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Education



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Economic forecasts around the world continue to look grim, and

unfortunately the education sector is not immune from the bad news.

Funding cuts mean teaching and support staff jobs are being slashed, wages are being clawed back, services are being reduced, schools are being closed and, inevitably, the quality of public education is threatened.

Everywhere we see these negative consequences of recession, teachers and education workers must stand up and boldly insist that their governments stop eroding education and start investing their way out of this crisis.

We must go on the offensive in every country, in every region and around the world. We must turn this crisis into opportunity!

I'm sure we can succeed, because we have persuasive evidence to show that investment in quality public education for all is the key to recovery, the key to eradicating poverty, and the key to democratic development.

EI leaders and staff are hard at work on a new campaign to help you, our members, persuade your governments that investing in education and training is the only way to build the knowledge society of the future. In the coming months, you'll see more information on our website and in our publications about how to use the campaign materials in your union.

Hands up for education! It's the smart strategy for economic recovery.

Fred van Leeuwen, EI General Secretary

Turning crisis into opportunity

Unions organise for economic justice

By Bob Harris

“Invest in people!” This is the message that EI will put to governments and key international agencies in coming months as the world searches for a path to recovery from the global economic crisis.

This first major upheaval in the globalized economy began as a financial crisis, as banks and other financial institutions collapsed or were bailed out by governments, and credit froze. Very quickly production and trade slumped dramatically, so it became an economic crisis. Now with unemployment figures increasing by millions, many countries will be confronted in the months ahead by serious social crises.

Projections paint a gloomy picture. Between November 2008 and April 2009, official agencies and most governments revised their estimates negatively. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) reports 50 million more people will be unemployed worldwide this year. The latest figures from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) project that the global economy will actually contract in 2009 for the first time since the Second World War – by 1.3% globally.

The European Union will lose 4% of GDP this year, Russia will lose 6% and the Ukraine and Ireland 8%, while Singapore and the Baltic States will lose a massive 10%. The United States will lose 2.8% of GDP, a lower loss than many other countries, due to the

federal government's massive and rapid stimulus programme. China's growth will be cut by half, to 6%. The IMF points out that these figures would have been far worse if many governments had not introduced emergency stimulus packages.

Experts are also changing their estimates of the timing of recovery. The IMF now says recovery will not begin before late 2010, at the earliest. Even this estimate is considered by some economists to be optimistic.

The impact on education, teachers and other staff varies considerably among countries. The Obama stimulus package in the US is estimated to have saved 500,000 jobs in education, but only in the short term – for the years 2009 and 2010. In the Baltic States, schools have already been closed. Several countries, including a number in Eastern Europe, lack reserves or the capacity to run deficits to finance stimulus packages, and have turned to the IMF for emergency assistance. Unfortunately, despite the IMF's advocacy for worldwide stimulus, IMF conditions for emergency loans usually require cuts in public sector budgets, thus creating the opposite effect.

A major concern is the looming impact on developing countries, which will soon be faced with dramatic cuts in financial flows from other countries. Official development assistance, aid through NGOs and foundations, and private investment are all drying up. The ILO and the World Bank warn that over 200 million people could be thrown back into poverty. The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including Education for All, by the target date of 2015 is looking problematic.

Even in countries where public sector budgets have not yet been cut, pressures will increase in the months ahead. Public revenues will decrease because of the worldwide slowdown, and demands for funding of unemployment benefits and other social services will increase.

So far, agencies like the World Bank, the IMF, UNESCO, the OECD and many governments



Teachers rallied in London to demand the G20 leaders invest in education as part of their economic recovery plans.

have called for education spending to be protected. But merely saying “Defend public education” is not enough! This is why the EI Executive Board has resolved to pursue a pro-active strategy. EI is urging all its member unions to mobilize together around the message “Invest in People,” and the idea that education and training are critical to recovery. This approach is supported by UNESCO and the OECD.

Investment in people through education and training is the key to sustainable recovery, to a future economy that will be stronger, cleaner and fairer. The EI Action Plan on Education and the Economy is based upon:

- ▶ A clear vision of the role of education in society;
- ▶ Powerful arguments for investment in people;
- ▶ A capacity to mobilize globally, nationally and locally, winning public and political support; and
- ▶ A strategy of proposition.

EI is advocating these positions with force at all the key global institutions and meetings. Our positions on defence of education and the need to achieve the MDGs were reflected

in the Leaders' Statement from the G20 Summit in London in April. But that is only the beginning. We must ensure that governments keep their promises. The key to that is mobilization – joining our global advocacy with national and local action. The driver is the conviction that education unions can make a difference.

A new global economy must be built on a stronger foundation – based on the education, the skills and the capacities of citizens, based on equity and justice, and based on quality public services. The stakes are high because the financial and economic crisis comes on top of other crises – the food crisis in many developing countries, movements of refugees, migrants and guest workers, conflicts between cultures and, last but certainly not least, climate change. That is the great challenge before EI globally and each member union nationally.

Bob Harris is senior consultant to the General Secretary, and chairs the Trade Union Advisory Committee on Education, Training and Employment Policy at the OECD. III

Good news

Facebook reunites student and teacher decades later

Ever since he was nine years old, Jacques van Zuydam has always remembered his Class 4 teacher at the Burgemeester van der Voort van Zijpschool in Utrecht. That's where he and his younger brother Lauwrence went to school after their parents brought them from South Africa to the Netherlands so their dad could pursue his PhD.

The year was 1974. Far away from the surging violence at home, Jacques learned an unforgettable lesson about the injustices of apartheid and the importance of speaking up for your principles. More than three decades later, he took the trouble to search out his former teacher and tell his story, with thanks.

*Dear Fred,
I'm actually close to tears with excitement... I've searched your name on the internet regularly during the past years. The problem was what to make of tens of thousands of Fred van Leeuwen 'hits' on Google ... Facebook has 3 Fred van Leeuwens ... and I concluded this would be the most likely one to be you.*

*Dear Jacques,
Yes, I am the same one. I remember you – and your brother – very well. You were the kind of students teachers dream of... Amazing that you found me...*

You have made my day. I am truly touched by your initiative to contact me. Tears were not far away either. This is probably a teacher's greatest reward. I am very proud of you. We must soon meet. ... I am looking forward receiving your message tomorrow.

*Dear Fred ...
I suppose the best way to start a 30-plus year story is to start at the beginning, and with one of the memories that certainly must have been central in why I've always regarded you as a mentor.*

In Class 4 we had a teacher who took care of us one afternoon per week. I don't remember his name, but I do remember clearly how he targeted me as a white South African for being somehow responsible for apartheid. I felt victimized, but as a nine-year-old quite powerless as well.

Eventually, you found out about this, and in front of the whole class you took him to task about it – which I thought was very brave, because he was much older than you. You proceeded to explain to us what apartheid was, why it was wrong, but also that a nine-year-old could not be held responsible for it.

The most important message you left with me was that it was not pre-determined that all white South Africans do or must support apartheid, but that each person can exercise a choice. This was quite a liberating view for a young boy who was taught in his own country that we were tied into a historically determined racial war in which the only alternative to winning was losing.

I've always wanted to thank you for this ... so, thanks very much, because your handling of this incident (along with all the values you taught us) certainly formed one of the most important parts of the foundation on which I was built.

I think on that day I became an activist. My parents were also always opposed to apartheid, but as parents were also very protective of their children in the police state that SA was in the 70s.

*Dear Jacques ...
I remember you very well... In fact, when in South Africa, I always thought of you, wondering how you and your family got through those turbulent years, and several times I seriously considered looking you up. I regret I never did.*

I remember you as a very bright little boy, sensitive, affectionate, somewhat shy but very serious, almost a bit too serious for a nine year old. It took you only a few weeks to master the Dutch language, and not long after that you beat most of your classmates in most subjects, "including language".

And yes, I also remember introducing your classmates to your country, including its apartheid system, primarily with the purpose of protecting you and your little brother (who I think was in second grade) against the kind of prejudice and adult stupidity you had experienced earlier.

Not being a very experienced teacher at the time, it never occurred to me that it would make the kind of impact you believe it did.

It was an impact that stayed with young Jacques even after the family's return home.

Arriving back in SA after two years in Belgium and the Netherlands, ten years

old, was quite a re-adaptation challenge. I rejoined my classmates whom I left two years earlier.

By then the education system had started shaping them into the little pre-programmed robots that apartheid education was designed to do. I, on the other hand, questioned the silly rules that were imposed on us.

Fortunately I also remained a hardworking student, and whilst the teachers and my classmates differed with my political and related viewpoints, they did give me space and respect to articulate them.

Some teachers even coached me along, and encouraged me not to compromise (I suppose, like they did). I finished my school education at that same school in Pietermaritzburg.

In 1984 I went off to study at the University of Stellenbosch. I ... finally settled in sociology (as a result of my passion for human geography). I completed BA, Hons BA and MA there.

I also became quite active in the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), an anti-apartheid organization, and when the ANC was unbanned in 1990 immediately became a member.

Fred replied:

I do not want to sound sentimental but I am so proud of you having been an active member and leader of NUSAS during this very crucial period. Courage and intelli-



Fred van Leeuwen (far left) and Jacques van Zuydam (front row, third from left) with classmates, 1974.

gence are, unfortunately, only too rare a combination in one person.

My good friend Thulas Nxesi, General Secretary of SADTU [and President of EI], must in that same period also have been a member of NUSAS' leadership. I will introduce you to him next time I am in SA.

Reflecting back on the danger confronting anti-apartheid activists, Fred questioned the wisdom of his actions in the classroom.

One could argue that what I did was – from a pedagogical point of view – not at all brave, but careless. That is why I take your words of thanks also as accepting my apology for such carelessness. Things could have worked out quite differently. For you returned to a South Africa that was a very dangerous place for rebellious young men. When on your Facebook page I learn about your favorite book, I think your parents had good reason to be worried!

Today Jacques van Zuydam is Chief Director for Population and Development in the De-

partment of Social Development in Pretoria. He already has an official invitation to the 6th World Congress of Education International, to be held in Cape Town in July 2011. III

**“A teacher affects eternity;
he can never tell where his
influence stops.”**

– Henry Brooks Adams

Have you had a similar experience as a student or as a teacher?

Is there someone who inspired you or taught you special life lessons?

If so, please write and tell us your stories.

We'll share them in the next edition to help celebrate World Teachers' Day.

Please write to: editor@ei-ie.org

Education For All

Learning helps children heal

By Claude Carroué

A hallway full of trolleys. Bright rooms decorated with children's artwork. The unmistakable smell of ether. Adults in white move about among the children. The teacher calls her pupils to attention. Feeling comfortable, one child speaks up right away. The teacher doesn't have a class register to take attendance. How many will be in class today? Here in the Necker Hospital for Sick Children in Paris, Nadine Vaudolon teaches in a tiny classroom that accommodates up to six students.

Hers is one of 12 classrooms in the hospital's school, which was created in 1969. Thirteen teachers employed by the National Ministry of Education provide classes to children who are under treatment for a variety of illnesses. In one of them, there is a cupboard in which school books are arranged and a trolley, which the teacher uses to take learning resources to children who are bedridden.

For the past two and a half years, Nadine Vaudolon has taught children who are hospitalised for diabetes and other endocrinological ailments. As a special education teacher, she gives lessons at primary and lower secondary levels to children of different ages. If need be, for high school level lessons she calls upon volunteers from the L'école à l'hôpital association. She explains that "the idea for the hospital's learning centre came from the need to avoid disruption in the schooling process for hospitalised children."

Jérôme Boulaud, the director of the centre, agrees: "We are all trained teachers who have undergone specialised training on working with children who have handicaps or psychological illnesses. We know how to adapt our educational approach with appropriate remedial methods."



In her classroom at the Necker Hospital for Sick Children in Paris, Nadine Vaudolon and a colleague discuss a project with their student, Ariane.

Boulaud said that two or three teachers in each department of France are assigned to work in hospital schools, and he is worried about the impact of planned job cuts. This year in the Paris hospital schools all of the teaching positions have been retained at the Necker, but three will be cut at Trousseau.

The typical case for these specialised teachers is that of a child who stays in hospital for about three weeks, and then returns to their normal school. However, Vaudolon's students are frequently in and out of hospital for a few days at a time.

So how can she remember each child and keep track of their progress in between stays in hospital? She keeps a complete file

on each child, with their academic levels as well as the activities and homework they have done with her.

Thanks to her filing system, she knows right away that Ariane, who just arrived this morning, has been in the class previously. She fills in a form, which allows her teacher to quickly evaluate her knowledge of reading and writing. Ariane maintains the classroom habit of raising her hand to answer a question, and she addresses Vaudolon as "maîtresse," or teacher.

Quite often the chief medical officer passes by to greet the teacher and students. The teachers are well integrated into the medical team. Vaudolon describes herself as a "therapeutic partner."

"The input from the specialist teacher is considered very valuable, and the doctors ask for it, especially in neurosurgery. The school report can foreshadow what is happening on the medical level. It takes time to weave the bonds of trust with the doctors so we can work together in a highly coordinated way. In this regard, volunteers are less effective," she said.

What she finds most motivating is "the discovery you make with each child" and "the multiple viewpoints of different professionals on the child's problems."

She is fully aware that "all children have the right to schooling during their period of hospitalisation, which can be long, hard and painful. Not all the children are excited about coming to school here! It's the patient's right to be left in peace. So I begin with what the child wants to do, so he doesn't end up in difficulty."

A contract of care is signed with the children and their parents which spells out that school work is an integral part of the healing process. It helps the children avoid falling behind their classmates and reintegrate more smoothly into life outside the hospital.

Some parents find it difficult to be separated from their children when they are ill, so Vaudolon invites the parents into the classroom so they can see where their children will be studying.

"I invite visitors to come outside of class hours but, if a visit is planned in advance, of course the child can leave the class," she said. For the youngest ones, the parents stay in the classroom so they feel safe.

Ariane's mother is happy that her daughter can continue to study while in hospital.

"At the beginning I was a bit unsure, but the goodwill of the teachers and their pedagogical approach overcame my reluctance. They take into account the student, along with her illness. I think it's important that Ariane continue her outside activities, so that her life isn't cut off from normal and she still has a measured amount of responsibility," her mom said.

With parental agreement, the educational programme is developed by the hospital teachers and those in her regular school. Vaudolon keeps in touch with her students' full-time teachers via phone, fax and email, in order to be aware of what homework is required.

Students of the school at Necker Hospital are entitled to write the examinations leading to upper secondary or to university. Sometimes students themselves decide to write the university entrance exams at the hospital because they feel more comfortable there. Students who have diabetes or other illnesses are granted up to one third more time to write, in case they need to rest during the examination period.

What are the qualities expected of teachers in hospital settings? According to Vaudolon, "you have to be a good listener, to be flexible, to have an enormous palette of teaching skills and techniques. You mustn't forget that you are teaching in a hospital, even though we do everything possible to try to forget that!"

Nonetheless, the hospital milieu and its harsh realities are undeniable. Vaudolon says she could not work on the oncology ward, where many of the children being cared for died in the past year.

"These are my limits," she confided. "You get too deeply involved. It depends on the



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A colourful and well-equipped library meets the young patients' learning needs.

stage you're at in your own life, but psychological support should always be available for the teachers who do that work. Particularly here at Necker, where we treat rare blood disorders for which there is no treatment protocol, there is a higher risk of the patients dying."

Vaudolon never loses sight of the fact that the children surrounding her are, first and foremost patients, not students. For her diabetic students, she always carries some sugar in case of hypoglycaemia. However, she does not dwell upon hospitalisation or illness. Rather, she focuses mainly on academic work according to the curriculum.

She leads students in projects such as a review of current affairs or philosophy workshops. "These are very interesting because they bring together students of all ages. In this type of project, illness often appears in the background, linked with themes of life and death." ■■■

Education For All

Biblioburro brings love of reading to remote villages

By Nancy Knickerbocker



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With his cowboy hat and dusty clothes, Luis Soriano looks like any local campesino as he rides into a rural village in the highlands of northern Colombia. But the cargo in his burros' saddle bags makes him special. He's carrying books and, with them, the gift of reading and the love of literature. The Biblioburro has come to town.

"Come on, everyone! We're going to read now! Biblioburro!" he cries out.

A primary school teacher from La Gloria, Soriano was inspired to create the Biblioteca Rural Ambulante about 10 years ago. He saw how the power of reading helped, and even transformed, children who were living through conflict and violence more intense than he himself experienced as a child. Soriano decided to begin sharing his small personal library with those who had no access to one.

He began setting out every weekend with his 70 books packed on his burros, which are aptly named Alpha and Beto. Their arrival soon became eagerly anticipated in towns and villages all along his difficult route

through rugged and sometimes dangerous terrain.

At his call, dozens of barefoot children come running, eager to see what books the maestro has brought this time.

"Just wait, wait, now," he says as he unpacks the carefully wrapped and bundled books. "Okay, quiet down now. Who wants a story?"

All the little hands fly up.

"Which book do you want me to read? This one? Okay. This is not a story book, it's a book about animals, and the marvellous variety of animals all over the world. Look, here's a page about the different types of cats. You've got tigers, and ocelots, and

They wait for you in the morning

jaguars and pumas. And here's a type of big cat from Africa. Where is Africa on the map? Yes, it's very far away. Show me, please. Yes, and where to we live?"

"America!" chime the children.

"Yes, South America. And what is the name of the country we live in?"

"America!" they reply.

"No," he says, giving them a hint. "America is the continent, the country is? Co...?"

"Colombia!" they shout out enthusiastically.

This scenario, captured on video and posted on YouTube, is only part of a longer work about Soriano being created by Colombian documentary filmmaker Carlos Rendon Zipaguata.

The Biblioburro project has expanded thanks to support from a community librarian and a prominent radio journalist, who broadcast a story about Soriano and the Biblioburro which prompted a flood of about 5,000 books being donated to the collection.

Construction of a library building has begun, but it is stalled because the available funding was not sufficient. That means many books must remain boxed up, for lack of anywhere to store them properly.

However, no one is giving up. Supporters such as the Spanish NGO Acción Visual continue to work to raise awareness about the Biblioburro and Luis Soriano, the courageous teacher who travels so far to put a few precious books into the hands of eager learners. ■■■

SOURCES: WIKIPEDIA, YOUTUBE, NEWS REPORTS.

Ramiro Cuadros Roballo was a veteran teacher with 20 years of experience in the classroom. He was also a prominent union leader and human rights defender in his home department of Valle del Cauca, in southwestern Colombia.

Ramiro had the courage of his convictions and knew how serious were the risks he ran as an activist with SUTEV, the regional teacher union affiliated to FECODE. Because of his union work, he had received many death threats over a period of several years, peaking at the end of 2008. He had filed several complaints with the regional Special Committee for Displaced and Threatened Teachers, and completed the procedure to apply for the status of "threatened teacher."

Indeed, such is the extent of violence against Colombian teachers that administrative structures and legal mechanisms have been created with the aim of protecting vulnerable teachers. But neither special status nor government decree could save Ramiro Cuadros Roballo from the unknown gunmen who lay in wait outside his home on 24 March 2009.

He woke up early on what would turn out to be his last day. He was ready to leave for school by 6:00 a.m. He headed out the door, but didn't even make it to his car before armed gunmen shot him dead, then fled.

No one has been charged with the assassination of Ramiro Cuadros Roballo, nor with the killing of Walter Escobar Marín, whose body was found on 21st March in Palmira after a reported absence from school of eight days. More than 800 other Colombian teachers have been killed since 1991.



Mapping murders: A union map show the faces of assassinated teachers from the different regions of Colombia.

In an effort to shine the spotlight on the ongoing repression of teacher trade unionists and the apparent total impunity for perpetrators of these crimes, EI will publish a new study by Dr. Mario Novelli, a lecturer in International Development at the University of Amsterdam. His work explores the relationship between globalisation and international development, especially as related to education and labour.

Dr. Novelli's study, entitled *Colombia's Classroom Wars*, will be published in Spanish and English. Please turn the page to read a brief excerpt from the upcoming publication. ■■■

Persecution of teacher trade unionists

Colombia's Classroom Wars

By Mario Novelli

Over recent years there has been a growing awareness of the scale of human rights violations against Colombian trade unionists (Amnesty, 2007). According to the Colombian National Trade Union School (ENS) between 1999 and 2005, of the 1174 reported murders of trade unionists throughout the world, 816 were Colombian.

What is less well known is that more than half of these (416) were working in the education sector (see Figure 1). In both cases, the vast majority of these assassinations are attributed to right-wing paramilitary organizations with links to the Colombian state (Amnesty International, 2007).

While these figures are indeed shocking they represent only a partial representation of the nature and scale of violence, death threats, forced disappearances and displacement that the education community in Colombia continues to endure on a daily basis. According to FECODE (the major national teacher's federation) this ongoing repression represents one of the biggest challenges for the trade union organisation (FECODE, 2007). ...

From Afghanistan to Zimbabwe political violence directed at the education community is becoming an all too common phenomena. Nevertheless there remains very little research that focuses specifically on this type of political violence.

Finally, in understanding the relationship between education trade unionists and po-

litical violence I think it important to avoid seeing Colombian education trade unionists as merely 'victims' of state terror, and instead to see them as active agents involved in a range of political projects.

The central argument of this report is that the violation of the political and civil human rights of educators in Colombia (through torture, assassinations, death threats etc), by state and state supported paramilitary organisations, is carried out precisely with the intention of silencing those organisations and individuals that are actively defending the economic, social and cultural rights (through defending salary and working conditions, public services etc) of both their own members and the broader Colombian community.

In this sense political violence against educators cannot, and should not, be separated from an understanding of the broader social struggles of Colombian trade unions and social movements against inequality, authoritarian rule and endemic political violence that continues to sustain a highly unequal development model favouring a small minority of wealthy elites

at the expense of the vast majority of the population....

As members of the international education community and international trade union movement it is important for us to build solidarity with our Colombian colleagues, to strengthen their attempts at making more visible the horrific human rights situation taking place in their country through disseminating and responding to Urgent Action letters and petitions, to assist them in both the financial and political support they need to defend the human rights of their members, to lobby and pressure our national and regional organizations (UN member states, the European Union) to increase the sanctions against the Colombian government and make it accountable for its crimes, to stop giving financial support to the Colombian military, and most importantly to prioritise improvements in the human rights situation in Colombia over the interests of foreign based corporations seeking investment opportunities. III

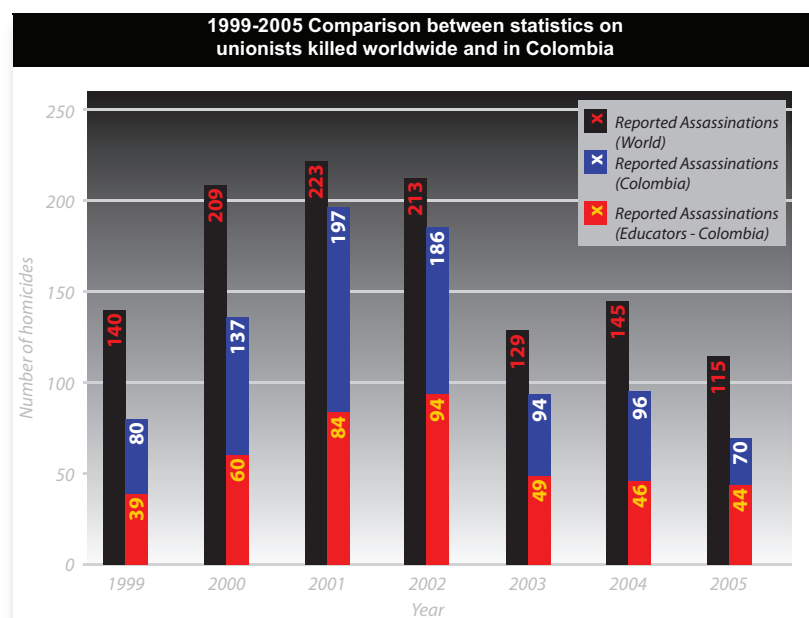


Figure 1: Trade union homicides worldwide compared to Colombia: 1999-2005

EI Declaration

Schools should be safe sanctuaries

The Executive Board of Education International has taken a strong stand in favour of schools being formally recognised as safe sanctuaries. At their March meeting, they voted to approve the EI Declaration on Violent Political and Military Attacks Against Education Students, Staff, Officials, Union Members and Institutions.

The Declaration aims to end violence against all parties involved in education, and to ensure that schools are “respected and protected as sanctuaries and zones of peace,” as stated in the Dakar Framework for Action.

The UNESCO study Education Under Attack documents a severe rise in attacks since 2004 including targeted assassinations, illegal detention, forced “disappearance,” torture, rape by armed forces, abduction for extortion, forced recruitment of child soldiers, and destruction of schools by bombing, arson and looting.

The Declaration notes that “attacks against students and education personnel who are not taking part in the conflict and attacks against education institutions are a war crime. When any of these are the result of carrying out a publicly declared order to target or kill civilians they are a crime against humanity. Governments and the international community bear a heavy responsibility to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice. Yet there has been a widespread failure to end impunity for such attacks.”

The Declaration articulates seven articles of principle and practice.

Article 1: Reaffirm commitment to principle of right to education in safety

EI calls for recognition of the right of all children and adults to a safe education in a peaceful learning environment.

Article 2: Take practical measures to ensure protection

EI calls on all governments to ensure national legislation conforms with interna-

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Children's art reflects their experience of aerial bombing of their homes and schools.

tional law protecting the right to education and prohibiting attacks on education personnel and institutions.

Article 3: End impunity for attacks on education

EI calls for an end to impunity for attacks on education, and for those culpable to be brought to justice. This focus should be included in the investigations of the International Criminal Court and the UN Secretary General's monitoring of grave violations against children in armed conflict.

Article 4: Scale up monitoring of attacks and efforts to end impunity

EI calls for systematic monitoring and analysis of the frequency, scale, and nature of violent military and political attacks against anyone in the education sector, and monitoring of efforts to end impunity.

Article 5: Prioritise action and share expertise on resilience and recovery

EI also calls on the international community

and governments everywhere to prioritise efforts to increase the resilience and recovery of education systems and institutions subjected to attacks, and to share information on such efforts.

Article 6: Make education an agent for peace

EI calls for measures to prevent education from aggravating conflict and to enable schools, colleges and universities to become zones and agents of peace, promoting tolerance, understanding, conflict resolution, and respect for cultural and religious diversity.

Article 7: Support campaigns of solidarity

EI calls for solidarity campaigns to support victims of attacks, to pressure governments to end impunity and make education institutions into safe sanctuaries where students have equal opportunities to fulfil their potential and become a force for peace. III

Hope for the hopeless

Finding refuge in the classroom

Zimbabwe now is going through a difficult process from dictatorship to a transitional government in a power-sharing agreement with opposition leaders, including Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the Movement for Democratic Change.

After decades of running the country through campaigns of terror, Mugabe's generals and henchmen trying to force the new government to provide them amnesty for their state-sponsored crimes by abducting, imprisoning and torturing opposition activists, including trade unionists, as leverage in a treacherous game. Tsvangirai himself was injured and his wife, Susan, was killed in a 6 March car accident that many viewed as an assassination attempt.

In this climate of extreme fear and ongoing violence, children and families are fleeing Zimbabwe into South Africa in search of jobs and a modicum of peace. Here is the story of a school in Johannesburg which is providing an education to some of the young refugees under very difficult conditions.

By Claudia Bröll

Gruesome pictures adorn the walls of the Albert Street School in Johannesburg. One picture shows burnt limbs and another is of a man with a large wound on his head. The caption reads "Zimbabwe is bleeding while the rest of Africa sleeps." The poster issued by the Zimbabwean opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change, seems not to shock these pupils. Many have seen similar scenes with their own eyes back home.

The Albert Street School is in the centre of this city, notorious for its high crime rate. Every day, 360 boys and girls attend this pink building in an otherwise grey street. Most have fled violence and poverty in Zimbabwe.

"Many have lost their parents and have been traumatised by their journey and experiences in their home country. We've had 11-year-olds who have arrived here all on their own," says Paul Verryn, bishop in the Johannesburg Methodist church, which takes in refugees from Zimbabwe and which opened the Albert Street School last year, providing protection for the children from the dangers of the big city and a return to what is often only an artificial normality.

In their dark blue uniforms with blue and yellow ties, the boys and girls look like pupils at any normal South African school. However, the uniforms fit hardly any of them. The trousers and skirts look worn out and normal

street clothes can be seen – there is not enough money to provide uniforms for everyone. On the crowded steps to the playground there's the usual laughing, flirting and screeching at break time. The school's motto – "Hope for the hopeless" – somehow does not fit the hustle and bustle: Zimbabwe seems a long way away.

Takudzwa Chikoro is entering the sixth form. He is top of his class. He proudly lists the subjects in which he achieved an A – almost all of them except biology and physics. The 16-year-old Zimbabwean came to Johannesburg in August. His parents died and things went from bad to worse while he was living with an uncle. He had not been to school since 2006 due to poverty.

"I wanted a better future and I wanted an education." He therefore decided to flee. He and five other refugees made it to the South African border. They climbed over electric fences and avoided wild animals. "I was really scared." Indeed, they were attacked and robbed of their last possessions and papers. Finally, he stowed away in a train to Johannesburg where he was told about Bishop Verryn. After a two-month odyssey, he finally arrived.

This sort of experience is not uncommon at the Albert Street School. "Most pupils here have gone through something similar," says deputy head William Kandowe, who himself fled Harare one and a half years ago when he became a target of government thugs.

There is a huge difference between the Albert Street School, which is funded solely by donations, and more affluent South African schools. A smell of sweat



Three classes in one room: in this school for Zimbabwean refugees, pupils have to concentrate three times as hard.

and boiled chicken pervades the classrooms. The paint is peeling off the walls, the ceiling is covered in soot and window panes are shattered. The building has not been used as a school for half a century. Only now is something being done to stop it from further deterioration.

In the overcrowded classrooms, pupils are crammed in cheek by jowl. In one room, three classes with 70 pupils each are taught at the same time by three teachers. Ten children crowd around 1930-era desks designed for two pupils. One class takes place in a narrow, poorly lit corridor. There are no desks or chairs, so the children must use the floor. Throughout the school, paper, pens, furniture and food are in short supply. Kandowe and his colleagues, most of whom are from Zimbabwe, are seeking to reach a level comparable to the once

highly-reputable schools in Zimbabwe. Pupils follow the Cambridge curriculum, which includes subjects such as Computer Sciences, Management of Business and English Literature as taught in private schools in Zimbabwe, a heritage bestowed by its former colonial rulers.

“Among the refugees are excellent teachers and highly educated people,” says Kandowe. “They now sleep on the streets and feel lucky if they have work.” He proudly adds that on a visit to the school, a delegation from the University of Cambridge praised the curriculum. “These young people can go to study in Great Britain when they finish school – at least in theory.” However, South Africa does not recognise the curriculum. When the first students graduate shortly, they will have to go to another school.

Like their teachers, the students have great ambitions for their future. Sixteen year-old Paidamoyo, who often attends proceedings at the Johannesburg Court of Justice, wants to be a lawyer or a journalist. Maliza dreams of a career as a pilot. If this doesn't work out, she plans at least to be an air hostess. Chikoro wants to pursue the law and is studying hard to ensure that the exam goes as well as his last school report card. III

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Global Action Week 2009

Teachers advocate for literacy and life-long learning

By Eva Gorsse

The Global Campaign for Education's 7th annual Global Action Week took place from 20-26 April in schools, community halls and legislative buildings around the world. During the week, education unions joined with students, parents, NGOs and politicians in a global effort to advocate for youth and adult literacy, and life-long learning.

Today, 776 million adults are illiterate, of whom two-thirds are women. Literacy is a human right, a tool of personal empowerment and a means to social, cultural and human development. Providing adults with access to literacy programmes and children with access to quality schools are both fundamental steps in tackling poverty. However, despite their importance, youth and adult literacy and life-long learning are two of the six Education for All goals that have been neglected in the past. Above all, it takes political will to establish effective programmes for adult and youth literacy.

Around the globe, EI member organisations undertook activities to advocate for literacy as a human right and a key to combating poverty and social exclusion. For this purpose, campaign materials including a poster, a leaflet and stickers were distributed by EI to all affiliates and made available for download at the Global Action Week website.

The GCE kicked off its Global Action Week with a well organized, impressive event on April 21 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. featuring Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan. AFT Vice President Francine Lawrence also spoke at the event. This event, plus a petition asking President



EI Executive Board member Patrick Gonthier during the Big Read organised by GEW in Nuremberg, Germany.

Obama to ensure that all children have the basic right to learn and to contribute \$2 billion to the Global Fund for Education, was featured on 400 AFT state and local web sites.

As the central activity of the campaign, the Big Read was carried out in classrooms all over the world, from big cities in the UK to rural schools in Ghana. Written contributions from students and teachers were collected and added to the compilation of short stories written by numerous personalities about the significance of education. The compiled stories were then exhibited and read aloud during the celebrations.

In Canada, CTF President Emily Noble took part in the Big Read event that took place

as part of an annual lobbying day with Members of Parliament and Senators.

In Denmark, an estimated 185,000 students did the Big Read outside the Parliament. The demonstration was organised by the national coalition in Copenhagen where all participants at the Fast Track Initiative Partnership Conference were invited to attend.

The Swedish teachers sent a letter to the Minister of Development Co-operation and the Minister of Education requesting a dialogue on Education for All and the involvement of civil society. Several debate articles were published, among them one together with UNESCO and UNDP. A critically-acclaimed Swedish author,

Henning Mankell, wrote a story for the Big Read.

In Brazil, CNTE called on teachers, parents and students across the country to participate in school conferences and debates on public education, coinciding with a national mobilisation for the implementation of the law on teachers' salary passed by the government last year. A public audience was held at the National Congress on 28 April.

The Argentinian coalition seized the opportunity provided by the International Book Fair in Buenos Aires, visited by more than one million people every year, to disseminate information and promote their activities. These ranged from presenting testimonies from literacy teachers and students, to showcasing short documentaries about Global Action Week.

In Senegal, films were also projected by the education union coalition. The President of Malawi took part in a national Big Read event. The coalition of associations, trade unions and NGOs in Niger held a national debate aired on TV, in which the government representatives took part.

Georgian poet and teacher Tsira Kurashvili launched the campaign with her students in her school in Western Georgia. They visited the orphans' houses in Tbilisi, providing children with new books. A symbolic tree of knowledge was planted in the central park which the children watered and hung their wishes' notes to. The Educators and Scientists Free Trade Union of Georgia (ESFTUG) also held a competition for journalists on education issues. The best authors were granted with diplomas and awards. Debates were held on education



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Teachers, parents and students participate in The Big Read in Melilla, Spain.

issues with representatives of Ministry of Education and Science, journalists, NGOs and publishing houses.

Teacher union members in Melilla, Spain, organised a "book market," where children had the opportunity to exchange books with their schoolmates. In Costa Rica, ANDE donated children books to schools in need of resources.

In Zambia, ZNUT conducted a campaign in rural areas where child labour is a problem, while carrying awareness-raising visits to prisons and juvenile detention centres. The teacher union coalition in the Philippines welcomed out-of-school youth and marginalized sectors of society to join in along with invited guests from the departments of Education and Legislation, as well as local government units. EI members in

Bosnia and Herzegovina organized workshops for industrial workers.

The Campaign did not just end on April 27, but was postponed to the month of May in countries like India, Sri Lanka and Togo. In South Africa a brand new education movement called Public Participation in Education Network was started. The PPEN is taking the Big Read to libraries and schools across the nation, with a highlight event taking place later on 16 June.

Rallies, open debates, seminars, information stands, public readings, artistic events, press mediation, mass distribution of materials in schools and organisations: EI acknowledges the commitment and enthusiasm of teacher unions to draw attention to the transformative power of literacy. III

INFO

To learn more about the massive scope and results of the Global Action Week campaign visit the GCE website:
www.campaignforeducation.org

Exploitation of girls

The hidden face of child labour

Every year on 12 June, children and adults around the globe mark the World Day against Child Labour. This year is the 10th anniversary of ILO Convention No.182 on the need to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, and the theme for 2009 focuses on exploitation of girls in child labour.

Despite progress made in recent years, an enormous amount remains to be done. The global economic crisis is pushing millions more families into poverty and threatens to derail advances in extending access to education and tackling child labour.

Around the world, an estimated 100 million girls are involved in child labour. Many girls do similar types of work as boys, but often also endure additional hardships and face extra risks. Moreover, girls are frequently exposed to some of the worst forms of child labour, often in hidden work situations including agriculture and domestic work.

Domestic work is often hidden from the public eye, and thus entails a strong potential for exploitation and abuse.

The ILO estimates that worldwide about 218 million children were child labourers in 2004. About 70 per cent of all working children are involved in agriculture, 22 per cent in services and 9 per cent in industry. The Asia-Pacific region continues to have the largest number of child workers, followed by Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Girls face multiple disadvantages

Because of gender discrimination in the household, the community and, indeed, all levels of society, girls face multiple disadvantages. These vulnerabilities are stronger in rural areas, where poverty, traditions and lack of infrastructure and services prevail, including lack of access to quality education.

In many cultures families place more value on the education of boys than girls. Girls are often the last to be enrolled in school and the first to be withdrawn from class if parents have to choose between educating a son or a daughter. Girls are also more likely to be withdrawn from school to take on child-rearing and other domestic duties such as cooking, cleaning, and fetching water and fuel. Girls may also be forced into early marriage and early pregnancies.

Much discrimination and violence against girls remains invisible, particularly in wartime or post-conflict situations, in areas suffering the HIV/AIDS crisis, in cases where families are migrants or refugees, and in rural areas. Girls are also more likely than boys to be victims of trafficking. The extreme exploitation of girls in the worst forms of child labour includes slavery, bonded labour, prostitution and pornography.

Domestic work: the invisible girl

Girls face particular disadvantages due to discrimination and practices which allocate to them forms of work which are largely hidden and undervalued.

Girls more than boys take on unpaid household work for their families. Girls often have to combine long hours of chores with some form of economic activity outside the household. This “double burden” has a negative impact on any opportunity for school attendance and can actually present a physical danger to girls. A major sector of employment for young girls is domestic work in third-party households. This form of child labour is mostly hidden from the public eye, and thus entails strong potential for exploitation and abuse. It is often accompanied by harsh working conditions and deprivation of rights. Post-primary age girls in rural areas are particularly vulnerable.

Gender inequality in education

The Millennium Development Goals include targets that by 2015 all children should be able to go to primary school, and gender disparity should be eliminated from both primary and secondary education.

The Education For All Global Monitoring Report for 2009 states that of 75 million

primary-aged children still not enrolled in school, 55% are girls. Gross enrolment at secondary level in developing countries stands at 61% for boys and 57% for girls. In the least developed countries, the figures are 32% for boys and 26% for girls. Clearly, across the world, huge numbers of girls simply cannot get access to education at post-primary level.

Gender inequality in education is also reflected in the high proportion of women among the world's illiterates. Of the 776 million adults who cannot read or write, two thirds are women – about 16% of the global adult population.

Once past the classroom doors, the obstacles girls face, both cultural and social, are still enormous: Poor quality education, with untrained teachers and minimal resources; persistent gender discrimination and bias; gender stereotypes in educational materials; and gender-insensitive learning environments.

Lack of adequate water and sanitation facilities at school, along with a lack of relevant curricula sensitive to girls' needs and aspirations are critical barriers for their education. Distant schools and unsafe journeys to school make education a risk many families do not want their girls to take.

Without access to relevant quality education, girls go into the labour force at an early age, well below the minimum age of employment. It is therefore vital to extend secondary education and skills training for girls, and to ensure that children from poor and rural households have equal access to it. When they do, the results are positive for generations to come.

Educating girls benefits the next generation

Research has proven that educating girls is one of the most effective ways to tackle poverty. Educated girls are more likely to have better income as adults, marry later, have fewer and healthier children, and be less likely to contract HIV/AIDS. They are also more likely to ensure that their own children are educated, helping to prevent future child labour. Tackling child labour among girls and promoting



©ILO

Because of gender discrimination in the home, the community and across society, girls face multiple disadvantages.

their right to education, is therefore an important element of broader strategies to promote democratic development and decent work.

No quick fix

Education is a crucial component of an effective strategy to eliminate child labour. Experience shows that a combination of economic growth, respect for labour standards, universal education and social protection, together with a better understanding of the needs and rights of children, can bring about a significant reduction in child labour. Compulsory school attendance up to the minimum age of employment (ILO Convention 138) is particularly important.

Child labour is a stubborn problem and responsibility to tackle the problem lies with all of us. Teachers have a special role to play, in the school and in the community, and with others in civil society.

Ending child labour and breaking the cycle of discrimination, poverty and violence requires the empowerment of girls. There is still a long journey ahead. But international human rights standards, agreed-upon commitments and targets all pave the way towards that goal.

EI is encouraging its members to organise awareness-raising activities around the World Day against Child Labour on 12 June and/or the Day of the African Child on 16 June. ■■■

Gender equality

Pension reforms in Europe and their impact on women

By Vanja Ivošević

Pension reforms have been a priority in Europe for the past decade. Though overall trends, policies, and measures have been documented, scarcely any information has been available on pension reforms affecting teachers in particular. With the retreat of the welfare state, governments are looking to reduce pressure on public budgets, including from pension systems. This has led to a reduction of redistributive elements within pension systems and the introduction of tighter links between contributions and pension benefits.

Both tendencies transfer existing labour inequalities directly into the pension system. Thus the disadvantaged position of women teachers in the labour market will be increasingly reflected in retirement income. And this is true not only for women teachers but no less so for every group disadvantaged in the labour market. Therefore, assessing the impact of pension reforms on women in particular is of utmost importance both for women employees themselves and as an indicator of overall fairness.

The study shows that pension reforms in Europe have a gender-biased impact on teachers.

In light of the commitments made in Hampton Court by the EU governments and the current financial crisis, reforms of the pension systems are likely to continue in a similar direction.

The EI Pan-European Equality Committee asked for a comprehensive study into gender impact of current pension reforms in Europe. The study is based on the responses of EI Pan-European affiliates to a rather complex questionnaire. The response rate was very high: 48 EI affiliates from 33 countries (as well as 2 jurisdictions separately within the UK: Scotland and Northern Ireland). This excellent geographical coverage of all the regions of Europe made it possible to present data for the great majority of European countries and to provide a European overview of pension reforms of a kind usually available only for individual EU member states.

There are two reasons for the gender impact on pension systems: first, gender inequalities among working teachers are conveyed through the pension system into retirement years; second, certain elements within the pension system can amplify or reduce gender inequalities in old age. For both tendencies, the continuation of employment differences into retirement and the critical features affecting gender bias, the study examines the mechanisms by which they are implemented.

The broad retreat of the welfare state is associated, in pension reform, with partial privatization of the pension schemes, a reduced public pay-as-you go system supplemented with saving schemes, and a tighter linking of pension benefits with contribution levels. These trends are com-

mon across Europe, except that the trend to privatization is more prominent in the “new” EU member states.

Increased **privatization** in the form of reduced government involvement in pension provision, financing, and regulation, reduces equity and efficiency. That is because addressing social objectives, such as securing adequate income in old age, requires making choices today for the long term, despite the unpredictability of economic and social trends. At the individual level, such choices are extremely difficult to make accurately and are likely to lead to under-provision for most people – in particular for people who have low incomes or are unable to engage in long-term financial planning. Private insurance for its part also has trouble dealing with the uncertainties involved in long-term commitments to provide adequate old-age income.

Savings schemes for old age, whether mandatory or voluntary, reflect and even amplify labour market inequalities. Workers in low-paid and precarious jobs, among whom women are disproportionately represented, cannot afford to save much and often fail to do so even if the law has supposedly made retirement savings schemes mandatory. Those whose savings are small or irregular typically get a lower net return, as a greater proportion of their savings is eaten up by administrative costs, owing to the higher costs of small accounts.

The tighter **linking of pension benefits to contribution** levels perpetuates the inequalities in the labour market into retirement age, so that the existing gender pay gap is extended into a gender pension gap.

The study draws attention to features of pension systems that can either mitigate or exacerbate gender differences. For example, in pension calculation formulas, the selection of the interval of earnings years onto which base benefits can increase or decrease gender differences. Moreover, the use of gendered life expectancy tables also increases the difference because women outlive men so their entitlement is subdivided over more years. Access criteria to pension benefits may discount careers with part-time or interrupted employment, and thus disadvantage women who more often than men take time off for family responsibilities. The minimum retirement age to qualify for full pension has traditionally been lower for women, but is increasingly being equalized with that for men, with disputed results.

Special attention was given to the vulnerable position of part-time workers. Although education is dominated by women workers overall, the ratio of women working part-time compared to men is much higher: 68% of men employed in education hold a full-time position but only 44% of women. Similarly, in tertiary education women more often hold part-time positions, and even when

Some factors to consider in assessing the gender impact of pension systems:

- › The effects of multi-pillar systems and in particular of saving schemes.
- › The extent to which the system is based primarily on contributions.
- › The extent to which redistributive elements are a part of the pension system.
- › The extent of individualization of pensions, displacing rights derived from family relations.
- › The extent to which family realities are incorporated into the pension schemes.
- › Equalization of pension rights between women and men, in particular those traditionally intended for women.
- › Access criteria: in particular, the disputed equalization of minimum age and minimum and regular contribution requirements.
- › Access to earlier retirement without pension loss.
- › Calculation formulas: minimum earnings, flat rate and income ceilings provisions; life expectancy tables and the general basis for calculation of pension entitlements.
- › Provisions for care credits and parental leave to be taken into account when calculating pension benefits.
- › Position of part-time workers in regard to pension benefits: in particular, access to pension benefits and provisions for buying into pension rights.

employed full-time they are more likely to be employed on fixed-term contracts. Therefore provisions regulating part-time work are of particular importance to women. Access to pension schemes is of primary concern to part-time workers. Following the EU Part-Time Workers Directive, a part-time worker must be treated no less favourably than a “comparable” full-timer. On this ground, part-timers who are or have been excluded from pension scheme membership may argue that they were discriminated against.

The teacher trade unions are key stakeholders in the upcoming reforms of pension systems. The collection of information, construction of data bases, and dissemination of information related to the tendencies in pension reforms and their impact on gender equality is relevant for both union members and the public at large. Teacher unions need to be active participants in policy debates and policy formation. ■■■

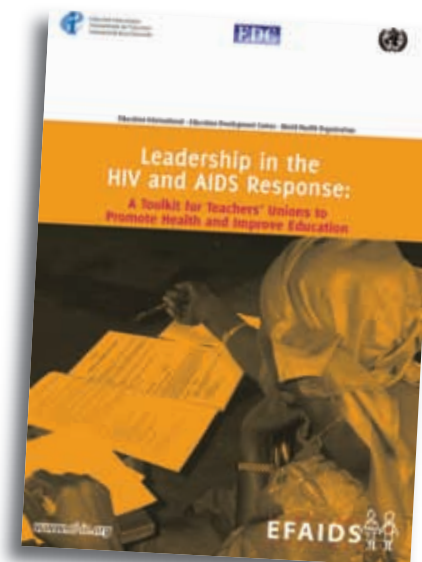
A new resource to teach about HIV and AIDS

Education International (EI), Education Development Centre (EDC) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) released their new toolkit *Leadership in the HIV and AIDS response: A toolkit for teachers' unions to promote health and improve education*.

The new resource has been developed in the framework of the EFAIDS programme to help unions, their members, and teachers around the world protect themselves and their colleagues from HIV infection.

Specifically designed for use by union leaders and for training of teachers and adults, this toolkit is based on the five EFAIDS working areas – research, policy development, advocacy, training and publicity. It provides information, tools, and activities to help unions take action and develop institutional skills in each area.

This core EFAIDS publication was warmly received by participants at the latest Africa Region Annual EFAIDS Evaluation and Plan-



ning Workshop. It will be used by 80 teacher unions to continue training their members to promote HIV prevention and end AIDS-related discrimination in 50 countries across four regions. ■■■

Swazi union speaks out against stigma

The Swaziland National Association of Teachers (SNAT) knows firsthand the challenges of talking about HIV/AIDS in a country believed to have the highest incidence of AIDS worldwide.

"In Swaziland, denial about AIDS is one factor that has made it almost taboo for families to admit their loved ones passed away

from an AIDS-related illness. You won't find AIDS listed as the cause of death on death certificates, and so we have no official number to work with," said SNAT representative, who declined to be named, told IRIN. During 2008, under the EI EFAIDS Programme, SNAT prioritised its work to focus on ending AIDS-related stigma and discrimination. Over 120 SNAT members took part in workshops to combat stigma and were trained to teach the EFAIDS material in Inclusion is the Answer: A toolkit for educators and their unions. Facilitating the training were members of the Swaziland National Network of People Living With HIV and AIDS (SWANNEPHA), as well as representatives from the Ministry of Education and Training.

Thembi Nkambule from SWANNEPHA said inclusive policies are vital not only for the welfare of teachers living with HIV, but also to counter the huge financial impact of HIV/AIDS on Swazi society. With education dominating public spending and with a constitutional provision guaranteeing Education for All, Swaziland needs to keep

qualified teachers in the classroom.

According to IMF estimates, simply maintaining teacher numbers in Swaziland over the next seven years will cost US\$230 million. Guaranteeing Swazi teachers a workplace free from discrimination and giving them skills to prevent or live positively with HIV is vital if the education system is to fulfil its goal of providing free primary education to all Swazi children. At the workshops SNAT members agreed that publicising a defined workplace policy on HIV and AIDS was the best way to protect colleagues living with HIV.

Victoria Nyawo, a teacher living with HIV, gave a motivational speech in which she praised SNAT's proactive policy of involving people living with HIV in the union's programmes and activities. A high school teacher in southern Swaziland, Nyawo is committed to breaking the culture of silence and stigma that continues to pervade Swazi society. She established a support group after discovering her status, and in this way helps other teachers to come to terms with their status and live positively with HIV. ■■■



Stigma of HIV and AIDS adds to victims' grief and loss

A seven-year-old girl named Pratyusha died of HIV/AIDS at Warangal in the South Indian state of Andhra Pradesh on 3 September 2008, after being infected with the deadly virus during a blood transfusion.

A month earlier, Pratyusha had been given four pints of blood brought in from two private blood banks in Warangal to the children's hospital. But as her condition deteriorated soon after the transfusion, tests were carried out revealing that she was HIV positive.

When family members carried Pratyusha's little body to their native village for the last funeral rites, none of her relatives or neighbours attended the cremation. Even the village shopkeeper and washer men did not come near the family. It was a total boycott.

Barely a week after their child's death, parents Kadari Butchaiah and Komala wished that they too had died because they and their two other children became pariahs in the community, even though they had themselves tested and found that they were not infected by the virus.

But society won't listen to that. It rarely does.

The impact of the stigma was even more traumatic for Pratyusha's siblings, since the other children in the neighbourhood were not allowed to play with them. The siblings were even prohibited from attending school.

"They think we are all HIV/AIDS infected. I tried to convince them and even showed the medical certificate issued by the government



©AP PHOTO/BISWARANJAN ROUT

Kamini, a girl who lives in a slum, participates in an HIV/AIDS Red Ribbon Carnival in Bhubaneswar, India.

hospital clearing us of the virus, but they don't want to listen," said Pratyusha's distraught father, Butchaiah.

Finally Butchaiah decided to knock on the door of the district administration. Only after he went on a *dharna*, did the administration constitute a committee of donors to probe the incident. [*Dharna* is a Hindi word meaning a fast undertaken as a means of obtaining compliance with a demand for justice.]

Meanwhile Butchaiah has urged that the hospital and the blood bank which supplied the

contaminated blood be brought to justice. Although the administration has ordered an enquiry into the incident, Butchaiah says he has no other option but to leave the village.

Such incidents are not isolated and it is only appropriate the governments across the globe pledge ... to step up the fight against HIV/AIDS, combating the stigma associated with the disease. It becomes all the more relevant for the teachers' unions too. ■■■

— Reprinted from the South Asian Women's Voice.

Development cooperation

Reflections on post-primary vocational education in Guinea

By Marcel Laroque

Marcel Laroque is the president of the Association of French Speaking Teachers of New Brunswick in Canada. Last year, he went to Guinea to evaluate a post-primary education programme organised by the Canadian Teachers' Federation. Below are some of his thoughts on his experience of Guinea.

My passion for travelling and undying curiosity about other cultures was more than sufficient reason for me to accept the invitation of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) and become involved in this excellent project focusing on human and educational issues.

Our task as part of the collaboration between Canada and Guinea was to evaluate six post-primary vocational education centres in Conakry, Kissidougou, Mamou, Labé, Boffa and Fria set up in partnership between the CTF, the Guinean Teaching Union Congress and the relevant ministry.

Through its international wing, the CTF helps promote the wellbeing of children in many parts of the world, who are often faced with the most challenging learning conditions. As regards the Guinean pro-



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gramme, there is genuine financial and human support for constructing new schools or repairing existing facilities, teacher training, preparing teaching materials or even negotiating agreements with local government. The results are very encouraging and full of promise.

The school drop-out rate in Guinea is quite striking. Children leave school very early to help provide for their families, among other things. In many cases, girls give birth to their own children at a very early age and so it becomes virtually impossible for them to attend school.

Post-primary vocational education programmes are helping to get things back on track by offering vocational education to young adults. Having more or less passed their primary schooling, this "second chance" school teaches them the basics of trades such as hairdressing, building, dressmaking, flower growing, hospitality, catering and tiling.

During our audit, we heard many people's stories, which were both highly eloquent



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and moving. The entire local population gathered to tell us about the challenges they face, but they mainly wanted to thank us sincerely for our support for this educational and human project.

Although I was motivated by a genuine desire to help, I did not realise how much this experience would enrich me in human terms. The Guinean people's incredible zest for life is clear from their kindness, sincere and generous hospitality, and courage. Witnessing the importance they place on family, I was reminded of real human values that we North Americans sometimes forget in the frantic pace of life we impose upon ourselves.

I would like to thank the teachers who, through their work with the CTF, help to bring light to the lives of children desperate to improve their prospects. In the hope that someday you have the chance to share this experience, I will leave you with the words of one very grateful father: "Opening a school means closing prisons." III

EI Task Force promotes Early Childhood Education

At its recent meeting the EI Executive Board adopted a report on the first EI Task Force on Early Childhood Education (ECE) meeting held in Malta.

Members of the Task Force agreed to map out early childhood education policies, systems and practices in each region. The data-gathering exercise involving the following countries is currently underway: Benin, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, The Gambia, Ghana, Czech Republic, Hungary, India, Italy, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Norway, Portugal, Senegal, Sierra Leone, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, USA and Venezuela. A report comprising a general overview of ECE policy and practice at global level and an analysis of the data gathered from the above countries will be compiled and presented to the EI Executive Board in 2010.

The next meeting of the Task Force will be held in Accra, Ghana, in September 2009 alongside an ECE African seminar. This seminar will enable EI member organisations in the region to share information on ECE in their individual countries and to develop strategies for ensuring that this important Education for All goal is achieved. The Danish National Federation of Early Childhood Teachers and Youth Educators (BUPL) has been working with the Ghana National Association of Teachers and other EI member organisations in West Africa to promote ECE. The lessons learned from this development cooperation initiative and experiences of the various members of the Task Force and participants will enrich the seminar.

Set up by the EI Executive Board following the 5th World Congress in Berlin in 2007, the 14-member strong ECE Task Force held its first meeting in Malta. The report was

presented by the chairperson of the Task Force, Haldis Holst of UEN/Norway, who briefed the Executive Board about its work, its action plan and its terms of reference.

The following terms of reference were given by the EI Executive Board to guide the Task Force in carrying out its assignment. They are:

- ▶ To devise and recommend strategies for implementing the 1998 EI Congress Resolution on ECE;
- ▶ To identify and analyse global, regional and country trends and developments in ECE and recommend appropriate policy responses;
- ▶ To identify successful examples of Early Childhood Education systems, programmes and activities and devise strategies for sharing them with EI member organisations;
- ▶ To recommend strategies for improving the status of Early Childhood Education and that of ECE staff, including their conditions of service and professional development; and
- ▶ To create publicity materials highlighting EI and its member organisations' involvement and activities in ECE.

EI reiterates the importance of Early Childhood Education, as it gives children an opportunity to discover the world, to develop and be valued as capable human beings, to be confident and motivated learners and participants in society. EI insists that ECE is a public good which should form an integral part of the education system; Ministries of Education should be given full responsibility for ECE; sufficient resources should be made available to provide for high quality ECE, free of charge and accessible to all; ECE teachers should be accorded the same status of pedagogical training, salaries and conditions of service as other sectors; and both men and women should be recruited to ECE. III

Iran

Regime cracks down on unions yet again



Shortly after the May Day crackdown on Iranian workers' rallies, teachers organised gatherings to celebrate National Teachers' Day on 4 May. The teacher association TTA invited members to gather in front of the Education Ministry in Tehran and in front of the Education Department offices in the provinces.

The meeting in Tehran started at 1pm with more than 100 teachers present. Before the gathering, police officers in plain clothes and in uniform patrolled the area, attempting to compel teachers to leave. When teachers resisted, the police assaulted and beat them. The police tried to arrest teachers, but they resisted.

Eventually, the police managed to arrest Rasoul Bodaghi, a member of the TTA in Tehran. He was transferred to the Revolutionary Court on 5 May. Bodaghi had been detained in 2007 and sentenced to a two-year suspended prison term after his participation in teachers' protests. At that time he was held for 16 days in solitary confinement and was released on bail.

This latest arrest came after teachers were forced to go on strike in late April to protest the government's failure to implement the Pay Parity Bill, which was passed in 2007

and guarantees better pay and working conditions for teachers.

A coalition of four international trade union organisations told the Iranian government earlier to respect their citizens' rights and permit free assembly on May Day – a day when the Iranian authorities traditionally meet peaceful demonstrations with violence and arrests.

However, during May Day rallies, independent trade unionists and labour rights activists faced heavy repression by security forces. About 130 women and men were arrested and were incarcerated in section 204

of Tehran's Evin Prison. EI has protested the arrests of independent trade unionists in Iran.

Together with EI, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) have all campaigned on this issue.

Their statement also calls for an end to the repression of independent trade unions and their members in Iran, and for the immediate and unconditional release of jailed unionists, including Farzad Kamangar, Mansour Osanloo, Ebrahim Madadi, and the five leaders of the Haft Tapeh Sugarworkers' Union who were recently sentenced to a year in prison.

EI continues to monitor the case of teacher Farzad Kamangar, who was unjustly sentenced to death after an unfair trial. EI is urging the authorities to immediately commute the death sentence and re-examine his case through a fair trial that meets both Iranian and international standards. EI is also concerned that his health is deteriorating due to maltreatment and squalid conditions in custody. ■■■

EI doc to screen at Labour Film Festival

A documentary video made in Morocco by EI has been chosen to be screened during the third annual Labour Short Film Festival to be held in Geneva in June.

No to child labour! Yes to education! was produced by EI's Video for Union Educators' (VUE) project, with assistance from the NEA Foundation. It documents the work of the Moroccan teachers' union

SNE in combatting child labour by reducing elementary school drop-out rates. The union's multi-faceted programme has been so successful that it is planned to expand from Fes to two other cities.

To see the video for yourself, visit www.YouTube.com and search *No to child labour! Yes to education!* ■■■

Latvian teachers confront economic crisis

By Mireille de Koning and Guntars Catlaks

On 2 April, more than 10,000 teachers took to the streets of Latvia's capital city to protest an impending 20 % wage cut. The protestors marched through Riga carrying banners and posters demanding no further cuts in education spending, better pay and working conditions, and a right to social dialogue with the new centre-right government of Prime Minister Valdis Dombrovskis.

In March 2009, Dombrovskis announced the 20 % pay cut as part of the overall reduction in government spending that is demanded by the International Monetary Fund and other lenders as a condition for a much-needed loan. The recent arrangement between Latvia and the IMF resulted in an overall 25 % cut in public sector wages, a similarly harsh reduction in government spending, and large tax increases. Teachers' salaries were already reduced by 15 % earlier this year.

Not surprisingly, Latvian teachers were outraged by the proposed wage cuts, and ready to voice their discontent at a demonstration. Organised by the Latvian Education and Scientific Workers' Trade Union (LIZDA), the demonstration was one of the largest union mobilisations in the country in decades. The trade unionists pointed out that teachers are not responsible for the global economic crisis, and they should not be made to bear the brunt of it.

Meanwhile, discussions about the budget took place behind closed doors between top government ministers and IMF officials, leaving no opportunity for teachers or their union to influence the negotiations about their future or that of their students. Despite a severe drop in economic growth and rising unemployment which has resulted in political instability, the IMF continues to demand austerity from the government of Latvia if it wishes to obtain further financing.



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Teachers march through the streets of Latvia's capital, Riga, to protest a 20 per cent pay cut.

Latvian teachers currently earn a basic monthly salary of about 550 Euros per month. Most teachers have to take on additional school tasks or work more than one shift, because they cannot support their families on the basic salary alone. It is predicted that major cuts will be made in additional work that teachers take on for much-needed supplementary income. Loss of these earning opportunities may push qualified teachers to leave the profession, a serious problem for a profession which is already finding it difficult to attract teachers in particular subject areas such as mathematics and science. The economic crisis has resulted in a resurgence of lending by the IMF and World Bank to middle-income countries such as Latvia. Between November 2008 and January 2009, the IMF guaranteed almost \$50 billion to seven countries: Hungary, Ukraine, Iceland, Pakistan, Latvia, Serbia and Belarus.

Despite the recent introduction of reformed lending arrangements, in particular the so-called Flexible Credit Line, mainly available

for emerging market economies, the IMF has still demanded that some governments balance their budgets if they want to receive financial aid.

At the same time, the US and most of the other wealthy countries are following the opposite economic strategy. They are relying on fiscal expansion and increased government spending to stave off the recession.

Questions are being raised: Will the IMF crisis loans severely hurt the poor as a result of this heavy conditionality? How will this impact on social stability and development? What will be the impact on education? What are the consequences for teachers' working conditions and salaries when public sector spending drops?

Rather than insisting on drastic public spending cuts, the IMF should join EI in advocating for investment in education as an essential and fundamental part of any economic recovery plan. ■■■

Performance appraisal and merit pay

A growing phenomenon in the education sector

By Dennis Sinyolo

Performance appraisal is a method by which the job performance of an employee is evaluated based on set targets, objectives or criteria. The extent to which these targets are achieved is usually assigned a numerical score or rating. For example, a rating of 5 on a scale of 1-5 may represent exceptional work performance, while that of 1 may represent poor performance.

Performance appraisal has its origins in the private sector and is usually linked to performance-related pay, also called “merit pay.” Performance appraisal results are sometimes used to reward, promote or demote employees.

Proponents of performance appraisal claim that it improves employee and organisational performance, while its opponents contend that the method is too mechanical and narrow to be applied in certain employment sectors, in particular education.

Arguments for performance appraisal

Some of the benefits of performance appraisal include the following:

- › It is results-oriented – may lead to improved individual and organisational performance.
- › It may encourage employees to focus on key result areas or objectives.
- › It may be used to give feedback on performance to employees.
- › It can be used to identify employee training needs.
- › When linked to merit pay, it may lead to salary advancement and progression.
- › It may facilitate communication between the supervisor and the supervisee.

Arguments against performance appraisal

Some of the demerits of performance appraisal, particularly in the education sector, include the following:

- › Learners (children) are not goods or products; they are human beings with diverse gifts and learning needs. Similarly, schools are complex institutions dealing with diverse situations. Setting specific, mechanical targets on learning fails to appreciate this fundamental difference between children and goods, and between schools and industry.
- › Performance appraisal assumes that the learners’ performance depends almost exclusively on the teacher, thereby downplaying the impact of the child’s socio-economic background, the availability or non-availability of resources and other significant factors.
- › Since performance appraisal is results-oriented, it tends to focus on learning outcomes, ignoring the important role of the inputs (resources) and the teaching-learning process.
- › The results are usually perceived as test scores/examination results. This diminishes the comprehensive nature of education. Such essential life-skills as good citizenship cannot be measured through classroom tests or examinations. Teachers are forced to teach to the test in order to obtain a good rating at the end of the performance cycle.
- › Although performance appraisal claims to be objective, performance is usually rewarded subjectively, taking into account seniority and the performance of other teachers in the same school.

- › Since performance appraisal is based on individual performance, it does not promote team work.

A growing phenomenon

There are clear indications that performance appraisal is gaining momentum in the education sector in many countries. For example, Australia, Malta, Sweden, Uganda, United Kingdom, Zimbabwe and, recently, South Africa, have introduced or attempted to introduce some form of performance appraisal in the education sector.

Proponents of performance appraisal claim that it improves employee and organisational performance, while its opponents contend that the method is too mechanical and narrow to be applied in certain employment sectors

The new Obama administration in the United States has also talked about rewarding excellent teachers, and may mean that some form of performance appraisal and merit pay would be introduced. International financial institutions such as the World Bank encourage governments to introduce performance appraisal and merit pay as a way of improving accountability and the quality of education.

Education unions need to research this growing phenomenon, learn from the experiences of others, debate or continue to debate the merits and demerits of performance appraisal, and to take a stand on this important issue. III

South Africans celebrate the African National Congress victory in the fourth democratic elections since the fall of apartheid.



©AFP PHOTO / ALEXANDER JOE

Cape Town to host EI World Congress 2011

The EI Executive Board has confirmed its choice of Cape Town, South Africa, as the venue for the 2011 World Congress. The Congress will take place from 19-26 July 2011 in the Cape Town International Conference Centre (CTICC) which is near the waterfront and surrounded by many hotels. The large purpose built conference centre has all the facilities necessary to accommodate an EI Congress.

The Executive Board has also adopted some changes in the Congress pro-

gramme in order to increase the time for general debate. Breakout sessions will take place on the third day of Congress. Cape Town itself is on the southernmost tip of the African continent, where the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans meet off the coast. It nestles under the shade of the spectacular Table Mountain, which features as part of the city's logo. Congress will be held in July 2011, during the region's winter period. However the climate is relatively mild and, while rainfall may be expected, the temperature should remain at least in the low teens! III

Mexico: Flu virus closes schools

About seven million students, from Kindergarten to higher education, were kept out of class beginning 24 April as authorities declared a public health emergency and closed schools, museums, sports arenas and other public venues across Mexico City. They were responding to fears of a flu pandemic due to a new virus that had mutated from pigs and been transmitted to humans. It was the first massive school closure since the major earthquake that hit Mexico City in 1985. III

Technology in Education

The future of the web: What's in it for teacher unions?

By Harold Tor

No one can successfully predict the future of the internet.

It first started out in the 1960s as a communications network for the US military. By the 1980s, it became accessible to university researchers. Then, despite many protests, commercial Internet Service Providers came into the equation in the 1990s. Today, the internet is everywhere.

Given the omnipresence of the internet in our daily lives, has it progressed as far as possible?

Sir Tim Berners-Lee, hailed as the creator of the internet by inventing its address system and layout at the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN), thinks otherwise: "It's just the tip of the iceberg... I'm convinced that new changes are going to rock the world even more."

Rock the world, indeed. Not since the invention of the printing press in 1439 has a single invention created such profound social change as the internet. In Europe, Gutenberg's invention made it possible for the first time in history to broadcast information to the masses. It liberalised and democratised literacy, resulting in the changes including the Reformation and the Enlightenment.

Organising without organisation

With the internet, the broadcast paradigm we have grown so used to is transformed into a matrix of communications that splinters and conglomerates constantly across

time and space. Technologist Clay Shirky calls this "organising without organisation:" that is to say, the internet lets us form groups effortlessly.

The power of this type of communication is already apparent across the web. People around the globe collaborate on wikipedia.org to create the world's most successful encyclopedia. Like-minded individuals form groups on sites such as del.icio.us, digg.com and Flickr to share photos, news and links. For the first time in human history, anyone can join a community not bound by space where he can share and receive information.

Moving towards online networks

What is termed as Web 2.0 embodies much of what the web was becoming after the bursting of the dot.com bubble in 2001. The pioneer in the Web 2.0 was Napster, a music-sharing platform. Napster started the democratisation of the internet which today allows us to use the web as an interactive platform rather than simply a broadcast tool. This made the web more participatory, and set off a number of community-type websites or applications, such as blogs, wikis, syndication, BitTorrent and most famously, Facebook.

Facebook is a social networking website where users can join networks organised under a great range of factors – city, workplace, school, hobby, political cause – to connect and interact with other people. It has more than 175 million active users worldwide and its success highlighted pre-



cisely the new matrix of communications the internet has brought us.

At a conference held in London in December 2008 on the "Future of Web Applications," Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg talked about the proliferation of social networking sites. He said the buzzwords for the future of the web are enhanced user experience, user-defined functionalities, user-created content. It is clear that websites are gearing towards community-based and community-driven virtual spaces because users like to create content for one another.

True enough, there are now many websites that are interest-based social networking sites, such as the Benche for the banking sector. Worldeka.com is another example of a social networking site for rights activists, while LabourStart created UnionBook especially for trade unionists.

Another dimension of the internet's future is shaped by the invention of portable devices. Thanks to wireless connection (wifi) and 3G mobile technologies, it is easy to access the internet on laptops, mobile phones or portable media devices like the iPod.

This development soon led to the advent of task-specific web applications called widgets. Widgets are web-based programmes that perform limited tasks, such as telling you the weather or keeping you updated about the latest movies. Windows Vista, for example, allows users to install widgets onto the sidebar right on the desktop. Another example is the iPhone, which allows users to personalise the functionalities through installing various widgets.



What is remarkable about widgets is that they are computer programmes written by the general public. By disclosing their source code, companies not only save costs in writing the applications themselves, they also build up good rapport with their customers by allowing user participation in product development.

What's in it for teacher unions?

These developments present golden opportunities for teacher unions to enhance their presence and credibility among their membership. It is important to engage users and understand their issues, even if this means changes to the union's traditional institutional structures.

Here are a few suggestions about how teacher unions could make better use of the web:

- › Send someone from your union office to a web technology fair to learn more about the web and share with colleagues later
- › Engage users on your website by using interactive applications such as forums and feedback forms
- › Have a union wiki on your site: members can add to a knowledge database of all the concerns of being an education worker
- › Publicise your union events and post photos on Facebook and Flickr
- › Ask someone to write a widget that could be useful for your members, such as an iPhone calendar of union events or a Windows news reader widget that displays union news by region or province...

The possibilities are endless:
be creative! III

Technology in Education

The whole wide world now fits in your pocket

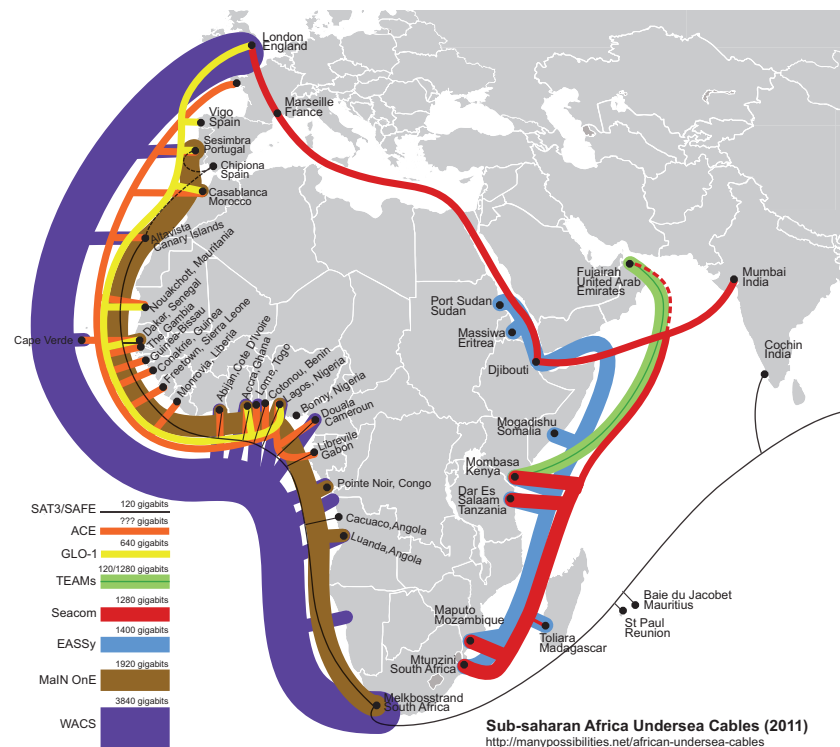
By Timo Linsenmaier

“The way we interact in cyberspace has fundamentally changed the way message conduits function,” says David Ottina, a usability expert and interaction designer. **“Whereas traditional media like newspapers or the radio functioned more or less in one direction only, ‘broadcasting’ centrally, the technologies used on the internet today enable us to interact directly and seamlessly in a completely decentralised way.”**

Originally the technology behind the World Wide Web was conceived mainly for text-based information-sharing scenarios that have little in common with the development and evolution of web-based communities, hosted on-line applications, peer-to-peer file sharing and complex interactive contexts

such as social-networking sites, video-sharing sites, wikis, blogs, tag clouds and so on.

Today, there are an estimated 160 exabytes of content on the net, a number that is expected to rise to more than 990 exabytes before 2012. Grant Gross of IDG News Service has



Sub-saharan Africa Undersea Cables (2011)
<http://manypossibilities.net/african-undersea-cables>
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Mobile access to the internet will be the key to getting more people on-line.

calculated one exabyte to be the equivalent of about 50,000 years of DVD-quality video, illustrating the incredible amounts of data flowing through fibre-optic cables around the globe.

What is even more astonishing: Most of the content will be created by users themselves, in what the OECD has called “a vast array of social, cultural and economic opportunities and impacts.”

The telecommunications industry is panting to keep up with these developments, laying thousands of kilometres of cables to enhance the data-transfer capacities. A brilliant example is the African East Coast, 7,000 kilometres long and so far the longest stretch of land on earth without any ADSL connections. In time for the 2010 Soccer World Cup Seacom, a Mauritius-based corporation, is laying a 15,000 kilometre-long broadband cable from East Africa to Europe and India, allowing internet access other than via slow telephone cables or excruciatingly expensive satellite connections for the first time in history.

“Faster and cheaper internet access will revolutionize the way business is done in Africa,” says Mark Buwalda, head of the South African search engine Ananzi. He expects the

first services to profit from better internet coverage will be video conferencing and VOIP telephony that could further lower costs and enhance communications.

Plus: A high-performance backbone infrastructure opens the way for future means of digital communications that promise even more profound changes and possibilities. For Vincent Cerf, Vice President at Google, mobile phones will become the main tool for reaching the 5.5 billion people on Earth who so far do not have access to the internet. Internet access via the mobile phone has only slowly been gaining momentum in developed countries, mainly because it is rather expensive. However, such mobile access will be the key to quickly getting large populations in developing countries on-line: the cost of a mobile phone compared to a computer is marginal.

Cerf calls attention to the fact that there are 2.5 billion mobile phone users worldwide so far, with India alone adding seven million more every month. Still, of India's more than one billion citizens, only about 40 million are currently on-line.

“We have realized that emerging markets today develop differently,” says Zeke Koch,

Director of Product Management for Mobile & Devices at Adobe. “In the industrialized world, the chain of events looked mostly like this: No internet access to Dial-up access to High-speed access to Access via a mobile phone. In developing countries, the sequence often reads: No internet access to Shared access (for example in internet cafés) to Access via a mobile phone.”

Tim Buntel, Senior Product Manager at Adobe, sees highly scalable technologies at the heart of this trend: “Dynamic adaptation of content delivery to the characteristics of diverse mobile terminals are indispensable to cope with the challenges of future interactive media usage.” Adobe makes FlashPlayer, one of the most successful media players which is installed on nearly every PC connected to the internet and on many of the newer-generation mobile phones. However, the programme so far has also been known as a relatively bandwidth- and hardware-intensive application, a fact that prevented users with dial-up connections from making good use of the technology.

But with more and more users using Flash on mobile devices, where much severer restrictions on processing power and storage space apply, the code behind Flash will continually evolve to become leaner and more efficient, says Koch. “We have to re-write much of the code to cater to mobile users – and that code will be used for the PC platforms later on, so that eventually users on older hardware and on a slow connection will benefit from it also,” he explains.

Even with the current relatively high prices and typically unreliable, low-bandwidth, high-latency connections, mobile internet is evolving. A blazing example is South Korea, where more than 3 million people regularly use their mobile phones to access the giant Cyworld social networking site to share photos and video clips made with their phones.

Still, affordability remains the crux of the question to be solved in Asia and Africa. Mark Buwalda is nevertheless hopeful: “In the end, better and cheaper internet access will also offer a cornucopia of new possibilities to education in Africa – and that may well lead to a boom of new establishments, not only in IT, but across all sectors.” ■■■

Burmese teacher and other unionists detained

A Burmese teacher activist and four other trade unionists were arrested earlier this month after taking part in the historic first National Congress of the Federation of Trade Unions of Burma (FTUB).

Zaw Myint Aung, a teacher from South Okkalapa, was arrested on 1 April. She and four other other trade unionists were taken from their homes in Rangoon after participating in the FTUB Congress as delegates. Besides Aung, the other detained trade unionists included three textile factory workers and one health care worker. They were all held without any explanation and without being formally charged.

Fortunately they were released on 10 April following protests from the International Trade Union Federation (ITUC) and several other unions, as well as strong urging from the ILO.

The ITUC's appeal to global labour expressed the concern that the five may have been tortured while being detained. In its letter to Burmese military junta leader, General Than Shwe, the ITUC called FTUB a legitimate labour organization which was facing yet another serious violation of fundamental rights by Burma's military rulers. ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder said: "This latest act demonstrates once again the determination of the junta to block any form of democratic activity and to clamp down on any form type of dissent from its iron rule."

FTUB General Secretary Maung Maung said: "The fact that our members were arrested just after returning from participating in the 1st National Congress of the FTUB speaks for itself." The three-day FTUB Congress was held in a border area inside Burma, and the fact that courageous Burmese trade unionists conducted democratic proceedings inside the highly repressive country is historic.



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CALENDAR

June 2009

1-3 Presentation of the Report of the Stiglitz Commission to the United Nations – New York, USA

3-9 98th Session of the International Labour Conference – Geneva, Switzerland

July 2009

5-8 World Conference on Higher Education at UNESCO – Paris, France

8-10 G8 Summit – La Maddalena, Italy

10-13 Symposium on Engineering Education and Educational Technologies at the International Multi-Conference on Engineering and Technological Innovation – Orlando, USA

27-29 World Outgames 2nd International Conference on LGBT Human Rights – Copenhagen, Denmark

August 2009

9 International Day of Indigenous People – Worldwide

September 2009

8 EI/ETUCE Pan-European Bureau – Brussels, Belgium

8 International Literacy Day – Worldwide

28-30 EI Asia Pacific Regional Conference – Seoul, Korea

Worlds of Education is published by Education International, the global union federation representing 30 million teachers and education workers from pre-school to university in more than 171 countries around the globe. To learn more about EI, go to: www.ei-ie.org.



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A close-up photograph of a man from the Inga tribe in Colombia. He is wearing a large, ornate headdress made of many colorful feathers in shades of blue, yellow, red, and green. He has red body paint on his cheeks and forehead. He is wearing a green and red shawl and is playing a wooden flute. In the background, other people are visible, including a man in a white shirt with 'FECON' printed on it. The scene appears to be a public demonstration or festival.

A Colombian Indigenous teacher from the Inga tribe plays music during a demonstration calling for better working conditions. The event was held on 24 March 2009 in Bogota to mark the 50th anniversary of the Colombian Federation of Educators (FECODE).

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