



Education International
Internationale de l'Éducation
Internacional de la Educación

TEACHERS OPENING DOORS TO A BETTER WORLD



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WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

From the earliest times, in every human society, there were those who opened the doors of knowledge. They were called teachers.

The image of opening doors is a powerful one – opening the way to liberty and progress. But for most of human history, for most people, those doors remained shut.

The great revolutionary idea of the modern era was Education For All. And those charged with the responsibility of opening the doors for all were the teachers.

So teaching became a profession no longer serving the privileged few, but working in the communities of the world, rich and poor, in the cities and the suburbs, the towns and the villages, sharing the hopes and fears of every segment of society – the affluent, the struggling workers and the desperately poor.

How much our communities owe today to those countless men and women who took up the vocation of teaching, opening doors for new generations. For they opened the doors of opportunity for individuals and for their societies. They opened the way to the world we know.

But that could be a better world – one of opportunity for all, of equity and justice and progress and peace.

The first step towards that better world is to achieve Education for All in all nations. Without discrimination due to race or national origin, or religious belief, or gender or wealth or poverty, all must have the opportunity to pursue their dreams and to make their contributions to their communities. *Everyone has the right to education* proclaims the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Secondly, our societies must recognise the key role of the door openers – the teachers. They must be qualified, and be given the means to provide quality education for all. *Advance in education depends largely on the qualifications and ability of the teaching staff* states the UNESCO/ILO Recommendation on the Status of Teachers.

Thirdly, we must affirm that opening the doors to a better world means preparing young people to be citizens, to be active and responsible participants in democratic societies. We must not allow our young people to be taken down paths of intolerance, hatred and violence.

We need teachers – real teachers, not substitutes. All our communities will benefit from investing in the quality of education by investing in the quality of teachers. We must encourage and retain our teachers and attract new, dedicated people to be the door openers of the future.

World Teachers' Day 2003 is the occasion to reaffirm our faith in the prospect of progressing towards a better world, and our recognition of the worth and contribution of the door openers – the teachers.

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World Confederation of Teachers