



UNITE FOR QUALITY EDUCATION
Better education for a better world

STUDENTS



BEFORE PROFIT



Global response to commercialisation of education

The continuing push for the commercialisation and privatisation of education is the greatest threat to high quality education for all. The market now seems to dominate all aspects of life with boundaries between public and private breaking down. Education, which once appeared to be one area that may have been immune from this agenda, is now under considerable threat.

Despite all the evidence, most notably from the OECD, showing that the application of market principles to the provision of education has a negative impact on student outcomes by deepening segregation and inequality, many governments remain steadfast in their attempts to dismantle public education.

We are already seeing the effects of this agenda with the break-up of traditional school systems. Worse still, we are seeing the emergence and spread of privately, corporate owned, and in many instances, for-profit schools, colleges and universities. This is compromising the public governance of education. It is giving more and more prominence to education as a commodity, a private, positional good as opposed to a public, societal good; it is undermining social cohesion and democracy.

The continuing growth of edu-businesses, the size and reach of which had not been foreseen, requires a specific direct response. But equally, the failure of elected officials to fulfil their primary obligation to current and future generations of students, by adequately funding and resourcing a public education system of the highest quality, requires renewed and determined action.

It is against this backdrop that we call on all governments to implement a legislative framework and action to protect students, teachers and quality education for all.

These documents provide a guide for EI's Member Organisations to assist with the development of campaigns and advocacy in the face of a growing commercialisation and privatisation in and of education.



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A Legislative Framework

Public education, free, universally accessible in every community, setting the standard for high quality education, remains a precondition for achieving *quality education for all and a better world*.

It is against this backdrop that we call on all governments to implement and enforce a legislative framework to ensure the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal 4, “*inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*”.

Beyond a legislative guarantee to fulfil their primary obligation to adequately fund and resource public education, governments must:

- protect and promote the principle of access and equity for all students through the provision of public education which must set the standards for high quality education;
- recognise the professional judgement of teachers and educators on matters of methodology, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and reporting, and accordingly respect their professional institutions, including unions;
- legislate against for-profit non-state actors particularly when they are in receipt, directly or indirectly, domestically or extraterritorially, of government funding intended for the educational well-being of students.

In the interest of transparency and accountability, where non-state actors provide schooling they would be required to:

- adhere to strict financial requirements, including independent auditing and regulations to monitor how government funds are spent;
- demonstrate that transactions made by a non-state operator for goods and services are directly required for delivery of education and are at reasonable market value.

A non-state actor found to be operating for-profit will be required to repay all government funding.



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To ensure the right of all students to quality education, for the purpose of registration the following minimum requirements must be met.

Quality Teaching – every student has the right to be taught by qualified teachers.

All teaching staff must have necessary experience and professional, recognised qualifications that comply with national standards.

Quality Curriculum – every student has the right to be taught an engaging and inclusive curriculum.

The curriculum must comply with national requirements and standards.

Quality Environment – every student has the right to be taught in a safe environment.

Educational premises and facilities must comply with relevant government requirements that are adequate for the courses of study.

Evidence of compliance must be maintained at all times.

Responsible Corporate Engagement in Education

The recent expansion of the global market economy has seen an unprecedented rise of corporate/private engagement and investment in education. Educators are concerned about a growing inequality and the denial of universal opportunity as a consequence of this trend.

For their long-term wellbeing children are encouraged or compelled (by law) to attend school. The reciprocal obligation for those who provide services and legislators is to shelter and protect those same children during the years and processes of their schooling.

Where corporations, foundations or any other non-state actors are engaged in the provision of schooling or other educational services, governments must ensure that they:

1. Respect the universal project of providing higher educational standards for all students informed by the principle of access and opportunity, necessary for the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4, “inclusive and equitable quality education...for all”;
2. Respect that the quest for higher educational standards commences with the recognition of qualified teachers as the leading agents in the development and delivery of life opportunity through a quality curriculum;
3. Respect and heed the professional judgement of teachers and educators on matters of methodology, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and reporting, and accordingly respect their professional institutions, including unions;
4. Respect, recognise and celebrate the value of pluralism -- in the student body, in pedagogy, in methodology, assessment and reporting, and in the broad curriculum;
5. Respect and protect the privacy of students, their performance data and the privacy and dignity of school communities;
6. Respect that schools are places of learning. Accordingly, they are not to be used as a marketplace for commercial self-interest including the monetizing of student data. Students must be separated from commercial activity in order to focus on their work as young people and learners;
7. Respect the importance of safe, suitable facilities and learning environments, conducive to quality teaching and learning;
8. Respect the role of public education and therefore eschew partisan ideological interventions including the favouring of private provision in schooling.