



Conclusions of the 8th EI Higher Education and Research Conference

We, the participants in Education International's 8th Higher Education and Research Conference, met in Buenos Aires, Argentina 25-27 September 2012 and reviewed the major trends and policy developments in our sector since the 7th Conference held in Vancouver, Canada in 2010. We express our sincere gratitude to our hosts CONADU for their warm welcome and generous hospitality.

NOTING the many challenges faced by higher education and research institutions, trade unions, staff and students in the current economic and political climate;

AFFIRMING that EI and its affiliates must step up efforts to defend and promote the professional, academic, trade union, and human rights of higher education teachers, researchers and staff; and

RECALLING EI policy that higher education and research is a public service and that it is the responsibility of public authorities to prevent the marketisation and trade in education and intellectual property, the casualisation of employment in the sector, the application of private-sector and for-profit management models to institutions, and the privatisation of provision;

Recommends to the EI Executive Board:

- Adoption of the Policy Statement on Tuition Fees asserting that tuition fees should not be charged and where they exist they should be progressively reduced and eliminated.
- Agreement to hold the 9th International Higher Education and Research Conference in the Africa region in 2014.

Recommends that the EI Secretariat:

- Collect and disseminate information and analysis of the impact of austerity measures on the higher education and research sector as part of the Education in Crisis campaign, paying

particular attention to the impact on the terms and conditions of employment of staff, their professional status and academic freedom.

- Ensure that interventions with the World Bank, IMF, G-20 and other relevant multilateral organizations stress the social and economic importance of public investment in higher education and research, particularly in developing countries.
- Gather information from affiliates concerning the status of precarious and fixed-term employment in the sector, with a particular focus on early-stage researchers.
- Explore ways to facilitate greater information sharing amongst higher education and research affiliates, such as an electronic newsletter.
- Focus on strengthening EI's membership in the Latin America, Africa and Asia-Pacific regions.
- Ensure higher education and research affiliates are represented in the EI Organisers' Network.
- Continue efforts to oppose the commercialisation and privatisation of higher education and research, including lobbying against the coverage of education and related services in international commercial trade agreements such as the WTO's General Agreement and Trade and Services, and the recently proposed International Services Agreement.
- Encourage and facilitate affiliates to promote equity for disadvantaged groups including women, indigenous peoples, racial groups, persons with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered persons.
- Engage with UNESCO, the World Bank and the OECD to highlight the negative consequences of international university rankings and assessments of student learning outcomes.
- Explore ways to promote greater development cooperation and international solidarity initiatives between higher education and research affiliates.
- Step up monitoring and reporting of violations of academic freedom, trade union rights, and civil liberties in the higher education and research sector.

Calls upon EI Affiliates to:

- Strengthen cooperation and sharing of information and best practices around campaigning, organising, collective bargaining, and promoting equity.
- Publicize and share good practice, including collective agreement language, legislative initiatives and public campaigns to improve the terms and conditions of employment of fixed-term staff and to promote paths for early stage researchers to permanent and continuing employment.
- Develop and strengthen partnerships with student organizations and other allies.
- Contribute to and actively participate in EI's Education in Crisis campaign.
- Strengthen international solidarity and development cooperation initiatives.