

Workshop Guide

Teacher Identity, Motivation, and Well-Being

A training module for IRC staff to use with teachers, administrators, communities, and education authorities

Introduction

This guide presents the Healing Classrooms Initiative theme of Teacher Identity, Motivation, and Well-Being for an audience of teachers, administrators, communities, and education authorities. Contained here is a basic outline with generic activities and resource material to be adapted and supplemented depending on the specific group you are working with. As presented, the workshop will take about 2 days, but may be shortened or extended depending on your context and participants.

General Objectives of the Module:

- To raise awareness of the critical role of teachers in promoting the academic development as well as the social and emotional protection of children and youth
- To provide a holistic framework for teachers, administrators, communities, and education authorities to understand different teacher support and development issues – and the relationships between these issues
- To help participants understand the relationship between teacher identity, motivation, and well-being, as it relates to the quality of education and student well-being
- To build commitment for teacher support and development and to encourage participants to identify practical and concrete ways in which different stakeholders can provide meaningful support to teachers

Day 1:

1. Welcome, Introductions

Welcome to participants
Opening remarks by community leaders, etc.
Introduction to the workshop

2. Background to the workshop

Provide the participants with some background to the workshop. This may include:

- Why it is being organized now
- What IRC has been doing related to teacher support and development
- What other organizations have been doing
- MoE policy on teacher support and development
- Any other local developments/issues – e.g. repatriation of teachers, teachers’ strikes, etc.
- A brief background on the IRC global HCI - where the ideas have come from – e.g. from listening to teachers’ and students’ voices in a number of different countries.

Explain to participants the objectives of the workshop (adapted from above)

3. Other preferred warm-up activities

For example, ground rules and workshop expectations

4. Small group brainstorm: What is the role of teachers in our community/society?

Participants work in small, mixed groups to brainstorm on a large sheet of paper, the role of teachers in the community. Particular attention should be paid to how the role of teachers may have had to adapt to the circumstances and to the particular needs of the children affected by a crisis. Prompted questions can be asked of the groups as they work, such as: How has the role of teachers changed at all over time? In what ways are the roles of primary school teachers the same as that of secondary teachers? In what ways are these roles different?

After about 20 minutes of small group discussion, the groups should present their brainstorms to the group. This discussion can be followed up with a general group discussion about ways in which the participants feel the role of teachers has changed or been adapted according to the crisis or post-crisis situation. Give particular attention to issues related to child protection and the psychosocial well-being of students.

5. Small group brainstorm: Who are our teachers?

Move the participants into different groups, in order for them to engage with different people and perspectives. In this small group activity they should try to build a general profile of the teachers in the community, noting as much as possible that they know about the teachers (in general, **not** individuals). For example: Are there male and female teachers? What is the average age of the teachers? Are the teachers mostly with their families, or alone? What is the range of qualifications/experiences that they have? What sort of priorities do the teachers have?

After about 30 minutes of work on these profiles, ask one group to present their profile and then ask the remaining groups to add to this first one with any additional information they may have considered. Try to build up as comprehensive and detailed of a profile as possible.

As a group, review the consolidated teachers' profile and discuss the implications of these sorts of experiences and perspectives for the quality of teaching they are able to provide and their ability to fulfill the different roles that were discussed in Activity 4. Be sure to raise both positive and negative aspects of the teachers' potential. For example:

There are some aspects of teacher identity which can be a **positive force** for child protection, for student well-being, and therefore for quality education. These include the fact that the teacher often belongs to the same community/ethnic/religious group as the children and so can relate to them very easily. The teacher may also speak the same language as the students, may have good relationships with the children's families, etc.

At the same time, there are also **negative forces** at play. The fact that teachers are generally under-experienced and under-qualified often means that they have limited strategies to create child-centered and child-friendly classrooms. In the absence of other models, teachers often fall back on the sort of teaching they experienced as children. Their experiences were probably very traditional and may even have included a heavy use of corporal punishment. Teachers may actually never have wanted to be teachers and yet have taken up the job only in the absence of better opportunities and/or because it has been requested of them by community members.

Wrap up the session with an initial brainstorm of ways in which the negative issues may be addressed through different types of teacher support and development and how the positive elements can be strengthened.

6: Small group Activity: What motivates the teachers within the school? What discourages the teachers within the school?

Working in different small groups, participants should take a single sheet of paper and divide it into two columns. They should then brainstorm different factors that motivate and encourage teachers in school and list them in the first column. In the second column, they should list school-related factors that discourage teachers. It is important that the discussions focus on the in-school factors, and that they consider different forms of motivation beyond just the teachers' salary.

What motivates the teachers within the school?	What discourages the teachers within the school?
E.g. Access to reading materials	E.g. Lack of parental interest in education
E.g. Interaction with other teachers	E.g. Limited teaching resources

After about ½ hour of group work, again have one group present its work and then have subsequent groups add to it (rather than repeating the same things several times). In the group discussion consider:

- a) The positive and negative implications for the students of factors that motivate and discourage teachers.
- b) The ways to act to strengthen the motivations and to address those factors which discourage teachers. This work will depend, of course, on the participant group and the range of options within their reach. For example, a group of parents versus a group of education administrators versus a group of teachers.

You may want to explain that in many countries of the world, teaching is usually not particularly well paid compared to other professions and is a profession that cannot attract well-qualified people by salary alone. This is especially true in emergency and post-emergency situations where the teachers may be paid only a refugee staff “incentive” or may receive minimal compensation from the community through school fees or other in-kind contributions. Even if teachers are on the government payroll, fragile, post-conflict governments rarely have resources to compensate teachers fully for their work or the systems to ensure that the salaries reach the teachers on time and without the involvement of middlemen. Even when teachers feel fortunate to receive their small compensation, other factors within the school may discourage them. When discouraged teachers have other opportunities, they will leave the profession.

It is important therefore, to recognize the alternative and additional motivations that may or may not be in place to encourage teachers to stay in the profession. Ongoing teacher education and professional development initiatives, for example, encourage teachers not only just to stay, but also to provide quality instruction and student interactions for oriented toward healing and well-being. In refugee contexts with uncertainties about the future for their community, teachers may be anxious to do what they can to contribute to the community and to ensure brighter futures for children. Teachers may also be encouraged and motivated to teach well if they feel that there are opportunities for them to develop professionally and to advance their career, for example, becoming a subject head or a head teacher. Other teachers may simply enjoy interactions with children and youth of a particular age. Such forms of teacher motivation are an important factor in promoting quality teaching and positive interactions between students and teachers in the school.

7. Wrap Up

Wrap up the day by summarizing the key points that have emerged from the work so far. Highlight the fact that the group is coming to a deeper understanding of who the teachers are (issues of teacher identity), of the personal and professional priorities and perspectives and that these are very important foundations for effective teacher support and development in order to promote quality education and student well-being, especially in times of crisis and post-crisis. On Day 2, participants will identify concrete ways in

which they – and other stakeholders – can provide relevant and meaningful teacher support and development.

Day 2:

1. Welcome and Introduction to the Day

Ask for two volunteers to summarize the key points that came out of the Day 1 activities and discussions. Summarize the key points and explain the plans for the second day.

2. Small group role-play: What are the social realities for the teachers outside the school?

In small groups the participants should discuss the realities of the teachers outside of the classroom, referring back to the teacher profile that was developed on Day 1. They should then consider the ways in which these positive and negative aspects may impact:

- a) The teachers' own sense of well-being
- b) Their capacity to support the learning, protection, and socio-emotional needs of the children in their care.

Encourage the groups to consider, for example, how the community feels about the teachers, whether they show particular respect for teachers, or otherwise. What are the particular risks (if any) for teachers in the community? Are they, for example, at risk for being targeted by fighting forces because of their positions of authority?

After the initial group discussion, the groups should then develop a short role-play in which they demonstrate some of these issues. Have them present the role-plays in turn.

In a group discussion session, try to draw out some of the common features, some of the key issues – both positive and negative – which affect the well-being of the teachers in the community, and how well-being factors may impact their teaching and their actions and behaviors in school. It will also be important to draw out some of the different issues for different teachers. For example, in communities where gender-based violence is prevalent, women teachers may also be dealing with this threat on a daily basis – maybe in their own homes, on the way to and from school, even in the school – whereas male teachers may not be affected. What other issues exist for teachers of minority ethnic, religious or other groups? What, if any, solutions to these have been identified?

Also important is for the facilitator to make note of any misconceptions or misinformation that are presented in the role plays and what are some possible solutions or program interventions that come out. These can just be written down at the time and then used as a starting point for discussion for the next session.

3. Group discussion: Teacher support and development – Who is responsible?

This discussion aims to identify the different ways in which different actors can play complementary roles in teacher support and development.

Have the participants first brainstorm a list of the different actors – the different groups of people and organizations who may have a role to play in supporting teachers, for example, head teachers, teacher educators in a teacher education institution, local NGOs, parents, senior students, etc.

In a second part of the discussion, identify the different roles and responsibilities of each. It will be important to highlight: a) the ways in which the different actions of each groups can be mutually reinforcing, and b) the responsibilities that the teachers themselves have to act on the support of the different actors, and to fulfill the expectations that are held of them.

4. Action-planning for teacher support and development

In this final activity, the participants should work in groups to develop concrete plans for providing enhanced teacher support and development. Start by recapping:

- a) The positive and negative experiences presented in the community in general
- b) The motivations and obstacles in the school environment.

Depending on the particular group and their possible areas for action and/or influence, you may want to focus the groups' attention on either in-school or out of school issues. Alternatively, it may make sense to address both – perhaps with different groups working on one or the other. Whatever the focus, the small groups should try to develop as concrete as possible, realistic plans for teacher support and development activities which address these negative and build on/strengthen the positive issues of teacher motivation, and well-being.

Once the groups have completed their action plans, they should each be shared with the whole group for feedback and further suggestions. If required, some additional time should be provided to finalize the action plans and plan the next steps, based on the feedback received. Depending on the level of the group, at this stage you may want to talk in more detail about the possible indicators and processes for participatory monitoring and evaluation of the action plans. Alternatively, this could be a topic for a follow up session.

5. Workshop wrap-up and next steps

Wrap up the workshop with a final summary of the key points. Reflect on the progress made towards the objectives outlined at the outset. Confirm next steps, and the roles and responsibilities of the different participants in bringing their action plans into being.