



EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL

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WOMEN'S NETWORK

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The Asia-Pacific Women's Network activities should continue to strengthen as this was vital for the growth of teachers organisation. This was among the recommendation of EI's Women Round Table on "Strengthening the ASEAN & SAARC Women's Network" held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 28-30 November last year.

The meeting discussed the opportunities and threat faced in building, maintaining and running women's network in the two sub-regions. Progress reports from member organisation were also presented.

One representative each from BTF, (Bangladesh), AIPTF, AISTF, AIACHE and AIFTO (India), NNTA and NTA (Nepal), ACUT and CTTU (Sri Lanka), two representatives each from the PGRI (Indonesia), NUTP (Malaysia), ACT, SMP NATOW and TOPPS (Philippines) and three representatives from NTTU, (Thailand) attended the Round Table. EI Chief Regional Coordinator, Mr. Aloysius Mathews and Coordinator Ms. Chusnul Savitri attended the Round Table.



Revised Labour Laws in Fiji



For the first time, teachers in Fiji were introduced to the revised Labour Laws at the EI/FTA/FTU Women's Training Programme held in Suva Fiji from December 4-6 last year. They were given a review of the amended Employment Relations Promulgation 2007. They were also informed of matters

such as work conditions, employees right, and work injuries and how to claim compensation.

The workshop felt that there was still lack of active participation of rural women in union activities. They also noted lack of support from men in higher position and co-operation among women themselves. The workshop recommended that union constitution be amended to make it gender sensitive.



EMPOWERED



The SAARC Sub- Regional Women's network activities have helped women in progressing to leadership position in their respective unions. This was one of the findings of the EI Sub-Regional Women's Round Table on 'Participation of Women in Education and Teacher's Union in the SAARC held in Chennai, India from December 13 to 14 last year.

The Round Table reviewed the status of the progress made by women in the SAARC in the areas of teachers' unions, education and society. It also discussed the challenges that hindered the full and active participation of women in the teachers' unions, education and society and formulated strategies and action for the future.

Four representatives from BTF (Bangladesh), three representatives each from NNTA, NTA (Nepal) and AIPTF (India), two representatives each from AISTF, AIACHE and AIFTO (India), and ACUT, ACUT (G), CTTU, SLITU (Sri Lanka) participated in the Round Table. EI Coordinator, Ms. Shashi Bala Singh also attended the Round Table.

TRIPARTITE APPROACH

The first ever workshop for women teachers was held in the Solomon Island. A total of 30 women and 6 men teachers attended the 3-day workshop from September 26-28 last year.

The workshop discussed tripartite approach to the industrial relations framework, the trade union laws and the right of workers, human rights, and international conventions and recommendations concerning teachers and their rights.

The training also discussed good governance, equal employment opportunity, equal pay for work of equal value, elimination of discrimination, access to workplaces, legal provisions governing the rights of teachers at work place and reproductive health and teacher unions role in combating the HIV/AIDS.

The 3-day workshop concluded with evaluation where members expressed their appreciation to EI, COPE and SINTA for organizing a training programme for women.





Appeal for Freedom of Expression

EI has protested to the Myanmar Government on its crackdown on peaceful demonstration by the people led by monks and nuns.

EI General Secretary Mr. Fred van Leeuwen, expressed profound concern and dismay over the violent crackdown on peaceful demonstrations throughout the country.

“It is an unacceptable and unjustifiable violation of human rights. It is deeply distressing to hear that soldiers fired automatic weapons into a crowd of unarmed demonstrators, causing the death of at least 10 people. Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right.”

“It is the duty of a responsible government to uphold this right and to listen to and to act upon the demands of its people.” he said.

Education International (EI) also called on the government to release immediately those who have been unjustly arrested and to begin a process of genuine social dialogue, in the context of harmony and respect for people and human rights.

Reducing Dropout is the Key

Australian Education Union and All India Primary Teachers’ Federation continued cooperation in Uttar Pradesh to reduce dropout and increase retention in 192 schools.

Speaking to representatives from districts of Uttar Pradesh, the President of Uttar Pradesh Prathamik Shikchhak Sang Mr. Tiwari said, “We have seen increased enrolment every year. But students do not stay until the completion of their studies. There are many factors for this dropout, among which quality of teachers is one.”

“We as teachers should constantly look at improving our skills. There are societal problems that lead to dropout. We as union leaders, the agents of social change should intervene, if necessary in the communities where we work so that all children can go to school.”

The 2007-2009 proposed Education for All cooperation agreement between AEU and AIPTF/UPPSS aims to raise awareness of the teachers, students and community, focusing on measures to tackle the hindrances to enrolment and retention and pressurize government to recruit trained teachers in permanent positions in these schools. A number of surveys, trainings, awareness meetings, and press conferences are being scheduled this year.

EI Consortium for Central Asia

EI has established a consortium of Unions from Sweden, Norway, Finland, USA, England and Australia to help its members in Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

EI conducted two workshops in Kyrgyzstan in cooperation with the Lararforbundet of Sweden on “The Role of Teachers’ Union in the Market Economy and Trade Union Leadership” from 8-10 October 2007 and 13-15 October 2007.

The workshops discussed; education situation, challenges faced by the teachers, children and schools and possible solutions; concepts and principles of leadership, union leadership and administration, programmes and activities of EI and the essential components and strategies of the campaign for Education for All.



JTF Programme Survey



An impact Assessment Survey of the JTF is being conducted by the EI regional office to find out how effective the training has been for the development of teachers organisation. This will be the first such survey done since the inception of the programme 25 years ago. More than 200 teachers will be interviewed during the survey.

The JTF training is aimed at improving union skills among the top leaders and contributing to the

strengthening of EI member organisations in the region. The latest training was held from November 19 to December 7 last year in Kuala Lumpur where 24 teachers participated. During the course the participants learnt among others; team building, leadership, communication, conflict resolution, union structure and practices, negotiations, financial management and planning and human and trade union rights.



EDUCATION FOR ALL

After the two national workshops on Education for All in the Philippines on 21-23 June and 20-22 September 2007, the EI affiliates in the Philippines, the ACT, TF VIII-FFW, SMP-NATOW, and TOPPS are now working hand in hand as part of their commitment to the realization of Education for All in the country.

The EI Affiliates formed, the Education for All Movement, a broad alliance with other teachers' organisations, students, parents and community leaders to lead the campaign for quality education for all by pressurizing the Philippines government to fulfill its EFA commitments.

A number of activities including launching of the EFA Movement on September 26 last year, a rally at the Liwasang Bonifacio on World Teachers' Day and actions in connection with the national budget deliberations in Congress were organised in 2007.

IMPROVE TEACHERS EFFICIENCY

A SEAN Teachers have recommended a code of Ethics for the profession. They felt that teachers organisations should be proactive in developing, promoting and implementing code of ethics in their respective countries. *“Teachers organizations should seek a right balance between the rights and responsibilities of teachers. They should understand that without the one the other does not exist. Teachers are professionals and every step has to be taken by individual teachers and governments to maintain the high standards of professionalism”.*



The Asean Teachers recommended that EI should continue to promote EI declaration on professional ethics raising awareness among member organizations on the need to adopt code of ethics, provide assistance to the affiliates which intend to develop and promote code of ethics at the national level.

During the EI- SAARC sub-regional Seminar on code of Ethics in India, Mr. Eswaran, Board Member of EI said, “There is a need to improve efficiency of teachers. There are many challenges facing education. The target to achieve Education for All by 2015 is still a distant dream. We have to give thought to the findings of the reports of the ‘World Bank’ and UNESCO about the teachers not fulfilling their moral obligations and responsibilities and falling short of the expectations of the public.”



ENHANCED CAPACITY



A total of 29 teachers from four EI Philippine Affiliates, namely the Alliance of Concerned Teachers, National Alliance of Teachers and Office Workers, Teachers Organisations in the Philippines Public Sector and Teachers’ Federation VII-FFW participated in the EI National Workshop on Trade Union Rights in Manila, Philippines from January 12-13 2008.

The workshop aimed at sensitizing leadership on trade union rights issues to enhance their capacity in providing advice, training and support to the membership. The workshop discussed the ILO instruments, complaints and supervisory mechanisms, and reviewed the national action plan developed during the ASEAN sub-regional workshop in Kuala Lumpur in January 2007.



Evasive Justice



In Cambodia, representatives of Federation of Trade Unions and Cambodian Independent Teachers' Association and Civil Society Organizations organized a march along the street where Mr. Chea Vichea, Former President of Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia, was gunned down, on 22nd January 2004.

Four years after the murder of Cambodia's prominent labor union leader, six leading international human rights organizations and the world's largest trade union federation ITUC called on the Cambodian authorities to free the two men unfairly convicted for the crime.

In 2007, an EI mission led by the EI Asia Pacific Regional Chief Coordinator Mr. Aloysius Mathews was sent to Cambodia to investigate allegations made against Mr. Rong Chhun, President of the Cambodian Independent Teachers' Association by some former CITA leaders.

On receiving the mission report, the EI General Secretary has written to the President of CITA Cambodia on 7th January 2008 to take immediate, remedial actions and rectify the situation so that progress towards continuing cooperation between EI and CITA could be made.

EFAIDS Project

As of this month, the NNTA (Nepal National Teachers' Association) and NTA (Nepal Teachers' Association) will be joining forces to work on EFAIDS programme. Both unions take the view that this cooperation will serve to greatly further their aims with regards to the prevention of the spread of HIV and the attainment of Education for All in Nepal.

In 2007, a study carried out by EI in Nepal concluded that the spread of HIV/AIDS and the lack of access to quality, free, public education for all were serious issues that needed to be urgently addressed.

It said that, '*HIV/AIDS is still a taboo amongst families, children and teachers. HIV AIDS has relevance to EFA and there is a need to link the two. There are educational disparities on the basis of gender, caste, ethnicity, religion and disabilities.*

There is a teacher shortage of about 60,000. No one is responsible for children out of school. Funding for EFA is insufficient. All efforts seem to be in increasing access and retention, the quality part is still lacking'.

In recognition of these challenges, two EI affiliates, the NNTA and NTA decided to join the EFAIDS Programme in 2007. In the coming year, the main activities which the unions will focus on include making temporary-teachers permanent; improving the working conditions and job security of non-teaching personnel; tackling violence in schools and training teachers on HIV and AIDS education. The programme will focus in most affected areas.



Strike : A Right of Teachers

More than 6200 teachers in the Merangin Regency, Jambi Province, Indonesia went on strike for two days protesting the severe financial cutbacks in educational funding in the Regency. The striking teachers locked every school in the Regency and gave keys to the Regency legislative council which had endorsed the cutbacks.

An editorial in Jakarta Post said, *“Conducting protests and going on strike are rights guaranteed by the constitution. The teachers are quite right in protesting the huge cuts. The strike portrays a tragic situation of our society which regards and rewards professions such as entertainment and law but continues to look down on teachers.”*

The strike comes at a time when the national government is struggling to fulfill the constitutional mandate to allocate 20% of its budget to education after the PGRI (Indonesian Teachers Association, an affiliate of EI) won a court case which has directed the government to comply by the constitution and

allocate 20% to education. At present the allocation is about 12%.

Strikes were also held in East, West & Central Java, South East Sulawesi and West Nusa Tenggara. The PGRI National Board has issued an ultimatum threatening nation wide strike to secure 20% allocation to education from national budget.

“This exercise of freedom shown by teachers of Indonesia to ensure educational and teachers’ rights is an outcome of the EI PGRI efforts under the EI Consortium Project which aims at truly transforming the PGRI from a professional organization to a professional and trade union organisation”, said a participant of the EI Consortium Planning meeting held in Jakarta from 21 to 24 January 2008.

The EI Consortium consists of EI affiliates, namely the Lararforbundet of Sweden, Australian Education Union, Union of Education Norway, Japan Teachers’ Union and National Education Union of the USA.

EI Research Programmes

The EI will conduct two research programme in Asean region this year to gather information and evaluate the progress of the implementation of Dakar Education for All Declaration.

The first research in India, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines and Papua New Guinea aims to look into issues of teacher training and recruitment, unqualified/para teachers, teacher remuneration, teacher absenteeism and girls’ education.

A team of researchers are scheduled to visit India and Nepal in July, the Philippines, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea in April and May this year.

The second research aimed at examining the spread and practical consequences of policies of liberalisation, commoditisation, decentralisation and commercialisation within public education systems will be conducted in Malaysia, Philippines, India, Thailand, Bangladesh, Australia, New Zealand and Kyrgyzstan later this year.

The findings of both researchs will be disseminated to member organisations for their use in advocating better national policies to enhance quality public education for all.



End Discrimination



Since 1981 over 65 million people have been infected with the HIV and 25 million have died of AIDS. It is estimated that over 8,000 people are dying from AIDS every day.

Marking the World AIDS Day an EI Workshop was held under the theme "Prevention of HIV/AIDS and Related Discrimination" from 27-29 December 2007 in New Delhi, India. The workshop aimed at

updating information on HIV/AIDS, reinforce the link of HIV/AIDS with Education for All and assess progress made on the action plans prepared in September last year.

The workshop recommended the need to develop school systems which creates a supportive environment to end discrimination against the HIV infected people.

A total of 27 top union leaders from All India Primary Teachers' Federation, All India Secondary Teachers' Federation, All India Federation of Teachers' Organisations and All India Association for Christian Higher Education attended the workshop. Representatives from UNESCO, NCERT, SCERT, NACO and EI also attended the proceedings of the workshop.

PGRI

P PGRI has one of the most extensive Networks of any organization in Indonesia which can be utilized to promote Education for All and combat HIV/AIDS, according to an EI feasibility study in that country.

As such, the EI EFAIDS recommended the launching of a programme in Indonesia in cooperation with the PGRI.

"The situation in Indonesia merits all possible assistance. The PGRI has the capacity and the potential to be a key partner and player in helping to achieve the goals of EFAIDS. This involvement would enhance their status both in government and society and would be a valuable contribution in achieving one part of the millennium declaration "to ensure that by the year 2015, children everywhere will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that, girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education".

CALLING FOR ARTICLES & COMMENTS

EI would like to invite members to contribute articles to the newsletter. Comments on its present contents are also welcomed. Please send your articles and news items together with photographs to the EI Regional Office at the address beside.

EI represents over 30 million members through 384 member organisations in 172 countries and territories

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