



Cambodians defy official ban on World Teachers' Day march



Indian children win new Right to Education Bill p. 3 EI President steps down after election to SA National Assembly p. 8 Strategic responses to the global economic crisis p. 10 Honduran teachers face post-coup violence p. 17 Quality teacher training spells success for Finnish students p. 23

Don't sacrifice children to economic crisis



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This month we are happy to report on a very successful World Teachers' Day 2009.

Teachers around the world participated at the highest level ever, thanks in part to better organisation and

modern communications. Interactive web features such as electronic greeting cards, digital photo streaming and tweets on Twitter helped EI to connect with teachers around the world, and them with one another.

On 5 October it seemed that everyone, everywhere, was talking about and celebrating their teachers and the amazing contribution they make. Their positive impact on the intellectual, social, psychological and physical growth and wellbeing of hundreds of millions of children around the world is literally incalculable.

But if politicians aren't committed to building strong and stable public education systems all year round, it's not really enough to merely smile and celebrate teachers for a single day.

In the face of economic crisis, governments must invest in lifelong learning for the future health and harmony of their societies. This will require political will and personal courage, no doubt. But society expects teachers to demonstrate the courage of their convictions, so why would we expect any less of our political leaders? Education International is urging leaders everywhere to heed our call to protect public education and to hear our plea on behalf of students:

Don't sacrifice children and youth on the altar of the economic crisis!

Fred van Leeuwen, EI General Secretary

Good news

Right to education affirmed for Indian children

India has passed landmark legislation providing for free and compulsory education to all children aged 6 to 14. In a vote held 20 July, the Rajya Sabha, India's upper House of Parliament, gave unanimous approval to The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill. The legislation passed the lower House, Lok Sabha, on 4 August.

The vote came after a long and intense struggle by teachers and their unions across India, said Mr. S. Eswaran, newly appointed Vice-President for Asia-Pacific region and the General Secretary of the All-India Primary Teachers' Federation.

"We are very happy. This is the outcome of our sincere efforts and agitation launched by AIPTF with the support of all affiliates," said Eswaran. "We have achieved success in our struggle to get every child in the country the fundamental right to education."

EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen welcomed the news. "This is an enormous step forward for a country such as India, which faces significant challenges in eliminating child labour and reaching the goal of universal access to quality public education. EI congratulates all of the Indian teachers and

Cover photo: Even though the authorities officially disallowed their demonstration and denied their right to celebrate World Teachers' Day, members of the Cambodian Independent Teachers' Association still took to the streets of Phnom Penh on 5 October.



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EI Vice-President S. Eswaran (centre, wearing white) and the All-India Primary Teachers' Federation organised tens of thousands of members to participate in a massive demonstration in front of the Indian Parliament in Delhi to urge passage of an improved version of the Right to Education Bill.

trade union activists who have worked so hard for so long to bring forward this historic legislation.”

Clearly, the practicalities of guaranteeing education to so many million children are daunting, and will demand increased funding. Eswaran said the AIPTF estimates that about 2.2 million additional teachers will be needed in the next two to three years to meet the requirements of the bill.

“Where will they get the money and find the trained teachers? This would influence the quality of education as well as opportunities for [teacher] appointment,” he said, noting that with so many untrained teachers and class sizes of 50-60 students, India faces great challenges in terms of education quality.

“We have protested at these conditions, and told government that the para-teachers have to be brought along, get training to be qualified, and adequate salaries,” Eswaran said.

Indrashekhar Mishra, General Secretary of the secondary teachers' union, AISTF described the bill as “a step in the right direction” which will rejuvenate the education sector.

The Bill seeks to make access to education more equitable. It prohibits the vetting of students and parents, and disallows the charging of arbitrary fees to secure admission to public schools. It also obliges private schools to make a quarter of their places available to disadvantaged children on a non-fee paying basis.

AISTF expressed concern that the latter clause “will encourage privatisation and thereby commercialisation of school education” and advocated “changes to ensure free and compulsory education for the child up to the age of 18 years.” Chief among their recommendations is the implementation of a neighbourhood school concept which aims to send children to the schools closest to their homes.

Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal said, “We are dealing with an issue that will determine the course of India in the 21st Century.... We must move forward by sending a strong message to the world and to our children that we are determined to provide them with quality education.”

We have achieved success in our struggle for getting every child in the country the fundamental right to education

Sibal noted that about half of India's 200 million children are out of the education system. “We have to get them back to school,” he said. “It is not an easy task to embark on a national enterprise but we have to do it. Is it easy to tackle climate change? Is it easy to counter the global meltdown? ... I agree it is a difficult task. Together, we have to do it, we must do it, and we will do it,” he stated. ■■■

World Teachers' Day

Build the Future: Invest in Teachers Now!

This was the resounding message from teachers around the world as they lobbied and marched and celebrated World Teachers' Day, 5 October, despite the global economic crisis threatening education and other key public services.

In countries where democratic rights are respected, educators celebrated their profession and their activism in a great variety of colourful and creative ways. In other countries, teachers were prohibited for reasons, both natural and man-made, from exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association.

In Indonesia, for example, teachers struggled to resume classes amongst the rubble in Padang, where more than 600 people were killed and many buildings, including schools, were destroyed by two massive earthquakes in late September.

In Cambodia, teachers took to the streets of Phnom Penh, despite a government order forbidding them to celebrate World Teachers' Day.

In a letter sent on 3 October, the Phnom Penh municipal authorities informed the Cambodian Independent Teachers' Association (CITA) that its plans to mark the day in front of the former National Assembly and the Ministry of Education would not be allowed. Leng Bunhong, Chief of Administration for CITA, said: "Cambodia has now lost its freedom, rights of expression and of association to join together in an association or trade union."

In Iran, teacher unionists were holding a union meeting in the Tehran home of their General Secretary, Mr. Baghani, when plain clothes policemen suddenly burst in and arrested them all. No reasons were given. Nine of the teacher unionists were



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Even though the authorities officially disallowed their demonstration and denied their right to celebrate World Teachers' Day, members of the Cambodian Independent Teachers' Association still took to the streets of Phnom Penh on 5 October.

released the next day, but Baghani was interrogated for 11 hours and charged with "holding an unauthorised meeting" and "celebrating World Teachers' Day."

In Romania, teachers and other public servants took strike action on 5 October to protest at the massive public spending cuts ordered by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Teachers have already been on strike this year against a pay freeze and a refusal to pay a promised increase of 50% on their meagre average salaries of \$485 per month.

By contrast, Spanish President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero published an open letter to teachers in the context of Spain's recent education reforms and its new project

towards a national social agreement for education. "I will continue to dedicate my heart and all my efforts to showing that the greatness of any country should be measured by the respect it accords to its teachers," Zapatero wrote.

In Belgium, teachers demonstrated in front of the Ministry of Education for the French-speaking community for withdrawal of the plan to impose maximum working hours and cut education spending.

In Germany, the EI affiliates GEW and VBE issued a joint statement insisting that "the decisions taken at the 2008 Education Summit must be fully and politically enforced." They called for both the federal state and the Länder to take the joint re-

sponsibility for “creating the conditions to achieve an educational Republic of Germany.”

In Albania, teacher unions FSASH and SPASH jointly organised events to involve local teachers and grassroots union members as much as possible. At one event in the capital city of Tirana, the Minister of Education and Science Genc Pollo announced the government’s plan to make education one of its top priorities next year and to increase investment, especially at pre-school and primary levels.

In the United States, the American Federation of Teachers urged Congress and the

I will continue to dedicate my heart and all my efforts to showing that the greatness of any country should be measured by the respect it accords to its teachers. — Spanish President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero

Obama administration to make sound investments in education, including teacher recruitment and retention, both domestically and abroad, to improve children’s futures and restore economic strength. “As leaders from Argentina to Zimbabwe grapple with the world economic crisis, it is more important than ever that they reject cuts to education, which offer only short-term relief yet have lasting effects from which children may never fully recover,” said AFT President Randi Weingarten.

The National Education Association in the USA expressed concern about the punitive testing regimes in American schools, and found parallels in the experience of South African teachers. Filmmaker Molly Blank explored the role of testing in South African high schools and, in celebration of World Teachers’ Day, her film “Testing Hope” was made available on the NEA website.

In the United Kingdom, members of the National Union of Teachers of England and Wales also boycotted the testing in their schools. Many other events took place across the globe on one of the most-celebrated World Teachers’ Days ever. III

Peace. Live it. Teach it.

“Peace. Live it. Teach it.” This was the theme for Canadian teachers and students who put peace education at the heart of their World Teachers’ Day celebrations. They met with the Dalai Lama in Montreal, after he gave

a presentation to 600 future teachers on the theme of teaching ethics and religion. Left to right: Heather MacIsaac, the teacher whose design won the WTD peace poster contest, CTF President Mary-Lou Donnelly,

and the Dalai Lama holding a box containing the award-winning essays on peace education by Canadian secondary school students Emily, Daniel and Miguel. III



World Teachers' Day

Bloggers celebrate teachers too

Barbara Hoskins Sakamoto has taught English as a Second or Foreign Language for more than 20 years. She currently lives in Kitakyushu, Japan, where she blogs at www.teachingvillage.org.

She writes: "I want to learn about anything that will make me a better teacher. These days, that includes learning how to use Web 2.0 tools and virtual worlds in the classroom and for professional development, learning about new teaching methodologies and techniques, trying to keep up with research about how children learn. Luckily, I have found generous online friends who help me learn."

Here are some of her thoughts on World Teachers' Day 2009:

There are teachers, and there are *teachers*. I respect anyone who steps into a classroom, but I adore educators for whom teaching is as much a vocation as a job. Why? Because when teachers go on vacation, they look at ways to exploit their adventures for students. Whether collecting foreign magazines for language class, or foreign coins for math class, or postcards for geography class, teachers always look for inexpensive ways to make learning more interesting and relevant....

Because teachers turn every single thing they touch into an educational opportunity. Teachers looked at World of Warcraft and thought, this just might motivate reluctant learners. They visited Second Life and said, "Cool place to teach! Look at the potential here!" They looked at Skype and saw a way to connect their students with the world. They looked at Twitter and said, "Great way to share resources!"

Because teachers fight passionately for education ideals – to include technology, to exclude technology; to abolish standardized tests, to improve standardized tests;



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Primary students in Karachi, Pakistan, display the EI World Teachers' Day poster.

to open classrooms to the world, to protect children from the world. But, at the end of the day, teachers work to help students succeed within whatever reality they face. Because teachers are reading this and wondering why I'm making a fuss about

the things they do every day... Because they can't imagine doing anything but teach.

Happy World Teachers' Day! Thank you for inspiring the world's children. III



Teachers teach ... and tweet!

Raul Pacheco Vega is a Canadian teacher and researcher in environmental studies, and a consultant on social media. On World Teachers' Day, he posted these thoughts on his blog at www.hummingbird604.com

My parents (both of them) have been teachers (well, professors more like it) for longer than I've been on this planet. All my brothers and myself have taught. Two of my brothers, my Mom and I all have PhDs, which means that we are qualified to teach at the university level. And my late Auntie L was an elementary school teacher....

Teaching is not only in my genes, but it is in my blood, it is in my soul and it's something I adore doing. I have taught at all levels (high school, undergraduate, Masters and PhD), I have taught in different languages (mostly Spanish and English) and I have taught in different countries. I have taught a broad variety of subjects...

The most important thing is, I teach because I am passionate about it. I love shaping my students' thinking processes. I love sharing what I have learned. I love helping people grow and learn...

To my Mom (who is still a professor at her university), my brothers (who are both assistant professors in US universities), to my former PhD supervisor and my instructors, professors, and teachers, my friends who teach in each one of their respective countries, and everyone else who is a teacher ... my congratulations.

We are all contributing in one way or another to the growth of our societies. III

Those who visited EI's World Teachers' Day site this year will have noticed that for the first time we integrated a Twitter board on its front page

"What's Twitter?" those who are not familiar with the odd term may ask.

In short, Twitter is a worldwide micro-blog that has transformed the way social networking sites operate, even threatening the hegemony of Web 2.0 giant, Facebook.

On Twitter, users can post a maximum of 140 characters in a "tweet" about any topic under the sun. Users have created a whole new vocabulary by changing the verb into a noun (someone "tweets" by posting a "tweet") and introducing the strange word "twitterer" (someone who uses the social networking site).

Site visitors who "follow" you will see your tweets on their Twitter page. If they like your tweet they may choose to "retweet" it by copying the whole tweet preceded by an "RT". If you're tweeting to a fellow "twitterer" you post your tweet preceded by an "@" then his or her user name, like "@eduint" – which is Education International's name on Twitter.

If you are tweeting about a particular subject, you may "tag" the end of your tweet with a hashtag followed by the topic, for example "#michaeljackson" or "#roses". Conversely you can search for all the tweets about a particular topic by typing a hashtag followed by the topic in the search box on your Twitter page.

Because Twitter is such a small and simple site, it is extremely easy to integrate its functions into your own websites and Twitter

twitter

ter applications have been developed for all sorts of mobile devices making it possible to tweet anywhere you go. Hence its simplicity and portability made its popularity soar sky-high in the past two years.

This year, we wanted to provide a service to teachers and their unions who make use of Twitter to chat about World Teachers' Day. Using the hashtag #wtd2009, we posted a live Twitter board featuring only tweets tagged with the topic. It proved to be an instant hit! On 5 October, more than 220 tweets were posted – ranging from best wishes to one's favourite teacher to links to blog articles about the passion of teaching.

Through Twitter, we were able to befriend so many teachers who are passionate about their profession and listen to their day-to-day concerns. Much to our surprise, there are numerous teachers out there who share their teaching methodologies and exchange teaching materials – providing support to one another – all through Twitter! III

INFO

Read all the tweets about World Teachers' Day:
twitter.com/#search?q=%23wtd2009

Follow EI on Twitter: twitter.com/eduint

Global leadership

EI President steps down after election to federal public office

Australian teacher and trade unionist Susan Hopgood takes on the presidency of Education International following the resignation of EI President Thulas Nxesi, who has been elected to the National Assembly of the Republic of South Africa.

Mr. Nxesi told the officers of EI at their autumn meeting that, as a Parliamentarian, he will have to devote all his time and energy to advocating for his constituents and his party, the African National Congress. For that reason, he made the difficult decision to step down as President of EI, a position he has held since the 2004 World Congress in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and to which he was re-elected in 2007 at the Berlin Congress.

The officers of EI paid tribute to Mr. Nxesi, noting that he has served the cause of teacher trade unionism at the national and international level with tremendous heart and dedication. His long history of anti-apartheid activism began in the student movement and continued through the labour movement.

Born in 1959 in the Eastern Cape, Thulas completed his Bachelor of Arts at Fort Hare University and his Bachelor of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. In 1987, he earned his Higher Education Diploma from the University of South Africa. He began his career teaching geography at Ikusasa Senior Secondary School in Tem-

bisa, and was later promoted to head of the social sciences department.

Thulas was a founding member of the National Education Union of South Africa, and eventually became its General Secretary. He went on to lead NEUSA in unity talks leading to formation of SADTU, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union, the first national, non-racial education union in the country. As General Secretary since 1995, he has led massive strikes and campaigns in defence of trade union rights for teachers and quality education for all.

"It's the end of my career with EI but not the end of our deep friendships and solidarity," Thulas said. He thanked the staff and political leaders of EI: "I salute you and offer my gratitude for your collegial support and my promise of ongoing commitment to the values and goals of Education International. It has been a pleasure and an honour working with you."

The EI Executive Board voted unanimously that Susan Hopgood, EI's longest-serving

Vice-President, should assume the position of President until the 6th World Congress to be held in Cape Town in 2011.

A former secondary school mathematics teacher, Ms Hopgood rose through the ranks to become a national leader of the Australian Education Union, which affiliates 181,000 teachers and education workers in public pre-schools, schools and vocational education institutions throughout Australia. Elected AEU Federal Secretary in 2006, she is the first woman to achieve that post.

"Susan brings a wealth of experience to her new position," Mr. Nxesi said. "We are fortunate to be able to count on activists like Susan, with such skills and integrity to lead EI."

First elected to the EI Executive Board in 2001, Ms Hopgood has served as a member of the Finance and Women's Committees, and as Chair of the Constitution and By-Laws Committee. She was Vice-Chairperson of EI's Asia-Pacific Regional Committee from 2000

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Eva Lis Sirén, Lärarförbundet Sweden



Reg Weaver, NEA USA



Irene Duncan Adanusa, GNAT Ghana



S. Eswaran, AIPTF India



Juçara Maria Dutra Vieira, CNTE Brazil



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Executive Board member Graeme McCulloch of Australia presents a farewell gift to outgoing EI President Thulas Nxesi, as his wife Sesi looks on and incoming President Susan Hopgood applauds. Other members of the Executive Board from every region of the world paid tribute to Thulas and thanked him for his contributions to Education International.

to 2006, and Vice-President of the Council of Pacific Education from 1998-2006.

Not limiting her commitments to education unionism, Susan is also extremely active in the broader Australian labour movement. She serves as a Vice-President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and is a member of several of its committees.

Executive Board member S. Eswaran was elected to take Ms Hopgood's position as EI Vice-President for Asia Pacific. As General Secretary of the All-India Primary Teachers' Association, he leads 2.3 million members. (See pages 2-3)

"After 50 years of continuous trade union service, I now have the opportunity to be a leader on a global level, and to work for improving the professional development and the status of teachers," he said. "My areas of particular interest are HIV/AIDS, child labour, research studies, strengthening organisations at regional level, and development cooperation."

Eswaran outlined three future directions for EI to pursue:

- › Development of solidarity to make unions strong;
- › Emphasis on the environment, and raising awareness among youth

› Making gender balance a reality in EI, in schools and in society.

Eswaran credited the hard work of AIPTF in enabling him to reach a position of leadership at the international level.

Other changes at EI: Haldis Holst of the Union of Education Norway (UEN) assumes the position of EI Vice-President for Europe, and Patrick Gonthier of UNSA Education, France, moves to an open seat on the Executive Board. III

Guest speaker

Federico Mayor Zaragoza

“ We have the power to make the world we seek, but only if we have the courage to make a new beginning. ”

U.S. President Barack Obama, Cairo, 4 June 2009

Now, this time, another world is possible



A Spanish scientist, poet and politician, Federico Mayor Zaragoza served as Director-General of UNESCO for 12 years, beginning in 1987. Under his leadership, UNESCO created the Culture of Peace Programme, which emphasizes education for peace, human rights and democracy. In 1994, Mayor was instrumental in establishing that 5 October would be recognised annually as World Teachers' Day.

To transition from an era of change to a change of era it is essential for society to react, ceasing to be passive spectators and mere witnesses to the passage of time, and commencing to participate actively. Only then will governments be authentically democratic, acting upon the will of the majority of citizens, while hearing and respecting their opinions. I can never cease to underscore the significance of the fact that, at the end of that terrible Second World War, the United Nations ... chose to commence its Charter's preamble with these words: "We, the peoples... are determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war." It was clear that it was the "peoples" who should build peace through their authentic representatives, doing so by virtue of this supreme commitment toward the future generations.

However, it was not "the peoples," but rather the States, many of them authoritarian, which interpreted the UN Charter at their own discretion. Cooperation soon became exploitation, subsidies were con-

verted into loans, and universal values were replaced by the rules of the marketplace. Preparing for war to ensure peace prevailed over efforts to build a lasting peace. The UN, progressively abandoned by the great powers, became a humanitarian agency, rather than a supranational legal and ethical framework, witnessing how its dream of worldwide democracy dissolved into plutocratic groupings (G7, G8, G20...) that have replaced "We, the peoples..." with "We, the powerful...".

The situation has deteriorated progressively and, at the end of the "cold war," supported by large weapons manufacturers, a war economy gradually developed until in the year 2000 investments in military equipment reached 3,000 million dollars daily while deaths from hunger and now avoidable diseases were estimated at 60,000-70,000 persons each day. There was no political will among the major powers to foster endogenous development or guarantee the equal dignity of all human beings.

“The time has arrived for a great transition from a culture of force to a culture of the word.”

And the present state of affairs is our collective shame, which demands an urgent and radical change.

This change is now possible because, in the last few years, circumstances have rapidly “matured” to enable former “subjects” to become citizens of the world and to acquire a “global conscience.” Thus, they have the possibility of making comparisons, the fundamental basis of ethics. In addition, there has been an increase in the number of women in public office and in decision-making roles and, finally, we have the possibility of distance participation through modern communications technology (Internet, SMS...).

Given the “human tension” generated by the present crises – economic, environmental, nutritional, energy, democratic, ethical... - there is an extraordinary opportunity to convert into action the shock and outrage felt by those who futilely demand reasonable investments for the eradication of hunger or AIDS, and who observe that the same institutions that have opened the floodgates to pour immense amounts of money into bailouts, are also those that have likewise, with greed and irresponsibility, prompted this crisis situation...

It should be recognized that the roots of this multiple crisis lie precisely in the terrible mistake of replacing the “universal democratic principles” of social justice, solidarity, equality ... with the principles of the marketplace. This has resulted in increased economic inequality, fomenting social unrest and underscoring the unbearable lightness of democracy, to paraphrase Kundera....

It is now possible to strengthen democracy in order to achieve the radical change that President Obama represents among the world’s leaders: dialogue, collaboration, constantly seeking peace through justice

and equal dignity for all human beings. “Together,” he has said, “we can.”

It is now possible, because it has been made clear that multilateralism is essential. It’s not about reinforcing some of the institutions of the System, but rather about radically changing them. If we were to limit ourselves to merely reforming our financial institutions, it would be as if Roosevelt had stopped at Bretton Woods.

Indeed, in 10 or 12 years it will be possible for that long-desired change of an era to take place, transitioning from a culture of force and imposition to a culture of dialogue, conciliation, alliance and peace. The time has arrived for a great transition from a culture of force to a culture of the word.

Until just recently immense amounts of money were still being spent on weapons for conventional warfare, which since the Vietnam conflict have fallen into disuse. The Bush administration took military spending, both its own and that of others (the “allied” countries), to unimaginable limits. But now, fortunately – and this is another important factor in transcending our present crisis situation - President Obama has decided to lead the way toward disarmament, offering a concrete plan to reduce arsenals, change the focus and stop the proliferation of nuclear warheads. As Obama has said, “We must choose between investments to maintain the security of the American people and others chosen to enrich a manufacturing company or a large contractor.”

It is now possible, while strengthening the multinational system and immediately eliminating tax havens (finally bringing before the courts the criminals that traffic in arms, drugs, patents, money and people), to partially replace spending on weapons with investments in sustainable global develop-

ment: renewable energies, food production (agriculture, aquaculture and biotechnology), obtaining and distributing water, health, transportation, housing... Only then will . . . the breeding grounds that create migratory flows of desperate people and violence be avoided.

This is now possible, due to that innermost feeling that the raised fist must finally give way to the outstretched hand. The key words are “involvement” and “sharing.” I am sure that at this time the great majority of employed citizens would contribute to a Voluntary Solidarity Fund. What we cannot do is to always assume that these problems – to which we have largely consented with our silence and inaction – will be solved by those who failed to restrain systems based on deregulation and speculation.

“All human beings are equal in dignity:” this is the key – so lucidly expressed in the UNESCO Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human rights - to entering a new era. All human beings capable of creating, imagining, inventing, and undertaking this new beginning, in the knowledge that we have the necessary abilities and will. And then, unlike those who remain anchored in the past and in their privileges, unlike the sceptics and faint-hearted, we will commence the change that we all desire, toward that other world of our dreams. With serenity, because we know that we can do it. As Álvaro Cunqueiro so beautifully observed: “The bird sings while the bough breaks, because he knows the strength of his wings.” III

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Hands up for education !

Educators fighting economic crisis: It's time for global and local strategies

By Angele Attard and Monique Fouilhoux

Whatever good or bad news we may hear in the media, education is still suffering from measures taken since the onset of the global financial and economic crisis. This has an impact on teachers and education unions at all levels of education.

Education International has been running a campaign on the crisis since March 2009, and has worked extensively on combating the crisis across all regions of the world. In particular, a high-level seminar held in September for leaders of education unions from Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia yielded very useful results in the form of a strategy for education unions to fight against the crisis. Although that all elements may not be applicable globally, it is nonetheless useful to help us in our union work in times of crisis.

This strategy is only a small part of EI's "Hands Up for Education" campaign, which includes fact sheets, speaking notes and a press kit, the analysis of two EI surveys on the impact on education of the economic crisis, ongoing global monitoring and international lobbying. All campaign resources are available at www.ei-ie.org/handsup

Background

Two days of plenaries and workshops provided good practice examples of negotiating during times of crisis, as well as deep discussions on the impact of the crisis in the region. A draft strategy then was drafted by the EI Secretariat and presented to the seminar participants, who then offered feedback to complete the strategy. This was one of the most concrete

outcomes of the Hands Up for Education campaign to date, and one to which the member unions constructively contributed. We believe it will prove to be a useful tool for education unions in times of crisis.

Why do we need a new strategy?

Teaching and learning conditions vary widely across the globe. Poor working conditions and inadequate pay were a daily reality for millions prior to the onset of the current global financial and economic crisis. In different degrees, the situation has now become even more severe. A number of teachers and academics face increased working hours, larger class sizes, salary and pension cuts, reduced social benefits, redundancies and the like. Cuts to education budgets mean that teachers are not the only ones to suffer the impact of this crisis, but that students and future generations will feel the repercussions for years to come.

We go about our union work using tried and tested recipes for negotiation and representation of our teachers and academics. So why do we need a new strategy? Because we are facing unprecedented threats.

This strategy represents an inward look at the work of education unions. More importantly, it stems from collaboration and sharing of good practice between leaders of education unions. Thus, it can help to stimulate us to think of recipes tried by others and not yet tested by us. This strategy aims to empower teachers and education unions. It aims to protect teachers' status

and rights, and fundamentally defines education as a solution to the crisis. It can prove useful for union work at the international, regional, national and local level, and can be built upon further in any of these contexts.

The role of unions

The financial crisis was aggravated by an imbalance between the bargaining power of employees and employers, which then led to a broader and more severe economic crisis. Unions therefore need to push for stronger negotiating powers, in order to bridge this imbalance between the two sides. Good practice at the international level needs to be emulated in all levels of our work.

In July, the International Labour Organisation agreed on an ILO Tripartite Jobs Pact called Agenda for Global Recovery. This involves governments, unions and employers, and highlights the key role of unions. This should be a key motivator to drive our work forward. Where unions have been involved in designing solutions to the crisis, the social dimension has been included in the resulting political and policy responses. In this respect, our role is clear.

Unions have particular strengths. General labour unions have a special view on the social effects of economic policy and have a capacity to make counter-proposals to government measures, based on their own research. As education unions, we have a unique view on the impact of economic policy and are able to tap into the views of members working at the front lines. As unionists, we are able to break down complex concepts into everyday

“Sacking thousands of staff who deliver education is deplorable at any time. In a recession, it is an act of academic vandalism by employers and government. As demand for learning soars, universities and colleges need more staff, not less. Stand up to defend jobs, defend education.”

— Sally Hunt, General Secretary, University and College Union, UK

language and we can engage educators in debates about possible solutions to the impact of the crisis.

Let's make it clear to governments what we are fighting for

We need to convey a clear message to governments about the goals we are fighting for. Equal access to high quality education is one of these, in connection with greater social justice and decent labour conditions. This goal can be furthered by advocating for well-trained teachers; by combating privatisation of public schools as the answer to the crisis; and by articulating the value of public education.

Another goal is enhancing investment in education over the long-term. This goal underpins our argumentation for increasing or at least maintaining teachers' salaries. This goal also serves as a background for the fight against weakening of pension benefits and the protection of teachers' pension rights.

An additional goal is to raise the priority placed on social dialogue. Without it, the human aspect of post-crisis recovery will be lost, and education will be seen as a cost, rather than the solution. This could have a devastating impact across the globe. We therefore need to pressure governments for a clear strategy to emerge from the crisis, and to make education part of the solution. In this respect we must stress that all negative crisis measures (e.g. budget cuts) need to be short-term measures only, and must be compensated by a commitment to

future investment and re-instatement of full salaries or compensation for cuts made to teachers' salaries.

We also need to have a clear policy in relation to the democratic values of public education, and government's wider responsibilities to their youngest citizens. If, as politicians often say, children are our future, and the most valuable assets of society, why do governments look for ever-cheaper ways to educate them? Economic growth in the post-industrial era has to be based on intellect and knowledge, and equal access to education is clearly an essential factor in creating social stability and harmony. As unions, our goals and advocacy work can also go beyond education, dealing with problems such as privatisation and unemployment in other sectors, as part of the public service movement against the crisis.

Let's reevaluate our collective bargaining strategies

Let's rethink the way in which we negotiate without our employers. First, in terms of timespan: We can negotiate for pay rises or compensation to take effect after the crisis, when a certain level of growth has been achieved. Second, in terms of collaboration with other education and labour unions, we need to present a united front across education and labour unions so that governments will not be able to play one union off against another. Third, in terms of positions of influence, union leaders who are members of official government bodies need to use their positions to exert pressure. Fourth, in terms of industrial action,

we can use the threat of industrial action without necessarily going on strike.

We need to find out what governments want and be clear with our demands. In this context it is important to understand the arguments put forward by governments for cutting public budgets or salaries, and we need to be prepared to counteract each one. Research on related issues could prove invaluable to strengthen our arguments. As education unions we also need to come up with alternative plans and solid research of our own. In turn, we need to be quick in responding to the changing situations in our respective countries, as events are unfolding rapidly from one day to another.

Let's be smart and politically astute in our planning. We need to choose the right moments to exert pressure, such as just before elections, gaining commitments for positive reforms after the campaign period. We should not take sides. Rather than form political alliances, it is better to stay in the margins of any potential political controversies. We also need to be vigilant to catch governments out if they try to use the crisis as an excuse for their mistakes.

Finally, in our negotiations it is crucial to aim for binding results, such as strong collective agreements and legislation with teeth.

Let's use a combination of new and old tactics

Many tried and tested measures have proven to work in exerting pressure on

governments. We can interact with the public via the use of the media by holding press conferences, issuing communiqués, helping students, parents and other allies to speak out. We can seek international support, lobby systematically at every level, and take part in solidarity strikes with other sectors.

We can also try some new tactics such as bilateral or multi-lateral collaboration with unions abroad; working with as many political parties as possible; developing research capabilities with researchers, higher education staff or higher education unions. We can hold large protest demonstrations or participate in general strikes to show our strength in numbers. We can also work very closely with partners such as students' unions, parents' associations, general labour

unions, school administration and higher education institutions, as well as professional associations and NGOs working on education.

In this context however, we need to consider the different aims of strikes that we undertake (such as salary raises, protest to education reforms and budgets cuts, etc.) and we also need to consider the efficacy of holding such strikes. We also need to be vigilant to solutions proposed to governments by others (such as employers) which may be harmful to employees. In turn, we need to inform and involve members in our campaign against crisis. And perhaps, more than anything else – we need to be patient! Positive change takes time to happen, but when it does, the fruit of our work will be evident.

Let's work together globally and act locally!

EI's campaign called "Hands Up for Education" consists of a number of elements, including advocacy at the international level with a view to impacting the local level as well. This is a key element of our work on the 1Goal Campaign to involve football players, students, teachers and civil society in supporting education in advance of the World Cup in South Africa next year. Another useful resource is the EI-ActionAid Toolkit on Education Financing. You can download the Toolkit from the Resources page of the Hands Up For Education web site. III

Human and trade union rights

Fijian leader targeted for dismissal

EI has launched an Urgent Action Appeal to its member and partner organisations to engage their help in appealing against the dismissal of Tevita Koroi, President of the Fijian Teachers' Association (FTA) of the Council of Pacific Education (COPE).

Koroi was dismissed from his position as principal by the Fijian Public Service Commission earlier in April for allegedly breaching the country's public service code of conduct. The accusation was based on a statement Koroi made in December 2008 in his capacity of trade union leader, calling for a co-ordinated campaign to return Fiji to parliamentary rule.

Fiji is currently ruled by an interim government after a military coup in 2006, led by Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama, seized power from the democratically-elected government. Commodore Bainimarama is currently the interim Prime Minister.

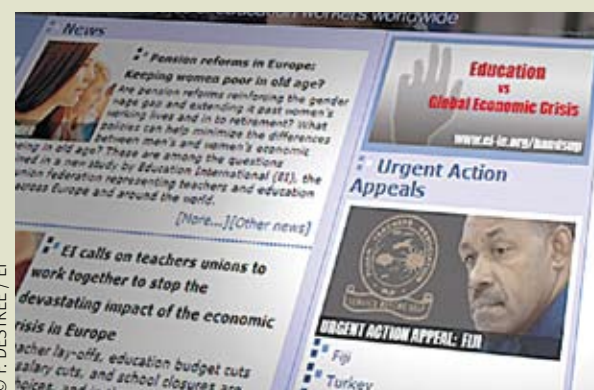
The other teacher organisation, the Fiji Teachers Union (FTU), as well as the trade

union centre, the Fiji Islands Council of Trade Unions (FICTU), have expressed their support to the FTA and its president.

EI deplores Mr. Koroi's dismissal from his employment for exercising his legitimate rights as a trade union leader, as recognised by the Fijian Constitution, the country's Employment Relations laws, and by the International Labour Organisation which states in its jurisprudence that "the freedom of expression which should be enjoyed by trade unions and their leaders should also be guaranteed when they wish to criticize the government's economic and social policy."

EI considers this dismissal a deliberate act to hinder the activities of the FTA, constituting a violation of Koroi's freedom of expression, and of the FTA's right to freedom of association.

In a recent message to EI, Joeli Nabuka, Principal Administrative Officer of the FTA expresses its gratitude to EI and its affili-



ates that which have already signed the petition: "Such support has given us much joy and encouragement, and will indeed receive much approval and encouragement from our membership." III

INFO

Support the FTA!
Sign the online appeal at
www.ei-ie.org/fiji !

COP 15

Teachers lead the way on sustainability

By Fred van Leeuwen

As thousands of scientists, environmentalists, journalists, policymakers and world leaders prepare for COP 15, the crucial United Nations climate change conference taking place in Copenhagen in December, teachers and trade unionists are also mobilising to help ensure that a strong new agreement is reached.

Education International has taken groundbreaking positions on the central role of teachers and their unions in forging sustainable economies and healthy communities. Within EI, we believe education can lead the way towards a new green society; indeed, it is fundamental to the solutions we seek. We strongly support the process as international negotiators continue to work towards a new, strengthened post-Kyoto agreement on limiting greenhouse gases and mitigating the disastrous effects of climate change.

At a recent UN leadership forum, Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon told more than 100 international leaders that climate change is the pre-eminent geopolitical and economic issue of the 21st century. "It rewrites the global equation for development, peace and prosperity. It will increase pressure on water, food and land ... reverse years of development gains ... exacerbate poverty ... destabilize fragile states and topple governments," Ban said.

Solving the climate and economic crises requires unprecedented cooperation and bold leadership by governments worldwide, with the active support of an enormous range of social actors including the inter-



Primary school students in India send a message to world leaders that a new climate deal is needed now. There were one of more than 4,600 events taking place around the world on 24 October.

national trade union movement, which is uniquely placed to make a significant contribution to the struggle to save the environment.

Already deeply engaged, teacher trade unionists will do all they possibly can to help find solutions. Across the higher education sector, academic researchers are hard at work at discovering new ways to reduce and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. Other teachers have different skills to bring to the work for economic sustainability and global recovery.

Writing about ecology, recycling at school, sharing eco-friendly learning resources, planting community gardens, composting in the school yard, helping kids create energy-saving science projects, restoring local habitat, organising environmental education associations, offering professional development that promotes sustainable communities ...

All of these initiatives clearly illustrate the old saying about how people are so often ahead of politicians. On the issue of climate change, public educators are at the vanguard – both in their classrooms and their union halls. Around the world, children and

young people are learning new ways of thinking about our relationships with the earth and one another, thanks to dedicated teachers and progressive education unions.

But radical action is needed, not only by individuals and unions, but by governments committed to investing in quality public services, including education, health and water, as the basis for sustainable economies.

EI and its affiliates insist that climate change is, indeed, a union issue. Education unions are beginning to engage in collective bargaining for measures to reduce the carbon footprint of their schools, colleges and universities. Some member organisations are already recruiting environmental reps who work like green shop stewards to promote environmentally-positive policies and practices.

Changes is never easy. But in these times of multiple global crises it's more important than ever that we work in a spirit of collective good will and solidarity to build a new global agreement to mitigate climate change. Educators hope and believe that Copenhagen 2009 will be a watershed moment along the path of history. ■■■

Trade Union Rights Network

More Rights, Fewer Violations

By Dominique Marlet

Southeast Asian teachers who face violations of their trade union rights now have a new line of defence and a new source of solidarity.

The EI Trade Union Rights Network (TURN) is really getting off the ground since representatives from member organisations in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand have agreed to set up an electronic network to share information and support one another. The TURN e-group was set up at a sub-regional conference in Manila, Philippines.

The TURN project, which is financially supported by the ILO ACTRAV and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES), proposes to equip teacher trade unionists with the tools and skills to promote and defend trade union rights, influence public policy, improve the legal frameworks within which they operate, and build solidarity networks to make a difference in their respective countries.

Thirteen unions from five countries are participating in the TURN project. They are: CITA from Cambodia; PGRI and FES-DIKARI from Indonesia; MAE, NUTP, and STU-Sarawak from Malaysia; NATOW, ACT, TOPPS, and FFW from Philippines; and NTTU and PSTAT from Thailand.

In these countries, where the trade union movement is fragmented and where most government initiatives are business-driven, teacher organisations have concentrated their efforts on freedom of association by reaching out to potential members.

Teacher activists at the Manila conference shared news of their achievements:

The giant Indonesian union PGRI mobilised among its 1.8 million members and ran a massive campaign to uphold the Constitutional requirement that 20% of the national and local budgets be spent on education. With support from the media and civil society, PGRI members won. Their success was inspirational for the Thai unionists, who acknowledged that it is not in the Thai culture to demand dignity and respect or to challenge the government.

In Cambodia, the independent teacher association CITA operates under constant

The TURN model could be developed in other parts of the world to empower member organisations to assert their trade union rights

surveillance and harassment from the authorities. Nonetheless, it was able to recruit more than 8,000 new members in one year. The union also won a 20% wage increase for teachers. In the Philippines as well, the unions have achieved major wage increases for teachers.

The teacher unionists in Malaysia were much envied because of their success in

creating an efficient checkoff system, which guarantees regular income to the teacher organisations.

EI's Trade Union Rights Network was launched in 2008 and the first year was devoted to training representatives of the 13 member organisations in international labour standards, supervisory mechanisms, international complaint procedures, information and awareness raising. Participants will replicate similar training in their unions to build a cohort of skilled trade union rights advocates.

The next step is the networking. All the teacher organisations will share information, experience and good practice, and also provide coordinated support through the electronic network. With improved collection of data, more violations will be reported, thus increasing the pressure unions can bring to bear on governments to implement, both in law and in practice, the full rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

In future, the TURN model could be developed in other parts of the world to empower member organisations to assert their trade union rights, speak out and promote democracy, good governance and social justice. ■■■

Teachers on the front lines against flu pandemic

H1N1, often called the “swine flu,” emerged in Mexico last April and is now the main flu strain circulating in both hemispheres, according to the World Health Organisation. It usually causes mild symptoms, but pregnant women and people with underlying medical conditions are at higher risk.

The web site www.flucount.org reports that worldwide about 6,600 people have died, out of more than 600,000 lab-verified cases of H1N1 infections. WHO estimates are lower, however.

Education ministries around the world have faced the question of whether to close schools to minimize the impact of the pandemic. In most cases, school suspensions are decided by local, rather than national, authorities. The exception was Mexico, which mandated nationwide school closures for two weeks in May. The WHO says it’s only worth closing schools to slow the spread of swine flu right at the beginning of an outbreak.

“School closure has its greatest benefits when schools are closed very early in an out-

break, ideally before one per cent of the population falls ill,” the UN health agency said in a statement advising its 193 member states.

“Under ideal conditions, school closure can reduce the demand for health care by an estimated 30 to 50 per cent at the peak of the pandemic.”

For more information, visit the World Health Organisation website: www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en.



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Like fellow professionals around the world, this teacher is helping her students learn about the H1N1 influenza virus, and the simple sanitary rules that can protect them from infection.

Latin America

Teacher unions confront political and economic crises



© REPORTERS

Since the military coup last June, Honduran teachers have taken to the streets to press their demands for a return to constitutional rule of law and the democratic process. They have faced fierce repression as a result.

Fears of a return to dictatorship and political violence in Honduras are compounding the grave economic crisis facing countries across Latin America.

“EI has taken a position that is absolutely clear on the recent military coup in Honduras,” General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen

told delegates at EI’s Latin American regional conference in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

“We cannot allow a return to the past, or to dictatorship of any kind. History shows that extremism and demagoguery of all forms, whether of the right or of the left, will thrive in conditions of crisis.”

In his keynote address, van Leeuwen noted that a year ago some observers believed that the countries of the South had succeeded in “decoupling” themselves from the financial crisis gripping North America and Europe. Today, however, many Latin American countries are facing the spectre of rising unemployment as tax revenues

Honduras

plummet, remittances from North America shrink, and investment flows stop.

Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean were harder hit than South America due to their dependence on the US economy. In Honduras, remittances amount to 26 percent of GDP. Mexico's remittances fell by 12 percent in January 2009.

But teachers are acutely aware that one cannot look at the financial and economic crisis in isolation. The food crisis, climate change and the HIV/AIDS pandemic confront all societies, van Leeuwen noted.

"And what lies beyond the present crisis? During these coming eighteen months there will be 10 electoral processes in the region, and they could change the political landscape. After the emergence from the years of the military dictators, there are still grave risks," he said.

History shows that extremism and demagoguery of all forms, whether of the right or of the left, will thrive in conditions of crisis

At the same time, Latin American countries have come to the forefront of the world scene. Brazilian President Lula is seen as "one of the key figures in the process of building a sustainable and equitable global recovery. Argentina is also playing a key role, having stood up to the IMF successfully three years ago, and showing an alternative to neo-liberal models."

"But we all know there is a big gap between words and action," van Leeuwen continued. "There is an enormous contradiction between the calls of the IMF leadership for stimulus through the public sector, and the budget ceilings – including public sector wage ceilings – imposed on countries through IMF conditions." ■■■

Teachers killed in post-coup violence

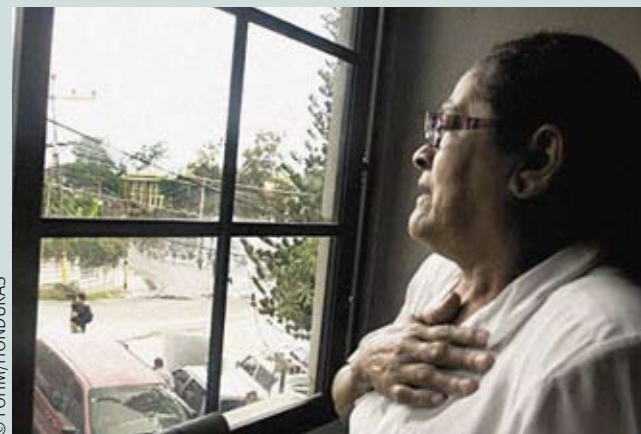
Four teachers have been killed since the 28 June 2009 military coup against democratically-elected President of Honduras, Manuel Zelaya. EI's member organisations there report ongoing repression by the army and the police.

The Federation of Teacher Organisations of Honduras represents 52,000 teachers across the tiny Central American country. FOMH reports four deaths in the teaching profession due to the post-coup repression.

Primary school teacher Roger Abraham Vallejo Soriano, a 38-year-old member of the union COPEMH, was shot in the head by security forces on 30 July during a demonstration. He died the next day.

Another teacher and member of the CO-PRUMH, Martín Florencio Rivera, died after being stabbed 27 times as he was leaving Vallejo's wake. Saturnino Sanchez, president of another EI member organisation in the country, COLPROSUMAH, was also severely beaten.

Felix Murillo López, 36, a member of COPEMH, died 17 September, National Teacher's Day, as a result of a hit and run while riding his bicycle. He was dead on arrival at hospital in Tegucigalpa. The police launched an investigation on suspicion that the crash may have been intentional, since Murillo had also offered evidence as a key witness to the murder of fellow teacher Roger Vallejo. COPEMH President Eulogio Chávez told the press that Murillo had already received threats as a consequence of his involvement in protest actions since the military coup. He was active in the Resistance and, as a member of the Committee for Security and Discipline, he often led demonstrations. The latest addition to this grim list was Mario Fidel Contreras. According to internet sources, the 50-year-old teacher died October in Tegucigalpa after being shot in the head. The coup regime denies responsibility,



© FOHM/HONDURAS

Troubled times: With four teachers already dead, family and friends worry that their loved ones could be the next to pay the ultimate price for their trade union commitment.

claiming that Contreras was murdered by an unidentified common criminal.

Rosario Avila, co-ordinator of the FOHM National Committee for Prevention of HIV and AIDS in Honduras, denounced the surge in violence: "The repression is increasing. They have suppressed constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression, and freedom of movement."

She added that "several members of COLPROSUMAH and COPEMH have been injured, some were put in prison only to be freed hours later."

A 12-hour night curfew in force in many parts of the country, particularly the south, severely restricts unions' right to freedom of organization and assembly.

Avila highlighted the important leadership role of the teachers and their unions, which have been on strike since June 29: "Their commitment to the defence of quality public education and human rights has been a strong voice against corruption, inequality and social exclusion." ■■■

EI's First World Women's Conference

Teachers are on the move for equality!

By Rebeca Sevilla

Bringing gender equality closer to reality in the daily lives of women, including through their participation in education unions, is a key principle of EI. With the current crises in food security, climate change and the economic recession, this goal of gender equality demands greater effort if it is to be achieved.

EI's regional women's networks

The women's networks established by EI in developing and developed countries of Africa, Asia-Pacific, the Caribbean, Europe and Latin America alike have been instrumental in addressing the problems women face worldwide: equal protection of their labour rights, decent work and safe workplaces free of harassment and violence, well-funded and reliable public services and social benefits (including maternity/parental protection benefits) and quality public education for all. The networks have contributed to enabling teacher organisations to put equality at the heart of their policies and into their action plans.

Declining public funding for education, cuts in teaching positions and decreasing teacher salaries are worrying trends documented in all regions. Women often find themselves in more vulnerable economic situations, such as temporary work and with no job security. These factors put in doubt the adequacy of pension revenues, as documented by the 2009 EI Pan-European study on pension reforms and their impact on women. Women workers are typically paid less than male colleagues because of the gender pay gap. Women are also more vulnerable to cuts in public services as can be seen in the education sec-

tor: many women are employed in public services and moreover they rely on those services as primary caregivers.

One step forward, two steps back?

The recent EI Asia Pacific Women's Caucus, held in Bangkok, Thailand and attended by a record number of participants, addressed the impact of the financial crisis on gender equality. "The multiple crises exacerbate inequality practices or undo some of the positive work through the cessation of constructive programs," the Caucus Report stated. "Regression is looming and teacher unions are challenged to realize the achievement of gender equality for women and girls."

In Latin America, specific commitments to consolidate the Women's Education Workers' Network are seen as a strategic element in strengthening the unions. New commitments were made to engage in union alliances to urge governments to fulfil their commitments on equal opportu-

nities at the 7th Latin American Women's Round Table, held in Sao Paulo, Brazil in September 2009. The delegates identified the following areas of inequity between men and women:

- › Sexual and reproductive rights: many countries still lack the political will to put in place policies that guarantee such rights;
- › The significant wage gap between men and women, on average 30%;
- › Violence against women: existing policies do not guarantee full protection;
- › Labour laws: 60% of women continue to work without any social protection;
- › Low participation of women in unions, especially in positions to shape political decision-making, less than 30%. Participation quotas exist in many countries.
- › Wealth distribution: in Latin America, 70% of the poor are women.

The challenges have proven difficult in Africa: drought, food crisis, high prevalence of HIV and AIDS, debt burden and a decline in foreign assistance. Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for the 47% of out of school children worldwide. In December, the Africa Women's Education Network (AWEN) will

On the Move for Equality EI's First World Women's Conference 19-22 May 2010 in Bangkok, Thailand

Over 300 women and men from education unions across the globe will meet in May 2010 in Bangkok at EI's First World Conference for Women.

On the Move for Equality is a participatory discussion forum, open to all members. The aims of the conference are to create a

joint understanding of the state of progress towards equality for women and men in unions, education and society, to advance women and girls through education, and to create a global equality network.

Register online at
www.ei-ie.org

develop its strategic plan for the years to come.

In Europe, the ageing of the teaching profession and persistent violence against women are high on the equality agenda. Teachers' organisations have collected data on the impact of pension reforms on female teachers with a view to drawing up a strategic trade union approach. Many teachers organisations have campaigned on the issue of violence against women, and have gathered good practices for its prevention. An eye-catching presentation on the issue is to take place on 25 November, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, at the Pan-European conference in Warsaw.

Education opportunities for girls

Worldwide, education makes a real difference, and empowers both girls and boys. Education of, and investment in, women and girls is one of the most effective means of breaking the cycle of poverty. Early childhood and primary education can play an essential role in changing patterns. Education increases job opportunities and income especially for girls, which ultimately benefits families and communities.

INFO

For more info on the conference go to: www.ei-ie.org

To learn more about good practices on violence against women, go to: www.un.org/esa/vawdatabase

© R. SEVILLA/EI



EI President Susan Hopgood at the Asia Pacific Women's Caucus meeting, with delegates from India, Australia, Bali and Hong Kong.

Accelerating the efforts for achieving gender equality in education will be one theme addressed at EI's conference "On the Move for Equality," to be held in Bangkok in May 2010. The conference will be structured around three main themes:

› **Connecting and strengthening the women's networks:** By bringing together all of EI's regional networks, activists will better be able to share information, analyse contextual challenges, celebrate successes and plan joint actions.

› **Taking stock of the status of women in today's world:** What is the participation of women in unions? What are the successes achieved so far for women at work? How

can education unions contribute to equality for men and women, boys and girls?

› **Advancing girls and women through education:** What are the means of increasing access to quality education in order to contribute to overcoming gender barriers through education?

Women in teachers' unions consistently play a pivotal role in realizing the achievements of equality. Quality education for girls and boys enables people to live their lives with hope and dignity, and to participate as citizens in the development and wellbeing of democratic societies. III

Professional development

Dutch, Burundian and Indian teachers share experiences

By Claude Carroué

“When I saw the ad in our union magazine ...I thought: Okay, why not?” says Rachel Heller, International Coordinator at Maartens College and a member of EI’s Dutch affiliate AOb. “I had spent two years in Malawi as a teacher before and I wanted to do it again.”

“I thought: That’s my chance to take such a trip and do something for education in another country,” remembers Irene Meertens, Curriculum Coordinator at the Centrum voor nascholing of the University of Amsterdam, and also a member of AOb. In August, they both left Holland to meet colleagues from abroad through a teacher exchange programme set up by the Dutch NGO Edukans. Heller travelled to Burundi, and Meertens to India.

In Burundi, Heller provided training to English teachers, who sometimes have to struggle to meet the needs of up to 100 students in a single class “We showed them how to get their students to practise speaking, how to organise a classroom. Also, teachers need to teach in a more engaging, less traditional, way and students must become more active in class,” Heller said.

There was also a computer aspect to the programme, which faced many challenges. “We visited four schools with electricity, with only two to four computers each. All the computers needed repairs, so two teachers per school were trained to do back up maintenance.”

With Dutch and Burundian colleagues, Heller arranged timetables for students to have computer training.

She found that the level of the Burundian teachers’ training varies widely. Some have been to university while others only had a single year of training.



© R. HELLER/AOB

Dutch teacher Rachel Heller gave training sessions to Burundian colleagues.

Meertens also found poor working conditions and lack of qualified teachers in some schools in India.

“It was shocking to see that the headmaster came late to school. The reasons? Salaries are low, teachers do not have much control over their work, and they do not want to work in remote areas,” Meertens explained. “It is a question of attention and attitude. The difference in salaries of teachers has to be dealt with by the government.”

A group of Dutch and Indian teachers along with NGO representatives identified different levels of teacher professionalism in India: Some are well educated, with two years of training, but where there is a severe shortage of teachers, some have as little as one week of training. “But even two years is training of low quality in our opinion,” Meertens said.

Teachers involved in the exchange programme came up with two major recom-

mendations: Teachers in India need more skills in active learning; and more attention must be paid to the motivation of teachers.

According to Trudy Kerperien, AOb International Secretary, it was important “to have the unions involved to promote the importance of real schools and well-trained teachers.”

What was the most striking aspect of the exchange? “There was a very good atmosphere, and it was wonderful to share experience with Indian teachers,” Meertens reports. “They were surprised that we paid more attention to the quality of education and of teachers, while in India they pay more attention to facilities and materials.” “I learned how difficult it is for someone from one country to really understand what is going on in another country,” she said. “You can help from the sidelines, but only Indian people can make things change really.” ■■■

Asia-Pacific regional conference

School enrolment down, child labour up due to crisis

Discussions at Education International's sixth Asia-Pacific regional conference, which took place in Bangkok from 28-30 September, centred around the impact of the financial and economic crisis on the education sector. The conference was opened by the Education Minister of Thailand, Jurin Laksanavisit. More than 300 union leaders representing 9 million educators in 37 countries attended the meeting. On the last day a Regional Committee was elected for the next four years with Yuzuru Nakamura of NIKKYOSO/Japan as its President.

There were concerns expressed about the quality of public education services, a decline in school enrolment, especially of girls, and an increase of child labour in low-income countries.

It was felt that the drying up of development funds would jeopardize the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals to end poverty by 2015: "If we want to achieve education for all children in the coming six years, governments will have to redouble their efforts and drastically increase investments in our school systems," said a representative from India.

The Asian-Pacific education unions are also troubled by the lack of respect some governments show for international human and trade union rights standards:

In Fiji, where the military government had a teacher leader dismissed for advocating a return to democratic rule; in Korea, where teachers have been laid off for protesting against the introduction of standardized tests; and in other places, such as Cambodia and Taiwan, where public authorities do not fully respect teachers professional freedoms and collective bargaining rights. Special attention was given to the situation in Myanmar where education

unions are outlawed. A delegation of Burmese teachers reported on the ongoing suppression of educators by the military regime.

In his keynote address, EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen urged the union leaders to be pro-active in promoting democracy and social justice in their region. He pointed to countries in Central Asia where, during the harvest season, teachers are forced to send children into the cotton fields.

"We expect our member organizations to speak out against this intolerable practice," he said. "I am fully aware of the risks involved in confronting authoritarian governments, but frankly, our moral and democratic duty as independent education unions leave us no choice but to challenge any public authority or private enterprise that denies a child his or her basic right to education."

"To reduce the impact of the crisis, we must pursue a strategy of action that combines all the forces we have at our disposal," continued Van Leeuwen. "We must link together our global strategy, our work across the Asia-Pacific region, and your national action. There must be a single unbroken thread from the global to the local. To succeed, we must combine ideas with actions at each of these levels."

Participants of the conference endorsed a recommendation by the Asia-Pacific Women's Caucus for a range of activities to be undertaken by EI to help remove obstacles to the gender inequity which is still rampant throughout the region. They also endorsed a proposal by the higher education unions to pay more attention to their sector's vital role in advancing socio-economic developments of the region. ■■■



Photographer K.M. Asad won the 2009 photo of the year competition on the trade union website Labour Start with this searing shot of a young boy working under dangerous conditions in the ship-building industry in Bangladesh.

More good news

A big step forward for Early Childhood Education in Germany

For pre-school children in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate in southwest Germany, 1 September 2009 was a historic day. Since that day, children aged 3-6 have been entitled to free pre-school education – a first in the entire country.

In Germany, education policy is the responsibility of the different states, or *Länder*. In some states – Berlin, Saarland and Lower Saxony, for example – only the year before primary school is free. But in other states fees vary widely and can be as high as €5,000 per school year. And while politicians at both state and federal levels are quick to pay lip service to the importance of Early Childhood Education, little has been done to redress the social injustices that result from these financial burdens.

Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft (GEW), one of the German national teachers' unions, has long been calling for a more inclusive approach to pre-school education, highlighting the benefits for individual children and society as a whole. "Children from low-income families benefit over-proportionally from attendance in kindergarten for longer than one year. Especially delays in speech development can be eliminated almost entirely," according to a research paper published on GEW's website.

In this context, Rhineland-Palatinate's achievement is all the more welcome. State coffers will provide an additional 85 million Euro this year to enable all 3- to 6-year-olds to go to pre-school free of charge. Beginning in August 2010, 2-year-olds will also benefit from free access to kindergarten.

Doris Ahnen, Rhineland-Palatinate's minister of Education, told ARD television: "The time before primary school is especially



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Under the aegis of minister of education Doris Ahnen (in the middle), Rhineland-Palatinate is the first German state to offer free early childhood education from the age of three.

important for the development of children – as important, in fact, as the time in school later on. In the long term, that is why we can't afford to treat this area of education worse than the rest."

Parents are grateful to be able to send their children to kindergarten earlier and at much lower cost. A mother told SWR radio: "It's great – I have two children in kindergarten, and having to pay only for lunch from now

on will really ease the burden on the family purse."

EI has been calling for an intensification of public spending in the education sector, especially during this time of crisis, and examples like Rhineland-Palatinate show the benefits of those investments and the great improvement they can bring for teachers, parents and children alike. III

Quality teacher training spells success for Finnish students

By Ritva Semi

In recent years, Finland has been consistently ranked at the top of the OECD's PISA surveys. The Trade Union of Education in Finland (OAJ) is often asked: How do you do it? What's the secret to your success?

A long tradition of high-quality teacher training is regarded as an essential factor in the success of the Finnish public education system. Primary school teachers have been undergoing Master's-level university training since the 1970s.

The success of young Finns in their studies is based on well-trained university-educated teachers, according to Erkki Kangasniemi, chairman of the OAJ.

The high-level academic teacher training has also made the profession more attractive. Finnish teachers must have passed rigorous entrance examinations by the time they begin their studies. In fact, only about 11 per cent of students applying for primary school teacher training are admitted, says Kangasniemi, pointing out that there is not a similar flood of applicants in all sectors of teaching.

The reorganisation of teacher education 30 years ago was closely connected with a reform of the whole Finnish educational system. The 1970s saw the transition from a system of parallel schools to a system of uniform comprehensive public education, in which every student completes at least nine years of basic schooling.

During those years, students enjoy relatively small class sizes. On average, there are 20 children per class in Grades 1-6 and 18 children in Grades 7-9. However, these are only averages, and some classes as large as 36 pupils do exist.

From the international perspective, compulsory school attendance in Finland starts rather late: not until the year the child



© OAJ

Finnish teachers must undergo extensive training up to the Master's level and, once they are on the job, they can count on small average class sizes and well-equipped classrooms. About 95% of Finnish teachers are unionised.

turns seven. The requirements are the same for all children in comprehensive school, after which they choose either upper-secondary or vocational education — or even both simultaneously.

University-level teacher education is based on solid pedagogic knowledge and proficiency in the subject areas to be taught. All primary school teacher trainees also engage in research, which supports them throughout their careers in terms of their pedagogical thinking and professional development.

Since 1995, the training of kindergarten teachers working with children between the ages of one and six has been based on university-level Bachelor of Education studies. Previously they were trained at polytechnics.

It is one of OAJ's challenges to raise the education of kindergarten teachers to the Master's-degree level. "A lot remains to be done in this respect," says Kangasniemi.

"Unfortunately, not all decision makers have yet realised that small children, too, need optimally educated teachers."

The comprehensive-school reform and the reorganisation of teacher education coincided with OAJ's emergence as the general teaching union. It now represents all sectors, from kindergarten teachers to university lecturers. Ninety-five per cent of Finnish teachers are union members.

OAJ is constantly engaged in close interaction with the universities with a view to continual improvement of teacher education. In this work, teacher-education students, who through their own association are members of the OAJ, are an important source of support and energy, both in the classroom and the union.

A former pre-school teacher, Ritva Semi has been an active teacher trade unionist since 1984, when Finnish teachers went out on an historic strike. She currently works on education issues and development cooperation for the OAJ. III

“Stand Up, Take Action, End Poverty Now!”

Global Call to Action Against Poverty sets new world record for largest mobilisation in history

A Guinness World Record was shattered in October when 173,045,325 citizens gathered at over 3,000 events in more than 120 countries, demanding that their governments eradicate extreme poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

“Stand Up, Take Action, End Poverty Now!” has been certified by Guinness World Records as the largest mobilization of human beings in recorded history, an increase of about 57 million people over last year.

“The more than 173 million people who mobilized sent a clear message to world leaders that there is massive, universal, global demand for eradicating poverty and

achieving the Millennium Development Goals,” said Salil Shetty, Director of the United Nations Millennium Campaign.

“In particular, we have seen citizens determined to show their governments that they will hold them accountable for keeping their promises to end hunger, improve maternal health and abolish trade-distorting agricultural subsidies. They will not accept excuses for breaking promises to the world’s poorest and most vulnerable people, who have already been hardest hit by the global food, economic and climate crises they had no role in causing.”

Sylvia Borren, co-chair of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP), said: “Stand Up is proven to be a growing global mobilization, as well as an ongoing

grass roots movement from remote areas and cities in so many countries, both rich and poor.”

“These are the voices of young people, women and men demanding the eradication of poverty, and new answers to the food, economic and climate crises. We will carry this overwhelming message forward in the weeks and months ahead to influence both the Copenhagen climate discussions and next year’s MDG review.”

GCAP reminds leaders that currently 1 billion people around the world are hungry and 500,000 women continue to die annually as the result of pregnancy and childbirth. The vast majority of these deaths are preventable. ■■■

President of GCE honoured as Defender of Democracy

Kailash Satyarthi, President of EI’s partner organisation the Global Campaign for Education, has been named by the Parliamentarians for Global Action as the recipient of the prestigious Defender of Democracy Award for 2009.

Mr. Satyarthi, who is also the Chairperson of the Global March Against Child Labour, gave up a lucrative career as a technical engineer to work for children’s rights. For nearly three decades, he has campaigned courageously to end child labour in his home country of India and around the world, rescuing more than 78,000 bonded and child labourers.

He is also the creator of the Rugmark label; the universally recognized symbol that certifies rugs as having been made without the use of exploitative child labour. Mr. Satyarthi also launched the Global

March’s World Cup Campaign, convincing the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) to agree to the elimination of child labour in the manufacture of soccer balls.

Below are some excerpts from his acceptance speech:

Let me remind you that besides the conventional economic exploitation of children, violence occurs in various forms. More than two million children are estimated to have died as a result of armed conflict since 1990. One million children are detained by law enforcement officials worldwide. Two million children are believed to be exploited through prostitution and pornography and 70 million girls and women have been subjected to genital mutilation. More than 1.2 million children are trafficked every year and bought and sold for a price lesser than cattle.

Education is the key to power, justice and equity. Education is fundamental to effective democracy and transparency in global governance. Education for all is the pre-requisite to democratize social, political and financial institutions. Two and a half days of military expenditure is enough to educate the world’s children, or 1/6th of what Europeans spend on cosmetics. Education for all our children requires \$11 billion. Is the world really so poor? ...

If we fail our children today, we fail our future forever. If we break our promises to them, history will not forgive us. We need governments, and we need intergovernmental bodies too. But what we really need is a strong global movement to hold these institutions accountable and challenge their conscience. We must make exploitation and violence against children history in our life time. ■■■

Human and trade union rights

International solidarity helps free activists in Turkey and Iran

Thanks to tremendous mobilisation and solidarity actions worldwide, numerous Turkish and Iranian teacher trade unionists have been released from prison since their stories were last reported in Worlds of Education.

“They are free! Egitim-Sen would like to thank you for your strong support. This is the success of international solidarity,” Mehmet Bozgeyik, General Secretary of the Turkish teacher union, wrote to EI.

After two long days of court hearings on 19-20 November, the High Penalty Court in Izmir decided to release all of the 31 public sector unionists who were tried for belonging to an illegal Kurdish organisation. All defendants were either Kurdish or have links to the Kurdish community.

Both Egitim-Sen and the public sector union KESK have been targeted because they were gaining new members and strength in the context of the economic crisis. “The purpose of the trial was to isolate us from other labour and democratic mass organisations and to marginalize our confederation in its struggle for labour [rights] and democracy,” said Sami Evren, President of KESK.

EI Executive Board member Jerry Bartlett, who was part of an international trade union delegation that witnessed the trial, said the arrests came as a result of months of telephone wire tapping, email and internet surveillance. He said there was not a shred of evidence offered to support the charges of belonging to an unlawful organisation.

By contrast, he said, the EI delegation was impressed by the tremendous integrity and conviction of the teachers, who are committed

to quality secular public education for all and the right to education in the mother tongue not only of Kurdish, but of all ethnic minority communities in Turkey.

In Iran, Mohammad-Reza Rezaie-Garakani was freed on 21 October and Sajad Khaksari, son of two leading teacher trade unionists, was freed on 24 October, 2009. Both are still awaiting trial.

However, teachers Rasoul Bodaghi, Jaafar Ebrahim and Farzad Kamangar all remain in detention in Evin Prison. While Kamangar’s physical and psychological conditions have improved somewhat, Ebrahimi suffers several serious health problems and his relatives are not allowed to visit him in prison. Hashem Khastar, a retired teacher and a trade union activist, is still in Wakilabad prison in Mash-



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had, where he has been refused medical treatment despite suffering kidney disease.

EI and the international trade union movement welcome the release of detainees, but will monitor the situation in both countries closely. III

Filipino principal beheaded

Teacher unions around the world have condemned the kidnapping and brutal murder of an elementary school principal in the Philippines.

The severed head of Gabriel Canizares, 36, principal of Kanague Elementary School in Patikul, Sulu, Philippines, was found on 9 November. His body was recovered several days later. He had been kidnapped by armed men on 19 October and held for ransom.

EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen expressed the shock and outrage of teachers and trade unionists everywhere. “We are appalled to learn of this atrocious murder of a dedicated educator,” he said. “And we demand in the strongest terms possible that the government of the Philippines act quickly and boldly to bring the perpetrators to justice.”

Van Leeuwen vowed that EI will monitor events closely and will hold the Philippine authorities to account for its prosecution of the Canizares case and for significant improvements to the human and trade union rights situation in that country. He noted that EI has long been concerned about the flagrant rights violations under the government of Philippines President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

In 2007, delegates at the 5th EI World Congress called on the Arroyo government to “immediately put a stop to extrajudicial killings and involuntary disappearances; investigate, prosecute, and punish those responsible for these acts; and ensure that its security forces respect the human rights and civil liberties of citizens.”

In 2008, EI set up a Trade Union Rights Network in ASEAN countries to help teacher organisations unite against such violations (see page 14). III

Teacher unions balance HIV prevention and treatment in AIDS response

By Julie Kavanagh



© NANTU

Members of EI affiliate in Namibia, NANTU, get their HIV-status tested.

In 2006 governments worldwide committed to achieving universal access to comprehensive prevention programmes, treatment, care and support on HIV and AIDS by 2010. With current access to anti-retroviral treatment meeting only half the needs and with five new infections for every two people who start treatment, greater investment backed by strong strategies is a must. Teacher unions in EI's EFAIDS Programme work in four of the priority areas highlighted by UNAIDS; ensuring people living with HIV receive treatment, ending punitive practices and discrimination, empowering young people to protect themselves from HIV, and

enhancing social protection for people affected by HIV. Education International sees education as a kind of "social vaccine." Learning about HIV prevention and behaviour change can transform the negative impact of HIV and AIDS globally. Equally, EI recognises the need to support teachers who are living with HIV so they have access to treatment and can continue to contribute to the education sector without fear of discrimination. With effective and sustained anti-retroviral therapy, those living with HIV can enjoy life expectancies similar to those uninfected by the virus. However, social change has not

kept pace with scientific progress; indeed, stigma and discrimination can hinder scientific advances. This point was highlighted by Françoise Barré-Sinoussi who, together with Luc Montagnier won the 2008 Nobel Prize in Medicine for first identifying the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in the 1980s. Speaking in Brussels in October 2009, Barré-Sinoussi asserted that quick testing complemented by quick treatment are key to effective treatment for HIV. Eager to tackle HIV on many levels, unions engaged in the EFAIDS Programme are working to break down stigma associated with testing and broaden access to treatment. The

Language of instruction

English imposed on Rwandan schools

By Delphine Sanglan

Namibian National Teachers' Union (NANTU) estimates that more than 20,000 teachers have participated in regional Edusector Health Days where they can access voluntary counselling and testing, and receive reliable information on HIV and AIDS.

In 2009 the Uganda National Teachers' Union (UNATU) stepped up its HIV-testing campaign, urging its members: "Know your sero-status." The UNATU National Secretariat is building a resource database to link teachers with testing services and counsellors nationwide. Further evidence of union commitment to teacher wellbeing can be seen in Buenos Aires, where the Argentinean teacher union confederation CTERA runs a dedicated HIV Testing and Counselling Centre.

To give teachers the best chance of staying healthy, early testing must be backed up by consistent access to effective treatment programmes. In Uganda, where 1 in 5 people know their status, less than half of those who require treatment can get it. Cuts in funding restrict supplies of antiretroviral medicines and interrupt treatment, with serious health implications. Unions are increasingly treating HIV and AIDS as a workplace issue and are developing policies and rolling out services to uphold their members' rights to access treatment. ■■■

Spread the word, not the virus!

"One Hour on AIDS," the popular lesson plan of the EFAIDS Programme, goes from strength to strength. Thanks to the enthusiasm of teacher unions, it has now been translated into more than 30 languages from A to Z: Arabic to Zulu, that is, with Hindi, Shona, Yoruba and many others in between.

By using "One Hour on AIDS" and other EFAIDS resources in classrooms and staff-rooms around the world, teachers can indeed spread the word, not the virus, and make a real difference in HIV prevention. Visit www.ei-ie.org/ef aids to download "One Hour on AIDS" and more EFAIDS resources.

At the end of last year, the Rwandan government decided to impose English as the single official language of education and government, without any public debate or consultation with teaching unions. Since 1996 all three official languages – Kinyarwanda, French and English, have been used in education. The move is designed to allow Rwanda to request membership in the Commonwealth and to cut its ties with the International Organization of la Francophonie. English became Rwanda's third official language behind French and Kinyarwanda in 1996, following the return of 800,000 – 850,000 Tutsis who had fled to bordering countries at the time of the 1994 genocide, primarily to Anglophone countries such as Uganda and Tanzania, but also to Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. French, Kinyarwanda and English remained the three official languages of Rwanda when the new constitution was adopted in 2003.

The decision of the government to favour English over the other two official languages was introduced at the start of the new school term in January 2009. Meanwhile, the teaching of English as a subject will be enforced across the board in 2011, with French being consigned to the second cycle of secondary school, and a reduced number of hours taught.

However, according to Sylvestre Vuguziga, President of the Syndicat des personnels de l'enseignement du Rwanda (SYPERWA), "Ninety-eight percent of teachers in the country are French-speaking, and union members are almost all French-speaking." Outside the union, very few teachers have a good command of English and many are nowhere near ready to teach in the language of Shakespeare.

Six months after the imposition of the reform, the President of SYPERWA is still concerned

about its impact on the quality of teaching in Rwanda, as Francophone teachers will need a great deal of time to attain sufficient mastery of English to be able to teach it themselves. In this respect, the two months of intensive classes taken by some teachers shortly before the introduction of the reform are far from sufficient.

"It takes several months or even years to learn a language well enough to use it in everyday life, in addition to living in an environment that requires the individual to speak only that language. However, that is not the case in Rwanda, where French-speaking teachers normally speak a mixture of Kinyarwanda and French. It is a real risk to try to learn a foreign language in a few hours of language classes and to try to teach in that same language, as the teacher must be able to find correct and varied words," adds Sylvestre. However, these teachers must adapt because of the risk of losing their jobs, with the resources available to them and without adapted teaching material.

If, as expected, the decision unilaterally taken by the Rwandan government has a disastrous effect on the quality of education, the situation could be worsened by the parents of Francophone pupils, who will no longer be able to support their children with homework they cannot understand. This rushed reform has even prompted some wealthier parents to send their children to Ugandan schools so that they can take classes taught in a less 'broken' English.

Sylvestre concludes: "We can only hope that logic and reason will prevail, leading to a progressive reform of education. Unfortunately, damage done to education is irreparable and even has long-term effects on the following generations, as culture is passed down from one generation to the next." ■■■

Technology in education

Organise your union work on the road, on the net

By Harold Tor and Timo Linsenmaier



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Mobile phone subscriptions are already outgrowing classic landlines, which will increase demand for access to the internet from hand-held devices in the future.

There has been a lot of buzz about browsing the web from hand-held devices since reasonably fast standards for mobile data transfer were developed in the early 2000s. So we decided to test some “smart phones” to see how these developments could help teacher trade unionists.

Video conferencing on the go

As a teacher unionist, your agenda is always packed with meetings and appointments. Some models of smart phones, such as the Nokia N97, have a small camera on the screen side of the phone. It allows you to conduct video conferencing provided that you have a good 3G mobile phone connection. Being able to conduct a meeting means a lot of time saved on moving from

place to place, leaving you with more time for other work.

Talk to your union colleagues for free

Many of us know that Skype is a common voice-over-internet programme (VOIP) that allows you to make free phone calls through the internet. For unionists living under oppressive regimes, Skype can even be their lifeline because mobile phone conversations or text messages could be tapped. Some newer phone models like the iPhone 3GS or HTC's Android phones let you install and use Skype for phone conversations.

Connect with your members on Facebook and Twitter

For many teacher unions, social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are the essential tools for connecting with their members. While some unions choose to integrate them into the official union website and others do not, these Web 2.0 tools have become necessary modes of communication with union members on a more personal level. So far, only the high-end phones such as iPhone 3GS, Blackberry Bold 9700, Nokia N97 and HTC Hero provide the best Facebook and Twitter “apps,” short for mobile applications. The mid- and low-end ones from Nokia, Samsung and LG only offer unmanageable “widgets,” which are actually links to the mobile versions of these sites.

Take videos and photos and distribute them immediately to your members

Trade unionists have to constantly update members about the development of is-

ues they care about. To enhance the information provided, videos and photos can really help bring home the message. A good smart phone will enable you to take videos and photos of reasonable quality, but swift uploads to the various video and photo hosting services are still problematic. The iPhone 3GS has an app for direct video upload to YouTube (a popular free video hosting service) and an app for direct photo upload to Flickr (a popular free photo hosting service), but its 3.2mp camera has no flash and functions poorly in low-light conditions. The Samsung Jet S8000 boasts being the fastest phone ever, and it does indeed allow you take to videos and photos of excellent quality in 5mp. However its widget for photo and video uploads is extremely sluggish.

Create a union app as an extra service for your membership

If you have a developer in your union, ask the person to develop an app as part of the union's services to its membership. You'd be surprised how many members will use it. The app can feature the latest updates, a frequently-asked-questions section, directory of union offices and contacts, union calendar and more. It could help attract new members when they see the union being so efficient and proactive in serving its membership.

Lastly, we mustn't forget that a smart phone is after all still a phone, so you can also use it to call people! ■■■

Labour united for decent work

Trade unionists around the world celebrated the second World Day for Decent Work on 7 October with round table discussions, conferences, rallies, flash mob actions and more, all urging their leaders to heed the Call to Action for Decent Work Decent Life.

Among the hundreds of events organised by the International Trade Union Confederation and its affiliates were:

- › Workers from countries across the Americas presented the Call to Action for Decent Work Decent Life to 33 Ministers of Labour gathered in Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- › Flash mob actions took place in 12 towns and cities in Hungary to draw people's attention to the dangers of precarious work.
- › In Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain, more than 2,000 union delegates marched to the headquarters of the regional government and read out the Call to Action.
- › In Copenhagen and Aarhus, Denmark, activists protested pay inequity between male and female academics by handing out "gender equality-cakes" and posing the question: "How big is your slice?"

EI supports this call from the ITUC for political leaders to put decent work at the centre of government actions to bring back economic growth and build a new global economy that puts people first.

To learn more about the Decent Work campaign, visit www.wddw.org

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



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CALENDAR

December 2009

- 1** World AIDS Day – Worldwide
- 1-3** 34th EI Executive Board meeting – EI, Brussels, Belgium
- 4** Meeting of Executive Board of Education and Solidarity Network – EI, Brussels, Belgium
- 2-5** WTO-GATS meeting – EI/Latin American Office, Uruguay
- 7** African Women in Education Network Meeting – EI/African Office, Accra, Ghana
- 7-12** Education for All and AIDS (EFAIDS) meeting – EI, Abidjan, Ivory Coast
- 9-11** UNESCO Working Group on Education for All – Paris, France

January 2010

- 19** Pan-European Equality Working Group – EI, Brussels, Belgium
- 25-26** Council of Global Unions annual meeting – Geneva, Switzerland
- 27-31** World Economic Forum – Davos, Switzerland

February 2010

- 11-12** Higher Education and Research Standing Committee meeting – EI, Brussels, Belgium

March 2010

- 1** 54th United Nations Commission on the Status of Women meeting – New York, USA
- 8** International Women's Day – Worldwide
- 8-10** Conference for EI affiliates in OECD countries – New York, USA
- 11-26** 307th Session of the International Labour Organisation Governing Body – ILO, Geneva, Switzerland
- 15-16** Pan-European Committee meeting - EI, Brussels, Belgium

Worlds of Education is published by Education International, the global union federation representing 30 million teachers and education workers from pre-school to university in more than 171 countries around the globe.

To learn more about EI, go to: www.ei-ie.org.



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Nanjing, China:
Primary school
students paste red
ribbons to mark
World AIDS Day