



December 18, 2015

## **EI calls for respect of migrants and refugees' rights**

Education International  
Internationale de l'Éducation  
Internacional de la Educación  
Bildungsinternationale

International Migrants' Day is an occasion to remind governments, the international community and other stakeholders to ensure that the rights of migrants, refugees and displaced persons are respected and guaranteed in both policy and practice.

Refugees and migrants are forced to leave their home countries because of war, political violence, economic instability, environmental disasters and other unbearable conditions. In their journeys, migrants and refugees – individuals; families; unaccompanied children - are too often targeted by smugglers and campaigns based on hate, racism, xenophobia or religious hatred.

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We are alarmed by the deteriorating and degrading treatment of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in some detention centres, forced deportations and the denial of essential services, including education, which undermine basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. EI stresses the need for governments and the international community to address the root causes of migration and displacement such as conflict, economic imbalances and climate change. We remind governments and politicians, particularly in transit and destination countries, to respect international human rights law and to refrain from using xenophobic and racist rhetoric when talking about migrants and refugees.

### **President**

Susan Hopgood

Over ninety percent of the world's 232 million migrants leave their home countries in search of work. The lives of migrant workers, including migrant teachers and other educators, are often constant struggles for respect and human dignity. They are subject to serial rights violations, from recruitment agencies, to local agents, to government agencies, to employers, to local citizens. This chain of oppression often places migrant women, who make up nearly fifty per cent of international migrants, in particularly cruel and humiliating circumstances.

### **General Secretary**

Fred van Leeuwen

However, even in countries that, on paper, respect human rights, including trade union rights, migrants are often concentrated in precarious work. The qualifications of migrant and refugee teachers and other educators are often not recognised, thus resulting in serious 'brain waste', personal and family hardship.

Over the years, EI and its member organisations have been defending and promoting the rights of migrant and refugee teachers, education support personnel and children. Some of these efforts are highlighted on the [migrant teachers' portal](#).

On International Migrants' Day, we reiterate our call on Governments to:

- Recognise the human rights and contributions of migrants, migrant and refugee teachers and education support personnel to all forms of development (social, economic, cultural...);
- Ensure decent work for all workers and equal treatment of migrant teachers, refugee teachers and education support personnel, including equal working conditions and access to social protection;
- Recognise the qualifications of migrant and refugee teachers and education support personnel;
- Take concrete actions to counter racism and xenophobia in their countries, political bodies and public statements;
- Ratify and implement the International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions 97 and 143 and the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and all other human rights conventions, including the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); and
- Take concrete and immediate measures to ensure free quality public education to all migrant and refugee children.

All communications should be addressed to the General Secretary – Toute correspondance doit être adressée au Secrétaire général

Toda la correspondencia debe dirigirse al Secretario General – Der gesamte Briefwechsel ist an den Generalsekretär zu richten