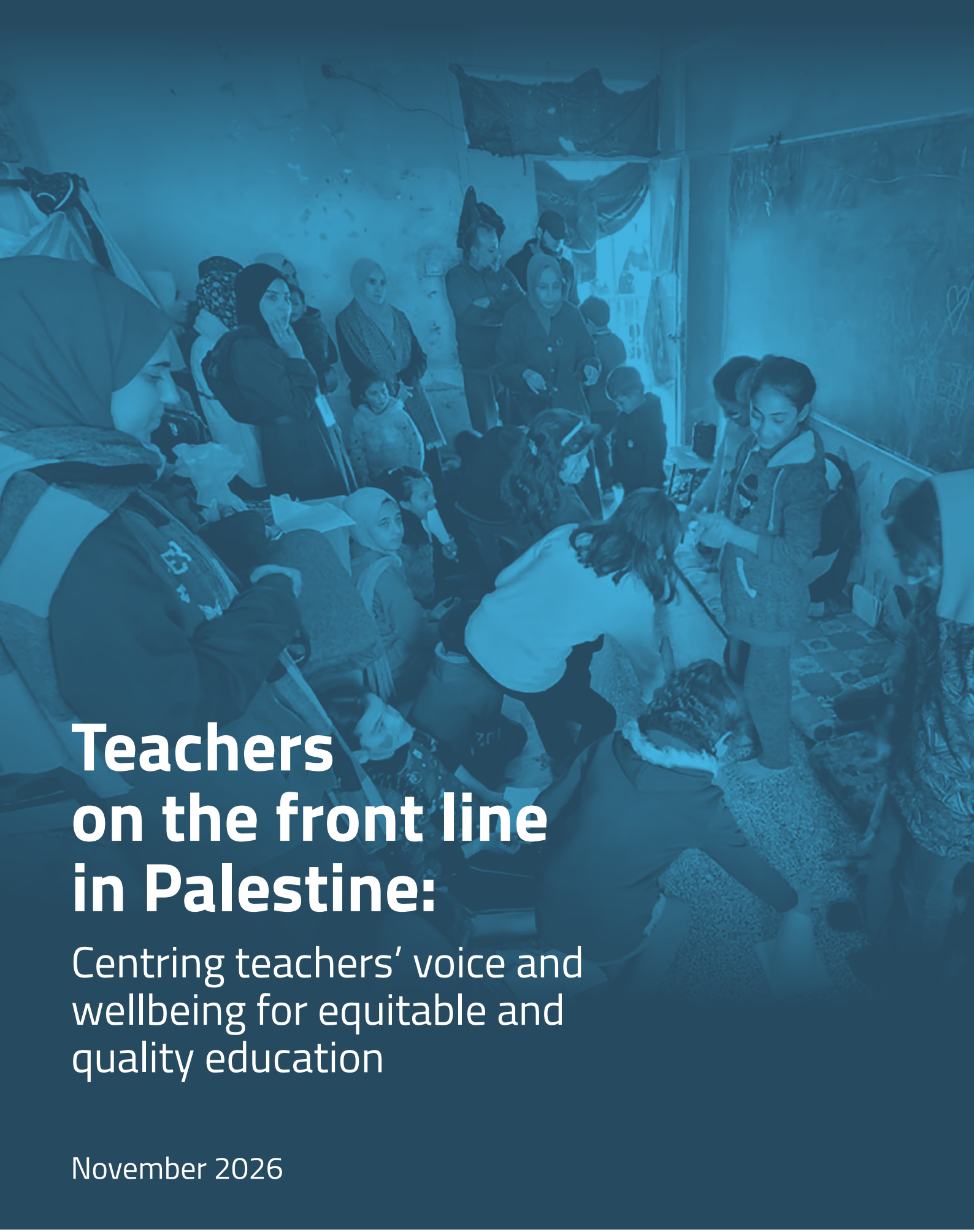


Teachers on the front line in Palestine:

Centring teachers' voice and wellbeing for equitable and quality education

November 2026

REAL
Research for Equitable Access and Learning

GUPT

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Disclaimers

The views and interpretations expressed in this report are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of their affiliated institutions, Education International, GUPT, their respective partners or the organisations that supported or funded the research.

To protect the safety, privacy and confidentiality of research participants, the authors have removed all personal and organisational identifiers from the report.

The terminology used in this report follows *United Nations* (UN) definitions and conventions.

Dedication

The authors dedicate this report to all the teachers who are working on the front line in Palestine, contributing to supporting children and young people in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.[1] Their steadfastness demonstrates their commitment to providing the right to education for all Palestinian children to equitable and quality education in Gaza and the West Bank, and for affirming and supporting Palestinian identity.

Statement on the use of AI

Artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted tools, including large language models, were used to support the literature search process and language editing, as well as improve the clarity and presentation of the report. AI was not used to generate primary evidence, interpret findings or make evaluative judgements. All AI-assisted outputs were rigorously audited by the authors. The authors remain fully responsible for the content presented in this report.

[1] The report uses the term the West Bank throughout to include Palestinian schools in East Jerusalem, which are under Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Palestinian Authority, control, unless stated otherwise.

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1. Introduction

Teachers are central to the quality, continuity and resilience of education systems. Yet the profession is under growing pressure globally. UNESCO and the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (2024) estimate that 44 million additional primary and secondary teachers will be needed by 2030, while also identifying difficulties in teacher retention. The UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession (International Labour Organization, 2024) and the 2025 Santiago Consensus (UNESCO, 2025) emphasise that addressing teacher shortages requires more than recruitment: strengthening the profession also requires adequate remuneration and decent working conditions, continuous professional development, professional autonomy and meaningful teacher participation in decisions affecting their work. These conditions become particularly important in contexts affected by conflict and crisis, where existing pressures on the profession are compounded by threats to teachers' safety, livelihoods and workplaces.

Conflict can fundamentally reshape what it means to work as a teacher. Teachers may be killed, injured, detained or displaced in addition to the need to support family and community members, while schools and universities may be attacked, damaged or even destroyed. Conflict, displacement and under-resourced working environments can compound teacher shortages and affect teachers' wellbeing and willingness to remain in the profession (Henderson, 2025). At the same time, teachers may be required to sustain learning in temporary or resource-constrained settings and support learners experiencing trauma, displacement and loss. However, teachers are themselves members of crisis-affected communities, and their work can simultaneously provide purpose and stability while exposing them to additional pressures and risks (Henderson, 2025).

The occupied Palestinian territory represents an acute example of these intersecting pressures for decades (since the 1940s). In Gaza, 19 years of blockade, repeated military escalations, shortages of electricity and teaching materials, damaged educational infrastructure and recurrent school closures had already placed immense pressure on teachers and learners before the Israeli military attacks started in October 2023 (Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster, 2024a). As of 1 February 2026, 792 educational staff in Gaza were killed and 3,251 were injured (OCHA oPt, 2026a). Teachers, therefore, have faced not only the destruction and disruption of their workplaces, but displacement, bereavement, material deprivation and psychological distress, while attempting to maintain learning and support students experiencing many of the same conditions (Education Above All Foundation, 2024; Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, et al., 2024; 2026).

In the West Bank, military checkpoints, restrictions on movement, attacks on schools, settler violence and recurring fiscal crises have disrupted teachers' ability to reach schools and participate in professional life, while creating an increasingly insecure environment for teaching and learning (Occupied

Palestinian Territory Education Cluster, 2025a; OCHA oPt, 2024). Teachers' issues have been compounded by the fact that salaries are irregular, largely reflecting the Palestinian Authority's fiscal crisis, including the withholding of clearance revenues by Israel and declining international aid (Najjar & Hamdan, 2025). Although the contexts differ, teachers across the occupied Palestinian territories were already working under conditions of prolonged instability and crisis before the military attacks of the past three years.

While the research highlighted above has extensively documented attacks on Palestinian education, less attention has focused on implications for the teaching profession: teachers' working and living conditions, wellbeing, remuneration and social protection, professional development, and autonomy, voice and agency. These concerns are central to global debates on strengthening teaching, particularly in crisis settings, where education continuity and recovery depend on sustaining a qualified and supported workforce (UNESCO & International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, 2024; International Labour Organization, 2024; UNESCO, 2025).

Against this backdrop, this study examines the state of the teaching profession across the occupied Palestinian territory, covering teaching personnel in early childhood, primary and secondary education and recognising the distinct circumstances facing teachers in Gaza and the West Bank. The purpose of the study is to document the state of the teaching profession and centre educators' needs, experiences and perspectives, providing evidence to inform national and international actors as they develop strategies for education continuity and recovery. Specifically, the report aims to:

- assess the profile, working conditions and professional experiences of teaching personnel across early childhood, primary and secondary education;
- examine how occupation, conflict, displacement and fiscal instability have affected teachers' professional practice, wellbeing, safety and livelihoods;
- identify the support available to teachers, together with remaining gaps and priority needs;
- explore teachers' perspectives on education recovery, professional agency and future planning; and
- generate evidence-based recommendations to strengthen the teaching profession and support education recovery across the occupied Palestinian territory.

The study draws on the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (International Labour Organization and UNESCO, 2019). The research combines teacher surveys with focus group discussions and key informant interviews involving teachers, teacher union representatives (i.e., General Union of Palestinian Teachers), education ministry officials, school leaders and other stakeholders. Together, these complementary methods provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences, challenges and priorities of teachers across the occupied Palestinian territory.

2. Methodology

Research design

This study included a cross-sectional online survey of teachers together with a qualitative strand involving focus group discussions and interviews with teachers and education stakeholders, including ministry officials and NGO representatives. The two strands were initially analysed separately and then brought together during reporting. The results from the survey provided patterns in teachers' experiences, which were combined with the qualitative data providing contextual and deeper explanation.

Sample and recruitment

For the quantitative strand, a non-probability sampling was used. A survey link was shared with teachers through WhatsApp groups and email lists by General Union of Palestinian Teachers (GUPT). Most of the groups reached through the survey were connected to GUPT. The survey was also distributed through additional lists and networks beyond the Union, including lists of private schools, in order to reach teachers who were not necessarily affiliated with GUPT.

The population of teachers in Gaza is comprised of 11,713 teachers, nearly half of whom are female (47.5%). By contrast, the population of teachers in West Bank, including Palestinian schools in East Jerusalem, is 41,214, 67% of whom are female. Tabe 1 presents the population and sample representation of the study.

Table 1: **Population and sample of the study**

Region	Gender	Population (n)	Population (%)	Sample (n)	Sample (%)
Gaza	Male	6,146	52.5%	289	45.5%
	Female	5,567	47.5%	346	54.5%
	Total	**11,713**	**100%**	**635**	**100%**
West Bank	Male	13,761	33%	566	24.4%
	Female	27,453	67%	1,757	75.6%
	Total	**41,214**	**100%**	**2,323**	**100%**

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2026, and sample calculations by authors.

In total, 3,381 teachers accessed the survey; out of which 3,165 consented to respond to the survey. Of the consenting teachers, 37 who were working in UNRWA schools were excluded because their number was insufficient for meaningful comparisons across school types. A further 170 responses

were excluded during data cleaning and sample weighting, due to missing or ambiguous demographic information related to school type and teaching level. This resulted in a final sample of 2,958 teachers, comprising 635 from Gaza and 2,323 from the West Bank. Detailed characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 2.

The gender distribution of survey respondents varied between Gaza and the West Bank, with female teachers having a slightly greater representation relative to their proportions in the respective teaching populations. In Gaza, female teachers accounted for 54.5% of respondents, although they constitute 47.5% of the teaching population, representing a slightly overrepresentation of 7 percentage points. Similarly, in the West Bank, female teachers comprised 75.6% of respondents compared with 66.6% of the teaching population, representing a slightly overrepresentation of 9 percentage points. Thus, while the West Bank sample broadly reflected the female majority within its teaching population, both regional samples had a slightly higher representation of female teachers.

In terms of teachers with disabilities, population-level data were not available. Most of the respondents from Gaza (96) and the West Bank (97%) reported no known disability. However, 3% from Gaza and 2% from West Bank reported a known disability. It is important to highlight that the survey might not have captured many of those teachers who have a conflict-induced disability and might have discontinued teaching and/or did not have accessible devices to respond to the survey.

The respondents were mainly from government schools. In the Gaza sample, 15% of the respondents were from private schools, which was larger than in the West Bank (3%). The predominance of government-school teachers in the sample reflects the structure of the Palestinian education system where most education is provided through government schools. The inclusion of respondents from private schools, particularly in Gaza, also ensured that the sample captured some variation across school types.

Regarding employment status, in Gaza, only 55% of the respondents were actively teaching, while 37% were employed but unable to work due to the military attacks and 7% were unemployed due to the miliary attacks. In the West Bank, by contrast, 92% were actively teaching and only a small number were unable to work or unemployed. In Gaza, only 64% reported had a permanent contract, while temporary contracts and volunteer roles were much more common. In the West Bank, permanent contracts were far more dominant at 92%, and volunteer roles were almost absent. This suggests that the Gaza teaching workforce in the sample is more disrupted not only in whether teachers can work, but also in the security of their employment arrangements.

Overall, the sample includes more primary than secondary teachers: 59% teaching in primary schools and 41% in secondary schools. A higher proportion of those in the Gaza sample are secondary school teachers (56%), while a larger proportion are primary school teachers in the West Bank (63%). Table 2 provides more detail.

Table 2: **Demographic background of sample teachers (n=2,958)**

Survey item	Response category	Overall (n)	Gaza	West Bank
Gender	Male	855	46%	24%
	Female	2,103	54%	76%
Disability	No	2,850	96%	97%
	Yes	71	3%	2%
	Prefer not to say	37	1%	1%
Employment status	Currently employed and actively teaching	2,489	55%	92%
	Currently employed but unable to work due to war/ attacks	397	37%	7%
	Unemployed due to war/ attacks	52	7%	<1%
	Unemployed but not due to war	20	1%	1%
School type	Government (Ministry of Education) school	2,780	85%	97%
	Private school	178	15%	3%
Teaching experience	Less than 5 years	512	13%	18%
	5-10 years	670	16%	25%
	11-15 years	411	12%	15%
	16-20 years	560	23%	18%
	More than 20 years	805	37%	25%
Highest qualification	Diploma/Certificate	127	3%	5%
	Bachelor's degree	2,339	78%	79%
	Master's degree	427	14%	15%
	PhD	58	5%	1%
	Other	7	<1%	<1%
Teaching level	Primary	1,649	44%	63%
	Secondary	1,148	56%	37%
Employment type	Permanent contract	2,536	64%	92%
	Temporary contract	219	18%	4%
	Daily contract	93	4%	3%
	Volunteer	64	10%	<1%
	Not sure	46	3%	1%

Note: Number and percentage represent only valid responses. The teaching-level variable has 2,797 valid responses.
Source: Authors

The qualitative component explored participants' experiences of teaching and the challenges facing the profession across Gaza and the West Bank. It involved 80 participants: 66 in focus group discussions and 14 in individual interviews, comprising nine teachers and five education officials.

Teachers interviewed individually were recruited from survey respondents who were invited to participate and voluntarily agreed. Education officials were purposively selected for their knowledge of the Palestinian education system and the issues examined. They included one Ministry of Education and Higher Education representative and four representatives from NGOs and a UN organisation. Table 3 summarises participation by method and gender.

Table 3: **Details of participants of qualitative data**

Participant group	Method	Women	Men	Total
Focus group discussion participants	Focus group discussions	38	28	66
Teachers recruited through the survey	Individual interviews	5	4	9
Ministry of Education and Higher Education representative	Individual interview	1	0	1
NGO and UN representatives	Individual interviews	2	2	4
Total		**46**	**34**	**80**

Source: Authors

Data collection tools and procedure

A survey questionnaire was developed to capture teachers' background characteristics, living and working conditions, school facilities, access and safety, alongside their views on various dimensions of education and teaching (see Appendix A – teacher survey). The online questionnaire was designed by the research team and included teacher education, international development, gender and assessment experts. The online form was developed using Microsoft Forms in both English and Arabic.

The survey was piloted prior to administration to ensure rigour and validity. The pilot supported the process of revising the tool to enhance reliability and clarity. The final survey was administered online using Microsoft Forms from 2 June to 6 July 2026.

Separate interview protocols were developed for teachers, Ministry of Education and Higher Education officials, NGOs and UN representatives

Data analysis

For the quantitative data, in order to assess whether the realised sample was adequately representative of the teacher population, post-stratification weights were used (see Appendix B for detailed methods and results). For robustness checks, sensitivity analysis was undertaken by comparing unweighted and weighted percentages. There were very marginal differences in results of the unweighted and weighted sample, which led the authors to the decision to present results with the unweighted sample in the report.

The main survey analysis was descriptive. For each variable, frequencies and percentages were calculated. Separate analyses were carried out for Gaza and the West Bank samples. In each region, the authors presented results for the overall sample followed by disaggregation by type of school and by gender.

The qualitative data from focus group discussions and interviews were analysed thematically. Transcripts were read closely, coded using ATLAS.ti, grouped into categories and developed into themes linked to the survey findings such as teachers' wellbeing, professional autonomy etc. Qualitative evidence was used to in each section linked with the themes of the quantitative analysis.

Ethical considerations

The study received ethical approval from the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, and research permission from the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Given the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis, ethical safeguards prioritised participants' safety, emotional wellbeing and voluntary participation. Informed consent was obtained for surveys, interviews and focus group discussions, and participants could decline questions or withdraw without consequence.

Data collection proceeded only when participants could engage safely and voluntarily. Questions avoided unnecessary probing of traumatic experiences, and researchers remained attentive to distress. Identifying information was removed from records and reporting, data access was restricted to the research team, and findings were presented in aggregate or anonymised form.

As some qualitative researchers were GUPT members, the team explicitly addressed potential power imbalances. Researchers disclosed their affiliations and assured participants that participation and responses would not affect their relationship with GUPT or access to support. Interviewers used a non-directive, non-judgemental approach to encourage open and critical views while minimising additional pressure or distress.

Limitations of the study

The study has several limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the survey was conducted online during a prolonged period of Israeli miliary attacks, so there is possibility that certain groups of teachers with no or limited internet access have not been included in the sample. Similarly, teachers facing the most severe displacement, insecurity, injury, conflict-induced disability, bereavement or lack of connectivity may be under-represented. Although post-stratification weights were calculated as a sensitivity check, these cannot fully remove the sample bias that may arise from non-probability online recruitment.

Second, the findings are based on teachers' self-reported experiences. Responses about teaching practice, wellbeing, professional autonomy, support and hardship may be affected by recall, current emotional distress, interpretation of questions, and the very difficult conditions under which teachers completed the survey. Therefore, the study captures teachers' reported

experiences and perceptions rather than independently-observed classroom practice, living conditions or verified institutional records.

Thirdly, the Gaza and West Bank samples differ in context, sample composition and conditions due to the conflict and attacks. Comparisons drawn between them are useful and important, but they should be interpreted cautiously. Differences may reflect real contextual variation, but they may also reflect differences in access to the survey, displacement patterns, institutional networks and response conditions.

Finally, due to the challenging context, the study does not include student perspectives, learning outcomes, classroom observations, school level administrative data or longitudinal follow-up. As a result, it cannot assess the full impact of teacher experiences on student learning or educational continuity over time. The findings should therefore be read as a strong descriptive account of teachers' living, working and professional conditions under Israeli military attacks, rather than as a complete evaluation of the education system or the causal effects of attacks on teaching and learning.

3. The teaching profession in Palestine

This section provides a mapping of teaching and the teaching profession in Palestine, drawing from documentary sources, including education data and unpublished literature.

Since the establishment of the state of Israel, which culminated in the Nakba (Arabic for 'catastrophe') in 1948 in Palestine, Palestinians have experienced ethnic cleansing through massacres and forced displacement (Khalidi, 2022; Pappé, 2007). Education has also specifically been under attack in the decades since the Nakba throughout Palestine (examples of previous attacks can be found in Norwegian Refugee Council, 2020 and Human Rights Watch, 2009, among multitudes of other attacks). Attacks on education, including schools, students and teachers, have escalated since October 2023 (Faculty of Education et al., 2026). This is the context in which Palestinian teachers are operating.

The teaching profession in the occupied Palestinian territory is a large and predominantly public sector workforce that sustains the education system across the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Table 4 provides an overview of the composition of the teaching workforce in Palestine (Palestinian Ministy of Education and Higher Education, 2026). They total 52,927, with the majority working in government schools (82.8%). Approximately 78% of all teachers are in the West Bank, and the remainder in Gaza (22%).

Table 4: **Teaching workforce of Palestine, June 2026**

Category	School type	Gender/ Teaching level	Gaza	West Bank	Total
Gender	Government	Male	5,895	10,606	16,501
		Female	5,341	21,949	27,290
		Total	**11,236**	**32,555**	**43,791**
	Private	Male	251	3,155	3,406
		Female	226	5,504	5,730
		Total	**477**	**8,659**	**9,136**
Teaching level	Government	Primary (1-4)	4,788	13,393	18,181
		Elementary (5-9)	4,496	12,314	16,810
		Secondary (10-12)	1,952	6,848	8,800
		Total	**11,236**	**32,555**	**43,791**
	Private	Primary (1-4)	103	1,882	1,985
		Elementary (5-9)	321	5,800	6,121
		Secondary (10-12)	53	977	1,030
		Total	**477**	**8,659**	**9,136**

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2026.

The workforce is predominantly female. Women account for approximately 62.4% of the total, compared with 37.6% men. The gender composition of the profession is therefore a central consideration in analysing recruitment, retention, career progression, leadership opportunities and the unequal effects that economic hardship, insecurity and political restrictions have on teachers.

Of the total workforce, 38.1% teach primary Grades 1-4; 43.3% teach elementary Grades 5-9; and 18.6% teach secondary Grades 10-12. This distribution highlights the profession's essential role in foundational learning and underscores the importance of ensuring stable working conditions, adequate resources, appropriate workloads, subject-specific support and sustained professional development across all educational levels.

Palestinian teachers face severe and prolonged socioeconomic pressures that undermine their financial security, professional stability and wellbeing. Historically, Palestinians have been subjected to restrictions, attacks and adverse working conditions since the occupation. The Palestinian government has been unable to pay public sector teachers their full salaries and has generally paid only around 50% of their monthly entitlements. This situation is closely linked to the withholding of Palestinian tax revenues by the Israeli government, alongside the near absence of Arab financial assistance and insufficient European support from donor countries.

In addition to financial hardship, teachers face serious restrictions on movement and access to schools, particularly in the West Bank. Settler attacks, Israeli military measures, movement restrictions, land confiscation and the installation of gates that can close off Palestinian localities have created increasingly difficult and unpredictable conditions for teachers travelling to and from their workplaces.

The situation in Gaza represents an even more devastating dimension of this crisis. The extensive destruction of Gaza has affected its essential infrastructure, including the education system and school buildings. By July 2025, 97% of schools had been destroyed or severely damaged (Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster, 2025b). Many of the remaining facilities have been repurposed as displacement shelters and centres, providing refuge to families who have lost their homes. Consequently, education has been severely disrupted, and teachers have been confronted with the destruction of their workplaces, the displacement of their communities, the loss of colleagues and family members, and the psychological and material consequences of prolonged violence.

Remuneration remains a critical indicator of the status and sustainability of the teaching profession. The average net salary of a government schoolteacher, after tax and deductions related to the teacher's benefits, is approximately NIS3,500, or around US$1,100. Teachers currently receive roughly half their salary, subject to a minimum payment of approximately NIS2,000, or around US$650 (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2025).

Taken together, these conditions reveal a teaching profession operating under intersecting and mutually-reinforcing pressures: prolonged salary insecurity, deteriorating living conditions, restrictions on movement, settler violence, Israeli military attacks and measures and the extensive destruction of educational infrastructure in Gaza. These challenges impact teachers' economic

circumstances and personal wellbeing, undermining the right to equitable and quality education for Palestinian children. This report considers the status and wellbeing of teachers in Palestine within this context.

The teaching profession under occupation and conflict

Teachers in the occupied Palestinian territory work within an education system shaped by prolonged occupation, violence, movement restrictions and fiscal instability, all intensified since October 2023.

Gaza

Working conditions and the changing role of teachers

The literature indicates that teachers in Gaza were working under difficult conditions well before October 2023. Blockade, recurrent hostilities, overcrowding, shortages of educational infrastructure and resources, and reliance on double-shift schooling placed sustained pressure on schools and teachers (OHCHR, 2019). Since October 2023, these constraints have intensified dramatically. By July 2025, 97% of school buildings had sustained some level of damage, with 91.8% requiring full reconstruction or major rehabilitation (Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster, 2025b). For teachers, the destruction and repurposing of schools as shelters have meant the loss of conventional workplaces and a shift towards temporary learning spaces, shelters, and other emergency arrangements.

Teachers have also been directly affected. As of 1 February 2026, 792 educational staff had been killed and 3,251 teachers injured in Gaza since October 2023 (OCHA oPt, 2026b). Qualitative research further documents teachers experiencing repeated displacement, bereavement, hunger, loss of homes and psychological distress, while continuing to support students affected by many of the same experiences (Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, et al., 2024; 2026). Harb et al. (2026) describe this as a '*dual burden*': teachers are expected to support children experiencing trauma while themselves living through continuing violence and insecurity. This complicates conventional distinctions between teachers' personal and professional lives, since their capacity to work is closely connected to whether their own basic material, physical and psychosocial needs are met.

The literature also points to a substantial expansion of teachers' professional roles. Alongside instruction, teachers are increasingly expected to respond to extensive learning loss, provide psychosocial and pastoral support, identify protection concerns, and maintain some continuity and routine for children experiencing disruption. By March 2026, 7,854 teachers were supporting approximately 300,000 learners through 494 temporary learning spaces (OCHA oPt, 2026a). However, these responsibilities are being undertaken in overcrowded and resource-constrained environments, with continuing shortages of educational materials and other basic inputs for teaching and learning (OCHA oPt, 2026c). Teachers are therefore being asked to perform broader and more complex roles, while the resources and institutional structures normally supporting their work have been severely weakened.

Wellbeing and professional support

Teacher wellbeing emerges as a significant concern in the literature. Even before October 2023, research involving teachers in Gaza and the West Bank identified relationships between psychological distress, job satisfaction and work engagement (Pepe et al., 2019). More recent research highlights the scale of the psychosocial demands placed on teachers over the past three years. Harb et al. (2026) found substantial stress among participating teachers and emphasised the importance of interventions directed towards teachers' own self-care and peer support.

Research from Gaza suggests that supporting teachers' wellbeing is important not only for teachers themselves, but also for their capacity to sustain relationships with students and continue performing their professional roles (Harb et al., 2026; Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge et al., 2026). Teacher wellbeing therefore needs to be understood as part of the functioning and recovery of the education system rather than as an additional or individual concern.

Professional support needs have also changed. Teachers are working with learners experiencing extensive learning loss, trauma, disability, interrupted schooling and very different experiences of displacement. This creates a need for professional development that extends beyond conventional subject and pedagogical training (Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, et al., 2026).

Remuneration and sustainability of the profession

The available evidence also raises concerns about teachers' employment and the longer-term sustainability of the workforce in Gaza. OCHA recently reported that the absence of reliable teacher remuneration was reducing teacher availability and motivation and increasing reliance on volunteer teachers, with implications for both the continuity and quality of education (OCHA oPt, 2026d). Earlier humanitarian reporting similarly documented teachers working voluntarily and temporary learning spaces being affected by insufficient funding for teacher incentives (OCHA oPt, 2025a).

Remuneration is particularly important because teachers themselves face severe material insecurity. In this context, remuneration is not only an employment condition, but an important issue for teacher wellbeing, motivation and the longer-term sustainability of the profession.

Despite this, relatively little is known about how the crisis is affecting teachers' longer-term professional trajectories. There is limited systematic evidence on teacher attrition, motivation to remain in the profession, career progression, professional identity or how teachers envisage their future within education.

West Bank

Safety, mobility and access to work

Violence and restrictions on movement increasingly form part of the everyday working conditions of teachers in the West Bank. During the 2024/2025 academic year, the Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster

documented 2,040 education-related incidents in the West Bank, affecting 541 schools, 84,749 students and 4,711 teachers (Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster, 2025a). Incidents included movement restrictions, incursions into schools, settler violence, weapons use, detention and harassment.

Movement restrictions are particularly limiting teachers, because many must travel to reach their schools. As of December 2025, OCHA had documented 925 movement obstacles across the West Bank – 43% more than the annual average recorded over the preceding two decades. Checkpoints and road gates accounted for nearly 60% of these obstacles (OCHA oPt, 2026e). Such restrictions can make teachers' journeys longer and unpredictable and, in some cases, prevent them reaching schools.

Additionally, teachers and their workplaces are also continuously exposed to violence with the schools being under the threat of demolition or closure. In 2026, OCHA reported that 84 schools across the West Bank, were subject to demolition or stop-work orders. These schools served nearly 13,000 students and employed more than 1,000 teachers (OCHA oPt, 2026f). In the northern West Bank, 10 UNRWA schools in Jenin, Tulkarm and Nur Shams camps remained closed at the beginning of the 2025/2026 school year because of Israeli military operations, affecting more than 4,000 children (UNRWA, 2025a).

Monitoring data demonstrate the scale of exposure but tell us considerably less about its cumulative professional consequences. There is little systematic evidence on working time lost at checkpoints, additional transport expenditure, teacher absenteeism, reassignment between schools or the extent to which insecurity influences teachers' willingness or ability to remain in particular posts.

Pay, workload and professional wellbeing

In the West Bank, teachers' issues have been compounded by irregular and reduced salary payments, linked to the Palestinian Authority's wider fiscal crisis, including Israel's withholding of clearance revenues and declining international aid. Teachers have received reduced salaries since 2021, creating sustained financial pressure on teachers and their families (Najjar & Hamdan, 2025).

Reduced instructional time changes the nature of teachers' work. Teachers are expected to prioritise and compress curricula while responding to accumulated learning loss and repeated disruptions due to road blockades and checkpoints by the Israeli military. Yet relatively little research examines how teachers make these pedagogical decisions, how reduced or irregular salaries affect their household circumstances and motivation, or whether deteriorating working conditions influence decisions to remain in the profession.

Teachers also carry considerable psychosocial responsibilities. Children in the West Bank experience military operations, displacement, settler violence, arrests and movement restrictions, while teachers themselves are exposed to many of the same conditions. The findings of Pepe et al. (2019) are important in this context because they demonstrate that teacher wellbeing and work engagement were already significant professional issues prior to the current escalation.

Professional and pedagogical autonomy

Professional and pedagogical autonomy is an important dimension of teachers' working conditions, especially in East Jerusalem, where the institutional environment has become more restrictive in recent years. Six UNRWA schools in East Jerusalem were forcibly closed by Israeli authorities in May 2025, affecting nearly 800 children and the staff working in them (UNRWA, 2025b). Legislative changes have also targeted teacher employment and expression.

In January 2026, the Knesset passed legislation barring graduates of Palestinian higher education institutions from employment as teachers, principals or supervisors in the Israeli and East Jerusalem education systems, with the exception of people who have already finished the first year of their studies at Palestinian higher education institutions, or who were already employed in the education system. Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel – challenged the legislation before the Israeli Supreme Court in February 2026, arguing that it discriminates against Palestinian graduates and would have serious implications for the Palestinian education system (Adalah, 2026). This applies to Palestinians, including those in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, who are seeking employment in institutions that fall under Israeli municipalities.

Curriculum contestation has implications for teachers' professional autonomy, particularly in East Jerusalem, where funding for new classrooms is tied to adopting the Israeli curriculum (Ir Amim, 2025). Reviews of Palestinian textbooks challenge sweeping allegations of incitement while identifying specific concerns, highlighting the need for rigorous, contextualised analysis (Georg Eckert Institute, 2021; REAL Centre, 2026).

Yet there remains comparatively little empirical research asking teachers themselves how these structural conditions shape professional practice. There is limited evidence on whether Palestinian teachers feel able to select teaching approaches, adapt curricular material, discuss sensitive political and historical issues, participate in school level decision-making or raise professional concerns. Autonomy therefore needs to be examined not only as freedom over classroom pedagogy but as part of the wider political and institutional conditions under which teachers work.

Summary

The review highlighted in previous sections provides evidence of attacks on and disruption to Palestinian education, but a considerably less-complete account of how these pressures are reshaping teaching as a profession. Administrative and humanitarian monitoring provides increasingly detailed information on teacher numbers, attacks, school closures and movement restrictions. Much less is known about teachers' everyday professional experiences and how they are changing over time. It is this gap which this report seeks to address.

4. Teachers' living conditions

This section on teachers' living conditions during the period of continuing Israeli military attacks is sub-divided into three themes: home living conditions, household financial conditions, and household caregiving responsibilities.

Home living conditions

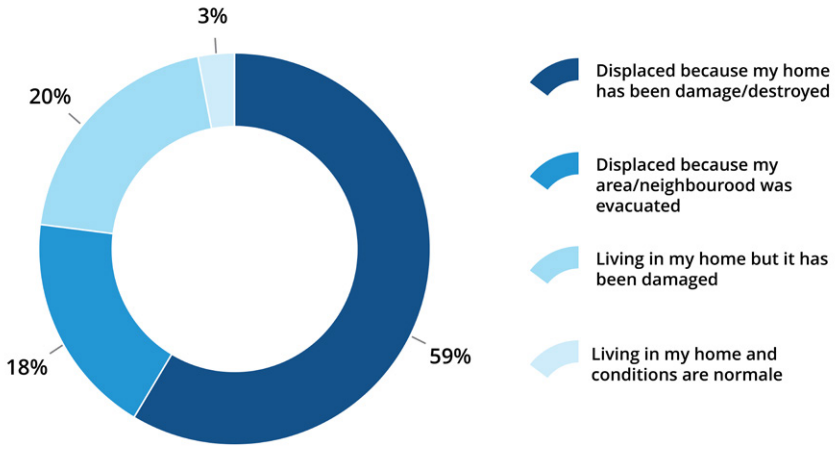
> *"Teachers are experiencing the same displacement, bereavement, insecurity, economic hardship and psychological trauma as the communities they serve."* —Development agency employee

Teachers in Gaza

> *"On a personal level, life has completely changed; we've moved to living in tents and shelters amidst a complete lack of stability, privacy, and basic services."* —Teacher in Gaza

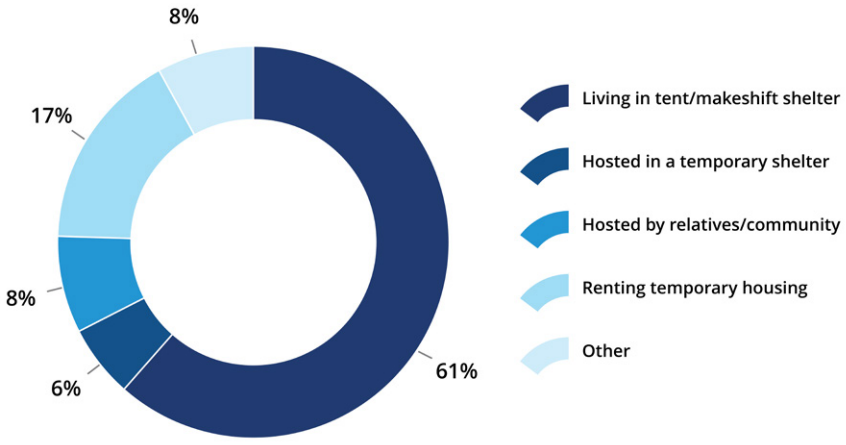
Teachers suffer from repeat displacement and unsafe living conditions alongside the rest of the population of Gaza. Almost all teachers in Gaza reported disruption in their home living conditions (see Figures 1 and 2). More than half (59%) have been displaced because of the damage or destruction of their home; 20% continue to live in their home even though it has been damaged; and 18% are displaced because their area or neighbourhood has been evacuated. Of those who have been displaced, a large proportion of teachers reported living in tents or makeshift shelters, followed by renting temporary housing. A smaller percentage have been hosted by relatives or community members or are in temporary shelters.

Figure 1: Current living conditions, Gaza teachers



Source: Authors

Figure 2: **Current stay if displaced, Gaza teachers**



Source: Authors

Displacement, and particularly repeated displacements (with teachers reporting 14 to 26 displacements), emerged as a major challenge in teachers' responses in the focus group discussions and interviews. Teachers reported living in displacement tents and shelters or "*unsuitable housing*" with their families. Teachers elaborated on the difficulties of day-to-day life under displacement. In addition to issues of safety, lack of privacy was a frequently discussed challenge. They expressed exhaustion as a result of trying to access basic needs, such as safe water and electricity, particularly as prices increased significantly. Teachers shared having to walk over rubble for long distances to reach their teaching destinations. Teachers reported that these hardships of daily life, and their related lack of adequate sleep or nutrition, severely impact their physical and psychological wellness.

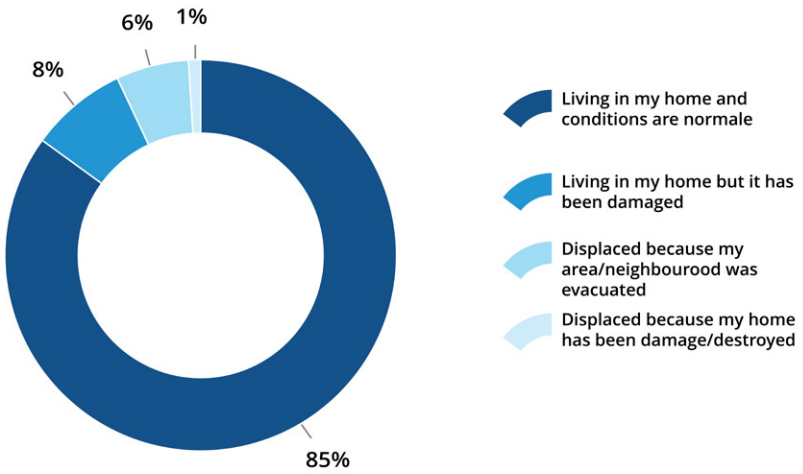
They discussed experiencing consistent anxiety and stress as they worry about their family and students' safety, in addition to "*deep sorrow*" over the loss of their schools. Teachers are also grieving the loss of family members, colleagues and homes. One teacher emphasised the pain of losing one's home after working and saving for years to acquire it. They carry these psychological burdens while also supporting traumatised students without adequate resources, as is discussed in Section 5 on working conditions. Teachers discussed how living in such circumstances causes "*severe physical and psychological exhaustion*", requiring significant resilience from teachers to continue teaching. An NGO employee stated that people with disabilities and women are the most affected among the whole population, especially in Gaza, as support services and assistive devices they may rely on, are not accessible. Despite these immense challenges and impossible conditions, teachers asserted that they are committed to continuing teaching, with one teacher stating that she aims to maintain some psychological balance so she can support her students and another saying that he "*remains steadfast*" in his commitment to his "*educational and humanitarian mission*".

Teachers in the West Bank

Compared to Gaza, the home living conditions of teachers in the West Bank are relatively stable (see Figures 3 and 4). The majority of respondents (85%) reported that they live in their homes under normal conditions and 8% reported living in homes that are damaged. In addition, 7% of the teachers reported displacement either due to a damaged house or due to a

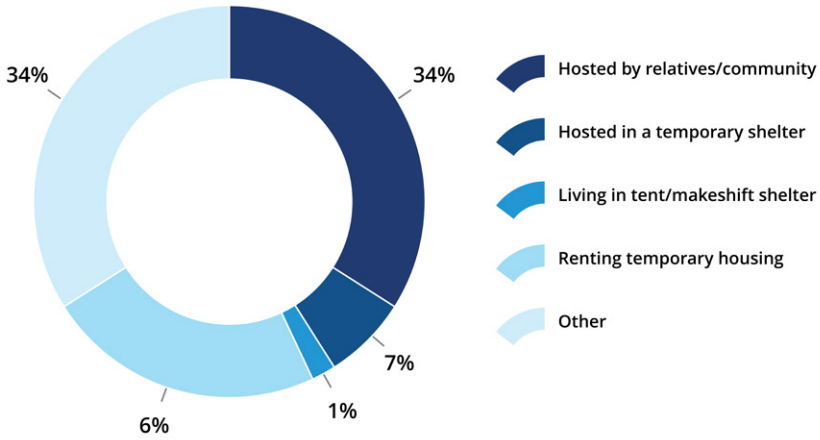
neighbourhood being evacuated. This is due to the nature of the escalations in the West Bank, which have not involved damage and displacement at the same scale as in Gaza.

Figure 3: Current housing situation, West Bank teachers



Source: Authors

Figure 4: Current stay if displaced, West Bank teachers



Source: Authors

Even though teachers in the West Bank experience displacement at a smaller scale, they reported significant disruptions to their daily life in other ways in interviews and focus group discussions. Development agency employees reported that teachers most affected by the crisis are those who have been displaced in the West Bank, including teachers and students in and around the refugee camps in the northern West Bank; those who live in communities near Israeli settlements; and those who cross military checkpoints on their way to school. Such conditions result in a psychological burden on teachers and students alike, as they experience daily uncertainty and restrictions to their right to education. In addition, a development agency employee noted that people with disabilities are disproportionately affected as assistive devices and specialised services are not available. In addition, women and girls are disproportionately affected because families are often more worried about girls' and women's safety than boys' and men's safety, resulting in limitations to their mobility and participation in educational services when there are security risks.

Beyond displacement, teachers and other interviewees reported that they experience settler violence, military operations, checkpoints and movement

restrictions. The violence, including raids, thefts and damage, impacts their schools and homes. These difficulties, in addition to the large workload, result in "*chronic exhaustion*". Teachers shared that they are uncertain about their working day due to security and mobility restrictions, making it difficult to plan both personal and professional activities. One female teacher shared that security and mobility restrictions "*affected* [her] *time management and routine, so* [she] *sometimes found it difficult to get to school on time, and* [she] *needed to adapt* [her] *study plans accordingly.*" In turn, as noted by another teacher, the restricted ability of "*teachers to reach the school due to barriers and closures*" results in "*irregularities in the educational process*" of students.

Teachers experience a heavy emotional burden as they grieve the losses of their community, and worry about their families', students' and colleagues' safety. Additionally, "*witnessing the effects of bombing, destruction and the killing of children in the Gaza Strip*" has a profound "*psychological impact*" on teachers, as explained by a male teacher who expressed "*frustration and anxiety about* [his] *children's future, fearing that what happened in Gaza will spread to the West Bank*." This prolonged stress can have a heavy physical toll, resulting in exhaustion. An NGO employee said that the conditions teachers are living and working under have "*left many teachers feeling uncertain about their role within the current political context and the future of education.*" Despite these challenges, teachers share that they continue to focus on the fulfilment of their responsibilities and draw resilience from their supportive colleagues and remembering that education can have a positive impact.

Household financial conditions

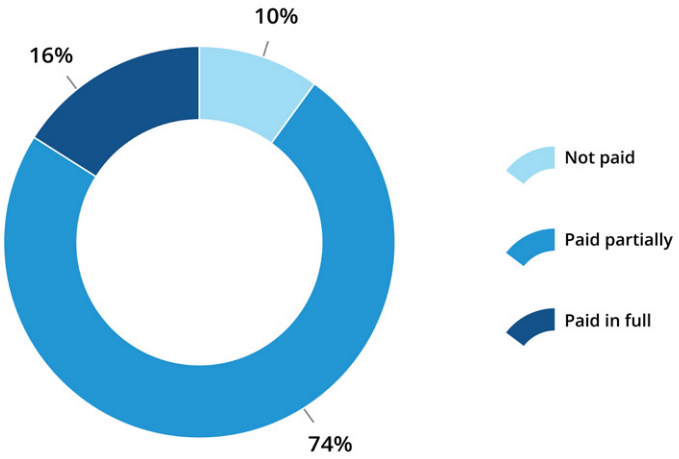
> *"Teachers also need social and economic stability. Having a reliable and secure source of income is essential, as financial insecurity places additional stress on teachers and affects their wellbeing and performance."* —Development agency employee

Teachers in Gaza

Teachers in Gaza reported salary disruption and financial hardship (see Figure 5). Regarding how often they receive their salary, around nine out of ten teachers reported delays. When asked to consider the past three months, around three quarters of teachers received partial payment and 10% did not receive any of their salary. More females reported full payment than males. Also, a smaller percentage of secondary school teachers received their full salary than primary school teachers. The data suggest that salary disruption has been a common experience across the teaching workforce in Gaza, as with Palestine overall. Relatedly, almost all teachers reported financial distress in the past three months due to salary issues, with 78% reporting that they face serious financial distress regularly and 20% occasionally.

Qualitative results corroborated with these trends. One teacher mentioned that transferring teachers from one place to another has resulted in lower salaries, possibly due to additional transport costs. Another stated that they continue to have financial obligations to pay off their home, which has been destroyed in this war, and for their children's university education. One teacher expressed frustration at having worked and saved for 25 years to acquire their home, only for it to be completely destroyed shortly after.

Figure 5: **Salary payment amount over the past three months, Gaza teachers**



Source: Authors

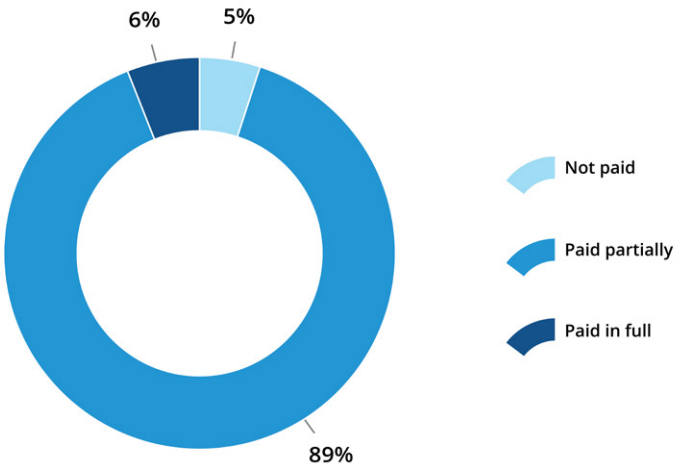
Additionally, the salary provided is not high enough to cover living costs as these have increased dramatically: "*The salary does not keep pace with the exorbitant cost of living.*" Teachers discussed not being able to meet basic needs, including water, electricity, cooking gas and internet, which negatively affect personal and professional life and can cause burdens at home. One teacher who reported that the salary does not meet her needs, shared that she has children with neurological and physical disabilities, suggesting that meeting needs is particularly difficult in such cases. The psychological stress of having the responsibility to provide family members with their basic needs in the absence of financial means also adds a burden.

When asked about what changes or actions they see as necessary to support them, or what message they would want to convey to decision-makers, teachers stressed the importance of a regular full salary.

Teachers in the West Bank

The majority of the teachers in the West Bank reported receiving partial salaries in the past three months (89%) (see Figure 6). In addition, the majority also reported that the salary payments they receive are often delayed (86%). Most teachers (97%) reported serious financial difficulty in the past three months, with 68% reporting that they regularly experience serious financial difficulty.

Figure 6: **Salary payment amount over the past three months, West Bank teachers**



Source: Authors

Teachers in the West Bank also reported severe financial difficulties resulting from incomplete and irregular payments of salaries, as well as reductions and delays. These have made it difficult for them to meet their families' needs, particularly as the costs of living increase, as teachers' salaries are their main source of income. Teachers discussed how the irregularity and incompleteness of salary payments makes the management of monthly obligations and family needs, including rent and food, difficult. They reported needing to reorganise priorities and adapt to the limited resources. One teacher shared that the financial impact is the largest of the effects of the war on their life. An NGO employee reported that the increasing poverty in the West Bank has caused a further reduction of support services for people with disabilities, resulting in many having limited access to necessary support services. Female teachers shared that their financial responsibilities at home have increased because their husbands became unemployed.

Teachers also reported the emotional consequences of this financial strain. One teacher shared that seeing their friends, families and fellow teachers struggle as a result of salary disruptions has caused anxiety, sadness and pressure, as such financial pressures impact the whole family, including the children. The impact of such financial stress on families is demonstrated in the following quote from a teacher: "*daily life has become fraught with family problems due to anxiety, fear and irregular and insufficient salaries*."

When asked about support needed, teachers stressed the importance of a regular full salary. One teacher emphasised the importance of "*financial stability to alleviate the burdens of living, especially in light of the high cost of living we are witnessing*." A development agency employee shared the following about the financial difficulties faced by teachers:

> *"Despite these hardships, teachers have continued to perform their duties to the best of their ability, although doing so has become increasingly difficult. Unfortunately, there is still no clear prospect of an economic solution, and the situation continues to deteriorate."*

Household caregiving responsibilities

Teachers in Gaza

Teachers reported that the Israeli military attacks have impacted their lives at home. The vast majority of teachers (90%) in Gaza reported an increase in their caregiving responsibilities since the start of the attacks in October 2023. For instance, one highlighted that it has disrupted life at home with "*constant fear and anxiety*". Teachers also discussed an increase in family responsibilities or difficulties managing family responsibilities alongside their educational and humanitarian duties towards their students and communities. One teacher discussed how family responsibilities are an "*overwhelming burden*" when combined with the "*management of basic survival needs and the effort to provide my children with a minimum sense of psychological security amid the constant threat of bombardment and uncertainty*." This increase in responsibility and difficult conditions impacts teachers' ability to carry out their professional roles. The fulfilment of their usual family responsibilities has become increasingly difficult. One teacher mentioned how one of her daughters with chronic medical conditions was severely impacted by the war in a way that resulted in a loss of vision and speech, because she was unable

to reach a hospital in time due to displacement from their homes, inaccessible transportation, and medication and medical treatment shortage.

An NGO employee highlighted that these circumstances make it increasingly difficult for teachers to carry out their educational work and "*nurture active learners and develop students into responsible and engaged citizens*." Others shared that their household chores are excessive and another that pressure at home has increased, affecting their daily life.

Teachers in the West Bank

Almost all teachers reported an increase in caregiving responsibilities, with more than two thirds (69%) of teachers reporting this increase as significant. Qualitative findings add further context to these results by explaining how teachers' responsibilities at home have changed during the war. A teacher shared that her responsibilities have been expanded from looking after family to taking care of students and the community during these crises. One teacher noted that she feels depressed as she is unable to meet the needs of her orphaned students.

Teacher living conditions across Gaza and the West Bank

The war and ongoing attacks have significantly affected teachers' living conditions in both Gaza and the West Bank, although the nature and extent of these disruptions differ. In Gaza, widespread displacement, destruction of homes and limited access to basic necessities have created severe physical and psychological hardship. In contrast, most teachers in the West Bank remain in their homes but experience insecurity, settler violence, military operations and movement restrictions that disrupt daily life and contribute to psychological distress. Women and people with disabilities face additional challenges, particularly in accessing essential services and support.

Despite these differences, teachers across both regions face considerable financial hardship due to delayed and partial salary payments, compounded by rising living costs. Increased household caregiving responsibilities have placed further pressure on teachers, particularly those caring for children and family members with disabilities. These overlapping challenges have affected teachers' wellbeing and their ability to balance personal and professional responsibilities. The findings highlight the importance of regular and full salary payments, alongside measures to address teachers' psychosocial and household support needs.

5. Teachers' working conditions

> *"In general, education is continuing at a minimum level. Teachers' capacity to provide quality education has been reduced because of multiple pressures, including reduced salaries, restrictions on movement, military incursions, threats to their safety, bombardment and arrests."*
> —Development agency employee)

This section discusses teachers' working conditions and is organised into three sub-themes: school resources, teaching and workload, and mobility and safety.

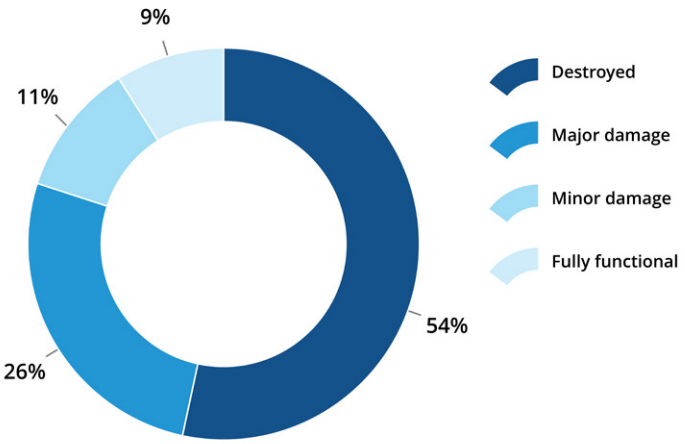
School resources

School resources refer to the physical condition of school buildings, the functionality of basic facilities and classrooms, the availability of furniture, textbooks and teaching and learning materials, and teachers' perceptions of whether inadequate resources constrain their ability to teach effectively.

Gaza

The results shown in Figure 7 indicate a huge disruption because of the condition of school buildings in Gaza. An overwhelming majority of teachers (91%) reported damage in their school building where they usually worked; out of which more than half of teachers reported complete destruction of their school.

Figure 7: Current condition of school buildings, Gaza teachers

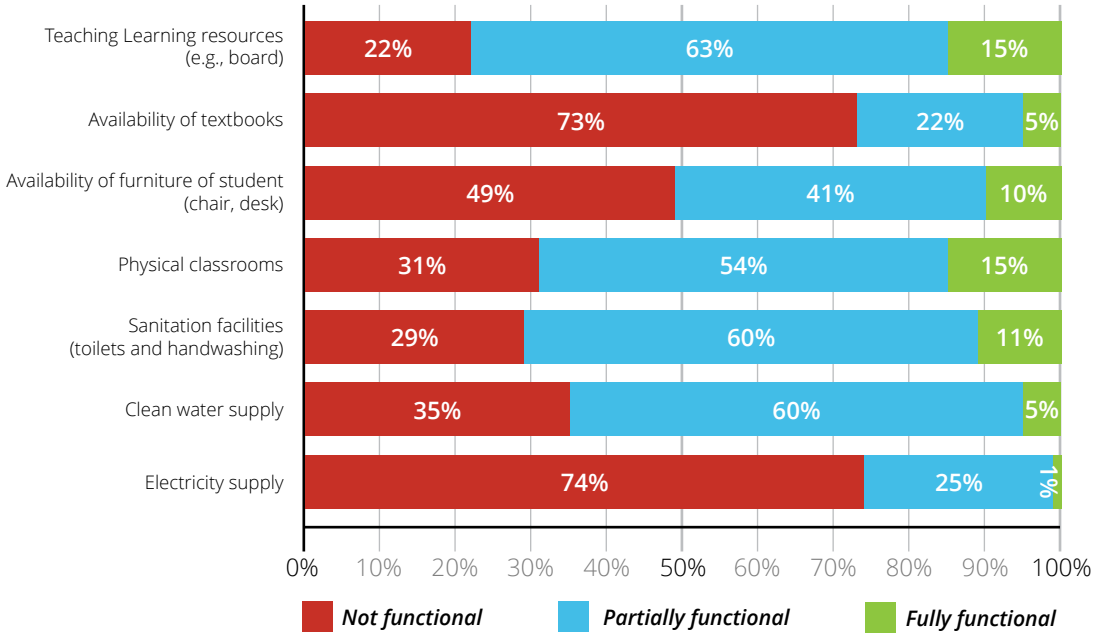


Source: Authors

The physical destruction of schools has been accompanied by severe shortages of teaching resources (see Figure 8). Overall, 79% of Gaza teachers perceived that inadequate teaching resources limited their ability to teach effectively. The functionality of basic facilities and teaching resources further

illustrates the severity of working conditions in Gaza. Around nine out of ten teachers reported completely not functional or partially functional basic facilities, such as electricity (99%), textbook availability (95%), student furniture (90%), clean water facilities (95%), sanitation facilities (89%), physical classrooms (85%) and teaching and learning resources (85%). It is worth highlighting that more than 70% of teachers reported that textbooks are not available and electricity not functional.

Figure 8: Status of basic facilities in teaching spaces, Gaza teachers



Source: Authors

Qualitative interviews and group discussions identified that the destruction of schools and the use of schools as shelters has "*fundamentally disrupted the educational process*", causing a significant challenge for teachers. The limited learning spaces that are left are heavily overcrowded and combine students from different grade levels together. Teachers also highlight the "*individual personal differences among students*" and the "*diversity of cultures within the tent* [classroom]" resulting from displacement. The overcrowding limits teachers' ability to pay attention to individual differences of students. Even these overcrowded learning spaces are difficult to access because of evacuation orders, damaged roads, absence of transportation and other security concerns. Teachers are severely impacted by this destruction, as they are not able to carry out their work, and when they do, it is in unsafe locations. In addition to being unsafe from "*bullets or shelling*", teachers also stress that the unsanitary conditions of the classroom environment lead to "*disease outbreaks*" among students. Overall, the unsuitable classroom environment is summarised by a teacher:

> *"...a lack of essential stationery and supplies for the educational process, such as blackboards, pens, paper... chairs, tables... and screens to protect from the sun and the spread of diseases, rodents and insects within the classrooms; and unsafe school locations that put students at risk."*

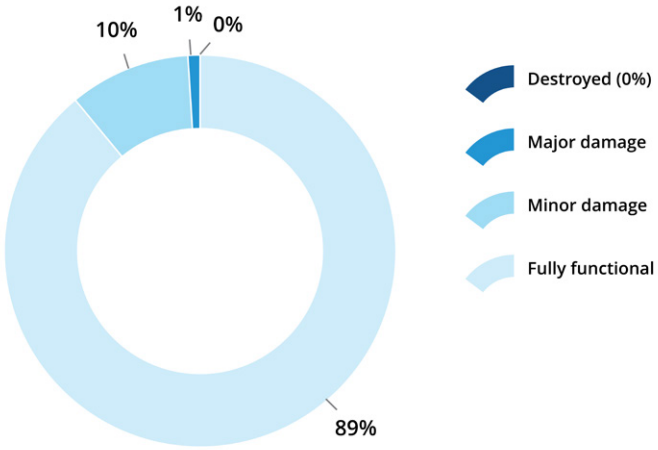
Additionally, due to the severe shortage of education resources, teachers are required to teach without the needed supplies and using their own limited personal resources and individual initiatives to set up mutual support among teachers and families. Furthermore, people with disabilities do not have access

to assistive devices and support services, making it difficult for them to access services, which further disadvantages students with disabilities. The switch to e-learning was hindered by the absence of needed technology and by the electricity and internet outages.

West Bank

In the West Bank, 89% of teachers reported that their usual school building was fully functional, while 10% reported minor damage, 1% major damage and almost none reported a destroyed building (see Figure 9). In addition, three quarters (75%) agreed or strongly agreed that a lack of teaching resources limited their ability to teach effectively.

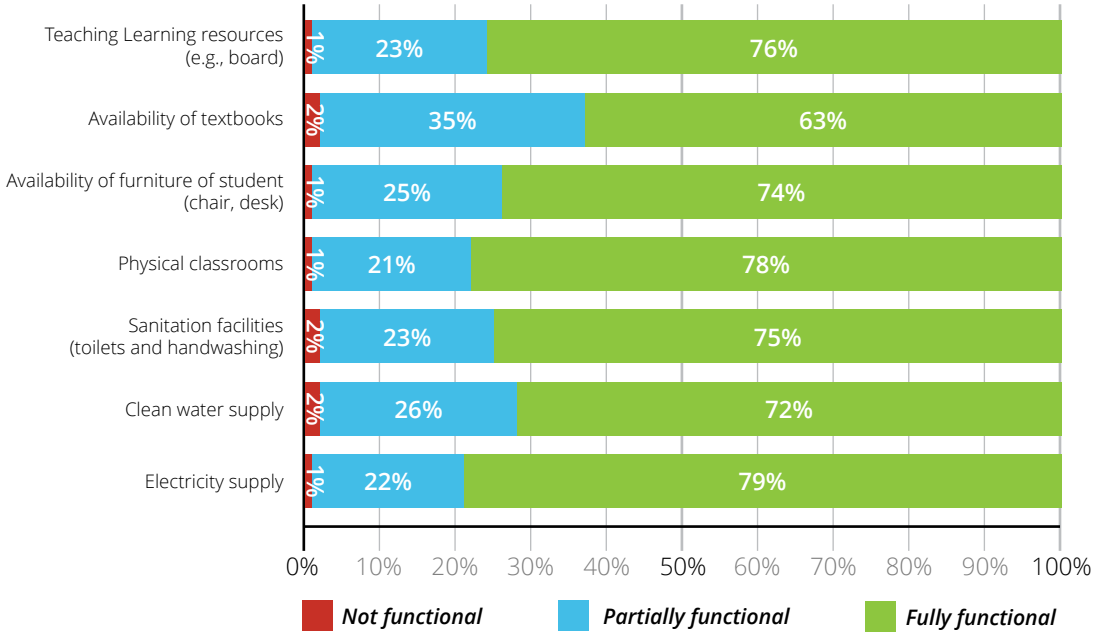
Figure 9: Current condition of school buildings, West Bank teachers



Source: Authors

Basic facilities were considerably more functional than in Gaza (see Figure 10). Overall, 79% reported fully functional electricity, 78% physical classrooms, 76% teaching and learning resources, 75% sanitation, 74% student furniture, 72% clean water and 63% textbooks. Textbooks were therefore again the least consistently available resource.

Figure 10: Status of basic facilities in teaching spaces, West Bank teachers



Source: Authors

Whilst school buildings in the West Bank are significantly more likely to be fully functional than in Gaza, data from focus groups shed light on the ongoing climate of fear due to the threats of demolition, most importantly affecting communities near Israeli settlements. One teacher, based near Yatta (in the West Bank) shared: "*there is daily anxiety and fear of not being able to reach the school, and its proximity to the settlements means that it could be stormed at any time, and it is now under threat and demolition notices.*" Another teacher, whose school is in the Masafer area in the West Bank, next to a settlement, describes a similar experience: "*All the houses and the school are slated for demolition... My students' house was demolished right before their eyes...* ." As one teacher puts it, the fear caused by seeing "*when houses near the school are demolished*" instils "*terror, fear and oppression*" in students and teachers alike.

Although schools are physically functioning, there are overcrowded classrooms with insufficient resources. For example, one teacher said that, with students' psychological stress, the difficulties of maintaining student focus and motivation, and the interruptions to the learning process, overcrowded classrooms and limited teaching resources are some of the main challenges teachers face. Teachers said they need more up-to-date resources, especially technological and digital tools, and particularly for subjects in which visual and interactive materials would be valuable, such as geography and history. However, access to the internet and needed devices hinders the use of such methods. The unavailability of assistive technology and support for people with disabilities is also a challenge, as people with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by the difficult circumstances.

Teaching and workload

> *"Teachers are expected to be educators, counsellors, protection focal points and emergency responders, often without adequate resources or specialist support."* —Development agency employee

This section covers issues related to teaching and workload, including the conditions under which teachers are currently working, class size, weekly teaching hours, additional shifts arising from teacher shortages, teaching outside the main subject area and the modality through which teaching is delivered. These areas provide insight into both the organisation of teaching during the crisis and the additional demands being placed on teachers.

Teachers in Gaza

Only 20% of teachers in Gaza reported currently teaching in a school building, while almost three quarters (74%) are teaching in temporary learning spaces and 6% remotely. Around a quarter of teachers reported that they are not currently teaching. Those actively teaching reported substantial workload in terms of engagement in second shifts (48%) and teaching outside their main subject area due to teacher shortages (25%). Furthermore, teaching modalities vary across Gaza, with 55% of teachers reporting hybrid teaching, 42% exclusively in-person teaching and only 3% fully remote teaching.

Class sizes vary considerably, indicating the fragmented and disrupted nature of educational provision in Gaza. Approximately 26% of teachers reported classes of 31-40 students, 22% are teaching classes of 20-30 students, and

20% reported classes exceeding 40 students. In contrast, only 7% reported teaching classes with fewer than 20 students.

The qualitative findings also depict highly disrupted teaching conditions in Gaza. One teacher described the extent to which conventional school-based provision has been disrupted: "*We have lost the traditional educational environment, schools and laboratories. Education has been reduced to volunteer initiatives within tents and displacement centres*." Another teacher described how the professional role had expanded:

> *"The teacher's responsibilities have been multiplied, as his role is no longer limited to teaching, but includes providing psychosocial support, compensating for educational losses, managing educational initiatives, coordinating with families, and working in continuous emergency conditions."*

The weight of the responsibility carried by teachers in Gaza has increased during this war. Teachers identified the excessive workload as one of their main challenges they experience. The difficulty of their work also increased as they are providing educational services in the absence of needed resources.

The excessive workload is not only confined to teaching but their role has been expanded to social and humanitarian for providing psychosocial support to students and communities. A teacher shared their experience as follows:

> *"I have assumed a much greater responsibility for providing psychosocial support to children and helping protect them from learning loss and illiteracy. I carry out these responsibilities while facing continuous danger and living with the constant absence of safety for both myself and my students."*

Amid the increased workload and responsibilities, teachers reported that they have not received any support and stressed on urgent need for "*all kinds of support related to personal and professional matters: psychological support, financial support and logistical support.*"

Teachers in the West Bank

Teaching arrangements in the West Bank largely remain in a conventional school setting, with almost all teachers (98%) reporting that they are teaching in schools, compared with only 1% in temporary learning spaces and 1% remotely. However, teaching modalities vary, with 87% reporting hybrid teaching, 12% exclusively in-person teaching and only 1% fully remote teaching. Teachers also reported excessive workload – 29% reported taking on additional teaching shifts, while 27% are teaching subjects outside their primary areas of specialisation. Class sizes nevertheless remain substantial – 42% of West Bank teachers reported classes of 20-30 students and 38% classes of 31-40 students. A further 7% reported teaching more than 40 students, while 13% reported fewer than 20 students.

The qualitative findings further highlight the increasing workload and expanding responsibilities of teachers for various reasons, including supporting traumatised students in the West Bank and providing remote support to students in Gaza. Teachers described how their responsibilities have extended beyond classroom instruction to include supporting displaced and traumatised students, addressing learning loss and providing psychosocial

support. Some teachers are also supporting students in Gaza through remote teaching alongside their regular responsibilities, adding to their workload and psychological burden. One teacher described the shift in their role towards "*actively absorbing the emotional and psychological fallout of a traumatised, displaced student body.*" Teachers also reported working additional hours to compensate for missed lessons, adapting their teaching plans to students' changing needs and attempting to maintain "*a sense of normality*" for students experiencing psychological distress.

Teacher shortages and the displacement of students further intensify these challenges. Teachers reported that financial constraints and recruitment difficulties have contributed to staffing shortages, increasing their teaching responsibilities. The arrival of displaced students has also placed additional pressure on schools, contributing to overcrowded classrooms and making it increasingly difficult to provide individual attention to students. An interviewee highlighted that overcrowding is particularly challenging in already underserved and marginalised areas, including schools in East Jerusalem and those operated by UNRWA, where expanding classroom capacity is difficult.

Frequent disruptions to schooling further complicate teachers' work. One teacher stressed that the greater challenge was not necessarily damage to school buildings but the uncertainty surrounding whether "*safe and regular access to the school*" could be maintained. An interviewee also reported repeated settler attacks and disruptions affecting schools in Bethlehem, Salfit and eastern Ramallah, making educational continuity particularly difficult. Teachers explained that shifts between in-person and remote teaching require them to repeatedly adjust their lesson plans, modify curricula, develop digital teaching materials and provide online assignments. When in-person teaching resumed, they faced the additional responsibility of identifying differences in students' achievement levels and addressing learning lost during periods of disruption.

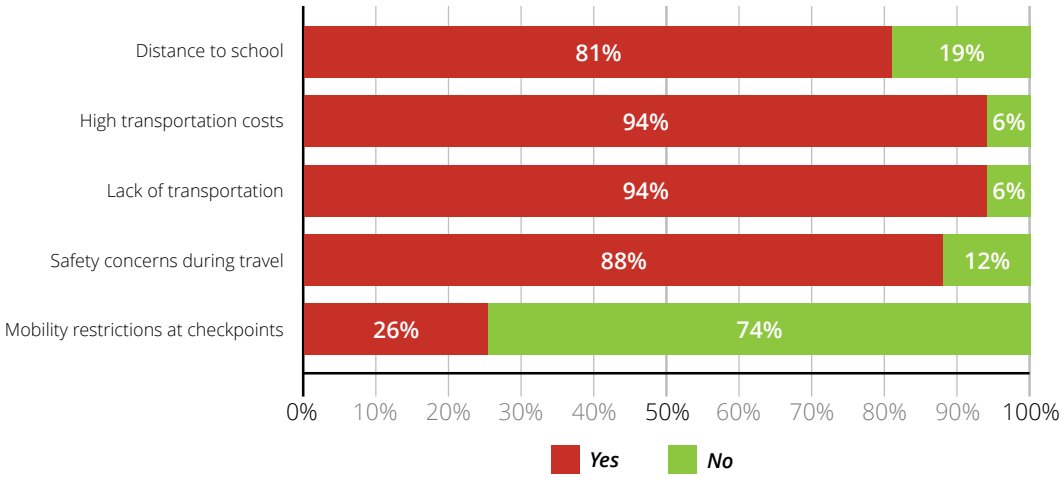
The introduction of remote learning also emerged as a source of additional workload, although teachers' experiences have varied. Several teachers feel the approach added to their burden, explaining that "*implementing an open* [remote] *learning system necessitates seeking other educational resources, which increases the burden on teachers*." Others linked this to a lack of clarity and preparation, describing curricula that shift unpredictably: "*sometimes it's packages, sometimes open learning and there is no clear training in the methods, which needs to be intensified sufficiently for open learning.*" The educational packages were characterised as "*neither enriching nor sufficient.*" One teacher warned that withdrawing textbooks in favour of open learning would make it harder for students to study effectively, "*adding to the hardship faced by parents and teachers*." Another teacher had a more positive response to open learning, linking it to reduced workload: "*Our open education system has been activated instead, and with the textbook available, we have reduced the number of lessons, while focusing on providing all the skills required for this grade.*" The same teacher highlighted that currently, support is provided "*by offering sufficient courses for open education, for example, by assigning a supervisor to each school who comes periodically and explains things to all teachers practically and effectively in front of them on the ground*."

Mobility and safety

Teachers in Gaza

> *"The central issue is the loss of safe, predictable and continuous teaching time."* —Development agency employee

Figure 11: Challenges in commuting to the teaching location, Gaza teachers



Source: Authors

Gaza teachers reported greater mobility and safety constraints (see Figure 11). Transport-related barriers were very high: the vast majority (94%) reported lack of transportation and high transportation costs, 88% reported safety concerns during travel and 81% reported distance to school or the teaching space as a challenge. Checkpoint restrictions were the exception, as it is more relevant to West Bank. This reflects the current situation in Gaza, where movement to teaching spaces is shaped more by insecurity, damaged infrastructure, displacement and lack of transport than by routine checkpoint crossing.

Safety at the teaching location is also a major concern. Most teachers in Gaza reported safety concerns, with 64% being extremely concerned and 28% being moderately concerned. Secondary teachers appeared more concerned about safety than primary teachers: 71% of secondary teachers are extremely concerned about safety at their teaching location, compared with 54% of primary teachers. Both female and male teachers reported that they are concerned about their safety in teaching places.

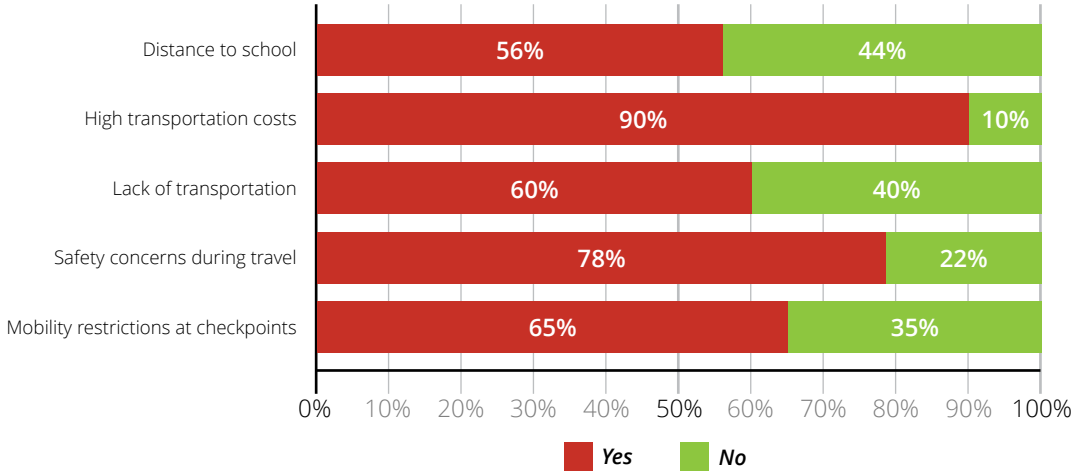
The above patterns echo qualitative insights where teachers frequently pointed out difficulties in transportation and accessing teaching locations and unsafe or dangerous transportation because of the ever-present threat of bombing. One teacher highlighted that the journey to school is dangerous for both students and teachers because of the attacks even during ceasefire. A teacher identified the dangers of the journey as a reason they consider leaving the profession altogether, while other showed commitment to be in the profession. When asked about what a typical teaching day looks like, a teacher shared that it is a "*tiring and exhausting day, starting with walking to school due to the lack of transportation… .*" Teachers say that their day begins with assessing risks and checking the routes before they leave their displacement tent: "*traveling either by whatever basic means of transportation are available or on foot for long distances through the rubble.*"

Teachers in the West Bank

"Safety concerns also affect daily teaching." —Teacher

Mobility and safety emerged as important dimensions of teachers' working conditions in the West Bank (see Figure 12). Teachers reported multiple and overlapping challenges in travelling to and from their teaching locations. The most widespread difficulty is the high transportation costs, reported by 90% of teachers. This was followed by safety concerns during travel (78%), mobility restrictions at checkpoints (65%), lack of transportation (60%) and distance to school (56%). These findings indicate that commuting difficulties are not limited to physical distance or transportation availability; they also involve affordability, predictability and safety of teachers' journeys to work.

Figure 12: Challenges in commuting to the teaching location, West Bank teachers



Source: Authors

Furthermore, teachers also expressed substantial concern about their safety at the locations where they were teaching. Only 17% reported that they are not concerned about their safety, while 54% are moderately concerned and 29% extremely concerned. Taken together, 83% of teachers reported at least some concern about their safety at their teaching location. The difference by school level and gender was minimal.

Teachers spoke extensively about their mobility and safety concerns. For example, they mentioned that Israeli military checkpoints, road closures and frequently changing access arrangements have made daily travel increasingly unpredictable for teachers and students. Checkpoints may close without warning or operate for restricted hours, creating uncertainty about whether teachers and students can safely reach their schools or return home. Their day begins with high levels of stress and uncertainty as they wonder if the roads will be accessible. These unexpected closures and restrictions make it difficult for teachers to make long-term plans and provide reliable education. One teacher shared:

"Movement restrictions and the closure of the area's entrances are also among the most serious challenges. One entrance has been completely and permanently closed, leaving only one remaining entrance, which may also be closed at any time. This makes access to and from the school uncertain and may result in teachers and

> *students from outside the area arriving late, being absent or the school having to adjust its schedule in response to emergency conditions."*

A development agency employee referred to teachers and students who must cross military checkpoints on the way to school as well as those living in communities near Israeli settlements among the groups of teachers and learners most affected. The resulting uncertainty and psychological burden impact teachers and students alike.

"*The most critical challenge is the constant threat to physical safety*", one teacher noted, describing the unpredictability of the military vehicle presence on their commutes and of direct incursions. The teacher gave an example of a time the Israeli army stopped at the gates of the school during class time, which caused the spread of "*acute terror*". In addition to the uncertainty from closures, there are safety risks from both the Israeli military and settlers. Teachers report passing military vehicles and crossing military checkpoints on their way to school.

Additionally, the increasing presence of settlers and settler attacks causes heightened anxiety for teachers, students and their families. Military operations and settler violence cause school attendance interruptions for both students and teachers. When asked about particularly vulnerable groups, a development agency employee listed the following among the most vulnerable:

> *"Teachers and students in Area C,[1] particularly in Bedouin and herding communities, where schools face demolition threats, settler violence and severe transport and access barriers; students in East Jerusalem, where school shortages, political pressures, access restrictions and uncertainty around service provision continue to affect education; Palestine Refugee students and UNRWA teachers, particularly those affected by displacement and operations in refugee camps in the northern West Bank; … and teachers required to travel through checkpoints or between fragmented localities."*

Further, the interviewee highlighted that they perceive females as being more impacted than males because of families' concern about the safety of girls and women, which can limit their mobility.

Regarding safety at school, teachers work to create a calm environment for their students in the classroom, in which students can feel safe, despite the circumstances. An NGO respondent discussed incidents of damage, raids and theft of schools, homes and public institutions that impact teachers. A teacher shared that "*the terror of the conflict follows us directly into the educational space*" as the army comes to the school gates and causes panic among both students and faculty.

1 Fully Israeli-controlled territory in the West Bank

Teacher working conditions across Gaza and the West Bank

Teachers in Gaza and the West Bank experience substantial but distinct challenges in their working conditions. In Gaza, widespread destruction of school infrastructure, shortages of essential resources and displacement are severely disrupting conventional schooling, with most teachers working in temporary learning spaces. In contrast, most schools in the West Bank remain physically functional, although resource shortages, threats of demolition and restrictions on access continue to disrupt teaching. Despite these differences, approximately three quarters of teachers in both regions reported that inadequate teaching resources is constraining their ability to teach effectively.

Teachers in both regions also face increased workloads, overcrowded classrooms and expanding responsibilities beyond classroom instruction, particularly in addressing learning loss and providing psychosocial support to students. Additional teaching shifts are more common in Gaza (48%) than in the West Bank (29%). Mobility and safety concerns are widespread in both settings, although teachers in Gaza face challenges primarily associated with damaged infrastructure, displacement and ongoing insecurity, while those in the West Bank experience military checkpoints, movement restrictions and settler violence.

Overall, these findings highlight how different forms of violence and insecurity have shaped teachers' working conditions. In Gaza, widespread destruction of educational infrastructure, resource shortages and displacement have severely disrupted conventional schooling. In the West Bank, although schools have largely remained functional, movement restrictions, threats to schools and persistent insecurity have continued to undermine teaching and learning.

6. Teachers views about teaching practices

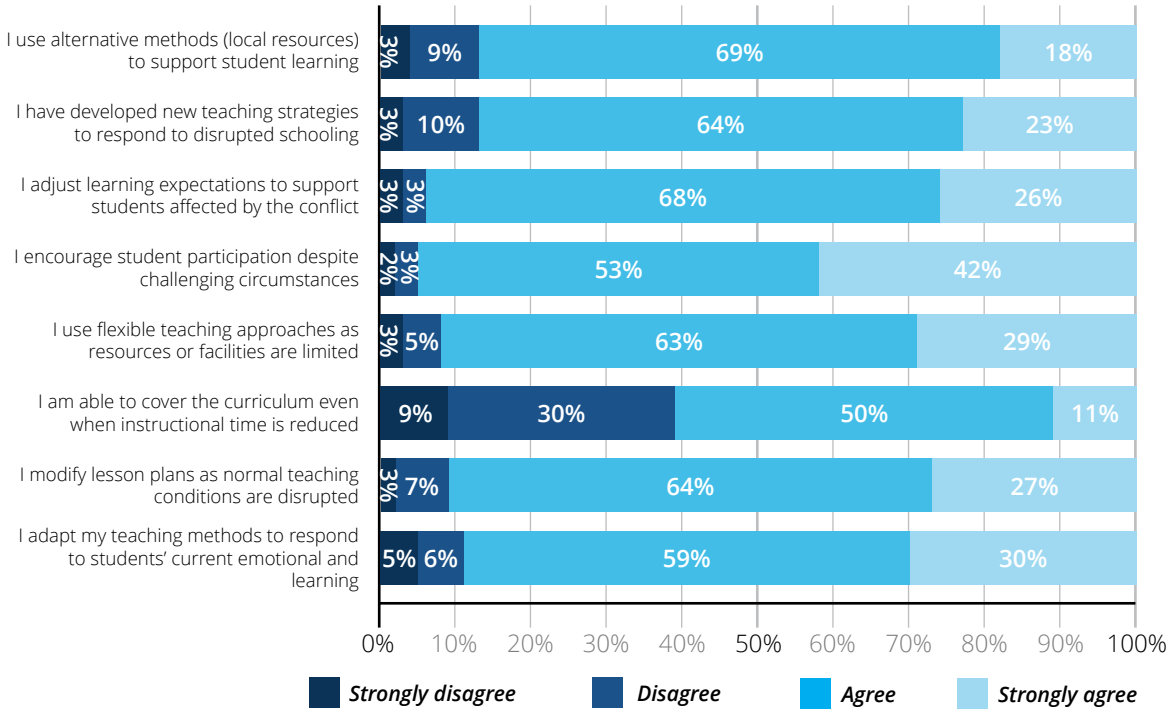
This section addresses how teachers have adapted their practice, how they are engaging students and what their thoughts are on needed professional development.

Views about adaptive teaching practices

Teachers in Gaza

In Gaza, very high numbers of teachers reported pedagogical adaptation, despite severe disruption (see Figure 13). The vast majority responded that they adapt teaching methods to students' current emotional and learning needs, modifying lesson plans, use flexible teaching approaches where resources or facilities are limited, encourage student participation, adjust learning expectations and develop new teaching strategies. This pattern is particularly strong for primary school teachers, and even more so for female teachers.

Figure 13: Adaptive teaching practices, Gaza teachers



Source: Authors

Gaza teachers are more positive on covering the curriculum content: 61% agreed or strongly agreed that they are able to cover the curriculum when instructional time is reduced. The results suggest that teachers in Gaza have stronger adaptive teaching capacity than might be expected from the severity

of the context. This is an indication of teachers' commitment; despite the personal and professional challenges they face.

Gaza teachers did not only agree that they have adapted, but a sizeable minority strongly affirmed that they have changed their practice in response to war conditions. For example, 42% strongly agreed that they encourage student participation despite challenging circumstances, 30% strongly agreed that they adapt teaching methods to students' emotional and learning needs, 29% strongly agreed that they use flexible approaches when resources or facilities are limited, and 27% strongly agreed that they modify lesson plans.

The largest concern again relates to curriculum coverage, where only 58% of secondary teachers agreed or strongly agreed, and 42% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Secondary school male teachers reported more disagreement on some items: 21% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they adapt methods to emotional and learning needs, compared with 7% of secondary school female teachers; 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they modify lesson plans, compared with 8% of secondary female teachers; and 14% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they use flexible approaches under resource constraints, compared with 5% of secondary female teachers. These variations suggest that Gaza male secondary school teachers may be a group requiring more targeted support in adapting their teaching practices to the context.

Teachers discussed their flexibility in adapting their teaching at length in interviews. One teacher described the change as "*a profound transformation from formal education to field-based emergency education.*" Their workload has expanded as they play humanitarian and psychological roles, including the management of educational activities, while they themselves are facing danger. They adapt their teaching to overcrowded temporary learning spaces and tents with very minimal educational resources, if any. One female teacher described how her role as a teacher has expanded: "*My role transformed from simply teaching an academic subject to facilitating and providing psychological and social support. I became more skilled at creating teaching methods with minimal resources.*"

Teachers also adapt their teaching to the context to best meet the needs of the students. For example, rather than focusing on the completion of curriculum content, they focus only on the core concepts and skills needed by the students to minimise learning loss and incorporate psychosocial support and activities to help the students cope with their realities and lessen the impact of trauma.

They also take a flexible approach with students as their circumstances impact their energy levels, such as malnutrition and repeat displacement. They foster as safe a space as possible for children to express their emotions and engage in recreational activities. They incorporate play, drawing and other activities to include psychosocial support and help their students express themselves. As one teacher stated: "*We resort to new methods such as entertainment to make the students feel safe*", whilst another explained "*trying to involve* [students] *in enjoyable activities such as fun games*." Their teaching goal became *"sustaining hope and protecting children's childhood and cognitive development.*" During the war, teacher volunteer initiatives aimed to provide psychosocial support and continued learning for students. For example, at the beginning of the return to education, a teacher spoke of their role in welcoming high school students to be registered and reintegrated into education to compensate for their learning loss. The continued security concerns and evictions have not allowed these educational initiatives to succeed as access to educational spaces became impossible. Therefore, the teacher gathered

the neighbourhood students and taught them basic English, Arabic and mathematics skills and facilitated drawing and free expression to give the students a safe space.

Teachers also adapt their teaching to support particularly vulnerable students. They try to accommodate students who sustain injuries and disabilities in the learning tents to ensure their continued engagement in learning activities. Their goal is to strengthen student morale and confidence. Teachers also welcome and support displaced students who might be anxious about the change. They work with the students to tailor their support to their individual needs and avoid putting them under academic pressure, while addressing their psychological needs and learning gaps. One teacher described reducing academic demands and adjusting for "*individual differences*", for example recognising that "*a student who has lost their home or a relative may not be able to concentrate in regular classes*", and using "*short, varied activities (storytelling, drawing, role-playing) instead of routine lessons*". Another teacher shared that they provide "*individual sessions*" for traumatised students to "*alleviate the impact of these traumas*".

Teachers have had to make major changes to their teaching to implement e-learning and blended learning programmes. However, this has been hindered by the disruption of internet and electricity access. A school counsellor also reported switching to remote or blended individual and group counselling sessions when in-person meetings were not possible. A teacher discussed using electronic methods of communication to contact students and parents whenever possible to support their learning. Another teacher said that the electricity and internet cuts resulted in an inability to use online teaching and answer students' questions online.

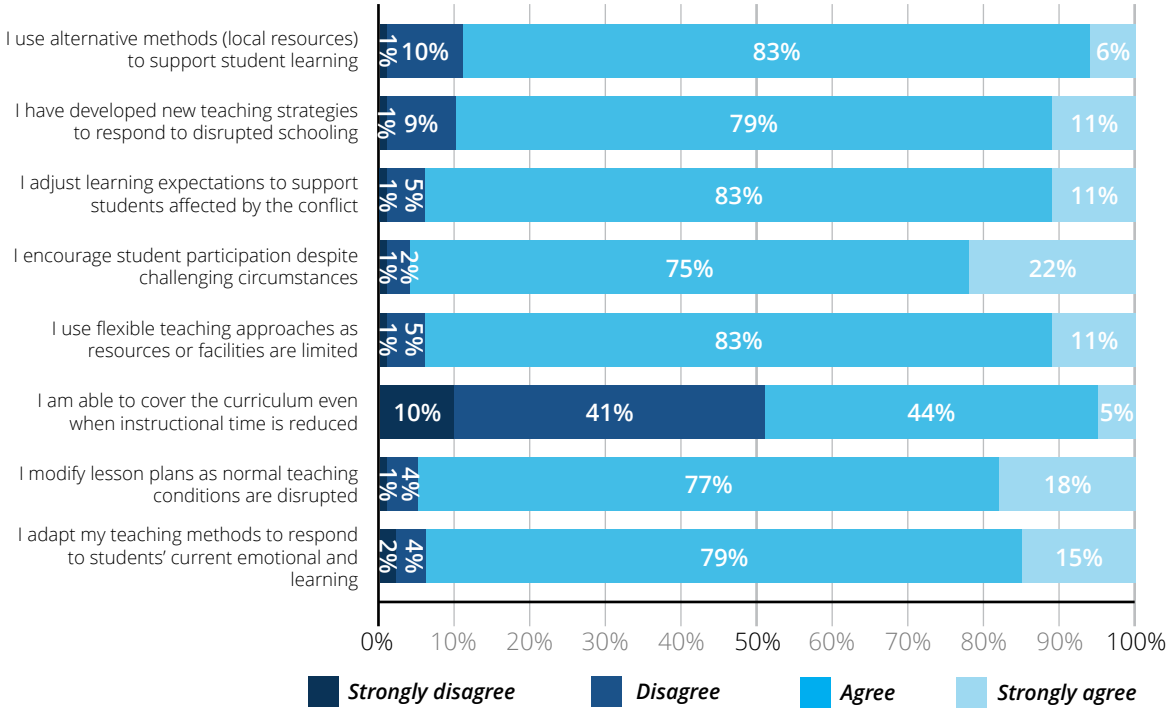
Teachers in the West Bank

The West Bank results show a generally strong pattern of adaptive teaching (see Figure 14). Across six of the seven items, more than 90% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they are adapting their teaching in response to disrupted schooling. This suggests that most teachers are not simply continuing with routine teaching practices but are actively modifying their practice to respond to students' emotional, learning and practical needs.

The strongest area was student participation. Nearly all teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they encourage student participation, despite challenging circumstances. This suggests that teachers continue to see student engagement as central to learning, even in crisis conditions. Similarly, high levels of agreement were reported for modifying lesson plans when normal teaching conditions are disrupted, adapting teaching methods to students' current emotional and learning needs, adjusting learning expectations for conflict-affected students and using flexible teaching approaches when resources or facilities are limited. These findings point to a strong level of reported professional responsiveness among teachers in the West Bank.

However, the pattern was very different for curriculum coverage. Only 49% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they are able to cover the curriculum when instructional time is reduced. This depicts that teachers appear to be adapting their methods, expectations and participation strategies, but they still feel that is not enough to maintain normal curriculum coverage under reduced teaching time. Differences by teaching level are generally small, but curriculum coverage again stands out. Primary school teachers have a

Figure 14: Adaptive teaching practices, West Bank teachers



Source: Authors

slightly higher agreement than secondary school teachers that that they can cover the curriculum when instructional time is reduced (51% versus 44%). This suggests that secondary school teachers may be more constrained by subject-specific content, curriculum pacing and examination expectations. Furthermore, primary teachers also reported slightly higher agreement regarding developing new teaching strategies (92% versus 88%).

For most other items, however, primary and secondary school teachers are very similar, usually differing by only one or two percentage points. Gender differences are also not large overall, but there are a few notable patterns. For example, among primary school teachers, female teachers in primary were somewhat more positive than male teachers on curriculum coverage (53% versus 45%). A similar pattern appeared for developing new teaching strategies, where 92% of female primary school teachers agreed or strongly agreed compared with 87% of male primary school teachers. At secondary level, gender differences are smaller. One notable difference is adjustment of learning expectations, where male secondary school teachers showed higher strong agreement (17%) than female secondary school teachers (10%), although both groups reported high overall agreement.

Interviews with teachers further highlight significant adaptation and flexibility among West Bank teachers. They noted how they adapt their teaching to students' needs, including simplifying the content, reviewing previous content, using interactive teaching methods and being attentive to student wellbeing. One female teacher framed her need to adapt as a responsibility: "*I must develop myself to be able to adapt to the situation and create alternatives.*" School work has become more demanding as teachers need to make continuous changes to their plans because of school disruptions. They reflect on how to best support their students and prepare lessons accordingly. Such uncertainty is difficult for students and teachers alike. Teachers modify their lesson plans to focus on remedial learning activities because of the academic gaps, disruptions and overcrowding.

Teachers' roles have expanded beyond academic ones, as they support student wellbeing. They prioritise creating a comforting and supportive space inside the classroom. They work to encourage students' confidence, communication, development and enjoyment. One teacher illustrated the extent to which teachers consider and adapt to students' psychosocial needs:

> *"Under the current circumstances, I am committed to treating students affected by war and trauma with sensitivity and understanding, providing a safe and supportive classroom environment where they feel respected and secure. I am mindful of their individual psychological responses and avoid any practices that might exacerbate their anxiety or stress. I employ flexible teaching methods that consider their emotional state and encourage them to express their feelings appropriately, while fostering values of hope, cooperation and mutual support among students."*

Teacher responsibilities regarding follow-up with students have also increased as they work with them to make up content they missed when they arrive late or are absent from school. Teachers have had to adapt to teaching without the needed infrastructure and resources. One secondary school science teacher shared the difficulty of teaching science when infrastructure is damaged and educational tools are not available. For example, the teacher said:

> *"The science lab completely lacks internet connectivity and advanced screens, preventing me from using digital resources or visual aids to demonstrate complex scientific concepts ... Furthermore, due to a severe shortage of teaching staff, I am carrying a massive workload, teaching under-resourced subjects to overcrowded rooms, while simultaneously managing the emotional and academic needs of traumatised students."*

Adapting to online learning has had many challenges because of the resource constraints. Focus group discussions highlighted the uncertainty of whether teaching will take place in person or online as a challenge, as one teacher explained: "*It's full of stress... we don't know if tomorrow's classes will be in person or online... whether I should leave my things at school or not.*" Teachers reported that students not having devices or reliable internet impacts the quality of learning and warned that, "*the shift to distance (online) education has also reduced student attendance.*" Teachers work through these difficulties. One teacher shared that "*although the responsibilities have increased, this experience has strengthened my commitment to education.*"

Overall, the West Bank findings show that teachers are working hard to sustain responsive and participatory teaching under difficult conditions. This suggests that the problem is not a lack of professional commitment or willingness to adapt. Rather, teachers are facing structural limits such as reduced instructional time, disrupted learning conditions, resource constraints and the difficulty of maintaining normal curriculum expectations in a crisis.

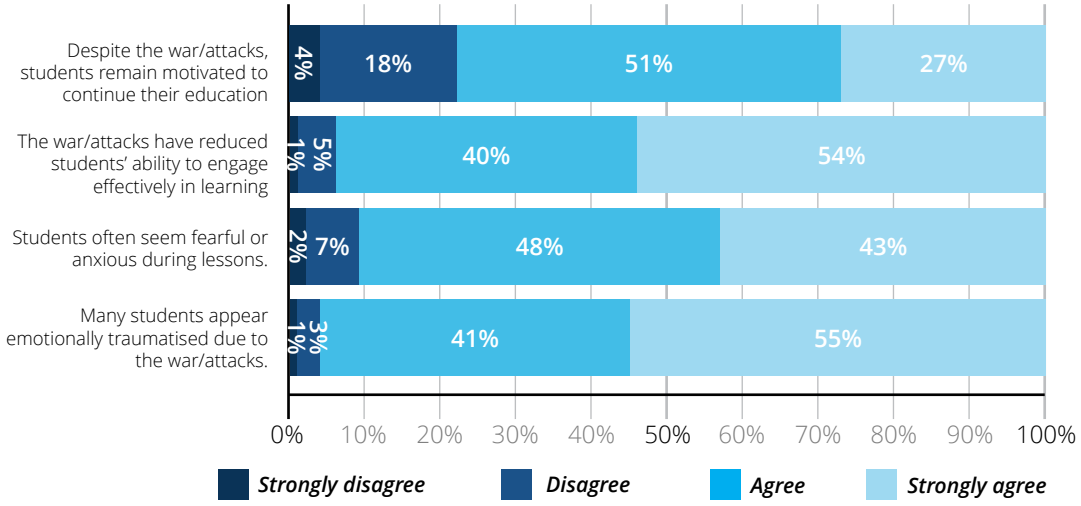
Views about student engagement

Student engagement refers to teachers' views about students' emotional readiness, participation and motivation to learn under Israeli military attack.

Teachers in Gaza

Teachers in Gaza reported a severe pattern of perceived student distress (see Figure 15). Almost all teachers agreed or strongly agreed that many students appear emotionally traumatised due to the war and attacks. Similarly, over 90% reported that students often seem fearful or anxious during lessons and that the attacks had reduced students' ability to engage effectively in learning. These figures show that, in Gaza, teachers identify trauma and emotional insecurity as central barriers to learning.

Figure 15: Views about students' engagement, Gaza teachers



Source: Authors

At the same time, Gaza teachers reported relatively higher student motivation than the overall sample, with around 78% agreeing or strongly agreeing that, despite the Israeli military attacks, students remain motivated to continue their education. This shows a dual pattern: teachers see students as traumatised and fearful but also as still showing a desire to continue education. Focus group discussions add further detail to teachers' views about student engagement. Beyond noting poor concentration in students, teachers also reported "*increased aggression among students*". One teacher linked this "*student violence*" to "*the absence of moral values as before*", implying a difficulty of teaching and maintaining moral values under such harsh conditions.

Secondary school teachers reported higher levels of fear and anxiety than primary school teachers regarding their students (93% versus 88%), while primary school teachers were slightly more positive about students' continued motivation (84% versus 73%). Male teachers often reported stronger levels of student distress, especially around trauma and reduced engagement. Primary school female teachers were more positive about student motivation than primary school male teachers (87% versus 79%).

Teachers discussed students' emotional state and the support they have to give them at length in the interviews. This is in response to the impact of the ongoing Israeli military attacks and multiple displacements on students.

Teachers begin their lessons with comforting and reassuring students, helping them focus on school as they hear aircraft above their heads. They noted incorporating psychosocial support activities into education, such as free expression, learning through play, teamwork and dialogue.

Teachers consider the differing needs of the most vulnerable groups, including students with disabilities or injuries, displaced students and students who have lost a family member, to best support them and address their specific needs. School counsellors identify which students are most affected by the military attacks to give them the psychosocial support they need. This includes individual and group counselling. They also coordinate with teachers and parents to monitor their engagement, participation and assignments. When needed, cases can be referred to specialised services. This process allows teachers and counsellors to foster an inclusive and supportive space in which students can adapt and continue learning.

One teacher discussed how their support of such students "*requires immense psychological and emotional effort, as they carry deep grief, loss and trauma.*" Teachers are required to balance their psychosocial support of a traumatised student body with their educational work. However, despite these circumstances, teachers assert that they continue to support students.

Teachers in the West Bank

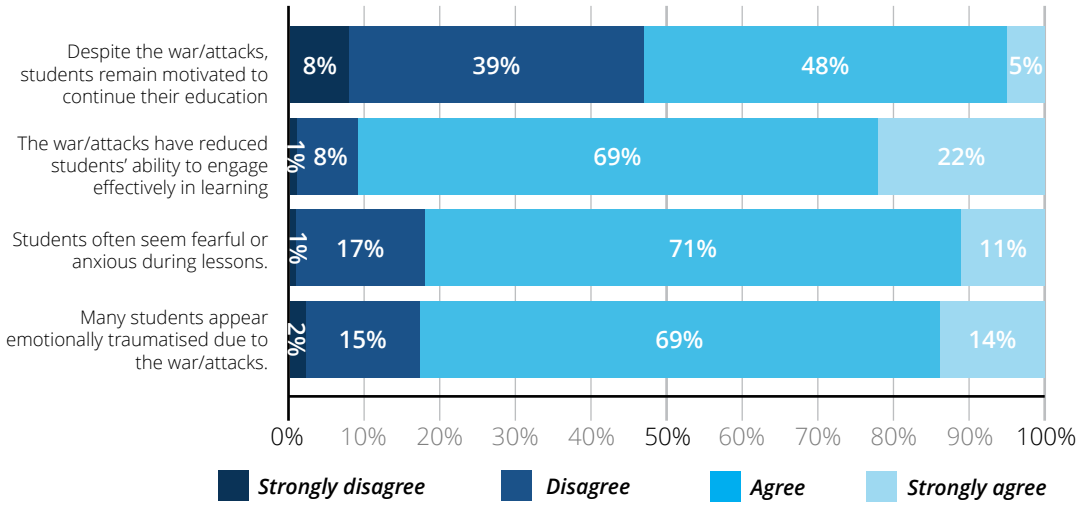
The West Bank results also show substantial concern about student engagement, although the intensity was lower than in Gaza. Overall, over 80% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that students appear emotionally traumatised and reported that students seem fearful or anxious during lessons. Over 90% agreed or strongly agreed that the Israeli military and settler attacks have reduced students' ability to engage effectively in learning. These results show that teachers in the West Bank also view the crisis as affecting students' emotional readiness and learning participation.

The main concern in the West Bank is student motivation. Slightly more than half of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that students remain motivated to continue their education. This is a major difference from Gaza, where reported student motivation is higher. The West Bank pattern suggests that although teachers recognise trauma and anxiety in students, they are especially concerned that students' motivation to continue schooling has weakened. The pattern is similar by school level for most of the items. Important variation was observed in motivation, as 55% of primary school teachers agreed or strongly agreed that students remain motivated compared with 49% of secondary school teachers. This suggests that motivation may be more fragile among secondary school students, possibly because older students face greater pressure, uncertainty about progression, economic responsibilities or interrupted examination pathways. Gender differences are generally modest, but male teachers tended to report stronger agreement on trauma and reduced engagement. Among secondary school teachers, 23% of male teachers strongly agreed that students appear emotionally traumatised, compared with 13% of female teachers. A similar pattern appeared among primary school teachers (19% versus 11%). However, both male and female teachers reported high overall concern. The main finding is therefore not a gender divide but a broad perception that students' engagement has been damaged by fear, trauma and reduced motivation.

Teachers spoke of their students' mental health and teachers' psychosocial support of students (see Figure 16). Teachers see their role as going beyond

the academic to "*become a source of emotional support, helping students cope with fear and anxiety.*" Therefore, they try to preserve a feeling of normality at school and aim to create safe learning spaces in the classroom that foster respect and support, and where students feel heard. They see how their students arrive at school distracted and anxious. Teachers also highlighted irregular class attendance as contributing to deteriorating student engagement. For example, one male teacher shared: "*The fear among students, coupled with their absence from school and attending only three days a week, has created a state of lethargy among them.*" Teachers addressed students' low motivation, for example one teacher shared: "*trying to do what we can, which has become difficult given the lack of motivation among students, trying to attract their attention and following up with them later to ensure their understanding.*" To address the needs of students, and especially those with "*deeper trauma, severe distress or specific needs of students with injuries*", they also monitor students' wellbeing and refer them for additional support services as needed and when available.

Figure 16: Views about students' engagement, West Bank teachers



Source: Authors

Views about professional development

Professional development addresses teachers' reported access to training, guidance and learning opportunities that help them teach during the Israeli military attacks. This includes support for identifying and responding to students' psychosocial needs, using alternative teaching modalities, accessing professional guidance and actively seeking ways to improve teaching under disrupted conditions.

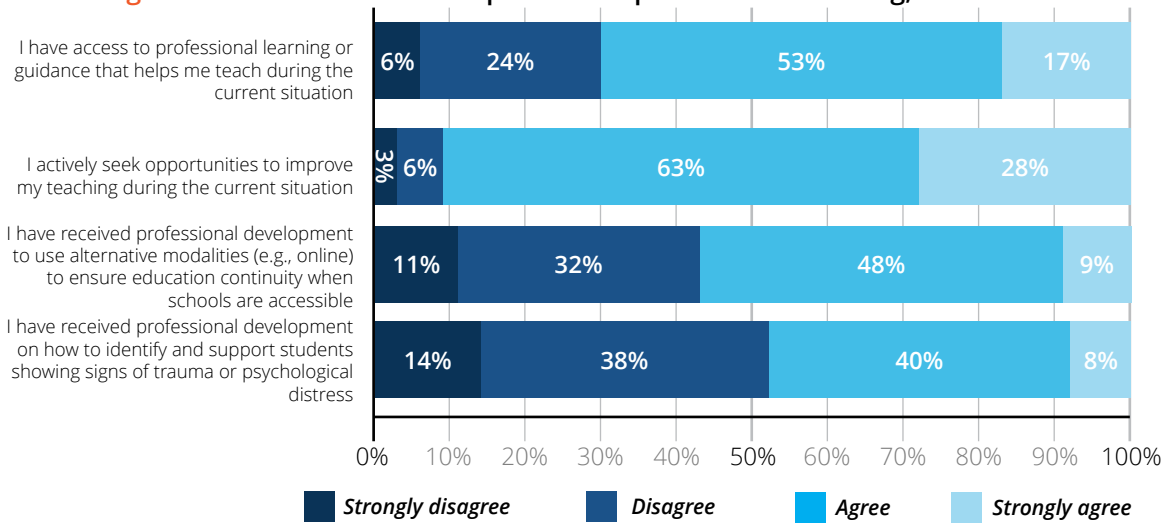
Teachers in Gaza

In Gaza, teachers reported strong motivation to improve their teaching, but more limited access to professional development and guidance (see Figure 17). Around 91% of Gaza teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they actively seek opportunities to improve their teaching during the current situation. This suggests a high level of professional agency despite extreme disruption in access.

Access to formal or structured professional development is weak. Only 48% agreed or strongly agreed that they have received professional development

on how to identify and support students affected by trauma, even though they reported very high levels of student trauma, fear and reduced engagement. Similarly, only 57% agreed or strongly agreed that they have received professional development on alternative modalities of teaching. This suggests that Gaza teachers are likely adapting teaching under crisis conditions without sufficient structured support.

Figure 17: Professional development and professional learning, Gaza teachers



Source: Authors

Access to professional learning or guidance has been somewhat better but still limited, as around 70% agreed or strongly agreed that they have access to professional learning or guidance that helps them teach during the current situation. Teaching-level differences in Gaza are small. Primary school teachers were slightly more positive than secondary school teachers on alternative modalities (64% versus 54%). Primary teachers were also slightly more positive about access to professional learning or guidance (75% versus 69%). The most visible gender pattern is among primary school female teachers who reported particularly high active engagement for improvement: 99% agreed or strongly agreed that they actively seek opportunities to improve their teaching, compared to 89% among primary school male teachers. Overall, Gaza teachers show strong professional motivation, but the support system around them appears insufficient for the scale of crisis-related teaching needs.

In interviews, teachers discussed not receiving training nor having access to professional development materials because of the ongoing miliary attacks, and suffering from this. Programmes that existed before October 2023, such as teacher capacity building, have been suspended. A teacher shared that any professional development depended on "*self-directed efforts and field-based initiatives in the areas of psychosocial support and trauma-informed education*", with the intention of preparing teachers to support and engage students impacted by the military attacks and displacement in temporary learning spaces and tents.

All teachers in the focus groups reported receiving no training or guidance of any kind to provide psychosocial support to students. One teacher noted that they resorted to "*self-research and consulting specialised educational guides on how to deal with psychological trauma and attention deficit in children*", and engaged in "*peer support, exchanging experiences and best practices with colleagues in the education sector to develop innovative solutions for emerging behavioural and psychological problems in the classroom.*" Despite this alternative support, teachers reported lacking experience in dealing with such situations due the lack of training and support. One teacher expressed feelings

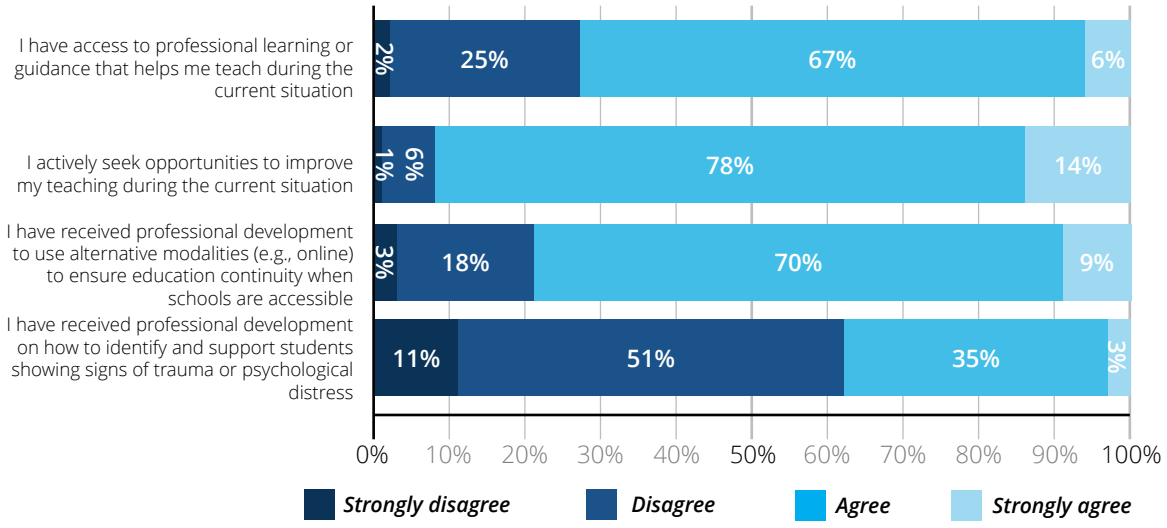
of "*frustration and helplessness*" as a result. The teacher highlights that they have not been able to benefit from training on the use of e-learning or blended learning because of the destroyed infrastructure. One teacher pointed to the need to use "*simplified technology*" and be trained on the "*use of flexible and rechargeable technological devices and the use of digital applications in environments lacking constant internet access.*"

Regarding training needs, teachers highlighted the urgent need for training in education in emergencies. Teachers included the following among their most pressing needs to support their resilience and ability to teach: training on the inclusion of students with new disabilities and injuries; trauma-informed teaching; psychological support; modern ways to address mathematics learning loss; e-learning courses; and psychosocial support programmes that focus on teacher wellbeing. One teacher highlighted the importance of receiving psychological training with "*practical applications and follow-up from academic development supervisors.*" Another highlighted the need to transform "*theoretical training into specialised and practical psychosocial support programmes that extend into classrooms, with the provision of permanent psychologists in schools to support teachers in dealing with difficult and traumatic cases.*" Additionally, most teachers from the focus groups reported needing first aid courses and courses on protection from debris, such as unexploded bombs and shrapnel.

Teachers in the West Bank

Teachers in the West Bank show stronger access to professional development than Gaza in some ways, especially with respect to alternative teaching modalities (see Figure 18). Around 79% of West Bank teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they have received professional development to use alternative modalities, such as online, remote or hybrid teaching. This suggests that support for continuing teaching through different delivery modes has been more available in the West Bank than in Gaza. At the same time, the weakest area is trauma-related support. Only a little over a third of West Bank teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they have received professional development on identifying and supporting students affected by trauma. This indicates that even where professional development for alternative modalities has been relatively stronger, teachers still lack adequate preparation for psychosocial support.

Figure 18: Professional development and professional learning, West Bank teachers



Source: Authors

Teachers' own motivation to improve remains very high, as around 92% reported actively seeking opportunities to improve their teaching. In addition, 73% reported access to professional learning or guidance that has helped them teach during the current situation. These findings suggest that West Bank teachers have some access to professional support, but the content of that support does not fully address the emotional and psychosocial demands they face. Primary and secondary school teachers reported broadly similar patterns. Gender differences are small, but primary school male teachers are somewhat less positive than primary school female teachers on alternative modalities and access to guidance.

During the interviews and focus group discussions, teachers also showed that there is some access to professional development and training. The reach of such professional development and training programmes differs, as some teachers report extensive engagement and others have received no training at all. A teacher said that some training opportunities exist but have limited reach and do not always address their needs and challenges. One teacher shared that they had participated in many professional development programmes provided by the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the General Union of Palestinian Teachers (GUPT), and other educational organisations since the escalation began. The trainings covered topics such as student wellbeing, trauma-informed teaching, innovative teaching strategies, social and emotional learning, the integration of artificial intelligence and educational technology into teaching, and the creation of supportive learning environments in emergency situations.

In focus group discussions, teachers noted the positive impact of social-emotional learning courses specifically, both on their own wellbeing and on their ability to support their students, suggesting that, where these programmes do exist, they are beneficial. This reinforces the need for trauma-related training, that the quantitative analysis above identifies as insufficient.

When discussing training needs, teachers noted the following topics: trauma-informed teaching; psychosocial support to students; supporting students with different learning needs; how to address learning loss; how to respond to differences in student achievement; and the effective use of blended learning and technology and the use of artificial intelligence. Teachers said that practical tools and strategies that can be applied and adapted in classrooms in the current context in Palestine are needed alongside theoretical training. As one noted, there must be "*ongoing follow-up and support for teachers after training to ensure a tangible impact in the educational field.*"

Teacher views about teaching practices across Gaza and the West Bank

Teachers in both Gaza and the West Bank reported considerable efforts to adapt their teaching practices in response to disrupted schooling and students' changing learning and psychosocial needs. Across both regions, large majorities reported modifying lesson plans, adopting flexible teaching approaches, encouraging student participation and adjusting learning expectations. However, these adaptations occur under different conditions. In Gaza, teachers increasingly focus on foundational learning and psychosocial support in temporary learning spaces with severely limited resources, while teachers in the West Bank adapt to intermittent school closures, reduced instructional time and shifts between in-person and remote teaching. A relatively higher proportion of

teachers in Gaza (61%), compared to the West Bank (49%), reported being able to cover the curriculum despite reduced instructional time, although the reasons for this difference remain unclear.

Despite teachers' reported efforts to sustain learning, student engagement emerged as a major concern in both regions. Teachers widely reported that students experience emotional distress, anxiety and difficulties engaging in learning. However, perceived student motivation to continue education is considerably higher in Gaza (78%) than in the West Bank (slightly over half). These findings illustrate the coexistence of substantial emotional distress and continued motivation among students, particularly in Gaza, while highlighting the need for context-responsive approaches to supporting students' psychosocial wellbeing and engagement.

Teachers in both regions also expressed strong motivation to improve their professional practice, although access to relevant professional development varies. Teachers in the West Bank reported greater access to training on alternative teaching modalities (79% compared with 57% in Gaza), whereas reported access to trauma-related professional development is higher in Gaza (48%) than in the West Bank (slightly over one third). Across both settings, teachers highlighted the need for practical, sustained professional support, particularly in trauma-informed teaching, psychosocial support, inclusive education and addressing learning loss.

Overall, the findings suggest that teachers' reported willingness to adapt and improve their practice despite considerable structural and institutional constraints. Strengthening context-specific professional development, alongside improving teaching conditions and resources, is therefore essential to supporting teachers and sustaining educational provision.

7. Motivation and commitment

> *"Today, education is our only window for preserving hope."* —Teacher

This section captures teachers' views about motivation and commitment alongside their views about whether schools can retain qualified teachers and whether teaching remains attractive to young people.

Teachers in Gaza

> *"The role of the teacher in the shadow of war has gone beyond the transfer of knowledge; he [sic] is a psychological supporter, a role model, a builder of hope and an essential partner in protecting children and maintaining the continuity of education. I feel a great responsibility towards the students and their families because the presence of a teacher in such circumstances contributes to strengthening the resilience of children, supporting their recovery and maintaining their sense of security and belonging."* —Teacher

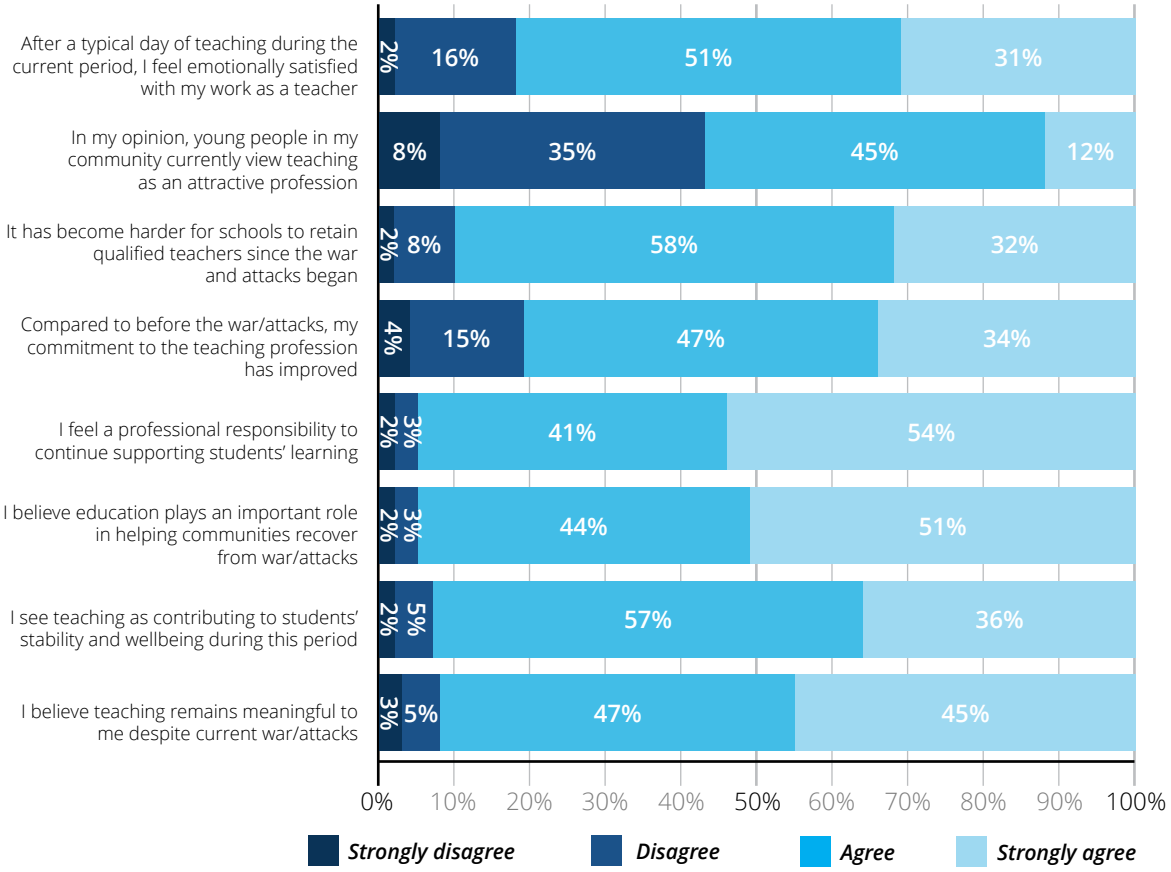
The Gaza results show a strong pattern of motivation and professional commitment: a vast majority of teachers agreed that teaching remains meaningful despite ongoing Israeli military attacks, 93% said teaching contributes to students' stability and wellbeing, and 95% believe education plays an important role in helping communities recover (see Figure 19). Similarly, 95% feel a professional responsibility to continue supporting students' learning. These results suggest that, in Gaza, teaching is strongly viewed as a form of social responsibility and community support during crisis.

Teachers in Gaza reported a strong commitment to the profession, with 81% indicating that their commitment has increased compared with before October 2023. However, 90% agreed or strongly agreed that retaining qualified teachers has become increasingly difficult. Perceptions of teaching as an attractive career for young people are more mixed: 57% considered it attractive, while 43% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This suggests a tension between teachers' sustained professional commitment and the growing challenges facing the profession. The relatively positive perceptions of the attractiveness of teaching may reflect the symbolic and social importance of education in Gaza, particularly its role in sustaining communities under miliary attacks. Nevertheless, concerns about teacher retention and the substantial proportion questioning the profession's attractiveness highlight the pressures on the future teaching workforce. Comparison by school level and gender reveal that almost equal numbers of teachers in these groups reported higher motivation and commitment towards teaching.

Teachers and other interviewees acknowledged the difficult circumstances and their impact on teachers' motivation and commitment to remaining in

the profession. One teacher identified the various challenges they experience, including "*severe physical and psychological exhaustion*" and the inability to access basic resources, and how such circumstances make "*the decision to continue teaching a daily challenge.*" An interviewee from a development agency highlighted the particularly difficult circumstances facing teachers in Gaza, noting that their motivation has been "*significantly affected because they are carrying an enormous emotional and psychological burden.*" The interviewee added that only "*a limited number*" of teachers continue to seek solutions under these difficult circumstances.

Figure 19: Teacher motivation and professional commitment, Gaza teachers



Source: Authors

Several teachers described declining motivation and enthusiasm for teaching during ongoing military attacks, expressing feelings of frustration and helplessness. Two teachers also described losing the will to live or feeling that life has lost meaning since October 2023. A teacher noted the declining motivation and depletion of teacher energy as a concern for the future of education in Gaza. Another said:

> *"Yes, during moments of extreme helplessness, I have found myself thinking about stopping or leaving teaching, especially when facing the dangers of the journey, the complete lack of educational resources, or when my thoughts are forced to focus solely on securing the basic necessities of survival and overcoming hunger and displacement for my family."*

Despite these challenges, the qualitative findings highlighted a strong commitment to education among teachers in Gaza, even "*despite the extremely difficult circumstances*". One teacher noted that the "*dedication and effort*

exerted by teachers" has increased considerably, while another explained that their "*sense of responsibility towards the students has always been stronger*" than the fear, displacement, loss and exhaustion they experience. This commitment is rooted in a strong sense of professional, moral and national responsibility towards students and communities. Teachers described their work as a sacrifice, motivated by their "*professional ethic*" and the belief that education is a "*noble mission*" and a tool for resilience. One teacher summarised their motivation through "*the hope in the eyes of children*", "*educational responsibility and national duty*", and the belief that education is a "*means of resilience and psychosocial support*". The overwhelming majority of focus group participants reported that they have not considered leaving or do not intend to leave the profession, citing religious, moral and national duty, commitment to students, the humanitarian importance of education and, for some, their dependence on teaching as a source of income.

Education as a source of hope and resilience emerged as another important motivation for teachers to continue teaching. Teachers described how children's enthusiasm for learning, even during the Israeli military attacks, and their perception of educational tents as a refuge from fear made "*abandoning them impossible*". One teacher emphasised that a child deprived of safety, education and play needs a teacher who can offer "*hope before knowledge*". Teachers therefore view their role as extending beyond academic instruction to protecting children's futures, addressing learning loss and supporting their psychosocial wellbeing. Two teachers drew on the Arabic idiom "*learning in youth is like carving into rock*" (العلم في الصغر كالنقش في الحجر) to emphasise the lasting importance of education during childhood. For these teachers, continuing to teach is not simply a professional obligation but also a means of sustaining hope, protecting children's futures and strengthening community resilience amid the ongoing crisis.

Teachers in the West Bank

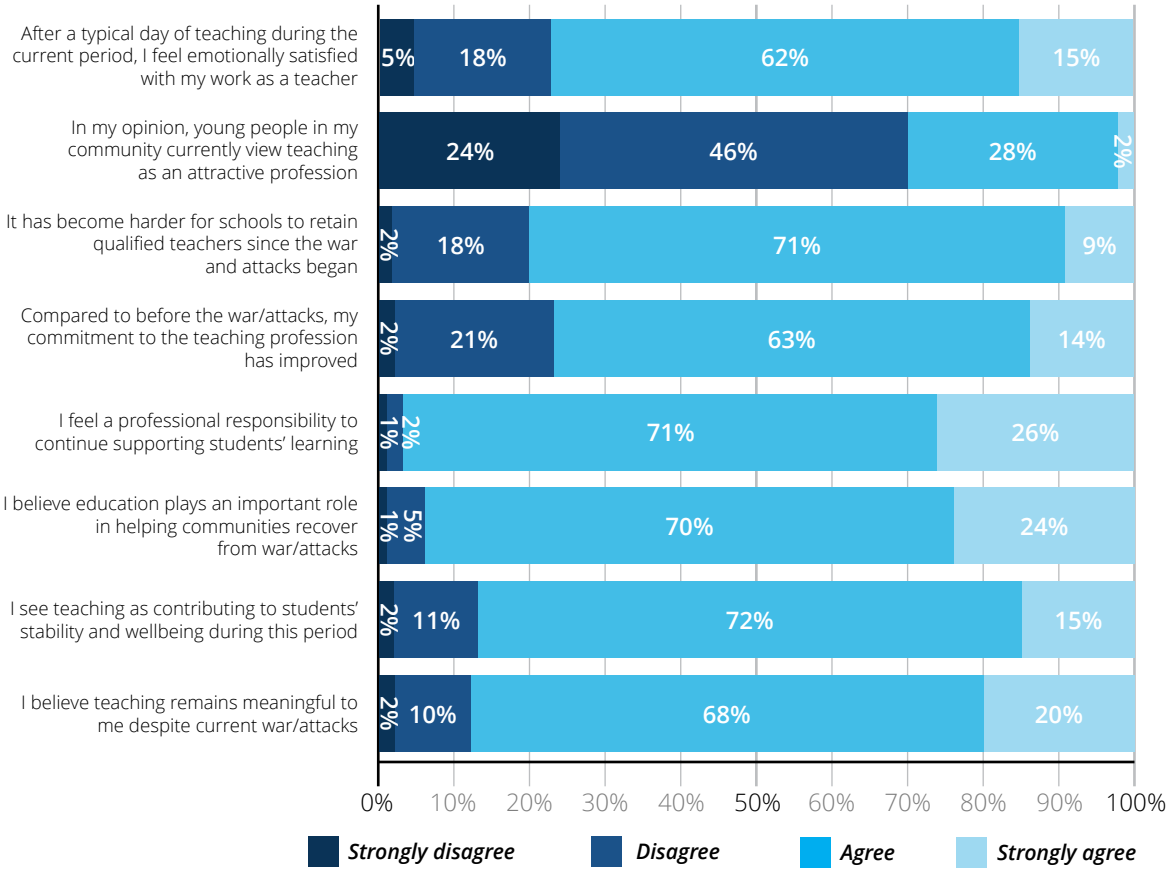
> *"I believe that education remains one of the strongest sources of hope for our society. Despite all the challenges, teachers will continue to do their best to support students and help them build a better future."*
> —Teacher

Teachers in the West Bank also show strong professional commitment (see Figure 20). For instance, 88% agreed or strongly agreed that teaching remains meaningful, 88% said teaching contributes to students' stability and wellbeing and 94% believe education plays an important role in community recovery. Almost all teachers (97%) agreed or strongly agreed that they feel responsible for continuing to support students' learning. This shows that teachers in the West Bank continue to see teaching as meaningful and socially important despite the difficult situation.

In terms of commitment to teaching, 77% of teachers said it has increased since October 2023, but 80% agreed that it has become harder for schools to retain qualified teachers. The strongest warning sign is the perceived attractiveness of teaching: only 30% agreed or strongly agreed that young people currently view teaching as an attractive profession. This suggests a serious concern about the future teacher workforce in the West Bank.

Emotional satisfaction is positive but a little less strong than in Gaza: 77% of West Bank teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they feel emotionally satisfied after a typical teaching day. Primary teachers were more positive than secondary teachers (83% compared with 76%). Gender differences are also visible: female teachers reported higher emotional satisfaction than male teachers at both primary and secondary levels. For example, among secondary teachers, 79% of females agreed or strongly agreed, compared with 67% of males.

Figure 20: Teacher motivation and professional commitment, West Bank teachers



Source: Authors

The qualitative findings highlight a strong sense of professional commitment, pride and responsibility among teachers in the West Bank, despite the challenging circumstances. The majority of teachers reported that they have not considered leaving the profession, with some indicating that their motivation and belief in the importance of education has strengthened during the crisis. Teachers frequently described their work in terms of "*sumud*" (steadfastness - صمود), "*determination*" and "*struggle*", recognising teaching as a humanitarian, national and religious responsibility. Their commitment is rooted in their passion for teaching, relationships with students and belief in education's contribution to society. One teacher explained that she could not abandon this responsibility, "*nor can we aid the occupation by perpetuating poverty and destroying education*". Religious beliefs also emerged as an important source of motivation, with teachers describing teaching as a sacred responsibility, a form of continuous charity and a profession associated with The Prophet. Some teachers also emphasised the importance of supportive colleagues, school leadership and families in sustaining their motivation, while others acknowledged their dependence on teaching as a source of income.

Education as a source of hope, resilience and continuity emerged as a central theme in teachers' accounts. Similar to teachers in Gaza, those in the West Bank view education as a "*vital lifeline of hope*", providing students with stability and a sense of normality amid ongoing insecurity. Teachers recognised that their responsibilities have expanded beyond academic instruction to include providing psychosocial, emotional and social support. One teacher emphasised the responsibility to "*protect education, protect the next generation, and have absolute faith in the right to education.*" Another described education as a source of *"hope, stability and a sense of normality,*" while another considered it "*a necessity for survival*".

These responsibilities are particularly significant for teachers supporting vulnerable students, including girls. One female teacher explained that "*female students need more than academic knowledge*", and require someone who can provide "*a sense of safety and stability*." She further described schools as places of belonging and dignity, where teachers can respond to students' emotional needs and identify challenges affecting their learning. For these teachers, continuing education is closely connected to protecting students' futures and sustaining hope for Palestine.

Despite this strong commitment, some teachers expressed concerns about their ability to remain in the profession. One NGO interviewee reported that teacher motivation has "*declined significantly*", particularly in relation to curriculum changes and the introduction of Open Educational Resources (OER). Teachers who have considered leaving identify multiple challenges, including school transfers that increase travel distances and childcare difficulties, safety concerns, transport barriers, psychological exhaustion, low salaries and wider financial instability. Some also mentioned continuing postgraduate studies and the broader political context as factors influencing their decisions. These accounts highlight the tension between teachers' commitment to education and the difficult personal, professional and economic circumstances in which they work.

Overall, the findings suggest that teachers in the West Bank remain strongly committed to their students and view education as an important source of hope, resilience and continuity. However, this commitment coexists with considerable concerns about the sustainability and future attractiveness of the profession. Addressing these challenges requires improvements in working conditions, reliable salaries, psychosocial support and longer-term strategies to retain qualified teachers and attract new entrants to the profession.

Teacher motivation and commitment across Gaza and the West Bank

These findings show very high motivation and belief in the importance of education for student wellbeing and recovery in both Gaza and the West Bank, with the Gaza findings being slightly higher. The vast majority of teachers in both settings also feel a professional responsibility to continue supporting students' learning. The majority of teachers overall also reported that their commitment to the profession has increased since October 2023. Interviewees reported that this is despite the massive challenges and difficulties they are facing. Interviewees in both contexts also acknowledged that the extreme difficulties have had negative effects on motivation, with some saying they have considered

leaving the profession, although the majority said they have not. The idea that education is a source of hope is apparent. These findings suggest that teachers are steadfastly committed to carrying out their educational mission. Together, these findings suggest that teachers remain strongly committed to supporting students and sustaining education despite the difficult circumstances.

However, this strong professional commitment coexists with growing concerns about the sustainability of the teaching workforce. First, teachers in both Gaza and the West Bank reported that retaining qualified teachers is a challenge. Additionally, many teachers in both settings report that young people do not see teaching as an attractive profession. These findings indicate that there might be concerns for the future of the teaching workforce. This is of even greater concern given that teachers have also experienced injuries, death and displacement.

8. Teachers views about health and wellbeing

This section considers the impact of the ongoing Israeli military attacks on teacher health and wellbeing. Specifically, it explores teachers' exposure to conflict-related experiences, including injury, bereavement and violence affecting schools, alongside indicators of psychological wellbeing such as depression, anxiety and sleep difficulties. Together, these findings provide insight into the extent to which the conflict has affected teachers' physical and emotional wellbeing while continuing to teach.

Exposure to conflict and bereavement

Teachers in Gaza

Teachers in Gaza reported exceptionally high levels of bereavement and conflict-related violence. Bereavement is almost universal: 90% have lost an acquaintance or community member, 92% a close friend or extended family member and 65% an immediate family member. Almost half (49%) also reported violence by military forces affecting schools, education staff or students. As one female teacher expressed:

> *"Losing my colleagues, losing relatives and being deprived of seeing my children and husband due to the border closure has affected my mental state; I'm filled with anxiety and fear."*

These findings illustrate the extraordinary scale of personal loss and conflict exposure experienced by teachers in Gaza. Although only 8% reported a physical injury resulting in lasting impairment or disability, this should be interpreted with caution. Given the scale of displacement, injury and loss of life in Gaza, teachers with severe injuries or disabilities may have been under-represented in the survey (see Section 2 on methodology).

Secondary teachers (56%) were considerably more likely to report violence affecting schools, education staff or students, compared with primary teachers (38%). Gender differences are observed in relation to physical injury and exposure to violence. Male primary teachers were more likely than female teachers to report a lasting physical injury (14% compared with 3%) and violence affecting schools, education staff or students (45% compared with 34%).

In the focus group discussions, teachers described repeated displacement, living in tents and temporary shelters, separation from family members and the struggle to meet basic needs while continuing to work. Many explained that these experiences have transformed both their personal and professional lives, contributing to a pervasive sense of insecurity and loss. One male teacher stressed how:

> *"During the few hours of teaching, my mind is divided between explaining lessons to my students and worrying about my family in the displacement tent whenever a nearby explosion occurs".*

Another teacher expressed how: "*I don't know if I will return to the tent because of the indiscriminate Israeli shelling. I am very afraid for my family and children...*"

Overall, the findings indicate that bereavement and exposure to conflict are pervasive among teachers in Gaza, with personal loss affecting almost every respondent, regardless of gender or teaching level.

Teachers in the West Bank

Teachers in the West Bank also reported considerable bereavement and conflict-related violence, although at substantially lower levels than in Gaza. A small number of teachers (4%) reported a physical injury resulting in lasting impairment or disability, while 38% had lost an acquaintance or community member, 29% a close friend or extended family member and 13% an immediate family member. In addition, 43% reported violence by military forces affecting schools, education staff or students.

Differences by teaching level are generally modest. Gender differences are more pronounced, with male teachers generally reporting greater exposure. Among primary teachers, men were more likely than women to report losing an acquaintance or community member (men=49%; women=33%), or a close friend or extended family member (men=39%; women=23%), violence affecting education (men=51%; women=36%) and lasting physical injury (men=6%; women=3%). Similar differences by gender are evident among secondary teachers. Loss of an immediate family member followed this pattern among primary teachers (18% versus 11%) but not secondary teachers, where it was slightly higher among women (14% versus 9%) compared to men.

Teachers described living with the constant anticipation of further violence, including fears that attacks experienced in Gaza could spread to the West Bank. As one teacher expressed:

> *"The constant fear of being attacked and assaulted, especially since I personally experienced two attempted attacks by settlers on the roads while going to work... But we cannot allow fear and what we are experiencing to control us, because that will prevent us from living... We try as much as possible to coexist and adapt to the current situation."*

Another teacher said:

> *"My day begins with a high level of stress the moment I leave my home early in the morning... Every journey feels like a risk to my personal safety." A government official further emphasised how "across many areas, students and teachers have been exposed to injuries, fatalities and arrests, creating an environment of fear and uncertainty."*

Overall, while the prevalence of bereavement and conflict-related violence is lower than in Gaza, substantial proportions of teachers in the West Bank have experienced personal loss and conflict exposure.

Psychosocial wellbeing

Teachers in Gaza

Teachers in Gaza reported extremely high levels of psychological distress. More than four in five teachers (81%) reported feeling depressed, while almost all teachers (95%) reported feeling anxious. Sleep disruption is also widespread, with 83% reporting trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much.

Teachers' accounts illustrate the profound emotional and psychological consequences of the Israeli military attacks. One teacher described: "*my psychological and emotional state had deteriorated drastically; I had lost hope and passion for life. My anxiety was now overwhelming. It became necessary for me to isolate myself and avoid any activity that might cause stress as much as possible.*"

Similarly, a female teacher reflected that she "*no longer possess*[ed] *the mental, physical and emotional peace* [she] *had before the war"*, and lived with the constant fear that *"at any moment I would be under bombardment and rubble.*"

Others described how the cumulative loss of colleagues, relatives and school leaders had profoundly affected their emotional wellbeing. As one teacher explained: "*The war has left nothing untouched and continues to do so; we are all vulnerable to what happened.*"

The qualitative findings further illustrate the nature of this distress. Teachers described living with persistent anxiety, fear and uncertainty, alongside feelings of helplessness, emotional exhaustion and grief. One participant explained that the military attacks had brought "*feelings of anxiety, fear, instability, mood swings and sometimes a feeling of helplessness due to the inability to meet basic family needs*", while another described "*psychological trauma, anxiety and fear for my family and how to protect them... fear for our children's future... a feeling of instability and loss.*"

An NGO representative added how "*teachers are experiencing high levels of frustration and depression, which have had a serious impact on their psychological wellbeing.*" Many are also suffering from physical exhaustion and fatigue. Despite these experiences, many teachers also described trying to continue supporting their students emotionally while coping with their own trauma, highlighting the considerable psychological burden borne by educators throughout the conflict.

Teachers in the West Bank

Teachers in the West Bank also reported high levels of psychological distress, although these are generally lower than those reported in Gaza. Nearly three quarters of respondents (73%) reported feeling depressed, while almost nine in ten (88%) reported feeling anxious. Sleep disruption is also widespread, with 71% reporting trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much.

The qualitative findings illustrate how this distress has been shaped by the cumulative pressures of living and teaching under prolonged occupation and insecurity. As one teacher explained, "*the war has had a profound psychological and emotional impact on me. My feelings of anxiety, stress and sadness have increased, and it has sometimes become difficult to separate*

personal pressures from professional responsibilities."

At the same time, many described making conscious efforts to provide stability for their students through empathy, social-emotional support and maintaining a calm classroom environment, despite their own psychological distress.

Teachers also described the persistent uncertainty of daily life in the West Bank, including fears arising from attacks on schools, movement restrictions and checkpoints. One teacher explained, "*I lost my sense of security due to the checkpoints and violations by the occupation army. I dealt with the situation with determination and defiance, looking at my students as if they were my own children.*"

Another described living with *"no psychological stability*" and "*a feeling of fear most of the time*", explaining that daily obstacles and insecurity contribute to psychological pressure and a loss of motivation. A development agency representative further added how the "*motivation and ability to be creative have been significantly affected because* [teachers] *are carrying an enormous emotional and psychological burden.*" Together, these accounts demonstrate that, although teachers to support their students, they did so while managing persistent anxiety, insecurity and emotional strain.

Health and wellbeing across Gaza and the West Bank

Although teachers in Gaza and the West Bank are experiencing very different forms and intensities of conflict, the findings show that poor health and wellbeing are a major concern across both contexts. The differences are most pronounced in experiences of loss. In Gaza, 92% of teachers have lost a close friend or extended family member and 65% an immediate family member, compared with 29% and 13%, respectively in the West Bank. Yet exposure to violence affecting schools, education staff or students is high in both settings, at 49% in Gaza and 43% in the West Bank. This points to an important contextual distinction: teachers in Gaza are experiencing conflict through widespread bereavement, displacement, bombardment and difficulties meeting basic needs, while West Bank teachers more commonly described persistent insecurity associated with attacks, checkpoints, movement restrictions and the possibility of further escalation.

Despite this difference, psychological distress is strikingly high across both contexts. Depression was reported by 81% of teachers in Gaza and 73% in the West Bank, anxiety by 95% and 88%, and sleep difficulties by 83% and 71%, respectively. Gaza teachers consistently reported worse outcomes, but the relatively smaller differences in psychological distress compared with the much larger differences in bereavement are notable. They suggest that teachers' wellbeing is being affected through different but overlapping pathways: acute and repeated loss and displacement are particularly prominent in Gaza, whereas prolonged insecurity and restrictions on everyday life are important features of teachers' experiences in the West Bank. Across both, teachers are simultaneously experiencing conflict themselves and occupying a professional role that requires them to provide stability and support to learners. This reflects wider evidence from crisis-affected contexts that teaching can provide purpose and continuity, while also exposing teachers to cumulative pressures that undermine wellbeing.

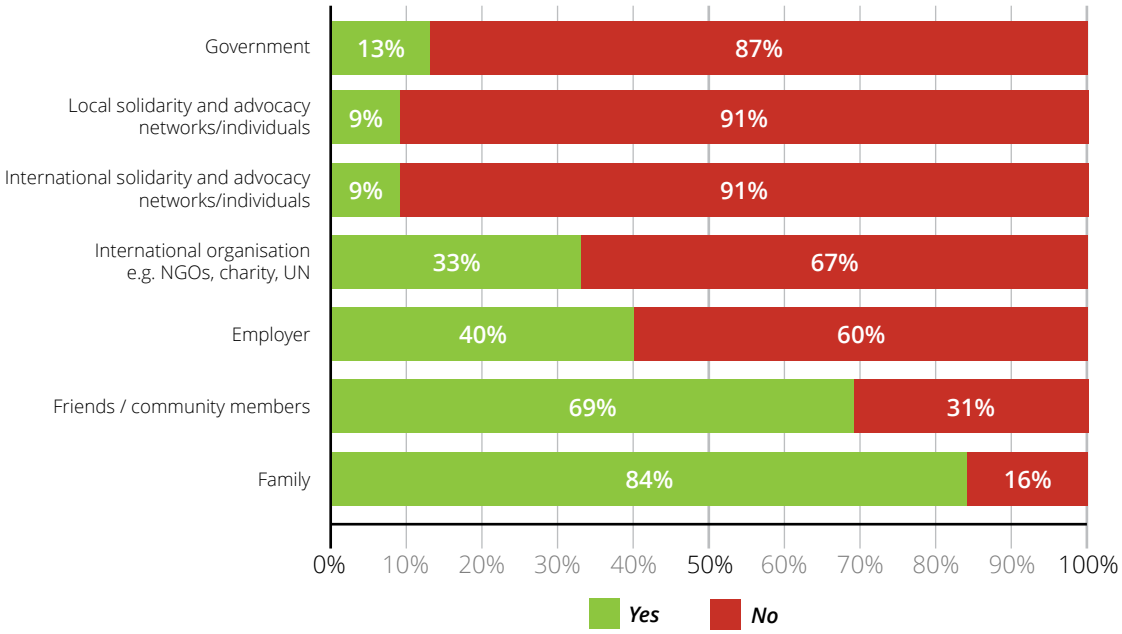
Support received for health and wellbeing

Teachers were asked who had provided them with support in managing the health and wellbeing challenges they had experienced since the ongoing Israeli military attacks began.

Teachers in Gaza

Teachers in Gaza rely predominantly on family (84%) and friends or community members (69%) for support (see Figure 21). Formal support is less common: 40% reported support from employers, 33% from international organisations, 13% from government and 9% from international or local solidarity networks.

Figure 21: Sources of support for teachers' health and wellbeing, Gaza teachers



Source: Authors

Differences by teaching level are generally modest. Primary teachers were more likely than secondary teachers to report family (87% compared with 82%) and employer support (47% compared with 34%), while secondary teachers were slightly more likely to report support from international organisations (35% compared with 30%). Gender differences are more apparent: female teachers generally reported greater family, community and employer support, while male secondary teachers were more likely to report support from international organisations (44% compared with 23% of women) and government (18% compared with 9%).

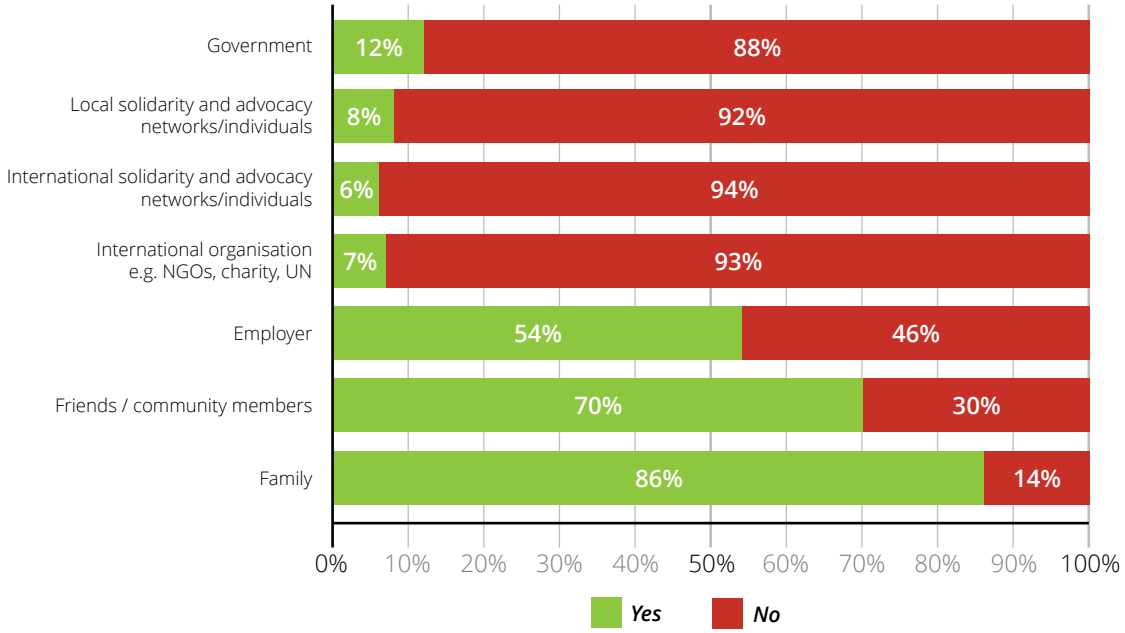
Qualitative findings show that support is often limited or inadequate. Many teachers reported receiving no support, while others described reduced salaries, small financial contributions and food parcels that do not meet basic needs. One teacher described receiving only two food parcels, which were "*not enough for any need*". Some teachers reported psychosocial and professional support through social-emotional learning, training and educational resources, but access has been uneven.

Overall, family and community networks remain important, but formal financial, material and psychosocial support is fragmented and often inadequate relative to teachers' needs.

Teachers in the West Bank

Family (86%) and community networks (70%) are the main sources of support for teachers in the West Bank, with 54% receiving support from their employer (see Figure 22). Formal external support has been much less common, including from government (12%), local solidarity networks (8%), international organisations (7%) and international solidarity networks (6%).

Figure 22: Sources of support for teachers' health and wellbeing, West Bank teachers



Source: Authors

Gender differences are more apparent: women were more likely than men to report family, community and employer support. Among primary teachers, for example, 88% of women receive family support compared with 77% of men. Male secondary teachers are somewhat more likely to report government support (16% compared with 10% of women) and local solidarity support (12% compared with 6%) than female teachers.

Qualitative findings similarly highlight reliance on family, colleagues and school administrations for psychological, social and practical support. Some teachers also noted benefiting from union support, social-emotional learning courses, professional training and educational resources. However, many reported receiving no meaningful external support and described relying on family, colleagues or themselves. One teacher who had received no financial support said that an emotional learning course had "*eased my mind somewhat*", while others referred to "*self-support*" and family assistance to cope with these pressures.

Overall, the findings point to substantial reliance on informal networks, alongside limited and uneven formal support, despite the high levels of psychological distress reported by teachers.

Support for teachers across Gaza and the West Bank

Despite some contextual differences, there are striking similarities in where teachers obtained support. Families were the most commonly-reported source in both Gaza (84%) and the West Bank (86%), followed by friends and community members (69% and 70%). Government support was reported by only 13% and 12%, respectively. The consistency of these patterns across two very different contexts is notable and suggests that teachers' immediate support systems are predominantly rooted in family and community networks, while government support is much less commonly reported.

Differences emerge more clearly in institutional sources of support. International organisations were reported more frequently in Gaza than in the West Bank (33% compared with 7%), while employer support was more common in the West Bank (54% compared with 40%). These differences are consistent with the distinct institutional and humanitarian environments in the two contexts, although the data do not establish why they occur. Importantly, reporting a source of support does not necessarily indicate that this support is sufficient. Qualitative accounts across both contexts described unmet financial, material and psychosocial needs and considerable reliance on family, colleagues and teachers' own coping strategies. Taken together, the findings point to a common gap: despite the scale of pressures facing teachers, much of the support they report receiving comes from informal networks rather than formal systems.

9. Teachers' beliefs and values

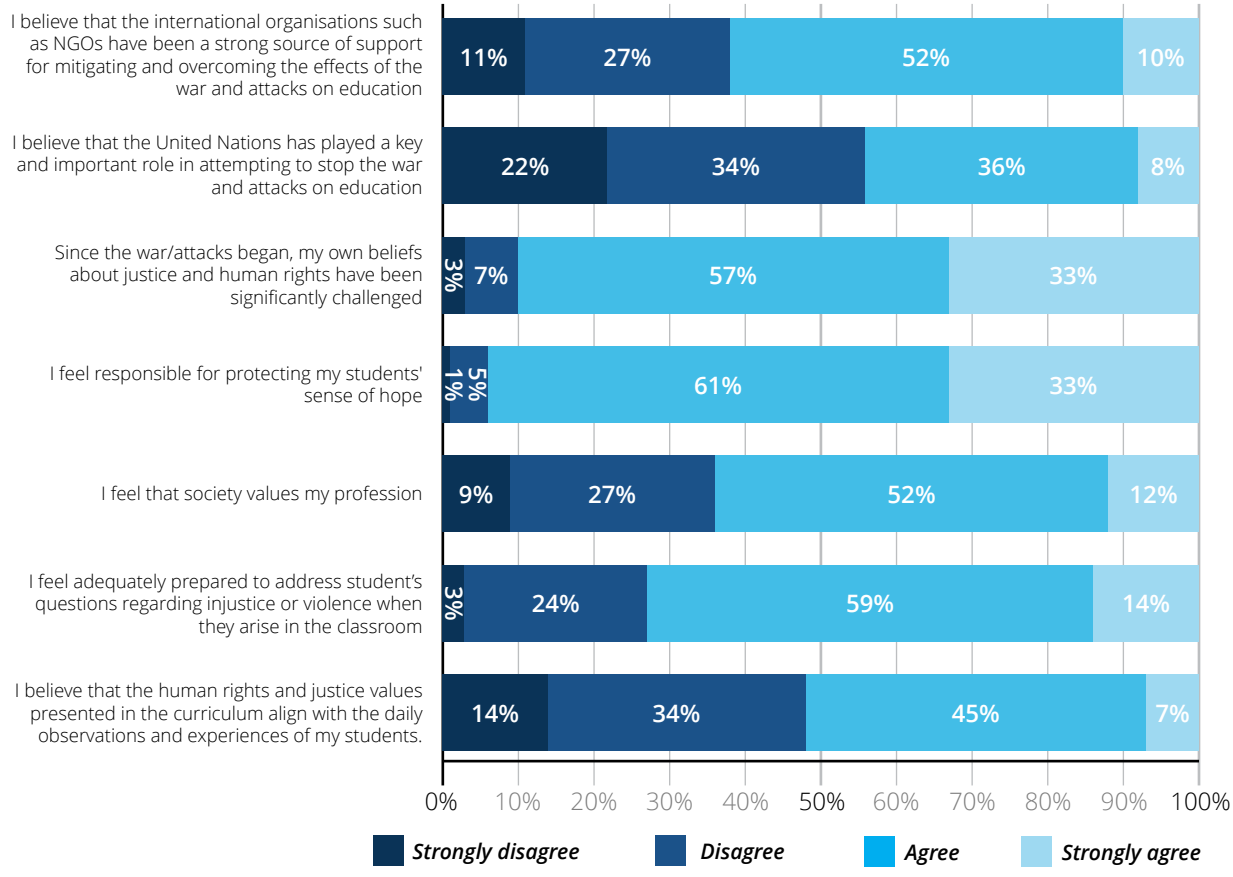
> *"Perhaps the most profound impact* [of war] *is that many teachers have lost confidence in the international system of humanitarian values. The events of the war have led them to question principles such as equality, human rights and tolerance, as they feel these values have not been upheld in practice."* —NGO staff member

Beliefs and values refer to teachers' views about justice, human rights, professional recognition, hope and the role of education during ongoing Israeli military attacks. This section captures whether teachers feel able to discuss injustice with students, whether they feel responsible for protecting students' hope, whether their own beliefs about justice and human rights have been impacted, and whether they think wider society and international organisations are supporting education adequately.

Teachers in Gaza

In Gaza, the tension between human rights as stated principles and human rights as lived experience are particularly visible. Nine in ten teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their own beliefs about justice and human rights have been significantly challenged since the Israeli military attacks began (see Figure 23). By contrast, views about whether curriculum values reflect students' experiences

Figure 23: Teachers' beliefs and values, Gaza teachers



Source: Authors

are almost evenly divided: 52% agreed or strongly agreed that human rights and justice values presented in the curriculum align with students' daily observations and experiences.

One teacher noted:

> *"I approach the values of human rights, justice and dignity as daily practices rather than merely concepts found in a textbook. I try to connect them to the real-life situations that students experience and to create a safe space where they can discuss issues and express their opinions and feelings... I also make sure not to present these values in an idealised way that is disconnected from reality. Female students sometimes see a clear contradiction between what they learn about rights and justice and what is happening around them. I therefore acknowledge this contradiction and help them understand and analyse it critically and consciously. I emphasise that the violation of rights does not reduce their importance; rather, it makes commitment to them even more necessary."*

This account shows that the perceived contradiction between curriculum values and lived reality does not necessarily indicate that teachers have ceased to believe in human rights and justice. Rather, some teachers appear to be responding by relocating these values from abstract curriculum content into everyday practices of fairness, respect, inclusion and dialogue. This interpretation is also consistent with teachers' reported preparedness to engage with difficult issues. Around 73% of Gaza teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they feel adequately prepared to address students' questions about injustice or violence in the classroom. Thus, although most teachers reported some confidence in dealing with these questions, more than a quarter did not, which is particularly important in a context where students' experiences of military attacks, displacement and loss may make such discussions unavoidable.

Focus group discussions offer further insight into these issues. When asked how they approached teaching values such as human rights, justice or dignity, teachers pointed to insufficient teaching time and curriculum constraints. As one teacher explained, "*due to the exceptional circumstances, it is difficult to teach these values because education is limited to basic subjects (mathematics, English, science, Arabic language).*" With class time reduced, teachers reported that the curriculum requires them to teach core subjects, focusing on basic skills and leaving no space for values-based content: "*the curriculum requires teachers to teach four core subjects, and students attend school three days a week... we cannot teach students about human rights, religion or patriotism.*" One teacher also pointed to the reduction of "*teaching skills*" as a reason why "*values cannot be included in the educational process*". Further, some teachers responded that the "*disconnect between values and existing reality*" makes it difficult for them to teach values. One teacher reported finding it difficult to teach justice and human rights values, "*because the student lacks them and doesn't feel their presence",* whilst another said that it was har*d "because these values are not present in all the students and their families.*"

Despite these constraints and contradictions, teachers find ways to convey and embody values in their teaching. One teacher explained that despite the lack of time, he links his "*topics to values, justice and human right*s", while another said they "*try to instil hope despite the contradiction between values and reality*". One

teacher described addressing values, "*through practical, real-world classroom experience*", striving to build students' dignity and self-confidence, distribute attention fairly and connect human rights to students' "*fundamental and inalienable right to education*".

Regarding teachers' own sense of moral responsibility, 94% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt responsible for protecting students' sense of hope. The qualitative accounts suggest that, in Gaza, "*protecting hope*" has become associated with an expansion of teachers' roles beyond instruction. One teacher described this transformation as follows:

> *"My understanding of my professional identity has expanded from being a mathematics teacher to becoming a guardian of hope and childhood, and an advocate for this generation's right to live and learn. My role is no longer limited to delivering knowledge; it has become a daily act of resilience. My responsibility is now reflected in creating a safe space and providing psychosocial support before delivering academic content. At the community level, I have realised that establishing learning points among displaced families' tents restores a sense of stability and balance. Today, education is our only window for preserving hope."*

These qualitative findings suggest that teachers' beliefs in human rights may have been challenged, but their perceived responsibility to enact these values remains very strong and even expanded. One teacher expressed this contradiction particularly starkly:

> *"The teacher is currently maintaining a minimum of humanity and scientific knowledge (addressing educational losses) to continue life and instil hope in the hearts of students. I preserve what remains of the morals and values in light of the disappearance of the values of justice and dignity as a result of the Israeli attacks, and preserve the remaining educational losses among the students."*

Far from abandoning values of justice and human rights in the face of daily injustice, one female teacher highlighted: "*the importance of adhering to values as a tool for resilience and preserving identity and humanity, rather than abandoning them due to circumstances*", and explained: "*if external justice is lacking, I emphasise establishing it within the classroom through mutual respect and equality for all*."

Teachers in Gaza are also relatively positive about the social standing of their profession. Two thirds (64%) agreed or strongly agreed that society values the teaching profession, while 36% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This may be read alongside the qualitative descriptions of teachers as psychological supporters, builders of hope and contributors to the continuity of education.

Views of international institutions present a different pattern. Just over half (56%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the UN has played a key and important role in attempting to stop the ongoing Israeli military attacks on education. Teachers in Gaza were slightly more positive about the practical support provided by NGOs and other international organisations: 62% agreed or strongly agreed that these organisations have been a strong source of support in mitigating and overcoming the effects of military attacks on education.

Qualitative insights corroborate this finding: when asked what role international organisations should play, almost all teachers focused on practical support, most notably financial support, teachers' salaries and reconstruction of educational institutions, rather than the prevention of attacks. However, when addressing themselves to the international community, teachers extend their appeals to include protection from attacks and the upholding of basic rights to safety and education. Teachers call on the international community to "*protect teachers from attacks on the sector*" and urged it to "*uphold the students' right to education and to protect them from the daily threat of death.*"

Slight differences by teaching level are visible for curriculum alignment compared to other items. Of primary teachers, 59% agreed or strongly agreed that curriculum values align with students' experiences, compared with 48% of secondary teachers. Primary teachers (76%) are also somewhat more likely to feel adequately prepared to discuss injustice or violence than secondary teachers (70%). Gender differences are mixed, although primary female teachers were notably more positive than primary male teachers regarding curriculum alignment (women=65%; men=51%), societal recognition (women=69%; men=57%) and the UN's role (women=51%; men= 39%). For the remaining items, differences are generally small. The dominant Gaza pattern therefore remains one of deeply challenged beliefs about justice and rights combined with a strong professional commitment to enact dignity and sustain students' hope.

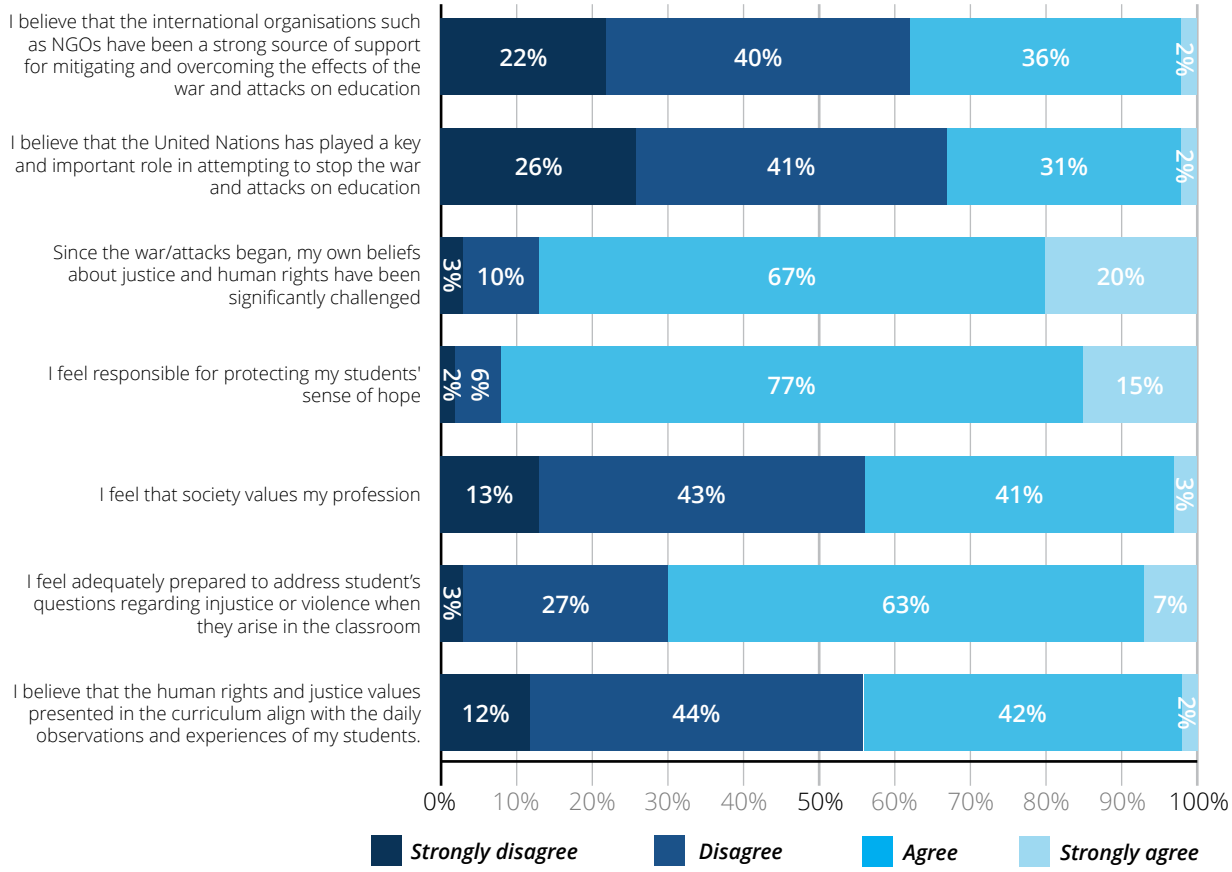
Teachers in the West Bank

In the West Bank, a large majority (87%) agreed or strongly agreed that their own beliefs about justice and human rights have been significantly challenged since the Israeli military and settler attacks over the last three years (see Figure 24). Moreover, 56% disagreed or strongly disagreed that the human rights and justice values presented in the curriculum align with students' daily observations and experiences, whereas only 44% agreed or strongly agreed.

The qualitative accounts suggest that this disconnection does not necessarily translate into teachers abandoning these values. Teachers in focus groups expressed this disconnection between values of justice and human rights and the experience of these values on the ground. One teacher stated: "*what is happening on the ground is completely different from what human rights and justice dictate; they are all absent and violated in the most heinous ways,*" whilst another deplored: "*In a world devoid of humanity, how can we speak of human rights and justice? All rights have been violated: the right to food, water, clothing, movement and expression. All these rights are non-existent due to the war.*"

However, whilst teachers denounce this disconnection, they do not abandon these values, but rather convey and strongly reaffirm them in the context of these violations and injustices, by presenting "*these values realistically, taking into account the students' lived experiences.*" According to one teacher: "*I give* [students] *the material and explain that it is not applied in all areas, and I explain what it should be*", whilst another explained teaching these values by "*recognising reality, connecting with the immediate surroundings, adhering to values, understanding them, and promoting them regardless of the circumstances.*" Teachers also teach values of justice and human rights by affirming students' and Palestinian people's rights. One teacher stated:

Figure 24: Teachers' beliefs and values, West Bank teachers



Source: Authors

"*We always affirm our right to life, work, wellbeing and dignity as a Palestinian people*", whilst another explained: "*It is my students' right that I clarify these matters for them, explain them and help them understand their rights and responsibilities.*"

West Bank teachers described actively incorporating dignity, fairness and human rights into their everyday interactions with students, treating these values "*as a practice*". One teacher explained:

> *"I integrate these values naturally into classroom discussions and daily interactions. I encourage students to respect one another, appreciate diversity, think critically and communicate with empathy. I believe education should help students become responsible individuals who value dignity, fairness and peaceful coexistence."*

Another teacher similarly explained:

> *"I use our daily reality and low-pressure discussions to empower students, validating their right to live safely, learn and have a voice."*

This suggests that many teachers questioned whether the curriculum correspond with what students are witnessing, but continue to describe dignity, fairness and rights as values they seek to practise with students.

Around 70% of West Bank teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they feel adequately prepared to address students' questions about injustice or violence when they arise in the classroom. However, around one third disagreed or

strongly disagreed. As in Gaza, this indicates that a substantial minority of teachers do not feel adequately prepared for discussions that may be central to students' attempts to understand their experiences. For example, one female teacher explained her difficulty in discussing values of justice with her students: "*Many students have been arrested or have become martyrs, making it difficult to actually convince them of these values*." However, despite these difficulties, many teachers feel prepared for these discussions. One teacher gave a clear account of her attitude: "*There will be clear rejection given the stark difference between their* [students'] *reality and our values, but their reaction stems from their age group. Here, I must not deny this, but rather agree with them, while emphasising that regardless of the difficulties, we must know our rights and uphold them no matter what.*"

The majority of teachers (92%) agreed or strongly agreed that they felt responsible for protecting students' sense of hope. The interviews show that teachers interpret this responsibility as extending well beyond curriculum delivery. One teacher provided a particularly detailed account:

> *"To be a teacher in the current situation means, to me, preserving a sense of normal life in the midst of a reality filled with disruption. School may be the only place where a female student feels that her day still has structure, that someone is waiting for her, listening to her and believing in her ability to continue. For this reason, I no longer see my role as limited to teaching geography or history and completing the curriculum. It also includes noticing each student, understanding what may remain behind her silence or decline in performance, and treating her with humanity before judging her academic achievement... In these circumstances, a teacher does not simply transfer knowledge, but helps students understand their reality without becoming overwhelmed by fear... Maintaining hope does not mean ignoring pain or making unrealistic promises. Rather, it means helping students feel that their future is still worth working for and that education remains a means of protecting both individuals and their communities. For me, teaching has therefore become a way of taking a stand in life and a mission that extends far beyond the classroom and the textbook."*

This highlights how the responses in the survey to "*protecting hope*" does not romanticise teachers' resilience. Hope was described not as overlooking violence or hardship, but as helping students retain dignity, structure and a sense of future possibility. However, teachers' own strong ethical commitment is accompanied by relatively weak perceptions of professional recognition: 56% of West Bank teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that society values the teaching profession. One teacher stated:

> *"I would like to add that Palestinian teachers continue to carry out their mission despite the difficult psychological, financial and on-the-ground conditions they face. However, they cannot be expected to remain resilient and constantly adapt without receiving the support and stability they need... Teachers should be viewed first as human beings, with families, needs and concerns, and also as professional partners whose experience and voices should be represented in educational decision-making. Despite all the challenges, I still believe in the power of education to preserve hope and build a better future,*

provided that we protect teachers and give them the trust, support and professional recognition they deserve."

The strongest scepticism concerned international institutions: 67% disagreed or strongly disagreed that the UN has played a key and important role in attempting to stop the Israeli military and settler attacks on education. Perceptions of NGOs and other international organisations were less positive: 62% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they have been a strong source of support for mitigating and overcoming the effects of attacks on education. Unlike Gaza, where a majority recognise the supportive role of NGOs, the predominant view of teachers in the West Bank is negative towards both the UN's protective role and the support provided by other international organisations.

Qualitative accounts reveal a slightly positive opinion of the role of international organisations in supporting teachers and the education system. A small majority still expressed scepticism. Some of these teachers reported being *"unaware of any support for teachers from international organisations*", whilst others who acknowledged the existence of some support, described it as "*less than required*" or "*minimal and almost non-existent*". However, some teachers held a more positive view of international organisations and the "*important and necessary support*" they provide. Key areas of support highlighted included the provision of training, psychological support, educational resources and the promotion of education continuity. One teacher specified that international organisations play "*a major role by providing courses such as artificial intelligence courses, the STEM programme, rewards and international competitions.*" UNICEF was named by one male teacher who stated that it "*provided a supplementary education system to [his] school two days a week.*" Differences by teaching level and gender are generally very small.

Teacher beliefs and values across Gaza and the West Bank

Teachers across Palestine have had their beliefs about justice and human rights challenged since October 2023, as 89% and 87% of teachers in Gaza and the West Bank, respectively, agreed or strongly agreed. Teachers in both settings expressed mixed views on whether the values presented in the curriculum align with students' lived experiences. Nevertheless, they remain committed to teaching human rights and justice, viewing these values as essential for preserving humanity and identity. Approximately 30% of teachers in both settings reported feeling unprepared to address students' questions about injustice and violence, highlighting the challenges of teaching human rights amid ongoing violations of those rights. In Gaza, teachers also identified limited instructional time and the prioritisation of core subjects as additional barriers to values education.

Teachers' assessments of international organisations varied. The majority in Gaza (56%) and the West Bank (67%) disagreed that the UN has played a major role in stopping the attacks on education. However, their reported experiences of support from NGOs and other international organisations differ considerably. In Gaza, 62% viewed their support in mitigating the educational consequences of Israeli military attacks positively, compared with 39% in the West Bank. Gaza

teachers particularly value the practical assistance provided by NGOs, although their messages to the international community emphasise the need to uphold the right to education and protect teachers and students from attacks.

Overall, the findings highlight teachers' continued commitment to human rights and values despite the tensions between these principles and their lived realities. They also reveal widespread dissatisfaction with the UN's perceived role in preventing attacks on education, alongside differing assessments of support from other international organisations. These findings point to the need for stronger international action to protect education and provide sustained support to teachers and students.

10. Teachers' professional and pedagogical autonomy

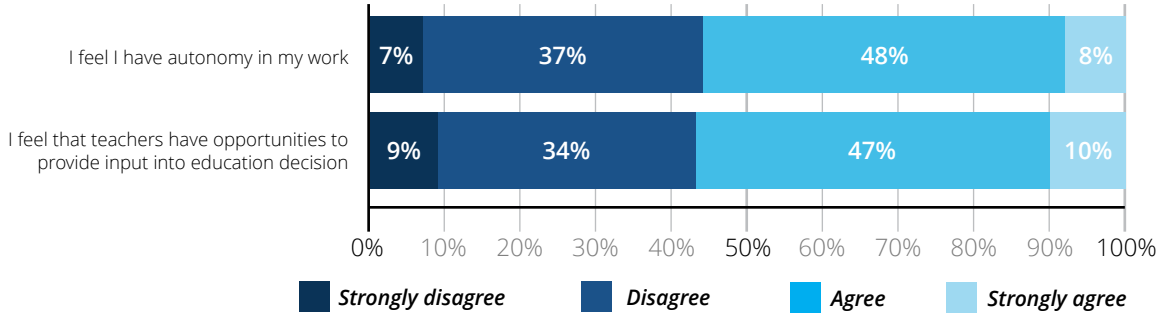
Professional and pedagogical autonomy include teachers' reported ability to exercise professional judgement over what and how they teach during ongoing military attacks. This includes whether teachers feel able to teach curriculum topics without restriction, discuss conflict-related educational issues safely, contribute to education decisions and maintain autonomy in their work. It also captures perceived limits on pedagogical freedom, including whether teachers avoid certain topics because of concerns about their own safety or the safety of learners.

Teachers' professional autonomy

Teachers in Gaza

Almost half of teachers in Gaza expressed that they do not have autonomy in their work (44%), or opportunities to input into decision-making (43%) (see Figure 25).

Figure 25: Teachers' professional autonomy, Gaza teachers



Source: Authors

Differences by teaching level are pronounced, with primary teachers more likely than secondary teachers to report opportunities to contribute to decision-making (64% versus 52%) and autonomy in their work (60% versus 53%). Among primary school teachers, women reported higher levels than men on both measures (68% versus 58% and 63% versus 55%, respectively), while gender differences among secondary school teachers are small (51% versus 53% and 49% versus 56%, respectively).

Qualitative insights highlight how Israeli military attacks have reshaped professional autonomy in Gaza. Teachers described working within educational packages, reduced instructional time and a narrower focus on core subjects, constraining their ability to make decisions about curriculum coverage. One teacher explained that: *"there is somewhat less independence as a result of the war; there are now restrictions in the curriculum in terms of packages*", while another teacher described "*restrictions on educational packages and adherence to core subjects*". Others linked reduced autonomy directly to shortened instructional time and fewer class periods.

At the same time, some teachers described the disruption caused by military attacks as requiring greater pedagogical flexibility and independent decision-making. One teacher explained:

> *"These circumstances require teachers to make quick and independent decisions within the classroom to adjust lesson plans, simplify curricula and select the most appropriate recreational and educational activities for the students' psychological and mental state."*

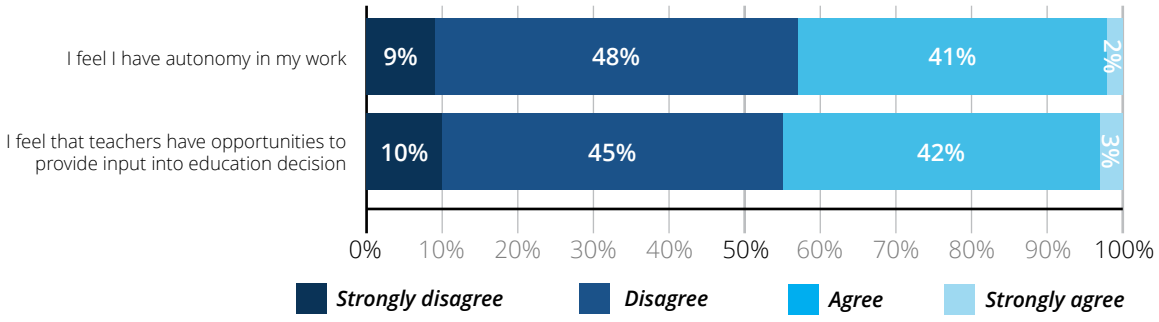
She also noted that, while adhering to core learning outcomes, they retain considerable freedom to determine the methods and strategies used in the classroom, highlighting that "*teaching inside tents and in shelters made us invent our tools from nothing.*"

Overall, while many teachers in Gaza perceived that they retain some degree of professional autonomy, despite the ongoing conflict, almost half continue to report limited opportunities to influence educational decisions and limited autonomy in their professional practice.

Teachers in the West Bank

Teachers in the West Bank reported relatively limited professional autonomy, with fewer than half reporting opportunities to contribute to education decision-making (45%) or autonomy in their work (43%) (see Figure 26). Differences by teaching level and gender are minimal.

Figure 26: Teachers' professional autonomy, West Bank teachers



Source: Authors

Qualitative responses suggest that professional autonomy in the West Bank is often experienced as partial. One teacher explained: "*I feel independent in using teaching methods, but there are limitations related to curriculum, time and general circumstances, while trying to balance this to meet students' needs.*" Another teacher reported having autonomy "*to some extent, because I try to focus on some lessons more than others, but I adhere to the plan, the number of days and my supervisor's instructions.*" Taken together, qualitative accounts reveal a similar pattern of relatively high autonomy over teaching methods, but limited autonomy due to time constraints, curriculum requirements, supervisions and lack of material resources. Overall, the findings suggest that many teachers in the West Bank perceive limited opportunities to influence educational decisions and relatively low levels of autonomy in their professional practice.

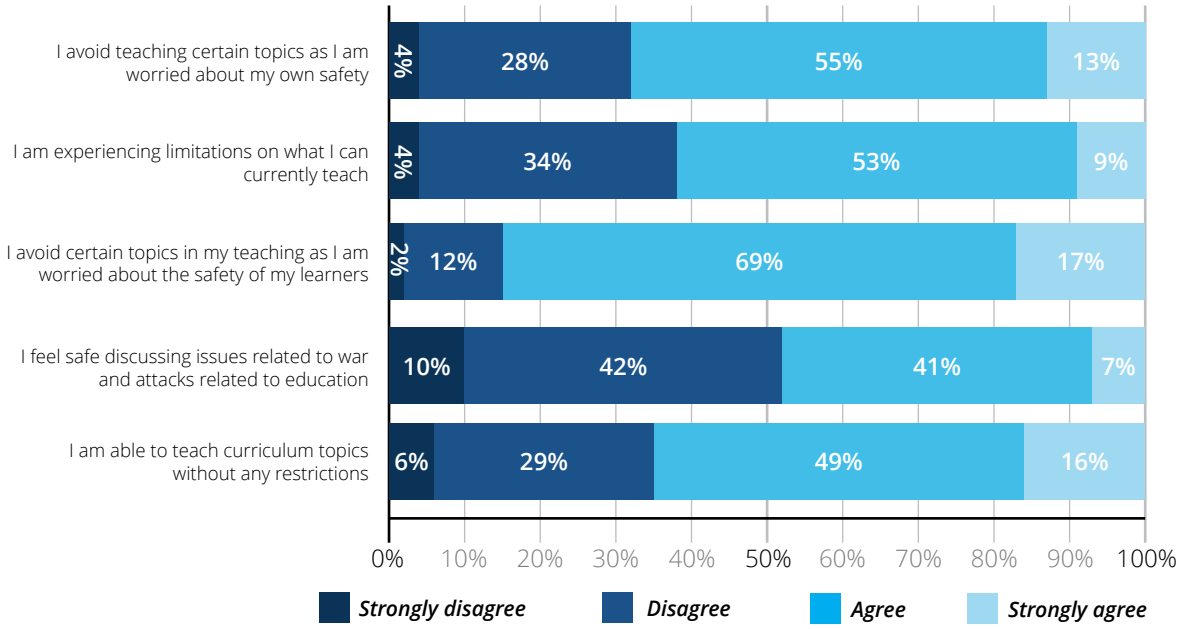
Teachers' pedagogical autonomy

This section examines teachers' perceptions of pedagogical autonomy, including restrictions on teaching, self-censorship and the extent to which teachers feel able to engage with issues related to the conflict.

Teachers in Gaza

Teachers in Gaza reported substantial constraints on pedagogical autonomy, despite relatively positive perceptions of their ability to teach the formal curriculum (see Figure 27). While 65% reported being able to teach curriculum topics without restrictions, 62% also experience limitations on what they can currently teach. Moreover, only 48% feel safe discussing attacks affecting education.

Figure 27: Teachers' pedagogical autonomy, Gaza teachers



Source: Authors

Self-censorship was widespread: 86% of teachers reported avoiding certain topics because they are concerned about the safety of their learners, while two thirds (68%) avoid topics because of concerns for their own safety.

Differences by teaching level are evident across several indicators. Primary teachers are more likely than secondary teachers to report teaching without restrictions (70% versus 59%), feeling safe discussing attacks affecting education (52% versus 43%) and avoiding topics due to concerns for learners' safety (90% versus 82%). Secondary teachers are more likely to report limitations on what they could teach (65% versus 58%) and avoid topics due to concerns for their own safety (71% versus 62%).

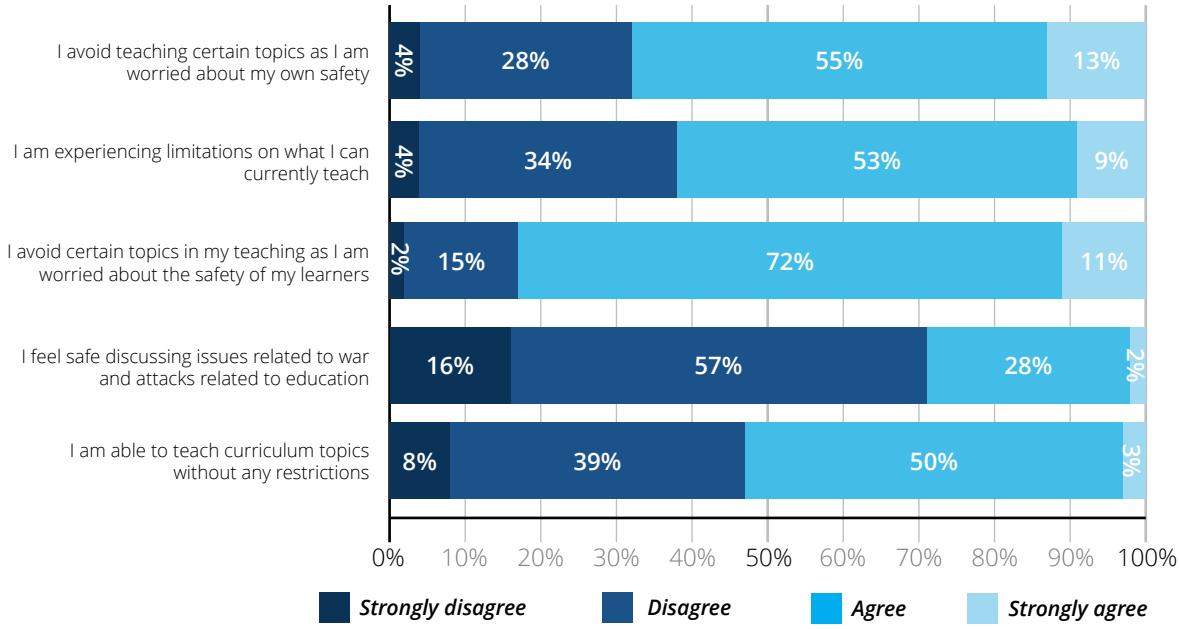
Gender differences are limited among primary teachers but more evident at secondary level. Female secondary teachers are more likely than men to report teaching without restrictions (65% compared to 55%), while men are more likely to feel safe discussing conflict-related issues (48% compared to 37%) and reported limitations on what they could teach (69% compared to 60%). Nevertheless, both women and men commonly avoid sensitive topics due to concerns for learner and personal safety.

Overall, the findings suggest that pedagogical autonomy in Gaza is shaped primarily by the realities of ongoing conflict rather than by curriculum alone.

Teachers in the West Bank

Teachers in the West Bank reported considerable constraints on their pedagogical autonomy (see Figure 28). While just over half of respondents (53%) agreed that they are able to teach curriculum topics without restrictions, a larger proportion (62%) reported experiencing limitations on what they can currently teach. Furthermore, fewer than one third of teachers (30%) reported feeling safe discussing issues related to attacks affecting education, while nearly three quarters (73%) reported that they do not feel safe doing so.

Figure 28: Teachers pedagogical autonomy, West Bank teachers



Source: Authors

The qualitative findings illustrate how the security situation shape teachers' classroom practice. One teacher reflected:

> *"I try to connect* [human rights, justice and dignity] *to the real-life situations that students experience and to create a safe space where they can discuss issues and express their opinions and feelings."*

Self-censorship is widespread across the West Bank, with 83% of teachers avoiding certain topics due to concerns for learners' safety and 77% due to concerns for their own safety. This suggests that insecurity shapes what teachers feel able to discuss in the classroom.

Differences by teaching level and gender are generally modest. Overall, despite teachers continuing to deliver the prescribed curriculum, widespread self-censorship, perceived teaching limitations and concerns about discussing conflict-related issues indicate substantial constraints on pedagogical autonomy in the West Bank.

Professional and pedagogical autonomy across Gaza and the West Bank

The findings suggest that teachers in both Gaza and the West Bank experience considerable constraints on their professional and pedagogical autonomy and opportunities to participate in educational decision-making. Qualitative findings suggest that while emergency educational arrangements restrict curriculum coverage, they also require teachers to exercise independent judgement and adapt their teaching to students' changing needs. In the West Bank, professional autonomy is more closely constrained by curriculum requirements, instructional time and supervisory expectations.

Across both settings, teachers report substantial limitations on what they can teach and discuss, particularly concerning conflict-related issues. Self-censorship is widespread, with more than eight in ten teachers in both settings avoiding certain topics because of concerns for students' safety. Teachers in the West Bank reported greater concerns about their own safety when discussing sensitive issues. Overall, the findings highlight a tension between teachers' professional agency and the restrictive conditions in which they work. While teachers continue to adapt their teaching in response to the crisis, their ability to exercise professional judgement and pedagogical autonomy remained constrained by institutional requirements, educational disruption and insecurity.

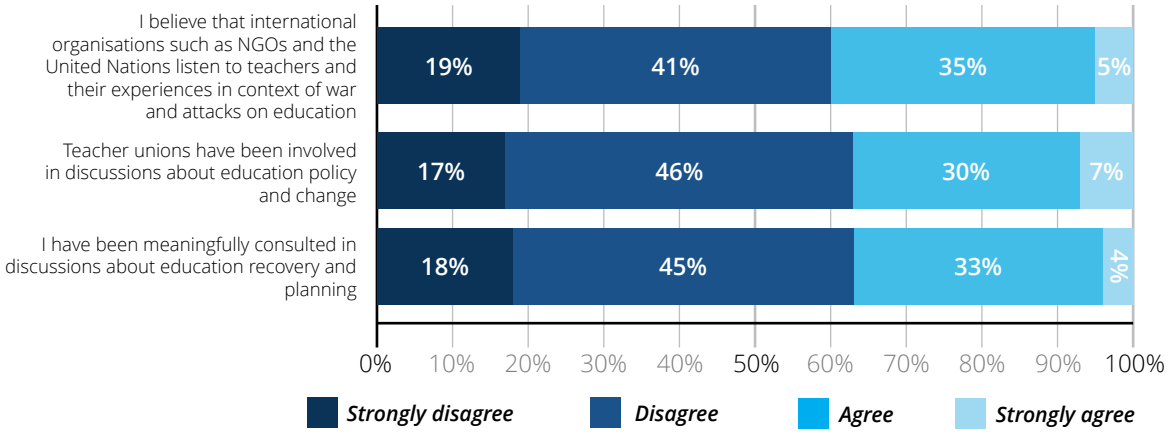
11. Teachers' voice and involvement in educational decision-making

This section focuses on teachers' perceptions of whether their voices are meaningfully represented in educational decision-making, including their direct involvement in discussions about education recovery, representation through the teachers' union (GUPT), and the perceived role of international organisations in relation to teacher voice and involvement.

Teachers in Gaza

In Gaza there is a consistent perception of limited teacher voice in educational decision-making (see Figure 29). Almost two thirds (63%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that they have been meaningfully consulted in discussions about education recovery and planning. A similar pattern was found for union-level representation where 63% disagreed or strongly disagreed that teacher unions had been involved in discussions about education policy and change. Nearly two thirds (60%) reported disagreement that NGOs and the UN listen to teachers and their experiences in the context of military attacks on education.

Figure 29: Teacher consultation and participation in education recovery and planning, Gaza teachers



Source: Authors

Differences by teaching level are generally small, although primary teachers were slightly more likely than secondary teachers to report meaningful consultation in education recovery and planning (41% versus 35%). Gender differences are more pronounced among primary teachers, with female teachers reporting higher levels of consultation (45% versus 33%) and more positive perceptions of international organisations listening to teachers' experiences (46% versus 37%) than their male counterparts.

One teacher described a gap between teachers' frontline role and their involvement in decision-making:

> *"Unfortunately, the opportunities available for teachers to contribute to decision-making or participate in planning for the recovery phase*

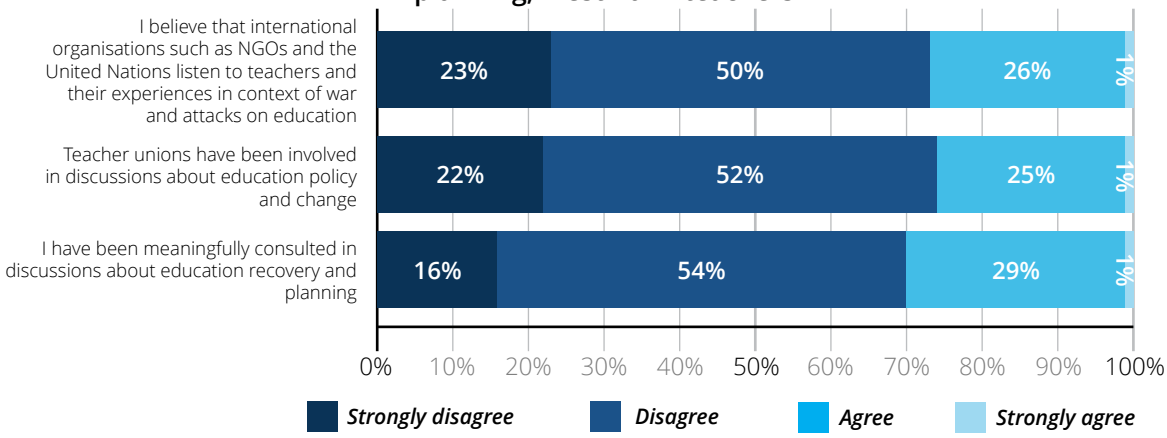
have been extremely limited and almost absent. Most decisions have continued to be made through top-down administrative processes, without establishing genuine mechanisms to listen to our voices and experiences. Despite our own initiatives and field-based efforts, our role has largely remained limited to implementation and confronting challenges on the ground. This situation highlights the urgent need to ensure the meaningful involvement of frontline teachers in future planning processes, as they are the ones directly experiencing the realities and challenges of education during crises."

Other teachers provided a more qualified picture. One teacher reported that opportunities have been limited, although in some cases teachers have been heard through directorates or school meetings. Another explained that teachers' participation is often restricted to communicating student needs and providing feedback, while the main decisions are generally made at higher levels. Overall, while there is not a complete absence of consultation in every setting, the extent to which consultation translates into substantive participation in recovery decisions is limited.

Teachers in the West Bank

In the West Bank, more than two thirds of teachers (70%) reported that they have not been meaningfully consulted in discussions about education recovery and planning (see Figure 30). Similarly, almost three quarters (74%) reported that teacher unions have not been involved in discussions about education policy and change. A similarly negative pattern was found in relation to international organisations, with 73% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that organisations such as NGOs and the UN listen to teachers and their experiences in the context of Israeli military and settle attacks on education. Differences between primary and secondary teachers and by gender are negligible.

Figure 30: Teacher consultation and participation in education recovery and planning, West Bank teachers



Source: Authors

One teacher distinguished symbolic consultation from meaningful involvement:

"Unfortunately, I believe that teachers have had very limited opportunities to participate in educational decision-making during the war and in planning for recovery. In most cases, what reaches us are decisions and instructions issued by higher authorities, and

> *we are expected to implement them without meaningful teacher involvement … Teachers' views may sometimes be collected through meetings or surveys, but we do not always know how those views were used or whether they actually influenced the decisions that were made. … We need genuine participation that begins before decisions are made, rather than limiting our role to receiving and implementing instructions."*

Other teachers in the West Bank reported that some opportunities to share experiences existed through meetings, workshops and professional discussions, but call for teacher voice to be included more consistently in planning. One teacher also described GUPT as the main organisation speaking publicly about teachers' daily struggles and rights. When asked if they have participated in any discussions or initiatives related to rebuilding education, teachers in the West Bank responded relatively more positively than Gaza teachers, with responses evenly split between those reporting no involvement and those reporting some. When involvement was reported, it most often takes the form of participating in specific initiatives for education recovery including STEM courses, the Tolerance Initiative, Recycling Initiative and camps to compensate for learning loss, rather than involvement in policy or planning discussions. Together, these accounts reinforce the distinction between occasional opportunities to express views and sustained influence over policy and recovery decisions. Focus group participants' responses about union support focused almost entirely on emotional, social and training support rather than policy engagement.

Teachers' voice and involvement in educational decision-making across Gaza and the West Bank

The findings reveal limited teacher participation in educational decision-making across both Gaza and the West Bank. In both settings, approximately two thirds or more of teachers reported that their voices are not meaningfully represented in education recovery and planning. Qualitative findings further highlight a gap between teachers' frontline responsibilities and their influence over educational decisions, which remain largely centralised and top-down. Although some opportunities for consultation exist through meetings, surveys and recovery initiatives, teachers reported that these rarely translate into meaningful involvement in policy and planning. Overall, the findings suggest that teachers are primarily positioned as implementers rather than active participants in educational decision-making, highlighting the need for more inclusive and sustained mechanisms to ensure their experiences and professional perspectives inform education recovery and reconstruction.

12. Policy conclusions and recommendations

> *"Palestinian teachers must be ensured financial and moral recognition. It is impossible to speak about educational commitment and passion while teachers are struggling* [without] *regular payment of full salaries, and … cost-of-living allowances … to safeguard teachers' human dignity. Sustainable psychosocial support programmes and professional protection measures should be provided for educational personnel to help them overcome trauma … and continue fulfilling their educational mission. Safe learning spaces equipped with essential educational resources should be established instead of relying on empty tents. Frontline teachers should be engaged as genuine partners and decision-makers in designing recovery plans and rebuilding the educational system, as their direct experience provides essential insights into the realities and needs of learners and educators."* —Teacher

The research has examined the status of teachers and their work in the context of Israeli military and settler attacks, as well as the withholding of Palestinian Authority revenue by Israeli authorities. As the preceding sections show, these attacks have affected teachers' working and living conditions, their health and wellbeing, and the extent to which they feel involved in decisions about their conditions and work, all of which affect their ability to teach effectively. Crucially, the research has shown a spotlight on the extent to which Palestinian teachers feel let down by the international community. This report speaks powerfully to teachers' strength, vitality and commitment to teaching under persistent attack, best captured in the concept of sumud, which expresses teachers' steadfastness and their commitment to education as an affirmation of Palestinian identity and the right to education.

The evidence points to several important recommendations for rebuilding the Palestinian education system and the teaching profession. Overall, these recommendations apply to both Gaza and the West Bank. Where a recommendation applies particularly to one context, this is indicated. The recommendations begin with the conditions that must change – ending the occupation and attacks on education – and with the physical and financial foundations of recovery, before turning to teachers themselves: their working conditions and rights, the status of their profession and their voice. These recommendations build upon and resonate with those made in the previous reports on education and attacking Palestine (Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, et al., 2026; 2024).

Recommendations

Ending the occupation and attacks on education

> *"Please end the war and restore normal life to the Gaza Strip as it was before the war."* —Teacher

Whatever short-term action is taken to support the teaching profession in Palestine, the report points fundamentally to the need to end the occupation and Israeli military and settler attacks on education facilities, teachers, parents and learners. Education is a fundamental human right, and education spaces must be protected under international humanitarian law. Upholding the right to education and protecting education spaces is an imperative, and one that all actors, including the international community, are bound to respect.

Recommendations include:

- Ensure that attacks on civilian educational spaces, teachers and learners cease immediately.
- Protect safe and continuous access to education, including by removing restrictions that unnecessarily obstruct teachers and learners from reaching it.
- Ensure that humanitarian assistance complements international efforts to protect civilians and education and to secure the conditions necessary for a sustainable political settlement.
- Exert effective, concrete and sustained political and diplomatic pressure on the Israeli government to release immediately the Palestinian taxation revenues it withholds. The withholding of these funds has significantly undermined the Palestinian government's capacity to meet its financial obligations, including the payment of teachers' salaries.
- Ensure that international humanitarian and human rights law is protected and applied, and that the international community fulfils its responsibilities under international law and works towards ending the occupation for a durable and just political settlement.

Educational reconstruction is indispensable, but reconstruction cannot become a cycle in which education systems are repeatedly rebuilt while the conditions that produce their destruction remain unaddressed.

Rebuilding education infrastructure

> *"It is important... to rehabilitate schools, provide safe learning environments, equip them with the necessary resources..."* —Teacher

For meaningful, quality learning to occur, there is an urgent need to rebuild and restore the physical and material infrastructure of education, supported by education aid. This requires classrooms, sanitation facilities, electricity, clean water, furniture and technology, as well as teaching and learning resources, and safe access to learning spaces for both teachers and learners.

The findings demonstrate why rebuilding cannot be reduced to the physical reconstruction of school buildings. In Gaza, teachers reported extensive

destruction, with basic living and teaching resources often non-functional or only partly functional. Many are teaching in temporary learning spaces rather than proper school buildings. In the West Bank, most school buildings remain physically functional, but teachers continue to face resource shortages, overcrowded classrooms, high transport costs, movement restrictions and uncertainty about safe access. Safe access for learners, water, sanitation, electricity and transportation are among Gaza teachers' highest reconstruction priorities. Rebuilding must therefore address both the physical spaces in which education takes place and the conditions that make those spaces genuinely usable, accessible and safe.

Recommendations include:

- Undertake a coordinated assessment of destroyed, damaged and partially functioning education facilities, particularly in Gaza, and develop a transparent, prioritised reconstruction and rehabilitation programme.
- Ensure that in Gaza, efforts are made to move progressively from inadequately equipped temporary learning spaces towards safe, dignified and properly resourced learning environments.
- Maintain adequate resources in the existing school infrastructure, particularly in the West Bank, and address shortages of teaching materials, textbooks and digital resources.
- Ensure that all reconstructed, temporary and existing facilities are accessible to learners and teachers with disabilities, and are equipped with appropriate assistive technologies and services.
- Restore and expand reliable digital connectivity, electricity, devices and digital learning resources so that remote or hybrid education can provide genuine continuity when in-person education is disrupted or impossible, without transferring the financial and technical burden to individual teachers and families.
- Ensure safe access to learning spaces for both teachers and learners to education facilities. This includes safe routes, safe and affordable transportation, travel support for teachers where high costs and access difficulties prevent them from reaching school regularly.

Rebuilding trust: accountable international action and aid

> *"Education recovery should not be understood simply as rebuilding schools or returning children to classrooms. It requires rebuilding trust, safety, professional capacity and hope..."* —Development agency employee

Restoring teachers' faith in human rights and justice matters profoundly for teachers and society, because teachers and the teaching profession have an important role in transmitting the values, knowledge and understanding of democracy, human rights, peace and justice to learners who will become the citizens of the future.

International agencies have a key role in providing much-needed aid to education, as this report shows. This is all the more imperative as funding for education has been limited and is declining in Palestine and globally more generally, and organisations supporting Palestinian education, such as UNRWA, have come under attack and face existential challenges. UNRWA itself has stated that financial pressures threaten its capacity to sustain essential

services, including education.

Importantly, rebuilding trust will require more than statements of solidarity. International actors will need to demonstrate through their actions that Palestinian teachers' experiences, priorities and rights influence humanitarian, educational and political responses.

Recommendations include:

- Ensure sustained, predictable and adequate international financing for educational recovery rather than short-duration projects that leave essential services dependent on repeated emergency appeals.
- Substantially expand and sustain direct financial support from international donors to the Palestinian government, enabling it to pay teachers' salaries regularly and in full, adequately finance the education sector, and implement reconstruction and rehabilitation programmes across all levels of the education system in Gaza and the West Bank.
- Protect continuity of education funding to organisations capable of delivering education at scale, including UNRWA.
- Ensure that any international assistance provided is aligned to priorities identified by Palestinian teachers through their representative organisations, including safe access to education, salaries, psychosocial support, professional development and continuity during movement restrictions.
- Improve transparency concerning the purpose, duration, funding and outcomes of international education interventions so that communities and teachers can hold international actors accountable.

Meeting teachers' working conditions and rights

> *"...support teachers by improving their living conditions, ensuring regular salaries and disbursement of their financial dues, and investing in the quality of education..."* —Teacher

Recovery begins with teachers' own working conditions and rights. This report shows that teachers are playing a critical role in continuing education against all odds and at great personal cost. However, teachers cannot be expected to support traumatised children, recover learning, adapt curricula and maintain educational continuity while their own basic needs remain unmet.

The ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers makes clear that teachers have the right to work in spaces that are secure and safe; to have their basic needs met; to working conditions that enable them to concentrate on their professional tasks; to timely and adequate salaries; and to professional development, including support for working with traumatised children and young people and strategies for providing education in contexts with limited infrastructure and resources (International Labour Organization and UNESCO, 1966).

This is particularly important because the professional role itself has expanded. Teachers described becoming not only educators but also counsellors, sources of psychosocial support, protectors of children's sense of stability, emergency responders and agents of learning recovery. In Gaza in particular, teachers described carrying these responsibilities while themselves facing insecurity and displacement. Teachers across the region identified the need for psycho-

social and emotional learning, and trauma-informed support to be provided by professional associations and representative organisations, such as GUPT. Regular salaries were the highest-rated support and governance priority among Gaza and West Bank respondents.

Recommendations include:

- Ensure regular and full payment of salaries, establish transparent mechanisms for settling outstanding payments, and consider appropriate hardship or cost-of-living support where circumstances warrant it, in recognition of the financial insecurity affecting teachers and their households.
- Ensure that displaced teachers and their families have access to adequate shelter, accommodation, food, healthcare and essential services, recognising that teachers cannot sustain education while experiencing acute humanitarian insecurity themselves. This is particularly urgent in Gaza.
- Establish sustained, easily accessible psychosocial, mental health and counselling services for teachers, rather than episodic, project-based provision, recognising the cumulative effects of insecurity, violence, displacement, caregiving responsibilities and the emotional demands of supporting distressed learners.
- Support teachers in appropriate classroom-level psychosocial and trauma-informed approaches, as well as providing specialist professionals for more intensive support for learners.
- Provide teachers with continuous, context-responsive professional support for learners with disabilities, as well as support to address learning loss and trauma.
- Provide teachers with support for remote and hybrid teaching.
- Developing flexible professional and administrative arrangements for teachers working in areas subject to recurrent closures, mobility restrictions or security incidents, particularly in the West Bank.

Enhancing the status of the teaching profession

> *"...teachers and educational counsellors should receive both financial and moral support to ensure their ability to continue fulfilling their mission..."* —Teacher

The basic conditions that enable the teaching profession in Palestine to uphold its commitment to teaching and learning have been undermined and destroyed. There is an urgent need to restore and enhance the status of the teaching profession so that teachers can continue to be role models and an inspiration for generations of traumatised children and young people. This requires ensuring that teachers in Palestine are able to work with colleagues worldwide, and that teachers across the globe are able to show solidarity with and support for a profession under attack. It also requires upholding the basic tenets of membership of the profession, such as professional autonomy, secure employment, career progression, professional learning and the provision of basic teaching and learning resources. Teachers across the whole sample gave high priority to professional development, and these needs were particularly high in Gaza.

Recommendations include:

- Develop a comprehensive strategy for recruiting and retaining the teaching workforce. In Gaza, this should include teachers unable to work because of displacement or the destruction of schools, temporary and volunteer teachers, and teachers working in emergency settings. Where shortages are placing unsustainable demands on the existing workforce, additional teachers should be recruited or redeployed.
- Restore and strengthen career structures and progression, mechanisms for professional recognition and access to sustained, practical professional development as the education system is rebuilt, including in trauma-informed teaching, psychosocial support, education in emergencies, learning recovery and remedial learning, disability inclusion, supporting displaced learners, and digital, remote and hybrid education.
- Protect teachers' professional and pedagogical autonomy. Teachers should have legitimate scope to exercise professional judgement over curriculum pacing and delivery, assessment, pedagogy and learning expectations aligned with national standards, particularly where learning has been disrupted, supported by appropriate system guidance.

A strong profession is not only one in which teachers are adequately supported, but also one in which their voices, through their representative organisations (such as GUPT), are heard, valued and meaningfully represented in decisions that shape their work. Ultimately, the strength of the profession lies in teachers' ability to exercise agency and influence the policies and practices that affect their professional lives.

Centring Palestinian teachers' voices in reconstruction and transformation

> *"The role of teachers... should shift from being merely implementers of policies to becoming genuine partners and decision-makers..."* — Teacher

For teachers' voices to be heard, teacher unions and representative associations must be able to operate freely and without restriction. The ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers states that teachers' organisations should be recognised as a force that can greatly advance education and should therefore be involved in setting educational policy. It also requires authorities to establish and regularly use recognised means of consultation with teachers' organisations, and it states that salaries and working conditions should be determined through negotiation between teachers' organisations and employers (International Labour Organization and UNESCO, 1966, paras 9, 75 and 82).

The UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession reaffirmed and extended these principles, linking teachers' status and dignity directly to their ability to influence policies on their work (International Labour Organization, 2024). It calls for national teacher policies to be developed through social dialogue with representative teachers' organisations, for employment conditions to be set through collective bargaining, with unions able to take industrial action as a last resort, and for institutionalised social dialogue to be the principal means of developing education policy (International Labour Organization, 2024). The Santiago Consensus built on the Panel's work, committing governments to establish permanent,

inclusive and transparent mechanisms for social dialogue with democratically elected representatives of teachers, including trade unions, at all stages of policymaking, and to promote participation by the full diversity of teaching personnel (UNESCO, 2025).

Across six decades, a global consensus has emerged that teachers' voices and the role of teacher unions are a necessary condition for effective education policy and for the status of the profession. There can, therefore, be no durable and just solution for education in Palestine and the Palestinian teaching profession without the full and substantive involvement of teachers in all aspects of policy, including governance, curriculum, assessment and the delivery of educational essentials and aid. Teachers need to be represented through their professional associations and unions in all discussions about stopping the attacks, as well as about education reconstruction and transformation in Palestine.

Centring teachers' voices should mean moving from consultation to meaningful participation. Teachers and their unions should be formally represented in national and local structures responsible for educational reconstruction, curriculum adaptation, assessment, workforce planning, professional development and the allocation of education aid. Consultation processes should occur before decisions are made, provide teachers with sufficient information to participate effectively and include mechanisms explaining how teacher input influences final decisions. It is the responsibility of all international actors to ensure that teachers and their representative organisations, including GUPT, are meaningfully involved in decision-making in Palestine.

Representation should also reflect the diversity of the teaching profession, and all should have opportunities to influence decisions affecting their work, including: teachers from Gaza and the West Bank; from primary and secondary education and different school sectors; female and male teachers; displaced teachers; teachers with disabilities; and teachers working in particularly high-risk communities.

Concluding remarks

> *"I hope that... collective efforts will be strengthened to rebuild the education sector and provide a safe learning environment that guarantees every child's right to learn, grow and live with dignity."* —Teacher

This report provides a comprehensive understanding of Palestinian teachers, their living and working conditions, and their views on their practices, motivation and needs in times of Israeli military attacks. The report does not simply claim that Palestinian teachers have remained resilient under the current military attacks context. Rather, it shows that they have continued to exercise professional commitment and sustain education under conditions that no education system should regard as normal. Their *sumud* is visible in their continuing belief in teaching, their adaptation of practice, their support for traumatised learners and their insistence that education remains important to the future of their communities. But this steadfastness cannot substitute for rights, resources, safety or professional support. Nor should teachers' resilience become an argument for expecting them to compensate continually for destroyed infrastructure, inadequate salaries, psychosocial distress, constrained professional autonomy or exclusion from decision-making.

Rebuilding Palestinian education, therefore, requires more than reopening schools. It requires an end to the conditions that repeatedly destroy education; safe and properly resourced places of learning; accountable international aid; teachers whose working conditions and rights are met; a strong and autonomous profession; and Palestinian teachers who help shape the future of the system they have worked so hard to sustain. The task is ultimately to move from education surviving through teachers' extraordinary personal sacrifice towards an education system in which teachers can exercise their profession safely and with dignity, agency and hope, founded on a durable and just peace.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Teacher survey

Table 5: **Survey provided to the teachers**

Category	Dimension	Items	Example of items	Response scale	No. of Items
Teacher background		Age, gender, current location, disability, employment status, institution type, years of teaching experience, highest qualification, teaching level and employment type	What is your gender? Where are you currently located? What type of educational institution do you currently teach in?	Categorical	10
Current Conditions	Living conditions	Housing situation, displacement location	How would you describe your current housing situation?	Categorical	5
	Teaching conditions	School-building condition, teaching location, functional facilities, commuting barriers, safety at teaching location, caregiving responsibilities, class size, teaching hours, additional shifts, outside-subject teaching and teaching modality, salary frequency, salary amount received and financial hardship	What is the current condition of the school building where you usually work? Which of the following are functional in the space where you currently teach?	Categorical: Yes/No/Not applicable; functionality scale; teaching modality items	9
Teaching	Teaching practices	Adaptation of teaching methods, lesson planning, curriculum coverage, flexible teaching, participation, adjusted expectations and new teaching strategies	I adapt my teaching methods to respond to students' current emotional and learning needs.	Four-point agreement scale: strongly disagree to strongly agree.	7
	Student engagement and learning	Student trauma, fear/ anxiety, reduced engagement and continued motivation	Many students appear emotionally traumatised due to the war/attacks.	Four-point agreement scale: strongly disagree to strongly agree.	4
	Professional development and teaching resources	Professional development on trauma support, alternative modalities, active professional learning, access to guidance, alternative learning methods and limits caused by lack of resources	I have received professional development on how to identify and support students showing signs of trauma or psychological distress.	Four-point agreement scale: strongly disagree to strongly agree.	6

Category	Dimension	Items	Example of items	Response scale	No. of Items
Motivation and professional commitment		Meaningfulness of teaching, contribution to student wellbeing and community recovery, professional responsibility, commitment, retention, attractiveness of teaching and emotional satisfaction	I believe teaching remains meaningful to me despite current war/ attacks.	Four-point agreement scale: strongly disagree to strongly agree.	8
Health and wellbeing	Impact of war/attack on health and wellbeing	Physical injury/ disability, losses among community and family, military violence affecting education, depression, anxiety, sleep difficulty and the experience with the strongest negative impact	Have you experienced any of the following as a result of the war/ attacks? Of all the experiences listed, write down the corresponding letter for the one that impacts you most negatively.	Yes/No/Not applicable matrix; open-letter response cleaned into one primary category.	9
	Sources of support	Support from family, friends/community, employer, international organisations, international and local solidarity networks, government and the strongest source of support	Who has provided you with support for any of the above? Write down the corresponding letter for the one you receive the most support from.	Yes/No/Not applicable matrix; open-letter response.	8
Beliefs and values	Beliefs and values	Curriculum alignment with human rights and justice, preparedness to address injustice, social value of teaching, protecting hope, challenged beliefs, UN role and NGO support	I believe that the human rights and justice values presented in the curriculum align with the daily observations and experiences of my students.	Four-point agreement scale: strongly disagree to strongly agree.	7
Professional and pedagogical autonomy		Curriculum restrictions, safety in discussing war/attacks related to education, teacher input into decisions, avoidance of topics, limitations on teaching and professional autonomy	I am able to teach curriculum topics without any restrictions. I feel safe discussing issues related to war and attacks related to education.	Four-point agreement scale: strongly disagree to strongly agree.	7
Teacher voice		Consultation in recovery planning, union involvement in policy discussions and whether international organisations listen to teachers	I have been meaningfully consulted in discussions about education recovery and planning.	Four-point agreement scale: strongly disagree to strongly agree.	3

Category	Dimension	Items	Example of items	Response scale	No. of Items
Future needs and education reconstruction Consultation	School infrastructure Teaching and learning resources Support and governance Professional development	Consultation, teacher participation, Palestinian leadership, school infrastructure, safe access, teaching and learning resources, support and governance, salaries and professional development priorities	Please indicate how much of a priority each of the following is for your school at present to continue education. Please choose the priorities you consider most urgent.	Four-point priority scale; ranked/ open-letter priority selections; final open-ended comment	30

Source: Authors

Appendix B: Sample weighting

Post-stratification weights were calculated after cleaning the data to adjust the sample's demographic breakdown so that it aligns with known population statistics. This adjustment was needed because the sample size of the online survey did not exactly match the known gender distribution of teachers in the population. Since the survey was distributed through online networks, rather than through a probability sample with known selection probabilities, the weights were treated as post-stratification weights rather than probability design weights. This distinction is important because weighting can adjust known differences between the sample and the population, but it cannot remove all sources of online self-selection bias (Lohr, 2021; Valliant et al., 2018).

The post-stratification weight for subgroup h was calculated as:

$$ww_h = \frac{N_h / N}{n_h / n}$$

Where N_h is the population count for subgroup h, N is the total population, n_h is the achieved sample count for the same subgroup and n is the total achieved sample.

Post stratification weights were calculated at two levels: combine region with gender (see Table 1); and within each region, gender stratification weights (see Table 2). The combined region-by-gender weight was used for overall estimates combining Gaza and the West Bank.

Table 6: **Combined region-by-gender post-stratification weights**

Region	Gender	Population	Sample	Population %	Sample %	Weight
Gaza	Male	6,146	289	11.61	9.77	1.19
	Female	5,567	346	10.52	11.70	0.90
West Bank	Male	13,761	566	26.00	19.13	1.36
	Female	27,453	1,757	51.87	59.40	0.87

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), 2026,.and sample calculated by authors

Region-specific gender weights were used when presenting Gaza and West Bank separately.

Table 7: **Region-specific gender post-stratification weights**

Region	Gender	Population	Sample	Population %	Sample %	Weight
Gaza	Male	6,146	289	52.47	45.51	1.15
	Female	5,567	346	47.53	54.49	0.87
West Bank	Male	13,761	566	33.39	24.37	1.37
	Female	27,453	1,757	66.61	75.63	0.88

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), 2026,.and sample calculated by authors

Respondents from other school settings in Gaza were retained in the dataset but reported separately using unweighted descriptive statistics because no reliable population denominator was available for this group. Respondents who selected 'prefer not to say' for gender were excluded from weighted estimates because this category was not present in the population frame. Results are presented using unweighted numbers and weighted percentages.

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Teachers on the front line in Palestine:

Centring teachers' voice and wellbeing for equitable and quality education

November 2026

Research for Equitable Access and Learning

The Research for Equitable Access and Learning (REAL) Centre advances rigorous research for education and social justice in the Global South through equitable and ethical partnerships. Through co-creating contextually relevant evidence for policy and practice, it works across six key intersecting themes: politics, systems and policies; equity, inclusion and diversity; teachers and teaching; conflict, climate and crises; and youth engagement and transitions.

The General Union of Palestinian Teachers (GUPT) represents Palestinian teachers through 28 branches: 18 in the West Bank, seven in the Gaza Strip, and three outside Palestine. It defends teachers' professional and trade union rights, works to improve their working conditions, and advocates for every student's right to quality public education.

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