

Teacher Compensation in Crisis Contexts

Challenges in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

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Palestine continually faces multifaceted emergencies, exacerbated by political and financial crises. To finance its budget, the Palestinian government relies on several sources, including international aid which has significantly decreased in recent years and tax revenues collected on its behalf by the Israeli government, which are often withheld. In this context, the ability of the Palestinian National Authority to ensure regular payments of salaries for public sector employees, including teachers, who have been receiving reduced salaries since 2021, is severely limited.

The study "Teacher salary in emergency contexts: Country briefing - Occupied Palestinian Territories" aims to investigate the primary factors contributing to irregular salary disbursements in Palestine during emergencies, explore the impact of this issue on the quality of education and identify potential interventions to address the issue. Over 1500 Palestinian teachers, as well as several school principals, policymakers, ministry officials and representatives of donor organizations supporting Palestine's education sector participated in the study.

This summary offers an overview of key findings and recommendations from the study.



Key findings

The participants of the study reaffirmed that the issue of teachers' salaries remains one of the most troubling challenges, as it negatively affects teachers personally and the teaching profession as a whole. Participants were also asked to identify the key factors leading to irregular salaries in Palestine during emergency situations, voice their opinions about how issue of irregular teacher salaries influence the quality of education, share suggestions for possible interventions to resolve the issue of irregular salaries and offer potential solutions to mitigate the effects of irregular salaries on the quality of education. Their responses are described in this section.

Factors leading to irregular salary payments

The study identified four factors most often perceived to be leading to irregular salaries in Palestine during emergency situations:

- Israeli withholding of clearance revenues - The political pressure exerted by Israel when withholding clearance revenues (taxes collected by Israel on behalf of the Palestinian Authority) severely worsens the financial deficit and disrupts salary payments, particularly in the public sector, as clearance revenues constitute approximately 65% of the Palestinian Authority's income ([World Bank](#), 2021).
- Palestinian Economy's Dependence on External Support - Foreign aid, particularly from the European Union and the World Bank, that the Palestinian economy has relied heavily on since the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority, fluctuates due to political conditions. According to the [International Monetary Fund](#) (2022), foreign aid decreased from \$1.6 billion in 2013 to \$600 million in 2021, significantly impacting the Authority's ability to pay salaries. Moreover, the occupation controls all crossings and borders connecting Palestinian territories to the outside world, maintaining authority over imports and exports of goods.

- Increase in the Number of Teachers - The annual population growth rate in Palestine necessitates an expansion of the education sector. The number of teachers has increased from 35,000 in 2000 to approximately 62,000 in 2023, adding a significant salary burden to the Palestinian Authority's budget. This surge in the number of teachers has created salary inflation pressures, as the education budget struggles to keep pace with the increasing payroll demands while maintaining quality standards.
- Economic Impact of the Israeli occupation - The chronic budget deficit of approximately \$1.2 billion annually faced by the Palestinian Authority contributes to the structural crisis in teachers' salaries. Israeli occupation policies, including the withholding of tax revenues and depriving Palestinians of natural resources, serve as the primary catalyst, while internal factors, including dependence on foreign aid, further exacerbate the issue.

The impact of irregular teacher salary payments on the quality of education

The study analysed the perceived influence of irregular teacher salaries on teacher performance, teacher-student relationships, classroom dynamics and found that, among the three domains analysed, teacher performance was the most affected, with a mean score of 3.60, indicating a high-level influence and highlighting that financial instability and stress among teachers can lead to reduced job satisfaction and lower performance. Teacher-student relationships (3.17) and classroom dynamics (3.14) were perceived to be affected to a lesser extent.

Notably, the analysis revealed significant differences between how male and female teachers perceive the influence of irregular salaries. Overall, male teachers perceive irregular salaries as having a more pronounced impact on their work (3.67) compared to female teachers (3.09) across all three analysed domains. This could be attributed to societal expectations, where male teachers may feel greater pressure

to provide financially for their families, exacerbating the stress caused by irregular payments.

Finally, the age of teachers was identified as a contributing factor to the perception of the influence of the irregularity of teacher salaries on the relations, as teachers over the age of 41 perceived a significantly greater impact on teacher-student relationships compared to their younger colleagues.

Interventions to resolve the issue of irregular salary payments

The issue of irregular salaries in Palestine, particularly teachers' salaries, is a complex matter influenced by interconnected political and economic factors. The interventions proposed by the participants include a range of financial, political, and economic solutions, including increasing grants and international aid, reactivating the "Revolving Fund" agreement that allows the EU to cover tax revenues withheld by the Israeli occupation as an interest-free loan, establishing consumer institutions for the public sector, reviewing and amending the Paris Economic Protocol to allow for free trade, increasing local revenues, amending economic policy to allow investment loans and borrowing, which is cautioned to come with risks of increasing debt levels and losing decision-making independence.

Mitigating the impact of irregular salary payments

Based on the participants' responses and proposals, the researchers identified the following six themes:

Professional Development Programs for Teachers - The findings suggest that implementing teacher support and professional development programs can help educators manage the stress associated with financial instability, thereby enhancing their effectiveness in the classroom. These programs could include workshops on stress management, modern teaching techniques, and psychosocial support.

Incentives for Outstanding Teachers - Providing incentive programs, including public recognition, opportunities for career advancement and awards, for high-performing teachers can serve as a motivational tool, encouraging excellence and dedication despite salary irregularities.

Reducing the Financial Burden on Teachers - Personalised support and targeted incentives, like deducting salary arrears to cover the expenses related to the education of teachers' children, effectively reduce financial strain while boosting morale, enhance retention and recognize teachers' value.

Enhancing Community Engagement - Engaging communities in education can create a support network for teachers, providing them with additional resources and moral support. Grassroots initiatives, such as community-led fundraising or volunteer programs, can strengthen the relationship between teachers and the communities they serve.

Enhancing Communication Channels - Improving transparency and providing regular updates about salary payments can reduce anxiety and build trust among teachers. Furthermore, understanding the long-term impacts of political and economic conditions on education is crucial for developing sustainable solutions. This includes analysing how salary irregularities affect teacher retention, student learning outcomes, and overall educational quality.

Promoting International Cooperation - Collaborating with international organisations to secure funding for teacher salaries and ensure their regular payment during crises is essential.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers offer the following recommendations:

Unite efforts globally, regionally, and nationally to support teachers' salaries:

Establish a coalition of international educational organizations and donors dedicated to securing consistent funding for Palestinian teachers' salaries. This coalition should:

- Identify and engage potential funding sources, including governments, NGOs, and private sector partners.
- Develop a transparent and accountable financial management system to ensure regular salary payments.
- Advocate for sustained international support through awareness campaigns and policy dialogues.

Explore possible mechanisms to ensure financial stability during crises:

- Activate a financial safety net.
- Reactivate the "Revolving Fund" agreement.

Reduce teachers' financial burden:

- Establish consumer institutions for public sector employees
- Offer low-interest loans for income-generating projects (e.g., EdTech startups) tied to their expertise.

- Award outstanding teachers with training scholarships or children's tuition waivers (deducted from arrears).

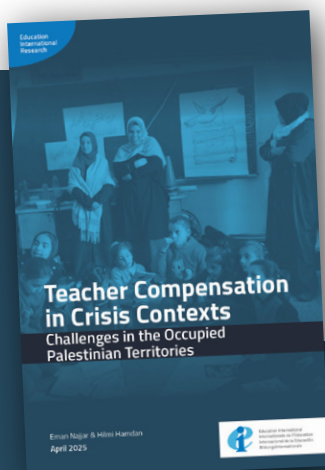
Provide moral and material support:

Provide both moral and material incentives for teachers amidst the ongoing salary crisis by:

- Offering professional development opportunities through training sessions, workshops and seminars to help teachers enhance their skills.
- Providing access to online courses and resources for continuous learning
- Implementing social, emotional, trauma and anxiety management by providing access to counseling services and mental health resources
- Enhancing community engagement in education to develop support networks for teachers

Ensure transparent communication and disbursement of salary arrears:

- The government should clearly communicate the mechanism and timing of salary disbursements.
- The Ministry of Finance should maintain a public portal tracking arrears payments and funding sources such as government budget allocations, donor contributions, and international aid programs, with detailed breakdowns by sector, payment schedule, and disbursement status.



The full research paper, in English, can be downloaded by clicking the image or the link or scanning the QR-code.

<https://eiie.io/2025PalestineCrisis>



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