



Education International 6th World Congress - Saturday, 23 July 2011

World Congress Newsletter

Building the future through quality education

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EI President calls on unions to defend quality public education

Moving poetry of hope; students dancing for joy; the stirring harmonies of South Africa's national anthem: all these sights and sounds made the opening ceremony of the sixth EI World Congress simply unforgettable.

"We cannot open this Congress in South Africa without remembering the enormous debt that we owe to President Nelson Mandela for what he has taught us all about the struggle for freedom and respect for human rights," said EI President, Susan Hopgood, to warm applause from 1,800 delegates and observers. "At a time when public education is under unprecedented attack, teacher unions' defence of every child's right to quality public education is ever more crucial," she said.

South Africa's Deputy President, Kgalema Motlanthe, began with a story about a young woman who was born in prison, in 1983, during apartheid, but had now a PhD



Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe calling Congress participants to take action for the future of education during his opening address.

candidate at the University of Cape Town. Sadly, such "incredible human triumph over heavy odds" remains impossible for "the majority of the world's people trapped in miserable socio-economic conditions," he said. Motlanthe went on to outline ways in

which his government has made education a national priority, including work with teachers' unions on a Quality Learning and Teaching campaign, and a strategic Framework for Teacher Education and Development.

Equal Education marches for investment in schools



Several hundred school children and members of the South African civil society organisation, Equal Education, marched to the doors of Cape Town's Congress centre to call on EI members from around the world to support their demand for increased investment in standards and school infrastructure.

The activists were met by EI's Vice President, Haldis Holst, and Deputy General Secretary, Jan Eastman, who pledged to support their campaign for good quality teaching and learning environments for all.

In a message of solidarity from the Congress, EI President, Susan Hopgood, stated: "School infrastructure has a major impact on teachers and students. These are crucial elements to achieving quality education for all."

The school children also demanded that participants at the EI World Congress should donate books to the Equal Education libraries project. All delegates are invited to visit the Equal Education stand in the Congress exhibition area.

Today's programme

09.00–12.30
Congress Plenary
Financial Report
Education Policy Paper

12.30–14.00
Lunch break

13.30–14.00
Presentation of VUE Project video:
Beyond Burma

14.00–18.00
Congress Plenary Amendments
to the Constitution and By-laws
Resolutions

17.45–18.00 Coaches leave from
CTICC (don't miss them!)

18.00–24.00 A Taste of the Cape

EI makes progress despite financial crisis

With four years between each Congress and a vast amount of work accomplished by EI worldwide, General Secretary, Fred van Leeuwen, faced a difficult task in crafting his progress report.

The global economic crisis, which has dominated the political agenda in many countries around the world, also dominated the report. "Together with the other Global Unions, we strongly advocated for a new global economic architecture based on decent work, social justice and sustainability," van Leeuwen said. In every international forum, EI has urged governments and financial institutions to invest in education, to make it part of the solution to the crisis, and not to make children pay the price for the greed and folly of a few.

Facing the "sledgehammer of the IMF" with its mantra of cut and privatise, EI and other global unions adopted a Charter and launched a campaign for Quality Public Services for All. The important work on Education for All continues: lobbying OECD countries to meet their funding commitments for the MDGs, supporting members suffering the consequences of hollow promises.



EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen reports on the many successes of Education International since last Congress.

Disturbingly, but not surprisingly, a steep increase in violation of teachers' human and trade union rights marks this period of crisis, van Leeuwen reported. EI has taken complaints forward to the ILO, the UN Human Rights Commission and other bodies about violations including threats, suspensions, fines, transfers, dismissals, arrest, detention violence and even murder.

Despite the risks, courageous teachers have helped to create fundamental change, for

example in the Arab Spring movement, where EI has been involved in supporting member organisations in Arab speaking countries. Elsewhere, EI has continued defending teachers from efforts to de-professionalise their work. Restrictions on professional autonomy; the casualisation of teaching; punitive evaluation models; the rapid rise of standardised testing, and the aggressive incursions of the 'education industry' all pose threats to authentic teaching and learning worldwide.

Local students want to record your story!

Throughout the world and history, rights and freedoms have advanced when brave men and women have chosen to take a stand.

'Civic Voices: An International Democracy Memory Bank Project' engages students in the process of preserving the first-hand accounts of change makers in their communities.

EI affiliates in eight countries have been collaborating to build a student-led oral history archive, and they would like to add your voice to the collection.

If you have a story to tell of involvement in the struggle for democracy, human and trade union rights, then please visit the Civic Voices booth in EI's exhibition area and be interviewed by a team of South African student historians.

Oral history methods allow students to make a personal connection with history and generate a lasting record for the benefit of future researchers and students.



By focusing on stories of civic engagement, the Civic Voices project hopes to inspire a new generation of active citizens and deepen their appreciation for the vital role that individuals can play in effecting social change.

Partners in the Civic Voices project are: AFT (USA); ESFTUG (Georgia); FECODE (Colombia); FMESU (Mongolia); NAPTOA

(South Africa); NASUWT (N. Ireland); PSLINK/BEST FED (Philippines); and Solidarnosc (Poland).

The project is funded by a grant from the USA Department of Education.

More information about the project can be found at www.civicvoices.org or the booth in the exhibition area.

News in brief

Election results

Delegates have elected a new team of leaders to carry EI through to the next World Congress. Susan Hopgood (President) and Fred van Leeuwen (General Secretary) were both re-elected, as were Vice-Presidents Irene Duncan-Adanusa (Africa), S. Eswaran (Asia-Pacific), Haldis Holst (Europe), and Juçara Dutra Vieira (Latin America). NEA (USA) President, Dennis Van Roekel, was newly elected as Vice President for the North America-Caribbean region.

ILO praises EI

International Labour Organisation Deputy Director General, Guy Ryder, delivered a spirited address to Congress in yesterday's first plenary. He emphasised the crucial role of education unions in key struggles to defend human and trade unions rights around the world, and reminded participants about the fight for core rights to organising and collective bargaining. Mr Ryder called on policy-makers to end the mistaken logic of recovery through austerity and warned of the betrayal of future generations if they were denied access to quality education or were burdened with enormous debt.

Greetings from UNESCO

UNESCO Director General, Irina Bokova, conveyed her greetings to Congress participants by video link. She reinforced her belief that EI is 'the world's most influential teacher organisation'. UNESCO Asst. Director-General for Education, Dr. Qian Tang, used his speech from the Congress platform to invite EI to further engage with UNESCO's policy developments and framework for education, teachers and teaching.

Delegate of the day

Ingrida Mikisko, Latvian Educational and Scientific Workers' Trade Union (LIZDA, Latvia)

What is the situation of Latvian teachers?

With the financial crisis, salary cuts of 20-40 per cent were imposed, and while salaries have not decreased any further, they have not been increased either, despite the cost of living going up. Latvia's shrinking population is also a concern. Last year we had 9,727 fewer pupils in our schools. This trend is set to continue and it is creating uncertainty about teaching work and salaries.



What is the union planning to do?

Later this year, Latvians will vote in elections for a new government and parliament, which could lead to education budget cuts in 2012. Therefore, in September, we will organise 'shadow days' where we invite national and local deputies to come to school and be teachers' shadows in order to see what it means to teach. After this we will ask them if they would still vote to cut teachers' salaries.

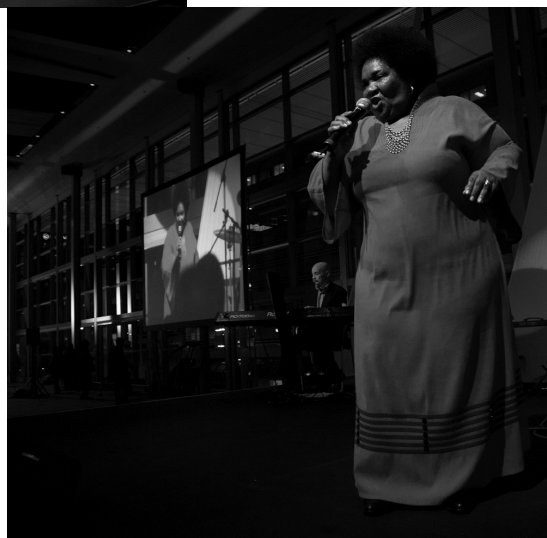
What constitutes quality education in Latvia?

Quality teachers, a quality working environment, and common work with pupils, parents and society for better results.

A warm welcome to Congress



EI's South African affiliates, NAPTOSA, SADTU and SAOU, who are hosting the World Congress in Cape Town, put on a colourful display of music and dancing for participants at last night's welcome evening at the Cape Town International Convention Centre.



Quiz of the day

1. El's 'Beyond Burma' VUE Project was filmed in the city of:
 - a. Mae Sot
 - b. Mae Ramat
 - c. Bangkok
2. Cape Town's working harbour is called:
 - a. Victoria and Alfred Waterfront
 - b. Elizabeth and Philip Waterfront
 - c. Kate and William Waterfront
3. El's study 'Equity Matters' was written by professors from which university?
 - a. Oxford
 - b. Norwich
 - c. Exeter

Yesterday's quiz answers:
1.a; 2.b; 3.b
Won by: Mary Bluett, Australia
Send your name and answers to: claud@ei-ie.org. The randomly chosen winning entry will receive a box of chocolates.

- a. Mae Sot
- b. Mae Ramat
- c. Bangkok

- a. Victoria and Alfred Waterfront
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Video of the Day

Beyond Burma: Lessons in hope for refugee children
10 min, EI VUE Project
(EI – NEA – Parachute Pictures)
Showing today, 12.30–14.00
Plenary Hall

This film tells the remarkable story of a school for Burmese refugees in the Thai border city of Mae Sot. Through joint work, teachers and students have found an educational pathway that helps to lead them away from war and repression, and enables them to work for a safer and more secure future in which they are empowered through education.




The poster for the film 'Beyond Burma' has a dark brown background. At the top, the title is written in white: 'Beyond Burma' followed by 'Au-delà de la Birmanie' and 'Más allá de Birmania'. Below the title is a small white bird icon. Underneath the bird, the subtitle is written in three lines: 'Lessons in hope for refugee children', 'Leçons d'espoir pour les enfants réfugiés', and 'Lecciones de esperanza para niños refugiados'. The central image is a photograph of a man with a mustache, wearing a white short-sleeved button-down shirt, standing in a classroom. He is gesturing with his hands as if speaking. In the background, other students and classroom furniture are visible. At the bottom left of the poster is a small circular logo with a stylized 'f' and the text 'Distributed by International Centre for Humanitarian Documentation & Education'.


(EI – NEA – Parachute Pictures)

Plenary Hall


Beyond Burma
Au-delà de la Birmanie
Más allá de Birmania




Lessons in hope for refugee children
Leçons d'espoir pour les enfants réfugiés
Lecciones de esperanza para niños refugiados



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 **Twitter**
@leconsdespoir

 **Instagram**
leconsdespoir

Campaign of the day

Teacher Well-Being Project
South African Democratic Teachers Union
(SADTU)

Health education should be at the heart of every school curricula. It deals with influencing or changing attitudes and behaviour with life skills. It is promoted by teachers' unions at national level, but also requires international support and initiatives.

The collaboration is supported by Western Cape University's TIP research institute and the Centre for Education Policy Development. It is focused on key activities that include: gathering and analysing data to complete a national study on teacher well-being; advocating for teacher well-being and HIV/AIDS through regular articles in SADTU's newsletter, the Educator's Voice, as well as through developing and distributing posters on teacher well-being, and the EI EFAIDS toolkit Leadership in the HIV and AIDS response to teachers and schools.

The toolkit provides information, tools and activities to help unions take action in each of the five main EFAIDS working



Photo: reporters.be

areas: training; policy development; advocacy; research, and publicity. It develops an engaging teaching approach that helps to make the right health-related choices, rather than focusing exclusively on preventing infection and disease. SADTU has used the resource to train more than 500 teachers and education conveners who have, in turn, rolled out the training to their own local structures.

Through the teacher well-being project, teacher unions have strengthened their role in policy dialogue on quality education and HIV and AIDS, as well as increasing their capacity to lobby governments to institutionalise HIV and AIDS training, and provide quality public education for all.

The EI EFAIDS toolkit Leadership in the HIV and AIDS response can be found here:

<http://go.ei-ie.org/efaidstoolkit>

Yemen

More than 20 teacher unionists have been killed during the recent pro-democracy revolution in Yemen. The teachers' union, YTS, continues to play a lead role in the pro-reform movement and needs your solidarity.

You can use this postcard in your campaign and advocacy work.

Contact EI by email for support : headoffice@ei-ie.org, and get in touch with your union..

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