



Education International
Internationale de l'Éducation
Internacional de la Educación



Rome 4-5 April 2016

Report:

Conference of EI Affiliates
in the OECD Member Countries

Protecting and Promoting Education as a Public Good



Abbreviations

AHELO	Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes
GERM	Global Educational Reform Movement
ISTP	International Summit on the Teaching Profession
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PIAAC	Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TTIP	Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
TUAC	Trade Union Advisory Committee, OECD

Day 1

Opening Session

Susan Hopgood, President of Education International (EI), opened the conference by addressing Education International's (EI's) role in protecting and promoting education as a public good.

Participants had come from almost all OECD countries and from every region. A warm welcome was offered to the Colombian colleagues who were joining for the first time. Colombia was about to join the OECD. The warm welcome was extended to all. "There are some big matters in front of people, but the right group has been assembled to consider them", Hopgood assured.

Hopgood was followed by Domenico Pantaleo, General Secretary of FLC-CGIL, Italian host of the conference, who gave an overview of the situation in Italy.

- Since 2008, when harsh cuts were made across the whole education sector, resources and conditions have dwindled, especially in southern Italy.
- The collective contract has not been renewed since 2010 despite numerous attempts to bargain.
- The academic community has been hit by precarious employment - a feature of the "new Italy".
- Economic conditions and quality of work need to improve and education is the best way to achieve this.
- Students need more autonomous skills and a better knowledge base developed through education and training that improves inclusion.
- Italy wants to see its own national education system improved. This applies also to those of the rest of the world.



Fred van Leeuwen, General Secretary of Education International (EI), then gave his introduction speech. “Poverty is much worse than it was. Precarious employment has accelerated these problems. Consensus values are coming under pressure around the world. This can turn healthy scepticism into unhealthy cynicism.”, he said. Van Leeuwen then listed a number of challenges:

- In England and Wales the debate around system change has been highly negative
- Quality teaching, quality tools and a safe and healthy learning environment are the only defence
- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were a battle that EI has won, but life must now be breathed into those fine words
- The UK white paper ‘Educational excellence is everywhere’ represents a corruption of thought by language
- This is an old battle – there is no evidence of parental or student consultation or support
- Ideologically driven, as Pasi Sahlberg says, it is about GERM approaches to education
- Philippines and Kenya show recent examples of this
- Liberia is about to sell off its whole system to ‘for profit’ education
- Behind this is an untapped market seen as more important than social cohesion or democracy
- The market value of the educational economy at presents represents 4.5-5 trillion USD
- This could rise to 7 trillion in the next few years with GERM approaches and the growth of new ‘education markets’ in China, India, Brazil and LA and Africa in general.
- Non-standardised curriculum, under/un qualified teachers, lower wages and for profit are the hallmarks of this system
- In some countries professional issues are no longer on the table

Van Leeuwen went on to describe EI’s response to this situation. He laid out a number of ways in which EI is working to turn this tide. The SDGs have already been pointed to as an advance, but they need more support to bring these goals to fruition. “Our global response programme is focused on resisting the GERM and for-profit educational provision and its many forms. Where corporations seek to interfere for the development of private good EI draws the line.”, he stressed.

He mentioned that significant work had also gone into teacher professionalism. Teacher policy was central to the discussion at the International Summit of the



Teaching Profession (ISTP) in Berlin. “The trend for pushing teachers away from passion and towards evaluation seems to be ending. The teacher policy that we have been promoting is recognized in the latest TALIS report on teacher professionalism. Genuine self-evaluation, PLD and more teacher autonomy.”, he said.

Van Leeuwen finished by underlining that while EI’s arguments were clearly gaining sway national governments might chose not to act. “We must reverse this trend by supporting the force of our argument with the argument of our force.”, he concluded.

Becky Pringle, Vice President of NEA, then spoke to introduce Dennis Shirley. Pringle spoke passionately about resisting the GERM. “Collaboration, equity and trust based responsibility enable countries to resist the GERM”, she assured.

Pringle said there were bright spots on the US horizon with the Every student Succeeds Act requiring teacher voice. She affirmed that there was the potential for this new approach to decouple tests from high stakes testing.

Pringle presented **Dennis Shirley**, Professor of Education at Boston College and Editor in Chief of the Journal of Education and Change. He authored The Fourth Way with Andy Hargreaves. “He will ignite our passion and encourage hope.”, she promised. With this rousing introduction Shirley took the stage.

Plenary Session 1

Refocusing Integrity and Purpose in our GERMed world. Dennis Shirley

Shirley opened up by talking about education being at the tipping point of educational change. “We need to achieve two goals simultaneously. We need to uplift student achievement, but we need to do it with integrity. To achieve this we also need inspiration.”, he stressed.

He noted that in England high levels of surveillance have caused many teachers to opt out. “They have perfected unsustainable change.”, he criticised. In Chile, in contrast, they were trying to reimagine education into a better, more holistic form. He highlighted the need to support our colleagues there.

He described the present as a time of opportunity.

System types:

- Low achievement, low integrity: pound principals and teachers
- High achievement, low integrity: pound the schools that fail, reward the ones that achieve (eg. Atlanta)
- Low achievement, high integrity: principal loves the children, but knows nothing about education
- High achievement, high integrity: high performing, but well supported teachers

New imperatives:

- The evidentiary imperative
- The interpretive imperative
- The professional imperative
- The global imperative
- The existential imperative

Shirley then elucidated a number of countries' different responses to testing. Germany slid down the PISA rankings, but rather than panic they worked on developing better pedagogy and more inclusive practices. England and Sweden instituted more testing. Germany went up the ranks, England and Sweden slid further down. "We need to move from the imperial to the interpretive imperative!", he said.

He explained that OECD data is scanned by systems like in the US where they only quote evidence that supports their policy. Teach First data was a classic example of this -despite evidence that they were leaving the classroom in droves.

"We then saw an environmental analysis of teachers being separated from each other and being denied the oxygen their professionalism requires.", he continued. "Yet we know insularity doesn't work in education. Mechanistic nonsense around 'learnification' needs to be challenged with reprofessionalising teachers. The University College Union in the UK is asking the question 'how do you develop educational leadership without deprofessionalising teachers?'"

Shirley is going to devote a special issue of the journal to the dark side of educational change. "Pasi Sahlberg has helped develop a counter narrative. We have to think our way out of this crisis with laboratories of democracy in our schools. Even the OECD is joining the counter narrative business.", he concluded.

The session was rounded off by the assertion that "we are pro-reform, but educationally sound reform please!"



The Sustainable Development Goals – How do they affect us all?

Susan Hopgood, Steffen Handal - President of UEN Norway, Marlis Tepe - President of GEW Germany, David Edwards - Deputy General Secretary of Education International (EI)

Hopgood opened up the panel by asking whether the new agenda for education 2030 was doable. “Generations of students will be affected by our ability to achieve these goals.”, she underlined.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the successor to the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They include 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets, from ending poverty to promoting healthy lives for all, achieving gender equality to promoting decent work for all, from ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education to combatting climate change. All this for the achievement of free, stable and secure societies where the blight of poverty and ignorance are eliminated. Governments adopted “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development at the UN General Assembly in September 2015”. Education International led the way in ensuring that there is a standalone goal on “Education”. The result is SDG 4 which calls to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”- a goal which is divided into six comprehensive education targets.

Vitality the Goals, including SDG 4, apply not only to developing countries but to developed countries including those in the OECD.

David Edwards made a number of important points about what had been gained and what still needed to happen:

- We achieved the wording ‘free’ (instead of ‘affordable’) Primary and Secondary schooling
- Teachers have to be qualified and trained
- ‘Institutionalised social dialogue’ finally achieved with the 17th goal
- Your union can use the checklist which is like a toolkit for unions to follow
- Demand your right to participate
- Insist the SDGs are visible in national plans
- Insist they are supported by adequate investment
- Include global competencies like peace and non-violence
- Scholarships are fine but are no replacement for free education

Marlis Tepe gave the German perspective:

Tepe emphasised the importance of future education, as well as social dialogue. The influx of refugees had required a considerable adjustment in Germany. The union has been active in the global education campaign by inviting all parliamentarians to come and talk about this. This campaign approach could also work in other countries, she said. A letter had gone to every parliamentarian in Germany positioning them as part of the solution. It would be interesting to see how effective this is in shifting their perspective.

Steffen Handal gave the Norwegian perspective:

Handal gave a different spin on the SDGs and the challenge of provoking a shift at the OECD. Their research institute had developed a paper looking at Norway in comparison to developing countries in their achievement against the SDGs. They discovered that while Norway was doing well in some areas it still had a long way to go. He reminded that every country needs to push forward on the goals, looking at marginalised groups, the impact of geography on educational delivery and support, the qualitative factors coming to bear around literacy and numeracy, etc.

He also insisted on the need to work out the relationship between educational achievement and social background.

In September 2015 the UN founded a commission to turn around the reduction in finance in education. EI and its members must continue to play a significant role in this, he said.

Goal 4 remains unachieved.

Q and A

Cuqui Vera from Spain thanked all the panellists and went on to warn affiliates of the impending trauma about to be visited by VAM on the Spanish system. "School results can have nothing to do with how well a teacher is doing and should not be impacting teacher salary", she said. David Edwards replied that EI had a paper critiquing VAM which shows up its inadequacies as a pay system and takes the lid off the whole #VAMboozle industry. The paper is available here: <http://go.ei-ie.org/VAM>. Edwards described VAM as 'a toxic mess'.

Conference then split into Breakout Sessions.

John Bangs, Senior Consultant to EI, introduced the sessions.

Here is the feedback from the sessions:



Breakout session 1 - Evaluating early years education

Stig Lund of BUPL Denmark reported on the Early Childhood Education (ECE) session.

The OECD is working on a new early learning assessment study. While the OECD's interest could help the early childhood sector get more prioritized, assessing young children's learning in a way that informs quality is a complex matter. The focus on child outcomes is worrying and could negatively affect ECE policy choices and ECE quality, especially in settings where teacher qualifications and professional autonomy are low. As ECE teachers and unionists, we need to highlight the limitations of the study, the implications for ECE policy, and how negative effects may be counteracted, so that we can instead turn our focus to this as a new opportunity to bring attention and greater investment to early childhood education.

Breakout session 2 - Where next for TALIS

Karine Tremblay, Senior Analyst, TALIS Team at OECD outlined the latest developments in TALIS and related projects such as the Early Childhood survey. There were discussions about the links between TALIS and PISA and their potential to have a positive influence on the worlds that teachers inhabit. A key point that was made was that countries sometimes failed to include EI affiliates in discussions on TALIS and other international surveys. EI and OECD were urged to press governments to alter their position on this issue.

Breakout session 3 - Tackling Stress and Promoting Teachers' Well-being

Countries represented at the workshop: Germany, France, Sweden, Canada, Ireland, Portugal, USA, United Kingdom, Scotland, NASUWT (United Kingdom) conducted a study involving 13,000 teachers in 2016. Common points: the workload, the managerial methods of principals, the requirements of the education authorities (national, regional and local levels) were denounced. Health and safety must feature in discussions between the governments and the teachers' unions.



Agreement that it is necessary to influence the TALIS study that is currently underway. EI should, first of all, compile the data collected by its affiliates before launching “a global inquiry”. Establish a link with the EI Research Network (whose next meeting will take place on 11 and 12 May in Brussels)

Warning regarding the fact that the OECD, through its studies and surveys, is not necessarily concerned with a claim that is common to the majority of affiliates, the reduction of teaching staff workload, and the reduction of the number of students per class.

Breakout session 4 - Further and Higher Education – Achieving supportive environments in Higher Education

This breakout session provided colleagues in Further and Higher Education with the opportunity to explore future OECD and EI work in the sector. Participants reviewed the current status of the PIAAC and the welcome decision to drop the AHELO project. It was asserted that future OECD work needs to start from a rights-based perspective, particularly with respect to financing and access.

Further discussion focused on the threats posed by the privatization of the sector, particularly with respect to academic freedom and research integrity. It was agreed that there is a need for Further and Higher Education affiliates to be more involved in EI's Global Response campaign.

Moderator/Rapporteur: **David Robinson**, Executive Director of CAUT/ACPPU, Canada

Background reading:

[*Discussion Paper on Pro Rata Appointment of Part-time contract, CAUT/Canada*](#)

[*OECD's Assessment of Adult Skills*](#)

[*OECD's Skills Strategy*](#)

[*OECD's Future thinking 1*](#)

[*www.oecd.org/edu/cei/highereducationto2030volume2globalisation.htm*](http://www.oecd.org/edu/cei/highereducationto2030volume2globalisation.htm)

Plenary Session 3

Equity and High Achievement – What does the latest research tell us about achieving these goals?

Randi Weingarten, AFT President, introduced the session. Andreas Schleicher gave a pre-recorded video presentation which focused mainly on the refugee crisis and the humanitarian/policy implications for countries. The workshop decided that professional autonomy had to be driven by teachers to make sense.

[*https://www.slideshare.net/mobile/OECD/EDU/international-summit-on-the-teaching-profession-framing-the-issues-58958880*](https://www.slideshare.net/mobile/OECD/EDU/international-summit-on-the-teaching-profession-framing-the-issues-58958880)

Larry Flanagan, General Secretary of EIS Scotland, responded to Andreas Schleicher's presentation by saying that all the key features that Schleicher had identified for providing quality education for refugees were in fact key

features of all quality education systems. Flanagan talked about how difficult the job was and that to do it properly there was a real need to collaborate.

Maddalena Gissi, General Secretary of CISL Scuola Italy, talked about places where immigrants have been coming for many years now. "Inclusion must work at all levels to accommodate this: at the school, local and system level.", she added.

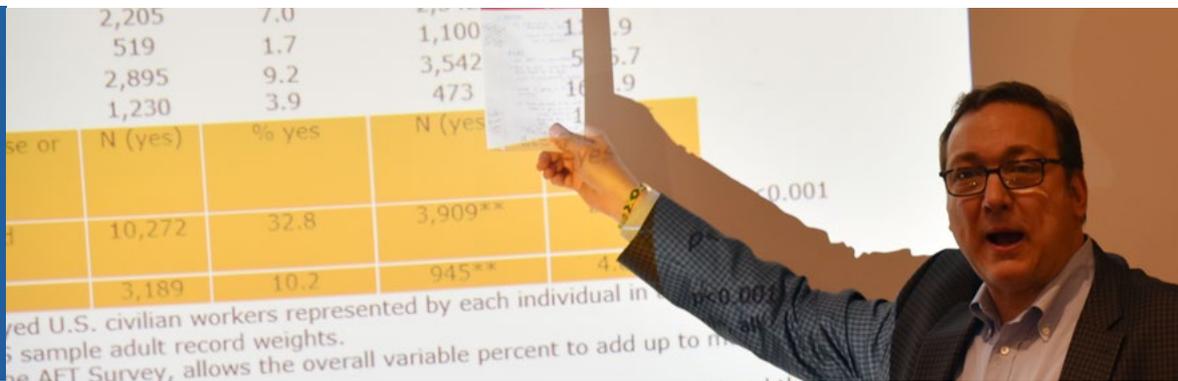
Rowena Phair, Project Leader DG Education and Skills OECD, drew a composite picture of a student likely to fail, from a low socio-economic background, with a single parent, repeating grades etc. How do we as a system reposition these students? Some countries, like Poland, have reduced the number of students in the least performing group. If you are from a poor community with little early childhood it is hard to learn!

The session concluded with feedback from the floor that to make a difference for these students it was absolutely necessary to involve teachers!

RECEPTION HOSTED BY FLC-CGIL, CISL-Scuola and UIL-Scuola

was enjoyed by all. Thank you Italy!





Day 2

After a restful night for all of us in the arms of Rome **Fred van Leeuwen** opened day 2 with a talk about Turkey and the right of refugee children to an education. Education International will be hosting a conference to bring together those who can help.

Note: When you receive the invite please direct it towards those teachers who have classroom experience and ideas to share around teaching refugees/migrants/people on the move.

Van Leeuwen informed that the previous day the President of the Bahrain teachers association was released from prison after 5 years. This information was met with strong applause.

Susan Hopgood then returned with thanks to the Italian unions for hosting the reception - and for the beautiful weather! "Free universally accessible education is a pre-condition for a better world", she said. "However, privatization is the biggest threat to this. Education treated as a commodity is undermining social cohesion and democracy".

Hopgood said that 'educational businesses' are trying to control education and that it was crucial that there was a global response. "To do this we must work together.", she reminded.

Guiseppe Turi, General Secretary of UIL Scuola Italy then spoke about the political economy around teachers and teaching in Italy. While he noted a degree of autonomy in the Italian education system, he also reported the miserable wages, contract stand off and difficulties in getting what the teachers in Italy clearly deserved.

Plenary Session 1

Long Division – When private interests into public education simply do not go

Cassandra Hallett da Silva, Secretary General of the CTF-FCE Canada, followed this up with a focus on the Global Response project. She introduced **Susan Robertson**, Deputy Head of School University of Bristol UK.

Robertson started by referencing the House of Commons lecture on which this presentation was based.

"We want education for respectful individuals. It is not a commodity.", she said.



The opening passages referred to Piccardy and Smith, French and British economists that set a backdrop for a discussion of a classical/neo-classical nature. She affirmed that the political elite oils the wheels of the economic elite and vice versa. The invisible hand of the market is after all not so invisible. Wealth continues to be redistributed upwards towards the 1% of the 10%, that is towards the billionaires.

By 2014 the US had become one of the most unequal societies in the world. Social mobility is disappearing, poverty is rising and the very wealthy are taking their money out of the public system to the detriment of all.

This underscores the move from a public investment model around schooling towards a market model. This market model has been actively supported and enabled by governments. It is also supported by a high level of parental anxiety.

Robertson spoke about Bill and Melinda Gates rolling out VAM across the world. She said that EI had developed an excellent paper on this written by one her doctoral students. "This policy is yet another example of the enclosure of political spaces by the wealthy and the powerful. This combines with states of exception and questions of fairness and democracy to severely limit the freedom of citizens.", she warned.

Robertson then explored the debilitating effect of trade agreements that limit educational freedom. England with its low regulatory floor becomes an entry point for multi-national edu-businesses who are then able to inhabit a space across countries and jurisdictions. This makes them all the more capable of doing damage. "Capitalism doesn't like politics", she analysed, "it wants to get on with the job of accruing capital quietly. It is our job to make the arguments much more visible."

Robertson finished with a challenge to slacktivism: "don't press send - act,act,act".

Mugwena Maluleke, General Secretary of SADTU South Africa (respondent) spoke of those with privilege avoiding their social responsibilities which "would leave us all in big trouble". Education is under threat because governments are abrogating their responsibilities. This is putting us all under pressure. "Susan has shown us the gap, now it is necessary for us to take these morally and politically bankrupt arrangements into account. Businesses are driving the agenda. We all need to reach out to halt and reverse the rapidly expanding trends of the commercialisation and privatisation of education.", he said.



"We are the leading lights in speaking the language of our time. It's our job to stop this!", he added.

Q and A

These included questions about education as a public good and as a societal good.

It was pointed out that 74 individuals have as much money as half the world's population. This illustrated the scale of the task.

Background reading: [Long Division: When Private Interests Into Public Education Simply Do Not Go!](#)

Plenary Session 2

Something old, something new, something borrowed: philanthropy, business and the changing roles of government in global education policy networks

Antonio Olmedo, Reader in Education Policy School of Education University of Roehampton UK

Olmedo opened by pointing out what a battle ground education had become. An invisible handshake seems to have taken place in England between the government and the state that takes the public interest out and replaces it with a private interest. He cited Bridge International Academies as a good example of this. A hierarchical company that, like Starbucks, is looking to capitalise on the brand. These new figures of philanthrocapitalism are leaning towards performance philanthropy, presenting themselves as doing good in the world, but driven by creating markets. Systems of evaluation and investment like GERA from Brazil are looking up to 30 years ahead.

This was followed by some analysis of the unbending nature of these new companies. Teach for All/Teach First/Teach for America are promoting their own model of teacher training, often without robust evidence. They have no interest in cooperating with anyone who is not 100% supportive of their model. Unions and universities alike are vetted out of these spaces.



Hogan has a focus particularly on Pearson. She has worked to expose the concerns and contradictions brought about by their global business strategy. "Pearson argue that they are improving access to education by being a cash generative company. This is driven by 5 billion in sales and 1 billion in profit. This was a media company that was transformed with the assistance of Michael Barber from the Blair government. They sell themselves about the good they are doing putting 'students at the heart of the learning' yet get involved with morally irresponsible low fee private schools.", she pointed out.

However, there is some light on this subject. The stock price fell by 40% this year. The public is speaking.

Christine Blower General Secretary of NUT UK (respondent)

Christine talked about the false evidence peddled around the academies. The British government is seeking to link tax data to subject results so they can work out which subjects are worth studying. However, there is growing opposition to this approach from both sides of the fence. The leader of the Oxford Council, for example, is a Tory who is strongly pushing back.

Q and A included:

"Anna Hogan was right on, Pearson are driving students to tears with their standardised tests.", one participant remarked.

Background reading: [The learning curve of Pearson](#)

[Neoliberal education Policy: The privatisation of education and educators](#)

Angelo Gavrielatos, Project Director from EI, closed the session by asking each affiliate to come up with national strategies.



BREAKOUT SESSIONS: A CO-ORDINATED GLOBAL RESPONSE

Breakout session 1

A co-ordinated Global Response to Trade and Tax: Trade union perspective and stocktaking on the OECD agenda on tax evasion and corporate tax planning

Manuela Mendonca, International Secretary of FENPROF Portugal, reported back on the tax and trade session. She said it was necessary to clarify the difference between tax evasion and tax avoidance. Tax avoidance is legal - Luxembourg is a good example - tax evasion is illegal - Panama is a good example.

The OECD has delivered a plan with directives to multinationals, but they have a very different perspective to countries.

We can only be successful if this work continues at national and international level.

Background reading:

[TUAC Statement "Final OECD/G20 BEPS Package is historic, but comes with a price tag : Strict business confidentiality and increased complexity"](#)

[Pierre Habbard's blog " BEPS: what's next"](#)

[Pierre Habbard's blog " Regulatory quality for whom and for what?"](#)

[EI Tax Justice Guide](#)

[EI Press Release on TPP](#)

[EI Briefing Note on TPP – the Potential Impacts for the Education Sector](#)

[EI blog post "Why the TPP seriously threatens Education and Public Interest Regulation"](#)

[EI blog post "The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership opens door to privatisation of public services"](#)

[EI blog post "Protecting Investors or Protecting the Public"](#)

[EI blog post "Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership \(TTIP\): Education is not for sale"](#)

[EI Briefing Note on TiSA](#)

[EI blog post "From GATS to TiSA: New Challenges for Quality Public Education"](#)

[ETUCE Campaign Exclude Education from TTIP](#)

[Global Unions Statement of Priorities for the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference \(MC10\)](#)



[Investment Provisions in Trade and Investment Treaties: The Need for Reform](#)

[Taxes on trial – How Trade Deals Threaten Tax Justice](#)

[Report of the Independent Expert on the impact of Investor-State-Dispute-Settlement on a democratic and equitable international order](#)

[World Investment Report 2015 – Reforming International Investment Governance](#)

Johanna Jaara Astrand, President of Laraforbundet Sweden, reported on a global response to the GERM.

“A number of educational issues about education, technology, competition and schools had been covered. There is no evidence that private schools make for better results. The OECD do not have any position on the GERM per se. Can we impact on any of this through TUAC? There are things the union have said that the OECD have ignored, but we can do things. The best point of influence is not at the final meeting (summits) but in the working groups.”

Astrand pointed out that countries shared ideas. Private schools and privatisation were often constructed as the problem. Public schools are overflowing with material from private providers. New Zealand managed to push back on privatisation via charter schools by using the learnings from New Orleans.

Unions can use evidence from each other’s research and EI has a role in coordinating this.

Further reading: [The 2 pillars of the Global Response: Towards a legislative framework](#)

[The Global Response Network. Has your union joined?](#)

Mugwena Maluleke dealt with a mobilisation of activity around Pearson. “It is crucial that this is understood as part of the Global Response. We should also acknowledge the work done by the affiliates of EI.”, he emphasised. The stakeholder report on Pearson covers:



- Investment structure of Pearson
- High stakes testing
- Low fee for profit schools

He mentioned that there was a petition against Pearson available in 7 languages and added that EI should make this available for delegates to sign. He suggested that if members were able to get to London for the meeting they should wear tee shirts and protest so that all could see this part of the global response.

“On social media tell Pearson that every child has the right to a free high-quality education. Take action and take the code for the petition and put it on your website. There is no global response without national action”, he concluded.

Plenary session 3

Making the case for public education in a changing world

Susan Robertson: “What can you do in the next few weeks to cut through the complexity and connect with a wider group?”

Anna Hogan: “Some overwhelming issues at the conference. You can’t influence everything in the world but the response is clearly becoming truly global.”

Antonio Olmedo: “The problem needs to be traced back from multinationals to the schools, teachers quitting after panic attacks, and the growth of teacher suicide. Strategies of urbanisation are also growing with families moving to posher suburbs to access better schools.”

Pierre Hubbard, Senior Policy Advisor at TUAC OECD: “Unions are about organising workers into a safe, democratic workplace. The two challenges facing workers are complexity and the need for alliances with pension fund managers and others.”

Anna Byhovskaya, Policy Analyst at TUAC, OECD: “Competitive education systems are the wrong goal. We should promote quality over efficiency. To do this we need a strong evidence base. We should tap into other OECD countries to tell the good stories about this. When we give good concise messaging with strong national case studies at transnational level we have a chance to turn the tide.”

Further reading: [*Challenges to public education systems globally*](#)
 [*Worlds of Education*](#)

Closing remarks

David Edwards gave the closing speech of the conference. He reiterated the purpose of the conference which was to promote a holistic, equitable, inclusive quality education system, to interpret the current trends in education and to defend and build societies through solidarity as education unions in the face of privatisation and commercialisation. He talked about the “octopus of privatisation” which “has its tentacles into everything”. “To resist this we must link the global vision

to on the ground muscle.” Edwards also reminded the participants of the 5 new imperatives that Professor Dennis Shirley suggested: the evidentiary imperative, the interpretive imperative, the professional imperative, the global imperative and the existential imperative. He recalled the message that Fred van Leeuwen gave at the 2014 Unite for Quality Education Conference which took place in Montreal, Canada to strengthen our professional strand, our industrial strand and our social justice strand. On behalf of the leadership of EI, Edwards thanked the participants, the speakers, the Italian host organisations, the interpreters and the secretariat for a full and fruitful conference.





Education International
Internationale de l'Éducation
Internacional de la Educación

Head Office
5, Bd du Roi Albert II
1210 Brussels, Belgium
Tel +32 2 224 06 11
Fax +32 2 224 06 06
headoffice@ei-ie.org
<http://www.ei-ie.org>
[#Unite4ed](#)



Protecting and Promoting Education as a Public Good

Conference of EI Affiliates
in the OECD Member Countries

Rome

4-5 April 2016