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Congress Edition:

Building the future through quality education

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Cover photo: Young students in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, develop their leadership skills to improve education

Promoting policies that meet our challenges

Fred van Leeuwen, EI General Secretary
Susan Hopgood, EI President

EI's sixth World Congress is an opportunity for us to reflect on and renew our policies, as well as to experience the culture and context in which some of our colleagues live and work.

The Executive Board selected South Africa to host this Congress because its history teaches us far-reaching lessons in the struggle for freedom and equal rights. With a powerful civil society and rich cultural diversity, the 'rainbow nation' has shown us that successful social transformation must reconcile the needs and interests of all its communities. The combination of Nelson Mandela's leadership and the South African peoples' faith in the future, have helped it make progress on those challenges. South Africa's experience offers lessons to other countries facing similar tests.

We gather as teachers, education workers and trade union leaders, to renew our commitment to attain social justice and quality education for all (EFA) through international union solidarity. We will debate the key issues affecting education and workers across the globe and build strategies for EFA by enhancing our advocacy for teachers' and education workers' rights.

EI members have developed a comprehensive Policy Paper on Education which will be presented for adoption at Congress. It draws together policies defining EFA and promoting respect for the professional role and responsibilities of teachers. In the context of the financial crisis, the policy states that quality education must be developed using best practice, professional experience and educational research.

Clearly trade unions have a big role to play in developing sustainable and successful education systems that promote equality, however, education and economic policies are increasingly devised under the influence of inter-governmental organisations and financial institutions. Our unions must evolve to meet the challenges of this rapidly changing landscape.

Our union solidarity at national and global levels makes us stronger and better able to meet the challenges of the modern world. For these reasons, EI's Congress theme is 'Building the future through quality education' because education is a basic human right that empowers people and drives social change. Only the educated are able to make 'the long walk to freedom'. ■

EDUCATION

Is the World Bank's Strategy 2020 a recipe for quality education?

By Dennis Sinyolo, Education International

In April 2011, the World Bank released a new education strategy focused on Learning for All. For the next ten years, the Bank will promote education reforms and research to achieve this agenda. Teachers' unions and others in the education sector must pay close attention to the new strategy and brace themselves for what lies ahead.

From Education for All to Learning for All

The new education strategy shifts the emphasis from Education for All to Learning for All and risks narrowing the concept of education into a focus on preparing learners for high test scores. The Bank argues that previous efforts focused primarily on schooling (inputs and school completion), rather than learning, consequently, many children have left school without acquiring necessary skills. While the Bank's observation might be correct, their strategy does not provide the reasons or contextual factors leading to 'poor learning outcomes'. Research points to a number of factors inhibiting the achievement of quality education, such as large class sizes, the recruitment of unqualified teachers, shortages of basic school resources and poor salaries.

Redefining education systems

The Bank's strategy provides a new definition of education, encompassing 'all learning opportunities in a given society, within or outside formal educational institutions'. The new strategy also strengthens the role of public-private partnerships and accountability. While the principle of an inclusive or systemic approach can be effective in improving quality, education financing and delivery should remain the primary role of the state. As a

public service and fundamental right of every child, youth and adult, education cannot be left in the hands of private providers, many of which are for-profit organisations; nor can the provision of education be left to poor communities who may not have the means to build and sustain quality schools or pay teachers a living wage. Evidence from research shows that privatisation often leads to the exclusion and marginalisation of vulnerable groups.

Focus on results and learning outcomes

The Bank's intention to improve learning by focusing on results may be detrimental to education systems of recipient countries. Putting undue emphasis on results and learning outcomes may lead to narrowing of the curricula and superficial 'quality' measures and outcomes which may also force teachers to teach to the test, thus reducing the learning experience to a mechanical exercise designed for standardised assessments.

Standardised testing and the publication of league tables that normally accompany results-based measures focus on quantifiable lower order cognitive skills, ignoring qualitative higher order skills that are difficult to measure or test. The publication of league tables may also generate competition rather than co-operation among teachers and schools. Education



World Bank President, Robert Zoellick

should not be subjected to competition. Competition is about winners and losers, but in education, every learner must be a winner.

Conclusion

Time will tell whether the World Bank's new strategy will result in strengthening education systems of developing countries or not. However, the new strategy is full of potential pitfalls that may undermine the provision of an inclusive, quality education in many recipient countries and beyond. ■

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To read the World Bank's Strategy 2020 on Education please visit:
<http://go.ei-ie.org/wb>

EDUCATION

A review of the International Summit on the Teaching Profession

By John Bangs, Special Consultant to EI General Secretary

A remarkable and unique event took place when ministers and teachers' union leaders from 16 countries sat down together in New York from 16–17 March to discuss the global future of the teaching profession. The International Summit of the Teaching Profession was organised by the US Education Department, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and EI.

EI's equal role in organising the Summit was highly significant; it was the first time that the global federation for teacher unions linked up with government bodies in order to jointly organise a conference on the future for the teaching profession.

During the Summit's preparations what became clear was the mutuality of strategic decisions taken by the US Education Department and the American education unions (NEA and AFT). The first mutuality is that both unions have consistently argued that they are more than defensive organisations solely concerned with annual pay negotiations and working conditions. Above all, they represent the professional interests of their members and are primarily concerned

with creating conditions that are conducive to high achievement for all young people. Both unions provide professional development for their members, therefore it should not be surprising that the US' Education Secretary, Arne Duncan, dedicated to the same principles of professionalism would support a US-based Summit.

Strong teachers' unions

Two further circumstances gave this Summit an extra dimension. First of all, the NEA and AFT have a profoundly international approach to education. They are members of EI and play key leadership roles in supporting teachers and development projects across the world. The second factor is that in many states, such as Wisconsin,

Republican administrations have tried to revoke recognition of their public sector unions, the biggest of which are NEA and AFT. Therefore, Duncan's decision to publically co-host a Summit with teachers' unions is significant. In addition, he co-authored an opinion editorial with OECD's Angel Gurría and EI's Fred Van Leeuwen, in which he made his stance on unions clear: 'Some believe teachers' unions are stumbling blocks to reform, but the international picture tells a different story. Many of the world's top performing nations have strong teachers' unions that work in tandem with local and national authorities to boost student achievement.'

Chinese involvement

Alongside the decision by the US administration to participate in the Summit, it is also significant that 15 other countries attended. Although China does not recognise independent unions, it chose to take part in the Summit, perhaps signalling a new openness.

More countries would have attended had it not been for extenuating circumstances. For example, New Zealand withdrew because of the Christchurch earthquake. Fortunately, Japan was still able to attend despite the destruction left by their earthquake. Although EI wanted Sweden to be included in the Summit, it was not



Fred van de Leeuwen addresses the summit



Education ministers and trade union leaders assemble in New York

included because it did not meet the OECD's criteria of 'high performing and rapidly improving education systems'. This decision was regretted because Sweden's approach to teacher involvement and its pay system was continually referenced in the OECD's background paper. Organisations such as the ILO and World Bank also attended the Summit.

Additionally, the co-hosts contributed to the OECD's background paper, 'Building a High Quality Teaching Profession-Lessons from around the World.' The paper contained fascinating conclusions about education, and advocated for effective teacher policy as the way to develop outstanding education systems while recognising that 'school reform will not work unless it supported from the bottom up'. One highly relevant finding concluded that: 'The frequently cited claim that the best-performing education systems all recruit their teachers from the top third of graduates, however that is defined, is not supported by evidence.' In a sentence which ought to be the cornerstone of any country's teacher policy, the paper went on to say that: 'Successful reform cannot wait for a new generation of teachers; it requires investment in the present teachers' workforce, providing quality professional development, adequate career structures and diversification,

and enlisting the commitment of teachers to reform.'

The Summit's agenda reflected the four sections of the paper: recruitment and initial preparation of teachers; teacher development, support, careers and employment conditions; teacher evaluation and compensation, and teacher engagement in reform.

Raising the level of debate

The Summit was an extraordinary affair. All government and teacher organisation representatives were significant contributors to its success. The background paper was addressed and reflections were given at the end of each section. Subsequent conversations were facilitated by Australia's Tony Mackay. In the words of Fred Van Leeuwen: 'We have a common interest in raising the level of debate. There are very real issues in national discussions, especially as the world recovers unevenly from the fallout of the world banking crisis. At a time of cutbacks, it is all the more important to focus on teacher retention and support'.

Countries that were designated as discussion starters facilitated the debate by sharing viewpoints on different subjects. For example, the Finnish Minister highlighted Finnish teachers' knowledge skills and commitment. This is all the more remarkable, as she is a Conservative member

of her coalition government. Her contribution complemented that of Hong Kong's Minister, who emphasised the organic relationship between teachers' evaluation and development. Other highlights included a heated discussion about test data driven performance and teacher evaluation and compensation. The final section on teacher engagement in reform contained less debate, and instead, governments and delegates discussed future arrangements for partnership.

Subsequent summit

When closing the Summit, EI President Susan Hopgood called for a global forum on teacher policies. Secretary Duncan agreed to a subsequent Summit in 2012, and the Netherlands government would consider hosting a similar event in 2013.

The Summit was the first of its kind and the resulting consensus on the importance of teacher policy proved it was important work. The McKinsey aphorism that no education system can be better than the quality of its teachers was an underlying concept of the discussion. ■

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To learn more about the Summit, please go to:
<http://go.ei-ie.org/7>

EDUCATION

EI Education Policy Paper

By John Bangs, Special Consultant to EI General Secretary

It comes as a shock when you read the preamble to 'Building the Future through Quality Education' and find that Education International has only existed for 18 years. Becoming the pre-eminent global teacher's organisation with 396 affiliated unions in 171 countries representing 30 million education workers in such a short time frame is nothing less than miraculous.

The five EI World Congresses and myriad of meetings that have occurred during those 18 years have been vital in enabling teacher unions across the world to get to know one another and learn about the nature of each other's education systems. Most importantly this has involved recognising the common values and beliefs about the future of education that our members share. EI's first Policy Paper on Education, which will be presented for adoption at the sixth World Congress in South Africa, is a distillation of those deep and continuing discussions. The paper is founded on coherent, closely argued and evidence-based proposals. In short, it is a paper at the cutting-edge of the global educational debate and covers topics ranging from teacher quality to evaluating schools.

Effects of privatisation

The first theme is the acknowledgement that high-quality education is vital to the future of healthy, democratic societies. It is a 'good in its own right'. The paper's opening critique of the market-orientated policies of some governments focuses on both the damaging effect of private companies skimming public education funding for profit as well as the negative effects of privatisation on the nature of education itself. The paper argues that the need for simple, measurable outputs, such as school performance tables based on

test results, is a direct consequence of marketisation trends. Such an approach leads to an erosion of the broader curriculum which is so important in helping children understand how inclusive social values work in a thriving society. The underlying evidence for this approach comes from EI's research, one of the most notable being EI's global study 'Hidden Privatisation' that was conducted by leading academics Stephen Ball and Deborah Youdell.

Qualified teachers for quality education

While the Policy Paper is concerned about maintaining the public provision of education, its main focus is on teachers themselves: their confidence, skills and knowledge. The paper is about the development of teacher policy – to which EI contributed in its paper for the International Summit on the Teaching Profession that took place in New York this March.

A key theme of the paper is the importance of quality education carried out by qualified teachers. It argues that teachers must be supported by credible educational research and professional standards that been established with the full involvement of the teaching profession. The paper warns against the negative impact of high-stakes evaluation of students, teachers, institutions or the system itself. Instead, it says teacher evaluation, or appraisal,

must be based on trust and lead to professional development that teachers own and are confident about.

Echoing the valuable work which Cambridge University's Professor John MacBeath has carried out for European EI affiliates over the years, the paper argues that the best form of school evaluation is self-evaluation. The EI Research Board has commissioned Prof. MacBeath to carry out a study on the teaching profession in the 21st century which will contribute to EI's work on developing the policy paper.

Another central focus of the paper is on the importance of professional leadership. It argues that pedagogic leadership requires in-depth training and support. The vital role of higher education is also emphasised in the paper. Academic freedom is vital not only to universities and colleges, but to the entire education system.

Securing inclusive education

The paper also addresses the struggle for inclusive education. Many EI affiliates work in underfunded schools in which gender discrimination, poverty and special educational needs compromise the day-to-day tasks that are essential to providing a quality education. The policy paper calls for a "fundamentally different and more inclusive funding and governance system for the Education for All



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agenda.” The proposal also numerically defines what adequate funding entails. It calls for governments to spend at least six per cent of their Gross Domestic Product on education, and if higher education funding fails to meet the ideal of being free from fees and charges, then fees should ‘not exceed 20 per cent of course costs and should be accompanied by subsidies and grants for economically disadvantaged students’.

Teaching as a profession

At the core of the policy paper is a detailed description of EI’s vision of teaching as a profession. It argues for all governments ‘to agree with teacher unions strategies for the development of the teaching profession’. One method of doing so involves defining a set of professional standards, ethics, conditions and rights that are similar to professional and ethical standards for other similar groups. This approach is integral to enhancing the professional autonomy and self-confidence of teachers in their professional and pedagogic judgements and also tackles the curse of job insecurity which affects young teachers in particular.

The paper recognises that some countries have established professional councils for teachers but it warns that such councils must be supported by the teaching profession and unions – a warning that was ignored by

governments such as England, where a teaching council was created but was unpopular with teachers. This lack of support pressured the government to abolish the council despite its generally fair approach to teacher standards and professional conduct.

Teacher training is also central to teacher policy. The proposal to support fully-funded professional development is based on major research that identified professional development as the one of the most effective ways of transforming education. Many unions have set up their own high-quality professional development programmes for their members, including successful programmes on teaching about sustainable development and IT, two fields that are highlighted in the paper.

Need for social dialogue

The importance of social dialogue where unions, employers and governments participate as equals is also a key recommendation in the paper. This method of collaboration is partially why the joint EI, NEA and AFT sponsorship, alongside the OECD and US Education Department, of the New York Teaching Summit was so successful.

Throughout the paper, the commitment to help developing countries receive the aid they need in order to establish a flourishing education system is evident.

Both governments and civil society organisations are vital to enhancing this capacity.

‘Building the Future through Quality Education’ provides detailed and well thought-out resolutions that address a range of issues facing educational community across the globe. It sets out a map for the future of the teaching profession and in doing so, maps out a brighter future for the world’s children and young people. ■

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To read the draft EI policy paper on education, please go to:
<http://go.ei-ie.org/educationpolicypaper>

EDUCATION

Congress breakout sessions: Building the future through quality education

By Claude Carroué, Education International

There will be a series of breakout sessions during EI's sixth World Congress in Cape Town, for those participants who wish to debate issues relating to the Congress theme of 'Building the future through quality education.'

The eight sessions will provide opportunities for participants to share ideas and experiences on a range of policy areas. The outcomes and recommendations of the sessions will be compiled into a report and presented to the new EI Executive Board after Congress.

Session one will address the implementation of the draft EI Education Policy Paper. Participants will discuss ways of implementing it at international, regional and national levels, as well as reviewing changes in education policies within governments and inter-governmental bodies.

Session two will focus on whether inclusive education institutions are a realistic possibility or a dream. Participants will share knowledge and experiences about school organisation, content of curricula, language and teacher training. They will also discuss the role of attitudes and actions of teachers, school communities and representative organisations in promoting inclusive education.

Session three will explore ways in which teachers' unions organise, recruit, negotiate, advocate and campaign together to increase the representativeness of the teaching profession. It will also seek ways for unions to be more visible and effective participants in social dialogue.

Session four is about the future financing of education and is intended



to look beyond the economic crisis to the future organisation and financing of education. Participants will review the impact of the global economic crisis and what its effects have been on education.

Quality teaching: confronting the challenge of de-professionalisation is the title of session five. It will be led by EI affiliate members in the UK and US and will focus on the problems that arise when teachers' professionalism is undermined. It will also deal with issues relating to the shortage of qualified teachers and the lack of adequate training that can sometimes be provided when preparing teachers for service.

Session six will focus on community-based and inclusive schools. It will identify ways to overcome structural,

political and cultural obstacles faced by school communities in their efforts to achieve inclusive Education for All (EFA).

Session seven will focus on building effective partnerships for quality education and will explore the role of independent research in establishing more effective partnerships and raising education unions' impact on global policy decisions.

Participants in session eight will debate how education should be part of the planning for economic recovery in countries that have been hit by the global economic crisis. It will take into account perspectives from different education sectors, as well as EI policy positions on lifelong learning and EFA.

All breakout sessions will take place in the Cape Town International Congress Centre on Sunday 24 July. ■

GLOBAL UNIONS

Quality Public Services campaign takes action to defend civil organisations

By Althea Lyness, Education International

Trade unions are evidence of the fact that reform is best achieved through unity and co-operation. Although formal union membership is one way in which people in specialised fields collaborate, there are other initiatives that support the same principals of unity.

The Quality Public Services – Act Now! (QPS) campaign is a trade union-led movement that helps civil employees defend their ability to perform their work. QPS' premise is that high-quality and accessible public services, such as education and health, are essential for a stable society.

Working and communicating with other organisations is important because sharing knowledge leads to more beneficial and higher-quality ideas. However, collaboration has become even more vital in the current financial crisis. Civil organisations worldwide have felt the pain of layoffs and leaner budgets. Although sacrifices must be made during difficult times, the public sector's societal importance makes it imperative that key components of a quality civil society are not compromised. QPS recognises this so guides participants to the resources to promote their profession in the face of a fluctuating world. Although unions and other organisations represent a variety of trades and professions, all of

them share the interest of promoting comprehensive public services.

The QPS campaign promotes this cause using a best practices approach, enabling participants to trade solutions or exchange relevant research. The campaign monitors what issues participants are discussing the most. The campaign also helps participants to lobby for their cause by introducing them to the essential contacts, strategies and political leverage. Although unions are the main participants, promoting involvement with civil organisations and governments cultivates a stronger foundation and broader resource to operate with. It focuses on creating change through grassroots movements, but provides a global forum with which to lead the discussion. They also provide concise information about the campaign and why the cause is essential to the well-being of people everywhere. It also includes an in-depth explanation of the benefits of public service on all aspects of society – equality, economy, security and climate.

The Quality Public Service – Act Now! campaign was started by the Council of Global Unions and is based on their Geneva Charter on Quality Public Services, a document which describes why public services are necessary and what factors make them high-quality services. By being a part of this



movement, participants promote a nation's ability to thrive by ensuring that all citizens have access to the public services that are vital to living a quality life.

The campaign was launched on World Public Services' Day on 23 June, when trade unions, civil organisations, and local governments were encouraged to join energies and accomplishments. ■



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To learn more about the campaign please visit:
www.qpsactionnow.org

EDUCATION

Union-led education reforms in the USA

By Steve Snider and Leona Hiraoka, National Education Association (USA)

Despite a tide of anti-union actions by politicians across the USA, the current of union-led education reform has never been stronger. In state after state, unions are showing the way, not only in education policy reform, but also to close the achievement gap and raise student achievement in lower-performing schools – those that National Education Association (NEA) calls ‘Priority Schools’.

In Illinois, three unions representing more than 230,000 education workers, the Illinois Education Association, the Illinois Federation of Teachers, and the Chicago Teachers’ Union, developed a joint proposal to raise professional standards while ensuring fair evaluation and employment standards. The plan was met with bipartisan support.

NEA President, Dennis Van Roekel, who has urged his members to “disrupt the status quo” in the push for student academic gains, praised the collaboration between unions and others for “making sure that experienced educators are respected and have a voice in decision-making as they do their jobs, which is to ensure student success.”

The American Federation of Teachers’ (AFT) President, Randi Weingarten, said: “The serious and inclusive process used to craft this legislation, in which partisan politics took a back seat to kids’ best interests, stands in stark contrast to anti-union, ideological legislation coming out of other states.”

Despite attacks on worker rights that continue in many states, organised educators are proving that collective bargaining and agreement-based change serves students and communities well, raising student achievement and the professionalism of educators.

In south Indiana, along the Ohio River, the Evansville Teachers’ Association



© Isaac Brekken/NEA

Trained teachers lift student performance

and the district jointly developed a plan to increase professional development and teaching time along with other innovations to involve the community more widely in the schools. Achievement rates are up across the district with a sharp increase in graduations.

On the south side of Los Angeles, California, the ABC Federation of Teachers worked closely with the district for nearly two decades to build a record of increased student achievement every year. The collaboration is based on a dozen principles, including: ‘we solve

problems rather than win arguments.’

Even as their basic collective bargaining rights face unprecedented attacks, U.S. educators continue to advance reforms that focus on providing a quality education to every student.

This spring, the American Rights at Work Education Fund issued a report highlighting strong labour-management partnerships between teachers’ unions and administrations across the USA. The report concluded that “labour-management partnerships create benefits not just for schools and students, but families and communities. And they’re a testament to the fact that when everyone has a seat at the table, our children thrive and communities flourish.”

Dennis Van Roekel said: “Partnerships between schools, school districts and educators may be surprising to many people exposed to a steady diet of attacks on unions. But in community after community, collective bargaining and other forms of collaboration are transforming public education.” ■

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For more information on union-led reform:
www.neapriorityschools.org

www.americanrightsatwork.org

EDUCATION

Triumph for teachers in Guatemala

By Mar Candela, Education International

Freedom must be won minute by minute, and defended tooth and nail and with dreams
– Luis Cardoza y Aragón, poet

On 14 April, Álvaro Colom's government and the Guatemala Teachers' Union (STEG) signed an agreement ending weeks of strike action during which schools were closed, teachers occupied public buildings, and main roads were blocked in areas bordering El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico.

The collective agreement focused on 16 points which STEG successfully argued were essential to quality public education in Guatemala, including a guarantee that it will remain free, that funds will be channelled into school infrastructure, that school safety and hygiene measures will be strengthened, and that funds will be invested in bilingual intercultural education for Indigenous peoples.

The Álvaro Colom government has made important concessions to public education because of the trade union efforts.

More teachers

For Joviél Acevedo, STEG President, the victory has been resounding: "We now have more than 186,000 teachers in Guatemala, compared to barely 52,000 under the previous government. In three years of collectively bargained agreements with this government, we have managed to triple the number of teachers in public education. In the same period we have also fought for and won a 28.5 per cent salary increase."

Teachers have played a key role in the fight for freedom in Guatemala. The strikes held by teachers and university students in the capital in 1944 triggered the 'October Revolution', which overthrew the *de facto* government and led to the first democratic elections in the country's history. A period of change began, during which STEG was created,



Children walk to their rural school in Xicalcal village in Guatemala

with the support of the new Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala. This period also led to the agricultural reform designed by the Jacobo Arbenz government in the 1950s.

The land for those who work it

Having abolished discriminatory measures such as the 'law against vagrancy', under which Indigenous people were made to work unpaid for 150 days per year on the farms of wealthy landowners, the agricultural reform increased land productivity and quality of life for Indigenous people. Arbenz proposed that land be expropriated and leased to impoverished workers. This policy was a blow to the interests of the large landowners.

With the support of the CIA and the dictatorships in Nicaragua and Honduras, Arbenz was overthrown in a 1954 coup d'état. The counter-revolutionaries then pursued the teachers, aware of the strong link between the profession and the October Revolution. This began a period of repression and absence of freedom, which eventually tipped the country into a bloody civil war in 1960. Only in 1996 did peace return to Guatemala, along with democracy, which has lasted until the present day.

For STEG members their recent triumph for Guatemalan education shows that governments must be pressured to respect the inescapable need to provide a free quality public education for all. ■

EDUCATION

Equal Education – mobilising millions for education

By Doron Isaacs and Adrienne Pon, Equal Education

More than 20 years after Nelson Mandela was released from prison, the education given to children in South Africa remains vastly unequal. Almost 2.4 million 18–25-year olds are unemployed. The primary barrier for life-chances is the poor quality education experienced by the majority. Despite attempts to overhaul the system, inequalities remain deeply entrenched along class and race lines.

During apartheid, education was the foundation upon which inequality was built, and unequal educational opportunity still remains as one of the greatest obstacles to equality, dignity and freedom in South Africa.

Equal Education is a movement for a quality and equal education for every person in South Africa. It is a community and membership-based organisation led by young activists that works with communities, schools, parents, teachers, unions and the government. Equal Education uses analysis and evidence-based activism to improve the nation's schools.

The organisation began in 2008 with a successful campaign for the government to fix 500 broken windows at a school in Khayelitsha, which is a working-class township in Cape Town with 700,000 residents. Khayelitsha schools are under-performing, under-resourced, and overcrowded – not unlike hundreds of other schools in the nation's poorest communities. Fewer than half of all students complete school of which only half achieve a basic pass.

From its head office located in Khayelitsha, the organisation is growing into a national movement that includes campaigns in various provinces and new sites of community organising. Although Equal Education is young, it is frequently referred to as the largest

mobilisation for quality education since the advent of democracy in South Africa.

Equal Education's most active members are called 'Equalisers'. These are high school students who take a lead role in the activities of the organisation. They develop their leadership skills through weekly youth meetings, improve schools in their communities, and set an example to their peers through their political awareness and dedication to education. Equalisers are united around the firm belief that quality education will enable them to have an equal opportunity in life.

'One School, One Library'

There are a number of accomplishments that show the strength of the Equal Education: since 2009 it has run a groundbreaking campaign against poor time-keeping in township high schools that helped to reduced lateness and absences. In 2009, Equal Education also began a national campaign for school libraries. In 2010, over 5,000 people participated in a 24-hour Fast for School Libraries, more than 7,000 postcards were sent to political leaders calling for libraries in schools, and 60,000 signed petitions calling for 'One School, One Library, One Librarian', which was the slogan of the campaign for a National Policy on School Libraries.

The campaign for libraries has grown to encompass overarching school infrastructure needs, particularly the need to rebuild the 395 mud-structure schools in the Eastern Cape, officially known as 'mud schools'. To help the struggle to improve libraries and 'mud schools', Equal Education has demanded regulation of Minimum Norms and Standards for School Infrastructure. In a grand display of solidarity more than 20,000 young people and their allies marched to Parliament on the recent International Human Rights Day.

Equal Education's focus on school libraries remains. It has a Bookery Project in central Cape Town which collects good quality children's books from the public. These are then sorted, categorised, organised into a collection, and installed in participating schools. The Bookery will soon open its tenth school library. All this is done to a very high standard and at very low cost.

The organisation is also engaged in other projects to help its members and their communities. They include a one year post-school program for members wanting to improve their school results, and intern within the organisation. Another project is Equal Education's work in organising parents, which includes workshops that build their understanding of the education system in order to support their children and improve school accountability.

Teachers and their unions have collaborated closely with Equal Education. At the 20,000 person march to Parliament the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) General Secretary, Mugwena Maluleke, delivered a message of support to the crowd. Another EI affiliate, the National Professional Teachers' Association (NAPTOSA) has been supporting Equal Education's campaign for school libraries.

Demand for decent wages

Equal Education has also supported teachers' demands for decent wages. During the strikes in 2010, the organisation arranged pickets to call on the government to meet teachers' demands so that learning could be resumed. Despite the fact that students did not benefit from the absence of their teachers, it was understood that better teachers' pay would lead to a better education system in the long-run.



South African education activists demand more investment in education

In the beginning some teachers felt their authority was threatened by organised students and there were isolated instances where school principals, teachers or union branches prevented Equal Education's activities. However, attitudes have evolved, and in the case of SADTU, there is a firm national and provincial mandate to work closely with Equal Education on its campaigns to improve the conditions under which students learn, and teachers teach.

Participants at EI's sixth World Congress, and all EI affiliates, can

support Equal Education by bringing an English-language children's book with them to Cape Town. The books will be donated to the Equal Education Bookery and a school library will be established in EI's name. ■

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To learn more about Equal Education, please visit:
www.equaleducation.org.za

Quality Educators for All Project

By Dennis Sinyolo,
Education International

Teachers are one of the most important determinants of educational quality. Highly trained, professionally qualified, well-resourced and motivated teachers provide rich teaching and learning experiences for children, promoting inclusion and gender equity. In 2008, EI and Oxfam Novib initiated the Quality Educators for All Project to focus on the training and professional development of teachers in both formal and non-formal education.

In 2009, two pilots were launched in Mali and Uganda which led to the development of a national competence profile of a primary school teacher in each country. The profile was developed using inclusive process involving teacher unions, civil society organisations, ministries of education, teacher training colleges, universities and other stakeholders. The national profiles have served as a basis for further action in Mali and Uganda, including the development of a life-skills curriculum and training modules for teachers. Professional development programmes have also

been organised for teachers and school leaders. Research entitled 'Quality Educators: An International Study of Teacher Competences and Standard' was commissioned in December 2010 and was launched in Brussels in May 2011. From this study, EI and ON will develop guidelines on the development of teacher competence profiles. ■

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The study can be downloaded from:
www.ei-ie.org/websections/content_detail/3269#intro3

EDUCATION

Education for All: it all starts with a good teacher

By Paula Engwall, Lärarförbundet (Sweden)

Lärarförbundet in Sweden actively takes part in the efforts to achieve Education for All (EFA). Education is a right in itself and the most important tool to achieve other Millennium Development Goals. In 2011, our key message is: 'It all starts with a good teacher'.

Lärarförbundet President, Eva-Lis Sirén, believes: "As a teachers' union we must actively engage in discussions about what kind of education we want, and be prepared to show that a quality teacher is the most important factor for any education system to succeed.

"As professionals, we encourage all children to enroll in school and we take responsibility for the quality of education. We must ensure that all students complete their education and leave school prepared to actively take part in society."

Achieving EFA in Sweden

Sweden has done much to achieve the EFA goals, but children are still left behind. Many students leave school with an unsatisfactory knowledge base and many, especially boys, under-perform.

The attitude at Lärarförbundet is that we have more to do before we can be satisfied. One way to improve results is to take the lead in developing the teaching profession.

Lärarförbundet's support for people's right to education goes beyond its own borders and is carried out in collaboration with teachers' unions in other countries. At the Dakar meeting in 2000, Sweden was among the countries that promised to contribute the necessary funding to deliver EFA. Sweden is performing well in



A teacher explains how the Earth moves

comparison to other countries and Lärarförbundet is playing its part as a watchdog to ensure the government lives up to its promises.

Lärarförbundet is an active member of the Swedish EFA Network which advocates for quality EFA for all children and adults, lobbies the political parties to give higher priority to education, and offers a strong partnership in developing the education policies.

EFA through co-operation

EFA goals are common objectives for all teachers' unions. In order to reach quality EFA, teachers must have decent working conditions, fair salaries, quality teacher education and in-service training.

Eva-Lis Sirén, argues: "If teachers are united in strong, independent and democratic unions, we can achieve a lot by scrutinising and influencing government policies and budgets. Co-operation in long-term development is crucial to establishing strong educational foundations. Capacity building aimed at strengthening national teachers' unions makes us better prepared to lead the debate and serve as advocates for quality EFA children deserve."

Engaging members on EFA

Lärarförbundet's international engagement makes it advantageous for teachers to join the union. Members are actively involved in advocacy for EFA goals, launching programmes that inspire and support learning. Many activities take place at the local level and in teacher colleges. For Global Action Week, it produced a campaign kit to suit the Swedish system. This year, it encouraged members to send postcards to the Minister for International Development Co-operation, demanding an increase in the budget allocated to education. ■

info

Watch Lärarförbundet's one-minute campaign film: www.lararforbundet.se/alltborjamedenbralarare

EDUCATION

World Teachers' Day 2011

The teaching profession makes a stand towards gender equality

By Monique Fouilhoux, EI Deputy General Secretary

In 1993 UNESCO created World Teachers' Day which is celebrated on 5 October every year. This is an important date in the calendar for the entire educational community and gives an opportunity to celebrate the profession, and to promote the 1966 and 1997 ILO/UNESCO Recommendations that define the international standards for the teaching profession.

The day should be a time to reflect on and evaluate teachers' working conditions, pay and training. It is also a chance to recognise the environment in which teachers work and the crucial role education plays in the lives of millions of young people and adults.

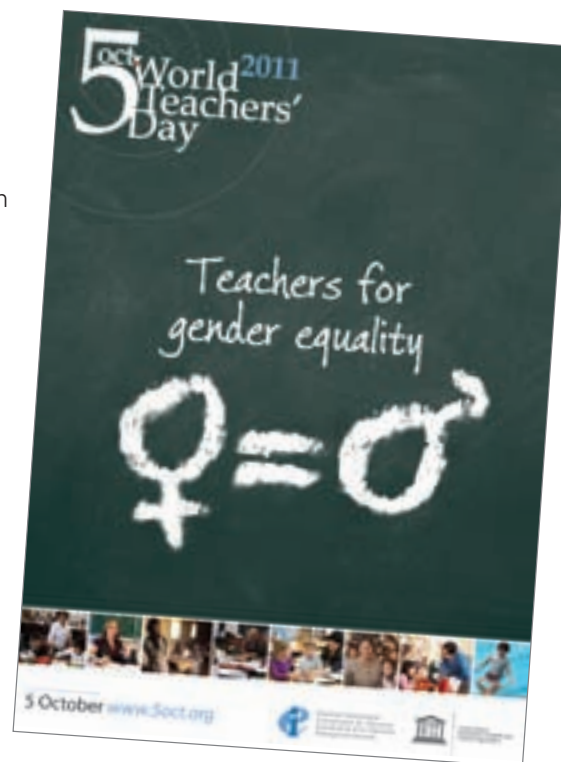
The theme for this year's World Teachers' Day is *Teachers for gender equality*, which ties in with EI's successful World Women's Conference, which took place in January 2011, and the Global Campaign for Education's Action Week in May 2011, whose theme was *Education for women and girls*.

Despite the teaching profession being made up largely of women, inequality remains an issue.

Measures to ensure equality are enshrined into the policies and constitutions of many states, but for millions of female teachers, the goals remain unfulfilled commitments.

The challenge of implementation

EI conducted a survey of its members on the status of women in unions, education, and in society. The results found poor implementation of legislation. For example, although many countries have maternity or parental leave systems in place, many women



feel obliged to reduce their time off on account of the shortage of cover staff. Another factor is that of family dependants, which continue to limit women's flexibility, their ability to take on new duties, and limits their possibilities for continuing education. These factors, as well as cultural barriers and a lack of confidence to apply for senior vacancies, has led women to be under-represented in the most influential leadership posts, where salaries are also higher.

From words to action

Gender inequality persists because traditional roles, social disparities, and gender discrimination remain within society. Women teachers are often unaware of their rights and there are still only a small number of procedures allowing women to protest against and bring this discrimination to light.

The teaching profession, both men and women, must unite and urge governments to implement their national and international commitments in practical terms, and to use all the tools at their disposal to support women teachers who demand their rights. Let's move from words to action: World Teachers' Day is your day! ■

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Read the 1966 ILO-UNESCO Recommendation at: <http://go.ei-ie.org/e>

Read the 1997 ILO-UNESCO Recommendation at: <http://go.ei-ie.org/f>

EI will launch an interactive World Teachers' Day website on: www.5oct.org and materials will be sent to EI member organisations.

Guest interviews: EI World Congress Awardees

By Mar Candela, Education International

Pauline Ladouceur (Canada): EI Albert Shanker Education Award 2011

Pauline Ladouceur has taught primary school level pupils with learning difficulties for 25 years. She has also worked for the Association of Dysphasia in Quebec, informing parents about the difficulties of children with a serious language disorder, while also developing tools to help them support their children throughout their school life. Pauline was named Outstanding Volunteer by the Government of Quebec for her community involvement and is the recipient of EI's Education Award 2011.



You have played an important role for children with learning difficulties. How would describe your career?

My professional experiences have taken place in Quebec with French-speaking pupils. I began my career by teaching reading, writing and mathematics to pupils with learning difficulties. I taught at all primary grades, but mostly pupils who were 11–12 years old. Some of them had major learning or behavioural problems. I also worked as a guest lecturer at University of Quebec in Montreal, where I trained young adults to work as teachers with pupils with learning difficulties. For the last four years I have been a member of the Fédération des Syndicats de l'Enseignement, which is affiliated

to the Centrale des Syndicats du Québec, where I advise on pedagogical matters relating to pupils with learning difficulties.

What are the main challenges in making an inclusive education possible?

An inclusive school must prepare all young people for life as citizens and their involvement in the community. It is vital to focus on the same objective: the academic success of pupils. This requires services meeting the needs of all pupils that are available for them at any time in the day.

How can the curriculum be flexible to allow schools to adapt to the needs of pupils?

In Quebec, one syllabus has been added for pupils with severe or profound intellectual deficiency; for the rest, it is the same syllabus. The curriculum is constructed in such a way as to favour the development of the skills of each pupil whilst aiming at the most thorough knowledge of all the subjects in the syllabus and developing their creativity and independence. This way

we promote a culture of respect and openness to others and of full personal development for everyone.

Explain your project 'Moi Journalist(e)' (I am a journalist)

This interdisciplinary project came from a desire to promote the academic motivation of pupils with learning difficulties. For the different layers of government and for a trade union organisation, it was a question of explaining how each of them operates, and what services are offered by these institutions, as well as describing situations in which they work to defend democratic rights and liberties. Pupils took up the role of a journalist because the final presentation of their work was to be in the form of a review entitled *Democracy*. For this purpose, a journalist with a Quebecer daily, *La Presse*, came to explain his work to them. To be able to write their articles, they had to learn various aspects of the syllabus in French, Mathematics and Human Sciences. They were rewarded for all their hard work, because the journalist wrote two articles congratulating them.

What have you learnt from teaching?

I have learnt that it is essential to believe in the challenge of educability, i.e. that all pupils can learn and that you must never lower the bar on the pretext that they have learning difficulties. ■

“I have learnt that all pupils can learn and that you must never lower the bar”

“We have no choice
but to struggle for
a decent future.
We have nothing
to lose”

Gülçin Isbert (Turkey): El Mary Hatwood Futrell Human and Trade Union Rights Award 2011

Gülçin Isbert is a primary school teacher in Turkey. She has faced ethnic and religious discrimination in the workplace throughout her life. Gülçin is a member of the Istanbul branch executive of EI's affiliate union, Eğitim Sen. She also holds a position on the union's national executive where she focuses on promoting women's rights. Gülçin is one of 31 public sector trade unionists who have been on trial since November 2009 for allegedly belonging to an 'illegal' Kurdish organisation. The trial continues to be delayed, Gülçin is prevented from doing her union work, and the defendants are still unclear precisely what the charges are against them. Gülçin is the recipient of EI's Human and Trade Union Rights Award 2011.



they have diminished the study of science in secondary education, as well as offering more financial help to private schools than to public schools. While the government appears to be providing text books for free, money is being indirectly collected from parents in other ways. The consequence is that education in Turkey is becoming less public, secular, and is no longer a fundamental right.

What is the reason for the Turkish government's attacks on Eğitim Sen union activists?

Our union has struggled against arbitrary detentions since it was founded in 1995. Political pressure and unsolved murders continued until the end of the 1990s. At that time, our legitimate struggle created a strong union powerbase. However, since 2000, capitalism has re-established itself and so have the attacks on political opponents increased and become more sophisticated. Other unions have been created to oppose ours. To struggle as a Kurd and Alevi person, a woman and a member of the Confederation of Public Employees' Union (KESK) must disturb the ruling powers in Turkey.

Since 2002, Turkey has been pursuing neo-liberal restructuring. What have been the implications of this on the education sector?

During its eight years in power, the government has been one of the most conservative and patriarchal in recent Turkish history. It has used education to persuade people to support its ideas. For instance, by founding student dormitories to attract students to religion,

Could you say more about your campaigns for gender equality?

Our Prime Minister recommends women have *at least* three children. The government is unhappy about the growing number of women activists and unionists. My union has struggled to achieve gender equality especially within the education field. The World March of Women is a useful event to keep us together. However, meeting once every five years, it is hard to find effective solutions to common problems. EI's first World Women's Conference in January 2011 was a useful event. We must multiply this kind of effort to create a strong organised power to struggle for gender equality.

In Turkey, trade unionists have been labelled terrorists and linked to the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK). Could you explain what is going on?

The Kurdish question in Turkey has boosted the PKK's organisation and Kurdish people's resistance. Consequently, people living in Kurdish cities have been branded 'potential criminals'. If you do not behave according to the system's interests, it is simple to stigmatise you. Almost all the accusations made against Kurdish people in the last 40 years have been nonsense. In Turkish society oligarchic advantages have not disappeared, they just changed hands with governments. Eğitim Sen is a dynamic union and its struggle is multi-dimensional. It supports the most progressive demands of women and workers, and is going to continue through fire and water. We have no choice but to struggle for a decent future. We have nothing to lose. ■

EQUALITY

Teacher unions on the move for gender sensitive education

By Angelika Striedinger, Education International

The formation of gender identities starts early. Schools, including early childhood education centres, are spaces in which stereotypes can be either strengthened or challenged. With the aim of creating a society free of discrimination and sexism, teachers' unions are organising projects to challenge gender stereotypes in education.

'Blurred Images' is a project co-organised by the Manitoba Teacher's Society (MTS) in Canada which invites teachers and students to question media portrayals of women and men. Pat Isaak, President of MTS, describes how such projects enable discussion on gender roles in the classroom: "Part of our everyday work is to be vigilant about these images and messages. We get students to analyse and question what they see and hear."

The hidden curriculum

Students' interactions at school are one of the most influential ways in which they conceive what it means to be female and male in society. "Gender parity at school can mask great inequalities," said Saniye Gulser Corat, UNESCO's Director for Gender Equality, at EI's World Women's Conference.

Many studies show traditional gender role models continue to be reinforced by education systems. These studies focus on the 'hidden curriculum' which is a collection of strong but subtle messages that are transmitted through the portrayal of women and men in schoolbooks, through interactions in the teaching and learning process, and in the curriculum itself.

The Nicaraguan teachers' union, CGTEN-ANDEN, has developed resources analysing the link between gender equality and the curriculum.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, it has managed to include a gender perspective in the new school curricula, as well as in the professional training of teachers.

Union training for schools

In order to learn more about the gender dimension in education, five EI member organisations in Senegal organised gender audits in almost 300 schools, which confirmed that girls' success in education would greatly benefit from gender sensitive practices. Teachers' unions encourage schools to organise trainings based on the EFAIDS publication 'Building a Gender Friendly School Environment.'

Similarly, EI's Indian member union, AIACHE, organised gender sensitisation programmes in colleges. Dr. Reny Jacob, AIACHE's Associate General Secretary, explained: "The workshops create common understanding among teachers and leaders about gender sensitive education, why it is necessary, and how we can effectively implement it in the teaching and learning processes."

Teaching for diversity

Challenging gender stereotypes in and through education was a central theme of EI's World Women's Conference in January 2011 that brought together 300 education unionists from around the world. The Conference highlighted



The Sindicadas union women's network devised teaching material to show women teachers' roles since the First World War

the central role of teachers and the challenges they face in dealing with the dynamics of sexism, racism and homophobia in the classroom.

Maki Hayashikawa, from the UN Girls' Education Initiative pointed out that: "When teachers are well trained in gender sensitive teaching, it benefits the learning process and outcomes for both girls and boys." ■

info

Send examples of your activities to achieve gender sensitive education to:
equality@ei-ie.org

Read more about the EI World Women's Conference at:
www.ei-ie.org/women2011

HUMAN RIGHTS

Speaking truth to power: bringing a passion for human rights to children

By John Heffernan, Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights

On 10 December – International Human Rights Day – the Robert F. Kennedy Centre for Justice and Human Rights joined forces with New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) to launch a groundbreaking human rights curriculum.

This pioneering achievement has paved the way for teachers' unions around the world to follow suit and enable thousands of students to learn about and become active defenders of fundamental rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

For Kerry Kennedy, daughter of Robert Kennedy and President of the Kennedy Centre, the curriculum provides students with a toolkit for action: "Our goal is for every student who uses this material to abandon the role of bystander and join today's heroes as a human rights defender."

Students learn about human rights through the lives of individuals who are the Martin Luther King's and Mahatma Gandhi's of their countries, in order to prompt students to self-identify as human rights defenders. Students are encouraged to take active roles towards creating a more just and peaceful world by creating change in the classroom and society on issues such as domestic violence, trafficking, and free expression.

Speak Up, Speak Out

The curriculum quickly took shape using a 2008 partnership between the two bodies which had commemorated the fortieth anniversary of Kennedy's historic presidential campaign and tragic death. That collaboration produced a teacher-devised curriculum called, *Speak*

Up, Speak Out, honouring the legacy of RFK.

Speak Truth to Power

The success of this prompted a second project, using Kerry Kennedy's book, *Speak Truth to Power: Human Rights Defenders Who are Changing the World*. Within three months the Kennedy Centre and NYSUT brought together middle- and high-school teachers to create lessons featured in the online curriculum (<http://blogs.nysut.org/sttp/>).

The *Speak Truth to Power* curriculum boasts 17 lessons which can be taught as a 12-week course, over the school year, or as stand-alone lessons. It has been disseminated to hundreds of thousands of students in Africa, Asia, Europe and North America. In February 2011, the curriculum was launched in Hong Kong and Cambodia, where the Kennedy Centre is set to work with Cambodia's Independent Teachers' Association.

Children's rights everywhere

In September 2010, the NYSUT and Kennedy Centre announced the 'Challenge to End Child Labour' initiative where school children were challenged to fight child labour in the cocoa industry in West Africa. Hundreds of participants in the challenge were recognised at the 10 December launch event, which showed the film *The Dark Side of*



'Anonymous' from Sudan is a human rights defender featured in Kerry Kennedy's book

Chocolate – a documentary on child labour in the cocoa industry. A webcast highlighted the work of students, who spoke about the actions they have taken in their communities to fight human rights abuses and how they have found the courage to 'speak truth to power'.

New York teachers will be showcasing the *Speak Truth to Power* project in the exhibition area at the EI Congress in Cape Town. ■

info

To learn more about the *Speak Truth* project visit:
www.rfkcenter.org/sttp

to learn more about the *Civic Voices* project which gathers personal stories of activists from around the world, visit:
www.civicvoices.org

HUMAN RIGHTS

Child labour does not remove a child from poverty, quality education can

By Dominique Marlet, Education International

Providing access to free, compulsory and quality education for all children is the first step in tackling all forms of child labour. Teacher organisations are committed to taking action to combat this injustice that endangers children worldwide.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) says 215 million children are engaged in child labour and 115 million of them are directly involved in hazardous work that is likely to harm their physical, mental or moral health. In some cases, hazardous work can even jeopardise the child's life.

Keeping children in school

The teacher union Syndicat national de l'enseignement (SNE-FDT) believes keeping children in school is the best way to tackle child labour. With the support of Dutch teachers' union, AOB, it launched a programme in 2004 to prevent children from dropping out. The programme is being implemented in five regions of Morocco, reaching 21,000 children through 30 schools.

SNE engages with teachers and pupils, as well as parents, authorities and civil society to improve school infrastructure and environment through refurbishments, new equipment, and organising sporting and cultural activities.

SNE and EI Executive Board member, Abdelaziz Mountassir, summarises the success: "The schools involved have all experienced significant reductions in drop-out rates, and the image of the teachers' union has been greatly enhanced."

The cocoa initiative

Teacher unions in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire have formed a coalition to

address hazardous child labour and child trafficking within the cocoa supply chain. The International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) is a unique collaboration between the cocoa industry, civil society, unions and governments to eliminate child labour and tackle poor education provisions, farming methods and cultural norms that permit exploitation of children. Nine out of 10 working children in rural areas are engaged in agricultural activities, and in Africa, more than 50 million children work in agriculture.

EI Vice President, Irene Duncan Adanusa, who is from Ghana and sits on the ICI board, describes the role of teachers: "Children in cocoa growing areas face the realities of rural poverty: scarcity of land, food insecurity, lack of education infrastructure, no potable water, and poor health service. I encourage the ICI to provide formal

education opportunities to help children break this cycle."

Uzbek cotton harvesting

In Uzbekistan, the government continues to send up to 1.5 million school-aged children to work in the annual cotton harvest for three months each year. Despite laws prohibiting it, this state-sponsored, forced child labour continues with harvesting quotas on teachers and children, which restrict the ability for schools to provide quality education.

Harvesting involves carrying heavy objects, working during harsh weather and being exposed to pesticides. As a result, many children suffer serious health problems, such as respiratory infections, meningitis, hepatitis and malnutrition. Those children and teachers who do not meet their cotton harvesting quota are threatened with expulsion from school and their families are subjected to harassment. The children are paid little to nothing for their work, and the food, transport and accommodation costs they incur require are recovered as a debt.

This violation was addressed at the ILO Conference in June 2011, and the ILO has called on the Uzbek government to take urgent steps to prohibit child labour. ■

The Hague Roadmap

A Roadmap for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour by 2016 was adopted last year. EI and its affiliates took an active role, with other trade unions, civil society and the UN, to have a strong declaration highlighting education as a key strategy to fight child labour. The Roadmap calls on governments and social partners to strengthen access

to education, social protection and decent work.

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To read the ILO Roadmap on Child Labour please visit:
<http://go.ei-ie.org/child>

HUMAN RIGHTS

Schools should be safe sanctuaries

By Dominique Marlet, Education International

Over the past four years, EI has been engaged in numerous initiatives to protect teachers and students against targeted attacks against education.

In Colombia, 27 teacher unionists were killed in 2010 leaving bereaved families and hundreds of students without teachers. In Afghanistan, 613 attacks took place on schools in 2009. In three of Thailand's provinces, 63 students and 24 teachers and school workers were killed or injured in 2008 and 2009. In the Central African Republic, the UN has reported on the continuing recruitment of children by armed groups, and incidents of sexual violence against girls.

The circumstances are different and the regions are diverse, but the fact remains: in conflict countries and fragile states, teachers and students are increasingly putting their lives at risk simply by turning up for lessons – because rebels, armed forces and repressive regimes consider schools, universities, students and teachers as legitimate targets.

Since 2008, EI has increased its engagement in initiatives, partnering with UN agencies UNESCO and civil society organisations. In 2009, an EI report to UNESCO and the ILO highlighted an increasing number of attacks on teaching staff.

EI Declaration

In 2009, EI adopted the Declaration 'Schools shall be safe sanctuaries', calling for increased efforts to prevent violations of the right to education and ensure the safety and security of learners, teachers and academics.

Teacher unions in Colombia, Australia and Canada, among others, have included the EI Declaration in their work programmes. EI urges other stakeholders to do so too.

Global Coalition on Protecting Education from Attack

EI contributed to UNESCO's global studies 'Education under Attack' (2007 and 2010). EI participated in a UNESCO seminar which brought together experts in education in emergencies, human rights law and child protection. Participants called for improved prevention, response and research into the nature, scope, motives and impact of attacks. The seminar led to the formation of a new Global Coalition for Protecting Education from Attack (GCPEA) with representatives from EI; UNESCO; UNICEF; Human Rights

Watch; Save the Children; Council for Assisting Refugee Academics, and Education Above All.

The GCPEA coalition aims to improve knowledge and awareness of attacks on education among key actors, cultivate public support for education in safe and secure learning environments, toughen provisions on protecting education workers, strengthen international standards, and improve existing monitoring and reporting systems and end impunity through accountability.

EI Deputy General Secretary, Jan Eastman, who represents EI on the GCPEA, said: "It is time for the international community to take action to stop this growing problem. These attacks violate the most basic human rights of students and teachers – the right to life and the right to quality education in safety and security." ■



A school destroyed during fighting in Herat province, Afghanistan

SOLIDARITY

HOKISA Children's Home – it takes a village to raise a child

By Pav Akhtar, Education International

For many of us our childhood memories invoke comforting scenes of close family interactions, the feeling of being loved, care-free and happy. Not all children are so lucky. The residents of HOKISA – Homes for Kids in South Africa – which is situated in Masiphumelele, Cape Town, may have been amongst the 'unlucky' ones but for the vision, love and commitment of some very special people.

Masiphumelele – or 'Masi' as it is known to locals – is Xhosa for 'we will succeed' and it is, as I discover, an apt moniker for the steely determination of residents in this overcrowded township which is home to 40,000 people, almost exclusively Black. They live in poorly constructed, tightly-packed, wooden shacks that frequently burn down when open fire cookers take hold and reduce entire homes to cinders.

The community boasts as many football pitches as it does churches, unemployment is high and its residents come from across South Africa and neighbouring countries. This is the harshest expression of survival in South Africa and it has been all but banished from the shiny new streets of modern Cape Town.

GEW supports HOKISA

I found Masi by accident. While in Cape Town for EI's Executive Board meeting in March 2011, I received an impromptu invitation from Ulrich Thöne, President of EI's German affiliate, GEW, who were visiting a development co-operation project they support. HOKISA, is home to 18 children affected in some way by HIV and AIDS. I was promised the visit would give me an insight into the challenges facing thousands of vulnerable communities across South Africa, and it would show one example of community-led solidarity projects that teachers and pupils in Germany are

actively supporting. The aim of GEW's international solidarity programme is to enable young people in Masi to access opportunities that will empower them to lead fulfilling lives.

It was almost midday by the time we arrived. Almost immediately after we pulled into the HOKISA centre, with its neat lawn, colourful play area, and washing line full of children's clothes, I took sanctuary from the burning sun. As I made my way to a shaded part of the building, I joined a young child who was quietly assessing the new visitors. Suddenly, another child, no more than three years old, approached me and reached out to touch my nose. It was unexpected and I laughed spontaneously. Both children's faces lit up and they laughed out loud too. As the young children took my hand to lead me away on a tour of their home, I sensed it would be a special day.



What most struck me was the fact that all of the children were engaged in activities facilitated by active volunteers from in and around Masi. Some were

building a model car with support from a retired engineer; some were playing in the garden, while I joined others who had gravitated to the kitchen where delicious aromas were escaping from pots on the stove. Like any normal family, the kitchen seemed to be where it was all happening!

HOKISA accommodates children in shared bedrooms leading off the open plan communal areas where meals are shared, fun is had and homework is done. The kitchen and bathroom have recently been renovated, thanks to funds donated by sponsors, including members of teachers' unions.

Founded by Karin Chubb and Lutz van Dijk, HOKISA was opened by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in December 2002 and the first child was taken to the home in January 2003. Others soon followed.

HOKISA's childcare team leader, Eunice Mbwanja, says that at first she had sleepless nights: "Our Health Minister at the time was infamously touting beetroot and garlic as opposed to Anti-Retro-Viral (ARV) medicine and, contrary to the law, the staff at HOKISA were giving ARVs to their HIV positive children on the advice of respected and highly qualified doctors."

Healthy and active children

She admits that they had had no experience with the drugs "but we

could only live in the hope that the drugs would work. Like neurotic parents we were checking on our happily sleeping children every few minutes to ensure they were okay!”

Their faith was not misplaced – today, one third of the children are on ARVs and all are flourishing, healthy, active, growing children. Helping to keep them so is Dr. Peter Jacka who runs a medical practice on the grounds of HOKISA, offering on-site support, advice and treatment to children, staff and members of the community.

The policy at HOKISA is to raise the children in as normal a home environment as possible. School-age children attend local primary schools, some of the children have joined an after-school lifesaving club, and their lives are enriched by outings to the Science Centre, Butterfly World, camping holidays or visits to the beach.

The nurturing continues as the children grow older. Once they reach an age where they can live independently as responsible adults, they have the chance to move into ‘Peace House’, which is also in Masi, and where HOKISA staff offer support and friendship. The oldest child has now grown up, is living independently in Peace House and has been trained to be a home-based carer. He is fully employed and is giving back to the community that supported him.



HOKISA gives orphaned children a safe ‘family’ life

Robyn Cohen, co-director of HOKISA, said: “What we truly appreciate, as much as the donations of money, is the giving of time and expertise, skills and equipment by local residents. The children revel in swimming and dancing lessons they are offered on a regular and on-going basis by local teachers.

“The children need consistency in their life, as all children do. When people offer their skills and experience, we want it to be on more than just a casual or occasional basis as the children form strong attachments, which we don’t like to see broken. They’ve had enough loss in their young lives.”

The GEW union is taking a delegation of EI Congress participants to visit Masi and see the range of social projects in the township. Meanwhile, HOKISA’s founding director, Lutz van Dijk, will be speaking after a free showing of *Themba!* his award-winning film about life in Masi, at the Congress Centre on Thurs 21 July, from 17:30–19:30. ■

info

To learn more about
HOKISA please visit:
www.hokisa.co.za

SOLIDARITY

Teachers help recovery from crisis

By Jane Blaikie, New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI)

Christchurch educators are working like heroes to restore the student communities devastated by the recent earthquakes.

Mary Pearson, a senior teacher at Chisnallwood Intermediate and local NZEI branch president, is determined to maintain her professional focus despite personal difficulties. She aims to establish an environment of normalcy for her students, who returned to class for an hour-and-a-half a day following a four-week absence.

"We had a mufti day, with cookies and milk – we were going to do a sausage sizzle but there was too much silt flying around and the kids could've gotten really sick. The students were so pleased to be back – and we were really glad to see their smiling faces."

The school has suffered some structural damage, although there are about a dozen schools and centres that may never reopen. Many students re-enrolled in schools outside of Christchurch after the quake, but only 700 had returned by March. The students who are not re-enrolled mostly reside in other areas of Canterbury, but 885 ended up in Auckland and 415 in Wellington.

Advice to educators

Despite the destruction, the first earthquake and the subsequent aftershocks have made people more prepared for disasters.

"It was an amazing feat to get 900 students and staff out safely with no injuries," says Mary. "It is vital for



Mary Pearson reflects on the lessons from the earthquake

every school in New Zealand to have a practiced evacuation plan, and to have students aware of the necessary procedures."

The earlier earthquake meant educators had previously dealt with the effects of trauma in the classroom, and Mary advises to be aware that "students will react in different ways and probably when we least expect it."

In turn, educators say they are being well supported by the Ministry of Education by allowing teachers flexible hours and substitute staff. The government has also made an extra \$20 million available to Christchurch.

Helping staff keep their jobs

Part of these funds will go towards ensuring support staff keep their jobs, something NZEI has fought for in the past. "If the teacher is not getting support then they're not getting kids on track with learning," said Nicki Ball from Aranui High School, whose house has taken 280 hours of work to return to liveable conditions.

Many students at Aranui High have been badly affected. "A lot of the media focus has been on the business district, and I don't think people in the country are aware of what's happening for people here."

Many students at Aranui cannot afford to replace books, shoes and uniforms lost in the earthquake, and Nicki says the school is grateful for funds and goods received from around the country. "For some kids, even food is a problem. We've got the breakfast club back up and running twice a week, so they get a good hearty meal twice a week, and some days we make lunch too."

Early childhood

The Canterbury Westland Kindergarten Association has high praise for early childhood educators. "They coped so well on the day – parents told us they went to pick up their children, and they're under the tables singing," says Karyn Willets.

Kindergarten teacher George Pearce says that being trained and remaining professional was vital. "Even though we had our own families in our minds, we still put the care of the children who were here and their parents first. We got the children under the tables, drawing on paper, playing with train sets or small toys."

George says NZEI must continue with its campaign for 100 per cent qualified teachers, making allowances for timing and budget. The demanding situations that Christchurch educators are dealing with, such as reviewing emergency procedures and dealing with family trauma, only reinforce the need for qualified teachers. ■



George Pearce believes qualified teachers helped keep children safe

Resources for educators

Shelley Dean from the New Zealand Ministry of Education's Traumatic Incident Service and Welfare Response team says the effects of the recent disasters are far-reaching. "We have never had any two, let alone three, disasters in New Zealand so close together of such impact."

Shelley says the damage and loss of life caused by the second earthquake required the team to respond to immediate needs first, working alongside agencies like the Red Cross and the Salvation Army. A key message has been: "Ko te oranga o te pakeke, te oranga o te tamaiti" – when the adult is embraced with wellness, so too will be the child.

The trauma teams include educational psychologists, but because of a lack of accommodation

and safety issues, mostly local team members have been able to work. Many Australian colleagues have reached out to team members in New Zealand.

The service offers a free number (0800 848326), planning workshops, checklists and guidelines at <http://tiny.cc/2h08u>.

But nothing beats being as prepared as you can, says Mary Pearson at Chisnallwood Intermediate. "Don't shelve your emergency kit with your class lists, as shelves can come down and bury the kit. Hang it by the door and collect it on the way out." Mary says the Japanese earthquake has "brought it all back for us, and our hearts are breaking for those poor Japanese people. I have a dear Japanese friend who I cannot locate." ■

info

Read more about teachers helping rebuild New Zealand after the earthquake:
http://ei-ie.org/en/news/news_details/1674

SOLIDARITY

Development co-operation bears fruit in Mali

By Agnès Breda, UNSA-Education (France) and Ritva Semi, OAJ (Finland)

At the turn of the new millennium, two EI member organisations, the OAJ and UNSA-Education embarked on a development co-operation project with an EI counterpart in Mali – *the Syndicat National de l'Education et de la Culture* (SNEC).



The new SNEC magazine

The aim was to strengthen the SNEC union's operations by developing its information and communication activities so that it could recruit new members more effectively.

The co-operation project utilised the internet to create information management and data-collection channels, as well as the installation of telephone and facsimile lines between the national and regional branch offices of SNEC.

Building capacity to recruit new members

One of the most visible results of the co-operation project was the publication of *L'Éducateur*, the union's magazine. Enthusiastic SNEC members were trained to produce the magazine, write articles and prepare the design and layout. Throughout this collaboration,

the magazine was managed by a passionate editorial committee that became highly competent through practice and experience. *L'Éducateur* gained increasing levels of visibility and was widely circulated to SNEC members. The union is now developing a strategy to meet the challenge of funding printing of the magazine, which has major costs.

Co-operation is a lifeline

SNEC's General Secretary, Tibou Telly, describes this co-operation with the French and Finnish teachers' unions as "an important stage in the history of the organisation." He added that the next main challenge for SNEC is to remain sustainable and provide for its own needs. For Telly, the co-operation has been a lifeline. Telly added: "It is important to know that even when this specific co-operation project comes to an end, the partnership between us three sister unions will continue."

Agnes Breda from UNSA-Education said: "I am very pleased to witness such enthusiasm. Reading the SNEC magazine gives a real practical, tangible aspect to the co-operation. It has been a pleasure to work in close collaboration with Finnish and Malian colleagues. It has been a fruitful experience for all three organisations. This proves that solidarity is a core value for teachers worldwide, and one of EI main strengths."

OAJ Special Advisor, Ritva Semi, said: "The co-operation between UNSA-Education, SNEC and OAJ is an important part of global education development. In Finland, the newly appointed government has agreed with the unions that Finnish know-how and experiences of education should remain integral to Finland's official development co-operation policy. This will enable us to build partnership work."

Tangible benefits and results

Such co-operation projects between teachers' trade unions in developed and developing countries have a definite purpose and produce tangible benefits and results, with lessons learned on both sides.

Solidarity plays an important role in EI activities. The aim is to support teachers' trade unions in developing countries so that they can increase and develop their activities and become independent unions in their country, as well as providing an effective voice for teachers and education. ■

info

EI Solidarity Work
<http://go.ei-ie.org/solidaritywork>

SOLIDARITY

EI affiliates support union capacity building in Moldova

By Adelina Danii, Education and Science Trade Union (Moldova)

For almost one year the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) and EI have been delivering a programme on trade union capacity development in Central and Eastern Europe.

In February 2011 the partners implemented training activity in Chisinau, together with EI's affiliate member, the Education and Science Trade Union of Moldova (ESTU), which the country's largest trade union.

Just as with other training courses, this seminar was tailor-made to the Union's specific requirements.

ESTU members wanted to learn more about the different social partnership models and gain new ideas about organising and delivering service provisions to their Union's membership.

Negotiation skills

Topics such as collective bargaining machineries and modern negotiations skills and techniques were picked up by the trade union leaders during the course. Following EI's suggestion, participants then discussed the Union's international co-operation possibilities with much interest.

The 25 participants that took part in the training responded with thought-provoking and insightful feedback to the items discussed during the sessions. They recognised that industrial relations do not yet function properly in their country, and that the Union needs to intensify its efforts to lobby at different levels of local and national structures in order to promote good partnership. They also concluded that one of the first steps



Participants discuss collective bargaining skills during a seminar in Chisinau

they needed to take involved creating mutual recognition and facilitating communication between the parties involved.

Alongside the EIS and EI representatives, the ESTU members discussed training for specific groups as an essential element of their future work strategy. ESTU thanked EIS and EI for their strong support and looked forward to welcoming them back for some follow-up initiatives.

Strengthening unions

ESTU President Mr. Ivanov, acknowledged the benefit of the

training and said: "We are thankful to EI and Scottish colleagues from the EIS for their support in strengthening our Union. This training has given us a real opportunity to share experiences, and will make us stronger in future bargaining activities with the authorities. Ultimately, this will enable us to become better quality teachers and provide better quality education to our students."

The preparation for trainers in Moldova will continue because participants recognised that more advanced level training in the near future was essential to intensify the Union's progress. ■

SOLIDARITY

Teachers in Burundi continue to face major challenges

By Claude Girard, Centrale des Syndicats du Québec (Canada)

Union activists from the Centrale des Syndicats du Québec (CSQ) union visited Burundi in late April as part of a development co-operation initiative funded by the Canadian International Development Agency.



The CSQ team's objective was to train 26 members of the Syndicat des travailleurs de l'enseignement du Burundi (STEB) union, and to capture the training in a video that will be rolled out further afield.

The education system in Burundi is overstretched and new reforms that are set to come into force in 2012 pose a major challenge to hard working teachers that are already struggling with inadequate resources and facilities. Despite teachers' concerns, the government intends to push ahead with plans to extend the number of years children must attend primary school from six to eight.

While the Burundi reforms are laudable in their ambition because they are designed to achieve the Education for All (EFA) objectives which were defined by the Dakar Forum of 2000. It is the context in which they are being

implemented that concerns Burundi's teachers.

Without doubt, progress towards primary EFA has been impressive in Burundi, where enrolment rates in primary schools have increased exponentially from 35 per cent in 1999 to 99 per cent in 2008. This progress has been possible because of increased government investment in education after the 2003 war which destabilised the entire country.

However, the progress has been hindered the fact that only 45 per cent of pupils complete primary school, and a large number of pupils, mostly girls, drop out during their first year.

The giant leaps towards primary EFA are being undermined by difficult school conditions. More schools have not been built to keep up with the rate of demand

that increased registrations creates. Classes are overcrowded and in some instances more than 100 pupils are packed into rooms designed for half that number.

In Mirango, a primary school near Bujumbura, 3,600 children are crammed into its classrooms. In Anésie Sinzobahamuya's year six class, she has 124 pupils but not a single textbook. Meanwhile, four or five pupils share the same desk that was originally intended for two pupils.

In Kinama IV primary school, on the outskirts of Bujumbura, Christine Bigirimana teaches 78 pupils aged between 10–17 years old. They are largely drawn from poor neighbourhoods and most do not have enough food to eat. They find it difficult to concentrate and they have no school equipment.

For Jean-Pierre Bigiriman, a teacher at Kanyosha III school, he strongly believes that class sizes in Burundi must be limited to a maximum of 50 pupils for effective teaching to take place.

With these challenges in mind, STEB's President, Eulalie Nibizi, has engaged the CSQ union to help her members to be trained in using analysis of the education reforms to equip Burundi teachers and union leaders in how to evaluate the measures, and empower them to demand improvements are properly negotiated and resourced before being implemented. ■

SOLIDARITY

Teacher mobility: developing resources for 'Overseas Trained Teachers'

By Darren Northcott, National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (UK)

The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) has long emphasised the importance of Overseas Trained Teachers (OTTs) in the British teaching workforce.

Over the past 20 years, the NASUWT increasingly recognised that it needed to develop its knowledge and understanding of the experience of OTTs and in order to enhance its ability to operate confidently and effectively in championing the interests of all members working in the UK.

NASUWT activists and staff with responsibility for representing and organising OTTs had reported clear challenges in taking forward this work as a result of the complexity of the legal and regulatory framework in the UK as it applies to OTTs. They also highlighted

the need for more effective national-level support and guidance.

In 2009 the NASUWT undertook a two-year project to explore ways in which the Union could develop new ways to work with OTTs. This sought to provide opportunities for OTTs and union activists to come together to share experiences and raise the profile of OTT-related issues within the Union and beyond.

As part of the project, the NASUWT developed a dedicated website for OTTs as a means of providing advice and guidance for OTTs and its activist base.



The website hosts information about professional challenges OTTs face, such as familiarisation with the curriculum, behavioural expectations, and broader themes such as health, transport and personal security.

The Union has had very positive feedback from OTTs and union activists about the work it has undertaken in this area. The Union held its first conference for OTTs in London during March 2011 to celebrate the achievements of the project and to set out the Union's future priorities in this area.

Speaking at the Conference, NASUWT'S Deputy General Secretary and EI Executive Board member, Dr. Patrick Roach said: "Research has identified that problems of long hours, poor pay and discrimination affect overseas trained teachers. They are particularly vulnerable and cannot challenge these unfair practices since they risk not only losing their jobs, but also their right to remain in the UK. This makes the need for enhanced support, information and advice for overseas trained teachers especially vital." ■

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Visit NASUWT's website for information on OTTs at: www.overseastrainedteachers.org.uk



TECHNOLOGY

Cell phone technology helps promote reading

By Pav Akhtar, Education International

A new library of cell phone stories – also known as mobile novels or ‘m-novels’ – has been launched by the Shuttleworth Foundation in South Africa as part of its m4Lit (mobiles for literacy) project. Yoza is the name of the m-novel library, which uses cell phones to support teenagers to read and write. The m-novels are free, interactive and available on all WAP-enabled cell phones, as well as on Facebook.

The founder of Yoza and a fellow at the Shuttleworth Foundation, Steve Vosloo, says: “The cell phone, not the Kindle or iPad, is the e-reader of Africa. Yoza is using this to get African teens reading and writing.”

The m4Lit project

The m4Lit project began in 2009 to explore whether and how teens in South Africa would read stories on their phones. Most of the reading and writing that happens on phones is of short SMS texts and chat messages.

The Foundation published a story called *Kontax*. It was 20 pages long and actively invited reader participation through this longer content; cell phones are interactive after all. Readers could leave comments on chapters, vote in opinion polls related to the story, and enter a writing competition. By the end of May 2010 another *Kontax* story had been published.

The uptake was tremendous. Since the launch, the two stories have been read on more than 43,000 phones, with over 4,000 entries received in the writing competitions, and more than 4,000 comments left by readers on individual chapters. Many of the readers ask for more stories and in different genres.

Encouraged by the high uptake of the stories and reader requests, the Foundation decided to launch Yoza.

Getting young people reading

Yoza’s goal is to get young people reading and writing, and in the ‘book-poor’ but ‘cell phone-rich’ context of South Africa, the phone is a viable complement and sometimes alternative to a printed book. The Foundation recognised that to help young people to read, books printed on paper and on phones were needed. “The paper versus pixels debate takes up a lot of page space, but in a country with a severe literacy problem, it is necessary to move beyond that and focus on reading and writing, whatever the medium,” says Vosloo.

Good reading material

Stories published on Yoza offer compelling, entertaining reading. The aim is to captivate teens and inspire them to catch the reading bug. Enjoying well-written stories by good authors is part of the Yoza experience. The m-novels are written in conventional language, with txtspeak only used when a character is writing or reading SMS or instant message chats. Also included is prescribed school reading that is in the public domain, for example, Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*.

There is a growing awareness about the impact that a lack of books has on literacy levels in South Africa. Books are scarce and prohibitively expensive

for most. Statistics show that 51 per cent of homes do not own a book, and only seven per cent of schools have libraries.

What South African teens have access to is phones. Statistics indicate that 90 per cent of urban youth have their own phone. The take up and interaction with the first two *Kontax* stories published in English and IsiXhosa have shown that phones are a viable platform for reading. There is no charge for the actual stories, but users do pay their mobile network operator for mobile data traffic. Images are kept to a minimum to keep the mobile charges low, making m-novels an affordable option for great reading.

Creating a community of readers

In 2011 the plan for Yoza is to build a library of cell phone stories of multiple genres that are available throughout Africa. *Kontax* has already been published in Kenya. Competitions with free airtime prizes prompt readers to participate in the interactive questions at the end of chapters, keeping readers engaged and coming back for more.

For Vosloo, the aim is “to grow the library of stories and a community of young users who not only read the stories but participate to comment, review and write them. We’re turning reading into a social, sharing experience.” ■

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Learn more about the m4lit project at: www.shuttleworthfoundation.org/projects/m4lit

New EI Deputy General Secretary

By Claude Carroué, Education International

David Edwards will take up the position of Deputy General Secretary from 1 August. David has worked closely with EI in recent years and was selected from a group of outstanding applicants.

David is currently a senior policy analyst in the international relations team of EI's largest member organisation, the National Education Association (USA). The NEA international relations team manages its membership in EI; articulates NEA's policy in international forums, and maintains communication with EI-affiliated unions around the world. It also works with the UN; inter-governmental agencies and non-governmental organisations on issues that affect education; teachers; gender, as well as human and trade union rights issues.

Prior to working at the NEA, David was an education specialist at the Organisation of American States; a project coordinator in Bolivia, and a teacher of German. ■



Calendar

SEPTEMBER 2011

- 3–5** 64th UN Conference of NGOs – Bonn, Germany
- 8–10** IBB School Leadership Symposium – Zug, Switzerland
- 12–14** EI sub-regional workshop on trade union rights – Phnom Penh, Cambodia
- 21** International Day of Peace – Brussels, Belgium

OCTOBER 2011

- 5** World Teachers' Day – Worldwide
- 7** World Day for Decent Work – Worldwide
- 10–11** EI-ETUCE (Europe) Committee – Brussels, Belgium
- 14–18** Global March against Child Labour Assembly and Conference on Child Labour in Agriculture Casablanca, Morocco
- 20–25** OECD-ELSAC Session – Paris, France
- 27** ETUCE Conference Third Party Violence project – Warsaw, Poland

NOVEMBER 2011

- 4–12** Indo-Global Education Summit on Academic Collaborations and Student Enrolment – New Delhi, India
- 17–18** EI-ETUCE Work-Related Stress Conference – Brussels, Belgium
- 25** International day for Elimination of Violence against Women – Worldwide

DECEMBER 2011

- 1** World AIDS Day – Worldwide
- 10** World Human Rights Day

**We welcome your comments.
Please write to: editor@ei-ie.org**

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