



## The Uplifting Africa Program

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# Africa's Teacher Shortage



*A teacher assists his students. Retrieved from [the Africa Renewal Magazine](#).*

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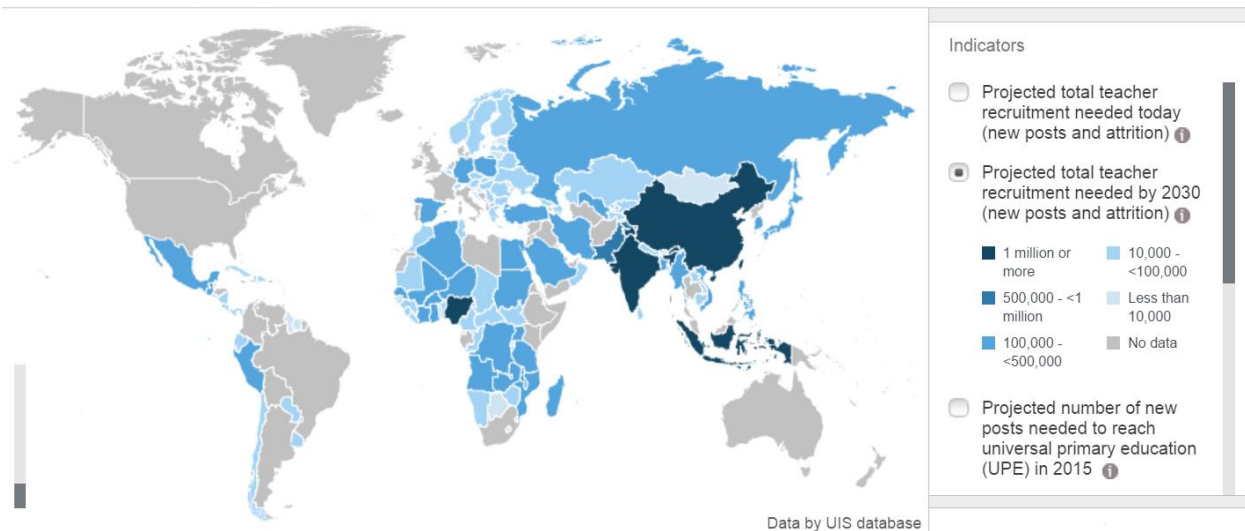
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## Overview

Africa is currently experiencing the world's worst teacher shortage, with the most severe deficits concentrated in the sub-Saharan region. In Tanzania, for example, there are currently 200 school-aged children per educator. The continent-wide shortage is resulting in overcrowded classrooms everywhere, which results in less individualized instruction, less contact between students and teachers, and a generally lowered quality of education. The impacts on education are severe: according to the UN, more than 85% of children in sub-Saharan Africa are not learning the minimum, and over half of the children not enrolled in school live in sub-Saharan Africa. The teacher gap is the largest challenge facing education in Africa, as not only are there not enough teachers, but many have not received sufficient training. A 2019 study estimated an average of 65% of primary teachers possess the minimum required qualifications, down from 84% in 2000.

The demand for primary teachers



*1 A UN map shows that almost every African nation that needs thousands of teachers by 2030. Retrieved from the [World Economic Forum](#).*

## Causes

The teacher shortage is compounded by a fast-rising population of school-aged children that is not being matched by available teachers. The UNESCO Institute of Statistics predicts a 38% increase in children of primary school age and a 48% increase in secondary age by 2030.

The main contributors leading to a lack of teachers include a widespread lack of resources. Teachers recognize the ineffectiveness of teaching in overcrowded classrooms, and often face scantily available textbooks and other basic school supplies. The largest problem, however, is a lack of funds. Many African teachers are paid scantily and often must work multiple jobs, and especially in rural areas may go hungry. Their salaries are low and irregular, often leading to strikes and disincentivizing new teachers. Training new teachers, providing for professional development, and improving learning conditions all require more funding than many low-income countries possess, resulting in higher proportions of underqualified educators.



2 A crowded classroom in Lesotho. Retrieved from [the Africa Times](#).

## COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many of the existing problems with education systems throughout Africa, resulting in an even more critical shortage of teachers as workloads increase, burnout reaches higher levels, schools close, and support wanes. The pandemic has impacted contract teachers most acutely. Contract teachers work outside traditional employment arrangements and are paid salaries but no benefits, meaning that they are frequently untrained, lower paid, and have less job stability. COVID-19 has made this pathway even more unstable, as budgets diminish and schools become unable to pay contract salaries. Contract teachers make up a high and

increasing proportion of educators in many countries such as Niger, Chad, and Burkina Faso, and the pandemic's disproportionate effect on this group is only heightening the teacher shortage.

## **What needs to be done?**

The UN's 2030 Agenda estimates that an additional 17 million teachers are needed in Africa to fill the shortage. Hiring these educators and supporting existing ones will require large amounts of funding, both international and domestic, along with better government policies to ensure effective spending. Funding is needed to hire, train, certify, and pay teachers, develop educational programs, purchase school supplies, and improve learning spaces.

## **What is being done?**

- The UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a 17-goal plan presented in 2015 with the aim of eliminating all forms of poverty by 2030. Sustainable Development Goal 4 targets quality education, and in point 4c declares a specific aim to “substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states.”
- The International Task Force on Teachers for Education, or TTF, is an organization created in alignment with SDG 4. Their mission is to mobilize governments in order to advance quality teaching worldwide, through advocacy and knowledge production.
- There are a number of international education programs that train teachers to training and approval to teach in the United States. These programs are recognized abroad and are very popular given the high demand in teaching English in foreign nations. However, the real need to address the global teaching shortage goes much further. American educational visionary Dr. Emily Feistritz, Founder of the Future Teaching Institute, became successful in creating Moreland University/TEACH NOW which is one of the United States' largest technology-centric teacher preparation and certification institutions. Recently, she proposed the concept of the Global Teaching License that would be recognized throughout the world and allow educators to teach abroad in order to be used to recruit teachers to help fill the gap in education globally.

## References

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