



Beirut Office



SDG 4 Teacher Conference (Arab States)¹

Quality and Innovation in Teacher Professional Development: Issues and Challenges

Thursday 9 and Friday 10 November, 2017

UNESCO Office, Beirut

Call for Papers

Conference scope

The Teacher Education Research Group (TERG) is a network of researchers and academics affiliated with the **Centre for Lebanese Studies (CLS)**, **Haigazian University**, **The Lebanese American University (LAU)**, the **Lebanese University (LU)** and the **UNESCO Office in Beirut, Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States (UNESCO Beirut)**.

TERG was founded in 2015 with a view to promote research on teacher professional development/TPD (i.e. initial and continuous teacher education and training) in Lebanon and the broader Arab Region by considering promising developments in the Region and internationally (see also www.arabtpd.org). The organization of annual conferences, as well as the publication and dissemination of subsequent relevant research papers will be part of its core activities.

¹ SDG4 stays for Sustainable Development Goal # 4, EDUCATION.

TERG cordially invites you to its first annual conference entitled “**Quality and Innovation in Teacher Professional Development: Issues and Challenges**” to take place on 9-10 November 2017 in Beirut (UNESCO Office in Beirut venue).

Over the last two decades, teacher professional development has become a key element of systemic educational reforms and/or school improvement strategies (Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Guskey, 2000). In the field of education, like in other fields, knowledge is emerging in a fast pace, which requires continuous revisiting of TPD strategies, and urges teachers to stay updated and to refine their conceptual and pedagogical skills (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace & Thomas, 2006; Guskey, 2000).

In fact, major improvement and reformation cannot take place in the absence of high quality teacher professional development (Guskey, 2000). This has been also reiterated in the **Mexico Declaration** of the **8th International Policy Dialogue Forum** organized by the UNESCO-led International Task Force on Teachers 2030 (Mexico City, 14-17 March 2016).

In the context of attaining the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, and more particularly **SDG 4** (Education Goal), UNESCO and its partners emphasize the central role of teachers in enhancing education quality and outcomes. Teachers are important for imparting and facilitating quality knowledge, as well as for developing relevant skills and attitudes for studies, life and work. In today’s world characterized by rapid changes and instability, teachers play also an essential role in nurturing the values of living together peacefully; constructive management of diversity; gender equality; sustainable development; intercultural understanding; and global citizenship.

The MENA Region (and the Arab World more broadly) over the last decades has witnessed several important educational reforms. However, despite the multitude of regional and national initiatives, attempts at educational reform in this region have been of limited success (Akkary, 2014; The World Bank, 2008; The Arab World’s Education Report Card, 2012). The limited success of these reforms has been accounted to several factors, one of which being the quality of initial teacher education and teacher continuous professional development programmes. Consequently, what makes a teacher professional development programme effective remains a question that occupies researchers and policy makers quite intensely.

According to Burns and Lawrie (2015), in developing and transition countries, evaluation and assessment of teachers’ professional development do not receive great interest. The reasons teachers’ professional development lacks attentiveness may be diverse, among which one can evoke difficult working conditions, low-quality of available professional development, conflicts in addition to TPD design, delivery, structure and services.

As for the systematic challenges, such countries not only lack the system of teachers' incentives but the teaching profession is overall devalued in comparison to other professions, which affects teachers' motivation towards learning and continuous professional development. Most of the time, staff evaluation of TPD is restricted to participants' impressions and reactions to training courses (Christie, 2009; Guskey, 2000).

Consequently, additional information is needed in order to evaluate TPD programmes, which should take into account:

- (1) teachers' acquisition of knowledge and skills;
- (2) the impact of learning on teaching practices;
- (3) the effects of TPD on students' learning; and
- (4) the effects of TPD on school culture and structures (Christie, 2009).

Against the aforementioned background, this conference seeks to create a forum to present, discuss, document and promote rigorous research on teacher professional development in the Arab countries and beyond. Teacher professional development encompasses a wide variety of approaches for capacity building including initial teacher education, teacher learning communities, graduate research programs in university, online courses and provisions, mentoring and coaching and individually guided activities (Guskey, 2000).

Given such an important variety of TPD delivery means, the conference aims to shed light on what is going on in the Region, as well as on promising practices to be scaled up.

More specifically the conference aims to address the following objectives:

- Examine innovative models and approaches for teacher professional development (i.e. pre-service and in-service)
- Facilitate productive dialogue among stakeholders (teacher education schools/colleges/teacher training institutes, policy makers, unions, schools) on how to improve teacher professional development.

This conference focuses primarily on two dimensions of teacher professional development:

- 1) Initial teacher education/teacher preparation; and
- 2) Continuous professional development (CPD):

We welcome topics related to the following areas:

- Policies in initial teacher education/teacher preparation and continuous professional development
- Induction and mentoring

- Innovative approaches to teacher education and continuous professional development
- Evaluation of teacher professional development programmes
- Certification and quality assurance systems as part of strategies to professionalize the teaching profession
- Role of different agencies in teacher professional development (e.g. international organisations, NGOs, INGOs, teacher unions and universities/teacher training agencies)

Submission and Guidelines

The conference aims to explore the modalities of teacher professional development within specific contexts, as well as lessons learned, based on reliable evidence.

We therefore invite academics, researchers, graduate students, teachers and principals to submit their research papers on the aforementioned topics and issues.

Languages of the conference are Arabic, English, and French.

Abstract Submission

Abstract of papers to be submitted by 15 September.

Abstracts can be submitted in Arabic, English or French.

Please include the following information in your proposal:

Title

Name:

Institutional Affiliation

Email:

Title of Proposed Presentation:

Presentation Abstract (300 to 500 words excluding references):

Submitted abstracts should conform to acceptable academic standards for inclusion in the conference program.

The abstract should state the purpose of the research, research questions, instruments, data analysis, findings (if available), and conclusions. Theoretical papers are also welcome.

Types of Contributions during the conference

1. Oral Presentation:

Each presentation will last 15 minutes and may be based on power-point slides, and/or supported by video footage.

2. Poster Presentation:

Posters will be exhibited during the conference poster session. These sessions will provide an opportunity for the researchers to display their work.

Publishing conference proceedings

A selection of papers from the conference will be published.

Important Dates

Submission of abstracts:

15 September, 2017 (submission of Abstracts)

30 September, 2017 (notification of acceptance)

Abstracts will be blind reviewed by the conference academic committee and included in the Book of Abstracts. Selected papers will be published in the conference publication.

Submission of proposals:

Starting with 10 June 2017, abstracts can be uploaded at:

www.arabtpd.org

Abstracts can be also sent by email to the following contacts:

1. Contact person for submission of abstracts:

Ms. Mayssa Achkar, abstract@arabtpd.org

2. Contact person for technical issues/website-related problems:

Mr. Serouj Baghdassarian, webmaster@arabtpd.org

3. Contact person for the conference and content: admin@arabtpd.org

Conference Date and location:

Thursday 9 and Friday 10 November, 2017 (UNESCO Office, Beirut).

Costs coverage

UNESCO Office in Beirut will cover organizational costs (venue; simultaneous interpretation; conference materials). During the conference days, participants will be offered coffee/tea breaks and lunch.

Invited presenters of selected papers should cover their transportation and accommodation costs. However, if requested, the organizing committee may consider supporting such costs on a case-by-case decision.

Academic Committee

Dr. Imane Abou Ali, Faculty of Education, Lebanese University

Dr. Nawal Abou Raad, Faculty of Education, Lebanese University

Dr. Zalpha Ayoubi, Faculty of Education, Lebanese University

Dr. Rima Bahous, Department of Education, Lebanese American University

Dr. Hanadi Chatila, Faculty of Education, Lebanese University

Dr. Dakmara Georgescu, UNESCO Office in Beirut

Dr. Mona Nabhani, Department of Education, Lebanese American University

Dr. Maha Shuayb, Centre for Lebanese Studies

Dr. Hagop A. Yacoubian, Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Haigazian University

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