

LOBBYING

Ongoing dialogue with the World Bank

Further to numerous meetings with World Bank officials, EI and the World Bank President agreed to set up a working group to facilitate communication between the two organisations on education policy and on education programmes funded by the Bank.

In 2003, EI conducted several meetings with World Bank officials to raise the concern of EI affiliates about several of the Bank's initiatives. The EI Executive Board instructed the secretariat to convene these meetings as there seemed to be a growing gap between the declarations made by the Bank's leadership and what seems to be promoted by the Bank's operational staff in the field. Namely, the Bank's policy to encourage the recruitment of unqualified contract teachers and the limitation of teacher salary to 3.5 times the GNP per capita. For most affiliates, the Bank is perceived to promote private input into education through the



levying of local tuition fees, to favour the reallocation of resources from higher to basic education, and to support basic schooling provided by NGOs. Bank staff is often perceived to be anti-union. Consultations on education policies and programmes between the Bank and governments take place behind closed doors without consultation with education unions.

On 16 December, EI Officers had a long working lunch with the World Bank President James Wolfensohn. The session was described as constructive. Mr. Wolfensohn insisted that the Bank supports quality public education provided by qualified teachers. He stressed that the Bank's staff is expected to follow its policies. Wherever this is per-

ceived not to be the case, he should be informed so that the appropriate corrections can be made. Wolfensohn stressed the importance the Bank attaches to partnerships with education unions, at both national and international levels.

EI President Mary Futrell said that Education International considers the World Bank an ally and not an adversary in achieving the objectives of Education For All and in creating better conditions for teachers around the world.

A number of concerns raised by EI will be the subject of further study and discussion with Bank officials in the coming months. Another meeting with Mr. Wolfensohn is scheduled before July 2004.

Glossary

ACTRAV ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities
ADEA Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AIDS Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ComNet EI Communicators Network
COPE Council of Pacific Education
CUT Caribbean Union of Teachers
EFA Education For All
EI Education International
ETUCE European Trade Union Committee for Education
FTI Bank World's Fast Track Initiative
GATS General Agreement on Trade in Services
GAW Global Action Week
GCE Global Campaign for Education
GLBT Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender
GNP Gross National Product
GUF Global Union Federations
HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICFTU International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ILO International Labour Organisation
NGO Non governmental organisation
OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PSI Public Services International
TUAC Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD
UN United Nations
UNCHR United Nations Commission on Human Rights
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund
WHO World Health Organisation
WTD World Teachers' Day
WTO World Trade Organisation

colophon

Education International is a worldwide trade union organisation of education personnel, whose 26 million members represent all sectors of education from pre-school to university 315 national trade unions and associations in 161 countries and territories.

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calendar

Meeting with ILO/ACTRAV on joint activities, Geneva	4-5 FEBRUARY
Preparatory Session of the EI/PSI GLBT Forum, Brussels	5-6 FEBRUARY
HIV/AIDS annual subregional evaluation workshop for Francophone countries - Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso	18-22 FEBRUARY
Pan European Bureau, Brussels	23 FEBRUARY
48th UN Commission on the Status of Women, New York	1-12 MARCH
European Higher Education and Research Committee, Brussels	4-5 MARCH
TUAC/OECD Education Committee Consultation, Dublin	18 MARCH
22nd EI Executive Board, Brussels	23-26 MARCH
Global Week of Action	19-25 APRIL
Pan European Committee, Brussels	26-27 APRIL
OECD 2004 Forum, Paris	11-14 MAY
3rd session of permanent forum on indigenous issues, NY	10-21 MAY
92nd ILO Conference, Geneva	1-17 JUNE
4th EI World Congress - Porto Alegre, Brazil	22-26 JULY



WORLDS OF EDUCATION



Global Action week 2004

4TH WORLD CONGRES	2-3
EDUCATION FOR ALL	4-5
EI ACTIVITIES	6-7
TEACHERS RIGHTS	8-9
NEWS FROM AFFILIATES	10-11
FEATURE: EDUCATION FUNDING	12
SPOTLIGHT ON: BRAIN DRAIN	13
PUBLICATIONS	14
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF	15

This year, Education International affiliates will once again mobilise during Global Action Week from 19 to 25 April.

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE), of which EI is a partner, will be organising its 5th Global Action Week (GAW) on 19-25 April. The theme of this year's action week is "Children Missing an Education".

The aim of the 2004 Global Action Week is to pressurise policy makers into providing more money and political leadership for the Education For All initiative. NGOs and teachers unions are invited to organise lobbies by children for children. "The 2004 Global Action Week is a chance for millions of children to voice

their right to a free, quality public education ... and ask decision-makers what they will do to make that right a reality," explains Frédérique Boni, the GAW coordinator in EI. To ensure that children involved in the lobby are not manipulated, teachers and NGO coordinators have been instructed to make sure that the children involved are confident and well-informed enough to speak for themselves. It is, therefore, important to prepare carefully with them ahead of time through classroom activities. Preparations for Global Action Week 2004 are well underway. So far, over 60 EI member organisations have registered to participate in the World's Largest Lobby.



This July, members of Education International, the largest federation of education unions in the world, will challenge the forces that threaten the expansion of human knowledge through education, to benefit the lives and well-being of millions around the world. This is why the theme of the next **EI World Congress**, to be held in Porto Alegre, highlights the crucial role of education in advancing global progress. The discussions in the coming debate will approach the problematique through three sub-themes:

Right to Teach: Right to Learn

The right to teach is the right to use one's knowledge and skills as a qualified teacher to interact and work with students in schools. The right to learn is the right for a student to acquire knowledge and skills in order to attain levels of performance in an education system. It is also the right to grow as a person in a learning environment. The right to education is stated internationally in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It has been reaffirmed in many internation-

al resolutions, including the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2000. The right to teach and the right to learn, derived from the right to education, are implicit in the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of the Teaching Profession. A key point of the EI Congress theme debate will be to give more explicit attention to the right to teach and the right to learn as vital conditions for achievement of the right to education.

The Right to Teach and the Right to Learn can also be defined as

the fulfilment of certain conditions to create a favourable physical, psychological, and socio-economic environment for education to occur. Some opponents of public education claim that the Right to Teach is incompatible with the Right to Learn. Evidently, they fail to realise that education is not simply putting a student in front of an adult in a classroom. It is the process whereby a student learns effectively from a qualified teacher. This professional teaches effectively so that the knowledge and life skills learnt by the student enable him and her to de-

velop their potential to the fullest in order to function independently in, and contribute positively to society upon reaching adulthood.

However, education is under threat because these two rights are under threat. Global as well as regional and local trends expose constant pressure to undermine these rights. Such threats range from various negative impacts of globalisation, the privatisation of education, fundamentalist religious or patriotic groups that control academic freedom, the restriction of the freedom of expression and speech, as well as anti-teacher union forces. Education International insists that the Right to Teach and the Right to Learn be defended by all means, so as to protect the future of education.

Education: Public Service or Commodity



In recent years, a number of innovative proposals have been put forward to reform education, as well as to bring education under the rules of the market. This has given rise to a far-reaching and sometimes harsh debate between the advocates of the concept of education as a public service and the advocates of privatisation. Education International and its member organisations must play a leading role in this debate. Policies and proposals need to be fine-tuned to ensure that the fundamental principles and values of education are not discarded for the sake of ideological and commercial interests. These interests bear little or no relationship to the interests of pupils and students, for whom quality education re-

mains an essential need to meet the challenges of today's changing world.

All of our societies have, at some point in their history, realised that education is indispensable for economic and social reasons, and for human development generally. All societies, including the most primitive ones, transmit knowledge and experience to younger generations. In all cases, education is essential to the survival of a community. Over the centuries, the reasons for organising informal means of learning, and subsequently more structured forms of education, have evolved. The organisation of education systems is also the outcome of a long struggle by the trade union movement for which learning was and still is a

key means of empowerment and action against poverty.

Education plays an important role in promoting equity and overcoming discrimination. Education enables individuals to respond to the challenges of our changing societies. It prepares young people for social responsibility, democracy and development. Education prepares them for harmonious personal development and self-realisation, for the world of work, for new technologies and social dialogue. It teaches them values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Should this role change in the context of the globalised world? At present, the General Agreement on Trade in Services

► Education is a process whereby a student learns effectively from a qualified teacher.

(GATS) is being put forward as a legal framework for the commercialisation of education. Rapid advancement in new technologies presents both opportunities and challenges for education. Lifelong learning becomes an essential element of modern living, and it cannot be traded as a marketable commodity.

In view of such challenges, it is

clear that the public education systems must be reformed. However, public education services must be placed under the responsibility of public authorities. Such responsibility demands fiscal solidarity, strong political will and co-operation between governments, teachers and teacher unions as well as parents



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and students. EI has unquestionably a major role to play in getting long-term commitments from policy-makers, and the coming EI World Congress should set the courses of action

and get the mobilisation process moving.

Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Teachers

Worldwide teacher shortage presents a threat to quality education. Unfortunately, this trend also threatens the fulfilment of the 2015 Education For All goal set in Dakar in 2000.

Several factors influence the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers: first of all, the demand for teachers has increased. Among the many contributing elements include the rise in human population, the achievement of EFA targets, the length of compulsory education, and qualitative improvements such as the reduction of class size.

Secondly, the supply of teachers has decreased. Causes include diminishing attractiveness of the profession, the age composition of the teaching profes-

sion, the mobility of teachers and the number of teacher education graduates. Education is one of the most labour intensive economic activities. Thus in all countries salary costs for teachers are the largest single factor in education expenditure, in many cases, accounting for 80 to 90% of national education budgets. This reality does not mean that teachers earn a lot. Both ILO and OECD have noted that, compared with other qualified professionals, teachers have an unfavourable position. Governments have to examine their teacher policies when they discuss how to change education and there is a growing understanding of the link between good education and good teachers. Informed policy makers have realised that if they really try to improve the quality of education, the key factor is the teacher.

Three major challenges exist in recruiting and retaining qualified teachers today:

The first challenge is Education For All. At the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, the participants, representatives of governments and international intergovernmental organisations

as well as many NGOs, reaffirmed their commitment to achieving education for all by the year 2015. To realise this commitment, there is a need to recruit a large numbers of qualified teachers around the world.

The second is quantitative. The teacher shortage situation may vary among countries, but there seem to be certain similarities. The number of retiring teachers has grown in recent years and, according to demographic statistics, these numbers will be even higher in the coming years. There is also a perception that a growing number of teachers are leaving the profession and that there will be difficulties recruiting qualified students to the teacher education institutions. In some of the affected countries the problem is already serious. Governments and local school authorities are trying to find different measures which may solve the problems in the short term. A major risk with many of these measures is that they put even more pressure on the qualified teachers working in schools and may lead to an even greater turnover among teachers.

The third challenge facing edu-

congress events

19-21 July: EI-PSI gay-lesbian-bisexual-transgender (GLBT) Forum

20 July: Higher Education and Research Caucus

21 July: Indigenous Peoples Forum

21 July: Women's Caucus

21 July: EI Communication Network

22-26 July: 4th EI World Congress

25 July: EI Awards Dinner

28-31 July: World Education Forum

cation today is qualitative. The quality of education provided in many cases needs to be improved. A number of actions may be needed, having implications on the demand for teachers. There is a need to see that all teachers have an appropriate teacher education. EI has indicated that teachers, both in primary and secondary education, need an education at university level. Higher quality also means that class size has to be reduced in a large number of countries. It is not possible to provide quality education in overcrowded classrooms where the teachers may not even know the names of all students. Support, such as remedial teachers, has to be given to teachers in order to help them to help students with special needs.

There is an urgent need to find acceptable solutions to the teacher shortage problem, which will guarantee that students will get a quality education.

All Congress materials – such as registration forms and requests for assistance – are available for download on the World Congress web section. All you need to know about Statutory Deadlines, Congress Hotels, travel documents for Brazil or how to nominate candidates for the prestigious EI Awards - it's all on www.ei-ie.org/congress2004.html Please feel free to email us at worldcongress@ei-ie.org should you have any enquiry.

Will AIDS mark the end of teacher unionism?

In southern Africa, over 25% of the population is HIV-positive. Trade union officials are no exception. New leaders need to be trained to replace them... fast.

Botswana, South Africa, Zambia, Swaziland, Lesotho and Namibia are at peace, but their graveyards fill more quickly today than if they were at war.

Why are teachers a high-risk group?

Teachers in Africa are regularly singled out as being a 'high-risk group' with respect to HIV and AIDS. Three reasons are put forward for why teachers in Africa are particularly prone to HIV infection.

First of all, the teaching profession is relatively young in most African countries. This means that the large majority of teachers are in the highest HIV prevalence age group.

Secondly, in many countries the teaching profession is female-intensive, and in Africa, HIV prevalence rates among the adult population are significantly higher among females (see page 6).

Thirdly, male teachers are frequently posted from one school to another. Without their family, they are likely to engage in sexual relations with their students. The South African Medical Research Council, quoted in the 2003 EFA Monitoring Report, states that 1 in 200 South African women aged between 15-49 was raped by a school teacher before the age of 15.

EI promotes an international declaration of ethics forbidding sexual harassment and sexual relations between teachers and students.

"Last year, I lost five staff members working at my school. Five out of fifty-five. I am quite sure that all of them passed away due to complications arising from HIV/AIDS," said Salatiel Tembo, Deputy General Secretary of the Zambia National Union of Teachers (ZNUT), at the Southern African Workshop on HIV/AIDS (November 2003, Johannesburg). In Zambia, like elsewhere in southern Africa, one out of five teachers is expected to die between 2001 and 2008. The unfolding tragedy is also sounding the death knell of both the education sector and teacher unions in the region.

Dennis Sinyolo of the Zimbabwe Teachers Association (ZIMTA) gave the participants an overview of the devastating impact of AIDS on his union: *"Every year, we lose close to one thousand members because of AIDS-related diseases,"* he said. *"And these are the numbers reported to the benevolent fund. We assume the number is even higher. The loss of those highly-skilled and capable union activists and leaders greatly affects the functioning of the union."*

Dennis' colleagues from Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi and South Africa echoed his words. Union officials, many in their thirties, have to be replaced all the time. This requires elections on an almost permanent basis. And the new leaders need training to do their union work prop-

erly. Despite the efforts made by the newly-elected leaders, the loss of experienced leadership is devastating. The lack of continuity in leadership is even threatening the stability of the unions in some cases.

As one participant noted, *"the fabric of our union is falling apart. There are too many holes."*

While the number of training programmes is to be increased, unions are already facing the challenge of declining membership dues. *"Under normal circumstances, it is a considerable task to train new leaders, but nowadays the mission is almost impossible. All this has a negative impact on the capacity of the union to deliver quality services to our membership,"* commented Salatiel Tembo.

Membership-driven structures

Naturally, the death toll not only affects union leaders, but also ordinary members. In southern Africa, teacher unions are membership-driven. Indeed, the strength of the union is based upon the involvement and the capacity of its activists. Members give their time and energy to the union on a voluntary basis. Most of them do so after school hours and during weekends.

The pressure weighs equally on the financial resources of the unions. *"The coffers of the funeral scheme are empty and dues are declining,"* stated Evert Dlamini, AIDS Co-ordinator of the Swaziland National Association of Teachers (SNAT). *"However, members continue to contribute*

to the pension fund, though many of them never reach their pension age." Once again, other union leaders nodded in acquiescence.

A new approach

These tremendously difficult circumstances call for a new approach to teacher unionism in southern Africa. Ezekiah Oluoch, Deputy General Secretary of the Tanzania Teachers' Union (TTU) called upon all unions in the region to allocate more funds from union dues to HIV and AIDS programmes, for both prevention and training programmes. Ezekiah Oluoch also pleaded for more research and documentation. *"We have to base our policies and action upon reliable data. So far, there's been a lot of guesswork."* Alfred Kamphonje of the Teacher Union of Malawi (TUM) suggested that union leaders go for HIV test like SADTU president Willy Madisha two years ago. All participants also agreed with Dennis Sinyolo when he stated that governments and unions should work out a plan of action covering sick leave, retirement schedules, a medical aid scheme and a bereavement fund.

Unions – together with their international partners – have to build their policies and action upon the dramatic circumstances in which they currently operate. A huge challenge to all.

¹ An assessment study done by the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex shows that in the case of mature AIDS epidemics (such as in Uganda and Zambia), 65-80% of deaths are likely to be AIDS-related.

Africa unlikely to achieve EFA by 2015



According to the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), the continent is unlikely to achieve the Education For All goal of providing critical education to its people by 2015. 35% of the world's 115 million children not enrolled in school are from sub-Saharan Africa.

Senior World Bank Education Adviser Birger Fredriksen said while some countries like Mauritius and South Africa had achieved 100% enrolment in schools, other countries like Mali and Burkina Faso are struggling with less than 40% of children attending primary school. "For most of the sub-Saharan African countries, education is the main priority," said Fredriksen.

UNICEF's annual State of the World's Children Report (see p.14) notes that, despite efforts to ensure universal primary education, the gender gap is still wide. In Nigeria, for example, the national average gender gap in primary school enrolment is 12% and has been rising in recent years. In some countries, disparities are as high as 48%. Nigeria is a prominent member of the group of countries that pledged to accelerate progress on girls' education by 2005. Last July, the Nigerian Minister of Education, Fabian Osuji launched a Strategy to Accelerate Girls' Education in Nigeria.

DEBT-FOR-EDUCATION SWAPS

"Discrimination, ignorance, poverty and exclusion can undermine the very foundations of democracy," declared Peruvian President, Alejandro Toledo, recently at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris. "Intercultural dialogue and education for peace," he added, "are the appropriate instruments for combating these scourges."

President Toledo also said he was in favour of debt-for-education swaps. "The moment has come to explore the possibility of trading external debt for education for the world's children," he suggested, echoing a proposal supported by neighbouring Brazil and Argentina. "Humbly but firmly", Toledo made his appeal to industrialised countries for their co-operation.

Home-based kindergarten in Uzbekistan

In Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Education launched an initiative of home kindergarten. The old system of kindergartens during the Soviet era was based on massive, impersonal but generously funded institutions. However, after Uzbekistan gained its independence in 1991, the enrolment of children of preschool age dropped substantially due to lack of funding and qualified teachers.

According to UNICEF, the number of children aged three to six years attending pre-primary schools dropped from 35% in 1991 to 17%

by 1998 and has continued to drop.

There is however concern that home-based preschool care may not be effectively monitored, because of the fact it takes place in people's houses rather than an institution, but Sevara Zuparkhodjaeva, head of preschool education in the Ministry of Education in Tashkent said she was satisfied that inspections of such facilities were adequate. "The mahallah [home-based] system is an extension of the public education system where inspection and monitoring are good," she said. Zuparkhodjaeva added

that the Ministry was hoping to make the mahallah nursery system universal throughout the country by 2005 if resources can be identified.

EI adopted a resolution recommending that early childhood education be a public service and form an integral part of the education system; that full responsibility for early childhood education be given to the Ministry of Education; that appropriate arrangements be devised to allow for continuity and co-ordination between early childhood education and primary education; that the size of

a class or a group within early childhood education be kept within reasonable limits; that teachers in early childhood education have the same rights, status and entitlements as teachers in other sectors and that both men and women be recruited and trained as early childhood teachers.

MR ZAIRJAN KADYROV, THE PRESIDENT OF THE EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC WORKERS TRADE UNION OF UZBEKISTAN (NTUESWU) PASSED AWAY IN A PLANE CRASH ON 13 JANUARY. EI SENT ITS CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY, FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES OF COMRADE KADYROV.

EI ACTIVITIES

International Women's Day

The theme chosen by the EI Women's Committee for the coming International Women's Day on 8 March 2004 is: Teachers' Unions Combating All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women And Girls.

The struggle against discrimination targetted at women, in all its forms - whether direct or indirect, old or new - is among the priorities of Education International's member organisations and it constitutes a pivotal point of their trade union action.

Affiliates have been invited to share details of the activities they will undertake, so as to exchange experience and ideas. Among the activities suggested is the organisation of a Union Day to raise awareness on the discrimination faced by female teachers, female education personnel and female students. The Day should conclude with a proposal for concrete action, which is to be acted upon in the following months. Evaluation of the actions will then take place on 25 November, the international day dedicated to the elimination of violence against women.

Another suggested activity is to organise a workshop to analyse all aspects of the labour law which tend to support (either directly or indirectly) discriminatory practices against women at the workplace, then elaborate on the necessary strategies to confront and change these practices. Likewise, the evaluation should be ready by 25 November.

Keep us informed!

EI colleague awarded by UNESCO



EI colleague Monique Fouilhoux stepped down as President of the UNESCO/

NGO Liaison committee at the last NGO Conference (17-19 December, Paris). On the occasion, she received the UNESCO

Medal awarded to personalities who greatly contributed to promoting the objectives and ideals of UNESCO. Monique was also warmly congratulated by the NGO community who awarded her the UNESCO Human Rights medal.

The Conference was opened by 2003 Nobel Peace Prize winner Shirin Ebadi from Iran, and featured plenary sessions on cultural diversity, Education For All and respect for human rights.

EI anti-HIV/AIDS programme launched in the Caribbean

The Guyana Teachers Union (GTU) has started training seminar to impart the skills among its membership to help young people acquire the correct attitudes and lifestyle in order to avoid HIV/AIDS and other sexually-transmitted diseases.

The six day seminar, organised by EI and the World Health Organisation (WHO), was also attended by 15 unions from the Caribbean region. For them, the seminar was a basis to develop their plan of action.

President of the GTU, Sydney Murdock, stressed that the project will be implemented in collaboration with the Ministries of

Education and Health. He pointed out in a press conference that while the union has its differences with the Education Ministry on the issue of salaries and working conditions, there is need with respect to the issue of HIV/AIDS for collaboration

because the dreaded disease threatens the very existence of society. Thus there can be no differences on this matter. *"We need to work together or perish separately,"* Murdock emphasised. EI Coordinator for the Caribbean and North America, Virginia Albert, said, *"Basically we see it as a rescue mission."* When asked how effective such projects have been in other parts of the world where they have been implemented, EI pointed out that one of the decisive factors is the support given by the Ministry of Education where the project has become part of the school curriculum.

The project is targeting schools in every administrative region in the country and following the conclusion of the seminar those



teachers that have been trained will return to their communities and train their colleagues so that the students will eventually benefit. A training manual is being prepared to guide trainers to train other teachers.

President of the Caribbean Union of Teachers (CUT), Byron Farquharson said CUT is in full solidarity and support of the efforts of the GTU, and that the very survival of the Caribbean region depends on how effectively the HIV/AIDS pandemic is tackled. He added that the successful implementation of the project would also help to counter the present discriminatory trends against infected children through the development of greater tolerance and understanding.



➤ GTU President Sydney Murdock

EI Pan-European Conference

The inaugural meeting of the new triennial Pan European Conference was held in Luxembourg on 9th December after the European Regional Conference of EI Europe and the General Assembly of the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) adopted the new Pan-European Structure for Europe. There were no votes against the new structure

at the conferences. The new structure was welcomed and regarded as potentially more efficient and effective than its predecessors.

This new development in the structure of EI serves to accommodate various changes happening in the European region, in particular the enlargement of the European Union. Represented by a Pan-European

Committee which meets twice a year and a Pan-European Bureau which meets between Committee meetings, the new EI Pan-European Structure groups all EI and World Confederation of Teachers member organisations in the European region. The EI Pan-European Structure holds its Pan-European Conference every 3 years.

Talks started in Kosovo



EI co-ordinated a meeting in the Balkan region to get its affiliates in Kosovo, representing the Albanian and Serbian communities, to engage in a dialogue.

The meeting was hosted by the Macedonian teachers union SONK in Ojhrd, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, on 16-17 January. SBASHK (the Albanian Kosova union) and SOK (the Serbian

Kosovo union) each sent a delegation of five officers. The event marked a milestone in the attempt which dates back to 1999 to bring the two unions back to the discussion table after the war.

Though co-operation still has a long way to go, the meeting opens official relations between the two unions. Another positive outcome of the meeting is that all participants felt it was a great opportunity to discuss openly, for the first time since the civil war ended, with their colleagues from the other union. From EI's point of view, the meeting was a great success as it is now possible to en-

gage both unions in the discussion of education issues concerning all teachers working in the country.

Two decisions were taken in the meeting. First, each union will build an agenda to discuss the future co-operating relations. Secondly, both will form a commission to propose areas of co-operation related to school activities, working conditions, social security and retirement. Participants will get together again in March.

The meeting was organised by EI, supported by Dutch affiliate AOb, Norway's Utdanningsforbundet and Germany's GEW.

EI Conference on Indigenous Peoples' Education

The EI Asia-Pacific Regional Office and affiliate COPE organised a conference on Indigenous Peoples' Education (4-7 December, Suva, Fiji) attended by 12 EI affiliates in the region.

Aimed to bring together in one forum different perspectives relating to the indigenous peoples' right to education with the view to utilise the information gathered to assist teachers, governments

and schools of the Pacific to better the services they provide to the indigenous people in the region, the conference also aimed to bring about a greater awareness of the ILO Convention on Indigenous Rights (Convention 169). In particular, it

served to examine ways in which teachers could advocate and promote the rights of indigenous people in the Pacific who were still struggling for self-determination and for their right to be rulers of their land and to be independent from foreign rule.

The event was a huge success, and an action plan was drawn up to enhance the work on indigenous education in the region.

EI has developed a network on indigenous education, where teachers, trade unionists, activist and researchers from around the world can share and exchange their experience and opinion. Please visit: www.give-edu.net for more details.

TEACHERS' RIGHTS



Freedom of association under attack

As many as 114 complaints of alleged violations of agreements on freedom of association, the right to organise and the right to collective bargaining have been submitted to the Committee on Freedom of Association of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). At its November meeting, the Committee cited several countries, including **Zimbabwe**, for their repression of union activity: according to the Committee's report, the intimidation of, and threats made to, trade unionists are a recurrent phenomenon in that country; 350 members of the ZCTU trade union centre were arrested as recently as last November.

People who found, or belong to, independent trade unions risk 20-25 years' imprisonment in **Cuba**. According to the Committee's report, at least seven trade union leaders were arrested in 2003, and found guilty of what the government described as "subversive activities". Cuban law only recognises one trade union centre, which is controlled by the state and the Communist Party, and it bans independent unions.

The **Ecuadorian** government was asked to adopt measures aimed at preventing violence against workers. It was also urged to amend legislation with a view to enabling unfairly dismissed workers to return to employment.

Sexual orientation and human rights

EI is adamant that the exercise of human rights and basic freedoms should not be hampered in any way as a result of sexual orientation.

In addition to the EI/PSI forum for gay and lesbian workers (5-6 February in Brussels), which was attended by trade union representatives from 14 countries, EI urged its members to back a resolution supporting sexual orientation that will be voted on by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) in March.

Last year, Brazil tabled a motion

relating to human rights and sexual orientation that demanded that freedom of sexual orientation should be an integral element of universal human rights. From 15 March to 23 April 2004, 53 nations will discuss the issue, and state publicly whether or not the choice of sexual orientation is a fundamental human right.

EI agrees with the authors of the draft resolution when they express their "their considerable anxiety concerning the human rights violations carried out against people all over the world by reason of their sexual orientation," and argue that the exercise

of human rights and basic freedoms "should not be hindered in any way on the grounds of sexual orientation".

Of the 53 nations with seats on the Commission, 17 publicly support the resolution and 16 are opposed. Lobbying will be particularly aimed at the 15 new states sitting on the Commission this year. A complete list of the 53 countries is be found on the EI website.

Support the Brazilian motion www.brazilianresolution.com



International Human Rights Day: Focus on Colombia

Colombia, the most dangerous place on earth for trade unionists, was the focus of EI's activities for International Human Rights Day.

EI organised a mission to Colombia on 10 December, the International Human Rights Day. "This was an intense mission," said the EI Co-ordinator Nicolas Richards. "Colombian teachers are going through very difficult times, with colleagues being murdered, displaced or disappeared, whether they are union leaders or teachers working in a rural school."

So far, 49 colleagues have already been murdered in 2003, 100 teachers have been displaced to Bogotá and another 60 to Baranquilla. The EI mission had meetings with government officials (Vice President's Advisor, Home Ministry, People's Defenders Office etc.) and with colleagues from the trade union centres and various human rights NGOs.

Representatives of the Global Union Federations, among them EI, also had meetings about Colombia in Geneva. An EI/PSI delegation was received at the Colombian Embassy to express serious concern about the hu-

man and trade union rights violations in the country. The representative of the Colombian ambassador recorded the complaints, without making any commitment. Earlier that day, ACTRAV organised a panel discussion at the ILO (picture), where EI co-ordinator Marta Scarpato explained that in Colombia, schools are often used as a propaganda tool. Teachers are being threatened and harassed because they prevent children from being used as child soldiers.



Protest victories

Estonia

In early December, Estonian teachers took part in the biggest strike of all categories of workers since the country broke away from the Soviet Union in 1991. The strike was called by unions affiliated to EI, the TALO and EEPU.

The government got the message, and raised teachers' salaries by 12%. Before the strike, a teacher's average starting salary was 5400 crowns (EUR 345). When the Prime Minister and the trade unions failed to reach an agreement, a stoppage was called for 4 December. More than 30,000 teachers from all sectors of education from nurseries to higher education, stopped work.

This victory has only just been won, but the unions are already thinking of the future, and on 10 February will commence salary negotiations for 2005.

Guinea

The EI has called on the authorities in Guinea to respect the right to strike in future. Six delegates of two EI affiliates, the Professional Education Trade Union Federation (Fédération syndicale professionnelle de l'éducation, FSPE) and the Free Trade Union of Teachers and Researchers in Guinea (Syndicat libre des enseignants et chercheurs de Guinée, SLECG) were arrested and detained at the end of the week-long strike last November. All the teachers

who took part in the strike were threatened with dismissal, and two trade union delegates have been disciplined for taking part in strike action, and dismissed from their posts as head teacher of a primary school and career adviser.

EI's letter to President of the Republic Lansana Conté and the Public Sector Minister states, "We urge you to take all essential measures to ensure that constructive negotiations are resumed with representatives of Intersyndicale FSPE-SLECG, and no interference or threats from the Directorate of State Security, with a view to reaching an agreement on the claims, including pay. Teachers can only ensure quality teaching, the motor of

the country's economic and social development, if they have decent living and working conditions."

Ecuador

On 5 January, the 112,000 teachers in Ecuador's EI-affiliated National Educators' Union (Unión Nacional de Educadores, UNE) achieved their objective after 43 days of industrial action; this was the fourth strike they had organised to achieve implementation of the salary agreement ratified on 11 June 2003.

UNE President Ernesto Castillo has committed himself to catch up on the lost teaching days.



Experience of the Skopje strike

► The strike has had a big impact in the press. The President of SONK is here featured on the cover of Macedonia's political weekly magazine.

January." Government representatives are visiting Albanian homes to persuade parents that the teachers want to deprive their children of an education.

Moreover, through directors of dedicational establishments and senior officials in the Ministries of Education and Labour, the authorities have been increasing the psychological pressure on the strikers to back down. It is quite obvious that the right to strike is not respected. At the end of January, an EI representative went to Macedonia to collect evidence.

Macedonian teachers are striking to demand the full implementation of the sectoral col-



lective agreement concluded in 1994. They are not asking for anything more than what has been negotiated and won.

"We are traditionally in favour of negotiations," explains SONK President Dojchin Cevtanoski. "We've been arguing with the new government for a year now. We issued an ultimatum in November, and announced that we intended to have a general strike in December. The govern-

ment was trying to gain time."

This is the first time that a whole sector has gone on strike, and the government has been destabilised. After trying force, threats and manipulation, the government may now revert to practices more worthy of a European republic. The future of social relations in this tiny republic that was formerly part of Yugoslavia depends on it.

The government is playing a dangerous game in Macedonia, where it is trying to turn the teachers' strike into an ethnic issue. 40% of the Macedonian population are of Albanian origin, and Albanian teachers are represented by the EI-affiliated SONK union. "Our strike has nothing to do with ethnic considerations," insists the SONK Vice-President, a female teacher of Albanian origin, "but the government is playing this card to make us call off a strike that has mobilised 95% of teachers since 26

NEWS FROM AFFILIATES



Rescuing the teachers in Haiti

The situation is becoming increasingly tense in Haiti. In December, Jean Lavaud Frederik, General Secretary of the CNEH - the National Confederation of Teachers in Haiti - received information that his life was threatened. Due to the speedy action of EI and its affiliates from the Francophone committee, particularly the French-Canadian affiliate CSQ, Jean Lavaud and three of his seven children fled the country. After staying in Miami for a few weeks, the union leader decided to go back to his country, but he asked EI to ensure that his wife and children could stay out of Haiti. Since returning to his country, the CNEH General Secretary noticed that he is constantly being followed by the militia.

Haiti's education system is in a dire state. Schools have no furniture, not enough chairs, no toilets, no running water! And what's more, the Education Minister resigned recently.

CNEH is fully committed to promoting the Education For All initiative, and in this context considers girls' education an absolute priority, which would also bring an end to child domestic servitude.

CNEH complains that the literacy campaign for adults is just cosmetic. *"Those giving the classes are young people who have neither the qualifications nor experience required,"* says Jean Lavaud.

EI has written to the Haitian authorities to demand an end to the violation of human and trade union rights, it monitors the situation

"What a site!"

AFT (USA), PPTA (New Zealand) and SADTU (South Africa) websites nominated for Labour Website of 2003. Every year, the one-stop union news website, Labour Start, organises the Labour Website of the Year competition. For 2003, three EI affiliates got their website listed by an international jury. But what makes a good labour website?

Good content

This rule applies to any website. Visiting a website is like reading a newspaper. You do not want to read yesterday's newspaper because you've read that before. Information on a website has to be updated regularly. Once you've got your members hooked on your site, you'd want them coming back for more. It is also the best way to show your members that you are working for their well-being and are up-to-date with the latest of their concerns. To tell whether a union is in tune with its membership, you just have to log onto its website.

Well-organised information

Even when you do update your website, but information is hidden somewhere and your reader is not able to spot it immediately, you might as well not update it at all. Quite apparently, a good labour website that is updated regularly has to be well-organised. Information and other resources have to be clearly classified and easily accessible. The trick is, never overdo things. A website clustered with menus and sub-menus and sub-sub-menus looks cryptic. A website littered with links with no coherent organisation looks like it's just been bombed. Remember, your reader has to be pampered - any information that is more than 4 clicks away means your website has failed utterly.

Visually appealing

Everyone likes beautiful things, whether they admit it or not. A pretty website with good colour co-ordination, well-selected fonts, appropriate and well-designed graphics certainly stands out in a crowd. Do your readers a favour. Who wants to face a grey, dull, sickly-looking site every morning? If you want to keep them coming back for more, you'd have to seduce your readers by making it a pleasure to just look at your site. Other than updating the content, you'd have to update the outlook of your site as well. The slogan "Retro is in" doesn't apply to websites. Either you're in, or you're out.

What IS a website???

Some unions make the fatal mistake of having a website without knowing what it is. "Err... because everybody else has it?" My response is: it's like buying a microwave oven when you only use it to heat things up. Many unions still don't realise it. You can use your website to run campaigns, do surveys, collect feedback, send out news, run services like greeting cards and SMS messaging, chat, conduct round-the-clock textual or video discussions, streamline applications for union assistance, sell books, and TONS of other things!! Why just use it to display your union logo?...

Accessibility

The New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association committed a huge amount of time and energy in redeveloping their website last year. *"A big chunk of the site is only accessible to our members so they can get confidential updates about the progress of negotiations, update their personal details online and debate tricky issues 'inhouse'."*



Unfortunately it means that the rest of the world can't see all we do but it's proving a very useful communication tool for us and was what our members wanted," explained Theresa Wyndham-Smith. Naturally, there is a huge gap in the different levels of technological know-how and material among our members, so a union website has to be as accessible as possible to the most technologically-challenged teacher in the most remote school with the oldest computer.

A good union website has to be functional, attractive and useful.

To know the reasons for success of the AFT, PPTA and SADTU websites, go take a look:

www.aft.org

www.sadtu.org.za

www.ppta.org.nz

Decentralisation in Norway

Teachers in Norway have for a long time had the municipalities as employer. But the responsibility for negotiating the teachers' wages, agreements on working hours, work conditions and so on has rested with the state, together with the responsibility for the curriculum. The situation changed unexpectedly last year, without preliminary discussions. As a result, as from May 1, 2004

all negotiations will have been carried out with the municipalities. The government only keeps responsibility for the curriculum.

«People employed by the municipalities have a wage-system very different from the one implemented at state-level, and we favour a state-system which ensures all teachers more or less the same wages,» explains Helga Hjetland, President of EI's affiliate in Norway, Utdanningsforbundet.

The situation is such that the union is now negotiating with the municipalities to reach an agreement stating how many hours a teacher should teach, and how many hours are set aside for other tasks, especially for preparations and corrections. So far, municipalities are reluctant to make any decision on that.



Call for increase in education spending in Latin America

In Bolivia, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru, teacher unions mobilise for an increase in public education spending for the development of a quality public education for all. However, the replies given by the governments are all the same: the State needs to find mechanisms to relieve itself of its financial responsibility towards education. "This implies that we are in the context of bilateral and sub-regional free market negotiations, which in turn calls for fiscal transparency and a re-definition of the State's functions," explains Jorge Pavez from Chilean affiliate CPC (photo).

In Ecuador, the new President Lucio Gutierrez was elected due to a series of electoral promises towards different segments of the population, notably the teacher sector. But these promises remain unfulfilled after coming into office and has resulted in several protest actions (see p9).

Presently, teacher unions in Latin America are reflecting on ways to get their government's commitment in education, as it should be. A possible solution, proposed at the Meeting of Education Ministers of the Americas, is the exchange of foreign debt with public investment in education.

Hope dashed in Ethiopia

To the dismay of the international community, the situation in Ethiopia has once again deteriorated. On 30 January, the offices of EI affiliate, the Ethiopian Teachers' Association (ETA), were resealed. This dramatic turn of event took place after the government-supported ETA appealed and new hearings were held on 19 January and 4 February at the Federal Supreme Court, when earlier in November the genuine ETA won the legitimisation of its existence at the Federal High Court. EI and its member organisations were delighted that after 11 years of harassment, justice had been exercised so that the lengthy litigation would come to an end.

This hope has now been dashed, but EI will persist in its mediation. EI General Secretary immediately addressed a letter to the Prime Minister's Office and to the Ministers of Justice and Education. EI also requested Ms Genet Zewdie, Minister of Education, to give audience to EI's Chief Regional Co-ordinator, Assibi Napoe, on 18th February.

Furthermore, EI is carrying on with its training programme on Education For All in Ethiopia. This programme, involving EI's ETA, is implemented in collaboration with donor governments and UN representatives from the World Bank and UNESCO. *"Teachers' input to achieve the Education For All goal is absolutely decisive,"* states the letter. *"thus our affiliated professional association, i.e. the independent ETA, should be able to undertake its genuine trade union activities".*

March for Education in Austria

On December 10, hundreds of teachers joined the "March for Education" to inform the public about the consequences of the budget cuts and pension reforms in the education sector. The march in Vienna was organised by EI affiliate GOD, together with parents and pupils associations – the school partners as the union calls them.

"On December 1, 700 teachers retired in Vienna. The capital of Austria has 450 compulsory schools. If those teachers had not retired, 700 young teachers would have lost their jobs, because the Federal government has decided to reduce its education budget and the County of Vienna argues, it is not their duty to pay for the teachers. The result is that the pupils miss many lessons, and pupils with various

deficits are not properly attended," explains Eva Maria Schachinger from GOD.

The union has decided to undertake a public activity each month to inform the public and lobby the government.

Spotlight on Violence

EI reacted to the shooting of a Dutch school teacher by a 17-year old student which happened on 13 January, in a letter to Dutch affiliate AOb. Violence is increasing in most Western countries, stressed EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen, as the killing sparked yet another debate on security in schools.

The EI European Round Table on violence in schools held in October 2003 concluded that pupils and teachers have to be guaranteed the best protection in schools, through very high quality curriculum and violence prevention mechanisms within the school compound. *"Quality has a cost,"* says Fred van Leeuwen. *"But most countries still do not invest enough in education".*

EDUCATION FUNDING

Blurring the Lines Between Public and Private in Canada

Many believe that increased globalization and international trade agreements are the most serious threat to the future of Canada's public education systems. Not so, according to our research. Domestic privatization initiatives are at the root of most of the problems we face, says **Harvey Weiner, Deputy General Secretary of the Canadian Teachers' Federation.**

Canadians fail to recognize the extent to which a two-tiered public education system has developed in Canada. Furthermore, it is happening on an ad hoc basis with little discussion of the implications for democratic citizenship. Whether by design, stealth, or misguided initiatives, our schools are incrementally being privatized through a broad range of initiatives.

The consequences of these initiatives are almost identical to the one wreaking havoc in Canadian universities. A recent Statistics Canada report indicates that, nationally, the percentage of university education funded by tax payers fell from 81% in 1986 to 55% in 2002.

This trend to increased reliance on private sources of funding is changing the nature of public schooling in Canada. School

boards and individual schools are desperately searching for new and innovative ways to raise additional revenues and the fundraising siren call beckons. It is creating growing inequities between schools and the services available to students.

Recent surveys indicate that parent fundraising initiatives provide schools with revenues ranging from as little as 500 Canadian Dollars to as much as \$600,000 per annum. Affluent communities are able to raise thousands of dollars relatively quickly through direct appeal campaigns. Schools in socio-economically disadvantaged communities are not as fortunate.

Teacher out-of-pocket expenses are also increasing at an alarming rate. In a 2001 CTF survey of 2,000 teachers, 95% said they contributed some of their own resources to support school-related and instructional activities. The national average was \$593 a year.

Ironically, the success of various fundraising initiatives makes it easier for Canada's provincial/territorial governments to deny or avoid their responsibilities to adequately fund public schools. Numerous reports and surveys attest to this trend. For example, an Ontario government appointed

Education Equality Task Force report states that an additional \$2-billion would be required to adequately fund Ontario school systems for the current school year. In October of this year, the

Alberta Commission on Learning reported similar findings.

Selling advertising space

Fundraising activities range from the ridiculous to the sublime and are increasing by leaps and bounds. The Richmond School District in British Columbia is exploring the idea of selling advertising space on school rooftops. The ads would be visible only to passengers flying into or out of the Vancouver International Airport so that no unsightly messages would corrupt impressionable students. The estimated annual revenue: \$5-million dollars.

Other funding sources include parent user fees for instructional resources, school board charitable foundations, corpo-

The success of fundraising initiatives makes it easier for Canada's governments to avoid their responsibilities to adequately fund public schools

rate sponsorships, junk food dispensing machines, blood plasma drives, adopt-a-school programs, and recent British Columbia legislation permitting school boards to set up business companies to raise revenues.

These initiatives pale in comparison with the revenues obtained by marketing public schools to foreign students. This has become the mother of all fundraising activities – international students recruited on a for profit basis. Ironically, at a time when provincial/territorial governments' per capita student grants are being reduced or frozen, foreign students are paying double or more for the privilege of attending Canadian public



schools. This provides a substantial revenue source for many school boards across Canada. For example, the Richmond School Board in British Columbia enrolled 5,000 foreign students at a fee of \$12,000 per student, providing that jurisdiction with additional revenue of \$60-million for the 2002-03 school year.

Restoring Canada's public education system

Does this range of fundraising initiatives meet domestic and international commitments Canada should be respecting? Although the answers are not always clear, there is good reason to believe our country is in breach of a number of provisions.

Accessible, equitable, and publicly funded schooling for all children and youth is the key to active citizenship and the future social and economic wellbeing of any country. It is the best investment a society can make. Restoring Canada's public education systems to health must become a national priority and governments at all levels must be held accountable to that end. It is an objective CTF and its members continue to pursue with energy and vigour.

This article refers to Canadian Dollars: \$1CDN = XXUSD = XX_
The full version of this article can be viewed on <http://www.ctf-fce.ca/en/issues/NI/CHARTER/GatsPaperEng.pdf>



BRAIN DRAIN

The Strain on the Future of Higher Education

The term "brain drain, brain gain" rings like an advertisement jingle. But in fact, the issue presents a challenge that confronts the entire academic world and is gaining momentum at an alarming rate

The term "brain drain" was first coined in the United Kingdom in the fifties to describe the outflow of British scientists to the United States and Canada. Nowadays, it is used in the context of highly educated professionals, often but not limited to academics and researchers, from low-income countries working in high-income countries for an objectively long period of time. The term has also come to be applied to graduate and postgraduate students who, after their studies, stay on in the host country to work. This trend has been going on for some years, and because the number of highly-educated persons moving out is so high, it is affecting these countries' already languishing higher education sector, and making it even harder to improve on their economic predicament.

The topic dominated the discussions of the fourth EI International Conference on Higher Education and Research "Universities: Key Partners for Development", which demonstrates that the issue is an increasing preoccupation of EI unions.

How does the problem of brain drain affect the higher education and research sector in a low-income country? "It's not about the departure of all professionals, but of the departure of professionals who are not well-paid and well-treated," explains Ibra Diene, Secretary General of the Senegalese Higher Education Union (*Syndicat sénégalais de l'enseignement supérieur - SAES*). Academics often choose to work in countries where there are high-

er salary, better work conditions, more academic freedom, more opportunities for scientific and intellectual exchanges and more chances for career advancement.

As remarked Rachel Hendrickson (NEA, USA), brain gain refers not only to the influx of qualified education personnel, but also of other highly educated professionals and students. The case of the United States, a chief brain gain country, shows that the countries that send the most number of students are also the countries that send the most number of highly educated persons in employment in the US. China and India top the list. This phenomenon only goes to show that the brain drain situation in these two countries will be perpetuated as the students stay on in the host country to work. "According to OECD research," writes Hendrickson, "79% of doctoral recipients from India and 88% of those from China in 1991 were still working in the US in 1995." With the lower number of professors and students, the higher education institutions in these countries are in dire need of a new lease of life. The situation is further compounded by the recent trend of "offshore branches" set up by "renowned" higher education institutions from high-income countries. Academics quit their home universities for better-paid positions in these offshore branches and students would rather pay more to obtain a degree from a more-renowned university. Without state assistance, local universities could ultimately face closure.

What can be done?

In the paper presented at the EI conference, Leszek Koszalka and Janusz Sobieszczanski (NSZZ, Poland) cite three main reasons for the gradual improvement of the situation in Poland, namely: new legislation that assures academic freedom, new legislation that allows university staff to hold more than one position, and significant increase in salary (around 25% on average). In their analyse, they suggest that in countries facing the problem of brain drain, governments should invest more resources into the higher education sector and increase the number of pull factors to retain qualified higher education staff. Measures proposed include significant pay increase for academic staff of international repute, support and promotion of international collaboration between universities to facilitate technological and scientific transfer and more job opportunities and mobility between domestic higher education institutions.

On the other hand, is the brain gain situation in high-income countries "all gain and no pain"? One assumption is that they are, taking the example of the United States, where local teachers are only able to fill in 150,000 of the 200,000 new positions every year. But further analyses show the case to be more complex: increasingly, the dynamics of situation is transferred from brain drain vs. brain gain to simply, "job drain". A hypothesis put forward is that, the increase in the employment of non-local personnel who does not receive proper employment benefits and satisfactory working conditions reflects a desire on the part of the employers to drive down labour costs. To ensure that the situation does not bring about a new wave of job dislocation in the US, the NEA

developed its policies around the protection of ALL workers in the education enterprise, immigrant or native-born. An example is the drafting of policy principles governing the employment of immigrant teachers in the US school system, to ensure that they are not hired through external agencies and that they enjoy the same working conditions and protection as local teachers.

As concludes the final report of the conference, the issue of brain drain is clearly in need of an international union approach. It is a delicate issue. On the one hand, it is not realistic to attempt to stop the international mobility of education personnel, which reflects not only economic and social realities at the global level but also the positive international character of higher education. On the other hand, brain drain countries are experiencing deteriorating economic and social conditions, compounded by the growth of offshore institutions and the commodification of higher education. An international union approach requires the collaboration of all EI affiliates. Unions in the host countries should ensure the status and proper working conditions of immigrant personnel are in place in order to prevent exploitation, and at the same time, press for their government to reach agreement with countries experiencing brain drain, so as to achieve protection for returning academics and students.

An independent, non-UN body, "Global Commission on Migration" was formed in December 2003 to analyse the subject of global migration, including the issue of brain drain, and will submit its report to the UN in 2005. ¹

¹ http://www.unwire.org/UNWire/20031124/449_10708.asp

PUBLICATIONS

UNICEF State of the World's Children Report 2004 - *Getting girls into school is crucial*

The annual UNICEF report notes that, despite efforts to ensure universal primary education, the gender gap is still wide. Although global enrolment rates show gradual improvement in gender balance, 9 million girls are still left out of the classroom completely... and girls who are enrolled drop out faster, on average, than boys.

The report argues that education must be approached as a human right rather than a privilege or an expected outcome of economic progress. When education is considered a right, governments are obliged

to mobilise the needed resources so that all children can complete a quality education. And parents are more likely to hold their governments accountable for failing to do so. *"The sooner countries treat education as a basic human right and not something to be funded optionally after their other budgetary needs have been met, the sooner all children will benefit,"* said UNICEF Executive Director, Carol Bellamy.

Using case studies and examples, the UNICEF report outlines the barriers that need to be removed. Those barriers include the distance between schools and homes, the lack of clean wa-

ter supply or separate toilet facilities, as well as the threat of violence in and around the schoolyard. It stresses that hiring women teachers improves the enrolment and retention of girls at school and that celebrating diversity, teaching in local languages may improve children's performance (that of girls in particular).

Among other specific measures stated in the report, UNICEF calls for education to be included as an essential component in development plans, the elimination of all kinds of school fees, the integration of education into national plans for poverty reduction, and the increase

of international funding for education.

However, the UNICEF report also highlights facts that EI deeply disagrees with. A poignant example is UNICEF's provision of a three-weeks on-the-spot training to 5,000 individuals in Angola, and pretended that they are qualified teachers. Furthermore, the report is silent on the need to provide good salaries and working conditions for teachers, or initial and in-service training of good quality.

www.unicefusa.org/education/sowc_2004.html

Professional Ethics

The EI Declaration on Professional Ethics is available in 3 more languages: Arabic, Chinese and Portuguese. These also exist as online versions. In addition to these 3 languages,

the Declaration is available in English, Spanish, French, German and Russian. Member organisations who need the Declaration in large quantities should direct their request to info@ei-ie.org. *"EI's Declaration on Professional Ethics is a document that should be available to every class room teacher,"*

says EI General Secretary. For that reason, EI is committed to have it translated in many languages as possible. Member organisations that wish to assist EI in translating the Declaration into their own language should feel free to contact us.

A cartoon to tackle HIV/AIDS-related discrimination

Three UN agencies launched a colourful, interactive cartoon booklet called *"HIV/AIDS Stand Up for Human Rights"*. The cartoon is part of a global campaign to tackle HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination and other forms of human rights violation.

The cartoon, launched by the United Nations Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNAIDS and the World Health Organisation is designed to

raise awareness about the key linkages between HIV/AIDS and human rights, to demystify the disease and to combat the myths and taboos associated with HIV and AIDS.

Specially designed for younger people, the cartoon explains how HIV is transmitted and how individuals can protect themselves. It sets out to combat HIV/AIDS-related discrimination by illustrating how the lack of awareness about HIV/AIDS can contribute to stigma, discrimination and human rights violations against

people affected by HIV/AIDS. It also shows how discrimination based on gender can hinder people's ability to protect themselves from HIV infection and also prevent people from accessing the needed treatment, care and support.

The cartoon is written in a language accessible to children and young people all over the world. WHO, UNAIDS and OHCHR encourage its use as a tool for education and training.

Educating children about human rights

3PLUSU is website recently launched by the International Labour Organisation. The colourful site uses three animated characters - Toshi, Kaia and Isabelle - to guide kids around. Japanese boy Toshi uses a map to help children learn more about different countries and the issues and problems they face. Kaia looks at real-life stories of child labour, forced labour and discrimination, while Isabelle's high-tech computer includes useful links to international organisations. This original website is surfer-friendly and easy to navigate - a useful source of information for children to learn about the importance of work.

<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/3PLUSU/index.html>

CHILD LABOUR

Dominican Republic: the right to education beyond reach

The right to education is not attained equally and irrevocably in all countries. In the Dominican Republic, living conditions and the circumstances surrounding access to education vary considerably, depending on whether children are of Dominican or Haitian origin.

We know the Dominican Republic for the beaches and lagoons that welcome huge numbers of western tourists to wallow in sun-kissed exoticism, but few people are aware of the shadow to be found on the other side of Dominican holiday postcards: thousands of Haitians who are exploited by the Dominican state and the sugar companies. The health, economic and social situation of these agricultural workers and their families – there are about as many as 500,000 of them – is so overwhelming that one can have no hesitation in describing it as modern slavery.

During the sugarcane harvest known as the *zafra*, Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent work in the plantations for 12-14 hours a day, 7 days a week, under the blazing sun and in physically intolerable conditions that include frequent injuries, cuts and snake bites. All for 60 pesos a day (i.e. 1 euro or US\$1.25). During the 6-month period, these slaves harvest 120,000 tons of cane under the menacing eye of armed rural guards.

When Haitian workers arrive at the plantation, they are herded into *bateyes* – labour camps that look more like shanty towns than workers' villages. Families of 5 or 6 people are cramped in bolyols, small houses made of wood and sheet metal. There, they have to cope with promis-



► Dominican law does not recognise children born within its territory but with parents of Haitian origin. These children are therefore unable to go to school, and they work in the sugarcane fields instead. Everybody knows they exist, but the state turns a blind eye to this present-day slavery.

© cqrthrdinc

cuity, lack of hygiene (there are no toilets, no proper sewer system, no running nor potable water), lack of security and widespread infections (e.g. malaria, diarrhoea, tuberculosis and HIV). Children are always the first victims of such precarious living conditions.

However, in this panorama of economic, social, health and family apocalypse, children do not come top of the list of people's concerns. For their parents, the first priority is to find something for them to wear and eat every day; the sugar companies, on the other hand, are more interested in turning them into an efficient, profit-making workforce as quickly as possible. Children help their fathers in the sugarcane fields from the age of 10, despite a Dominican law which bans children under the age of 14 from working – a legislation that the sugar industry flouts unscrupulously.

The fate of the children in the *bateyes*, and their right to a different life, and therefore the access to education – a decisive element in personal and social development – depend entirely on the legal basis of their situation. The Dominican state refuses to recognise the legal existence of children born in the *bateyes*, hence they are not registered with

the Dominican state. But neither can they register with the Haitian state because they are born outside Haiti. Legally, these children do not exist as far as anyone is concerned. They have no identity, and hence there are no rights for them to claim.

It is in this absurd legal setting that the question of the right to education is posed. How can they be enrolled in Dominican state schools when these institutions insist on a birth certificate provided by state authorities? Without proof of Dominican citizenship, schools and social services refuse to care for them, thereby breaching the International Convention on Children's Rights, which the Dominican Republic ratified in 1991. By violating this Convention, and particularly Article 7 which specifies that every child has the right to a name and a nationality from birth, the Dominican Republic is knowingly placing itself outside the law.

There are a few primary schools in the *bateyes*, but most children drop out and are unable to enrol in secondary schools – which are situated many kilometres from where they live anyway. Some secondary schools do try to accept children who have no papers, but they are in a minority.

NGOs like the *Movimiento de Mujeres Dominicano-Haitianas* (Movement of Dominican-Haitian Mothers, MUDHA) are there to remind the Dominican state of its responsibilities. In 2000, MUDHA ran a national media campaign that led to the situation of 3000 children being legalised recognised, and this eventually got them their birth certificates. As magical as the phrase 'Open Sesame', the birth certificate grants them access to secondary schooling and holds out the hope of integration into a society which nonetheless rejects them.

The struggle for legal recognition is still a long one because with the Dominican authorities, any the file featuring a Haitian-sounding name would frequently be slowed down or even blocked by the administration. Nevertheless, legal recognition is the only way out for children of Haitian descent to escape the vicious circle in which they are trapped.

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The Quebec Committee for the Recognition of the Rights of Haitian Workers in the Dominican Republic has been supporting these victims of globalisation since 1987.

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