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TITLE:

EDUCATORS ON THE FRONT LINES OF ARMED CONFLICT: WELL-BEING, ROLES, AND AGENCY

SPEAKER: DANIEL XERRI

PRESENTATION TYPE: PLENARY

Abstract

This plenary examines educators' well-being, roles, and agency in contexts of armed conflict. Its purpose is to show how teaching on the front lines involves not only the continuation of schooling but also the maintenance of care, hope, identity, and social continuity amid violence and institutional disruption. Drawing on research from diverse conflict and post-conflict settings, the talk first explores the psychological effects of war on teachers, including trauma, burnout, resilience, and the dual burden of supporting learners while also experiencing insecurity themselves. It then analyses how teachers' roles expand beyond instruction to include trauma-sensitive care, psychosocial support, community stabilisation, peacebuilding, and learning design. Lastly, it examines teacher agency as a situated and uneven practice shaped by survival, resistance, silence, advocacy, and risk. In the talk it is argued that teachers' resilience and commitment cannot substitute for sustained institutional, professional, and psychosocial support.

Biography

Daniel Xerri is an Associate Professor in Applied Linguistics and TESOL at the University of Malta and the Chairperson of the ELT Council. He has published widely across different areas of English language education, co-editing eleven books and authoring over 250 publications. His work has appeared in research anthologies, scholarly journals, magazines, and newspapers and has generated a substantial number of citations. He has delivered more than 110 invited presentations, including plenary talks and keynotes, in over 40 countries, and his research has received international awards. His main research interests are teacher research and professional learning. His most recent book is *The Rise of English as a Glocal Language: Reimagining its Role in an Era of Deglobalisation* (Springer, 2026). www.danielxerri.com