



Education International 6th World Congress - Sunday, 24 July 2011

World Congress Newsletter

Building the future through quality education

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EI approves comprehensive education policy

EI members have taken the historic decision to agree to a comprehensive education policy that sets out the collective views of its 30-million-strong global membership on a wide range of education-related areas.

Before passing the paper, EI President Susan Hopgood laid out the policy proposal's strengths, saying: "It is coherent, it is closely argued, it is clearly evidenced and we believe it is at the cutting edge of education policy."

Addressing the most critical issues facing public education around the world, the policy is under-pinned by the belief that quality public education is essential for healthy communities and must therefore become a global priority for all governments.

Delegates deliberated the policy during Congress and firmly rejected the privatisation of learning because it leads to a race to the bottom, where limited



Delegates applaud as new EI Education Policy is passed.

resources are used to drive up profit margins instead of improving access to quality educational attainment and development. Standardised tests as a measurement of school performance are another symptom of privatisation and must be used sparingly, as reliance on test scores

to evaluate and compensate teachers is inaccurate and narrows the scope of what students are taught. Instead, the policy suggests that to strengthen performance, it is essential to invest in more professional development and training.

Dream of EFA threatened by funding gap



Carol Bellamy speaking to Congress

Despite overwhelming obstacles, amazing progress has been made towards universal access to education. In 2000, more than 100 million children were out of school; today it is 30 million.

"Teachers hold the future of their countries in their hands, and the world's teachers have risen to the task," said Dr. Carol

Bellamy, Chairperson of the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) to achieve Education for All (EFA). However, the EFA target is still "way beyond our reach."

Working in 45 of the world's poorest countries, the FTI is seeing good results. However, international aid has been static since 2007 and the funding gap is now US\$16bn annually. The FTI is seeking a "replenishment pledging" of an additional US\$2bn – an ambitious goal.

The FTI is also working to alleviate the shortage of 1.9 million more teachers. Recruitment is difficult when future teachers know they will face poorly equipped, overcrowded classrooms with no support and paltry wages. "Teachers are expected to perform miracles without training or resources," Bellamy said.

Today's programme

09.00–11.00 Breakout Sessions

11.00–11.30 Break

11.30–13.30 Breakout Sessions

13.30–14.30 Lunch break

14.30–15.45 Vocational Education and Training Forum

14.30–15.45 Teacher Migration Forum

14.30–15.45 Privatisation of Public Schools

16.00–18.30 Commonwealth Teachers' Group

16.00–18.15 CSFEF Group

Quiz of the day

1. According to UN how many Indigenous Peoples are there in the world?

- a. 280 million b. 300 million
- c. 370 million

2. The 1958 ILO Convention to protect LGBT people has been ratified by how many ILO member states?

- a. 169 out of 183
- b. 171 out of 183
- c. 173 out of 183

3. Women are a majority of teacher union members, but what is the global average of women teachers?

- a. 60 per cent b. 65 per cent
- c. 70 per cent

Yesterday's quiz answers:

1. a; 2. a; 3. c

Winner: Samidha Garg, UK

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

Video of the Day

THEMBA! A Boy Called Hope

1h41. Lutz van Dijk (GEW).

www.thembathemovie.com

Themba: A boy called Hope is a film that takes you to the heart of South Africa's social and political challenges. Themba is based on a novel by Lutz van Dijk, who runs a children's centre in a Cape Town township community. The centre is supported by EI's German affiliate, the GEW. Cinema for Peace gave Themba its Honorary Award

2011 as a film which makes an outstanding commitment to peace building and human rights.



Campaign of the day

'Amai-vos Uns Aos Outros: Basta de Homofobia!' (Love each other: Out with homophobia!)

Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores em Educação (CNTE, Brazil)

In 2009, the CNTE union created a diversity group linked to the human and trade union rights secretariat, with the objective of including the issue of rights for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender groups within a broad trade union working remit. By giving LGBT communities greater visibility, it was intended to secure more influence on public education policies.

It was against this background that the campaign against homophobia was developed, operating on various fronts at both regional and national level:

- Organisation of training seminars for teachers in 13 provinces of Brazil. At these seminars, ideas and guidance were shared on how to work in schools around LGBT issues and the role of trade unions was analysed. Further sessions are planned in 2011 for which 600 teachers have already registered.

- Distribution of campaign materials such as leaflets, posters and news bulletins in each province.

- Participation in a second conference on LGBT rights in Brasilia in late 2011 and in events across Brazil.



A slide from the campaign's presentation

At national level, pressure has been applied on the Brazilian Parliament to pass a bill criminalising homophobia. Around this, the CNTE lobbied the Government's National Council for the Defence of LGBT rights.

Since 2007 EI's Latin American Region has been debating among its affiliates about LGBT rights, in order to achieve union policies to defend LGBT rights. Unions must be aware that they represent workers of differing sexual orientations, and schools should be safe and protective of all staff and students, regardless of their identity. Therefore, education unions must do a work on sensitising, training and building proposals to defend LGBT rights and achieve an inclusive education.

Colombia

The violation of the right to life remains an all too common form of political violence in Colombia.

Within the trade union movement, teachers represent the highest proportion of its victims. EI and FECODE have documented 52 teacher unionists who have been killed over the last 30 months.

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

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



Growing inequities reveal failure of neo-liberal model

“Globalisation is not working for working people,” said Sharan Burrow who is General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation. Shockingly, the gap between the wealthiest two billion people on the planet and the poorest two billion has increased by 60 per cent in the last seven years.

“But it is not wealth alone that denotes the failure of the current economic model. Unemployment is the highest on record with some 205 million people officially without jobs,” Burrow said.

In the face of this bleak situation, the ITUC’s priorities, therefore, are jobs, decent work and organising: “In short, power for workers.” Burrow – a former Vice President of EI – congratulated the AFT and the NEA “for their fighting stand in Wisconsin and the other 18 or so states where the fight is on,” she said. “You will win, you must win.” However, the greatest inspiration comes from the courage of trade unionists and civil society activists in the Arab-speaking world, she said.



ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow addresses Congress

“To watch live revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt and to now be able to actively support their quest for the dignity of democracy and the rights to free and independent trade unions is a privilege, but it is very fragile,” Burrow cautioned.

On top of it all, there’s the greatest threat of all: climate change. “This is union business. There are no jobs on a dead planet!” But while it is a risk, climate change is also an opportunity to increase employment

through green jobs.

Sharan Burrow will be speaking in breakout session 3: Stronger Together - building better unions from 09:00-11:00. The session will focus on ways for teacher unions to organise, recruit, negotiate, advocate and campaign to increase the representativeness of the teaching profession, as well as becoming more visible and effective participants in social dialogue.

EI Congress condemns attack on Norwegian youth camp

Congress participants held a one-minute’s silence yesterday morning in memory of the 92 people who died when a gunman opened fire at an island youth camp in Norway, just hours after a deadly bombing in the capital, Oslo.

A murder suspect, who was dressed as a police officer, was arrested after an hour-long shooting spree of children.

Norway’s Prime Minister, Jens Stoltenberg, whose offices were among those badly hit by the blast, described the attacks as a national tragedy. “The attacks were like a nightmare.”

The minute’s silence was observed by participants in memory of all teachers, education workers, and students who have been killed in attacks in or around educational centres.

General Secretary, Fred van Leeuwen, said: “Congress expresses its deepest sympathy and solidarity with the people of Norway, with the families of the victims



Smoke pours from a building in the center of Oslo, Friday July 22, 2011

and with all those affected by these terrible events. . . Educators condemn these acts of extremism.”

EI Vice-President, Haldis Holst, from the Education Union of Norway (UEN), condemned the murder of so many potential leaders: “These were young activists, our students, training to become

leaders of the future. It is an enormous loss.”

UEN President, Mimi Bjerkestrand, said: “On behalf of the Norwegian delegation, I express our deepest gratitude for the sympathy and solidarity we have felt from all of you after the shocking events in our otherwise peaceful country.”

News in brief

Constitution and By-laws amended

Congress has adopted a number of amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws of EI. These will facilitate a greater number of speakers contributing to plenary debates by limiting the time allocated for contributions at Congress, while removing the need for accredited delegates who are seconding resolutions to speak from the rostrum. The agreed proposals also allow for sub- and cross-regional working to take place.

Today’s breakout sessions

Participants are invited to join in the eight breakout sessions, about different education and trade union issues, which take place today. In each session a mixed panel of EI members and external speakers will share their experiences and observations to stimulate debate about better unions, inclusive education, economic crisis, and quality education, before arriving at practical proposals for action. Breakout sessions will take place from 9:00-11:00 and then from 11:30-13:30.

Exhibitions

The EI Congress exhibition area is located directly opposite the Congress plenary room and is open from 09:00 until 17:00 daily. Do not forget to visit it and see the work that is being done by EI, member affiliates, partner organisations ranging from UNESCO to civil society organisations such as Edu-Pac, Equal Education, and Art for AIDS!

Delegate of the day

Mohammad Khakshari

Coordination Council of Iranian Teacher Trade Associations (CCITTA), Iran

This is your second EI Congress. How has the experience impacted on your union?

The World Congress has informed EI members about the ITTA and enabled us to get familiar with EI policies on quality education and promote them on our weblogs. However, our involvement is also problematic. Before my trip, Iranian Security Forces warned me not to go attend Congress as it was ‘conducted by our enemies’. I asked them for evidence, but they had no response. I left Tehran with colleagues and a representative of the German Consulate escorting me to the airplane.

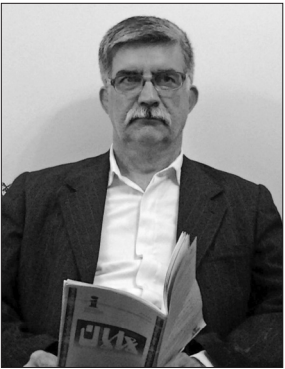
What is the reality for teacher unionists in Iran?

After the 2007 protests in Tehran, about 80 per cent of teacher unionists were detained, dismissed, sent into exile, or forced into early retirement. The media was banned from reporting on teachers’

protests and teachers cannot report to international media. Esmail Abdi, a teacher in Eslamshar, was recently sentenced to 10 years prison for being interviewed by Voice of America. The main problem we face is being prevented from holding meetings. Teachers’ legal right to organise and act has been suppressed.

What difference can international solidarity make?

EI’s Congress is a great occasion for teachers to exchange knowledge and experiences. Issues such as quality education, teachers’ skills, trade union capacity building and the impact of privatisation help to promote quality education around the world. International solidarity makes our trade unions stronger.



A Taste of the Cape

EI’s North American and European affiliates joined together to invite all Congress participants to a social evening extravaganza last night at the Ratanga Junction. Participants got into the party mood with good food and company, all enlivened by local entertainment which included the Cape Town Minstrels who welcomed guests before the opening act, CODA, set the crowd alight with their energetic performance. They were followed by the Gugulethu Tenors and 3 Tons of Fun. Guests then danced the night away in front of the stage, as well as purchasing handicrafts made by local people.

