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Education



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No to child labour! Yes to education!

Teachers take on cyber-bullying p. 8 G8 must do better on aid commitments p. 22
Education is not a tradable commodity p. 28



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Today most people agree that childhood is the time for learning, not earning. No longer can we accept that the coffee we drink, the carpets we walk upon, or the shoes we wear are produced at any point in the supply chain by child labour.

Childhood is for learning, not earning!

In this edition of *Worlds of Education*, we focus on efforts by educators in India and Morocco to raise awareness about children's rights and to prevent child labour. Children's rights are not only about child labour; they are also about child abuse, trafficking, health care, safety, and of course, education. Child labour and education are inextricably linked. Where education is up, child labour is down. Where education is down, child labour is up.

Education For All is also closely linked with the elimination of child labour. Yet, the latest reports show that many countries are falling behind the Millennium Development Goal benchmarks. The very first benchmark – gender equity in primary education by 2005 – has been missed in most of Africa and in much of Asia. We have now passed the half-way point in the 15 year programme to achieve primary education for all children by the year 2015. But most countries are still far from the half-way mark.

The trade union movement has been at the forefront of helping achieve the rights of children in all countries and by putting an end to child labour, once and for all.

The task before us is immense, but we cannot afford to fail. Each of us has a part to play in moving children from work to school, whether through advocating, mobilizing, or developing programs.

Children should learn, not earn. And school is the best place for them to work.

Fred van Leeuwen, EI General Secretary

Good news

Australia apologi Generations of Ab

Australian teachers are wholeheartedly applauding the new federal government's formal apology to indigenous Aboriginal people for past injustices and human rights violations.

On 13 February, the first day of taking office, newly-elected Prime Minister Kevin Rudd rose in the Parliament and apologised in an emotional and magnificent speech to all Aborigines for past laws and policies that "inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss." He specifically apologised to the "Stolen Generations," thousands of Aboriginal children who were taken away from their families through a policy of forced assimilation which lasted from the 19th Century to the late 1960s.

"For the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry," Rudd said.

In a statement signed by AEU Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos and Federal Secretary and EI Vice-President Susan Hopgood, the Australian Education Union called the apology "a significant moment in Australia's history."

"It marks the beginning of a journey which sees a painful and tragic period of Australian history acknowledged," the statement said, and pledged the AEU to stand in solidarity with the Stolen Generations, their families and communities.

Hopgood noted that students and teachers in schools across the country watched the ceremony and were moved by the eloquent apology. "It was a day of high emotion – tears, laughter, sadness for the past wrongdoings, but also an overwhelming hope for the future," she said.

The AEU statement urged the government to go beyond today's apology: It said "all levels

ses to Stolen original children

of Australian governments must further acknowledge and urgently act to redress the significant and unacceptable gap between the educational outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.”

The union also welcomed the government’s announced commitment to prioritise provision of early childhood education for Indigenous children.

“Countless studies show that quality early childhood education is crucial to future learning and educational achievement,” Hopgood said, adding that AUE figures show that as many as 7,500 Indigenous children are missing out on pre-school education in the Northern Territory alone.

The apology comes in advance of the World Indigenous Peoples Conference, slated to be held on the traditional lands of the Kulin Nation in Melbourne, Australia from 7-11 December 2008. “Indigenous Education in the 21st Century: Respecting Tradition, Shaping the Future” is the theme of this year’s confer-

ence, which will attract Indigenous peoples from around the globe to celebrate and share diverse cultures, traditions and knowledge.

EI and its affiliates from the Australian Education Union (AEU), the National Tertiary Ed-

ucation Union (NTEU) and the Independent Education Union of Australia (IEU) are hosting a seminar prior to the conference. It will look at how education in today’s world economy may be a major actor in the continuing process of assimilation, colonisation, cultural and linguistic genocide of indigenous peoples. It will also examine the role of education unions in addressing these issues, and share models of unions working positively with indigenous peoples. ■■■

Members of the “Stolen Generations,” thousands of Aboriginal children were taken away from their families through a policy of forced assimilation.

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Access to education was also stolen

In 1995 the Australian Government commissioned a National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families. Their report, entitled *Bringing Them Home*, contains testimony from hundreds of members of the Lost Generations. Witnesses told of receiving little or no education, and certainly little of any value. In their own words:

“The authorities said I was removed from my parents so I could receive an education but the fact is the nuns never gave me that education. I didn’t

receive an education. I was very neglected.”

“I wanted to be a nurse, only to be told that I was nothing but an immoral black lubra, and I was only fit to work on cattle and sheep properties ... I strived every year from Grade 5 up until Grade 8 to get that perfect 100% mark in my exams at the end of each year, which I did succeed in, only to be knocked back by saying that I wasn’t fit to do these things ... Our education was really to train us to be domestics and to take orders.”

INFO

To read the full text of the AEU statement, see:

www.aeufederal.org.au/Atsi/AEUstatapology.pdf

For more information on the World Indigenous People’s Conference, see: www.wipce2008.com

Global Campaign for Education

Together we set a record for the biggest lesson ever taught

More than 7.5 million children, adults, teachers and campaigners in more than 100 countries took part in the Global Campaign for Education's "World's Biggest Lesson" about the importance of everyone having the chance for a quality education. The world record for the largest simultaneous lesson in history has been broken already – and the numbers are still coming in until the end of May!

For half an hour, teachers all over the world gave the same lesson at the same time. The objectives of the World's Biggest Lesson were as follows:

- ▶ To explain the importance of getting a good quality education.
- ▶ To explain the number of people who do not get an education.
- ▶ To explain the impact that not being able to read, write or count has on people's lives.
- ▶ To teach politicians a lesson about the importance of education and the need to take urgent action to achieve the Millennium Development Goals on Education for All.

The country with the highest recorded count is Bangladesh, with 2.5 million people taking part in over 25,000 different locations. Millions took the lesson in Vietnam and one million more took part in the Palestinian Territories.

In Belgium, three primary schools participated. In Brussels, 70 students aged 9-12 took the lesson. Their teachers asked them to reflect on what makes for a world record, then on what makes for a good or bad education, and finally on how their future lives would be different if they grew up and didn't know how to read, write or count.

The lesson ended with a quiz to evaluate the students' understanding of the concepts covered.

The children demonstrated a great awareness of the central role of education in their lives. Here are some of their comments:

"Without knowing how to read or write, it is hard to find a job."

"For a good education, we need money to pay salaries for good teachers."

"If you do not go to school, you do not have happy memories."

"Without education, we are kept from fulfilling our dreams. I want to be a veterinarian."

And to become one, you need to go to school for a long time."

The children illustrated the importance of literacy with examples from their everyday lives, and the negative impact the absence of education could have for them. Such daily tasks as working, paying the bills, sending an SMS or going on MSN become impossible, they said.

"If you are illiterate, you could not help your own children do their homework."



Students taking part in the World's Biggest Lesson outside the German Reichstag (Parliament Building). The GCE presented a school report card marking Germany's performance on Education for All.



©GCE

A few of the thousands of students who took part in the World's Biggest Lesson in Mexico.

Below are some of the countries which participated in the World's Biggest Lesson:

Afghanistan, Argentina, Albania, Armenia, Austria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Brazil, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ethiopia, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Macedonia, Malawi, Mauritius, Mexico, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Somaliland, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Taiwan, Turkmenistan, Uganda, UK, USA, Uruguay, Venezuela, Vietnam, and Zambia.

"You could not take medicine to get better, because I do not know exactly which disease they cure, and it can be dangerous."
"I could not send a letter if I have administrative problems."

The students also had a vivid interest in seeing African children getting the same fair chances of success. They were ready to welcome African children into their classroom so they could study together.

They were mostly shocked to learn that still 750 million adults around the world cannot read or write, and that in many schools in Zambia the size of a class can be over 100 children to one teacher. "How can the teacher teach them all? Does he get mad if the children have poor marks and study badly?" they rightfully asked.

All agreed with the poetic definition of education presented by one of the students:

"It is the key of life. Without it, you are as good as blind, it is a great handicap."

"The most promising reason to believe that the world will achieve its goals of Education for All by 2015 has been the emergence of strong civil society movement and this mobilization of millions of children, women and men during the Global Action Weeks each year," noted Kailash Satyarthi, GCE President. "We will not fall silent until we have ensured quality education for all."

"The world's biggest lesson given by teachers, students, parents, performers around the world is also the world's most valuable lesson," remarked Assibi Napoe, EI's Chief Regional Coordinator for Africa and current Chairperson of the GCE. "It is time now for governments to go back to complete their assignments." III

Guest speaker

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon



©UN

“Violence
against women
is never
acceptable,
never
excusable,
never
tolerable.”

I am honoured and moved to be with you today. Standing here before the Commission on the Status of Women, whose members have done so much for gender equality worldwide, I am energized by your activism and inspired by your achievements.

Today, we come together to launch a global campaign to end violence against women. I am counting on you – advocates from Government, civil society and the UN – to carry our message around the world.

Violence against women is an issue that cannot wait. A brief look at the statistics makes it clear. At least one out of every three women is likely to be beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Through the practice of prenatal sex selection, countless others are denied the right even to exist. No country, no culture, no woman young or old is immune to this scourge. Far too often, the crimes go unpunished, the perpetrators walk free.

War has always been devastating, but now, women and girls are themselves targets in the war zone. Today's weapons of armed conflict include rape, sexual violence, and the abduction of children conscripted as soldiers or forced into sexual slavery.

On my visits to conflict-torn areas around the world, I have spoken with women who have endured horrific forms of violence. I will forever be haunted by their suffering – but equally, I will always be inspired by their courage. These mothers, sisters, daughters and friends are determined to reclaim their lives.

This is a campaign for them. It is a campaign for the women and girls who have the right to live free of violence, today and in the future. It is a campaign to stop the untold cost that violence against women inflicts on all humankind.

We know that gender inequality is hampering progress towards the Millennium Development Goals – our common vision to build a better world in the 21st century.

We know that violence against women compounds the enormous social and economic toll on families, communities, even whole nations.

And we know that when we work to eradicate violence against women, we empower our greatest resource for development: mothers raising children; law-makers in parliament; chief executives, negotiators, teachers; doctors, policewomen, peace-keepers and more.

And so my campaign to end violence against women will continue until 2015 to coincide with the target date for the Millennium Development Goals.

We have solid policy frameworks and initiatives to build on.

UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict brings together 12 entities across the United Nations family, from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to the World Health Organization.

The UN Task Force on violence against women is spearheading joint programming at the national level.

The UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, set up eleven years ago, has supported partners in communities, nations and regions around the world.

Just last December, the General Assembly adopted a historic resolution on rape and sexual violence.

And the landmark resolution 1325 on women, peace and security adopted by the Security Council seven years ago raised the issue to the level it deserves.

Today, I call again on the Security Council to establish a mechanism dedicated to moni-

toring violence against women and girls, under the framework of resolution 1325.

Let us remember: there is no blanket approach to fighting violence against women. What works in one country may not lead to desired results in another. Each nation must devise its own strategy.

But there is one universal truth, applicable to all countries, cultures and communities: violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, never tolerable.

In this campaign, I will personally approach world leaders to spur action through national campaigns.

I will urge all States to review applicable laws, and to revise them or enact new ones to ensure that violence against women is always criminalized. And I will call on all States to enforce their laws to end impunity.

I will encourage the media to take our message far and wide, and urge regional organizations to set priorities and targets.

I will galvanize the UN system to provide stronger and more effective support to all stakeholders, at the local, national, regional and global level.

I will form a global network of male leaders to assist me in mobilizing men and boys – men in Government, men in the arts and sports, men in business, men in the religious sphere, men in every walk of life, who know what leadership truly means.

I will work hand in hand with women's groups worldwide. The progress over the

past century happened thanks to them, and they will be our chief standard bearers in the future too.

And I will propose a high-level event in 2010 to review what we have accomplished, exchange best practices and map out the steps ahead.

Dear friends, Our campaign will build on a deep and broad partnership, bringing in all society to take us to the end of violence against women and girls everywhere.

To help us reach our destination, I call on young people around the world – our leaders of tomorrow.

I call on the private sector around the world, whose reach is indispensable in advancing our cause.

I call on women's groups around the world, whose valiance and vision have brought us to where we are today, and who will keep charting the way forward.

I call on men around the world to lead by example: to make clear that violence against women is an act perpetrated by a coward, and that speaking up against it is a badge of honour.

I call on Member States around the world: the responsibility, above all, lies with you.

I call on all of you to pledge with me: United we shall succeed.

Thank you very much. ■■■

New York, 25 February 2008

Safe schools

Teachers take on cyberbullies

“Bullying has butted its way into the digital age, negatively affecting the lives of students and educators. As with other complex educational problems, cyberbullying has no easy solutions.”

That’s the conclusion reached by Bernie Froese-Germain in his recent paper, *Bullying in the Digital Age: Using Technology to Harass Students and Teachers*. A researcher with the Canadian Teachers’ Federation, Froese-Germain is part of a national work group of teacher trade unionists, education researchers and experts in communications technology who are collaborating to find solutions to this emerging problem.

“Bullying is bullying — whether it’s done online by the latest technology or whether it’s done in person — and it is unacceptable,” says CTF President Emily Noble. “We want our schools to be safe and secure places for learning.”

The CTF has adopted an action plan to address the many challenges presented by cyberbullying in schools and in the professional lives of teachers. It is part of an overall strategy that includes:

- › Developing national policy on cyberconduct
- › Undertaking joint initiatives with key education partners
- › Creating web resources and publications for teachers, parents and students

› Lobbying for legislative protection against cyberbullying

› Working in cooperation with other teacher organizations around the world, under the umbrella of Education International. Although the term “cyberbullying” was coined by Canadian educator Bill Belsey, the problem is by no means limited to Canada. Indeed, education unions in many countries are reporting instances of bullying via email, cell phones, text messages, chat rooms, blogs, and web sites.

Experts agree that cyberbullies are often emboldened by anonymity. Hidden behind the mask of technology, they harass others with little fear of being discovered. But virtual bullying that takes place in cyberspace can have serious consequences in the real world: school absenteeism, poor grades, anxiety, anger, depression and worse.

“The media stories are already tragically familiar,” writes Froese-Germain, “defamatory comments about teachers ... on Facebook; students harassed online and driven to depression or even suicide; teachers deliberately provoked in class by students only to have their reactions caught on camera phone and posted to a worldwide audience over the Internet.”

Scholars have expressed concern about the current policy void on this issue, and are

calling on teachers’ organisations to work with others to develop and implement the strategies needed.

“Policymakers will need to reconcile the multiple tensions unleashed by cyberbullying: freedom of expression; a rapidly evolving electronic communications environment; the best interests of the child; the well-being and working conditions of teachers; and parental and school protective authority over the child,” says Froese-Germain.

“Bullying is bullying — whether it’s done online by the latest technology or whether it’s done in person — and it is unacceptable.”

The CTF has just released a pamphlet on CyberTips for Teachers, which encourages teachers to know their rights and responsibilities. Their advice? Be professional, be prudent and be prepared.

Because teachers hold positions of trust, they must model ethical cyberconduct and maintain exemplary professional standards in email to students, parents and colleagues.

The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers in the UK is also concerned that the abuse of technology is leading to bullying and false allegations against staff. The union has an incident report on its web site where members can report instances of cyberbullying in confidence. The NASUWT is campaigning for:

- › A review of regulatory and legislative provisions to prevent allegations being made about named teachers on Internet sites and to secure more accessible avenues of redress for those who are exposed to public ridicule and false allegations;
- › More effective school policies which promote zero tolerance of cyberbullying;

- › Mobile phones to be treated as potentially offensive weapons and pupils’ access to them restricted during school sessions;
- › School policies which encourage or require teachers to provide individual mobile phone or e-mail contact details to pupils to be outlawed;
- › Heightened awareness of the need to be cautious when using social networking sites as the contents are being scanned by employers and hijacked by pupils;
- › The inclusion of reference to the use and abuse of technology in the Health and Safety Executive’s health and safety good practice guidance and in all workplace health and safety audits, including risk assessments.



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At work, teachers are advised not to share their password with others, nor to leave their computers on and unattended around students. At home, CTF advises members not to use their personal computers to contact students or parents, nor to permit any images of themselves to be posted on the Internet without appropriate privacy safeguards.

“Never put in electronic form anything that you wouldn’t want viewed by a million people, including your colleagues, students, and supervisors – and your mother.”

Legal advisors to the National Education Association in the USA offer even stronger advice regarding protecting teachers’ professional reputations online. Michael D.

Simpson of the NEA Office of General Counsel writes: “Never put in electronic form anything that you wouldn’t want viewed by a million people, including your colleagues, students, and supervisors – and your mother.”

Simpson cites cases of teachers who have been fired or disciplined for wild party stories or sexually explicit pictures they posted on their MySpace or Facebook profiles. At least one NEA affiliate is urging all members to remove their personal profiles from such social networking sites.

Teachers who do become targets of cyberbullies are advised to:

- › Make copies of the messages, including URLs
- › State that the conduct is unacceptable and demand that the sender stop

- › Beyond that, do not engage with the person as this could escalate the situation
- › Contact the parents if the cyberbully is a student
- › Tell your school administrators and your union.

Some forms of cyberbullying can be a computer crime. If there is a question as to whether the cyberbullying is criminal or not, call the police. **III**

INFO

For more information:

www.cyberbullying.ca
www.ctf-fce.ca

Safe schools

Video game condoning bullying in schools provokes international outcry

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Teachers in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, South Korea and the Caribbean recently joined together with EI in an unprecedented effort to condemn bullying and cyberbullying in all its forms. The outcry by eight organizations representing over 4 million teachers was sparked by the release of a video game called “Bully: Scholarship Edition.”

The coalition spearheaded by the Canadian Teachers’ Federation (CTF) includes the Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ), the National Education Association (NEA) in the United States, the National Union of Teachers (NUT) in the United Kingdom, the Scottish Secondary Teachers’ Association (SSTA), the Australian Education Union (AEU), the Korean Federation of Teachers’ Association (KFTA) and the Caribbean Union of Teachers (CUT). All are members of Education International, which also endorsed the initiative.

“Educators around the world are deeply concerned about the impact of violence in media, especially when it is marketed as entertainment,” said Fred van Leeuwen, EI General Secretary. “Violent video games undermine our efforts to create safe schools where children can grow and learn in an atmosphere of respect. As teachers, it’s our professional duty to speak out against this kind of bullying behaviour whether it’s in the community, in the classroom, or on a computer screen.”

“Teachers are concerned because the video game is mean-spirited in that it trivializes and glorifies bullying in school. While teachers recognize this game is only one among thousands of violent and aggressive video

games on the market, this game in particular hits closer to home for teachers and students,” explains CTF President Emily Noble.

“We were disappointed when the game was first released in 2006. And we are appalled this new version is said to be more realistic, featuring new methods to torment and bully,” adds Angelo Gavrielatos, AEU Federal President.

“What a distasteful example to show young people. The game undermines all our work for civility, social engagement and peaceful resolution,” explains CUT General Secretary Adolph Cameron.

“At a time when media reports of bullying and cyberbullying behaviours are on the rise, the last thing we need is a video game that further fans the flames of bullying and cyberbullying behaviour in schools,” says NEA President Reg Weaver. “After all, every teacher has seen at least one of their students mimic what they have seen and watched on the video screen.”

Studies have shown that children who watch television or films with violence or play violent video games have a tendency to imitate this behaviour in real life:

➤ According to a UNESCO study, almost half (44%) of both boys and girls reported a strong overlap between what they perceive as reality and what they see on the screen. Many children experience both real and media environments in which violence ap-

pears to be natural and the most effective solution to life’s problems.

➤ According to the non-profit organization Media Awareness Network, the level of violence in the gaming habits of young people is disturbingly high. The network’s 2001 study, *Young Canadians in a Wired World*, found that 32% of youth aged 9 to 17 are playing video games “every day or almost every day.” A full 60% cited action/combat as their favourite genre.

➤ According to a 2003 study published in *Psychological Research in the Public Interest*, television, films, video games and music that contain violence increase the likelihood of aggressive and violent behavior in both immediate and long-term contexts.

“The devastating psychological effects of both verbal and social bullying become even more profound online because the victim often doesn’t know who is doing the harassing, and many people can covertly witness or join in the bullying,” noted SSTA President Ann Ballinger.

“The lack of non-verbal visual cues in the non-physical world of the Internet makes it difficult for perpetrators to gauge how their actions are being received by others. When people can’t perceive the effect of their actions on others, it’s difficult for them to feel empathy,” added KFTA spokesperson Kim Dong-suk. ■■■

INFO

Helpful link for teachers and parents:

www.media-awareness.ca/english/parents/video_games/choosing_videogames.cfm

Classroom humour

You're having a laugh

By Rachel Power
AEU News

The toughest audience can't hold a candle to Year 9 on a wet Friday afternoon. That's why so many teachers are a hit at this year's comedy festival.

Twelve years of teaching was the perfect grounding in crowd management—which is basically what comedy's all about, says Damian Callinan, now one of Australia's premier comics.

Teaching Year 8s in Broadmeadows was like doing four shows a day, he says. In fact, when his first attempt at stand-up bombed, at least he could think, "Well, I've had worse lessons" and get back on the horse.

Callinan is one of a number of past and present teachers who are taking the stage at this year's Melbourne International Comedy Festival, which took place in April.

But while teaching honed his resilience, staff meetings were the real test of his wits. Those "exercises in self-indulgence and grandstanding" were the arena where Damian practiced "the one delicately shaped barb that would bring the whole thing down".

While education remains one of his passions, Damian's latest show moves into less salubrious territory. Inspired by a memorable visit to a Melbourne drinking hole, Last Drinks will combine Damian's talents as a stand-up, storyteller and character actor to dissect the worlds of gangland and pub culture.

If you're after something a little more wholesome then try Halley Metcalfe's Shout Hallelujah? C'mon, Get Happy. The Lilydale High School teacher says her first solo show doesn't contain any material that might offend her grandma.

Mind you, her grandma is a former prison warden.

According to Halley, there are plenty of parallels between teaching and comedy. Both require standing up in front of a crowd, shouting down the hecklers, and keeping a sense of humour about it all.

"Kids are much more critical than audiences," she says. "At least audiences are polite. Kids are like (sarcastically): 'Ah, yeah... that's great, Miss'."

Teaching drama is a particularly great source of material, she adds. "Let 20 kids into a room without tables and they just go mad."

Both teachers and comedians "have to be a bit cocky", she adds. And they tend to be cynics. As did Halley, until she discovered a love of teaching and "became disgustingly optimistic".

Hence her show, which asks: Does changing our attitude change our life? "People are going to walk out thinking, 'I don't know what that was all about. She's one confused lady!'" Hayley warns.

Yianni Agisilaou has become a hit on the UK comedy circuit, but 20 years ago he was a Grade Four student at a Hawthorn primary school being told to "get back in his box".

"Maybe you'd like to teach the class!?" were his teacher's exact words — and the name of Yianni's show. For a moment he entertained the thought, before wimping out.



Teacher and comedian Yianni Agisilaou in his show "Maybe you'd like to teach the class!?"

But, armed with two decades of life experience, Yianni is back and ready to teach the class.

"Out go quadratics, the periodic table and Venn diagrams," he says. "In come the tricks advertisers use to con you out of your money, acceptable uses of profanity and a show stopping mathematical proof that manages to combine love, threesomes and the meaning of life."

If any maths teachers see it they'll pick holes within the first ten minutes, he admits. Teacher friends have already torn him to shreds for his technological ignorance.

Envisaging himself standing in front of blackboard, Yianni asked a couple of mates if he could borrow one from their school. They cracked up.

"So I asked if they have a whiteboard and they still laughed in my face." He asked them what they were using in schools these days.

"They said, 'We don't even have boards, Yianni. We just put little electrodes on our heads and the kids receive the knowledge.' So I know all about interactive whiteboards now!" ■■■

Human and trade union rights

Colombia: Even more teachers assassinated

Educators around the world are condemning the latest brutal assassinations of teacher trade unionists in Colombia.

On 1 April, Emerson Ivan Herrera Ruales and Luz Mariela Diaz Lopez lost their lives at the hands of unknown gunmen who shot them as they made their way to work in the morning. Both were teachers at a rural school in Valle del Guamez, in the department of Putumayo. Compounding the atrocity of the crime is the fact that Diaz Lopez was seven months pregnant at the time she was murdered.

The Human Rights Commission of the Colombian Federation of Educators (FECODE) has issued a statement calling on the government to investigate their deaths and bring the killers to justice.

“FECODE rejects these abhorrent recent crimes and demands once again that the national authorities urgently conduct all necessary and decisive investigations in order to break the chain of impunity that regularly characterises the assassinations of teachers,” it said. “We find that the only response from the education authorities is the opposite of solidarity, negligence and administrative contempt.”

The union federation also exhorted the departmental authorities to guarantee and respect the fundamental rights of all educators in Putumayo, who face daily threats due to the actions of different players in the ongoing civil conflict in Colombia.

Education International is also calling on the government of Colombian President Alvaro Uribe to abide by its obligations under international law to guarantee the funda-

“FECODE rejects these abhorrent recent crimes and demands once again that the national authorities urgently conduct all necessary and decisive investigations in order to break the chain of impunity that regularly characterises the assassinations of teachers.”

mental right to freedom of association, including the safety and security of all trade unionists in Colombia.

“Education International and its members around the world are speaking with one voice. This killing has got to stop! Impunity for murder of trade unionists cannot be allowed. Those responsible for these heinous crimes must be brought to justice,” said EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen.

The murders of Herrera and Diaz are only the latest in a horrendous death toll of Colombian trade unionists so far this year. Statistics issued before their deaths include the latest report from the respected Colombian NGO, Escuela Sindical Nacional, which notes the assassination of 17 workers since the beginning of 2008. According to the British NGO, Justice For Colombia, nine trade unionists were killed in the month of March alone. ■■■

Human and trade union rights

Zimbabwe: Post-election violence targets teachers

Among the dead are the following teachers, who were activists in FECODE member organisations:

Ramiro de Jesús Pérez Zapata,
killed on 12 January in San Jeronimo in Antioquia department.

María del Carmen Mesa Pasachoa,
killed on 8 February in Tame in Arauca department.

Carmen Cecilia Carvajal,
killed on 4 March in the town of Ocaña in Norte de Santander department.

Gildardo Antonio Gómez Alzate,
killed on 7 March in the city of Medellín in Antioquia department.

Víctor Manuel Muñoz,
killed on 12 March in the town of Codazzi in Cesar department.

Emerson Ivan Herrera Ruales,
killed on 1 April in the town of Valle del Guamez in Putumayo department.

Luz Mariela Díaz López,
also killed on 1 April in Valle del Guamez in Putumayo department.

Unfortunately, as is typical in such cases, no one has been arrested or charged in connection with any of these murders.

Education International has received chilling reports about political retribution against teachers in Zimbabwe. This comes in the aftermath of general elections held on 29 March.

According to the results released by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, the House of Assembly elections were won by the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), while the Senate seats were split between the opposition and the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party.

Morgan Tswangirai, leader of the opposition MDC, won the presidential election with 47.9% of the votes cast, while President Robert Mugabe came second with 43.2%. (Two other candidates split the balance.) However, none of the candidates won an absolute majority as required by the country's constitution, thereby necessitating a run-off vote within 21 days.

Reliable information from Zimbabwe indicates that ZANU-PF activists are threatening teachers, accusing them of voting for the opposition. In some areas, teachers have been told to vacate their schools or to relocate, while others have been threatened with unspecified action. Most violence is allegedly perpetrated by war veterans and the youth militia, known as "green bombers" because of their green uniforms and notorious ruthlessness.

In some parts of Zimbabwe, teachers have been accused of influencing the rural folk to ditch ZANU-PF and to vote for the opposition. Some teachers, who were acting as polling officers during the election, have been arrested or abducted by the feared Central Intelligence Organisation operatives. This is reminiscent of the 2000-02 election period when several teachers were

beaten up, forced out of their schools, murdered and sexually molested by political thugs.

It is surprising that teachers are being accused of having voted for the opposition when thousands of them are reported not to have voted in the first place because they were deliberately deployed outside their voting wards as polling officers. This calculated disenfranchisement of teachers is a violation of their constitutional right to elect their political leaders.

Teacher unions in Zimbabwe have strongly spoken against the violence being perpetrated against teachers in the country.

The unions have threatened to go on strike unless the current harassment of their members is stopped.

Education International strongly condemns the threats and violence being perpetrated against teachers and innocent citizens in Zimbabwe.

Teacher unions in Zimbabwe have strongly spoken against the violence being perpetrated against teachers in the country.

"We call upon the Zimbabwean authorities to respect human and trade union rights and to protect teachers," said Fred van Leeuwen, the EI General Secretary. "This unfortunate development will worsen the brain drain in the education sector in Zimbabwe and bring the already crippled education system in the country to its knees." ■■■

Affiliates in action

Lebanese and Palestinian teachers struggle for fair wages

On a recent visit to the Middle East to present EI's new initiative to strengthen relations with teacher unions there, EI met with the Teachers Syndicate of Lebanon (TSL) and the League of Public Secondary School Teachers of Lebanon (LPESPL) in Beirut, and the General Union of Teachers of Palestine (GUPT) in Amman.

EI found its members in need of support. One commonality for Lebanese and Palestinian teachers is the escalating cost of living. Teachers need their governments to address this disparity with a wage adjustment, and to do so through negotiated settlements.

EI strongly supported the teachers of Lebanon in their strike action to back legitimate demands for a fair salary increase. On 3 April, teachers across the country staged a one-day "warning strike" aimed at pressuring the government to come to the bargaining table in good faith and negotiate a fair salary deal.

For the Palestinians the story is very similar – teachers can no longer support their families on a teacher's salary, and strike action was being considered. However, GUPT has since met with the government and they expect a change in salary soon.

"This is good news indeed. Quality education for children requires good

teachers, and good teachers need and deserve reasonable and adequate salaries to support themselves and their families," said Jan Eastman, EI Deputy General Secretary.

In recent years Lebanese teachers have experienced a significant drop in their purchasing power due to huge increases in the cost of living and zero increase in their salaries. In response, the TSL and LPESPL came together with other public education associations and partner groups to form a union coordinating committee and plan joint action toward shared goals.

Union leaders have had several meetings with key government officials, including Prime Minister Fouad Seniora and Education Minister Khaled Khabbany, both of whom acknowledged the legitimacy of the teachers' demands. However, by press time there had not been any correction to the teachers' salaries.

Eastman praised the courage of the teacher trade unionists in Lebanon, especially in

view of the political and economic challenges their country faces. And she commended their responsible and professional approach in asserting their collective bargaining demands.

"The teacher trade unions are determined to redress the dire situation of teachers' low salaries, and they are working very hard to do so through negotiation, not confrontation," she said.

Eastman was in Beirut and Amman for meetings with the unions regarding joint projects on training for school union representatives, professional development and research to support collective bargaining. She said EI's member organisations expressed appreciation for international support in their struggle to achieve decent wages for their members.

"Despite difficult economic situations, we would hope that governments here and elsewhere would use the bargaining table to find solutions," Eastman said. ■■■

World Day Against Child Labour: June 12



Child labour

Global unions affirm children's rights

Dusty-faced children toiling near the heat of brick kilns, beautifully costumed children dancing and singing sweetly, smiling children walking hand-in-hand with their parents and teachers in a rally for their rights; there were many faces of childhood to be seen at the International Conference For Child Rights Organisers and Campaigners, which took place in New Delhi, India, in late February.

Despite recent progress, more than 200 million child labourers worldwide are still denied their fundamental right to go to school, to learn and play, to experience a childhood. That's why more than 200 activists and experts from all corners of the globe met to share knowledge and strategise ways to eliminate child labour. The conference was a joint initiative of the global labour movement, led by the Building and Woodworkers' International, with the aim of raising awareness about children's rights and the role of trade unions in eradicating child labour. As BWI General Secretary Anita Normark said:

"Trade unions have historically led the fight against child labour, and the trade union commitment to end this scourge remains as strong as ever. Through their campaigning for universal, compulsory, good quality education and their action to fight against exploitation and discrimination of any sort in the world of work, unions will continue to be the mainstay of the global struggle to get children out of work and into school. Decent work for every adult is a key foundation stone for ending child labour."

EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen and EI Executive Board member S. Eswaran of

the All India Primary Teachers Federation also addressed the delegates. Van Leeuwen affirmed "that children's rights are not only about child labour, they are also about child abuse, about trafficking, about the health of our children, about their safety, about their education."

Stavri Liko from the teacher union FSASH in Albania and Trudy Kerperien, International Secretary of AOb from The Netherlands, both made presentations on teacher union programmes underway in Albania and Morocco to prevent child labour.

In Albania, there are about 40,000 children labouring in the textile and shoe industries, in construction and in agriculture, Liko said. Both Albanian education trade unions, FSASH and SPASH, are seriously working to help reduce the numbers of children dropping out of school. More than 1,500 teachers are involved with 4,200 pupils. As a result, in the last two years more than 1,200 pupils have returned to school or are no longer at risk of dropping out.

Kerperien was moved by the visit to a bridging school built in Agra by BWI to help children who are working in brick kilns to make the transition to mainstream schooling. "It's

wonderful to see the children so eager to learn," she said. "You could see what's happening both on the education side and the industrial side. It opened my eyes to where we can work together as unions."

Through their campaigning for universal, compulsory, good quality education and their action to fight against exploitation and discrimination of any sort in the world of work, unions will continue to be the mainstay of the global struggle to get children out of work and into school.

Kerperien said she learned once again how the fight against child labour is inextricably tied into the movement for quality public education and the struggle for decent work for adults. If public schools are universally accessible and the education is high quality, more children will enjoy learning and fewer will drop out. And if their parents have decent work, fewer children will be compelled by dire poverty into the work force, she added. ■■■



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Building and Wood Workers' International is helping these children who work in brick kilns to make the transition to regular school.

Children's rights

No to child labour! Yes to education! Teacher unions work to prevent drop outs

By Nancy Knickerbocker

Fez, MOROCCO – Sara Marbough flashes a radiant smile at her teacher and settles into a front row desk in her Geography class at Abbas Benani School in this holy city. A conscientious 14-year-old, Sara knows every child has the fundamental right to an education. She also knows how precarious that right can be.



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The fourth of five children in a desperately poor family, Sara is well-loved but not well-provided for. Her elderly father suffers from vision problems, so is unable to work. Her mother is illiterate and unskilled. Sara often goes to school without breakfast.

The headmaster of her school knew that Sara's family could barely afford to feed her, let alone buy textbooks. Mohammed Glioui said, "Sara used to come to my house and do homework with my daughter. She told me about the hard conditions Sara was living in, so in the mornings I often gave her milk and cake or other food."

Suddenly, at age 12, Sara stopped coming to school.

"My mother forced me to go to work as a housemaid for a wealthy family," she said. "I cried a lot and my mother cried too, but it was a must for us ... It happened very fast. I just came home from school and my mother told me that tomorrow someone would come for me. I didn't want to eat for the first five days."

Sara's mother, Malika Hinda, felt humiliated that poverty compelled her to send her daughter to work. "The neighbours would ask, 'Where's Sara?' I would lie and say she was visiting relatives," Malika said.

Sara's mother was happy that her daughter could return to school, thanks to the union's help.

As a live-in domestic servant, Sara's days began at 6:00 a.m. After preparing breakfast for the children, she faced hours of drudgery. According to Human Rights Watch, the majority of child domestics in Morocco work 14 to 18 hours a day, seven days a week, for hourly wages of between five and 12 cents US (0.4 to 1 dirham).

The mistress of the house was cruel. "She treated me like an object," Sara said. "I was considered only a maid, not a human being. In that house I was deprived of many beautiful things in life – especially kindness."

As soon as Sara's absence was noted, Headmaster Glioui and other teachers met to discuss her case. They visited Sara's home and tried to convince her parents that long-term investment in her education was far more valuable than any short-term gain. They promised that the teachers' union would provide Sara's books, supplies and clothing. After six weeks, Sara's parents agreed.

"There is a huge difference between the cruelty of my employer and the kindness of my teachers."

"Thank God we could convince her family to let her go back to school," said Glioui.

Sara was overjoyed. "I can't describe the feelings," she said tearfully. "There is a huge difference between the cruelty of my employer and the kindness of my teachers." Today Sara works hard at school, earns high marks, and dreams of becoming a pediatrician so she can take care of children, just as she herself has been cared for.

"Sara is a lovely and lovable girl. She pays attention in class. She is a good student with strong motivation to learn," Glioui said. "We will continue to help her achieve her goals."

Sara's rescue from the ranks of elementary school dropouts came about because of an extraordinary programme undertaken by the Syndicat Nationale de l'Enseignement,

the leading teacher union in Morocco. Abdelaziz Mountassir, SNE Vice-President and a member of the Executive Board of Education International, says the union plays a strategic role in preventing child labour by keeping children in school.

"As educators we fight child labour because it's our duty to defend the rights of children to learn."

"As a union, child labour is one of our major concerns," says Mountassir. "Once children go out to work it means a loss of jobs for grown-up workers. As educators we fight child labour because it's our duty to defend the rights of children to learn."

According to the Moroccan Ministry of Education, up to 320,000 children quit school annually to work in domestic service, agriculture, handicraft industries and worse forms of child labour. While education is compulsory until age 16 and the minimum age for work is 15, children are often apprenticed before age 12 in family-run workshops in the handicraft industries.

Fez is known for the beauty of its handicrafts, but the brass platters and silver teapots in the tourist shops shine with a brilliance that belies the dark and dirty conditions in which they are crafted. One young man, Karim, said he has worked since he was nine. After his father died, Karim had to help support the family. "I would like to be able to read a newspaper," he says. "But if I go to study, who will work for my mother?"

Poverty is the main problem, but it is compounded by illiteracy. More than 80% of Moroccan women in the countryside are illiterate, over 60% in the cities. The illiteracy rates for men are 50% in rural areas and 40% in urban. Parents often can't comprehend the value of education for their children's life chances, and how vital it is to breaking the cycle of poverty.

Mountassir has been a strong advocate of the SNE child labour prevention programme

since its launch three years ago in five primary schools in Fez. With a cadre of enthusiastic teachers and headmasters, supported by the skills of national union leaders, the project is making such a positive impact that it is expected to expand to four other cities.

Glioui says one of the main factors contributing to the programme's success is that 96% of the teachers belong to the same union, the SNE. "We share the same spirit of solidarity between the teachers and administration. We cooperate to solve the children's problems, and the union has built good relationships with the parents."

It has also had phenomenal success in reducing the numbers of children dropping out of school at an early age. In the year before the programme began, a total of 1,381 children dropped out of the five schools combined. In the first year the number of drop-outs plummeted to 212, and then declined to 116 in the second year and 121 in the third.

The programme is funded by three Dutch organisations: the labour confederation, FNV Mondiaal; Oxfam Netherlands; and the teachers' union, AOb. Together they invested €300,000 over a three-year period. Trudy Kerperien, AOb International Secretary, explains that the program has four target areas: the teachers, schools, families and politicians.

But first, they start with the basics: a clean, healthy learning environment. Ahmed Hraich is the programme coordinator at the 18 November School, where he has taught for the past 14 years. He described the formerly appalling state of the school, with broken windows, filth and garbage everywhere. The stench from the latrines in the central courtyard used to be overpowering. Now the latrines have been renovated and the whole stinking mess cleaned up. Pointing out the freshly painted walls, turquoise wooden stall doors, and running water, Hraich had a strong message: "This project has transformed our school. Look, you can see things are better, cleaner. The children

in this neighbourhood are very poor. Having a good toilet is important for children's education!"

The programme also funds textbooks, school bags, uniforms and other supplies for needy children, as well as modest libraries in all five schools. Thanks to the French teacher union UNSA-Education, there are French books along with the Arabic collections. Basic literacy programs for mothers are also offered.

"We are in very great need of this library," said one mother. "We don't want our children to play in the streets. I need my children to be able to come here after school and read books I can't afford."

Abdellah Hijazi, programme coordinator at Al Quods School, said being able to see the blackboard and printed page is also critical. Teachers began to realise that many students who were not succeeding actually suffered from short-sightedness. After supplying glasses to those who needed them, they found many children's grades improved.

"I love my glasses," said little Said. "Before I couldn't see the blackboard and now I can. Without them, I think I might have dropped out of school."

Another crucial element in the programme is family and community outreach. Teachers meet with parents' associations, and make

consistent efforts to communicate with families. Every year, they do a risk analysis of every child. Criteria that signal high risk for dropping out include:

- Extreme poverty
- Illiteracy of parents
- Unemployment of parents
- Divorce or family breakdown
- Domestic violence
- Illness or death of parents
- Mental or physical health problems
- Low marks in school
- Frequent absences from school

Because so many students come to school from stressful homes, teachers try to create an oasis of physical and emotional safety. Corporal punishment is not practised in the programme, and this freedom from violence at school is often in sharp contrast to the dangers lurking in the streets, and even at home.

Walking through the playground, Glioui chats and strokes the face of a little girl named Kawtar. She's eight, he says, but she looks more like a five-year-old. Unlike the other girls, she is wearing the traditional headscarf and long jelaba. She has a cut over her right eyebrow, a purple greenish bruise on the cheekbone, and deep shadows under her anxious brown eyes. After her teacher reported Kawtar's wounds, the headmaster asked her father why he had beaten his daughter. The father, recently released from prison, claimed it was because she had not done her homework. Kawtar said that wasn't true; she was just playing with her cousins when it happened. With anger and sadness in his voice, the headmaster explained: "It's because her cousins are boys. That's why he beat her."

Kerperien says that this kind of caring is at the heart of the programme's success. The union aims to improve the quality of education through professional development for its teachers, enabling them to improve classroom practice and encouraging them to deepen relationships with students and communities. Most important, she says, is

the professional attitude of the teachers, their willingness to learn new skills and to change their traditional ways of working with children.

"We've seen extraordinary results since we began giving after school tutoring and extra lessons for slow learners. It's been a good initiative," says Rabia Mouyssi, a teacher at Ouinat Alhajaj School.

"When a student leaves school and is abandoned to the streets, I feel really heartsick."

Mouyssi says she has benefited professionally from meetings with partner groups and workshops on children's rights and the pedagogy of listening. "It has changed the relationships between me and my students. I'm much closer to them now. We seek solutions together and I give them support – pedagogical and personal. We always have a sense of solidarity between us," she said. "I'm their teacher, but also their mother, their friend, everything. They are like my own children."

Young Mohammed is a student who faces a lot of problems, Rabia said, putting her arm around his shoulder. His father is an alcoholic and so his mother suffers a lot. "I try to keep him close to me, support him, talk to him. Now he doesn't think about dropping out of school anymore."

One of her students recently did drop out, but she and some other students convinced him to return. "I am very proud. It's a victory for me," she said. "When a student leaves school and is abandoned to the streets, I feel really heartsick."

Making school more fun is another important part of the union's work.

The silly clown bumped his head on a balloon and almost fell down, prompting howls of laughter from hundreds of children packed into the courtyard at 18 November School. The stage was just a dozen desks

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Karim, aged 18, has never had the opportunity to attend school. He has worked in this metal foundry for more than half his life.

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Abdelaziz Mountassir, SNE Vice-President and member of the EI Executive Board, and Boughour Houssin, Headmaster, in the new library at 18 November School, Fez.

pushed up one against the other and the blaring loudspeakers squealed with feedback, but the audience was exuberant, clapping and singing along.

“No to dropping out! Yes to education!”

That was the steady refrain during the performance by activists from the Association Maultaika des Jeunes pour le Developpement (AMJD). These animators cooperate with teachers to offer after-school classes in painting, ceramics and creative movement, as well as dramatic performances with a strong message about staying in school and becoming good citizens. Association President Mohammed Ataiche is convincing about the key role of art and cultural activities in preventing school dropouts.

“We want to show the children that school is not just about studying and discipline, but about fun and creativity too,” Ataiche said. “A child who lacks play is not going to be able to study well.”

M’hammed Yazzough, headmaster at Ouinat Alhajaj School, praises the extraordinary efforts of the teachers who work so

hard and give so much to their students. “I bow down to my teachers,” he said humbly.

“When we bring a child back to school, it is as if we are giving him a new life.”

But the national government is not doing enough. “They have invested lots of money in less worthwhile programmes,” said Yazzough. He called on the government to address problems of poor school infrastructure, overly large class sizes and a crowded curriculum.

SNE activists agree, lobbying the Ministry of Education for increased funding and political support. They have had some success; ministry officials have provided space for the programme headquarters, and are expressing support for expanding it to other schools and other cities, where it can benefit up to 15,000 children.

There can be no doubt the union’s programme is changing attitudes and saving lives.

“Leaving school can be like a death sentence,” says Boughour Houssin, headmaster

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Rabia Mouyssi, a teacher at Ouinat Alhajaj School, says she learned a lot from the union’s capacity-building seminars, especially regarding children’s rights.

of 18 November School. “When they go to the streets, the children can be so easily influenced by drugs or criminals.”

“When we bring a child back to school, it is as if we are giving him a new life. It’s like taking a plant that is dying, and we give it care and water and bring it back to life. Many of these children [who dropped out] now are good students, and we hope they will become good citizens and contribute to our community and our country.” ■■

EI to launch video on World Day Against Child Labour

This year, to mark World Day Against Child Labour on June 12, EI will launch a short video documentary on efforts by teachers’ unions to prevent child labour, with a focus on the SNE Morocco project featured in this article. The first fruit of a new initiative called Video for Union Educators (VUE), the video will be made available to affiliates on DVD and via the EI web site.

Success story

Indonesian teachers' union goes from weakness to strength

The Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia (PGRI) was established as a teachers' trade union in 1945. However, in 1968, when the military leader Suharto became president, the PGRI was severely weakened from a trade union to a professional organisation. For 32 years, the PGRI was a submissive, government-dependent and non-democratic organisation headed by bureaucrats from educational departments at all levels.

Membership in the PGRI and dues payment were compulsory for the 1.7 million teachers across Indonesia. The organisation no longer played an effective role as a union dedicated to promoting the welfare and status of teachers. Members' salaries were very low and a number of compulsory deductions were made. Furthermore, teachers often did not receive their salaries on time.

One year after the fall of Suharto in 1997, the PGRI Congress decided to rebuild the PGRI as a strong trade union promoting both the professional rights and economic welfare of teachers. The Congress decided that in order to bring about the necessary changes, it would request assistance from Education International.

In 1999, EI put together a consortium consisting of Lärarförbundet from Sweden, Utdanningsförbundet from Norway, the Japan Teachers' Union, the Australian Education Union and National Education Association from the USA. Together, they agreed to cooperate with PGRI to become an independent, democratic and effective teachers' union.

A pilot project was initiated in two provinces in 2000, and within seven years gradually increased to 26 out of 33 provinces. The programme is ongoing in all 26 provinces.

The programme mainly targets provincial and district level leaders. As of 2007, more than 5,800 leaders, 46% of whom are women, received training in a series of seminars and

workshops. The activities initially covered the problems faced by the 350 district branches when education was decentralized in 2001. The project also covered topics on trade unionism, leadership, empowering women, capacity building, training of trainers, improving organisational and financial aspects, and improving skills in editorial work and quality of education.

A meeting is held annually to evaluate and plan for each subsequent year with representatives from the five cooperating organisations. As a result of the project, significant changes have taken place.

Most of the bureaucrats who were leaders of the organisation at all levels have been replaced by teachers. The leadership is becoming pro-active in promoting human and trade union rights and making serious efforts to improve the quality of education. PGRI was able to remove a mayor who was against teachers demanding their rights.

Since 2006, PGRI has been demanding implementation of a clause in the Constitution of Indonesia that requires 20% of the national budget to be allocated to education. The PGRI mobilized and campaigned actively to achieve this. In the past, the government allocated only about 9% of the budget to education. However, funding was increased to 12% in 2007 after PGRI took the government to the Constitutional Court and was twice successful in obtaining a positive result. PGRI is continuing its campaign to get the court

award implemented. PGRI also held many rallies and demonstrations when their demands were not met.

More teachers are involved in the Global Campaign for Education and World Teachers' Day, and more than 15,000 teachers celebrated PGRI's 62nd anniversary in Pekanbaru on 25 November 2007. More women are now in the leadership of PGRI at all levels and Dr. Anah Suhaenah Suparno was elected as a member of EI Asia Pacific Regional Committee at the Regional Conference in 2006.

PGRI is now playing an active role in the labour movement in Indonesia, especially in the Indonesian trade union congress, KSPI, where the Secretary General is from the National Board of PGRI. The union has also been campaigning to get 400,000 temporary teachers confirmed as permanent government-employed teachers.

As there is no more salary deduction allowed, dues payment is now done voluntarily. Because of the many obstacles and problems faced, there is more to be done to improve the financial situation of PGRI.

Thanks to the cooperation between PGRI and the consortium, PGRI is developing into a strong, democratic and sustainable teachers' union. All consortium partners have contributed to the success of the project which has been achieved so far through their continued efforts and commitment. ■■■

Development aid

We must do better

In order to fulfill the international commitments they have made, donors will have to increase funding for aid programmes faster than any other public expenditure, according to the latest Development Co-operation Report from the OECD.

The report notes that at the 2005 G8 summit in Gleneagles, donors made a series of pledges to increase aid to \$130 billion and double aid to Africa by 2010. In fact, their actions have fallen far short of their promises.

Aid funding, recently rising by 5% per year, would have to rise by 11% every year from 2008 to 2010 to meet the pledges, the OECD says.

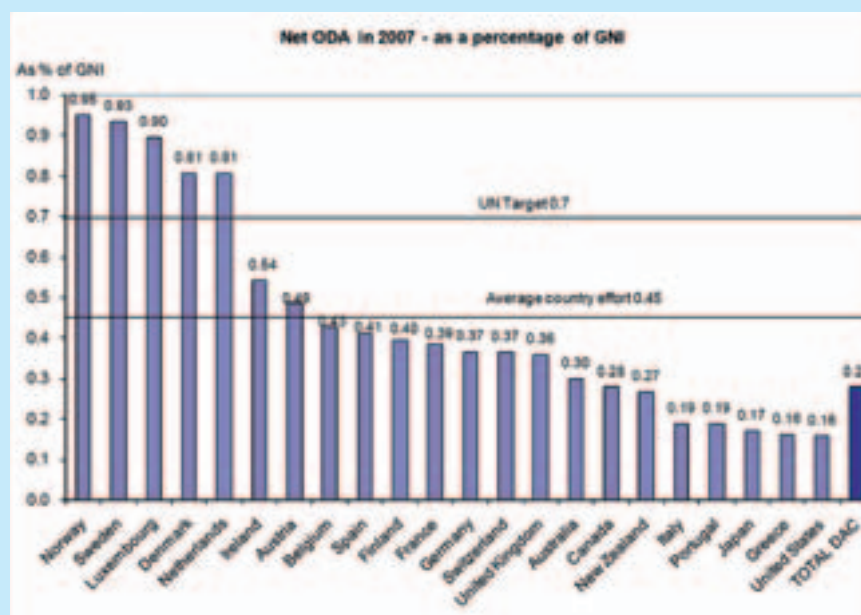
The United States gives most by volume but, along with Greece, trails for giving least as a percentage of its gross national income (GNI). Only Sweden, Norway, Luxembourg, Denmark and the Netherlands actually exceed the UN target of 0.7 percent of GNI to official development aid.

In a speech entitled “We must do better,” OECD Director General Angel Gurría said that “in the current global context, we must keep our attention actively focussed on development assistance to the poorest; we cannot let domestic economic concerns, important as they are, deter us from meeting our development commitments.”

Gurría said he was “sorry to report that donors’ plans do not currently show the rapid upturn needed” to deliver the promised aid. In fact, he said, “to meet the commitments made in 2005 to substantially increase aid by 2010, we still see a shortfall of nearly USD 40 billion in 2007 dollars in planned spending, compared with donors’ own targets. If we are to come close to achieving these targets, we must act now.” ■■■



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Development Cooperation

Sri Lanka: EI and Oxfam open doors to learning

Teachers, parents and more than a thousand children from a small fishing town in southern Sri Lanka celebrated the opening of their new public school on 20 February.

In an emotional inauguration ceremony, students in beautiful costumes danced and sang to demonstrate their gratitude for their new opportunities to learn in a beautiful, well-equipped building.

One of eight schools built in Sri Lanka through the EI-Oxfam post-tsunami reconstruction project, the Ahangama Shariputhra Navodya College will enrol 1,100 students from Grades 1 through 13, with three classes in each grade.

Most of the students are sons and daughters of fishers whose homes and livelihood were wiped out by the enormous tsunami that struck in December 2004. Their new school now is protected by a high tsunami wall on the seaward side of the building.

General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen and Chief Regional Coordinator Aloysius Matthews attended to represent EI and to officially hand over the school to the public authorities.

"In opening this school we are opening 1,100 little doors," van Leeuwen said. "We think that all the boys and girls should step through those doors, work hard, and work together for their parents, their local community and their country."

The devastating impact of the tsunami worsened an already difficult situation for Sri Lankans, who have endured more than 20 years of ongoing civil war between the government, predominantly ethnic Sinhalese, and separatist militants known as the Tamil Tigers.



© EI

Van Leeuwen said one particularly touching moment in the opening ceremony came when a little Sinhalese boy gave a speech in Tamil. "It became so clear how important it is we build these schools," he said. "It is a real contribution to peace."

The school auditorium is named after Basil de Silva, former coordinator of the EI-Oxfam School Reconstruction project, who died in April 2006 after a courageous battle against cancer.

"Basil was deeply committed to helping the teachers and children of Sri Lanka overcome the painful consequences of the tsunami," said van Leeuwen. "He would have been proud to see this wonderful school come to completion." ■■■

Defending public education

France: Demonstrations continue against teaching job cuts



©SNUipp-FSU

In April between 20,000 and 40,000 teachers, students and parents demonstrated in the streets of Paris to protest the loss of 8,830 teaching jobs planned for next autumn in public secondary schools and against the education policies of the French government.

President Nicolas Sarkozy, in a televised interview, addressed issues of education. He made no new announcements, but reiterated his intention to continue with his controversial reforms and voiced support for his education minister, who has been the target of protests.

“The teachers are devoted, competent and do all they can,” he said. But “if all that was needed was to hire more teachers to have a better education system, we’d know that by now.”

“You tell me the teachers are unhappy, and you’re right. Policies of systematic hiring without good salaries haven’t made them happy,” he added. He insisted that increasing the status of the teaching profession remains for him “a priority” but that it was necessary to choose between “hiring more and paying more.”

The education unions – UNSA Education, FERC-CGT, FSU, SGEN-CFDT, and SUD Education – fear that the 2008 education budget and the job cuts will cause deteriorating working conditions for all education workers. A day of strike and national mobilisation took place on 15 May. ■■■



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Campaigns

Let's go! Educators and students campaign for mobility

By Nina Gustafsson

After finishing his first degree, Predrag Lazetic, a Serbian student, was happy to be admitted to a Master's degree program in Germany. Well in advance of the beginning of his course, Predrag applied for his student visa, which he was told would take between four and five weeks.

However, he soon realised things were not going his way. First he had to pay a visa application fee of 75 €. Then he had to pay about 200 € more for translations of the many documents required. Then he had to wait three months before receiving any answer to his visa application.

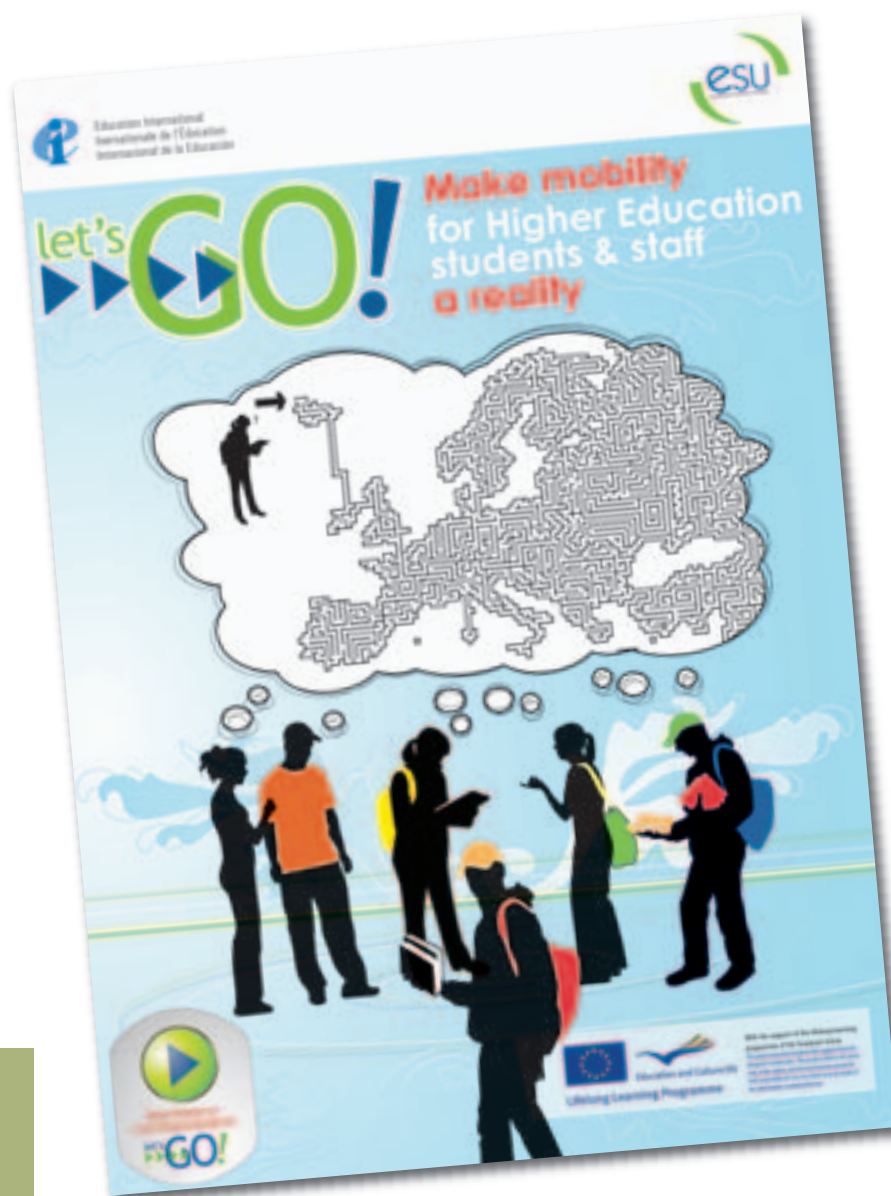
Anxious that the programme would start without him, Predrag explored the possibility of getting another type of visa in order to be able to enter the European Union. However, the second process was not possible while the student visa application process was ongoing.

It wasn't until two full months after his programme had started that Predrag finally got his student visa and could begin his studies.

INFO

Are you concerned about student and staff mobility? Sign the petition at:

www.lets gocampaign.net





Since 1999, European ministers responsible for higher education have worked together in the so-called Bologna Process, aiming at creating a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) that will be attractive to European students and researchers, as well as to students and researchers from abroad. One of the goals is facilitation of academic mobility for students, academic and administrative staff.

Despite intensive intergovernmental cooperation and promises, many students like Predrag continue to experience frustrating delays, costly obstacles, and lost educational opportunities.

Education International and the European Students' Union continue to receive reports about economic barriers, non-recognition of academic merits gained abroad, and dis-

crimination based on gender, age or cultural background hindering mobility.

EI and ESU believe that mobility is important for students and academic staff to gain new skills, to become aware of the importance of international cooperation, and to learn to work in a multicultural environment. The higher education institutions can only develop and further their quality if their academic staff and students are internationally-oriented. A European identity can only be developed if people can move across borders freely. For peace and prosperity to develop, society needs highly-educated citizens who are able to interact across cultures.

EI and ESU want mobility grants to be available for at least 20 percent of all students; all work periods abroad for staff to



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be recognized for recruitment and promotion; free language courses in every higher education institution for students and staff; free visa and residence permits for students and staff in higher education; social benefits and pension schemes to be mobile across European borders; and a European Charter for Mobile University Teachers to be developed.

In order to encourage governments in the EHEA to fulfil their goals and promises, EI and ESU are carrying out a campaign called "Let's Go!" It is trying to identify remaining obstacles to European academic mobility and propose solutions. The campaign will close with a conference in October 2008, where a petition with student and teacher demands will be presented to the European ministries responsible for higher education. III

INFO

For more information about the campaign please visit

www.lets gocampaign.net

Education finance

Education is not a tradable commodity

By David Robinson

One of the most dramatic developments within education in recent years has been the emergence of the “international trade” in education services. The aggressive recruitment of fee-paying international students by schools, the explosion in borderless commercial e-learning, the franchising of offshore schools and campuses, and the sale of course material overseas are all features of an emerging multi-billion dollar trade in education.

To date, this trade has been much more difficult to regulate and codify than trade in widgets or wheat. Nevertheless, efforts are being made to do precisely this — to develop rules governing the international trade in education services. This is occurring through numerous bilateral trade negotiations and agreements, and multilaterally within the World Trade Organization’s General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). These agreements could have far-reaching consequences for our schools, students and teachers.

Trade agreements are legally-binding treaties that promote liberalization, not just by eliminating barriers to trade and investment, but also by encouraging domestic liberalization in the form of privatization, commercialization, and deregulation of public services like education. Trade agreements don’t necessarily force governments to privatize and commercialize education. But they can have the effect, through the legal restrictions they place on governments, of intensifying and locking-in pressures to do so.

Most trade treaties contain two sets of rules. One set requires members to publicize mea-

sures and regulations that may affect trade, and to treat each party to the treaty equally. A second more onerous set apply to service sectors where a government has explicitly agreed to liberalize trade. “National Treatment” obligations require that countries extend the same benefits and privileges that domestic providers enjoy to foreign providers. “Market Access” rules prohibit governments from preventing foreign providers from entering the marketplace.

If a country agrees to open up its education sector, these two rules could threaten a number of important policies. National Treatment requirements, for instance, prohibit any conditions being put on foreign schools relating to nationality, such as hiring preferences given to local citizens. More controversially, it has been argued that if countries were to fully include education services, National Treatment would require them to provide the same public subsidies to overseas institutions as they provide to domestic schools. Alternatively, governments could be forced to eliminate those subsidies altogether.

Market Access rules would prevent governments from placing any limits on the number of overseas schools allowed to operate locally, thereby enabling institutions and companies from other countries to engage freely in education activities. Governments would be prevented from adopting measures that discriminate between public and private institutions, as this would be seen as a restriction on Market Access.

Until recently, the education community had little awareness of GATS and other trade agreements. But all this has changed. Stu-

dent organizations, teachers’ unions, and even many schools are increasingly voicing their opposition to the notion that education can simply be viewed as a commodity to be traded as any other.

EI and its affiliates have strongly opposed including education in trade agreements. That does not mean that we oppose the internationalization of education. On the contrary, we believe that cross-border collaboration, overseas studies, school partnerships, and academic cooperation should be encouraged. We oppose agreements like the GATS because they would subject education to commercial values, treating it simply as a private commodity to be bought and sold in the international marketplace. We are concerned that the inclusion of education in trade treaties will have a powerful narrowing effect on public regulation, and promote privatization and commercialization.

Above all, teachers believe that education is not a tradable commodity. It is part of the cultural and social infrastructure of a society. ■■■

David Robinson is Associate Executive Director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers and a consultant to Education International on trade and higher education.

Technologies in education

Get the latest news with EI's RSS feeds

By Timo Linsenmaier



News feeds, also called RSS feeds or RSS channels, offer an easy and time-saving way to follow the latest developments in your areas of interest.

RSS (Really Simple Syndication) has become a veritable buzz word when speaking about the newest trends in internet technology. But what exactly are RSS feeds and how can they be used?

News feeds allow you to see instantly if websites have added new content. You can get the latest headlines and usually a summary of the full article, as soon as it is published, without having to visit the website that offers the feed.

At first, the variety of names and formats collectively summarized under the term RSS may seem a little confusing, but all this range of configurations has much in common: RSS feeds are basically web pages built to be initially read by computers, who process them to output a more “user-friendly” view.

How then can you make use of these feeds? In general, the first thing you need is a so-called news reader. Such a programme automatically checks the feeds you have subscribed to and lets you read any new articles that have been added. Again, there are quite a number of applications to choose from, and your choice depends on your preferences.

Some browsers, including Firefox, Opera and Safari, automatically check for feeds

when you visit a website, and display a small orange icon in their address bar when they find one. When you click on that icon, the feed is added as a “dynamic bookmark,” which will automatically update once new articles come on-line.

Another simple solution is to add RSS feeds to your e-mail client. New articles will thus arrive in your inbox as would new messages, and you can read them there, too. All modern e-mail clients, such as Thunderbird, Opera or Evolution, support this functionality.

Once you have chosen a news reader that fits your requirements, you just need to decide what content you want to subscribe to. That can be done in various ways, for example by using the aforementioned “dynamic bookmarks” or by simply dragging or cutting and pasting the URL of the feed into your news reader. Most feeds are given prominence by a standard orange icon, but some may just be marked by a text link. III



The EI RSS Library offers a wide range of RSS feeds, both by EI and member organisations.

INFO

To try out RSS, go to the EI RSS library (www.ei-ie.org/en/rss), subscribe to one or more feeds on topics of your interest there – and stay up to date easily and for free!

In memoriam

Steve Sinnott: A guy with a golden heart



Steve Sinnott, General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers in the UK, died suddenly on 5 April 2008. He was 56. The leaders and members of Education International join with teachers across the UK and indeed around the world in mourning the loss of this outstanding teacher trade unionist, who contributed so much to the cause of defending universal quality public education in his native country and abroad.

Sinnott held the post of General Secretary of the NUT since 2004, having served the union previously as a member of the National Executive, President and Deputy General Secretary. His career was marked by energetic advocacy for quality education for every child and full labour rights

for every teacher. He was a staunch defender of the teachers of Ethiopia and took vigorous action in solidarity with the ETA in their long struggle against government repression.

"Steve was a very passionate union leader and a great friend of Education International," said EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen, who travelled several times with Sinnott to the Middle East.

"As chairperson of EI's Advisory Committee on the Middle East, Steve succeeded in helping our International step up its development work in that troubled region," van Leeuwen said. "He was deeply committed to promoting dialogue between the Palestinian and Israeli teachers as part of his work for a peaceful solution."

Van Leeuwen also praised Sinnott as the driving force behind the creation of the Commonwealth Teachers' Group. "He strongly believed that international solidarity is crucial to the success of our movement, and always acted in the spirit of that solidarity."

Sinnott was at the helm of the NUT during a most challenging period. The union is in the midst of a major pay campaign, and a one-day strike took place on 24 April. Sinnott's skillful leadership would have been invaluable in ensuring a successful outcome to the campaign. The officers of the union decided that the strike should continue as planned in honour of Sinnott's commitment to the teachers' demands and goals.

Don Pasquallie: A visionary and strategist



The South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) grieves the death of Don Pasquallie, the union's Deputy General Secretary.

Pasquallie died in a car accident in Napier, in the Western Cape, on 27 January. Four other passengers in the same car died with him, including his elder brother who was a school Deputy Principal.

EI President Thulas Nxesi, SADTU's General Secretary, said Pasquallie's death was a "profound loss" to the union and that he

would be remembered as a "visionary and strategist."

"Even as we reel from the shock of the news of his death, we take some comfort in recognising and celebrating Don's massive achievement and contribution to trade unionism and the teachers of South Africa," Nxesi said. "A hard working organiser and negotiator, he was a man of great warmth and compassion. He was a giant. He will be greatly missed."

Pasquallie, aged 41, joined SADTU in 1991

as a member of the Elsie's River branch of the Western Cape. He rose to the position of provincial secretary of the Western Cape, and in 2006 joined the national leadership as Deputy General Secretary. Pasquallie spearheaded organisational development and renewal of the union. "He led the national collective bargaining team and was committed to improving service delivery to members through better training and communication," said Nxesi.

Janek Kuczkiewicz: A passionate rights defender



Trade unionists around the world were saddened by the untimely death of the ITUC Human and Trade Union Rights Director, Janek Kuczkiewicz, at his home in Brussels on 7 April.

Born in Belgium in 1956, he graduated cum laude in Philosophy from the Catholic University of Louvain in 1981. He was a champion fencer, a classical cellist and, notwithstanding the loss of his legs in an accident in his early 20's, an accomplished sailor.

Kuczkiewicz was active in journalism and

politics while at university, and was closely involved with Doctors Without Borders throughout his adult life. He joined the international trade union movement in 1982, working with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), where he was a central figure in the international movement in support of the independent trade union Solidarność in the country of his forebears, Poland. He was also active in the campaign to end apartheid in South Africa. He took on an ever-increasing range of responsibilities and built an unparalleled net-

work of international contacts in the trade union movement, with human rights organisations and within the United Nations system, in particular the International Labour Organisation (ILO). He used this network with tremendous impact in campaigns to promote and defend trade union rights in countries around the world. Many people owe their liberation from prison, their escape from tyranny to safety abroad, and even their lives, to global solidarity action which Kuczkiewicz initiated, coordinated and sustained, often against tremendous odds.

In brief

Germany: Underpaid academics need social welfare

Teaching jobs in Germany have become so precarious that up to 33,000 teachers and education workers are in need of social welfare, according to Der Spiegel, a respected German weekly.

This problem most seriously affects young professionals just starting their careers, especially in higher education. In a recent study, Andreas Keller, head of the University and Research Committee of the Union of Education and Science Workers (GEW), said that the increasing precariousness of employment has a negative impact on public education. He deplored the long delays for young academics to achieve tenure and the fact that short-term work contracts, instead of stable employment, have become the norm.

Keller further argued that “universities have the responsibility to take care of sustainable structural planning and personnel career development, as well as the smooth running of projects.” To him, the model for academics at universities and research institutions should be that of an employee with complete social rights, not a contract worker.

“Unions should take a leading role in the social policy discussions on the precarious situation of many academics and to organize the appropriate coalitions,” he concluded.

Letters to the editor

Dear editor,
I think your new format and look for the magazine is great. The publication has increasing appeal and application. It's attractive, informative and current. Great work.

Ken Novakowski, Executive Director
British Columbia Teachers' Federation
Vancouver, Canada

Dear editor,
Concerning the article “France : les enseignants inquiets des réformes promises par Sarkozy”, I would appreciate if you could mention at least my position within SNES : Odile Cordelier, secrétaire du SNES. As you know, I am also Vice-President of the Pan-European Structure of IE and ETUCE.

Odile Cordelier
SNES Secretary
Paris, France

CALENDAR

MAY 2008

- 11-14** G8 Trade Union Leaders' Meetings with the Japanese Prime Minister and G8 Labour Ministers, Japanese Trade Union Confederation, Niigata & Tokyo
- 19-20** Ninth Meeting of the Editorial Board - EFA Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO, Paris
- 21-24** Planning Workshop on African Women in Education, EI Regional African Office, Cotonou
- 28/05-13/06** 97th Session International Labour Conference, International Labour Organisation, Geneva

JUNE 2008

- 01** ETUC-ITUC Conference for “European Works' Councils and China”, International Trade Union Confederation, Brussels
- 10** Commonwealth Education Fund Seminar, CEF, London
- 10-11** High Level Meeting Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, UNAIDS/ Office of the President of the General Assembly / Civil Society, Support Mechanism, New York
- 11** Meeting of General Secretaries, Council of Global Unions Global Union Federations, Geneva
- 29/06-02/07** XVIII World Congress on Safety and Health at Work, Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency, Seoul, Republic of Korea

JULY 2008

- 28/07-01/08** Open Seminar at EuroPride Stockholm 2008, Lärarförbundet, Stockholm

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A thousand words

Young girl participating in the World's Biggest Lesson on April, 23 in Soweto, South Africa. More than 1,000 teachers took the same lesson in Durban at the South African Democratic Teacher' Union's cultural festival. Among those who took this lesson were Thulas Nxesi, President of Education International, and Blade Nzimande, General Secretary of the South African Communist Party.
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