

51 Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft

52 Federación de Servicios Públicos de UGT - Enseñanza

53 Syndicat National de l'Enseignement Supérieur

54 Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación

55 Confederación de Sindicatos de Trabajadoras y Trabajadores de la Enseñanza - Intersindical

IV. How EI Can Support its Member Organisations

As the global federation of educators' unions, EI plays a unique role in mobilising the collective power of teachers and ESP the world over. This includes facilitating dialogue, communication and information sharing between its member organisations. As one respondent put it:

It is extraordinary that there is communication and mutual support. We all need to know that we are not alone (ALMA MATER⁵⁶, Romania)

Beyond this, the responding unions highlight **three key forms of support they would like from EI**, as lockdowns and school closures continue in some countries, whilst other countries are preparing to implement lockdown exit plans and to re-open schools.

Member organisations would like EI to: 1) facilitate communication with and between them; 2) share information, provide updates and – where necessary – conduct research as the Covid-19 health emergency continue to develop and government responses change and evolve; and 3) play a strong advocacy role for the teaching profession.

The table below includes some examples of support that member organisations would like to receive from EI.

Table 13. Type of Support EI Can Offer

Type of Support EI Can Offer	Examples
Facilitate communication with & between member organisations	Provide online learning and teaching resources
	Facilitate dialogue between MOs that have been 'hit the hardest'
	Facilitate peer-to-peer learning between MOs on platforms for digital teaching & learning



Type of Support EI Can Offer	Examples
Share information/ provide updates/ conduct research on –	How teaching aides can support remote/home-based teaching
	Any developments in the privatisation/commercialisation of education as education takes place online
	Union practices and experiences during the health emergency
	The impact of the health crisis on education and response strategies for unions
	How different countries are working to protect the rights of vulnerable teachers (e.g. those on temporary contracts)
	Workload issues when schools re-open (or have remained open) with some students returning to on-site learning and others remaining home and expected to continue distance or online learning
	Social dialogue processes across regions and union/social solidarity
Advocacy on behalf of member organisations	Statistics on the numbers of teachers working online/doing distance teaching of some kind
	Advocate for teaching staff to receive training on using the platforms made available for online/distance learning
	Highlight the lack of social dialogue & failure to involve unions in decision-making in countries where this is an issue
	Advocate for the jobs of ESP and teaching staff on precarious contracts to be protected
	Call for all schools to be properly sanitised before onsite teaching and learning can resume, and for protection and safety measures for teachers & ESP
	Advocate for attention to poor countries, conflict zones and the situation of displaced persons
Provide member organisations with advocacy tools and documents	

Solidarity between unions, the protection and advancement of the universal right to quality education and of human and trade union rights and equality are the solid foundations on which Education International is built. The kinds of support that member organisations are seeking from EI during the global Covid-19 health emergency remains typical of the kind of support EI strives to provide to its members in 'normal times'. In these rapidly changing and uncertain times such support will continue, and will be strengthened and deepened as the global education union movement positions itself to champion the rights of education workers and students alike.



Conclusion

The impact of school and educational institution closures has yet to be fully assessed. However, this survey suggests that many of Education International's member organisations responded quickly and have been supporting efforts to provide quality, equitable education for all in the context of the pandemic.

Whilst government responses to continue education after school closures varies, a transition to online education is most often reported, with fewer unions indicating that offline education delivery (such as through television and radio) has been introduced. However, survey respondents raise questions as to whether online learning matches the needs of children and young people, whether teachers have sufficient professional development to use new digital materials, and whether students have equitable access distance learning.

Some education workers face dismissal, furlough, redundancy, unrenewed contracts or no hourly work. The impact appears most severe for workers on temporary and/or part time contracts. Additionally, education support personnel, those working in private education institutions, higher education staff and researchers, supply teachers, and early childhood education workers have been affected by loss of income or dismissals. Some member organisations highlight that they are working to protect their members' jobs or income during school closures.

Education unions are responding to the effects of COVID-19 in education in a variety of other ways. The most common responses of member organisations is to provide their members with training and support, and to share information. The responses of member organisations shows solidarity, professional leadership, and the importance of the critical role of unions in society.

Summary of Key Findings

1. Distance learning modalities implemented in response to school closures are not sufficiently equitable.
2. Education workers are not well-supported to provide education online and other new modalities during the health emergency.

3. There are examples of education workers of all types (on full-time, part-time, permanent and temporary contract) whose employment conditions have been negatively affected by school closures. However, it is those with precarious employment conditions who are worst hit. These include ESP, education workers in private settings, higher education workers, supply teachers, ECE workers and immigrant teachers.
4. Education unions are engaging in social dialogue and lobbying their governments to protect the jobs and incomes of their members and education workers.
5. Education unions are taking action in a variety of ways to support their members, including through direct support, providing training and sharing information.

Based on the survey results, the following recommendations can be made:

Key Recommendations for Governments (now and short term)

1. **Prioritise equity.** Governments should take urgent measures to make distance education more equitable and address the needs of the most vulnerable students.
2. **Support teachers to provide distance education.** Teachers need more support to adapt to the range of modes of teaching and learning at a distance.
3. **Protect education workers' jobs and income.** All education workers should remain in employment and earn their normal salaries. In cases where education workers have been temporarily (or permanently) laid off, they should be sufficiently financially supported.

Key Recommendations for Governments (medium to long term)

1. **Make education systems better prepared for distance learning.** Put in place measures to enhance the readiness of education systems to provide equitable distance learning in the future.
2. **Support education workers' return to work.** Governments should ensure that local governments have sufficient funds to



rehire any workers who were laid off as a result of precarious contracts. ESP and supply teachers will be crucial to ensure safe and well-functioning education institutions when they re-open.

3. Improve education workers' employment conditions.

All education workers should have decent employment conditions. Precarious employment conditions violate international labour standards, harm worker wellbeing and are detrimental to quality education.

Key recommendations for Education International (to support member organisations during the pandemic)

- 1. Facilitate communication** with and between member organisations.
- 2. Share information, provide updates and – where necessary – conduct research** as the Covid-19 health emergency continues to develop and government responses change and evolve.
- 3. Play a strong advocacy role** for the teaching profession.

Education International acknowledges the spirit of collaboration and cooperation with which member organisations approached this survey. All over the world, education unions are providing the educational leadership, professional support and policy advice needed to get students and teachers through this crisis in the best way possible.

Annex I: Survey Questions

Q Nbr.	Question	Multiple choice (blank=free field)
1	First Name	
2	Last Name	
3	Job Title	
4	Organisation Name	
5	Country/Jurisdiction	
6	Email address of your organisation's Covid-19 representative	
7	Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Africa • Arab Countries Cross Regional Structure (AC-CRS) • Asia-Pacific • Europe • Latin America • North America and Caribbean
8	Please mark the type of education personnel your organisation primarily represents (more than one selection is possible):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Education (ECE) • Primary Schools • Secondary Schools • Higher Education • Education Support Personnel (ESP) • Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) • Other (please specify)



Q Nbr.	Question	Multiple choice (blank=free field)
9	What has been your government's response to Covid-19? (please select the closest fit for your country)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All schools and other education institutions have been closed • Most schools and other education institutions have been closed • A few schools and other education institutions have been closed • No action has been taken by government • Other (please specify)
10	If schools and other educational institutions have been closed what concrete measures has your government taken to minimise the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on student's education? (more than one selection is possible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are being taught via online means • Technological support is being provided to teachers • Teachers provide lesson content and are in regular contact with parents • Teachers are being supported with access to appropriate resources both curriculum-based and pedagogical • No action has been taken • Other (please enter any other actions that are affecting a majority of education workers)
11	Please provide links to student support resources that will help other educators.	
12	Have any of the following groups' remuneration and/or employment situation been affected as a result of measures taken in relation to the Covid-19 crisis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Support Personnel • Part-time teachers on temporary contracts • Full-time teachers on temporary contracts • Part-time teachers on permanent contracts • Full-time teachers on permanent contracts • Other (please list any other significantly affected groups)
13	If you answered yes to question 12 please describe how the various groups have been affected.	

Q Nbr.	Question	Multiple choice (blank=free field)
14	<p>Please list the links of any excellent resources your organisation has developed and/or used. This data will be held by the EI research unit and will only be shared with permission. It is our intention, if you are willing, to share this with other EI member organisations. If you do not wish us to share the resource in our Covid-19 resource hub please inform us in the other box below.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum • Inclusive practices • Teacher wellbeing • Assessment • Online Pedagogy • Other- permission to share denied
15	<p>Please share online tools (e.g., online platforms to support students) that you have used in your country during school closures.</p>	
16	<p>Is there anything else you would like us to know about your Covid-19 support activities and actions?</p>	



Annex II: Survey Respondents

<i>Member Organisation Acronym</i>	<i>Member Organisation Name</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Region</i>
SINPROF	<i>SINPROF - Sindicato Nacional de Professores</i>	<i>Angola</i>	<i>Africa</i>
SNEP B	<i>Syndicat National de l'Enseignement Primaire Public du BENIIN</i>	<i>Benin</i>	<i>Africa</i>
FECAP	<i>Federação Caboverdiana dos Professores</i>	<i>Cape Verde</i>	<i>Africa</i>
SET	<i>Syndicat des Enseignants du Tchad</i>	<i>Chad</i>	<i>Africa</i>
SNEPPCI	<i>Syndicat National de l'Enseignement Primaire Public de Côte d'Ivoire</i>	<i>Côte d'Ivoire</i>	<i>Africa</i>
SYNESCI	<i>Syndicat national des enseignants du second degré de Côte d'Ivoire</i>	<i>Côte d'Ivoire</i>	<i>Africa</i>
SEP	<i>Syndicat des Enseignants et Personels de l'education</i>	<i>Djibouti</i>	<i>Africa</i>
ISTT	<i>Independent Teachers Syndicate of Egypt</i>	<i>Egypt</i>	<i>Africa</i>
SENA	<i>Syndicat de l'Education Nationale</i>	<i>Gabon</i>	<i>Africa</i>
GNAT	<i>Ghana National Association of Teachers</i>	<i>Ghana</i>	<i>Africa</i>
TEWU	<i>Teachers and Educational Workers' Union</i>	<i>Ghana</i>	<i>Africa</i>
SNE-CDT	<i>Syndicat National de l'Enseignement - Confédération Démocratique du Travail-</i>	<i>Morocco</i>	<i>Africa</i>
UDEN	<i>Union Démocratique des Enseignants</i>	<i>Senegal</i>	<i>Africa</i>
NAPTOSA	<i>National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa</i>	<i>South Africa</i>	<i>Africa</i>
SADTU	<i>South African Democratic Teachers' Union</i>	<i>South Africa</i>	<i>Africa</i>
TTU	<i>Tanzania Teachers Union</i>	<i>Tanzania</i>	<i>Africa</i>
SGIEP	<i>Syndicat Général des Inspecteurs de l'Enseignement Primaire</i>	<i>Tunisia</i>	<i>Africa</i>

<i>Member Organisation Acronym</i>	<i>Member Organisation Name</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Region</i>
ZATU	Zanzibar Teachers Union	Zanzibar	Africa
BTA	Bahrain Teachers Society	Bahrain	Arab Countries Cross Regional Structure (AC-CRS)
AEU	Australian Education Union	Australia	Asia-Pacific
FTU	Fiji Teachers Union	Fiji	Asia-Pacific
FTA	Fijian Teachers Association	Fiji	Asia-Pacific
AIFEA	All India Federation of Teachers Organisations	India	Asia-Pacific
AIPTF	All India Primary Teachers' Federation	India	Asia-Pacific
KTU	Kurdistan Teachers Union	Iraq (Kurdistan region)	Asia-Pacific
JTU	Japan Teachers' Union	Japan	Asia-Pacific
MOVE	Malaysian Academics Movement	Malaysia	Asia-Pacific
NUTP	National Union of the Teaching Profession	Malaysia	Asia-Pacific
FMESU	Federation of Mongolian Education and Science Unions	Mongolia	Asia-Pacific
ISTU	Institutional Schools Teachers Union	Nepal	Asia-Pacific
NTA	Nepal National Teachers' Association	Nepal	Asia-Pacific
NZEI Te Riu Roa	NZEI Te Riu Roa	New Zealand	Asia-Pacific
PPTA	New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association	New Zealand	Asia-Pacific
TOPPS	Teachers Organization of the Philippine Public Sector	Philippines	Asia-Pacific
KTU	Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union	South Korea	Asia-Pacific
ACUT(G)	All Ceylon Union of Teachers (Government)	Sri Lanka	Asia-Pacific
USLTS	Union of Sri Lanka Teachers Solidarity	Sri Lanka	Asia-Pacific
NTA	National Teachers' Association	Taiwan	Asia-Pacific
NTTU	National Thai Teachers Union	Thailand	Asia-Pacific



<i>Member Organisation Acronym</i>	<i>Member Organisation Name</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Region</i>
CSC Enseignement	<i>Confédération des Syndicats Chrétiens de l'Enseignement</i>	<i>Belgium (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles)</i>	<i>Europe</i>
COV	<i>Christelijk Onderwijzersverbond</i>	<i>Belgium (Flanders)</i>	<i>Europe</i>
OLTEK	<i>Association of Teachers of Technical Education Cyprus</i>	<i>Cyprus</i>	<i>Europe</i>
POED	<i>Cyprus Turkish Teachers Trade Union</i>	<i>Cyprus (Northern)</i>	<i>Europe</i>
KTOEOS	<i>Kıbrıs Türk Orta Eğitim Öğretmenler Sendikası</i>	<i>Cyprus (Northern)</i>	<i>Europe</i>
ČMOS PŠ	<i>Czech and Moravian Trade Union of Workers in Education (ČMOS PŠ)</i>	<i>Czech Republic</i>	<i>Europe</i>
BUPL	<i>The Danish Union of Early Childhood and Youth Educators</i>	<i>Denmark</i>	<i>Europe</i>
EEMU	<i>Eesti Haridustöötajate Liit</i>	<i>Estonia</i>	<i>Europe</i>
FUURT	<i>Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers (FUURT)</i>	<i>Finland</i>	<i>Europe</i>
OAJ	<i>Trade Union of Education In Finland</i>	<i>Finland</i>	<i>Europe</i>
FEP-CFDT	<i>Fédération Formation et Enseignement Privés</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Europe</i>
SNES-FSU	<i>Syndicat National de l'Enseignement Supérieur</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Europe</i>
SNUipp-FSU	<i>Syndicat national unitaire des instituteurs, professeurs des écoles et PEGC</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Europe</i>
ESFTUG	<i>Educators and Scientists Free Trade Union of Georgia</i>	<i>Georgia</i>	<i>Europe</i>
GEW	<i>Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Europe</i>
OLME	<i>Organisation of Secondary School Teachers of Cyprus</i>	<i>Greece</i>	<i>Europe</i>
ITU	<i>Israel Teachers Union</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Europe</i>
UIL-S	<i>UIL-Scuola</i>	<i>Italy</i>	<i>Europe</i>

<i>Member Organisation Acronym</i>	<i>Member Organisation Name</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Region</i>
<i>FLC CGIL</i>	<i>Federazione Lavoratori della Conoscenza CGIL</i>	<i>Italy</i>	<i>Europe</i>
<i>UESCK-SBASHK</i>	<i>Union of Education, Science and Culture of Kosova</i>	<i>Kosovo</i>	<i>Europe</i>
<i>LESTU</i>	<i>Lietuvos Švietimo ir Mokslo Profesinė Sąjunga</i>	<i>Lithuania</i>	<i>Europe</i>
<i>SEW-OGBL</i>	<i>Syndicat Education et Sciences / Onofhangege Gewerkschaftsbond Letzebuerg</i>	<i>Luxembourg</i>	<i>Europe</i>
<i>Aob</i>	<i>Algemene Onderwijsbond</i>	<i>Netherlands</i>	<i>Europe</i>
<i>UEN</i>	<i>Union of Education Norway</i>	<i>Norway</i>	<i>Europe</i>
<i>SINDEP</i>	<i>Sindicato Nacional e Democrático dos Professores</i>	<i>Portugal</i>	<i>Europe</i>
<i>ALMA-MATER</i>	<i>Federația Națională Sindicală ALMA MATER</i>	<i>Romania</i>	<i>Europe</i>
<i>OZPŠaV</i>	<i>Odborový zväz pracovníkov školstva a vedy na Slovensku</i>	<i>Slovakia</i>	<i>Europe</i>
<i>ESTUS</i>	<i>Education, Science and Culture Trade Union of Slovenia</i>	<i>Slovenia</i>	<i>Europe</i>
<i>FECCOO</i>	<i>Federación de Enseñanza CC.OO.</i>	<i>Spain</i>	<i>Europe</i>
<i>FeSP-UGT</i>	<i>Federación de Servicios Públicos de UGT - Enseñanza</i>	<i>Spain</i>	<i>Europe</i>
<i>STEs-I</i>	<i>Confederación de Sindicatos de Trabajadoras y Trabajadores de la Enseñanza - Intersindical</i>	<i>Spain</i>	<i>Europe</i>
<i>Läraryförbundet</i>	<i>Läraryförbundet / Swedish Teachers' Union</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Europe</i>
<i>SULF</i>	<i>Swedish Association of University Teachers and Researchers</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Europe</i>
<i>SER</i>	<i>Syndicat des enseignants romands</i>	<i>Switzerland</i>	<i>Europe</i>
<i>NEU</i>	<i>National Education Union</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>	<i>Europe</i>
<i>UCU</i>	<i>University and College Union</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>	<i>Europe</i>
<i>CONADU</i>	<i>Federación Nacional de Docentes Universitarios</i>	<i>Argentina</i>	<i>Latin America</i>
<i>CEA</i>	<i>Confederación de Educadores Argentino</i>	<i>Argentina</i>	<i>Latin America</i>

<i>Member Organisation Acronym</i>	<i>Member Organisation Name</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Region</i>
CTERA	<i>Confederación de Trabajadores de la Educación de la República Argentina</i>	<i>Argentina</i>	<i>Latin America</i>
CNTE	<i>Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores en Educación - CNTE/Brasil</i>	<i>Brazil</i>	<i>Latin America</i>
PROIFES	<i>PROIFES Federação</i>	<i>Brazil</i>	<i>Latin America</i>
CPC	<i>Colegio de Profesores de Chile</i>	<i>Chile</i>	<i>Latin America</i>
FECODE	<i>Federacion Colombiana de trabajadores de la educacion</i>	<i>Colombia</i>	<i>Latin America</i>
ANDE	<i>Asociación Nacional de Educadores</i>	<i>Costa Rica</i>	<i>Latin America</i>
ANDES	<i>Asociación Nacional de Educadores Salvadoreños</i>	<i>El Salvador</i>	<i>Latin America</i>
COLPROSUMAH	<i>Colegio Profesional Union Magisterial de Honduras</i>	<i>Honduras</i>	<i>Latin America</i>
CGTEN-ANDEN	<i>Confederación General de Trabajadores de la Educación de Nicaragua</i>	<i>Nicaragua</i>	<i>Latin America</i>
OTEP-SN	<i>Organización de Trabajadores de la Educación del Paraguay</i>	<i>Paraguay</i>	<i>Latin America</i>
UNE-SN	<i>Unión Nacional de Educadores Sindicato Nacional</i>	<i>Paraguay</i>	<i>Latin America</i>
CSQ	<i>Centrale des syndicats du Québec</i>	<i>Canada (Québec)</i>	<i>North America and Caribbean</i>
JTA	<i>Jamaica Teachers' Association</i>	<i>Jamaica</i>	<i>North America and Caribbean</i>
SNTE	<i>Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación</i>	<i>Mexico</i>	<i>North America and Caribbean</i>
AFT	<i>American Federation of Teachers</i>	<i>United States of America</i>	<i>North America and Caribbean</i>
NEA	<i>National Education Association</i>	<i>United States of America</i>	<i>North America and Caribbean</i>



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Covid-19 and Education: How Education Unions are Responding

Survey Report

Coronavirus Disease 2020

Covid-19

April 2020



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Education International represents organisations of teachers and other education employees across the globe. It is the world's largest federation of unions and associations, representing thirty million education employees in about four hundred organisations in one hundred and seventy countries and territories, across the globe. Education International unites teachers and education employees.



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