

Supporting Teachers Beyond the Classroom: Literacy, Learning and Lifelong Growth

World Teachers' Day 2026 Address

Salutations

The Chief Guest, distinguished guests, representatives from the Ministry of Education, education stakeholders, school leaders, fellow partners in education, and most importantly, our teachers from across Kenya.

Good morning.

Happy World Teachers' Day!

Today, I stand before you not only as the Chief Publishing Officer of Oxford University Press East Africa, but also as a teacher.

And because I am a teacher, I understand something that many people outside this profession may never fully appreciate:

Teaching is one of the few professions where success is measured not by what you achieve for yourself, but by what you help others achieve.

Teachers plant seeds whose fruits they may never live to see. They inspire confidence, nurture talent, open minds, and shape futures. Often without applause. Often without recognition. But never without impact.

Today, we celebrate that impact.

Today, we celebrate you.

At Oxford University Press East Africa, we have had the privilege of walking alongside teachers for more than seventy years. From the days of the first English/Kiswahili Dictionary, to *Hello Children*, to today's print and digital learning solutions, one truth has remained constant:

We cannot achieve our mission without teachers.

In fact, teachers are not simply our partners. They are part of who we are.

Oxford operates within the education ecosystem, and teachers are at the heart of it. Our authors are teachers. Our reviewers are teachers. Our trainers are teachers. Many of our own colleagues began their careers in the classroom.

The resources we publish are shaped by teachers.

The professional development we provide is led by teachers.

The learning solutions we create are informed by teachers.

Simply put, Oxford is a community built by teachers, for teachers, and in service of teachers and learners.

That is why this year's theme, "**Standing with Teachers: 60 Years of Protecting the Profession, Advancing Its Status and Shaping Our Futures**," resonates so deeply with us.

Because the future we all want depends on the quality of teaching taking place in our classrooms today.

And that is why supporting teachers must go beyond providing books.

A well-trained teacher changes lives.

An under-supported teacher affects generations.

When teachers are empowered with the right knowledge, skills, and support, every learner benefits. Every family benefits. Every community benefits.

That is why teacher development remains one of our most important commitments.

Each year, Oxford University Press East Africa supports the professional development of more than **25,000 teachers** through webinars, conferences, training programmes, and educational resources.

This month alone, our teacher webinar series attracted an incredible **10,686 registrations** from teachers across Early Childhood Development, Primary, Junior School, and Senior School.

What inspires us most is not the number itself.

It is what the number represents.

Thousands of teachers choosing to learn, grow, and improve their practice for the benefit of their learners.

Importantly, these webinars are provided completely **free of charge**, are available **on demand**, and can be accessed by any teacher, anywhere.

Because we believe professional development should not be a privilege for a few. It should be accessible to every teacher who wants to grow.

Our commitment also extends to supporting the implementation of Competency-Based Education. Many of you use our **Primary Teachers' Companion**, **Junior School Teachers' Companion**, and **Senior School Teachers' Companion**, which continue to be some of our most downloaded FREE resources.

We have made these resources available free of charge because we believe that investing in teachers is one of the most powerful investments we can make in education.

After all, when we support one teacher, we ultimately support hundreds of learners.

As we think about learning, we must also think about literacy.

Literacy remains one of the most powerful foundations for lifelong success. When learners develop confidence in language, they gain confidence in learning itself.

That is why we remain committed to developing resources and solutions that strengthen literacy, improve communication skills, and encourage independent learning.

But today is not about books.

Today is about people.

The teachers who arrive before the learners.

The teachers who stay long after the final bell.

The teachers who carry not only lesson plans, but hopes, dreams, and futures.

And before I conclude, allow me to share a simple thought.

Years from now, your learners may not remember every lesson you taught.

They may not remember every assignment or examination.

But they will remember how you made them feel.

They will remember the teacher who believed in them.

The teacher who encouraged them.

The teacher who refused to give up on them.

Many of us can trace our success back to one teacher who changed the course of our lives.

One conversation.

One encouraging word.

One moment of belief.

History has given us many examples of great teachers, but perhaps one of the greatest was Jesus Christ.

His classroom had no walls.

His teaching tools were stories, questions, and everyday experiences.

Yet through teaching, mentoring, and guiding others, He transformed lives, inspired generations, and changed the course of history.

His example reminds us that the true measure of a teacher is not the size of the classroom, but the depth of the impact they leave behind.

As we celebrate today, I encourage each one of you to continue investing in your own growth.

The best teachers are lifelong learners.

That is why I warmly invite you to join the **English Language Teaching Online Conference (ELTOC) 2026**, taking place from **22nd to 24th October**.

This free global conference brings together teachers and leading educational experts from around the world to share practical classroom strategies, innovations in education, inclusive teaching approaches, assessment practices, learner engagement techniques, and insights into the evolving role of AI in education.

We invite you to be part of this global community of educators.

Because when teachers learn, learners thrive.

On behalf of Oxford University Press East Africa, thank you for your dedication.

Thank you for your resilience.

Thank you for your sacrifice.

And thank you for choosing a profession that shapes every other profession.

As you leave here today, remember this:

A doctor's journey begins with a teacher.

An engineer's journey begins with a teacher.

A scientist's journey begins with a teacher.

A leader's journey begins with a teacher.

Every profession stands on the shoulders of a teacher.

And so I leave you with this thought:

"Long after buildings have faded, technologies have changed, and generations have passed, the influence of a great teacher lives on in the lives they have shaped. The future is not something we enter. It is something teachers create."

Teachers of Kenya, thank you for creating our future.

Happy World Teachers' Day.

May God bless you, and may God bless the work of your hands.

Thank you.