



Education International 6th World Congress - Tuesday, 26 July 2011

World Congress Newsletter

Building the future through quality education

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EI awards outstanding teachers

EI has honoured two outstanding teachers during a formal awards ceremony. Pauline Ladouceur received the Albert Shanker Education Award while Gülçin Isbert was given the Mary Hatwood Futrell Human and Trade Union Rights Award in absentia.

Ladouceur, who is a member of the Fédération des Syndicats de l'Enseignement, which is affiliated to Centrale des Syndicats du Québec, has taught pupils with learning difficulties in disadvantaged communities for more than 25 years, as well as training teachers at the University of Quebec.

Accepting the award, Ladouceur said: "This is profoundly moving because the work of teachers working with special-needs students is seldom recognised. We teachers practice the very finest profession. Even if the results are not immediate, sooner or later, you discover that you have made a difference for many young people."

The Turkish primary school teacher, Isbert, who is a member of Eğitim Sen,



Pauline Ladouceur proudly holds her award

was recognised for her work to promote women's empowerment and the rights of ethnic minorities. She is among 31 trade unionists who have been on trial since November 2009 for allegedly belonging to an 'illegal' Kurdish organisation. The Turkish authorities have prevented Isbert from travelling to Cape Town to collect her

award so she addressed delegates through a pre-recorded video.

Isbert said: "I am a teacher, and I believe that education is a basic and universal human right that should be public, democratic, and available in the mother tongue for everyone. I thank EI for its continuing solidarity."

Peace, principles and courage to fight crisis together



Kumi Naidoo calls for social justice

In a rousing call to action, Kumi Naidoo, Executive Director of Greenpeace, told Congress participants to challenge the threat to education services "peacefully, principally and courageously."

Describing austerity measures being advocated by some governments as a "daily, silent tsunami" Naidoo argued that

such policies were a "perfect storm and turning point" for education trade unionists and social justice activists to renew and refocus shared strategies to overcome climate, financial, food, fuel and poverty crises that continue to devastate millions of people.

"We cannot allow business as usual, nor can we rely on the same strategies as the past. We must use this crisis to make clear what happens when we let profit come before people."

Arguing that this democratic crisis was an obstacle, Naidoo said: "We cannot allow those in power to use the financial crisis to launch a second wave to decimate our public services. Without educators delivering our public services, we cannot achieve the MDGs."

Today's programme

09.00–13.30 Congress Plenary

Resolutions

Appointment of Auditors and internal audit committee

Presentations to:

Distinguished Associates
Retiring Staff
Outgoing Executive Board members

Welcome new Officers and Executive Board members

Closing speech – EI President

Closing Ceremony

Congress adopts policies on education and union rights

With the adoption of a comprehensive education policy earlier in the week, delegates at EI's sixth World Congress have continued to debate resolutions from member organisations, to consolidate EI's commitment to building a strong teaching profession and quality education.

In order to tackle the challenge of recruiting and training highly qualified teachers, the resolution on the Future of the Teaching Profession emphasised the central role of teacher unions in dealings with governments to ensure evaluations enable the recruitment and retention of high calibre student teachers. The gender equality resolution re-affirmed EI's commitment to equality within schools, unions and society at large.

In the economic crisis resolution, EI members agreed to seek new means to fund education, to reject privatisation and those policies that demand education budget cuts to resolve public debt.

The resolution from members in EI's



Delegates vote to pass a resolution

Asia-Pacific region confirmed the global union's support for affiliates who have incurred damage from natural disasters on top of the burden from the financial crisis. Congress heard how, in many instances, from Japan to New Zealand to Haiti, educators were at the vanguard of protecting and re-establishing communities.

Promoting education includes rejecting practices that violate human rights. A resolution on South Korean teachers rejected their government's oppression of teachers that exercise civic rights. Teachers' rights were also upheld in the resolution on migrant teachers, which committed to providing education and rights to migrant teachers' families.

Magna Carta Human Rights Project

The Magna Carta Human Rights Project uses education to promote civil liberties, human rights and freedom for all. It is a joint venture between the British National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the USA's National Education Association (NEA).

The project was conceived by the late NUT General Secretary, Steve Sinnott, and former NEA President, Reg Weaver. It focuses on the Magna Carta of 1215 as a basis of freedom, fairness, justice and human rights. The Magna Carta established principles like habeas corpus and influenced the US Constitution. By introducing students to this historic document and what it means, it enables discussions about contemporary human and civil rights issues.

Through workshops teachers were encouraged to work together and follow up their work by engaging one another through email and phone calls as they try out teaching and learning strategies in their classrooms. The NEA and NUT also created a virtual discussion forum and Facebook page so that participants could stay connected.



Teachers meet to talk about human rights education and the Civil Rights Movement

In April 2008, 20 teachers from Britain and the US met at Stoke Rochford Hall, England, to develop a unit of study which focused on how concepts in the Magna Carta relate to issues today. They viewed one of the four remaining copies of the original 1215 Magna Carta manuscript, and debated citizenship education in a range of different countries. Participants then developed lesson plans from early childhood education to university level.

In October 2009, 19 teachers met in Washington, DC, to talk about human rights education and the Civil Rights Movement. They were led through discussions and activities in human rights-based approach to education, and jointly developed ideas for projects, lesson plans, and resources to aid their peers in Britain and the US to make human rights relevant to their students.

The project is continuing in 2011.

News in brief

Life-long service honoured

Bob Harris, a life-long member of the Australian Teachers' Union, has retired after a long and committed career in trade unions and education. He was chair of the Trade Union Advisory Committee for 17 years and Secretary General of the World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession. His efforts were instrumental to EI's formation for which he served as Executive Director and Senior Consultant.

AFT President leads on OECD policy

Randi Weingarten, President of the AFT (USA), is to lead EI members on a new OECD Advisory Committee that will bridge EI and OECD policy. Committee members will shape the international response to OECD policy as well as organising advocacy to inform governments on how to implement OECD recommendations while upholding the interest of teachers and public education.

Distinguished Associates

Congratulations to Barbara MacDonald (CTF, Canada); Lillemor Darinder (Nordic Teachers' Council); Paul Bennett (UCU, UK); Don Cameron (NEA, USA) and Jack DeMars (NEA, USA) who are being honoured with EI's distinguished associate status today for showing outstanding commitment to strengthening unions and being instrumental to EI's growth.

Delegate of the day

Antoinette Corr, Gambian Teachers Union (GTU, Gambia)

After 12 years as a school teacher in Banjul, Gambia, Antoinette became the first woman to be elected GTU's General Secretary.

What are the key problems for teachers in Gambia?

Low salaries, the use of unqualified and under-qualified teachers are all key challenges in Gambia, as is the lack of research data on teachers, despite only having a small population of 1.5 million people.

How is your union addressing these?

Firstly, we are negotiating with the Ministry of Education through formal committees where we are board members.

Secondly, we are organising training programmes for teachers on issues including developing materials, professional ethics and gender leadership.



Thirdly, we have released a Code of Conduct for teachers in Gambia which is a key publication for us, and we are also giving teachers insurance because many have no access to it due to their low incomes.

What projects are planned for the future?

I would like to develop counselling training for teachers within the Union as this is my specialisation. I believe it is a vital tool to achieve quality education and will benefit the entire community in Gambia.

Final words...

As this sixth EI World Congress draws to a close, I want to reflect on our achievement. We have considered the major issues that are affecting our members on the ground, in our organisations, and across the international education trade union movement, and we have set ourselves a clear path for the challenges that lie before us. It is clear to me that only through closer working, by building quality public education for all, can we achieve the goals we have set ourselves and governments.

This World Congress has equipped us with the tools we need to fight for our goals. The comprehensive Education Policy, and the unprecedented number of resolutions we have passed, all contribute to making Education International an organisation that is even more united, visible and credible.

As this intensive week closes, let me also say a heartfelt thank you to all that have made this Congress a fantastic experience: the South African education unions, who have given us such a warm welcome; the EI staff who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make everything work; the



El President, Susan Hopgood, thanks Congress

many volunteers and colleagues who have contributed to this event; the Executive Board for their leadership; and to you – our Congress participants – for your dedication and commitment.

Last, but not least, let me welcome the newly elected Executive Board members who will work on our behalf over the next four years to build the future of quality education. It will not be an easy task, but together, we will achieve it.

Susan Hopgood, EI President

Quiz of the day

1. EI sits on the Board of Directors for the EFA Fast Track Initiative, a global partnership dedicated to ensuring that all children receive what?
 - a. Quality basic education
 - b. Quality early childhood education
 - c. Quality primary education
2. Since EI co-founded the Global Campaign for Education in 1999, how many more children have been able to access school?
 - a. 25 million
 - b. 30 million
 - c. 40 million
3. Where will the next EI Congress in 2015 be held?
 - a. Asia Pacific
 - b. Europe
 - c. North America

Yesterday's quiz answers:

1.b; 2.a; 3.b

Winner: Muzikayise Mhalanga

Send your name and answers to: claudio@ei-ie.org. The randomly chosen winning entry will receive a box of chocolates.

Video of the Day

Green Schools Project in Burkina Faso
10 min. (EI – CSQ – NEA – SNEA-B)

This video documents the environmental education exchange between teachers from Quebec (Centrale des Syndicats du Quebec) and Burkina Faso (Syndicat National des Enseignants Africains du Burkina) which led to the setting up and growth of an important network of 'green schools' throughout Burkina Faso. As well as tackling issues about climate change and its impact on communities, the video also address issues such as young girls' right to education.



Photo: Luc Allaire, CSQ

Campaign of the day

Education Votes

National Education Association (USA)

Facing "crass, blatant, and ruthless" attacks on their collective bargaining rights, teachers across the United States are organising to fight back, according to John Stocks, incoming Executive Director of the NEA.

Beginning in Wisconsin, traditionally a labour-friendly state, a right-wing campaign of "cultural destruction" has swept through Ohio, Idaho, New Hampshire and beyond. But members of both the NEA and the American Federation of Teachers, along with other public sector workers and civil society groups are mounting vigorous resistance through massive demonstrations, a two-week peaceful occupation of the Capitol Building in Madison, and other actions.

The initial phase of the campaign "really opened my eyes to the power of social networking," Stocks said. For example, at a critical moment when state legislators were about to pass the devastating law, he asked a small number of young activists to put out an urgent call for action. "By the time the meeting ended, there were 15,000 people out on the streets. It was remarkable!"

Keenly aware that the assault is going to continue, NEA has developed 'Education Votes,' a multi-faceted campaign that combines a range of online elements with traditional door-to-door strategies. The union has also built a platform for iPads



Pro-union rally in Madison, Wisconsin. Photo by CindyH Photography

which enables its organisers to create walking routes to reach the greatest number of potential members.

There's also a petition called 'Standing Strong for Education' which pledges people to defeat efforts to undermine collective bargaining; to elect pro-public education candidates in 2012; and to ensure that education reform includes the voice of teachers.

There's a Facebook page called 'Speak Up for Education and Kids' which has already attracted almost 50,000 friends. Education Votes Twitter feeds, or "Tweets," ensure that followers have the latest news. A "Contact your legislators" page makes it easy for concerned citizens to lobby their elected representatives, and a "Resources" page offers a wealth of background information.

"We need an engagement strategy that is totally different," Stocks said. "It's about the survival of our union."

To learn more visit: www.educationvotes.nea.org and www.aft.org/election2012/electionsmatter.cfm

South Korea

EI seeks members' support to challenge the South Korean authorities' harassment of unionised teachers and attempts to incapacitate Chunkyojo (KTU) which sometimes criticises government policies.

EI will continue to work with its affiliates in South Korea to campaign against restrictions on public services workers' rights to organise and bargain collectively. You can use this postcard in your campaign and advocacy work.

Contact EI for support and get in touch with your union.

