



EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL AND THE INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT ON THE TEACHING PROFESSION



Education International
Internationale de l'Éducation
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EI DECLARATION ON PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

In 2001, EI's third World Congress in Jomtien, Thailand, adopted a Declaration on Professional Ethics. This was updated at EI's fourth World Congress in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2004.

The declaration is a blueprint for EI affiliate members' own guidelines and complements the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998), and draws on UNESCO's Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966), and the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

The declaration aims to:

- raise consciousness about the norms and ethics of the teaching profession;
- help increase job satisfaction in education; to enhance status and self-esteem, and;
- increase respect for the profession in communities.

You can access and download the full EI Declaration on Professional Ethics at: <http://www.ei-ie.org/ethics/>

EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL AND THE INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT ON THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Education International (EI) believes the opportunity represented by the Summit is unique. It has the capacity to create a global forum in which governments, teacher unions and international global organisations including EI and OECD can meet on the basis of shared interest and partnership to discuss how the confidence, learning and status of the teaching profession can be enhanced. As the global body for all unions representing teachers and education workers, EI and its affiliates believe profoundly that the future of all children and young people depends on highly qualified and motivated teachers.

In order that the voice of the teaching profession globally can be heard in the international arena EI engages actively and constructively with all major international organisations including the OECD, UNESCO, the International Labour Organisation and the World Bank. In an increasingly globalised world where educational policies and ideas travel ever more freely, EI believes that such engagement and social dialogue is crucial for the future development of the teaching profession.

The four themes of the Summit are vital to the education of children and young people and to the future of the teaching profession. There is much in the OECD background paper, 'Building a High Quality Teaching Profession', that EI agrees with and it welcomes the fact that OECD has been proactive in taking on board the comments of all Summit partners before publishing the final version. In this context there is little point in repeating the evidence and propositions in the paper. EI's comments, below, therefore consist of additional comments and the occasional alternative perspective.

HOW TEACHERS ARE RECRUITED INTO THE PROFESSION AND TRAINED INITIALLY

The overall picture of teacher recruitment is mixed. There are real and potential teacher and school leadership shortages in some countries. In others there are too many applicants chasing too few posts. There are also attempts by some jurisdictions to replace qualified teachers with under qualified staff and to buy in ready-made computer based applications and programmes as substitutes for teachers. Against this uncertain background OECD is right to emphasise that teacher quality must be maintained.

However, this goal cannot be achieved through a 'one-size-fits-all' formula. As the background paper says, the idea that the 'best performing education systems all recruit their teachers from the top third of graduates... is not supported by the evidence.' EI believes that it is high quality initial teacher training and continuing professional development which are crucial to successful education systems. Such provision must be seen as part of the same continuum. Continuing professional development and learning should be seen as a career long entitlement for all teachers starting with high quality initial training. Indeed such a continuum should be an essential part of what makes teaching as a profession attractive. The motivation to make a positive difference to the lives of young people plus enthusiasm both for teaching and the content of what is taught are the bedrock of a high quality profession. Teacher learning and student learning build on that bedrock and are inextricably linked. High quality teacher learning must start with the achievement of qualifications from higher education institutions or their equivalent.

There is every argument for establishing flexible routes into teacher training. Flexibility must not, however, lead to short cuts at the expense of high quality mentoring and coaching.

The supply of teachers depends not only the number of teaching posts but also on the attractiveness of those posts to all people thinking of entering the profession. The OECD background paper rightly emphasises innovative approaches to recruitment but it is vital that such approaches also recognise that some groups are under-represented in the profession -including those who are in minority ethnic groups in their home countries, those with disabilities and mature entrants. In some countries there is also a gender imbalance amongst teachers. The issue is not whether there may be a large majority of women teachers or indeed a large majority of male teachers but whether wider government or employer policies are inhibiting the establishment of the biggest possible pool of high quality potential entrants.

Governments must focus on providing working conditions which support teaching and teachers including small class sizes, career paths, more opportunities for professional growth and development, salaries which are comparable to those in other professions and high quality induction programmes. This is especially critical in the context of globalisation which is opening up new employment opportunities for young people, often with higher financial compensation than is available through a career in teaching.

HOW TEACHERS ARE DEVELOPED IN-SERVICE AND SUPPORTED, A CRUCIAL ASPECT OF CREATING AN ADAPTIVE WORKFORCE CAPABLE OF RESPONDING TO NEW CHALLENGES

OECD's 'Teaching and Learning International Study' (TALIS), 'Teachers Matter' and the 'Programme for International Student Assessment' (PISA) are important contributions to the development of teacher quality. However EI believes that teacher policy must change fundamentally both in terms of ambition and engagement with teachers themselves if high quality education is to be sustained in all countries. The background paper rightly emphasises that conditions of employment must include professional development. Indeed EI believes a further step needs to be taken by governments and employers. As researchers in New Zealand (e.g. Timperley, 2009), have consistently emphasised in their work on teachers' professional learning, of all initiatives a focus on high quality teacher learning and development has the greatest transformational potential. EI believes that high quality professional development owned by teachers and properly funded as an entitlement for all teachers is vital for the future of the teaching profession globally. Yet the first default position for many governments is to cut teacher professional development when the financial going gets tough.

EI is convinced that every government must develop a coherent and consistently funded strategy for the teaching profession in partnership with the profession itself. Knowledge about the most effective forms of professional learning, including collaborative professional development must be built into such strategies. OECD's TALIS points to further components of an effective strategy which the background paper refers to implicitly. It is the professional, not the supervisor, who has the knowledge needed to make the important decisions and that, too often, teachers have not been able to buy into externally imposed reforms. It is therefore essential that, as TALIS suggests, strategies for the teaching profession emphasise the importance of creating the conditions for enhancing and improving teacher self-efficacy, e.g. teachers' confidence and knowledge that they can make a difference. As part of this approach EI has, itself, commissioned research on developing a policy framework for teacher leadership; an essential component of enhancing teacher efficacy.

A major resolution on the Future of the Teaching Profession will be debated at EI's Congress in Cape Town this July.

HOW TEACHERS ARE EVALUATED AND COMPENSATED

When its focus is on supporting and developing teachers, appraisal has the capacity, as TALIS says, to increase, 'job satisfaction and, to some degree, their job security, and... [to] significantly increase their development as teachers.' Appraisal can become problematic and lead to unforeseen consequences when it adopts the multiple roles of evaluating teachers' development needs, accountability and providing the basis for individual financial incentives. The essence of appraisal should be trust-trust between the teacher who is being appraised and their reviewer. The purpose of creating a climate of trust should be to enable the teacher being appraised to be honest, not only about their strengths as a teacher but also those about the areas of their work which need strengthening and developing. Where potential compensation or merit pay is based on appraisal outcomes or appraisal is likely to lead to accusations of incompetence, it then becomes high stakes. The pressure on teachers is then to adapt to the performance objectives which have been set and to conceal any anxieties about aspects of their work.

EI believes that all teachers are entitled to appraisal and feedback which leads to positive advice and high quality professional development. Above all, if appraisal is to be owned and not feared by teachers, appraisal schemes should be subject to full consultation and negotiation with teachers and their unions.

As the background paper notes, 'career advancement opportunities, salaries, and working conditions are important for attracting, developing and retaining skilled and high-quality teachers and are intertwined.' EI welcomes the tacit acknowledgement in the background paper that low pay and poor working conditions contribute to teacher shortages and low morale. It also notes that a number of countries have schemes which reward additional skills such as those acquired through professional development. Such schemes are relatively uncontroversial.

However, the background paper's acknowledgement that, 'developing a closer relationship between teacher performance and compensation has proved difficult' is an under-statement. Although, as the background paper argues, achieving fair and transparent procedures should be axiomatic for any scheme, in fact there is no evidence that individual performance pay or compensation based on appraisal raises standards. Indeed the OECD's 'Evaluating and Rewarding the Quality of Teachers – International Practices' (OECD, 2009) contains no such evidence and indeed includes the following telling paragraph: 'at the very least, we know that performance measures, particularly those which focus on individual teachers, are likely to be noisy and will necessarily only reflect the material covered by test assessments.' (p140)

EI believes that incentives such as fair and transparent additional compensation for additional responsibilities; career structures which provide a continuum of opportunities; opportunities to innovate and be creative and the career long availability of high quality professional development are examples which support high standards.

HOW TEACHERS ARE ENGAGED IN REFORM

Successful education reform cannot be achieved without the involvement and consent of teachers, education workers and their school communities. EI welcomes the chapter in the background paper on teacher engagement in education reform. Reforms must factor in the engagement and capacity of the teaching profession. There is evidence that such a process did not take place in one of the most notable and recent education reform programmes undertaken by the UK Westminster Government from 1997-2002. Senior officials are on record admitting that there was 'no understanding in the wider government of the demands of teaching', and that teacher morale was never 'talked about explicitly or attended to... we didn't talk about morale or the quality of the local authority, we just kept our eyes on those [target] numbers.' ('Reinventing Schools, Reforming Teaching', Bangs, Galton and MacBeath, 2010)

This example is not unique. Unfortunately, many potentially effective reforms have been undermined by the failure of reforming governments to work with teachers and their unions.

As Professor Ben Levin of the University of Toronto posted in a recent blog: 'A lot of education rhetoric these days includes mention of the supposedly negative impact of teacher unions on reform. For a few commentators, eliminating union opposition is one of the most essential, or even the single most important component in creating improvement, while for many others it is part of the package. But here's an interesting observation. Virtually all the top performing countries on international education measures have strong teacher unions, including Finland, Korea, Japan, Canada, Australia and others. Of course, such a relationship does not imply causation but it does suggest that there is no necessary conflict between strong teacher unions and good outcomes. Moreover, some countries or sub national units that took steps to weaken the influence of their unions did not demonstrate any subsequent improvements and, in some cases, such as England, later had to take many measures to improve the situation of teachers to get an adequate supply and thus, improve student results.' (Levin, 2010)

His colleague, Professor Nina Bascia, who has studied the relationship of teacher unions to governments for many years, concludes that: 'teacher unions are nearly the only organisations that have paid substantive attention to the actual conditions of teachers' work... [but]... because they are rarely invited to the table to discuss substantive policy issues with education decision makers, teachers' organisations can only react after the fact to decisions that have already been made.' (Bascia, 2009)

EI believes that social dialogue between teacher unions and governments and employers is essential both on the working and professional conditions of teachers and on education reform. The Summit has a very real opportunity to further productive dialogue between teachers and their governments which will lead to future reforms being based on consensus rather than imposition.



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As the global union federation representing 30 million education personnel across 396 nationally affiliated unions in 171 countries around the world, Education International is proud to acknowledge the contribution of teachers and their unions to deliver high quality publically funded education for all from early childhood to higher education.



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