



Education International
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Education



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Celebrating teachers around the world:

World Teachers' Day poster p. 6 Chad: Teachers do their best for refugee students p. 18

Iran: Teacher faces execution, supporters face reprisals p. 21 Hidden privatisation
of public education p. 26



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Teachers must reclaim our profession



This year's activities to mark World Teachers' Day are focused on professional training for quality education. Never before has this need been greater. Millions of children and adults everywhere are hungry to learn, and they all have an

equal right to free quality education. Unfortunately, we all know that access to this right is woefully unequal.

Since 2000, the world has made significant progress toward the goal of Education For All. Enrolment rates have increased dramatically, especially in countries farthest from the reality of EFA. The severe teacher shortage now confronting us is, in part, a measure of our success in giving millions more children access to the classroom.

To help fill the huge gap between the supply of qualified teachers and the demand for quality education, the Executive Board of EI decided to become actively involved in teacher training. (Read more about it on page 9.)

Through this project, we are taking positive action against the de-professionalisation of teaching. It's not just in the South where governments have resorted to engaging untrained teachers to save money and fill classrooms. It's happening around the world.

But tailoring education to the demands of the marketplace, rather than to the needs of an educated citizenry, is short-sighted and reckless because it jeopardises the life chances of an entire generation.

That's why, together, the world's education unions must say, Enough! We are going to reclaim our profession and reassert our central role in establishing and upholding its standards to the highest level.

Fred van Leeuwen, EI General Secretary

New Brazilian national wage

Brazilian educators are celebrating a new law that establishes a national standard salary, bringing to an end decades of inequity between teachers' salaries in different regions of the country.

Effective January 2009, the new law sets a National Professional Wage Floor for Teaching in basic public education at a minimum of 950 Brazilian Reais per month, equivalent to about 300 Euros. The Ministry of Education and Culture estimates that the new professional wage will directly benefit 1.5 million educators and, indirectly, 46 million students in Brazilian public schools. At a time of growing teacher shortages, the new professional wage may make it easier to attract young people into the profession.

Roberto Franklin de Leão, President of the Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores em Educação (CNTE), said that "the new law is an important step in terms of recognition of the value of professional teachers." Leão added that the whole society wins when the teaching force is highly valued and well qualified.

The CNTE has long struggled to close the huge wage gap between teachers in urban and rural schools. In the past, teachers working in small village schools were paid very poorly, and sometimes not at all. Under the new law, these teachers may see their salaries double, or even triple, to keep up with those paid to colleagues in Brasília, Rio de Janeiro or other large cities.

Passage of the law is considered a historical milestone for the teachers' union, and it came about only as a result of intense mobilization throughout Brazil and a national strike on 14 April this year. Teachers are the first group of professionals to have their national wage floor defined in the Federal Constitution, and they expect that other unions, especially those in the public sector, will see this legislation as a model. III

Good news

Indonesian teachers win improvements



©VÉRONIQUE DURRUTY/PHOTO NEWS

“The teachers of Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, have a very important role to play.”

The Indonesian government's promise to increase funding for public education is good news for students.

The government of Indonesia will annually increase the education budget as well as the salaries of teachers. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono made that promise to the more than 5,000 delegates and observers attending the opening session of the 20th Congress of the Indonesian teachers' union PGRI held in Palembang on 30 June-4 July.

President Yudhoyono praised the Indonesian teaching profession for playing such an important role in the economic and social development of the country. He said that he had instructed all public authorities to collaborate with the PGRI in order to im-

prove the quality of education and welfare of teachers. The president also thanked Education International for providing support to the PGRI and for the post-tsunami education relief programmes in Aceh.

In his address to the participants of the congress, EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen highlighted the role of teachers in imparting democratic values and teaching tolerance.

“Teachers (must) build bridges of understanding, just as we in Education International are trying to build bridges between the teaching profession of the Muslim

world and our colleagues in the so-called Western countries. And you, the teachers of Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, have a very important role to play in helping us build that bridge,” van Leeuwen said.

The five-day congress determined a course of action for the coming five years and elected a new executive board. Dr. Mohammad Surya, President since 1998 and under whose leadership the organisation started a renewal process, was succeeded by Dr. Sulisty, former General Secretary of the Central Java branch of the union. III

Guest speaker

On 12 June 2008, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper rose in Parliament “to apologize to aboriginal peoples for Canada’s role in the Indian residential schools system.” Over a century, the government removed more than 150,000 aboriginal children from their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and forced them into schools designed to assimilate them into the dominant culture. The aim, as it was infamously said, was “to kill the Indian in the child.” Harper announced implementation of a settlement agreement with survivors and formation of the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Here is the response from one survivor of that cruel chapter in Canadian history:

Stephen Kakfwi



STEPHEN KAKFWI, a member of the Dene First Nation, was born in a traditional bush camp near Fort Good Hope on the Arctic Circle. As a child, he was sent to residential schools 800 kilometres away from home. A distinguished aboriginal rights activist and former Premier of the Northwest Territories, he is also a celebrated singer/songwriter.

A century and a half ago, an imported government declared itself “Canada” – a strong aboriginal word. Almost immediately, it began the torturous process of destroying all other aspects of aboriginal culture and identity it did not value. The policy of assimilation through Indian residential schools is the most destructive example.

Finally, Canada admits this shameful history. On Wednesday, the Prime Minister said sorry for the devastation caused to aboriginal children and families. He also asked for forgiveness. That message was no small mouthful. It took personal courage and political will to utter it. I know, because in 2002, as premier of the Northwest Territories, I offered my own apology to our residential school survivors.

I did it despite resistance from the bureaucracy and my own ministers and colleagues. It was difficult and humiliating to face the survivors and their parents and children. I know what Stephen Harper and the other national party leaders must have been feel-

ing on Wednesday. As a residential school survivor myself, I also understand the importance of the apology offered, and the strength and courage it will take survivors to consider and accept it.

At nine, I was sent to residential school. A nun shaved my head and stripped me bare in front of all the other boys, followed by months of repeated beatings, whippings, sexual abuse and solitary confinement in a dark, locked closet. Why? Because I was bad and deserved it. That’s what they said.

But this is not just about me. It is about my father, brothers and sisters ... and my 87-year-old mother. We always wondered why

“I accept the Prime Minister’s apology”

she never told stories of her family. Recently, she finally told us she was taken away at six and never returned home until she was 14. She left with baby teeth, and returned a young woman. Her family all died within five years. She has no childhood or family memory, no stories to tell.

So many aboriginal brothers and sisters across the country have their own versions of this same sickening story. Twenty-five per cent of us did not survive residential schools. What a crippling loss to our peoples.

Even in times of active warfare, Canada has never faced such a high death toll. Generations have been ruptured from each other. Lives have been shattered. Spirits have been broken. Our communities are haunted by so many of the living dead. I was lucky. I survived. Many survivors learned to fight, we had to.

Over the past 30 years, every single gain for aboriginal peoples has been hard-fought.

In school, we learned nothing about our histories and ourselves. We were told we had no rights. We were the last Canadians to get the vote, in 1960. Before then, to vote we had to give up our treaty rights. In the 1970s, it took a Supreme Court judge to say we had aboriginal rights for governments to listen! In the 1980s, during constitutional

talks, governments begrudgingly referred to aboriginal rights as an “empty box” that could be filled with specific rights only if they agreed.

Over and over in our history, the recognition, negotiation and implementation of our rights has consistently been met only with great reluctance.

Is this the dramatic turning point we have all been fighting and praying for? The Prime Minister has said sorry to the First Peoples of this country. I don’t know exactly what motivated him. I imagine that political and legal factors were carefully weighed. Or is it because he understands what it is to be a father?

Surely all parents can imagine the horror of having your children forcibly stolen as little more than babies, to return as young adults – strangers, who no longer speak your language. You completely missed their childhood ... they did, too.

Whatever the PM’s reasons, I hope the Canada he represents will now work with us to restore strong, healthy and vibrant families, communities and nations, not begrudgingly, but because it is the right thing to do. You offer an apology, which I accept. But that restoration work will deliver the forgiveness, which you also seek.

This apology marks us all. It is the end of national denial, the beginning of truth. It opens us to the promise of new relationships.

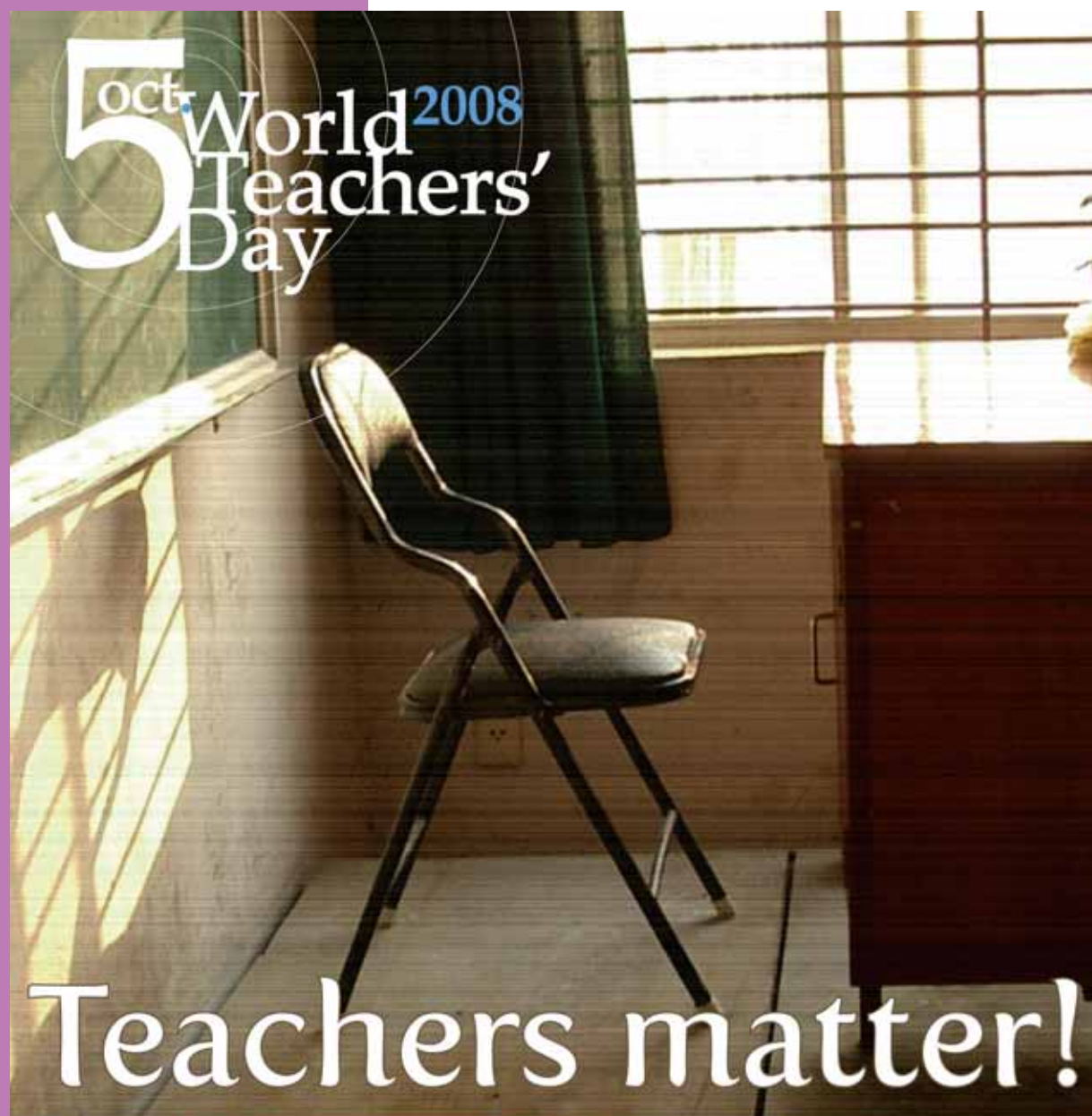
Making amends takes longer; it requires sustained commitment over time to heal wounds and return spirit and dignity to survivors and their families.

Reconciliation, with action, can take us there. Together, we can work to make this the best place in the world for all who call Canada home.

I am proud of this moment in Canada’s history. I accept the Prime Minister’s apology. It is what my father and grandfather would have done.


At nine, I was sent to residential school. A nun shaved my head and stripped me bare in front of all the other boys, followed by months of repeated beatings, whippings, sexual abuse and solitary confinement in a dark, locked closet.

We are about to write a new chapter of Canada’s history. Twenty-five years from now, may children across the land be proud of it, and proud also of all their grandparents, who today began a journey together to make things right. III





5 Oct. World Teachers' Day 2008

Teachers matter!



5 October at www.5oct.org

 Education International
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Bildungsinternationale

 United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

5 October

World Teachers' Day 2008

Teachers matter!

Every day, in millions of classrooms around the world, the universal endeavour of teaching and learning takes place. The gift of literacy is passed from one generation to the next, along with love of learning and thirst for knowledge. When knowledge is shared, skills are gained and lives can be changed.

At the heart of it all is that key relationship between teachers and their students, a relationship based on every society's caring for, and investment in, the next generation. Teachers shape the future in the most profound ways, by inspiring the hearts and minds of tomorrow's leaders.

World Teachers' Day is set aside by the world community to celebrate teachers and the central role they play in nurturing and guiding infants, children, youth and adults through the life-long learning process.

5 October

On 5 October 1966, the *UNESCO/ILO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers* was unanimously adopted by nations around the world. It was the first international instrument by which governments recognised the fundamental importance of having highly-qualified teachers and strong, stable public education systems. The Recommendation is so important that 5 October, the anniversary of its signing, became the date chosen for World Teachers' Day.

Global teacher shortage

UNESCO estimates that 18 million more teachers are needed worldwide if universal primary education is to be achieved by 2015. This shortage of qualified teachers is considered one of the biggest obstacles to achieving the EFA goals.

Teachers' low wages are at the root of the global shortage. Around the world teachers



are crying out for the resources they need to meet the needs of their students, their families and their communities. Millions are living below the poverty line, struggling to feed their own children as they strive to educate others people's children.

That's why teachers' unions around the world are demanding living wages and decent working conditions, including adequate learning resources and reasonable class sizes, in order to recruit the best and the brightest young people into this vitally important profession.

Active recruitment and retention strategies are an essential part of the solution, but the task of training millions more new teachers remains a challenge.

Professional training for quality education

This year's activities for World Teachers' Day are focused on professional training for quality education. Never before has this need been greater.

While everyone in the world has the fundamental right to quality education, unfortunately access to this right is woefully unequal.

In an effort to cope with millions more children in schools, some governments have resorted to engaging untrained teachers to save money and fill classrooms. To help bridge the huge gap between the supply of qualified teachers and the demand for quality education, the Executive Board of EI decided to become actively involved in teacher training.

Thanks for the gift of learning!

Education International encourages you to take a moment to thank a teacher who made a difference in your life. Just visit our World Teachers' Day web site, where you can choose an electronic greeting card to send to your favourite teacher:

www.5oct.org III

Vocational Education and Training

EI develops guidelines to confront globalisation

Education International has long been concerned about the growing threats posed to education at all levels as a result of economic globalization and trade liberalization. Vocational education and training (VET) is particularly vulnerable to these pressures.

Once the primary responsibility of public institutions, vocational education and training now straddles the public, private and for-profit sectors. Meanwhile, the growing cross-border provision of vocational education and training is increasingly governed by commercial imperatives and subject to the rules of trade agreements.

EI's task force on globalization and VET asserted that the internationalization of education should be encouraged insofar as it advances knowledge and promotes cooperation and development. However, it should be firmly based on educational values, not commercial ones.

Therefore, the task force has developed a set of guidelines for the cross-border provision of vocational education and training that (in contrast to GATS and similar trade agreements) would promote quality, accessibility, equity, and protections for the status and employment rights of staff.

The draft guidelines are intended to address and counterbalance the threats posed by trade and investment agreements, not only to staff jobs and living standards, but to the quality of education and training students receive.

The principles underlying the guidelines emphasize education as a public good, not

a private commodity. Therefore, governments should continue to play the lead role in provision of vocational education and training, and not abdicate this responsibility by contracting out to cross-border providers.

The guidelines also deal with important issues including accreditation and quality assurance; locally relevant content; mobility of teachers, staff and students; cross-border investment in VET; cross-border supply of VET; and employment rights of staff.

Together they aim to ensure that employment standards and educational quality are strengthened, not diluted, due to cross-border



Growing shortages of trained electricians and other skilled workers mean increased demand for technical training programmes.

der initiatives, and that local characteristics, including linguistic and cultural diversity, are respected. The guidelines also address the danger of the "brain drain" of staff and students from the developing to the developed world. III

Inclusive education: the way of the future

Inclusive education as the way of the future will be the theme of the 48th session of the International Conference on Education, to be held in Geneva from 25-28 November.

The conference is organised by the International Bureau for Education, the UNESCO institute specializing in assisting states in all regions of the world to achieve quality Education for All through innovative curriculum development and implementation.

It is expected that this conference will enrich the debates about the concept of inclusive education, look more carefully into the role of governments in the development and the implementation of policies on inclusive education, draw attention to education systems that offer opportunities for life-long learning and more.

EI will be represented on a panel exploring how to foster a learning environment where teachers are equipped to meet the learners' diverse expectations and needs.

INFO

For more information, see:

www.ibe.unesco.org/en/ice/48th-session-2008.html

Teacher training project launched

By Dennis Sinyolo

Education International and Oxfam Novib from the Netherlands have embarked on a joint pilot project on teacher training in developing countries. The Education for All targets and the education-related Millennium Development Goals, to which EI is committed, cannot be achieved without adequate numbers of properly trained and qualified teachers.

Over 18 million teachers are needed worldwide to meet the Universal Primary Education goal by 2015. Yet more than half way to the target date, many countries, especially in the developing world, continue to face critical shortages of qualified teachers.

Many countries in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, for example, have resorted to hiring unqualified, contract, community, volunteer or para-teachers. These teachers are usually paid less than regular teachers and do not get pensions or other benefits normally given to regular teachers. Many countries resort to the recruitment of unqualified teachers in order to cut education budgets, usually at the instigation of international financial institutions such as the World Bank and/or the International Monetary Fund.

The recruitment of unqualified teachers has resulted in the de-professionalisation of teaching. The practice has negatively affected the quality of education. Badly trained, underpaid and poorly motivated teachers are unlikely to teach effectively. There is overwhelming evidence that teachers matter. Quality education depends on quality teachers. These are teachers who have undergone sufficient and appropriate pre-service training, have been inducted into the teaching profession and continue to receive professional development and support.

Education International is committed to promoting the right to quality education for all people in the world, and to this end, to pursuing the establishment of public or publicly-funded education systems of good quality.



Teachers attending a capacity-building workshop.

That is the reason why EI has decided to embark on a pilot teacher training project, in partnership with Oxfam Novib.

The proposed initiative, known as the Quality-Ed Project (Quality Educators Project), is designed to complement public authorities' efforts by helping to develop and provide training programmes, especially for unqualified teachers who work in both formal and non-formal schools. The Quality-Ed Project seeks to reclaim the teaching profession and to bridge the gap between formal and non-formal education. The envisaged training would involve governments, local teacher education institutions, and other stakeholders in the country and result in recognised certification.

Feasibility studies are currently being carried out in seven countries: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Peru and Uganda.

Specific pilot projects will be implemented in some of these countries. The pilot proj-

ects will seek to develop joint initiatives between the national authorities, the teachers' unions that are members of Education International, and civil society organisations working with Oxfam Novib. The goal will be to bridge the gap between qualified and unqualified teachers through adequate training programmes. The final list of the countries that will participate during the pilot phase of the project will be determined in the autumn by the Project's Steering Group on the basis of the results of the feasibility studies.

Clearly this project comes at an opportune time. The theme for this year's World Teachers' Day commemoration on the 5th of October is "Teachers matter!"

"Teachers' unions should use the occasion of World Teachers' Day to highlight the importance of the teacher and to call for the training and recruitment of adequate numbers of qualified teachers," said Fred van Leeuwen, EI General Secretary. III

Early Childhood Education

Quality versus quantity?

By Eva Gorsse

It's 9:30 on a grey day in Brussels. In the colourful playground at crèche Cardinal Mercier, 15 toddlers are giggling and running about or playing on a slide, oblivious to the imminent rain. Séverine Ndeye, one of the three educators carefully watching over, calls her infant class inside to start their morning activity. "It will be raining in the classroom!" she says, pointing to five big basins filled with water and a variety of containers and toys.



Story telling is fun for children and intellectually stimulating as well.

For more than a decade, EI has worked to affirm and promote all children's fundamental right to quality early childhood education. And this Belgian "crèche," a nursery for newborns to three-year-olds, proudly abides by the Code of Quality for child care centres established by the government of the French Community: adequate premises, qualified staff, in-service training, health assessment and equality of access.

A healthy diet, sleep, physiological needs and play are all part of the children's affective, in-

tellectual and social development. Early Childhood Education (ECE) has the purpose of preparing children not only for primary school, but also for life in the same way as all other phases of the educational process.

In developing countries, where Education For All is still far from reality, the provision of ECE is very limited. It is mostly organised on a private basis, and therefore only available to children from the wealthiest families. In other words, there is flagrant inequality of access.

ECE is certainly a primary target for initiatives aimed at the privatisation of education. While the situation varies from country to country, it is clear that there is an upward trend in the enrolment of children in private early childhood establishments. In industrialised countries, demand for such services is on the rise as more women of child-bearing age are also holding down jobs in the work force. However, demand has so far outstripped supply that unlicensed care givers have moved in to profit from the situation.

Recent research in Spain revealed that more than the half of the spaces available for newborns to 6-year-olds are in the private sector. The national study on Quality in Services for Early Childhood and Assessment of Demand, found that nearly 400 private day care centres were operating without authorization, therefore not complying with the minimum requirements for care of the youngest infants. Understandably, this news caused considerable controversy over the proliferation of unlicensed nurseries. A lack of proper supervision, qualified staff or sufficient space can have an impact on children's health and develop-

ment. That is why improvised centres with too few or unqualified care givers cannot guarantee the quality of the services provided, let alone the safety of children.

The study also highlighted a severe shortage of qualified early childhood educators, who represent only 34% of staff in public institutions and almost 36% in private centres. The researchers found that 60% had undergone some vocational education and many had taken a one-year training course, but the majority of staff working in private nurseries had absolutely no qualifications.

Some companies are opening kindergartens for their employees' children without specific authorization. Other private initiatives called "ludotecas" are mere recreational centres welcoming children of any early age from 8 am to 8pm. Even unregistered private nurseries are set up in people's apartments to host groups of children while their parents are at work.

Spanish affiliates have alerted the government that the quality of ECE should not be compromised by an increase in unregulated centres.

José Campos, General Secretary of Federación de Enseñanza de Comisiones Obreras (FE-CCOO) and a member of the EI Executive Board, is critical of this disturbing trend: "In the past years, there have been numerous political promises to increase provision of ECE, but the government has failed to allocate the necessary resources."

Removing the educational aspect of ECE reduces costs and helps authorities meet the increasing demand. However, ECE is not simply day care, says Carlos López, General

The researchers found that the majority of staff working in private nurseries had absolutely no qualifications.

Secretary of Federación Española de Trabajadores de la Enseñanza de UGT. “Rather, it is an essential stage in the child’s development, the first steps in the learning process,” he insisted.

López explained that FETE-UGT’s position is that, for the sake of quality, all 100 million Euros recently allocated for ECE should be administered entirely by the education authorities, not shared with social services.

To get a broader picture of the issues and challenges facing this important educational sector, EI has commissioned a study on the organisation and funding of ECE in Europe. It is being conducted by Dr Mathias Urban, Director of Early Childhood and Profession at International Centre for Research, Studies and Development at the Martin Luther University in Germany. The findings will be presented at the EI Pan-European Round Table on Early Childhood Education to be held in Malta in October, and will enable EI members to more effectively advocate for early childhood education services across the EU.

There is much work to do, for the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008* reveals that the comprehensive care and education of children below age 3 remains a neglected area. In countries where pre-primary education systems exist, too often they combine very low enrolment ratios with insufficient teachers, and even fewer trained professionals.

At the district nursery in Brussels, it doesn’t seem to be the case. Séverine and her colleagues smoothly guide their infant class through the storm created by their water play. “We’ll need more people to help dry the room after!” III



Young children at the crèche Cardinal Mercier enjoy and learn from water play.

Peace Education

History textbooks build bridges to understanding

By Claude Carroué

The recent arrest of Radovan Karadzic, the former Serbian leader charged with instigating ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, aroused nationalist demonstrations of support. This shows, if there was any need, that historic injustices can be repeated if not properly understood. It is therefore necessary to agree upon and to teach a common version of history, with a view to ending resentment and other tensions between states or regions of the same country.

The European press has noted that Karadzic's arrest coincided with a new government in Belgrade, which is aspiring to join the European Union. While the Balkan conflict is very recent, in fact, European integration and the passing of more than 60 years since the Second World War have enabled the renewal and achievement of projects for bi-national history textbooks. Thus, since last year, French and German school children have been able to learn from a common textbook entitled *History: Europe and the World from the Congress of Vienna to 1945*.



National teaching unions approve of this without reservation. On the French side, Jérôme Crozat, communication officer at the UNSA Education union, calls this “an impeccable initiative.” So what is the aim of these works? They aim to tell the history of the 20th century from another perspective, which is less nationalistic and ethnocentric. However, Crozat said, the scientific method of writing is not the same

in France and Germany, obliging writers to review their way of teaching history, combining their methodology, vision and state of mind with that of the other. Such a book benefits school children most of all because most students are unaware of the history of their neighbours. So this kind of textbook gives them the option of seeing the other side's point of view.

Claire Krepper, National Education Secretary for SE-UNSA, adds that her union has an interest in any initiative that helps bring about dialogue and reconciliation between peoples.

Alice Cardoso, who is responsible for curriculum issues at SNES-FSU, notes the reaction of a group of former Resistance fighters, who wrote to say they were horrified at the portrayal of the war and Nazi Germany in the textbook. But the letter raised more “about the problem of competing memories than a concern for historical objectivity.”

Across the Rhine, the German union VBE also supports the textbook. Heinz Wagner, head of the School and Training Unit, appreciates being able to “consider history from different perspectives,” adding that “it is difficult, but it has to be done.” He finds

the book important in helping to build a European identity and says he is confident it will be a success and widely used. This common textbook is set to be used in all German regions. For her part, Marianne Demmer, member of the Federal Bureau of GEW, says the books are essential to peace and international understanding, as they help us to better understand the “other.”

On the strength of this experience, common history textbooks will soon be used in both Germany and its neighbour country of Poland. Thomas Strobel works at the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, an institute that specialises in comparing international societal views of the self, “other” and enemy as conveyed through school textbooks and other educational media. He says that the involvement of the German regions and Polish government in political and scientific commissions bodes well for the success of the project. He said the defeat in Poland of the Kaczynski government in the autumn 2007 elections has created a new and more favourable political climate for the project. A first school textbook is now being discussed. Another is set for release within three years. Then a third opus should cover the history of the French Revolution to the present day.

“There are many things to discuss, such as the expulsion of German citizens living in Poland after the Second World War,” says Strobel. “It is a subject that is often debated and one that is very emotionally charged between the two countries. Most historians agree. But public opinion can lead to a false idea of historical reality.” From a scientific and practical point of view, publishing houses in Germany are granted a lot of influence and freedom when producing school textbooks. In Poland, however, the text is sent with the images and the illustrations to the publishing houses.

By means of various resolutions, Education International has given strong backing to initiatives of this kind. The resolution on education for peace, taken in 2004, commits EI “to promote education for peace and intercultural education as the best antidote to racist and fundamentalist acts, with a view to anticipating social conflicts and any recourse to social violence.” In 2007, the resolution on the strategic role of educators confirmed “the importance of professional and academic freedoms for teachers so that teaching may be independent of any influence whether political, economic, ideological or religious, with a view to preserving the right and democratic exercise of criticism and creativity among young people.”

This takes on renewed importance when problems appear in the editing of bi-national textbooks. Take, for example, the case of Serbia and Montenegro. For her article published on the Transition Online website, US journalist Andrea Gregory interviewed Igor Milosevic, executive director of the Association for Democratic Prosperity, based in the capital of Montenegro, Podgorica. In Milosevic’s view, “this is a political game. The conquerors write the history books.” Following the Franco-German experience, he is convinced that neighbouring countries can agree to a text on their history. He adds: “We should probably decide on what has happened. Every student in the Balkans should learn the one true history, as difficult as that may be to achieve.”



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Bi-national history books can lead to reconciliation and mutual understanding across borders.

But this not only applies to Europe. The shared history of Asia is sometimes just as painful. In 2001, the EI World Congress reminded the Japanese government: “that the current trend in the world is for countries to reflect on their own history of wars and violence and to seek to create a new era of peace... We again call on the Japanese government to immediately rectify its school history books which embellish the war and colonial domination and distort historical truth, and to participate in a positive way in international efforts for securing peace.”

In 2005 and 2006, Japan also drew fire from the Chinese and South Korean governments for revising Japanese school textbooks. The Chinese government accused its Japanese counterpart of

“exonerating Japanese militarism, embellishing its aggressions and even openly preaching about the accomplishments of aggression.” They were mainly criticised for excluding the term “invasion” when describing Imperial Japan’s military occupation, for passages on its army’s former sex slaves and for the disputed number of victims in the siege of Nanking in 1937. Since then, the two great Asian neighbours have set the goal of publishing in 2008 the results of a joint study on their common history.

EI supports peace education in all parts of the world, and the desire for reconciled nations to move forward through concerted action, fostering peaceful relations while distancing themselves from resurgent nationalism. III

INFO

To read the full text of EI resolutions, please visit
www.ei-ie.org

To find out more about the activities of the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation, please visit
www.gei.de

Better benefits for educators

Education and solidarity network planned



The Education Solidarity Network aims to ensure the growth and viability of the mutual benefit model.

Most countries face a major development challenge in the growing need for social welfare, particularly in the area of health care.

In an environment in which globalization tends to propagate a single development model favouring private insurance, it is important to coordinate the positive efforts of all those who promote innovations in the fields of education and social welfare. The aim is to ensure the growth and long-term viability of mutual benefit models.

Because we wish to strengthen and expand solidarity-based social protection systems with the support of educators worldwide, EI has teamed up with AIM (Association internationale de la mutualité) and MGEN

(Mutuelle générale de l'Education nationale - France) to create a network called Education and Solidarity.

The network will be launched during an international conference to be held next May in Paris. The conference will address the rapid growth in health care and social welfare needs which, in the coming years, will exceed GDP growth in every country.

Faced with government shortfalls and sometimes even withdrawal, strictly commercial insurance systems have gained influence and are finding a large potential for growth, driving a deep wedge between the individual options they market and existing mutual benefit schemes. The market-driven approach often leads to the exclusion of

society's most vulnerable members and to unethical speculation over a basic right like health care.

On the continuum between state-driven and market-driven systems lie alternative models based on the following core values:

- > **Solidarity:** Members benefit from the group's strength and resources.
- > **Non-profit status:** Mutual schemes bring together people rather than capital. There are no shareholders to pay. Like the wealth created, the resources pooled by members remain the group's collective property.
- > **Democratic process:** Members elect the managers and participate in decision-making bodies either directly or through representatives. Each member can run as a candidate for the management committees. Members or their representatives set objectives and allocate resources.

These solidarity-based systems (mutual benefit, microinsurance, etc.) carry significant economic and social weight across the globe, with millions of policyholders, hundreds of thousands of employees and hundreds of billions of Euros in assets under management. These schemes are not prone to government withdrawal or to the risk selection mechanisms of market-based approaches.

A solidarity-based organization offers the advantage of a more sustainable social contribution because it is not subject to mobility, capital volatility or speculation-related financial risk.

Our aim is to defend the idea that in future, every citizen in every country should have the choice between being a customer of an insurance company or being a stakeholder in one's own social protection system in cooperation with others. III

Ending the cycle of poverty

Empowered children are key to economic injustice

Educators everywhere strive to give children the knowledge and skills to become self-reliant, fully-engaged citizens. But, despite their best efforts, the cycle of poverty often continues through the generations.

Aflatoun, an Amsterdam-based network of organisations, aims to change that through a creative program of child social and financial education. Their dream is to create new generations of children whose economic self-reliance and sense of social responsibility enables them to be the drivers of a more resilient and equitable global society – a society that has broken the cycle of poverty.

The original inspiration for Aflatoun came from the streets of Mumbai, where social worker Jeroo Billimoria saw firsthand how a lack of basic knowledge about rights, responsibilities and finance is at the root of economic and social inequality.

Now executive director of an international organisation that touches the lives of 240,000 children in 18 countries, Billimoria dreams of taking their message to the global level. In discussions with EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen, she expressed the desire to work not only with NGOs and micro-finance operations, but also with teachers' organisations to promote child social and financial education as part of the core curriculum in schools around the world.

Billimoria says that the vision of Aflatoun is "the empowered child as an agent of change." Wherever she goes, she is deeply impressed by the teachers and their commitment to their students. "I am moved by the tremendous motivation of the teachers, even though they so often face such severe limitations in terms of resources," she said.

The Aflatoun program is centred on five core elements:

1. Personal understanding and exploration

Children investigate their own personal values. Through exploration of citizenship ideas and ongoing interaction with peers, each choose the values that they feel are right for them. Financial ethics are explored and children learn the importance of balancing financial skills with the judgement to use these skills responsibly.

2. Rights and responsibilities

Aflatoun is grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), which identifies four sets of interdependent rights. Responsibilities go hand in hand with those rights and children learn about their responsibilities towards themselves, their family, the environment and their community.

3. Saving and spending

Financial empowerment hinges not only on constructive personal value systems, but also on specific, practical skills. Children learn how to save and how to spend in a responsible manner.

4. Planning and budgeting

Financial empowerment is achieved when children use their saving and spending skills to maximise their life choices. For example, a consistent savings habit can enable a child to stay in school for longer when payment for education is required.

5. Running small-scale social and financial projects

Children are encouraged to view themselves as active participants in and shapers of their community. Through managing community activities or entrepreneurial enterprises children begin to see how they can have a positive impact on their community.



© COURTESY AFLATOUN

Students in the Philippines participate in Aflatoun's financial education programme

These core elements are elaborated in a series of eight workbooks, designed for children aged 6-14. The classroom activities involve lessons, games and songs, with an emphasis on learning as fun. The children create their own savings system and undertake social campaigns, such as anti-smoking or pro-recycling initiatives.

The classroom materials were originally designed for use in India, but since then have been adapted for different cultural contexts. Aflatoun found it necessary to include HIV/AIDS in the materials for Africa, while European partners wanted more on financial literacy in an age of credit cards and internet purchasing, while Latin Americans asked for more focus on citizenship education to emphasize democratic principles. At present they are also working on an Arabic-language version. III

INFO

For more information, please visit:

www.aflatoun.org

Nepal

Historic elections bring new era of hope

A bloody decade of civil war in which more than 130,000 Nepalese people were killed came to an end earlier this year. National elections took place on April 10 in a peaceful atmosphere, despite serious violence and human rights violations during the campaign.

The Maoist party won with over 30% of the vote, followed by the Nepali Congress with almost 23%. These and other major parties agreed that getting rid of the despised monarchy that has ruled Nepal for 240 years would be the first task of the new government.

Thus Nepal became the world's youngest republic on May 28, when the newly-elected Constituent Assembly voted to abolish the throne. Across the country, crowds of joyous Nepalese thronged the streets to celebrate the end of King Gyanendra's rule.

Education and health are the two pillars of the development of nations - Baburam Adhikari

Education International welcomed these developments, and is about to begin working with its two Nepalese affiliates to help strengthen public education and to combat HIV and AIDS in the Himalayan nation.

EI's **Alexandra Cogels** spoke to **Baburam Adhikari**, General Secretary of the Nepal National Teachers' Association, and **Birendra P. Shrestha**, General Secretary of the Nepal Teachers' Association, during the first EFAIDS workshop in Nepal, held in Kathmandu from 25 to 28 June.

With all the political changes, what do you foresee in education?

"We, the Nepalese people are not expecting the change will come at once – the economical, geographical and cultural problems in our country are too great," according to Shrestha. "Now, with the Maoist Party coming into power, there are many ideas being discussed – private education, a republic education, etc. But we question the lack of informed thought and absence of consensus amongst stakeholders. The Maoists need to aim for more consultation... Our work is based on the belief that education should be for all, it should be inclusive and it should meet the challenges of the 21st Century."

Adhikari agreed: "NNTA believes there should be a new educational policy, as per the reality on the ground in the country. Up to now, because of faulty education policies, many young people are unemployed and are moving abroad. So, education should be linked with the lives of the people. That is why we are bargaining with the government for quality education, inclusive education and education for all."

Adhikari also highlighted the fact that about 13% of school-aged children are out of

school. "How can we bring them into school? These practical considerations present a great challenge. Likewise, there are specific problems, such as educating children in mountainous areas, problems of drop out, girls' education, etc. So the new education policy should target these issues."

Why is it important to start the EFAIDS Programme in Nepal?

"Education and health are the two pillars of the development of nations," Adhikari said. "To fulfil these two pillars, teachers' organisations have much work to do. Both of these issues, Education for All and HIV and AIDS, are directly related with society. In Nepal teachers can influence change, teachers can speak to remove misinformation, the misunderstanding of society. So we want to reach society through this programme."

Shrestha noted: "In the global context, Nepal is a very small country, but with so many problems, and we are concerned with improving our country.... Concerns over education are now joined by an awareness of HIV/AIDS as an issue. So, we want to mobilize our members to minimize this problem.... We also feel the programme will help the working culture of our unions." III



Nepalese teachers and pupils look forward to greater stability in their public school system.

Teachers care about orphans' plight



Teacher Lalita Upadhaya

Heaven only knows what would have become of little Sandesh Gurung if not for Lalita Upadhaya.

Lalita is head teacher at Rastriya Primary School, in Gharwavitol. She is also a union activist, serving on the Central Committee of the Nepal Teachers' Association. Four years ago, through a programme on Education for All, she learned about the case of a little boy who was orphaned.

"He was three years old when I found him," Lalita recalled. "His mother was sold when

he was three, and no one knows the whereabouts of his father. The child was like a beggar. He used to sleep on the streets and was without clothes. So I invited him to stay with me at my home."

Lalita took him in, and gave him emotional, moral and economic support. And, since no one knew what his parents had called him, she even gave him his name—Sandesh.

"He stayed for a month and later we took him to an orphanage," Lalita recalls. "There were six orphans there, but after couple of months three children ran away. So I decided to bring Sandesh back home."

Now Sandesh is seven years old and he is in Grade 1. Lalita is in touch with an orphanage run by a local NGO with support from Save the Children Norway.



Sandesh Gurung

"I think this will give him a good education. I am seeking a good place for his future so that he will become a good person for our society," Lalita said. "There are some other orphans who study in my school, and I am also trying to find orphanages for them. I like to work for children and women." III

Chad

Education on life support in Eastern Chad

Story and pictures by Jacky Delorme

Goz Beïda, Eastern Chad – The town is surrounded by camps for Sudanese refugees and displaced Chadians, bare hills on which a few bushes struggle to survive, shrivelled by the sun. Beyond lies the desert, which now is only crossed by armed men: bandits, soldiers or rebels.

In January and June 2008, soldiers of the National Alliance occupied the town briefly, before resuming their offensive against the government army. Nobody wants to stay in Goz Beïda. People just end up here.

People like Djibril Meina, a young teacher from the south of Chad. He never stops counting the days that he has spent here since he took up his duties at the Karai State school. His monthly salary is 108,000 CFA, the equivalent of 164 €, but he has yet to see a paycheck.

“It was four months ago that I was assigned to this place and I have still not received any pay,” Meina said. “We live in poverty, my wife and I. The cost of living is very high. It is impossible to rent a room for less than

20,000 CFA (30 €). A chicken costs 4,000 CFA (6 €) in the market. It’s outrageous!”

Faced with the same difficulties, Evariste Togue, the school headmaster, confirms that there are serious problems with the functioning and administration of the school and payment of salaries. The young teachers are the first to suffer.

“The newcomers’ files go off to Abéché and then to the capital,” he explained. “It is very hard for them, even though we too are sometimes affected by delays in the payment of salaries.

“Of the personnel at the school at present, only Togue is a member of the Chad teachers’ union SET, an EI affiliate. He says he



would like a little more support from the organisation, even though he recognises that he is a very long way from the capital if he wants to have his voice and demands heard.

“As teachers, we have no choice. We have a moral duty towards these children, in order to help the country’s development,” Togue sighs.

The remote location, terrible lack of security, long delays in payment and high cost of living discourage more than one teacher, admitted Mohamed Youssef Bachar, a departmental inspector of the national education system. He said 79 teachers with diplomas have been assigned to the 104 schools in the Dar Sila area, but many don’t report for work. The last count revealed 46 teachers and 55 community teachers for the entire department.

In the Goz Beïda camps for refugees and displaced persons, the training for community teachers is every bit as rudimentary as the school infrastructure.





A French class at Karaï state school

The community teachers receive a meagre salary of only 28,000 CFA, or 42 € per month. Even so, with eight trained teachers for 720 pupils, 200 of whom live in a nearby refugee camp, the Karaï school almost seems like a “centre of excellence.”

Chad has been an oil producing nation since 2004, but petroleum has not provided manna for the people. Asked whether industry profits have been reinvested in public services such as education, the inspector is evasive in his reply.

“There are a few new school buildings. This year we have also received a hundred or so tables and benches,” Bachar said.

With or without petro-dollars, education has never been a priority for successive Chadian governments since independence, particularly in this region adjacent to Darfur where until recently the rate of illiteracy was one of the highest in the world. Paradoxically, the trend in Eastern Chad, rocked by inter-ethnic conflicts and cross-border raids, is being reversed.

The forced grouping together of populations and the fact they have been taken over by United Nations agencies and NGOs – which finance the school canteens and pay the community teachers – enables more children to attend school.

The education inspector says that in 2005 school attendance in the department was 37% at the beginning of primary school. But now it is almost 100% on the sites taken over by humanitarian organisations, at least for the first and second years of primary school.

The enrolment rate for higher grades is still much lower, however. Discrimination against girls reduces their chances of finishing school to almost zero. For girls, and especially for boys, there is also the risk of being recruited by the national army, by rebel troops or by a self-defence militia. III

Iran

The internet fosters free expression

By Harold Tor

Iranians are using the internet to exercise their right to free expression as never before – despite strict prohibitions and severe penalties imposed by the authorities.

Early in 2007, Iranian teachers repeatedly demonstrated at the Parliament in Tehran to back their strike demands for better salaries, improved working conditions and freedom for hundreds of jailed colleagues. Teachers used their mobile phones to make videos of their protest and posted them on the internet.

An EI letter of solidarity received an unexpectedly large audience after it was translated into Persian and at least a dozen bloggers posted it on their sites. Thus, powerful images of dissent and words of support were quickly communicated to untold numbers of people, both within and beyond Iran's borders.

These recent internet developments, known as Web 2.0, are allowing courageous voices from Iran to be heard all over the world. More than seven million Iranians are internet users, and there are an estimated 400,000 blogs in Persian—an incredibly high number for a country that, by law, requires every website or blog to be

registered. Emboldened by the anonymity of the internet, English-language blogs by Iranians have also begun proliferating across cyberspace.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has one of the most extensive technical internet filtering systems in the world, according to the OpenNet Initiative, a collaborative project of Harvard Law School and the Universities of Toronto, Oxford and Cambridge. Most websites that contain information relating to political or religious dissent, or pornographic material, are blocked.

Because the national media is under strict government control, most journalists exercise self-censorship for self-protection. As a result, blogs have become increasingly important alternative news sources and are increasingly threatening to the regime, which is reacting with ever-harsher measures.

If a new proposed law is passed, bloggers and other cyber-commentators could face execution on grounds of “disrupting the mental security” of Iranians. The national Defenders of Human Rights Centre released a statement protesting the bill, arguing that it “not only increases the number of crimes punishable by death, but also endangers the security of citizens if it is passed given its deficiencies.”

The Iranian Penal Code already forbids content-based crimes such as “propaganda against the state,” while leaving “propaganda” undefined. Article 513 allows for the death penalty or imprisonment of up to five years for speech deemed to be an “insult to religion,” but leaves “insult” undefined. Article 609 criminalizes criticism of state officials in connection with their work, and calls for a punishment of a fine, 74 lashes, or three to six months in prison.

Living under the threat of prosecution, Iranians find other creative ways to express their views and hopes. Like the UK's acclaimed and illusive Banksy, Iranian graffiti artist Icy creates his art on the streets of Tehran and then posts it on photo-sharing sites like Flickr.com.

Similarly, video makers have used YouTube.com to document events like the cruel execution of young homosexuals by hanging, police brutality against demonstrating university students, and the defiance of women protesting for equality rights.

Ironically, even as the government is actively blocking foreign and local websites and using draconian legal measures to prosecute users, it is also using the internet to promote its own messages. For example, in an effort to discredit the teachers' protest last year, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei made a speech in which he claimed the “enemies of the Iranian nation” were manipulating the teachers to create “discord among the people.” The videotaped speech was later posted on YouTube.com.

Even President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has his own blog, with content in Persian, English, French and Arabic. **III**

INFO

Links for more information:

www.opennet.net/research/profiles/iran
www.irannewsblog.blogspot.com
www.blogsbyiranians.com
www.flickr.com/photos/icepunk
www.ahmadinejad.ir

Iranian teacher faces death sentence after unfair trial

On 11 July, the Iranian Supreme Court confirmed the death penalty against Farzad Kamangar, a 33-year-old Kurdish teacher and trade unionist. Kamangar, who has been imprisoned for more than two years, could face execution at any time.

However, his lawyer, Khalil Bahramian, is determined to continue the fight to free Kamangar. He said: "I will use all legal means to protest this new judgment. If I do not receive a convincing response regarding my client's acquittal, I will complain to the [International Court of Justice at the] Hague."

EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen deplored the ruling. "Teachers and trade unionists around the world care deeply about what is happening to our colleagues in Iran," he said. "We are carefully monitoring events and feeling a great deal of outrage that fair process and respect for trade union rights is so severely lacking in this case."

EI has written to the Iranian authorities urging them to commute the sentence immediately and to re-examine Kamangar's case fairly, as the death penalty is irreparable and no judicial system should run the risk of condemning an innocent person. EI has also been appealing to Iranian government representatives to meet and discuss Kamangar's case, but to date these efforts have been unsuccessful.

Meanwhile, fellow trade unionists, teachers, friends and family members are campaigning to win Kamangar's freedom. Unfortunately, they appear to be suffering reprisals as a result. After a 21 July meeting with the Defenders of Human Rights Centre, chaired by jurist and Nobel laureate Shirin Ebadi, three of the teachers were arrested en route to a village where Kamangar once taught. At press time, Hasan Ghorbani, Ahmad Ghorbani and Kaveh Rostami were still being held in the Sanandaj intelligence detention centre.

Kamangar himself was arrested in Tehran in July 2006 and since then has been held in various detention centres in Kurdistan, Kermanshah and Tehran. He was charged with *Moharebeh*, which literally means "enmity against God," and with membership in the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a militant group fighting for cultural and political rights for Kurds.

He was sentenced to death by the Iranian Revolutionary Court on 25 February on the basis of "absolutely zero evidence," according to his lawyer. Bahramian said that, contrary to the Iranian Constitution, the trial took place in secret. The proceedings lasted only seven minutes, during which time he was not allowed to speak in his client's defence.

The judgment was met with widespread protest and Kamangar's case has been taken up by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other human rights defenders. Kamangar has published several letters from prison maintaining his innocence and detailing ill-treatment and severe repeated torture.



Supporters calling for freedom for teacher trade unionist Farzad Kamangar.

While Kamangar's is the most serious, his is not the only case of rights violations against teacher trade unionists. Constant surveillance and harassment are becoming increasingly common. The leader of the Tehran Teachers' Trade Association says both he and his wife receive threats from the Ministry of Intelligence and Security on a daily basis.

In July, members of the Coordinating Council of Iranian Education Workers and Teachers' Trade Associations met to plan strategies to celebrate World Teachers' Day, to appeal to the authorities to stop pressuring teachers facing longer working hours in bigger classes, and to discuss the issue of unpaid pensions. Although the meeting was held in a private home, security forces broke it up, kicked everyone out of the house, and threatened them with arrest. III

Argentina's end to impunity

Murderer of Fuentelalba gets life in prison

The convicted murderer of Argentine teacher Carlos Fuentelalba has been sentenced to life in prison by a court in Neuquén, the city in which the latter was killed during a peaceful teacher union demonstration last year.

On 4 April 2007, members of the Asociación de Trabajadores de la Educación de Neuquén (ATEN) demonstrated to back their demands for decent wages and other improvements. Even though it was a peaceful protest, provincial police were ordered to disperse the crowd.

Sergeant José Darío Poblete shot a tear gas canister which struck Fuentelalba in the back of the neck. He was taken to hospital in a coma, and died two days later. He was 40 years old.

Fuentelalba was a respected and beloved chemistry teacher. In 2006, his students gave him an award for being the best teacher in the school. He was married and the father of two daughters, aged 10 and 14.

Over the past decade, numerous Argentine trade unionists have suffered a similar fate to Fuentelalba, however no one has been prosecuted for their deaths. The sentencing of Sgt. Poblete brings the long record of impunity to an end. Poblete had been twice convicted of earlier criminal offences, most recently for abuse of prisoners, but he had not spent any time behind bars on those charges.

El acknowledges this historic judgment and salutes the tireless efforts of the Confederación de Trabajadores de la Educación de la República Argentina (CTERA), its members and supporters in their pursuit of justice for Fuentelalba and his family.



Carlos Fuentelalba

General Secretary Fred Van Leeuwen expressed his satisfaction that justice had been seen to be done, but warned that such repression against peaceful protesters must be prevented from happening again. "It is very positive that the judiciary of Argentina has acted firmly in the face of such a heinous crime, yet we must not forget that the policeman who took the life of our colleague was presumably acting under orders," van Leeuwen said.

Beyond the charges against Poblete, CTERA has brought forward a second court case, Causa Fuentelalba 2, seeking to hold accountable those higher up the chain of command who gave the orders for such violent repressive action.

El joins the teacher unions, social movements, and Argentine people in their call: "No to impunity! No to the criminalisation of social protest!" III

Burma

Military criticised by Asia-Pacific teacher leaders

After Burma's devastating cyclone left at least 133,000 people dead or missing, the chair of EI's Asia-Pacific Regional Committee lashed out at the Burmese military government for continuing to thwart humanitarian and rescue operations by international aid agencies.

The United Nations estimated at the time about 2.4 million people were in need of food, shelter, clean water or other humanitarian aid, with 60 per cent yet to receive any help whatsoever, even in the hardest-hit parts of the Irrawaddy Delta.

Yuzuru Nakamura, President of the Japan Teachers' Union, conveyed a heartfelt message of condolences to families and friends of the cyclone victims on behalf of education trade unions across the Asia-Pacific region.

In his opening remarks to the annual meeting of the regional committee, held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, Nakamura also discussed the global crises which are slowing down the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In addition, he expressed concern over violations of democratic freedoms and human and trade union rights in the region.

In his own country of Japan, for example, the Japan Teachers' Union was recently refused access to a conference centre for its annual meeting, even though the courts determined that this refusal was illegal.

In other business, the regional committee approved a program of activities for 2008 and 2009. Chief Regional Coordinator Aloysius Mathews informed the assembled union leaders that the current EI program includes

73 projects in 22 countries. He warned that the capacity of regional staff to implement so many projects is rapidly reaching the limit.

EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen, who also attended the meeting, said that for new programs, including those to be developed in Central Asia, as well as the projects foreseen under the EFAIDS program, he is committed to finding the means for additional staffing.

Among the other issues discussed by regional committee members were the forthcoming Commonwealth Ministers of Education meeting, the cooperation with Public Services International, and the upcoming World Indigenous Peoples Conference, which will take place in Melbourne, Australia, in December. III

China

Teacher punished for photos of schools

A teacher who published online photos of schools that collapsed due to the Sichuan earthquake has been ordered to serve one year of Re-education Through Labour, according to Human Rights in China.

Liu Shaokun, a teacher at Guanghan Middle School in Deyang City, Sichuan Province, travelled to heavily-hit areas after the May 12 earthquake, took photos of collapsed school buildings, and put them online. In a media interview, he expressed his anger at "the shoddy 'tofu' buildings."

The government has acknowledged that 7,000 schools collapsed during the earthquake, and that an estimated 11,000 stu-

dents and teachers were among the nearly 70,000 deaths.

Liu was detained June 25 at his school. After his wife demanded to know how and why he was placed in Re-education Through Labour (RTL), she was told her husband would serve one year for "inciting a disturbance." Under RTL regulations, public security authorities may issue an order to anyone to serve up to four years without trial or formal charge.

"Instead of investigating and pursuing accountability for shoddy and dangerous school buildings, the authorities are resorting to RTL to silence and lock up concerned citizens like teacher Liu Shaokun and others,"

said Human Rights in China Executive Director Sharon Hom. HRIC is an NGO founded by Chinese students and scholars in March 1989.

Education International has no affiliates in mainland China, but continues to encourage its member organisations to support efforts by the authorities and international aid agencies to establish interim education arrangements for the estimated three million children affected by the earthquake. III

INFO

For more information:
www.hrichina.org

SATS fiasco in UK

Standard testing fails Britain

Britain's system of standardised testing is in disarray following large-scale bungling by the American company contracted to mark students' papers.



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Teachers are increasingly concerned that high-stakes testing places undue stress on young learners.

The confusion has left children waiting until autumn for their results and called into question the integrity of the government's school league tables.

Problems emerged in early July when results of Standard Attainment Tests (SATs) were not delivered to schools on time. In the weeks that followed it became apparent that Educational Testing Service (ETS), the company engaged on a £156-million

contract to mark the tests, had completely botched the job.

The litany of blunders included:

- > Schools receiving results late or not at all;
- > Students who took the tests being marked absent;
- > Tests returned to schools unmarked;
- > Papers returned to the wrong school.

Standard Attainment Tests are taken every May by all children in England and Wales when they end primary school and after three years of secondary school.

Compulsory standard tests have long been unpopular with British educators who believe their professional judgment is replaced by a centrally-determined exam. There is also dissatisfaction with the pressure created to 'teach to the test' at the expense of other curriculum areas.

As the SATs fiasco spread, teachers contacted the media in droves to tell their stories.

Mike Blant, head of Winter Gardens Junior School in Essex, told the BBC that of 59 children they registered on 16 May as having taken the tests, as of July 16, 58 were marked in ETS's system with an "A" for absent.

Teachers also used the fiasco to argue the case against standard testing.

Tony Mulgrew, Norfolk secretary of the National Union of Teachers (NUT), told the *Eastern Daily Press*, "The whole thing is a farce. With a bit of luck this is the final nail in the coffin of SATs. Let's just get rid of them and rely on teacher assessments."

Despite the distress caused by late results, many schools were forced to return papers found to be incompletely marked. Grave doubts also emerged over the reliability of ETS's marking.

Outrage greeted revelations that teenagers recently graduated from high school were being employed to mark papers.

Public confidence wasn't helped by comments to the media by markers working for ETS complaining of inadequate training, papers delivered late and unreturned calls to the inquiry line.

WTO talks collapse

Education services still on the table despite collapse of trade talks

With summer holidays commencing and the government announcing an inquiry, some of the heat went out of the issue as the school year drew to a close. Given the revelations about the standard of marking however, large numbers of students are expected to appeal their results.

Many stakeholders, including the NUT, are calling for this year's league tables – due out in August – to be scrapped. Poor performance by a school in the league tables can lead to it being placed in 'special measures' and ultimately closed down.

Bigger questions are also being asked about the wisdom of spending large amounts of money outsourcing a massive administrative exercise to fulfil a function which could be done by teachers who are already on the public payroll and observe students' progress daily.

Standard errors

Janis Burdin, head teacher at Moss Side Primary School in Manchester, released examples of two students' SATS papers to the national media.

One wrote: "If he wasent doing enthing els heel help his uncle Herry at the funfair during the day. And had stooody at nigh on other thing he did was invent new rides."

For the same exercise another wrote: "Quickly, it became apparent that Pip was a fantastic rider: a complete natural. But it was his love of horses that led to a tragic accident. An accident that would change his life forever."

Bizarrely, both youngsters were awarded 5 out of 8 for sentence structure. The first student was given 8 out of 12 for composition and effect but the second child was given only 7 out of 12 for what is clearly superior work. III

Attempts to negotiate a new global trade deal fell apart in July as developing and developed country members of the World Trade Organization clashed over agricultural subsidies and industrial tariffs.

The so-called Doha Development Round of WTO talks was launched in 2001 with the aim of creating fairer trade rules for developing countries, but talks have floundered from the beginning.

The key issues revolve around agricultural subsidies, tariffs on industrial products, and trade in services, including education. Developing countries have been pressing the US and EU to reduce the subsidies they give to agricultural producers, which make it difficult for poor farmers in other parts of the world to compete. In exchange, rich countries want poorer ones to open up their markets to their industrial products and service providers.

David Robinson, EI's trade consultant, says all these elements of the negotiations affect teachers.

"In many countries, tariffs represent a significant portion of government revenues," he explains. "Reductions in tariffs mean less public revenue for education and other public services."

In many developing countries, teachers have to supplement their incomes with subsistence farming, Robinson adds.

Trade ministers gathered in Geneva for a nine-day marathon of talks aimed at bridging the impasse and after six days it appeared a deal was at hand. However, things quickly soured when a dispute arose between the US and India over a mechanism that would have enabled developing countries to raise tariffs in the event of a surge of farm imports.

Robinson, who attended the ministerial meeting on behalf of EI, says trade in educa-

tion services was placed front and centre during a special one-day conference on services liberalization.

Ministers from Australia, New Zealand, Mexico and Japan indicated that, depending on the outcome of other negotiations, they were prepared to make further concessions in private primary, secondary and higher education services. Australia and New Zealand also announced they were seeking more access to the private education "markets" of other countries.

Robinson warns that the focus on private education doesn't mean that public education would be immune from the reach of any new deal.

"Given the rise in public-private partnerships and private financing initiatives in education, the distinction between public and private is increasingly blurred," he says. "In this way a deal on private education could expose public education to the commercial rules of the WTO trade agreements."

With the future of the Doha Round once again in doubt, Robinson says affiliates will need to pay close attention to how their governments react.

"One real danger is that we will see more countries now negotiating bilateral trade agreements," he says. "This creates difficult challenges for us. These deals always go beyond the WTO agreements and developing countries in particular face strong pressure to make significant concessions in sensitive areas like education and other public services."

Robinson warned: "These agreements are also much more secretive and more difficult to follow. Affiliates will need to be actively involved in helping EI to monitor these bilateral negotiations." III

Public education at risk of privatisation by stealth

By Guntars Catlaks

A new study commissioned by Education International reveals that a growing trend towards privatisation of public education is often camouflaged by the language of “educational reform,” or introduced stealthily as “modernisation.” Hence the title of the study: *Hidden Privatisation In Public Education*.

Stephen Ball and Deborah Youdell, co-authors of *Hidden Privatisation in Public Education*



The research was undertaken by Prof. Stephen Ball and Dr. Deborah Youdell, both of the Institute of Education, University of London. The authors explore two key types of privatisation: one in which ideas, techniques and practices from the private sector are imported to make schools more business-like; and another in which public education is opened up to private sector participation on a for-profit basis. The former type often paves the way for the latter.

Both types of privatisation have profound impacts upon the way education is delivered, how the curriculum is decided, how teachers are trained, how students are assessed, and indeed on the fundamental values underpinning public education in both industrialised and developing countries.

“A central issue, as this report so clearly shows, concerns the very ethos of education,” said EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen. “To put it in the starkest possible way: is education about giving each child, each young man or woman, the opportunity to develop his or her full potential as a person and as a member of society? Or is edu-

cation to be a service sold to clients, who are considered from a young age to be consumers and targets for marketing?”

Teachers and their unions around the world actively defend the concept of quality public education as a fundamental right of child. Therefore, this stealthy transformation of education from a public good into a commodity to be used for private profit is of deep concern.

“Education International commissioned this study to shine a spotlight on the trend towards privatisation. We need greater transparency and we need to get a better understanding of what is happening, so that we can engage in an open public debate about the future of education in our societies,” van Leeuwen said.

A preliminary report was published for the World Congress in Berlin in July 2007, and was presented by the authors at a break-out session. The EI Research Institute commissioned the report, and the EI Research Network met twice to discuss issues of privatisation and to evaluate the emerging findings. The final report was launched 17 June at the Trade Union Centre in London.

John Bangs of the National Union of Teachers and a member of the board of the EI Research Institute, said: “It’s the first genuine analysis of the global impact of these

trends toward privatisation on public education systems.” Referring to the lately deceased General Secretary of the NUT, he added: “Steve Sinnott would have been absolutely delighted to see this report.”

“This is the first blast of the EI trumpet against the monstrous impact of the privatisers in education,” said Jerry Bartlett, General Secretary of the NASUWT and a member of the EI Executive Board. “Privatisation is an abdication of the state’s responsibility to provide a fundamental right. This will be a really useful tool to use to campaign against the loss of the public sector ethos in education.”

Stephen Ball noted that the so-called education industry is enormously profitable. “Education services are the single largest export industry for the UK, valued at about 28 billion pounds a year,” he said. “This is *big* business!”

And within this big business, the newly emerged class of “edupreneurs” are set to reap the biggest profits. Testing companies, for example, are multi-million dollar enterprises in countries that place high priority on test results as a measure of educational quality. Under George Bush’s “No Child Left Behind” legislation in the United States, about 45 million tests are administered annually at a profit of up to US \$517 million to the private sector, he said.

And, at a global level, the World Bank is also actively promoting private corporate involvement in public education systems. “The World Bank is placing the private sector at the centre of its policy in the developing world,” Ball said.

Youdell added that in many developing nations privatisation tendencies are often more prevalent in newly-established World Bank or aid-funded educational projects. Because they are more dependent on external funding, developing nations are inevitably also more vulnerable to privatisation in all its forms, she said.

In many countries, privatisation has proceeded so far that it is seen as inevitable or simply “common sense,” Ball warned. He urged educators to be sceptical of private initiatives, and to look more deeply beyond the immediately apparent benefits of, for example, “free” computers, equipment, or learning resources.

The most insidious effects of hidden privatisation, Ball found, were the ways in which relationships between teachers, students and parents are changed. When education is commodified, the results – including the accomplishments of students – become seen as products. In this way, school leaders become business managers, teachers become technicians and students – depending on their test results – become assets or liabilities in a school ranked against all its neighbours.

He emphasized that there is a strong need for “ethical audits” to evaluate the impact of private involvement in public education.

Bob Harris, EI Senior Consultant, welcomed the report and praised its potential as a tool for teacher unions to develop their strategies and resist the most egregious forms of privatisation. Harris emphasized the need for trade unionists to gain a deep understanding of the threats posed to public education (and indeed all public services) by the pressures of privatisation, and to act energetically to implement counter-proposals.

“The debate should not be about whether education reforms are needed, but rather about the kind of reforms and the conditions for success,” he said. III

“This is the first blast of the EI trumpet against the monstrous impact of the privatisers in education.”

- Jerry Bartlett, member of EI Executive Board.

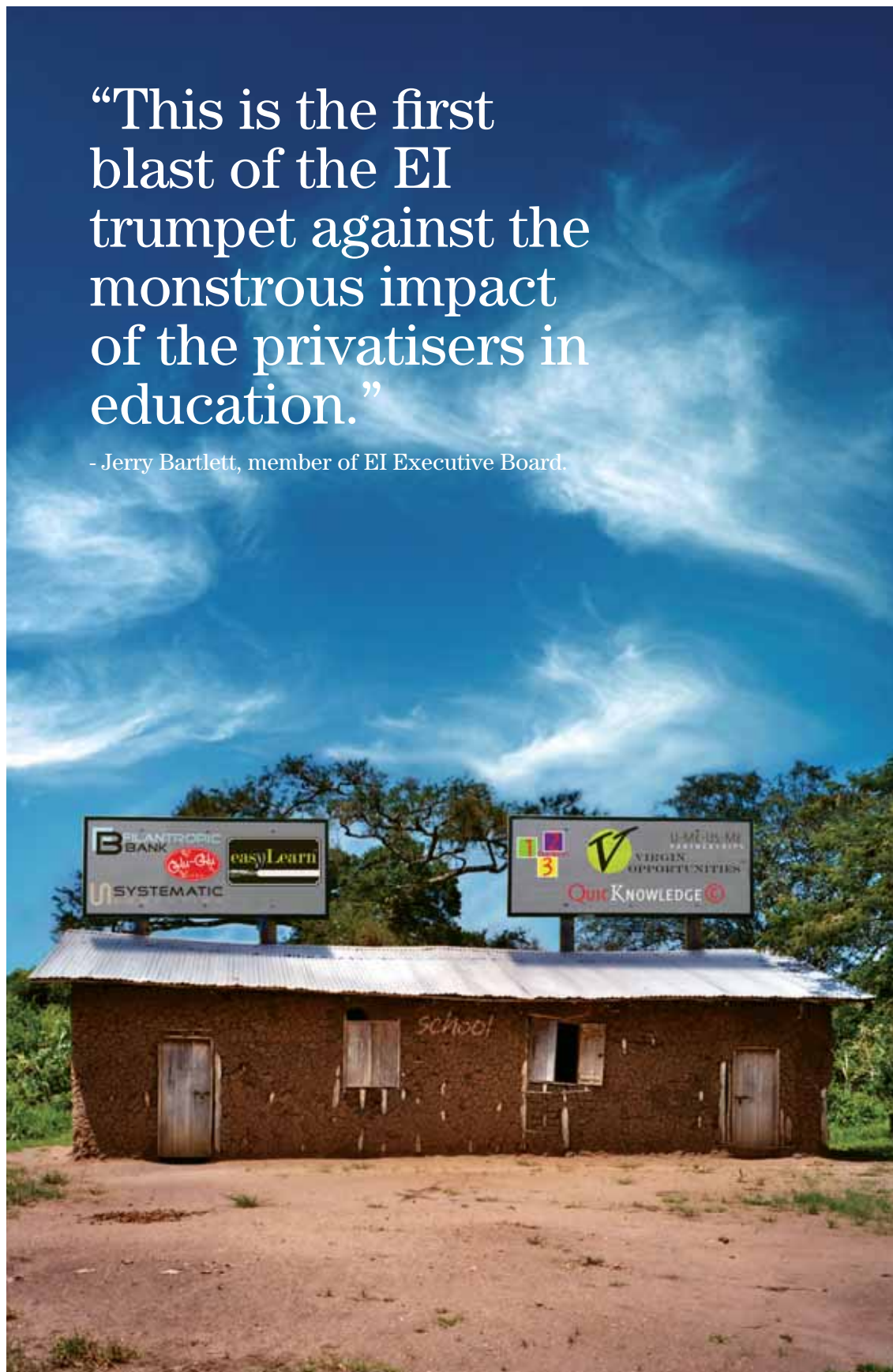


Photo illustration: Dennis Sinyolo/Frédéric Destrée/EI

Technology in Education

Word processing doesn't need to be expensive to be effective

By Timo Linsenmaier

When it comes to office suites – traditionally including word processing, spreadsheets, databases and the creation of presentations – most people automatically think of Microsoft Office. Indeed, Microsoft's product dominates the market, but it also is rather pricey.

Especially for unions in developing countries, often having only limited resources at their command, the high license costs may pose prohibitive obstacles. These costs are also something to bear in mind by unions active in development cooperation: When providing partners in developing countries with computers, it is recommended to use software that costs less in deployment, and more importantly, whose subsequent updates will not be a burden on those unions' budgets. Fortunately, there are alternatives that offer the same functions as Office, but at a much lower price or even for free.

The most sophisticated of these alternative office suites is OpenOffice. It is an open source application and therefore free to install and use. While largely maintained by a community of volunteers, OpenOffice is also subsidized by Sun Microsystems. In fact, Sun's own office suite, StarOffice, is based on the OpenOffice source code, with some additional proprietary components. StarOffice, while not entirely free of charge, is much cheaper than Microsoft Office. It also uses a more generous licensing model that allows a user to install up to five copies of the software in any of the supported languages and on any of the supported operating systems.

OpenOffice – to return to software that is entirely open source – aims to compete

with Microsoft Office, and therefore emulates the look and feel of its menus and buttons, sometimes improving their practicality and usability. This means that it is almost painless for users accustomed to Microsoft Office to switch to OpenOffice, and surprisingly enough, those users may often find workflow and functionality easier to handle, too. Besides, the included help files are very complete and provide solutions to virtually any kind of problems users might encounter. Like the programme itself, these help files are available in more than 90 languages and localizations, including Arabic, Chinese or some African languages. OpenOffice can read and write most of the file formats found in Microsoft Office –



even, via a plug-in, the new file format created by Microsoft for Office 2007 that older versions of Office cannot read. It also offers the possibility to save files in formats originally used by many other applications, a fact that many users see as an essential feature of the suite. For example, it is possible to export PDF files by the click of a button – without needing to have Adobe's Acrobat software installed.

Apart from that, OpenOffice runs on a large number of operating systems, be it Microsoft Windows, Mac OSX (for which a specially-adapted development fork called NeoOffice exists), different Linux, UNIX or BSD distributions or even IBM's OS/2. This

makes it the office suite of choice when working in a cross-platform environment, e.g. a computer lab in a school or a union's office utilising Linux-based computers.

For those already working with Linux systems, the KOffice suite, integrated into the K Desktop Environment (KDE), can also be a viable alternative. Its word processor might not be as advanced as OpenOffice's, but it is also open source. Apart from traditional word processing and spreadsheets it includes flow chart, vector graphics and planning tools, making it a very complete and extensive choice.

If you have reliable internet access, Google Docs could also be useful – especially if working remotely in a team. A free, web-based word processor, spreadsheet, and presentation application, Google Docs allows users to create and edit documents on-line while collaborating in real-time with other users. Documents can be created

and altered within the browser-based interface itself, or they can be imported. They can also be downloaded to the users' computers in a variety of formats. Moreover, documents can be tagged and archived to keep them organised and easily accessible.

To conclude: Don't be afraid to test alternatives to Microsoft Office. You won't be sacrificing functionality – quite the contrary. And these programmes can indeed help to cut costs or even make deployment possible. Moreover, using them is an easy and effective way to introduce alternatives and choices to students in the classroom – a worthwhile goal in itself. III

OpenOffice is Microsoft Office's main competitor. While it includes most of MS Office's features, it is an open source programme and therefore free of charge.



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Update

France: 13,500 more teaching jobs cut

The French Minister of Education, Xavier Darcos, announced in July an additional 13,500 job cuts in 2009. These cuts come on top of 11,200 jobs already cut in the 2008 school year.

In a news release, UNSA-Education denounced the “unprecedented mass layoffs,” which it said “will be to the detriment of the quality of the public service and the educational programming and will put at risk the proper administration of the school system, not only for staff but for students and parents as well.”

The job cuts are “totally unacceptable,” according to SNES-FSU. In a public statement, the union recalled that President Nicolas Sarkozy and his education minister had made many announcements about enhancing the value of the teaching profession, yet no discussions have taken place so far. Even worse, the minister's promises haven't been kept for 2007 and they are far from being kept for 2008. The union called on all education workers to refuse overtime hours.

The SNUipp-FSU predicted that the cuts would damage the entire education system,

from early childhood to university, and especially but the capacity of the public service to fight inequality and to reduce school failure. “The consequences will be devastating for children coming from the poorest families.”

All of the education unions, along with students and parents, are planning to take action in defence of public education and to participate in massive demonstrations at school opening. III

Letters to the editor

Dear Editor,

I am an activist and member of the Force Ouvrière, through which I had the opportunity to see your magazine.

I was very impressed by your article on child labour. My own history is somewhat similar to that of Sarah [a girl who was forced to quit school and become a domestic servant]. How can we help the Moroccan teachers and others to safeguard the education of children? I am looking forward to your reply.

Thank you,
Mrs. B. Grimaldi
Aubervilliers, France

Editor's note: Below is a reply from the Moroccan teachers' union.

Madam,

We heard about the interest you expressed in the young Moroccans who must work from an early age. We are very grateful for your concern.

Indeed our union SNE-FTD, helped by several national and international partners, leads a preventive action against child labour by trying to bring the most vulnerable children back into the classroom. Your sympathy for our action strengthens our drive to combat school dropout, which is the main cause of child labour and its humiliations.

We are convinced that the support of everyone is necessary to rescue children from the hands of predatory employers, and we wish to engage in further discussions in order to play our part in this noble work.

In solidarity,
Driss Elyoubi
National Union of Teachers (SNE-FDT)
Fez, Morocco



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CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2008

- 08-09** Global Unions Communications Task Force Meeting, CGU, EI Headquarters, Brussels
- 09-11** EFAIDS Annual Meeting, EI, Elewijt, Belgium
- 10** EI/ETUCE Pan European Bureau, EI/ETUCE, Brussels
- 10-12** Pisa 2008 Conference, University of Helsinki, Helsinki
- 16-18** European/Euro-Mediterranean Pan-Regional Conference, PERICC/EI, Sofia
- 16** Global Task Force on Child Labour & Education for All, ILO-IPEC, Paris
- 23-26** 32nd Executive Board Meeting, EI, Brussels

OCTOBER 2008

- 02-04** Pan European CEE Roundtable, EI, Croatia
- 06-07** Mobility Campaign Conference: Let's go! Where to now?, EI/ESU, Lille
- 23-29** Gender Audit, EI, Brussels

NOVEMBER 2008

- 03** Global ECE Taskforce, EI, Malta
- 04-05** Early Childhood Education Seminar, EI/ETICE, Malta
- 10-12** EIE/ETUCE Pan-European Meeting, EIE/ETUCE, Luxembourg
- 13** Pan European Status of Women Committee, EI, Luxembourg
- 20-21** Development Cooperation Meeting, EI, Brussels



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Back cover:

A thousand words

Education is still under threat in Afghanistan, especially for girls. Education Ministry statistics indicate that only 35 per cent of students enrolled are girls.

Teachers who defend girls' right to attend school have been brutally murdered. Arsonists regularly attack girls' schools: in May three were set ablaze in central Logar, the same province where last year gunmen shot and killed two girls as they left school. According to UNICEF, there were 236 school-related attacks last year.

Education International salutes Afghan teachers and students for having the courage to teach and the hunger to learn, despite the escalating climate of violence against education.

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