



Early-Stage Teachers

Report of the Web-Mapping Exercise 2012

Scope

This report supplements the table laid out in the Annex which gives an overview of the results of the web mapping exercise.

The web mapping exercise was done within the span of two months in early 2012. EI staff went through all the websites of member organisations in an attempt to map out:

- Union's definition of "early-stage teachers";
- Union policy with regard to answering the specific needs of this group, so as to increase retention rate of early-stage teaching professionals;
- Union strategies to attract this group into their membership, so as to ensure the continuity of teacher unionism within the profession;
- Union policies that seek to include the meaningful involvement of this group in all decision-making processes, so as to groom young union leaders.

Aim

The aim of the exercise is to get an idea how much EI member organisations are doing to increase the retention rate of new teachers and what they are doing to ensure the continuity of teacher unionism among the new generation of teachers.

This exercise forms the basis of this short report, which will be sent out to member organisations for verification. With the refinement of the information gathered from member unions, EI will then have a set of foundation to prepare for its first *Conference on Early-stage Teachers*, which will take place in the course of 2013. The Conference will be the start of EI's efforts to create a space for member organisations to exchange information, experiences and ideas about organizing early-stage teachers, and also find solutions to common challenges surrounding the issue. The Conference will also tie in with the work of the other Global Unions on youth employment and young union leaders.

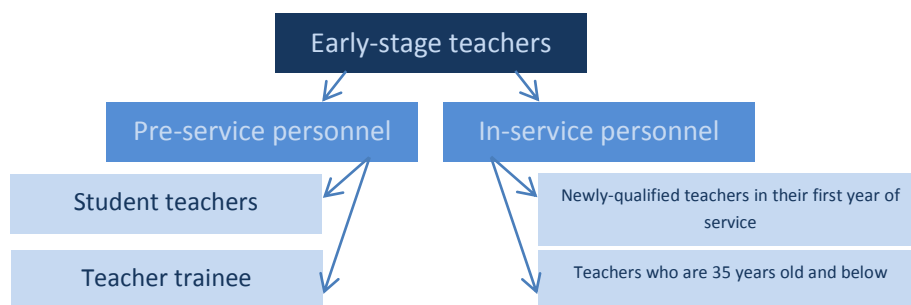
EI's definition

As specified in the Resolution on Early-stage Teachers and Researchers passed in the 6th World Congress in Cape Town in July 2011, Education International defines "early-stage teachers" (EST) as newly-qualified teachers who have completed their required pre-service training and are in their first few years of service.

Observations

Different definitions in different countries and regions

As expected, the idea and definition of “early-stage teachers” (EST) differ significantly from country to country. The table below shows that EI member organisations apply the term to two major sub-categories: “pre-service personnel” who may or may not have completed their teacher education, and “in-service personnel” who have completed their teacher education and any traineeship requirements and are in their first year of service.



Membership status

Some unions such as CAUT (Canada) and NZPPTA (New Zealand) offer associate membership for pre-service personnel. Others such as NUT (UK) and NAUSWT (UK) have special student membership for student teachers.

All in-service early-stage teachers have the right to full union membership in all unions.

Union structure

Some unions such as FSLI (Romania) set up special groupings for early-stage teachers, like they do for women teachers, so as to allow them to participate meaningfully in all important union decision-making processes.

Unions that organize more than education workers set up Youth sections, which include other young workers and student members, such as FLESL and LDF of Lithuania.

Union support

The web-mapping uncovered various ways in which EI member organisations offer support to early-stage teachers. Some examples are given below:

- Initiation guide
- Periodicals such as magazines and bulletins
- Social activities and training courses
- Online networking: website, blog, Facebook page and other social networks
- Helpline
- Mentorship programmes
- Assistance in job search

Use of social media

The use of social media in organizing this group is particularly notable. Unions such as Lärärförbundet (Sweden), UTU (UK) and EIS (UK) create Facebook groups for their ESTs. This is likely because ESTs are more adept at the use of social media and use it in their private lives via mobile devices. The AFT (USA) has even created its own social network site on Ning for their ESTs.

Note on federal unions

Federal unions that organize state-level, provincial-level or regional level member unions tend not to have a consolidated set of policies or strategies regarding the organisation of early-stage teachers. This is because such activities have to be highly localized and teacher policies might differ among regions. There are however federal unions such as NEA (USA) and AFT (USA) that offer advice to member unions and, by organizing national-level activities for early-stage teachers, encourage member unions to be more active in this area.

Note on Early-stage researchers and Early-stage academics

Higher education unions face another set of challenges. Depending on the country's labour law, doctoral students who are working as research or teaching assistants can be affiliated to student unions, teacher unions or either. The terms of conditions under which many of these students are working may not conform to labour rules if their status is ambiguous. Even when it is clear that these students are legally employees and should therefore be protected from precarious work, the students themselves are reluctant to come forth with their problems for fear of jeopardizing their studies or prospective employment opportunities with the higher education institution concerned. For this, DM (Denmark) has a student board comprising only of doctoral students and the body sets the union's Student Policy.

Next Steps

The web mapping exercise terminated on 29 February 2012. It will serve as the basis for further consultation with EI member organisations after which a more substantial report can be produced.

- End of report -

