



Survey report

The Status of Teachers in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Key Findings and Implications for Education International Member Organisations

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is increasingly presented as essential to economic development, technological transformation, climate transitions, and the future of work. Yet the findings of Education International's first global survey of member organisations representing TVET teachers and education support personnel reveal a persistent gap between the ambitions governments profess for the sector and the realities facing the workforce that makes it possible.

Drawing on responses from 66 Education International member organisations representing more than 2.3 million TVET members across all regions, the survey provides a global picture of teacher status, working conditions, professional autonomy, training, teacher shortages, funding, and social dialogue in the sector.

Why This Report Matters

Across the world, governments increasingly look to TVET to address skills shortages, support industrial and technological change, respond to digitalisation and artificial intelligence, and prepare workers for more sustainable economies. However, the survey findings demonstrate that many TVET systems are being asked to deliver more while operating under growing strain.

As noted by Education International General Secretary David Edwards, the quality of TVET ultimately depends on the people who deliver it.

Expanding TVET systems without investing in teachers and ESP risks, undermining the very outcomes governments seek to achieve.

The report identifies a clear policy contradiction: TVET is increasingly recognised as strategically important, yet public investment, workforce planning, professional development, and support for teachers and ESP frequently fail to match that ambition.

Key Survey Findings

1. Teacher Shortages Are Widespread

The survey identifies significant teacher shortages across many countries and regions. These shortages are particularly severe in:

- Information technology and cybersecurity
- Engineering and electronics
- Construction trades
- Advanced manufacturing
- Mathematics and sciences
- Healthcare and care sectors
- Artificial intelligence and emerging technologies

A recurring theme throughout the survey is competition with private industry. Many skilled professionals can earn substantially more working in industry than they can teaching, making recruitment and retention increasingly difficult.

The findings also reveal that nearly 60% of surveyed jurisdictions report that employing unqualified personnel to address teacher shortages is either somewhat common or very common. This raises serious concerns about quality, safety, and the long-term professionalisation of TVET.

2. Pay and Conditions Are Not Keeping Pace

The survey reveals considerable concern about salaries and working conditions.

Key findings include:

- Only 28.6% of respondents reported that TVET teachers' salaries are sufficient to maintain a reasonable standard of living.
- Only 39.7% reported that salaries are comparable to professions requiring similar qualifications.
- More than half of respondents reported that salaries have stagnated or declined in real terms over the past three years.
- Over half of participating unions reported that working conditions have deteriorated during the same period.



Respondents repeatedly linked low pay to recruitment and retention difficulties. Approximately 70% identified pay as a major factor affecting the recruitment and retention of teachers, while nearly three-quarters identified employment conditions as a major factor.

3. Precarious Employment Remains a Major Concern

While permanent employment remains the most common arrangement globally, the survey reveals significant levels of precarious work:

- More than 67,000 teachers represented in the survey were reported to be employed on temporary or casual contracts.
- More than 40% of unions reported a decline in permanent employment over the last decade.
- 80% of respondents identified the use of casual and short-term contracts as a prevalent challenge in their countries.

Precarious employment affects professional autonomy, access to social protections, union participation, and long-term workforce stability.

4. Workloads Are Increasing

Workload emerged as one of the most consistent concerns across all regions.

The survey found:

- 94% of respondents identified work intensification as a significant challenge.
- 76% reported that the pace and intensity of work has increased over the past two years.
- Many unions reported insufficient time for professional learning, industry upskilling, curriculum development, and supporting students' practical learning.

Growing administrative demands, accountability pressures, inspections, and the need to continually update technical knowledge are increasing pressure on teachers.

5. Professional Learning Is Essential but Uneven

Professional learning is particularly important in TVET because teachers must continually adapt to changing technologies, industry practices, and labour market needs.

The survey found:

- Nearly 10% of respondents reported no access to Continuous Professional Development (CPD).
- 22% reported receiving no support for upskilling.
- More than one-quarter reported no allocated work time for CPD.

- Almost half of respondents felt teachers are not adequately supported to undertake professional learning.

Participants consistently identified high-quality continuing professional development as essential to maintaining educational quality and professional status.

6. TVET Teachers Continue to Experience Low Professional Status

Despite the growing importance of the sector, social recognition remains limited.

Key findings include:

- 61.4% of responding unions perceive TVET teachers as having low status within society.
- Status varies by discipline, with engineering, IT, and technical fields generally perceived more positively than care, community service, creative, and early childhood sectors.
- Gender inequalities remain evident, with women making up the majority of the workforce while men continue to dominate leadership positions.

Member organisations repeatedly highlighted the persistence of academic-vocational hierarchies that continue to position TVET as a second-tier pathway in many countries.

7. Underinvestment Threatens TVET Quality

The survey highlights concerns about resources and institutional capacity.

Respondents identified:

- Inadequate investment in technology and digital infrastructure.
- Shortages of equipment and teaching materials.
- Growing competition for funding and enrolments.
- Expanding privatisation and outsourcing.
- Inadequate institutional capacity to meet community needs.

Most significantly, 80% of respondents believe TVET providers cannot fully meet community needs with current levels of support and investment.



What Unions Are Demanding

Across countries and regions, a clear consensus emerged around key priorities.

Member organisations consistently called for:

Fair Salaries and Secure Employment

- Pay parity with other teachers.
- Competitive salaries that attract and retain qualified professionals.
- Secure and permanent employment.
- Strong collective bargaining rights.

Sustainable Public Investment

- Increased public funding.
- Better infrastructure and facilities.
- Modern equipment and technology.
- Reduced dependence on privatisation and outsourcing.

Stronger Professionalism

- High-quality initial teacher education.
- Accessible continuous professional development.
- Professional autonomy.
- Recognition of teaching expertise alongside industry experience.

Greater Recognition of TVET

- Challenging outdated perceptions of vocational education.
- Recognising TVET as a central part of public education systems.
- Elevating the status of TVET teachers and learners.

Key Takeaways for EI Member Organisations

The survey points to a fundamental conclusion: the challenges facing TVET are well understood and solutions are available. What is missing is sufficient political commitment and investment.

For Education International members, four priorities emerge:

- 1.** Campaign for increased public investment in TVET systems and institutions. (Go public)
- 2.** Defend professional standards and oppose deprofessionalisation.
- 3.** Strengthen collective bargaining and social dialogue.
- 4.** Advance the status, visibility, and public value of TVET and its teachers and education support personnel.

As EI General Secretary, David Edwards notes in the foreword, governments face a clear choice: continue asking more of TVET while investing less in the people who sustain it, or build the conditions that allow the sector to fulfil its promise. The survey findings suggest that the future strength of TVET will depend less on policy rhetoric and more on decisions about investment, workforce support, professional autonomy, and respect for teachers.

A strong TVET sector requires strong public investment, strong professional support, and a strong commitment to the teachers whose work turns policy ambitions into life changing opportunities for learners and communities.



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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.