

The Main Challenges Facing Teachers

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Friends, colleagues

Firstly thanks to Camilla, Owain and Sherry at GCE and especially Caroline. Thanks to those who have spoken before me - it is clear that we all have a joint message here today.

I'd like to talk about the need for this campaign by laying out a few paradoxes that are floating around the EFA ether at the moment.

Paradox 1. The Issue of Purpose

The big civic purpose of our profession, as we have known it and refined it has been to help prepare students to make sense of, participate in and construct a world based on a set of core principles and rights - peace, democracy, creativity, solidarity, inclusion, a commitment to a sustainable environment, and international and intercultural understanding.

Yet the current debate on what teaching is about often narrows it to neat measurable outcomes that are generally limited to what's measurable through pencil and paper tests and teachers are held accountable for the results.

Schools are thus forced to narrow the curriculum in order to meet the demands of these standardised assessments, while teachers are forced to "teach to the test" in order to prove their "effectiveness".

Hence the individuals who joined teaching to make a difference in kids' lives and build participatory learning communities are leaving the profession in droves because it has been reverted back to a service delivery industry based on control, sanctions and compliance.

Never mind that the economy of the 21st century requires creative, critical and collaborative thinkers who can solve problems effectively.

Paradox 2. The Issue of Importance

Current policy discourse suggests that teachers are important. We agree.

So important, they say, that special attention must be given to recruiting the best and the brightest into the schools that need them most. Well, maybe some differences of opinion in criteria, but in principle we absolutely agree.

So very very important that we should not worry about preparing them well as teachers or worry about them staying and building a school community or let them organize and speak with a unified voice...but rather make it super easy to fire them, or pay them unprofessional rates of pay.

If they think that that is what it means to be "important and respected"...to outright reject international norms and standards, the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the status of Teachers, employ cheap, untrained teachers and suspend rational thought...we have a serious problem with that.

And we do.

Just a few years before the 2015 deadline we have over 60 million children who are going without a primary education and at least three times more without access to secondary.

2 million additional teachers are needed so that every child is taught by a qualified teacher.

The need also exists in the OECD countries, and with migration and integration many teachers now find themselves teaching kids from a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

No data centralized, dashboard and flipped classroom can replace a trained teacher who both cares and acts in ways to deepen learning and understanding. No system will be able to fire its way to excellence to ensure every child receives the education that is their right. And no high performing system becomes so without authentic and respectful engagement with teachers and their organizations.

The last challenge I want to raise is one that is well documented and equally well ignored.

The Issue of Poverty.

Current generations are facing historic levels of inequality and poverty. Whether teachers are asked to teach reading to kids without a single book or e-reader or whether, as the Global Partnership for Education noted, teacher poverty itself is the obstacle...we must be clear that poverty is not an excuse, it's a scourge and must be confronted head on.

The Issue of Pedagogical, Trained Teachers

Educational expansion within the current global context requires not just knowledge workers that can innovate and set up microbusinesses, it needs critical thinkers that can work collaboratively to solve complex problems with people that may not have the same gender, culture, ethnicity and belief system as them. The challenges of modern society and the fight against ignorance and manipulation require people who can read the word as well as the world.

We need individuals and communities that can model, teach and inspire students to learn how to learn and learn how to apply that learning in ways that benefit themselves, their families and society.

A person with a script is an actor not a teacher. We need well-trained, dedicated, reflective and thoughtful teachers in our profession.

Which brings me to the campaign that EI is proud to launch today with the GCE, to call attention to the trained teacher gap.

Every Child Needs a Teacher

Every child has the right to a quality, publicly delivered education.

These are true and still largely aspirational statements. For EI and its members, 30 million teachers around the world, the two go hand in hand and we will work to realize them over this next year.

Every child's right to an education will amount to very little if we do not urgently address the issue of the trained teacher gap.

Every child's right to education will not be realised if we are unable to address the issues of equity and quality.

This means, as this report tells us, that the world community must urgently focus on the recruitment of over 2 million more qualified teachers and the improvement of the

competences, knowledge and skills of practising teachers if we are to achieve the EFA targets and MDGs (access, equity and quality) by 2015.

From our launch with GCE, to our pedagogical movement, to our Summits on the teaching professions with OECD, to our work within the Global Partnership for Education (GPE); with UNESCO and ILO on social dialogue, to global action week and World Teachers' Day, together with our members and partners at local, national, regional and global levels, we are committed to driving this campaign into every forum and space we can. Tomorrow UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, launches Education First and we educators, will continue to call for the achievement of international targets for education, Education for All and Millennium Development Goals. We will participate in all processes seeking to define the post-2015 education and development agenda and ensure that this message rises above the paradoxical policy chatter and bean counting.